

7 Days Course

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7 Day Course Initiation

Central to the Brahma Kumaris practice is the teaching of all their core beliefs in 7 one, or one and a half hour, long lessons traditionally called " The 7 Day Course ". Once these 7 lessons are understood, students were then introduced to unpublished scriptures considered to be the direct teachings of God called "Murlis", named after the flute that the Hindu God Krishna is generally illustrated holding. These comprise of the core philosophy of their religion and are known as " Gyan " or "The Knowledge". The use of the word "Knowledge" is specific to these beliefs and absolute faith in this knowledge is seen as central to the liberation of the soul.

Example lessons

- **For a more detailed documentation of each lesson, including guided meditations, taken from an English teacher's manual for teaching BK Raja Yoga in the West, see the individual pages listed at the bottom of this page.**

Raja Yoga Courses - later developments

The course was not taught uniformly in all centres and a certain degree of flexibility was left to the individual teacher. In some cases, mid-period Western spread, the course was divided into introductory, intermediate and advanced classes [see below], in which the more controversial parts for Westerners, e.g. Cycle, were excluded from the basic introduction. Latterly, in many countries especially in the West, the Brahma Kumaris have introduced lightweight versions of their meditation courses designed to capitalize on the interest in New Age, positive thinking or personal growth movements which introduce basic elements of their faith and practice but avoid detailed and controversial

instructions altogether. Often these courses focus on specific interest groups such as women, business people, teachers and so on.

These seven basic lessons are:

- The Soul
- The Supreme Soul
- The Law of Karma
- The Cycle
- The Tree of Religions
- The Founder Brahma Baba
- Brahma Kumaris' Lifestyle and Principles

The Soul

Brahma Kumaris teach dualism. That is human beings are a soul or spirit living inside the physical body which is not the individual but a " costume ". The soul's form is a point of light and it is situated in the forehead of the body. The soul is described as having 3 functions: Mind, Intellect and Sanskars. The sanskars, or record of experiences, are transmitted from birth to birth. Brahma Kumaris believe in human reincarnation but unlike classical Hinduism and Buddhism, they do not believe in transmigration, or re-incarnation between different species. Brahma Kumaris originally taught that there are only 5 Billion human souls.

The Supreme Soul

Brahma Kumaris believe that their " God " is a soul or spirit identical to the human soul, also in the form of a point of light but that this soul cannot take birth in a human form. Their " God " remains disincarnate, eternally unchanged and so therefore is the only individual that can purify impure incarnated human being souls through its knowledge and by their mentally connecting to him through the practise of their Raja Yoga. This entity then is able to channel his psychic energy through the Raja Yoga practitioners to other human beings and into the World. The practice of this form of Raja Yoga and the allowing of their god Shiva to channeling his energy through them is said to be an intense spiritual fire burning away the practitioner's previous personality and eradicating their sins.

The Law of Karma

Similar to many Eastern religions, the Brahma Kumaris believe that Karma is a law controlling actions and reactions ; that every action creates a reaction and that individuals experience the effects of those reactions either as happiness or suffering. These reactions can be experienced in the current or a following lifetime. Thoughts being the origin of actions.

The Cycle

Using the symbolism of classical Hinduism, Brahma Kumaris believe that time is

cyclical and follows a pattern of a cycle which lasts for 5000 years. This is referred to as " The Cycle " of 4 or 5 Ages or Yugas ; Satya, Thretha, Dwapara and Kali in Hindi. Each cycle is identical to the one that came before it and to the one that will come after it. They call this the 'Eternal Drama'. God, souls and the 'Eternal Drama' have no beginning or end (*Anadi* and *Avinaashi*). The souls keep on entering the physical body (birth) and leave (death) them as per the rules of the 'Eternal Drama'.

It starts with a paradise or " Golden Age " of 900,000 human beings, all followers of their religion. This then declines to a slightly less paradisiacal " Silver Age " in which humans are also naturally spiritual minded. Then after 2,500 years, the Earth declines further to enter into a " Copper Age " where humanity experience the duality of spirit and matter. Suffering is experienced for the first time, the search for God and religions are created for the first time. 1,250 years later, a totally impure " Iron Age " of suffering, injustice and irreligiousness begins. Brahma Kumaris believe this " Iron Age " is our current age and that it is " Hell ". The opposite of their " Golden Age " 5,000 years before - or a few years into the future. They teach that at the end of the Iron Age, the World must be completely destroyed by a nuclear war between Russia and America, natural disasters and a blood bath of civil war in India.

At the end of Kaliyuga, BKWSU teach that the moral status of humanity deteriorates to such an extent that negative tendencies dominate human relationships and their god Shiva adopts the body of Lekhraj Kripalani to teaches souls how to remove these negative tendencies and instill divine qualities in their place. Those who follow the BKs will contribute to the creation of a "heaven on earth" and will naturally end up in Golden Age or Silver Age of the next cycle. All others, and non-BKs will start taking birth from Copper Age and Iron Age.

Between the lowest entropy of the " Iron Age " and the high spiritual state of their " Golden Age", there is a brief period of 100 years when the work to establish the Paradise must takes place. This period of time is known as the " Confluence Age " and was originally taught to be 40 years. When the World did not end, it became 100 years; 50 years for destruction of the World through " the jaws of death, the wail of horror, the rivers of blood and pus, the panic and the desperation, and then, the final death ", [2] followed by another 50 years for the creation of Heaven on Earth.

However, " Destruction ", as it is known, did not happen according to their timetables :

- World War II
- 1950, 12 years Yagya,
- 1976, one hundred years after the death of Dada Lekhraj,
- then some time between 1986 and 1997, 50 to 60 years after the alleged incarnation of Shiva Baba
- Year 2000 [3]

Therefore their knowledge has become modified according to necessity in order to sustain their faith. At first it was taught 50 years for destruction and 50 for creation, then 60 / 40, now the Brahma Kumaris tend to try and avoid the issue. They teach that every soul will receive salvation, regardless of their religion or way of life. Every soul will return to its Nirvana, also known as Shantidham or the Land of Peace.

The Tree of Religions

The Brahma Kumaris use the symbolism of " The Tree " to represent the evolution, or rather decline, of the human family of souls. The root of the Tree is made up by Brahma Kumaris followers currently practicing their Raja Yoga only. These individuals alone are to become the residents of " Heaven on Earth ", symbolised by the trunk of the tree, where humanity is one and experiences Golden Age and Silver Age.

" The Tree " is then illustration to split in 5 major branches. Humanity, they teach, forgets its original nature and each branch represents one of the 5 major religious traditions or seeking for god and divinity ; Judaism, Buddhism, Christianity, Islam and renunciate tradition of India called " Sanyasism " and manifestation of this newly impure world.

The outer branches of " The Tree " are said to symbolise the " Iron Age " of a fractured humanity where even major religions are split into many small branches, representing scientific beliefs, religious cults and political movements. Jesus Christ, Muhammad, Buddha, Shankaracharya and all other religious founders are said to incarnate at the beginning of their religion and then continue to reincarnate through out the history of their religion until coming to the " End of the World " at this time and seeking out the Brahma Kumaris for re-education in spirituality. It is specifically taught that none of the other religious founder have a direct connection with God nor are they able to escape human reincarnation many times over as is believed by Sanyasin, Buddhists, Mohammedans or Christians.

" The Tree " of humanity must be destroyed each " Cycle " in order that a new " Tree " repeats the pattern exactly. The " seed " for this new tree is their " God " Shiva Baba alone and they are the only true source of this knowledge.

The Founder Brahma Baba

Under the inspiration, or possession of their " god ", or channelled entity Shiva, businessman Lekraj Kripalani, became known as " Brahma Baba " and was said to have had 84 human births, which is the maximum number of births for any human soul. The Brahma Kumaris believe that Lekraj Kripalani was the first pure being in the world known as " Adam " or " Krishna ".

Since they believe that their " God " needs a human body through which to communicate and Lekraj Kripalani was considered to be the most experienced of all human beings, their " God " took possession of his mental faculties and body in order to communicate with body conscious, impure humanity. Lekraj Kripalani is considered by the Brahma Kumaris to be number one soul, higher in divinity than Jesus Christ, Mohamed, Buddha and all other religious founders who must come to him, or his followers, for re-education in spirituality. Lekraj Kripalani by his actions in a previous incarnation 2,500 years ago is also taught to be the individual that led humanity to " The Fall ", that is out of divinity and heaven on earth and into dualistic suffering.

Followers believe that this Supreme Soul, known as Shiva or God and Lekraj Kirpalani continue to be channeled on a regular basis by a senior BK sister at their headquarters in India. Also that Lekhraj Kirpalani's soul will reincarnate as Hindu god Krishna in his

next birth.

Brahma Kumaris Principles

The final lesson traditionally taught by the Brahma Kumaris relates to the lifestyle and disciplines they follow, called Maryadas, as regards to religious practices, food, sex and relationships.

Lesson 01 - The Soul

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Lesson 1: THE TRUE SELF

Objectives

At the end of the session, the students would have been aware of the nature of the true self, recognized and experienced the characteristic of the soul, recognized and experienced the true nature of the self e.g. peace, etc.

Content

Who am I?

Identify the differences between body and mind (as common knowledge among people these days). Who am I really? A soul is a non-physical or spiritual, intangible entity. Examples of awareness about body and soul relationship: Soul is an actor and body is costume; soul is driver and body is vehicle. Please see the appendix session for more examples.

Characteristics of soul

1. Form: point of light energy.
2. Position: Center of Forehead.
3. Role/task (in relation with the body that is to): animate the body, brings life and expresses itself through the body. Self-expression in relationship with others through the body.
4. Life span: eternal, imperishable.
5. Nature: Power, Love, Truth, Peace, Purity, etc.

Two mistakes from over identifying with the physical body

1. Limited experience of peace and happiness through the senses.
2. Traps of Limited Identities based on the body such as sex, race, religion, profession, family, etc.

Meditation is to experience each original qualities of the soul versus the experience of self esteem based on the limited identities.

Procedure

BKWSU Introduction (optional): Welcome the participants and give a 5-minutes talk about the University and local centers. An in-depth history of the institution will be taken in the 4th session of Raja Yoga Intermediate course. If the group is 15 participants or less, allow personal introduction for about 15 minutes.

Start With the Lesson Proper

- Ask some participants for their personal reasons for attending the course. Whatever the answers are, explain that meditation is a process of inner healing where they will learn right exercise and diet to re-store the inner balance or balance of the mind.
- In the practice of meditation, there is a need to know and understand who and what is meditating. Who and what lost the inner balance. Therefore, the one, who experiences unhappiness, depression or hopelessness, etc.
- Explore the common knowledge about mind and body as two different kinds of energy. "Today, we are uncertain of the difference and tend to mix the two: instead of seeing the body as the package and the mind as the contents, we see ourselves mainly as the body. Let us state the most obvious difference between

body and mind".

1. Main difference between body and mind
2. "Now, experience the difference. Close your eyes and be aware of yourself. (Pause for few seconds.) You are able to be aware of the different parts of your body (legs, arms, feet, etc.). Do your legs, your stomach, etc. have self-awareness? Body is the human (container) where the being resides. The being, which is YOU, situated just above and behind the eyes (between the eyebrows). This is the driver's seat where you do your thinking and directing every movement of the vehicle of the body.
3. After the short exercise, explain the difference between the point of consciousness (which is called the soul) and the mind. "This is where you are conscious of yourself and the world. In fact you are consciousness itself and your mind is your conscious ability to think. The Mind is not separate from you but an integral part of you. YOU ARE THE POINT OF CONSCIOUSNESS within the body, which is called by many names: soul, spirit, aura, being, inner self, life energy, consciousness, essence, etc. For our purpose, we will use SOUL. You are a SOUL. (or I am a SOUL) .

Explain in detail the Characteristics of the Soul

1. Form - conscious point of spiritual (metaphysical) light energy and cannot be seen by the physical eyes.
2. Position - center of the forehead, just above and behind the eyes, inside the brain but separate from the brain. The brain is the computer and you, the soul, are the programmer.
3. Task / Role - animates and directs the body. It is the soul that brings the body to life. Without the body the soul cannot express itself.
4. Life span - Eternal, imperishable: The soul cannot be created nor destroyed. There is no such thing as death of the soul, only the death of the body, at which point the soul leaves the body and takes rebirth (takes another body). (The taking of another body should not be taken in length on the first lesson. When questions come, tell them it will be taken in-depth later on.)
5. Original Nature - Purity, Peace, Love Happiness, Truth, etc. The aim of meditation is to experience each of these original (innate) qualities.
6. Purpose - self-expression in relationship with others (without your body you could not express and relate to others).

Effects of Over Identifying Ourselves With the Physical Form

1. Experiences of the senses - We think that the 5 senses are our only sources of experiences and we begin to depend on external things for our happiness and peace. In the physical world everything changes and comes to an end. When those physical pleasures (experience through the sense organs) end, we become unhappy and peaceless. We desire more and become dependent on external stimulus. Our moods go up and down, conditioned by how satisfied our physical senses are. Anger results when we do not get what we want We become greedy when we get what we want and we want more. Ego develops when we show off what we have gotten. Feeling OK one minute and not OK the next makes us feel powerless and unhappy. Meditation could help to find inner peace and freedom in a life full of ups and downs.

2. Traps of Limited Identities- We create many limited identities or labels for ourselves. Firstly, when we think we are the body, we give it labels. Each label is a different identity - nationality, family, religion, profession, race, sex, etc. Each identity brings with it certain values, which determine certain ways of thinking and acting. Secondly, we put labels on others. We put them in boxes and that also ends in conflict Christian against Muslim, Black against White, labor against management, and so on. Once again the result is anger and conflict, contrary to our true nature and our desire for peace.

No need to reject your body. When you know the right relationship between you and your body, you can take care of it in the right way, because it will not take care of you! My True Identity as SOUL - is the key to experience your real nature of peace and happiness; key to understanding yourself and key to harmonizing with others. Meditation is the method to experience and cultivate that "I am a soul" or soul consciousness.

Method of Meditation

Explain first why Raja Yoga meditation is open-eyed.

In meditation, you experience yourself as a soul. Sit in a comfortable position, let go of all different limited bodily identities, try to let go of all sounds and sights around you and turn inward toward yourself. Focus your attention up to that point in the forehead where you the soul is seated. If your mind seems to be running with many thoughts or memories, just observe them and watch them come and go. Gently keep bringing your attention back to yourself here-and-now, sitting on your seat of consciousness. Gradually your mind becomes more peaceful and your thoughts slow down. Create the thought of peace, concentrate your attention on that thought and gradually it becomes your experience. Try this once or twice a day to start with, in a quiet place at home or at work. These are the first steps to learning how to meditate and regain control of your thoughts, feelings and your life experience. If you find it a little difficult, be patient Don't give yourself a hard time. Regular practice will make you perfect.

Sample commentary

"In the past I often thought of myself by the name which I am called, or by what my body looks like, or the job I've been doing or the role I've been playing ... I now understand that these roles, names and appearances are connected with my body, with the part I play in life ... I now going to allow myself to feel the life force within my body ... I am living energy, emanating from an infinitesimal point, radiating out in the form of light and vibrations ... I am a star, radiating energy and light ... This is I, the soul, the inner being ... I give life to my body, my body is my vehicle and I the soul, am the life within this body ... I can make the body move ... I can keep the body at rest ... I, the soul, exist and I can think and feel ...

(Pause)

Sometimes I feel pain and hurt, and sometimes I feel tranquility and peace ... Now, I understand that the pain and hurt I have felt come to me through the body, and my qualities of peace and tranquility are the true nature of the soul ... I focus on I, the soul ... My awareness of my body fades ... I begin to feel light, travelling beyond the awareness of my body into the consciousness of being a soul ... Deep reserves of peace and calmness emerge from within me ... Deep within myself, I feel my own original pure

energy of peace ... I am surrounded by a feeling of peace immersed in a deep experience of peace ...

(Pause)

My life extends beyond my body ... Even without a body, I, the living energy, will continue ... I am eternal ... I am a being of light, the embodiment of peace ... My awareness is beyond fear, beyond hurt and pain ... I am safe because I can never lose myself ... I am for always ... I exist forever, and I am so peaceful, content just to be who I am and for these few moments free of the limitations of the physical world ...

(Pause)

Within myself I can experience the limitless wealth of my treasures of peace, happiness, love and serenity, and I share this with others now ... I share my own pure energy of peace and love with those who are close to me, either physically close or those who may be far away and whom I can bring close in my mind ...

(Pause)

As I love and accept myself and others, I, the soul re-gains the feeling of my own harmony and fullness ... My inner spirit is re-balancing. I have the strength to love and be peaceful and I have the freedom just to be me ... And in my own time, when I feel ready, I allow my thoughts to return to the room in which I am sitting, but only when I am ready."

Assignment

Points of Application, Some suggestions are:

1. Practice seeing others as subtle beings of spiritual light on the forehead. "I am a soul and I am seeing my brother soul."
 2. As soon as you wake up, remind yourself; "I the soul have entered this body to express my original qualities of peace and love." Before you sleep remind yourself; "I the soul am putting my body to rest. I am closing the windows of the senses to allow myself to rest."
 3. Practice while you do your activities and work throughout that "I am a soul acting through this body of 5 elements. I am the actor in this costume of the body."
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Lesson 02 - 3 Worlds

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Lesson 2: SOUL CONSCIOUSNESS & THREE WORLDS

Objectives

At the end of the session, the students would have ;

Affirmed & established their true identity, Deepened the experience of the true nature of

the soul Understood the relationships between the Mind, Intellect and Sanskars and how this knowledge helps them in managing their life. Explored the three levels of consciousness and experienced the process of traveling to these worlds by using the vehicle of thought.

Content

Faculties of Soul

- **MIND**: faculty of creation, where you create all your thoughts, which then stimulates certain feelings, desires.
- **INTELLECT**: faculty of discrimination and decision-making, which you use to assess right from wrong, good from bad and then make a decision.
- **SUB-CONSCIOUS MIND** (Sanskars): the impressions made on the soul by any action you do.

How These Three Faculties Work. Conclusion About Process of the Self.

Raja Yoga Meditation: Process of Activating Higher Emotions.

Summary of Soul Consciousness and body Consciousness.

Three Worlds or Levels of Consciousness

The soul (consciousness) has the ability to inhabit and be aware of the three worlds (levels of consciousness).

1. **The Physical World** (Corporeal World) - a world we experience through our physical senses; a world in which we directly relate & interact with other embodied souls
2. **The Subtle World** - beyond the physical world; sometimes referred to as the astral plane; or angelic world; a world where there is purity of thought; a world of light and movement, but no sound; the light is therefore not visible to the physical eye. In our meditation our aim is to leave the physical world behind for a little while, and turn our attention inward to re discover this subtle world through pure thought.
3. **The Soul World** (Incorporeal World) - Beyond the physical world of constant change, constant noise, constant movement; beyond the subtle world of pure thought, there is a dimension of complete silence and stillness, where nothing changes and time has no reference. This is the soul world, or the home of all souls, from where each one of us has come, and will eventually return.

Procedure

Start with 5-minute meditation with commentary. Use any of the suggested commentaries for Lesson 1.

Review the 1st session but ask the main concepts they have learned, which they are applying. Check also for some questions they may have about the previous lesson.

Answer questions related to previous lesson and questions, which will be answered by other lessons, should be addressed later.

Introduce the faculties of the soul

"The human body consists of many organs and limbs to move around and exist in the physical world. So too, the soul has the subtle faculties of thinking power (mind), reasoning power (intellect) and its own unique personality to negotiate the inner world of thoughts, feelings, decisions and habits. The understanding of these subtle abilities or powers and how they work and interact helps me immensely in managing my personal world. The soul expresses itself through the mind, the intellect and the sanskars. We will use the original Hindi word to mean the subconscious and unconscious impressions that form the basis of the personality." Show the Anatomy of Consciousness. Start explaining the importance of each.

" If I want to change my life, I need to change my actions, for which I have to alter my thinking. To do that I need to know just how and why thoughts arise."

- **Mind:** The soul uses the mind as a screen or field on which it projects thoughts, sensations, images and ideas. According to the impact that they cause, an experience, feeling or emotion is created. For example, if I think 'orange', immediately the familiar round and golden yellow image of an orange appears on the mental screen together with, perhaps, the sensation of its taste or texture. If I remember something abstract like my colleague's irresponsibility, it brings with it a feeling of negativity, perhaps related to something I haven't quite worked out myself.

Basically what happens is that the mind has the amazing capacity to take on the form of whatever it is thinking about at any one moment and extract a feeling of the quality that comes with the form. Nothing could be a greater incentive towards positive thinking than this simple fact. If I want to feel good, I have to have the types of thoughts that bring the quality of goodness. The mind is unfortunately subject to the whims and inconsistencies of the intellect just as the force of gravity pulls the tides to whatever the side of the world the moon happens to be on, the tides of the mind and its moods. Wherever the intellect roams, the mind automatically follows, producing all of its essential functions.

- **Intellect:** As the ruler of the inner state, the intellect is the principal faculty of the self. While a powerful and benign ruler is of immense benefit to any country, a weak and confused leader is manipulated and over-ruled by clever subjects. The feeble and weak intellect surrenders itself to two worlds: the external world of the senses and their objects, and the internal world of thoughts, feelings and personality traits. If I want peace, then I need an intellect that can create and decide on the types of thought patterns and actions that lead to peace. In the same way, the peace-provoking sanskars can be reinforced and brought to the surface so that they are the ones that come into the mind. Thus the intellect plays its role of doorkeeper. It allows or refuses entry into the process according to its own set of rules and perceptions. Through meditation the accuracy of this role is heightened so that positive qualities are permitted entry and continuity while negative ones are weakened and transformed.

The intellect can really be strengthened for this vital purpose through meditation and vigilance. I can know, for example, that to become irritated is detrimental to my life. Even so, when I am faced by the person who has been a traditional trigger for my irritation and once again he is doing exactly that action which I find so annoying, then all

theory is of no use. At that moment I need power not to get irritated. Meditation will give me that power. The strength or weakness of an individual is connected with the intellect. It's important to note that an individual can have an intellect that functions perfectly well without necessarily being an intellectual.

- **Sanskars:** The soul is the seed which contains within itself not only the faculties of thinking and deciding but also has specific configuration. The soul's configuration is based on what are known as personality traits. A more accurate description would be the imprints that are the basis of the personality. It largely resembles what is called in the West subconscious mind, though it also includes the unconscious as well.

When I am in bed at night just before going off to sleep, images of all shapes, forms and color pour onto the screen of the mind one after the other. Of course, it's not only when I am dreaming that the sanskars come into play. The raw materials for all thoughts, ideas, feelings and emotions also arise from the sanskars. In the analogy of images projected on a screen, the sanskars would be the archives of all previously recorded experiences. Every single action that I perform leaves its mark in the soul itself as a sanskar. The tendency of the sanskars to self-organize means, that they group themselves according to quality and function. The quality of a person, described by such adjectives as good, evil, happy-natured, boring, arrogant, altruistic and so on, is basically related to his or her sanskars.

How these three faculties work together

The three aspects of the self work together in a precise and integrated manner. Each faculty affects both the others. Functioning jointly they produce what can be termed as the state of consciousness. Looking at the flow in a clockwise direction, we can see how from the sanskars a thought arises in the mind, which is processed by the intellect. The intellect decides whether to carry it into action or not through the body. If the decision is to act, the experience of the action is recorded in the soul as a sanskar.

The dynamics of the inner self

In this way old sanskars (those that are already there) are modified, strengthened or weakened according to the actions performed. In the case in which a thought is not carried out into action, it is simply tossed back into the pool of sanskars for future consideration, if necessary.

Conclusions from understanding the process of the self

- The intellect has a crucial role in guiding and transforming the self.
- I cannot escape the effects of whatever I do.
- I have within me both the sources of any suffering I may go through as well as the solution to it.
- The positive qualities, which are in me as sanskars can only be brought to the surface of the conscious mind through intervention of the intellect.

Raja Yoga Meditation

Process of Activating Higher Emotions

Raja Yoga gives the intellect the power to select those positive sanskars, which lead to the higher emotions, calm and clear thoughts and the pure desire to enjoy life in such a way that no sorrow is experience for the self and no sorrow is given to others.

Meditation steps: In the initial steps of meditation, I call to mind and experience original sanskars, which in most people surface only occasionally. They are deeper than the superficial memories of worldly experiences. These are pure and powerful sanskars related to the eternal nature of the soul. Since the soul is not a material energy, but is a metaphysical energy separate from the body, the dualities of the material world do not relate to the deep, inner nature of the soul.

Consciousness has the same property as light, the powerful force with distinct qualities of the soul: peace, purity, power, etc. When these original sanskars are experienced, love and happiness are also experienced automatically. After some practice, I can have the intellectual power to activate these sanskars consciously in daily life at any time. In a situation which would lead most people to experience negative moods or emotions such as fear, depression, anxiety, boredom, fatigue, hatred or aggression, I can become detached and access my innate qualities. This, of course, is beneficial not only for me but for others around me.

Though emptying the mind may bring temporary relief, it's not a natural part of living to have no thoughts. Instead, the mind has to be trained to create the types of thoughts that lead to harmony. Thus, each session of Raja Yoga meditation can be seen as one of thought-training in a similar way to a tennis player who, seeking proficiency, practices his/her serve, back-hand, and volley in order to improve them.

Meditation is the journey towards soul consciousness and God consciousness guided by the use of the thoughts created in the mind and the deep and inner memory of the original and innate state of being. I first have to withdraw my attention from all outer circumstances and direct it within towards inner dialogue.

I consider and experience as intimately as possible thoughts related to the real nature of the self, its role and relationship with the Supreme Being. All such thoughts carry a distinctly positive vibration and lead me to fulfillment.

Soul Consciousness and Body Consciousness

Before moving on to the topic on the three worlds, summarize the lesson by explaining the difference between soul consciousness and body consciousness. Use OHP transparencies (or chart) to show clearly the distinction. These two terms need to be clarified and understood because they will be often used in the succeeding lessons.

Soul Consciousness	Body Consciousness
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When your identity is based on your true form a point of eternal, spiritual light - soul	When your identity is based on your physical appearance, possessions, position or people
You feel comfortable no matter what happens	You feel anxious and up-tight
Your heart is open and loving	You are motivated by short-term desires
You love yourself	You criticize and find fault with everyone
Your confidence and self respect soars	Your happiness doesn't last
Your life is meaningful	You have judgmental attitude
You understand the scheme of things	You have low self-esteem and a lot of ego
You attract beauty	You become defensive
You understand your story	You constantly seek approval
Peace is your religion, you are motivated by wisdom	You are dependent on physical support and systems
You are not afraid of death	You are afraid of dying
You respect your body and treat it well	You have no control over your sense organs
Your inside matches your outside	You are disturbed by feelings of attraction to the physical beauty of bodies
No human being is your enemy, patience and contentment accompany you	You see a distorted past and have no clear aim for the future

Lesson 3: SUPREME SOUL

Objectives

At the end of the session, the students would have:

1. Understood the important aspects of the nature & identity of God,

2. Understood the similarities and difference between soul and Supreme Soul,
3. Appreciated the unique continual-relationship with God which is beyond time and distance,
4. Appreciated the benefits of having relationship with God,
5. Experienced in meditation the link with God as source of power and love.

Procedure

Start with 5 minutes of meditation (with commentary).

Review the topic on the three worlds

In the last session, we took up the topic of the three levels of consciousness, also called the three worlds. The soul or incorporeal world is that dimension of golden-red light, where we came from and will eventually return to. It is a dimension of complete silence and stillness, where nothing changes and time has no reference. That is our home, and home indicates a spiritual family of all souls in which there is a spiritual parent: God or the highest among souls, the Supreme Soul.

Common Understanding or Concepts About God

To start the session, let's spend a few moments to reflect on these questions:

1. What is God for you? Why do we need God? What is His task?
2. What is your relationship with God at present? Solicit some answers to the two questions and begin the conversation by grouping ideas according to the following headings: 1. Qualities or Attributes of God 2. Tasks of God 3. Relationships With God 4. Names for God 5. Others (Begin with familiar concepts to begin explaining who and what God is?) Looking at the answers, we can say that God is considered as higher than any human soul; is powerful and almighty; is the Father of all souls; is a Giver or Bestower (never a Taker or Receiver); source of everything good; etc.

Our Search for God

All of us in one way or another are in search of God without us knowing it. On our journey towards a better life some of us consciously search for truth, others for love and still others for beauty. If these three aspects - love, truth and beauty - were offered as those, which most summarize God's qualities, there would be few willing to argue. Unfortunately just as the word God has been so much used and abused out of context, love truth, and beauty have all but lost their deeper meanings. The love we have between us or between two persons is often conditional, selfish and not lasting. What I feel is true today is discredited tomorrow. Beauty has come to be associated with the temporary, often bodily beauty, which is easily disfigured. If I have been searching for a love that never lets me down, a truth that is unshakeable and a beauty that goes beyond the superficial, I have indeed been searching for God - perhaps without even knowing it.

Nature and Identity of God

It is not too difficult to understand that out of all the billions of souls, there is ONE who could be designed as the Supreme, because of His perfect love, total truth and absolute beauty.

1. **HIS FORM:** Anything that exists must have a form. God's qualities are formless but He the source has a form God is not love but the source of love; God is not truth but the source of truth, and so on. As the soul is a point of light, of conscious energy, surrounded by an oval-shaped aura, the Supreme Soul is also that. The difference is in the degree and intensity of qualities. How do I use this knowledge about God in meditation? Knowing His form, I can bring that image onto the screen of my mind and begin immediately to experience powers and qualities by associating them with that beautiful form. There is so much value in meditating on God's form and attributes. In all cultures and religions there is some special memorial or ritual in which light is always allied to what is holy or sacred. It is a reminder of the form of God as light. Candles, flames and other light sources have always held importance in religious practices.

The near-death experience, in which the soul "leaves" the body, usually due to some traumatic happening, lends meaning to this point. The individuals relate how they pass through a long tunnel at the end of which they perceive a light, which is self-luminous and conscient. The light gives them a sense of relationship and warmth, possessed of non judgmental love and compassion. The interesting thing about all these reports on neardeath experiences is that, independent of their background - religious or even non-religious - their experiences of this Being of light and love is identical. (Give examples of remembrance of God as the form of light in different religions).

2. **HIS NAME:** Anything that has a form has a name, so too God has a name. There are as many names for God as there are languages, and each name highlights one of God's specialities, but there is one name that perhaps describes God best. When the human soul takes a body, it is the body-that bears the name and not the soul. God's name is eternal and is based on attributes and functions. The sanskrit word Shiva describes God quite accurately. It has three meanings: benefactor, the seed of creation and point-source- and implies that there can be no other creator superior to that one. It describes the form as a point and the role as benefactor and seed of humanity. The word Shiva is the introduction to God, but in meditation another word is more applicable. The word Baba or Father (literally Father or Elder One), which conveys the closeness and sweetness of the relationship I have with God. So the name Shiva Baba conveys the closeness and sweetness of the relationship I have with God. So the name Shiva Baba conveys God's role and my relationship with that One.

3. **Residence of God:** When we turn our minds to God, wherever we may be and from whichever culture, the first thing we normally do is to close our eyes in order to go beyond the world of people and objects. Intuitively we know that God exists beyond matter. If we are souls and not bodies, our real and eternal existence is on another plane. It's in that same dimension that God exists. The home of the soul is a region of subtle, golden-red light, which can be visualized during meditation. Just as my real home is the soul world, it is also the home of the Supreme Being. He/She is not millions of light years away from me. I can reach that One in one thought, just as a dialed phonecall connects instantly. He/She is only one thought distant from me. In incorporeal world of absolute stillness, silence and purity, God is able to remain perfectly stable, constant and

unchanging, while the rest of the universe and the souls go through constant change

4. **God's Attributes:** On the basis of our similarities of form and abode, I learn from God of my own original attributes of peace, purity, love, truth, power, happiness and balance. By tuning my thoughts to that One, the influence begins to activate these qualities in me. God has often been described as the Ocean of all Qualities - limitless and constantly available. It is important not just to think of this being of light as the source of all positive attributes but also in terms of different relationships. God's superiority lies in the depth, sharpness and continuity of His attributes. While human souls fluctuate between qualities such as peace and peacelessness, love and conflict, knowledge and ignorance, agony and ecstasy, God is ever constant. He remains beyond the fields of change and relativity.

Similarities & Differences Between The Soul & God

There are differences between the souls and the Supreme Soul that it is not logical to consider the self as being equal to God. Yet, the union or yoga with God is based on similarities and not differences.

Relationships With God

To the extent I am able to make my own personal link with God, I develop in my personality aspects which are missing. Through relationships with other human beings I have been trying to fill the empty gaps in my emotional make-up. Now, I can complete what is missing through loving contact with the Supreme Source of all attributes.

1. **God as Mother and Father:** In an overwhelming proportion of traditions God is a male figure. Just as the soul is neither masculine nor feminine, God has no gender. Therefore, as a soul, I can come close without any awe or difficulty caused by the gender of the body I am now occupying. In absolute terms, God is the Supreme Mother whose love is totally accommodating. No Matter what has happened, how I am, good or bad, I experience unconditional acceptance. It is a love that empowers and cleanses. She is also the Supreme Father who offers protection and provides the inheritance of divine qualities. It is a question of just being an innocent child and claiming that inheritance - letting of all the sorrow and pain which have been burdening the soul. These are the first relationships that have to be experimented with: God as the Mother and Father. In the perfect personality of the Supreme there is the feminine principle of loving, giving and accepting. This perfectly balanced with the masculine principle of power, authority and strength. He is She and She is He. These parental relationships with God as Mother and Father are the foundation of my spiritual development. The concept of taking a new spiritual birth - of letting go of the past and developing a new consciousness - is a familiar one. It refers to becoming an innocent child again in the sense of purity, openness and wonderment. The awareness of the self as a soul already changes my perspective enormously, but the consciousness of being a child of God and seeing others with that vision brings self-esteem, dignity, love and respect. Then all these things spill out in my connections with others. If I respect and value myself, I'll do the same for others. Because God has the most perfect personality, there are so many different ways I can entertain myself in this highest and purest of all relationships.

2. **Benefits of Other Relationships With God:** Purpose of Relationship With God.

Raja Yoga means having a relationship with God. It is the only relationship that can transcend the span of a lifetime, which is the limit of human relationships. Being beyond time and distance, it is the only relationship, which is continual. Even though I forget, it doesn't finish. The essence of yoga or union is embodied in an idea that occurs in both Eastern and Western traditions - that God creates human beings in His own image. Being created in God's image is a process, which doesn't have anything to do with the creation of the body but with the re-energizing of my original qualities through yoga with God. It is the change from humanity to divinity.

Meditation - a love link

Through knowledge I create a link with God but, if it's only an intellectual connection, it will not remain stable. Through the understanding of the method of Raja Yoga I can build a bridge between myself and the Supreme Being but it's only with love that I can cross it. Using the method of meditation, I can begin to develop the experience of pure love for God who is the essence of all relationships: Mother, Father, Teacher Friend, Guide, etc. Any relationship in which affection can exist is possible between the soul and the Supreme Soul. Because of the subtle nature of meditation practice an intellectual approach is inadequate. Both the soul and God are incorporeal. It is only love that can propel me towards God and keep me connected in a concentrated way. In Raja Yoga I meditate not just on myself but also on the nature and qualities of the Supreme Soul. The main purpose of meditation is to be able to communicate with God in order to be able to experience a relationship with Him. Perhaps I have already had an experience of deep love for God without any conscious information. In this case, meditating on or remembering God with love comes easily. For others love grows on the basis of deepening experiences. In human terms, there might be a spontaneous feeling of love for someone and, on another level, I might recognize the need for the person in my life and so a relationship grows. It's built on the basis of need. Unfortunately, because of our limitations, there always seems to be a price to pay. If I take from another in some way, at some point, even in the most altruistic of relationships, there will be a price to pay. Basically this happens because every human being has a need. Each one of us looks towards others to be able to fulfil that. The idea of God as the absolute source is very appealing. In meditation there is the awareness that I am turning to the source of love who will never expect anything in return. He/She is the only soul who has no need! Whether my relationship with God begins out of pure love or the love gradually develops the most powerful discovery is that it's on the basis of this relationship that I can actually start changing myself. It's the same as in human relationships. The more intimate the relationship, the greater the influence. Knowing myself is one thing; recognizing my own weaknesses and strengths is another thing. The negativity in the world outside stimulates my own defects even though I know that somewhere inside me are the jewels of virtues that seem to be hidden very deep. Learning to access the beauty of the self and my original quality is definitely the first step. Still, I need power to be able to break free from the difficult trap that I have got myself into. On my own I am not able to generate that power. If I turn to another human being, it becomes another trap in itself. One addict trying to support another is not the most effective way to generate the power to transform. The alternative is to turn to the source of spiritual power - God, the Supreme Soul. Coming to the realization that I need help from the Supreme isn't a sign of

weakness but of wisdom and recognition.

It is soul consciousness that creates the foundation for me to have this understanding of God from whom to take strength. Besides being the source of love, truth and beauty, the Supreme Being is also the source of power and light. Through connection with God all these qualities become available. All I have to do is to make that link and it all starts flooding in. The only effort I make is to tune my consciousness. That is my responsibility. It is necessary to experiment with depth and love in each relationship, and not just think of the Supreme Being as a point of light. The subject of God takes on a new meaning, if only for the reason that in God I can find the source of power and love to overcome the consequences of my weakened state in which negativity has proliferated in an uncontrolled manner. I need to know the self and be still to be able to make the mental connection or union with the Supreme Soul. Equally, I need to have the details about who, what, and why God is, so that the contact is not just theoretical but so real that it can blossom into a meaningful relationship. Raja Yoga in its deepest sense is just that: learning to develop a relationship with God. (Allow for question and answer session before having meditation)

Assignment

Experiment on any of the relationships with God. Make it your meditation experience for a few days. As you sit in meditation or even as you move, walk around and do things keep this relationship with you and see the benefits you will experience.

Lesson 04 - Karma

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Lesson 4: KARMA & KARMA YOGA

Objectives

At the end of the session, students would have:

1. Understood the basic concept of the Law of Karma,
2. Appreciated the different ways to settle karmic accounts,
3. Realized the deep aspect of creating positive accounts through positive consciousness while doing actions

Procedure

Start with 5 minutes of meditation (with commentary)

Define the characteristics of human life: awareness, relationship and expression.

These three characteristics of human life cannot happen in the silent, still world of souls, they require action and a stage on which to act. Human life is subject to the universal law of karma (action and interaction).

What is the universal Law of Karma?

Every action has an equal and opposite reaction; what you sow, you reap; this law is absolute can't be adjusted or manipulated. With the law of karma, however there can be a delay between sowing and reaping. The seeds of certain actions bring instantaneous results. Others can take years or even lifetimes to come to fruit. (Give examples here.)

Motive Determines Result

It is not so much the act that determines the return but the quality of intention behind it. In the simple task of brushing the teeth the intention can be varied. - I need to clean them well; I don't want cavities. (care) - What terrible teeth! What am I going to do? (anxiety) - I have the most splendid teeth in the world. (vanity)

Importance of Understanding the Law

In ignorance, we have done many things against the universal and divine laws. We cannot just say "I didn't know". Above a certain age it is our responsibility to know. The understanding of the karmic process is fundamental, if I want to:

- reduce the weight of the past - eliminate any type of suffering - modify the course of my life - start to experience a positive return from my spiritual efforts understand all the "why's" which surround my daily life

Questions That Lead to Tensions

Why? What? For what reason? How? These inner questions tear at the fabric of the consciousness. Even so they all have only one answer: karma. I don't need to go into minute details of each situation. If I see that nothing can happen without having had a just cause in my past or in that of others, life becomes much easier to face, with responsibility and courage.

Taking Responsibility of My Life

The knowledge of karma is the pathway to real freedom. It makes me accept that the responsibility for whatever has happened to me up to this moment cannot be attributed to any another person, ancestors, the government or even God. It is mine and mine only. Equally, what my future holds depends on me. Rather, whatever I choose to do at the moment is already creating my destiny for tomorrow. I shouldn't forget that the only real time I have for creating my future is the present, now. Karma teaches me that I am the creator of my own little world. I also, am the creator of the environment immediately around me. On greater level, I am a co-creator together with God of the world of tomorrow. That I can create the future of my choice - love, peace and happiness is what is going to happen. If I choose to exchange love and peace in my interaction with others, I create relationships based on those qualities."

Three Kinds of Karma

In all relationships there is some give and take and the greatest interaction takes place with those who are closest. To get a sense of the value of interactions, consider the three kinds of karma (action) which the soul carries out through the body. 1. **Positive Karma**: arises from being soul-conscious. The action is purely benevolent and there is no motive or desire for any return. Actions carried out in soul consciousness will help others rediscover their own soul consciousness. 2. **Negative Karma**: is motivated by body consciousness. In this state, I seek self-gratification or I get angry at someone because my desires are not met. These are actions, which accumulate karmic debt. 3. **Neutral Karma**: involves routine tasks, which do not affect others; washing dishes, driving the car, etc. However, even these actions, if carried out in a state of body consciousness, can become negative.

Karmic Indebtedness/Account

An important corollary to the Law of Karma.

Indebtedness with Others: "We are not only individuals acting alone. We act in this extraordinary play of existence with other actors. During the process and according to the interaction with others, we create accounts of debit and credit that become the basis of our connection with others. The reasons for which a specific relationship goes well or not are in the so-called karmic account that I have accumulated with the other person. The beings that lay the parts of parents, husbands, wives, children, friends, colleagues and acquaintances form a network for the giving and receiving of happiness and sorrow from this account established in the past or being created in the present. The strongest relationships that I have now were established previously. We knew each other in other lives and possibly in other connections. As long as the account exists, the interchange of actions together continues. When there is nothing more to give or receive, the paths separate by death, divorce or simply by the loss of contact."

Development of Sanskars or inner Nature

"Everything that an individual does and produces is registered in the self (faculty of the subconscious mind) as a sanskar. Sanskars are not only the basis of the karmic accounts but also our talents personalities and propensities.

Example: Mozart, at age four, wrote minuets, a concerto for piano and a sonata. These compositions were not only technically accurate but extremely difficult. At seven, he wrote a complete opera! Where could he have learned to play so well? It's obvious that such musical mastery at such a young age was not a genetic inheritance. He must have developed his talents previously. Seeing the process of human existence on a personal level stretching back into the past and continuing on into the future definitely gives back a great degree of security to the soul. Affinities and aversions are understood. The feelings of having met someone before or passed by a specific place are so common that the idea of cosmic randomness just cannot remain. If there is such order in the minute details of cells and atoms, why cannot such order exist to determine relationships, stretching over a long period of time? In the impossibility of complying with karmic obligations in one life, we have to take a new body to guarantee that all beneficial and negative actions receive their due return."

Settlement of Karmic Indebtedness/Accounts

There are three methods of settling your debts and setting yourself free.

- **Firstly**, now that you have a clear understanding of the difference between soul consciousness and body consciousness, you can stop performing action in a state of body consciousness that is taking from others.
- **Secondly**, you can begin to repay your outstanding debts by serving those souls with whom you have a karmic account. This, however, can take time, and perhaps as long as it took to create the debts.
- **Thirdly**, the fastest way is to meditate; to establish the direct link (yoga) with the source of spiritual power, the Supreme Soul, to pass on to others through positive thoughts, good wishes and vibrations. This union with the Supreme is the key to your own personal freedom from bondage of karma with other humans. Not only does that power transform your old habits, which created the debts in the first, but it is also the income you need to settle all your debts comparatively quickly.

(There is also some kind of settlement of account through suffering of body or state of mind.)

Karma Yoga

The third method of settling karmic account is one of the major aims of Raja Yoga. To be a raja yogi means to be a ruler of the self. It's not just a question of learning to discipline the physical senses but, more importantly, of directing the energy of the mind, emotions and the personality in a positive and constructive way.

Definition

Raja Yoga can also be called Karma Yoga. It means to perform action while having a mental connection with Supreme Being or to have a meditative consciousness while talking, walking, sitting on a bus, driving a car or working, in fact, doing anything. My meditation isn't a secret process but a very visible one. I can see the results of yoga through my karma. If my actions are still aggressive or motivated by greed, this certainly serves as an internal check for what's happening with my meditation. If there is the experience of a link, then God's peace, light, love and purity are going to manifest themselves through my actions. Relationship can't exist without karma or interaction. The same applies in my relationship with Supreme Soul. Actions that are just for my own sense-gratification or for the development or sustenance of relationship with another human being are called karma. Actions performed out of love for or obedience to God is called karma yoga. Certainly there is no question of doing anything for God. He doesn't need or want anything. When the seed of karma is filled with the love of the Supreme, and the power of the Supreme, that karma becomes so powerful that it brings thousand-fold fruit. Karma yoga means to live in the world but to maintain the link of yoga so that it transforms one's life and one's life can help transform the world.

Strengthening the Conscience

Criterion for right and wrong - if action is performed in my eternal consciousness, then not only will it bring benefit to me, but it will give happiness. The pure karma is to bring myself and others around me close to God. An action based on limited consciousness, which can be called impure, takes others away from God. Even after realizing the difference between right and wrong, to be able to pull myself out of my own trap of negative vicious cycles and both substance and emotional addictions, I need power. That is the ultimate purpose of meditation. In meditation, through the link with the Supreme Being, my conscience awakens and starts to become clearer so that I can see the difference, in terms of my life, between right and wrong. I also receive the power to be able to make the right choices and to follow those through in my life. The quality of my karma changes as a result. The conscience is the voice of the original state of the soul. When awakened, those original qualities of peace love, purity and power arise and assume control of the self. The very quality of my personality begins to change and develop in, a positive direction. Just by being focused in the consciousness of a being, a soul and allowing my conscience to guide my life means that I am moving towards my destination with clarity and speed.

Changing Deeply Ingrained Sanskars

Karma yoga functions in two ways:

1. by filling the self with power, the transformation of action is possible. This in turn brings about change in my sanskars.
2. by drawing on the qualities of the Supreme Being my sanskars change. On one level, whatever I have done, I have to receive the return for that On another level, whatever my past karma may have been, the fire of God's love is able to resolve it and remove its

impact from within the souls itself, in terms of negative personality traits and also in terms of karmic effects in physical situations. Thus it can be seen why yoga or the union of love with God is so crucial.

End the session with meditation (recorded or live)

Meditation Commentary

As you turn within, become aware of the relationship between you the soul, your body and the physical world ... Visualize and understand how you animate and express yourself through your body in all your actions ... Visualize and consider your interactions with others specially members of your family; colleagues in the workplace ... Check the quality of your actions and interactions with them ... Are they coming from body consciousness, wanting something for yourself, or from soul consciousness, your spiritual vision of others, and giving them what they need on a spiritual level?

Be aware of the relationships, which are uncomfortable and watch your thoughts in those relationships ... Your waste/negative thoughts and feelings tell you that you need to resolve something in relation to that person. (Pause)

Now, focus your attention and concentrate on the Supreme Soul ... Visualize a subtle but powerful link of love between you and the Supreme Being ... You allow yourself to absorb spiritual power of peace and love directly from Him. (Pause)

Visualize yourself channeling the power of peace and love into your actions and into positive thoughts and good wishes for those around you and for those who are far but you can bring close in your mind. (Pause)

Now, come back to the awareness of your body and the room where you are sitting. Om Shanti!

Assignment

Use the power of thought. As the thought, so is the result. Thoughts create actions, and so spread vibrations and the law of karma will return those vibrations to you. Pure thoughts are the most valuable treasure of one's fortune. Answer the following questions (in your own words):

1. Who is responsible for our sorrow or happiness?
2. How can a soul erase negative karma?
3. How can a soul create a stock of happiness for the future?

Lesson 05 - Raja Yoga

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Lesson 5: Steps in Raja Yoga Meditation (Part I)

Step One: JOURNEY INSIDE Step Two: THE JOURNEY UPWARD

Objectives

- At the end of the session, the students would have:
 1. Appreciation of the unique aspects of Raja Yoga meditation
 2. Understanding of the 3-step method of Raja Yoga meditation
 3. Initial positive experience of the 3-step method.

What is Meditation?

- **Inner Dialogue:** a conversation with yourself. We are so used to spending a lot of time talking to others especially when we are looking for answers to questions. During these inner conversations, you get to know yourself: your deep desires, your strengths, talents and qualities. And your weaknesses also become visible. It's important to learn to look at all these aspects of your personality. Many things happened to the soul during the course of time. Many of these past experiences made us body conscious and led us away from who we really are: the original, complete individual, that is, the eternal soul.
- **Inner Healing:** Having a silent conversation with yourself is very healing. Meditation literally makes you 'whole' again. When we don't know ourselves, we feel lost: Who am I? Where am I going? What should I be doing?, etc.

No one can solve these questions for you except yourself. That's why Raja Yoga pays so much attention to the experience of meditation. That's where the answers lie. When you begin to experience yourself as a spiritual personality, others may try to undermine you, but no one can destroy this inner reality.

- **Recharging the Battery:** Meditation is about recharging yourself with inner strength. This can be achieved by connecting with the Highest Source of spiritual energy. Lack of spiritual energy is the reason for every problem we have in the world today, individually and collectively: depression, stress, isolation, conflict, etc. It all comes down to a lack of spiritual power: the power to cooperate, to tolerate, to face, etc.

Ingredients of Raja Yoga Meditation

(OPTIONAL)

Method

Raja Yoga meditation is a clear step by step method.

- **PRACTICE:** Meditation is something we ought to do daily. Regularity is important. Through consistent practice you will experience yourself to be improving. Changes will start to happen in your life. It is not just sitting down to experience a bit of peace. It will become part of your whole life, a way of living
- **ATTENTION:** It is better to practice regularly than only once a week for a couple of hours. Regular and consistent meditation makes you alert. You will find that you won't have to work so hard to get rid of all the 'cobwebs' in your mind, that is, the wasteful impressions you have to clear away before the actual meditation can begin. Regular moments of introspection (called traffic control) during the day sustain the experience you had during your morning meditation. Attention is needed to keep regular pauses in your daily activities to re-affirm who you are or you lose yourself in activities.
- **EXPERIMENTATION:** To experiment with everything you learn is very important. In this way the theory becomes practical and life becomes a joy, that is worth living. See your mind as a laboratory in which you can experiment with new thoughts, feelings and ideas. Experimenting is an individual and incognito process. Allow yourself the time to understand and practice the ideas you have learned.

STEP- BY- STEP RAJA YOGA MEDITATION

Meditation is the art of being able to create your own experiences. We are not aware of the fact that we create our own experiences anyway, on the basis of the thoughts that we create in our mind. Our thoughts are determined by our consciousness. Our

consciousness determines our mood. Our mood is how we feel and these feelings create an experience.

- **Choice:** We have to realize that we always have a choice in what we think. We are free to think whatever we like in any given circumstances. And these thoughts create our feelings and emotions. Secondly, we also realize that we are influenced by whatever we focus on. The mental link with a person, an object or a situation brings up certain feelings. This choice is ours.
- **Concentration:** The longer you stay in a certain consciousness, the deeper the experience of those thoughts will be. Focusing on a certain subject is done by the intellect. When the mind and intellect are stable in one consciousness, this is called concentration. It is only when we are concentrated that we can have an experience. So meditation is the condition when the mind and intellect are stable in a spiritual consciousness. You learn to focus your attention on the pure essence of your being the peaceful soul and you experience this. The reason why we find it difficult at times to concentrate is because the intellect has become weak. There are many things that influence our intellect in a negative way. Such obvious things are: liquor, drugs and cigarettes. Also watching television for long periods of time; overwhelming emotions such as: anger, fear, worries, sorrow or desires. They could cloud the intellect. If you are not attentive during the day and do not filter the impressions that come to your intellect, it becomes polluted. When you want to meditate at the end of the day, you will struggle for a while to get rid of all the unwanted impressions.

The word yoga literally means connection or union. You are influenced by whatever you connect yourself with. So, whenever you feel a certain emotion coming up, you can ask yourself: 'Hey, what's happening? What did I connect my thoughts, which make me feel the way I feel? I did that myself, I chose to connect myself with something or someone.' A Raja Yogi consciously chooses with whom or with what to connect the mind. A Yogi controls the mind. 'Raja' means king, the master of the self. A Raja Yogi learns to connect his/her intellect with his/her original personality of peace, love, purity, and power and with the Supreme Being.

Let's experiment with yoga: Think of your home and connect to your kitchen. Imagine that we were to concentrate very intensely with your kitchen for 30 minutes. The experience of being in your kitchen will then become very realistic. Every detail will become 'visible' you just feel the whole atmosphere of your kitchen. This is what yoga is about. It is connection, influence and experience.

1. Yoga = Connection 2. Connection = Influence 3. Influence = Experience

So, the soul doesn't have to leave the body to actually experience another place or even another dimension. You were here in this room, yet your attention was elsewhere.

STEP 1: THE JOURNEY INWARD

Raja Yoga is the conscious choice for a connection with your original self.

CREATING A SPIRITUAL SELF-IMAGE

The inward journey is soul consciousness. It is important to emphasize the word spiritual,

because we all have a self and think about this question. What thoughts come to mind when I think about myself? (Wait for answers)

Which means you do not connect yourself with all the ideas you might have had about yourself: I am a man or a woman, I am funny, and I am Christian. etc. These are concepts; ideas that have been formed in the course of time they are not your original 'you', your spiritual identity.

The foundation of Raja Yoga meditation is a stable stage of soul consciousness. To create this stage you can ask yourself these four questions:

Basic Exercise to Become Soul Conscious

1. Who am I?
2. What is my form?
3. What are my original qualities?
4. Where do I come from?

The success of this exercise depends on how long you are able to think about these questions without being distracted by the things around you or by the other thoughts within your mind. Even if you don't have an experience right away, just keep practicing. See it as a kind of gymnastics for the soul. A golden rule to complete these four questions is that if you have a waste thought in between these questions, you have to go back to 1. In this way, you learn to build up a concentrated soul conscious stage step by step.

Try to answer with understanding. Try as much as possible, to really experience your answers. Visualize, experiment, and experience. Don't go to the next question until you feel you have really completed the preceding question. If you practice this exercise well, the next step in meditation will be easy. Start and end your day with this soul consciousness exercise. Take your time, at least ten minutes. You will find that these questions will serve you as a framework into which you can build your own creative meditations. See to it that you sit in a quiet place where you are not interrupted by phones or people.

Now, let's practice the four questions. Pause for this exercise.

HOW DO YOU KNOW YOU ARE REALLY SOUL CONSCIOUS?

POSITIVE THOUGHTS

Are my thoughts positive or negative? When you are soul conscious you only have positive thoughts about yourself and others. No criticism, jealousy, fear, hopelessness, etc.

CLEAR MIND

Are my thoughts clear and clean? There should not be any confusion, lack of concentration or waste thoughts. In soul consciousness the mind and intellect are clear and concentrated

FREE FROM INNER CONFLICT

Is my mind free from conflicts, free from tension? There are a variety of conflicts: when our conscience bites, guilt or shame are experienced; confusion about what is right or wrong, good or bad, true or false, also create inner conflicts. Worrying about others also create an inner conflict. All these are signs of body consciousness.

INTROSPECTIVE

In Raja Yoga we learn to keep our eyes and ear wide open and still remain within ourselves. Introspection means being able to create and control your own thoughts no matter what is happening around you. You are the one who create your own 'reality'. There is a subtle difference between reacting and responding. We are used to reacting to people and things around us. Responding is something we consciously do. We think about it and then we decide whether to do it or not. Responding implies a choice.

It is important to create a spiritual self-image because we want to establish a relationship with the Supreme Soul. As the Supreme Soul is completely soul conscious, it's essential that we stabilize ourselves in soul consciousness. A relationship with the Supreme Soul is a relationship of soul to Soul, purely through thoughts and feelings. It's an exchange without eyes, hands, feet, mouth, ears, etc. It is here where the importance of the practice of the four questions comes in, because they help us to become stable in soul conscious stage.

STEP 2: THE JOURNEY UPWARD

The second step in Raja Yoga is the journey to the spiritual dimension. This dimension, called the soul world, is a non-physical world. This is a world in which time, sound and movement do not exist. In this original home of all souls, we experience ourselves as we truly are in all eternity. Here, we are separate from limitations such as form, role, age, race, religion, expectations, time and space. Here, in this world of silence, we can be who we truly are without any disturbance.

The Power of Silence

For this connection with your own self, silence is very important. So, what is silence? The power of silence enables us to disconnect from everything around and even from the '-noise' inside the mind. In silence we can journey to the silent home. In this world of silence we are able to heal, to experience ourselves as we really are. Silence is an enormous power. It is only in silence that we are able to know ourselves and the secrets of life. Silence is like a weapon, a shield against negativity.

Silence is an inner power. It means being able to connect with the essence of our being with that original point of peace, of harmony, of wholeness. Silence is a quiet place behind all thoughts, feelings and emotions. From this place of quiet I can, like an observer, look at the world from a distance. Silence is something you can build up inside yourself; you can create a space for silence. In this space you can build up a stock of silence, a reservoir which can always be used at the time of need. Raja Yogis have a 'meditation room' inside their mind, a place of silence they can always go to.

Let's see if we can be completely silent for just a minute.

Was it possible? No thoughts at all? Making the mind completely silent that is without thoughts, is not the practice of Raja Yoga. Raja Yoga is the art of stabilizing the mind in one consciousness like peace for instance. When you think deeply about peace, you'll find your mind gradually become more and more quiet, until only a few essential thoughts remain. It then feels as though you can 'float' on those thoughts. Silence comes automatically when you learn to focus your mind on one idea. So, learning to give your thoughts the right direction takes you into silence.

The Experience of Essence

Going back to the essence gives power. Think about the essential oils of flower. These oils are very concentrated. Just a drop is enough to spread a lot of fragrance. In the same way, our concentrated thoughts are also very powerful. If, on the contrary, we go into wasteful expansion, we lose power.

- **Fuel;** For the journey upward we need fuel, first of all to get off the ground and secondly to be able to remain in our place of destination, at least, for a while. What do you think this 'fuel' is?
- **Powerful;** positive thoughts are our fuel'. Positive thoughts 'lift us up' while negative thoughts make us heavy. As long as we have uplifting, powerful thoughts, you will be able to stay in a spiritual consciousness. When your positive stock runs out, then you fall back into ordinary thinking. The art of the spiritual upward journey is to have a large stock of powerful, positive thoughts and to keep on increasing this stock.
- **Churning;** To keep on increasing the stock you need spiritual knowledge. Spiritual knowledge is the basic material that the intellect works on to produce pure, refined thoughts. These thoughts are the fuel for the upward journey. This is what meditation is all about. That's why Raja Yoga meditation is not to make the mind empty, bringing it to a point of blankness. In fact, it is focusing the mind on a spiritual quality, churning that quality or idea, refining it until you come to essence. And the essence gives you the power to lift up.
- **Visualization;** This is important because the soul, Supreme Soul and the soul world, though they do exist and are real are at the same time invisible. Visualization can help make the invisible visible', thereby making it easier to understand and experience. So, the journey upwards consists of three elements: fuel, churning and visualization.

Let's do a meditation exercise on traveling to the soul world. You can use recorded commentaries or do a live commentary. After the meditation, ask for the experience they have.

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Lesson 05b - Raja Yoga II

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Lesson 5: RAJA YOGA MEDITATION II

- Step 3 - **Connection with the Supreme Soul**

Objectives

- At the of the session the students would have:

1. Appreciation of the unique aspects of Raja Yoga meditation
2. Understanding of the 3-step method of Raja Yoga meditation and 3. Initial positive experience of the 3-step method.

Step 3 is the connection with the Supreme Soul, a connection from point to Point. This connection is so important and unique because the Supreme Soul is the only personality who is ever pure and eternally positive. God is an eternal Point of Light. Human souls are also eternal points of light. But the difference is that human souls have a body of matter whereas the Supreme Soul never has one. He is always a Point of pure energy living in the eternal home, the soul world. The connection between the human soul and the Supreme Soul is a connection between two pure essenceful beings. This is why it is the most powerful connection a human soul can experience.

- Why do you think it is important to connect with the Supreme? (Wait for answer from the student(s))

Power: Recharging the battery of the soul
Experience of being eternal and imperishable
Purification

First of all it's important to understand that the Supreme is the most pure source of spiritual energy. When we connect ourselves mentally with someone, by thinking of that person, we are influenced by his/her energy. Connecting with the Supreme means being influenced by pure, powerful, and loving energy. It is said that a person is colored by the company he/she keeps. As there is no better company possible, isn't it a good choice to connect your mind and intellect with the Supreme?

Recharging the Battery

Everything we do in our everyday life takes energy. Usually we lose more than we gain. This is why the soul gets tired if it is not recharged regularly or properly. So to recharge your battery daily, you need to learn to connect yourself with the Supreme, the constantly powerful One. When this connection is established, the energy will automatically start flowing from the Supreme Soul to the human soul.

Experience of being Eternal and Imperishable

Another important reason for connection with the Supreme is to experience your own original nature of being eternal and imperishable. Eternity is the feeling of being beyond the consciousness of time and matter, that is, being beyond limitations. Especially the limited thought of having just one life, of being a mortal being, is a source of great fear for many. When you connect with the Supreme, you feel to be above time and matter. Your eternal relationship with the Source of Life is once again being established. This experience gives peace and contentment to the soul. Your attitude towards life changes by experiencing yourself to be something more than just a name, a body, a role. · It is important to let this point sink in deeply. "You, the soul, will never die. You have always lived and you will always live." Take a minute to think and concentrate on this point of truth. (Allow for few moments of deep silence.)

Purification

The connection with the Supreme purifies the soul. After a deep meditation there is the experience of lightness, as if a heavy weight has fallen off your shoulders. Sometimes you even feel as if you are completely renewed. Connecting with the Supreme cleanses the soul. Ingrained negative feelings and emotions gradually dissolve and the original pure sanskars emerge. A deep meditation is sometimes called a 'bhatti', meaning 'furnace'. This refers to the fact that the impurities of the soul are being burnt away, dissolved. In this purification misconceptions that consciously or subconsciously dominate the soul are also removed.

The Supreme Soul

- The Source of Truth, Peace, love Power, Purity and Happiness

The most valuable and significant things in life include: truth, peace love, happiness and freedom. These qualities or power or values, however you like to name them, are the things that make life worthwhile. Is there anyone who would say that love or truth or happiness is not worth anything or that is worth very little? When we forget these qualities, these powers, we begin to feel empty - without purpose, dissatisfied. We need to find them again, because only then can we truly be called human beings. A true human being is one who enjoys and creates a life of happiness. We need to remember and refill ourselves with the fundamentals of human life. Where do we go? Where do we search? How?

First we need to understand God as He truly is and then connect with Him, absorbing those qualities deep within ourselves. These qualities He gives generously, constantly, selflessly. We know that God is a Point of Light. However, we do not simply relate to the form, but to the qualities within the form. To understand God, is to understand His qualities. It is when we understand His qualities that we can experience them. By experiencing His qualities of truth, love, peace and happiness, we once again discover our own source of truth, love, peace and happiness. (If there is not enough time to go into the depth of all these qualities, just pick one. As long as students understand how this process of churning deeply on a certain quality works.)

Truth

God is the Source of truth. But what is truth? Truth is that state of being which never gives or takes sorrow in anyway. Another word for truth is purity. The Pure cannot be violent, nor give pain, or suffering. The Pure is always benevolent. All suffering is the consequence of personal choices over time. Truth is knowledge and knowledge creates a new consciousness, a new life of wholeness and happiness. Truth is the mother of freedom and happiness, because it brings honesty and trust to relationships.

Love

God is the Source of Love. What is love? Love is the power to give and forgive. Love is the power that makes us free, independent. Love doesn't measure, posses or say 'mine'. Love has many faces: respect, tolerance, patience, mercy. Above all, love accepts, nurtures and heals. In a word: love is friendship. Love is not just a good feeling for one person. Pure, divine love, by its very nature, is universal and democratic. God, the Being of Love, accepts all, but all do not accept Him. God's love heals, because it accepts me as I am. Pure love enables me to believe in myself. Faith in myself brings courage; the courage to face, change and to be myself. God loves me in this way.

Peace

God is also the Source of Peace. What is peace? Peace is freedom; free from the desires that create conflict in the self and with others. Selfishness, expressed through a variety of desires, creates separation and disharmony. God's being is harmony, because He is complete; beyond needs, and therefore naturally beyond any desire. Peace is contentment. To be at one with your self, that is, to know your eternal self and to experience its value and uniqueness. A peaceful being is stable, because no negative influence has the power to disturb him. A positive self-awareness naturally brings peace

and stability to the soul.

To think about the qualities of the Supreme Soul in this way, makes you become aware of His personality. This understanding and this experience will bring you closer to Him. And the more you experience God and His qualities, the more you will come to realize your own divine nature. This is what self realization is all about. We recognize ourselves by recognizing the Supreme Soul.

We now know that the Supreme Soul is the Source of all powers and qualities. But apart from that, He also has, like human souls, a personality, though He is not a person (with human form).

Raja Yoga is the relationship of the human soul with the Supreme Soul

Raja Yoga is the yoga of relationships. Relationships are the most fulfilling experience of human existence, which is why everyone looks for the ideal relationship. Of course, often it is not found, whether it is with other people or with God. The reason, usually, is that we don't know enough about the other nor have wrong information. Both of these aspects determine or color the relationship.

It is important to connect with the Supreme Being because in reality it is the most positive relationship a human being can experience especially at this time. In order to experience this relationship, we need to understand the wrong ideas we have about this Being, otherwise it's just about impossible to start a relationship with Him, let alone experience it. Later on we will understand how punishment, creating fear, guilt and regret is certainly not the way in which this totally pure and loving Being relates to us.

So, Raja Yoga is the relationship between the human soul and the Supreme Soul. A relationship is more important than a connection. It is about feelings and experiences that two personalities share. The relationship between the human soul and the Supreme Soul is a purely subtle one through thoughts and feelings. The sharing of feelings and experiences is direct, not through any physical organs such as hands, eyes, mouth, etc. The highest level in Raja Yoga meditation is the full experience of the self united with the Supreme. Raja Yoga means the highest union, because no greater relationship is possible for the human soul than to experience this spiritual union with God Himself. To be able to relate to God, we need to know Him. Without some depth of knowledge we cannot form a relationship. This also applies in our relationships with human beings. The more we get to know someone, the easier it is to love him or her. The relationships we can have with God are very natural and normal, in so far as they are reflected in the relationships we have with human beings. The difference is that, with God, the relationship that can never be polluted by sorrow, exploitation or possessiveness.

- God is a complete Being and a complete being never needs to take anything in order to add to him or her. A complete being gives unconditionally, so the one who responds does not feel afraid or diminished. The experience of the true love that God gives is so pure, so real, that the soul wishes of its own choice to remain in this relationship. Feelings and experience we might have missed in relationships with human beings are now possible with God. Everything we have ever longed for in our relationships and didn't get, we can get now. In this way,

our dependencies, projections and expectations are removed. This in itself, will automatically improve relationships with others. Instead of taking, we start giving. Instead of wanting, we start sharing. Instead of needing, we start loving.

- God is the gentle, understanding Father who, on the basis of love, creates a new life. God is the wise, accepting Mother who, with patience and care, sustains the growth of our spirit. God is always there to assist and guide the soul towards the goal of happiness and wholeness.
- God is the eternal Parent of all souls. When a soul has a genuine feeling of love, wherever the soul may be, the Parent responds. The Parent also supports and in one way or another fulfills the needs of a child. The constant love of the Supreme Parent, when it is felt by the child, strengthens the child, enabling him to experience a sense of self worth.
- God wants friends not worshippers. Friends understand each other. Friendship means trust, because you know you' l not be judged, but accepted as you are. With trust, one can be open and not afraid of weaknesses being seen or known, because a true friend's vision sees that which is innately good and pure in spite of external appearances.
- God is our true Friend. A real father and mother are friends to their children. They do not dominate or misuse their role, but whatever they have, they give for the child to mature into a complete individual. God is our true Friend, Mother and Father. In Raja Yoga, a yogi feels so close to God that he/she does not only use the word Father but especially uses the word 'Baba'. Usually Baba' is what a small child, lovingly and trustingly calls his/her father. So, for a yogi reaching for self-realization, God is Baba, the gentle and knowledgeable One who sustains, who guides, who teaches and who liberates. Sometimes, a person is given a name to reflect his/her special power or quality. God is given the name `Shiva'. Shiva means the Point, the Seed, the Benefactor. Shiva describes God's form (eternal Point), power (eternal Seed who has total knowledge and the power to transform and renew life) and main virtue (the One who is eternally benevolent to all).

Meditation

Let us end this lesson with a meditation in which we meet Baba as our eternal Mother, Father and Friend. (You can either use a taped commentary or give a live commentary.)

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Lesson 06 - 8 Powers

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Lesson 6: THE EIGHT SPIRITUAL POWERS

Objectives

- At the end of two sessions, the students would be able to:
 1. become aware that these power are naturally within the self

2. identify the powers as fruit of meditation
3. recognize the benefits of applying the powers and
4. assess which powers need to be reinforced and strengthened.

Procedure

Start the session by explaining the difference between virtue and power. The eight powers are specially mentioned as being developed through positive thinking and meditation. Emphasize the powers as fruit of meditation. Motivate the students to practice meditation regularly to naturally develop these powers.

At first sight you might just consider them as eight virtues, but the word "power" has been used especially. What is the difference between a virtue and a power? A virtue is something which others can see in us, but is sometimes hidden. It is something which others appreciate but do not necessarily feel that they can possess. Whereas a power is something that cannot remain hidden. It is a constant source of inspiration to others so they too can change themselves and become powerful.

Introduce the lesson by reviewing soul consciousness. You are a soul, you are consciousness, you are light, you are spiritual energy, but are you in control of that energy? Are you in control of yourself? Are you self empowered?

The energy of consciousness is your personal power. Are you the master of that power? When you are, you will use your power to shape your responses to people and the world around you. When you take responsibility for your ability to respond you are able at will to use your power in many ways. There are just eight different but important ways in which you will demonstrate your self-mastery.

- Introduce the powers by using the chart or the OHP transparency of the eight spiritual powers. Mention that four powers would be discussed first in one session, and the other four in the next session.
- Present each power by calling the attention of the students to the picture/object, which the power is connected with.

The 8 Powers

1. The Power to Withdraw

is represented by a tortoise. What does the turtle do when it senses some kind of danger, or when it wants to rest? (Draw answer from the students. Follow-up consciousness: In the same way that a tortoise goes within its shell in a moment of danger, or just to rest, I am able to retract myself from any situation and remain protected in the "shell of soul consciousness."

The Power to Withdraw is the ability to disengage from the world around you. It is the first step in restoring calm and fording internal focus to withdraw attention away from everything external. Tortoise is good at this as it pulls its head and arms and legs inside its shell. Can you do these with your senses? To see but not see, to hear but not hear, or to see and hear but not to be influenced or disturbed by what you see and hear. It helps if you value periods of solitude and introspection, time to reflect and be quiet. It means

leaving your senses behind for a few moments, minutes, may be half an hour in a day. This is also the first step of personal mastery. If you are not the master of your senses and all incoming stimuli, you will be their slave.

The Power to Withdraw is the ability to detach the mind from the current situation while maintaining full awareness. To withdraw in this way allows us to observe the scene with an objective perspective we are in stronger control of our thoughts and behavior and can more astutely understand our emotions because we are looking at the scene as a third party, or as a director would.

Going within at regular intervals during the day enables me to both accumulate and draw on my stock of inner strength.

2. The Power to Pack-Up

is represented by a luggage. What is the symbolism behind this? (Draw some answers from the students to explain the power to Pack-up) What is spiritual packing-up? Just like an expert traveler who will carry only what is necessary and useful to enable him to travel light, similarly we must learn the art of packing up all the wasteful thinking about the past, present and future and remain light and positive constantly. Once fully inside, you will be met by the second challenge of mastering yourself a racing chattering mind, an analytical intellect with endless queue of questions and gurgling memory, throwing up images and experiences from the past. With the ability to go within, I learn how to pack-up all wasteful thinking in one second. How? The power and ability to pack-up is simply the ability to control your mind, your intellect and your memories. At the heart of our consciousness are these three most valuable servants.

Unfortunately, however, they are servants who have come to enjoy too much freedom, and they now take turns to be master of you. This is a time to make friends and elevate your servants to be more like your ministers, your inner cabinet. Encourage your mind to take a break, time out for a holiday. Shut down the production line for an hour and rest. Pack-up and come home. Make quietness a luxury and indulge yourself. When your intellect, your ever-inquiring, examining, analytical intellect asks you why it should also be quiet, still and patient, help it understand that the understanding it seeks only comes when it listens and observes, not when it questions and searches. Invite it to relax and just watch the movie. And when those trains of thought come racing out of your memory into a newfound quietness just let them come and let them go. Refuse to get on the trains and they will soon slow down and become less frequently. And so with the mastering of the faculties of your consciousness restored you can return to your center with total respect and a sense of integrity within yourself. Don't forget - masters are not autocratic tyrants. Real mastery is based on servant leadership. In other words, serve your mind, care for your intellect, respect and value your experiences as if they were your teachers, and they will return the service a hundred fold.

The Power to Pack-up is the ability to set aside all wasteful thoughts in one second so there is lightness and freedom from burdens and worries. Though there may be many responsibilities, we cease to equate them with worry. By going deep into the self, our preoccupations with limited external activities - of the past, present, or future are "packed-up" for that limited time period, and we experience a new dimension in the form of an unlimited consciousness.

3. The Power to Tolerate

is the ability not to be affected by external and internal events and to respond to those events positively. The tree represents the power of Tolerance. How is the tree tolerant? (Draw from the students some answers). The tree can often withstand assaults from both human beings (Give examples how human beings "mistreat" trees yet it gives benefits) natural calamities. Like a tree, develop the strength to remain unaffected by external or internal events and respond to them positively.

The Power of Tolerance is the ability to be undisturbed inside by any event going on around you and within you. It's an ability that comes with ease when you are involved and yet detached at the same time. Tolerance is necessary when you fully engage with those situations and people around you and they say and do things, which stimulate buried negative memories and emotions. First, you have to tolerate your own inner reactions and that is only possible when you can consciously disengage and detached from the thoughts and feelings accompanying your reactions. Remember, you are not your thoughts and feelings, they are your creation. When tolerating others, it helps to remind yourself you are simply watching a massive drama going on around you. The greatest production in movie history and nothing in the script can disturb you. In fact your role is a vital one. Not only to tolerate and transform your own reactions, but to tolerate the actions of others by accepting their energy and returning a higher quality of energy as you return a blessing in the face of an insult, acceptance in the face of rejection, love in the face of hate. MASTERS ARE TRANSFORMERS.

In this light frame of mind, I am able to tolerate all types of situations and people to the extent that there is not even the feeling that I have to tolerate something or someone. The question of tolerance of this or that religion doesn't even come up. There is natural comprehension of all.

4. The Power to Accomodate

is represented by the ocean. How did the ocean get this quality? (Draw from the students some answers). The power to Accomodate / Adjust is the ability to expand and accept the present ideas and desires of others. Just as the ocean accepts all types of rivers that flow into it, whether polluted or clean, I am able to adjust myself and accommodate all that is happening around me. "Accommodation to let" is a sign most people seek at least once in their lives. At a spiritual level, and in the context of our relationships, we learn to accommodate or to evict. My simple acknowledgement of your presence is my first gesture of accommodation as I "let" you into my universe.

The ability to accommodate means accepting and going with some else's flow, working with other's ideas. It means expanding yourself to allow someone else in who may in a clumsy moment, trample all over you. The power to accommodate is the ability to adjust to the other person or the situation with the consciousness of creating benefit from each opportunity. If the atmosphere is weak and negative, the power to accommodate is used - 1) to press the right "internal buttons" so as not to be affected by that negativity and 2) taps the wisdom to perceive exactly what the person or situation requires. Example: If the person before us is dying of thirst and we try to give him diamonds or gold, he will not value those as much as a simple glass of water.

5. The Power to Discriminate

is the ability to discern the subtle and separate what is true from false. Gems represent the Power to Discriminate or to discern. (Draw from the students some answers). Discrimination is the art of seeing. Not seeing with the physical eyes, but seeing with the inner eye, the third eye. Seeing what is true and what is false. Today it is possible to create an artificial diamond, which looks and directs light as well as the real thing. To you and me there is no difference. To an experienced and unhurried jeweler, however the subtle flaws are noticed through the eye of experience and knowledge. Spiritual sight is like the jeweler's eye. Seeing what is true is only possible when there is an understanding of the laws and principles, which govern the course of human life. It is knowledge of these laws of nature, both physical and spiritual, which restore sight and give you the ability to discriminate.

The power to discriminate helps to distinguish the real truth from the apparent truth, between things of temporary value and those of eternal value, between the superficial and the subtle. This power helps to recognize traps of illusion, however sweetly decorated and enticing. Through this power, we see through disguises and acts confidently and wisely. Through meditation, develop the clarity of mind to discern right from wrong, true from false within a second.

6. The Power to Judge

is the ability to assess the quality of choices, decisions and actions in yourself and others. The accurate scale represents this power. (Draw from the students some answers). What is the significance of the accurate scale in relationship with the Power to Judge? Real, authentic, accurate judgement has three dimensions.

- 1) Assess a situation so you may be able to check the right response you need to create and express.
- 2) Don't judge people, because no one has that right but you do judge actions. Perhaps for rightness or quality, for ethic or value, because you are an eternal student and seek to continually learn from others. But you have no need to judge any person for you know they are innately good, even though their actions may demonstrate otherwise.
- 3) Judge yourself. Not with the aim to punish, but simply to assess and see that your thoughts, words and actions are consistently of the highest quality and find acceptance from others. The Power to Judge helps assess any situation accurately, with clarity and precision. With a detached impartial state of mind, we can use this power to help discriminate the quality of our thoughts, words and actions and not to be judgmental of others. If we do see someone doing something wrong according to the universal code of conduct, the power to judge can be called upon to help determine if that person perceives he/she is acting wrongly. If so, we can feel mercy and inspire him/her to make the correction through our own example or with accurate and empathetic "coaching". If he/she does perceive the inaccuracy and is making an effort to overcome the weakness, we can feel respect and good wishes for that individual, which would encourage him/ her to gain victory over that weakness.

7. The Power to Face

is the ability to confront and resolve external and internal obstacles, tests and challenges with great faith and courage. The picture, which symbolizes the power to face, is death, fire or tidal waves. (Draw some students some answers). The spiritual journey home is a return to full awareness of what is true and what is right. But there are numerous obstacles, tests and challenges on the way. It is only with your inner strength which is restored by knowledge and spiritual power from the source that you are able to face and deal with the inner dragons that rear their heads during the journey. In meditation you take that step inside and get to know yourself again. You learn to discern right from wrong and you recover the strength to face the obstacles which come from inside and out.

1) Internal obstacles are old habits of behavior born out of false understanding and wrong beliefs.

2) External obstacles are those who would deliberately stand in your path of change - wanting you to stay the same.

3) Tests come when you meet those who yesterday triggered fear or hate within. Can you face them, walk towards them, see their beauty, their quality however, deeply hidden and respond to that? Horror, terror or simply error will test the strength of your ability to look at them in the face, forgive yourself and move on.

4) And challenges: Every moment on this journey home is a challenge, and masters thrive on challenges. There are no problems, only opportunities to learn, grow and help others in the process. There are no such things as failure, only feedback. Change and chaos are travelling companions. And there is no other time than the present. The mantra of the master is just facing it, just face right now. Masters know that delay is expensive.

The power to face gives courage and confidence to deal with any person or situation. This power helps conquer all types of fears, insecurities, and doubts, especially about our own abilities.

8. The Power to Cooperate

is the ability to give your attention, time, experience and wisdom in the service of others. The picture of forgers lifting a mountain symbolizes the power to cooperate. Why? (Draw from students some answers). Real cooperation comes from the deeper spaces of attitude, feelings, thought and vision.

1. Simply to see someone's highest qualities of character and not their weakness is an act of cooperation. 2. The offering of powerful subtle thoughts towards the success of another is invisible but priceless cooperation. 3. The generation and generous sprinkling of good feelings when friend or foe are down is selfless cooperation. 4. And a constantly positive attitude regardless of the size of the perceived disaster is the inspiration of uplifting cooperation. 5. To accept, acknowledge and appreciate another is to cooperate with their journey, thus providing the fuel of encouragement.

Cooperation is the fabric of unity the song of harmony and the only way in which we prosper together. And as Benjamin Franklin once said, "If we don't hang together, we will surely hang separately". Cooperation allows me to share my virtues and specialities and to learn from the qualities and talents of those I am cooperating with.

Assignment

- 1) Think and reflect more about these eight powers and write their realizations.
- 2) Practice any of the powers you feel you particularly have to develop.

End the session with a live or recorded meditation commentary about the spiritual powers of the soul.

Lesson 07 - Lifestyle

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Lesson 7: SPIRITUAL LIFESTYLE

OBJECTIVES

At the end of the session, the students would be able to: 1. Appreciate the different disciplines of the spiritual study 2. Appreciate the benefits of a healthy lifestyle especially vegetarianism. 3. Decide to adopt a spiritual and healthy lifestyle for a period of time and experience the benefits of this lifestyle

PROCEDURE

Start with 10 minutes meditation with commentary.

Explain the importance of routine, regularity and concentration in order to attain maximum benefit in being a spiritual student.

Enlighten the students about self-transformation as aim of this spiritual study. (experiential learning process; learning is a relatively permanent change in behavior manifested in performance lokik definition) Explain the learning process in the context of being a spiritual student. Meditation is the bridge between knowledge and practice. Practice makes perfect. If I want to perfect any art or skill, I need to allot regular time every day to harness that art or skill. In the same way, as a spiritual student spends 15 minutes out of your daily routine to concentrate, then it will increase easily. Spend 15 minutes to write on any topic related to the spiritual knowledge. Churn on any theme or point of knowledge. Churning helps develops concentration power.

Benefits of Understanding and Experiencing Spiritual Knowledge

Makes the soul feel powerful. It makes you aware of your powers and self-respect. Any inferiority complex ends and one experiences oneself as a great soul. Self-confidence awakens as weak thoughts diminish. Thoughts such as "I won't be able to do this. Will I be able to do anything with my life?" Weak thoughts will be replaced by more powerful thoughts such as "God Himself is with me. I will definitely be successful." Such confidence and courage is attained to undertake every possible task.

Feelings of happiness dominate the consciousness

Happiness and intoxication can only be attained by understanding and experiencing knowledge. Natural and unruffled peace in my outlook: Understanding and experiencing takes us to the depths of the ocean of knowledge. The depth of knowledge finishes all our attractions. In the depths, there are no storms, but only the peace and bliss of limitless treasures. Knowledge that we have become more real. We can give more effectively to others. We can use the jewels of knowledge in service. This knowledge will have much greater power and be of much greater help to others than any form of scholarly

knowledge.

Our personality changes

Limited views and thought patterns which give birth to various obstacles can be finished by churning. Our view of life becomes so broad that name, fame, respect, insult, superior, and peer don't affect us, they seem totally insignificant. Natural bliss: By understanding and experiencing the knowledge, we experience bliss. Because of the spiritual happiness that comes from experiencing, our faces will become radiant and automatically there is service.

Benefits of Following Spiritual Discipline

Meditation (for 20-30 minutes twice a day: Regular meditation during the day is a way to build and strengthen your spiritual awareness, experience the natural positive qualities of the soul and achieve freedom from fear. You should have regular meditation as soon as you wake up and before going to bed. It has been recognized that the most effective time is the early morning before the routine activities of the day begin. Take time every morning to meditate, and understand spiritual principles and values. The best time to meditate is between 4:00-5:00 in the morning when the atmosphere is relatively pure. This routine provides both mental and spiritual nourishment for the whole day.

Traffic Control

As days become busier in an increasingly busy world, here is a short, practical and empowering exercise, which you can integrate into your daily lifestyle. At regular intervals throughout the day (7:00AM, 10:30 AM, 12:00 NOON, 3:00PM, 5:30PM, and 7:30PM) stop whatever you are doing (if practical at that time) and withdraw your attention from everything around. Bring your attention back to yourself. You will become aware of the heavy traffic in the form of your thoughts passing through your mind. Now, step inward and begin to observe your thoughts and they will naturally begin to slow down. As your thoughts slow down, begin to remember who you are "I am a peaceful soul who is the master of my mind and body." Keep this consciousness for 2-3 minutes and experience calmness, focus and inner silence. The practice will enable you to re-charge yourself and get added energy, which you can redirect and use in accomplishing your task and activities more effectively.

==Maintaining a chart for self progress== By having a chart we can change our old body-conscious habits and enhance our practice of soul consciousness.

What questions do I ask myself:

1. For how many minutes did I remember "I am a soul, a peaceful soul."? Did I practice seeing others as souls?

2. For how long was I in body consciousness? Experiment for few days (5-7 days) and observe the effect on your early morning meditation. Observe also how your waste and negative thoughts are minimized by this practice of hourly chart. Chart means a hourly written record of your practice in minutes. Maintaining an hourly chart allows us to go twice as fast since remembrance and concentration with Baba allows us to burn the past. While working we are free from waste and so are not creating new, negative accounts of karma.

Churning & Writing Down Your Realization

To churn means to go into the depths of any point of spiritual knowledge. The purpose of churning is to extract insights and learning from them which we can use to manage better our personal life and relationships. Churning also helps us to put into practice spiritual knowledge. Spend 15 minutes daily and churn (think deeply) about any point of spiritual knowledge and write down your insights and realization about it. Churning is also a form of meditation using pure and elevated thoughts. Some other benefits of churning:

1. Churning spiritual knowledge makes us a complete authority of that knowledge.
2. We need the power that comes from churning and the remembrance of God to overcome obstacles and to make us aware of our powers and Self-respect.
3. Happiness and intoxication can only be attained by churning knowledge.
4. Our personality changes, limited views and thought patterns which give birth to various obstacles can be finished by churning.

Healthy Lifestyle

Physical exercise

15-20 minutes of physical exercise every other day help your physical instrument (the body) to remain healthy. Brisk walking in meditation is a good way to do two things at the same time.

Smooth sleep

Early to bed and early to rise. As a spiritual student, prepare yourself to sleep with pure consciousness by avoiding watching TV or reading novels or non-spiritual materials. Sleep at the latest at 10:30 PM after a 20-minute meditation. During meditation pack-up all waste and negative experiences of the day, and stay in the pure company of the Father. Our last thought will be our first thought when we wake up in the morning. Wake up at 4:00 AM, freshen-up by washing your face and brushing your teeth and then sit in meditation for 20-30 minutes. After meditation read more spiritual readings.

No smoking and no drinking of alcoholic drinks

These bad habits will not allow you to deepen your meditation. Nicotine and alcohol have adverse effect on the mind and our emotion.

Food

Natural food, plant-based (vegetarianism-non-violence), types of food and effect on the body and mind. The preparation of and taking in of pure or satwic food is necessary in sustaining a spiritual lifestyle. By pure food, we mean one that is strictly plant-based or vegetarian; i.e., no meat, no seafood, no eggs. A plant-based diet is not only a healthier diet for the body but also for the mind. (A brief explanation of how the negative energy of violence, anger, fear etc. connected to the slaughter of animals for food have a subtle negative effect and influence on the mind and intellect). It can also be mentioned that for a serious practitioner of meditation, onion and garlic are likewise not taken because they

have a very stimulating/ agitating effect on the senses.

Note: Explain that this subject of taking pure food will be taken in depth later. Simply underline the importance of eating and preparing pure food - it helps purify the mind and the body.

Thought standard throughout the day

If you maintain an hourly chart and observe traffic control, you will be sure that the quality of your thoughts will improve. The different disciplines for the body and the mind will help you in your spiritual journey.

IMPORTANCE OF KARMA YOGA

- Meditation in Action is the spiritual consciousness during everyday action.

Raja Yoga meditation is much more than sitting down every now and then to meditate for a while. It will become a part of your life, it will become apparent in everything you do. With an elevated consciousness you can add quality to everything you do. What you do becomes less important than how you do it. Karma Yoga is the spiritual consciousness whilst in action. Yoga means connection with your real 'I' and with the Supreme. Karma literally means 'action'. Our attitude and expressions reveal the consciousness we are in, that is, our underlying thoughts and feelings. It's important to realize that our thoughts, consciously and unconsciously, have a great effect on our attitudes and actions. Everyone vibrates something. We cannot hide this vibration, it is something that others feel. Even if our words are positive, if our inner attitude is negative, people will feel this. They sense it in the atmosphere. The vibration behind the words is what really accounts.

So, karma yoga is about being able to maintain the spiritual consciousness you experience in meditation in your everyday actions. Gradually the difference between how you experience yourself to be in meditation and the way you express yourself in everyday life will diminish. A karma yogi has learned to keep a state of soul consciousness anywhere and everywhere.

BEHAVIOR: Quality, Significance and Essence

Putting quality to your actions means performing actions with a positive inner attitude. So, you can do something with joy because you want to do it or you can do the same action with complaints because you are told to do it. In both cases your task will probably be accomplished, but the result will be very different. Cooking is a good example. You can literally taste how a meal is prepared, whether it is with love or with compulsion or in haste.

Significance

With the right consciousness you can add something to everything you do. Through this, feelings of boredom, uselessness and frustration begin to disappear. Thus giving the most significance to the things you do, making life more fulfilling. You don't have to do very important or great things for this. Anything from vacuum-cleaning, washing up, driving

the car, to running an office, directing a company, etc. is a matter of your state of mind. There is a simple law that states "You can either influence the circumstances, or the circumstances influence you". If you feel controlled by a situation, you only react negatively, instead of being able to contribute to it. You'll feel there is nothing you can do. You then feel angry or apathetic, afraid or useless. You feel a victim of circumstances.

Essence

It is important in behavior and in speech. It has to do with the art of leaving unnecessary things out. Check your use of words and gestures to make something clear. How long does it take you to get to the point? Another aspect of being essenceful is of seeing others in their essential form as souls. A Raja Yogi learns to distinguish between form and the content. The form might be of anger or rude behavior, but inside there is a soul, a being who might be frightened or distressed. It's really an art to always see the essence. It's the art of living! Time-consciousness and action-consciousness prevent us from having that feeling of consciously adding something beautiful to everything we do in life.

Time-consciousness means `pressure'. These types of thoughts create haste, tension, stress and impatience through which the action loses quality. Often, while we are doing something, we are thinking of what we have to do next. Or maybe, we are still thinking of what we have just done. So, we are not living in the present. We are not `here'. Thus, we lose the power and opportunities offered by the present. Check how many times your thoughts took you away from what you were doing, even whilst listening to these words. Adding quality to your actions in the form of accuracy, contentment and patience is only possible when you live in the now.

Action-conscious is getting too caught up in the action itself, which makes us forget that we are supposed to be light and peaceful. We forget to be easy and contented since we are caught up in the desires of our actions. When we learn to pay more attention to our thoughts and motives, we get less tangled up in the action itself. Through meditation, you can develop the consciousness, which you could call, being a `detached observer'. You learn to look at things from a distance. You learn to look at your own thoughts and feelings without getting too caught up in them. You learn to look at others without negative feelings. Being a detached observer makes it possible to work on details without losing sight of the whole picture. This doesn't mean you are less involved in what you do, it just means there is more balance.

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Lesson 08 - The Cycle

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Lesson 8: ETERNAL WORLD DRAMA

(Law of Entropy)

Objective

To deepen their experience of eternity through understanding the world drama cycle.

Procedure

Explanation of Entropy

(Start with 10 minutes meditation)

Give examples of life cycles in nature. The "cycle is a means for the expression of energy. The cycle is usually in four main phases or periods, with a smaller final phase or period, the transition towards a new cycle.

There is the maximum potential and maximum means of expression of this potential. If you take the analogy of seasons, this period corresponds to spring. There is abundant energy for growth and renewal. It is the same process for us. However, we will find that, although you would like to remain in this phase, it is not possible because of "entropy". Entropy is an auxiliary of the Second Principle of Thermodynamics. The inexorable

trend of the universe, and of every isolated system within it, is to evolve towards a state of increasing disorder. It refers to how the quality of systems changes under the influence of the second principle: mixing, disorder and uncertainty. Apply this principle to your own resources. Your resources are your energy. As soon as you use your resources, part of your energy is transformed into another form of energy for instance experience. This means that your resources will not remain constant. Your inner resources pass through different phases. For each new phase of energy there will be specific characteristics and corresponding forms of expression.

After the first phase, of abundance, you pass into the second, that of expenditure. Although you still have considerable resources, some have been expended, utilized. Using the analogy of the season, this would correspond to summer. The main change occurs at the end of phase 2 and the beginning of phase 3. At that time you will have already expended considerable resources, but have also gained many more things. This period corresponds to autumn, the harvest. Phase 4 follows, the final major phase, which corresponds to winter. By this time you would have expended nearly all your energy. In order to restore your energy, you need to act decisively and appropriately.

Then comes that last phase, phase 5/0, the transition phase. This is the only phase in which you can recharge yourself. After entropy there is negentropy. Negentropy is the process of reorganization. It is only possible through connection with an external energy source. Give the example of the battery being used then becoming discharge. To recharge the battery you need to connect it with a power or energy source much higher in quality or capacity. Cite more examples in nature and also in human relationships.

Ask them to identify signs of entropy in physical energy as well as soul energy. How do these two kinds of energy influence each other?

- Possible answers:

1. How can the process of entropy be reverse? 2. What is the role of God in this process of empowerment or renewal? 3. Draw answers from the students before starting with the explanation of the world drama cycle.

The Story of the World Drama

Start the explanation with Golden Age as the start of the cycle of energy decline (purity to impurity). The first age in which everything is at its highest level of purity can be called for simplicity's sake, the Golden Age. That is followed in sequence by the Silver, Copper and Iron Ages and ultimately there is a period of transition from old to new, impure to pure which can be called the Confluence age.

The Golden Age - "Sat Yuga" - The Age of Truth

Shiva Baba has revealed, the original system is a divine one in which each member of society plays exactly that role for which his or her natural qualities are best suited. Some have the qualities to be rulers and others have the qualities to be subjects. It is a "hierarchical society" based on divine virtues. This means that different souls have a different "status" based on their intrinsic qualities and roles and not on false notions of grandeur and social inequalities as the present connotations of "hierarchy" and "status"

imply. Each soul plays the role to which it is best suited and so no one complains or covets the role of another. Though there are rulers and subjects, there is neither enforced authority nor submissive subordination to that authority. The rulers are simply those who have the greatest virtues and natural wisdom.

The system is held together like a most perfect, crystal lattice. Everything is at its highest stage of purity and beauty. Concepts such as value, profit and loss, misery, poverty, sorrow and death do not exist. In a society whose members have many times more that they need or can use, trade and exchange are carried out mainly for distribution purposes. With such universal prosperity and internal and external harmony, shortage, and the misery it entails is unimaginable. The system of the Golden Age is a natural manifestation of a society whose members are in the highest state of natural soul-consciousness. They instinctively feel their realities as souls and not bodies. Being soul-conscious they are automatically the masters of their sense organs and therefore of their environment. Paradise is not a perpetual youth of blissful innocence but it is the peak of human civilization in every field of human endeavor; the arts, music, government, drama, linguistics and science. Science is the purest use of science and technology at its highest level of development.

Only the best materials that nature can provide such gold, diamonds rubies, etc., are used in the construction of buildings. The world is a garden in which it is spring all year around. Art, dance and music are in their purest and most expressive forms. There are no borders of land, sea or air. The soul is in perfect balance with all others. Everyone enjoys perfect health. There is no need for laws or law courts. The only law is love.

The Socio-Political System of the Kingdom of Heaven

The perfect order of a monarchic system of government is counter-balanced by universal, brotherly vision. Everyone feels each other to be a brother or a sister. Even the rulers treat their subjects as their own mothers and fathers would. The rulers need no ministers or advisors because of their inherent wisdom and divinity, and though there are meetings to organize and programs to attend, there is no concept of the word "problem" nor the word "advice." Though they represent sovereign power, there is never any occasion to issue ordinances that the people would feel as any kind of imposition or authoritarianism.

Lakshmi and Narayan, the sovereigns of the Golden Age, possess all the qualifications for both religion and government. It is not even possible to compare such divine authority with the religious leaders of today, well versed though they may be in scriptures and rituals, nor with the kings who linger in our memories. They have the "light" of religion in their lives, that of purity and peace, so there is natural respect from all. They are not religious leaders in the sense of being "upholders of doctrine." Their virtuous example is simply the focal point of the kingdom. They are not emperors in any despotic sense. Not merely because of their position, but because of the great royalty of their characters they receive universal acceptance, it is not that no one dares challenge their authority. The very idea of "challenging" does not exist.

The law of the kingdom is the example of the action of its divine leaders. It is this example which all follow so we can see how it is natural rule in practice. The power of simultaneous, unified thought and actions gives Lakshmi and Narayan the power to rule

the affairs of state with like harmony. Even the names Lakshmi and Narayan connote perfection. "Laksh" means the aim. "Nar-yan" means the "the perfect man" (Lakshmi and Narayan were in fact, Radhe and Krishna, the highest amongst human souls. When they married, their names changed to Lakshmi and Narayan respective.)

Society itself runs smoothly because all are in tune with nature and each other. There is no thought of competition. Family life is in perfect unity because relationships are not based on anger, greed, ego, lust or attachment, but on mutual respect and equality. The behavior and attitude of all are selfless and sharing. It is a "self-governed" life in which the soul rules the sense organs. Because of this complete self-control there is the experience of perfect comradeship between each member of the community. There is one way of life, one language, one tradition. There are no churches, temples, scriptures, gurus, etc. The religion is our lives, it is the religion of truth in action. Since there is no conflict within, there is no conflict externally. The "dynasty" of Lakshmi-Narayan lasts eight generations. It is referred to later as the "Sun Dynasty."

The Silver Age - The Decline

Inevitably the slow decline of things starts to be notice. In the same way that spring imperceptibly creeps into summer, the golden Age paradise became the "semi-paradise" of the Silver Age (Treta Yuga, the "Three-quarters" Age, which means that three ages are left of the cycle). Its beginning is marked by the changing of dynasties; from Lakshmi-Narayan to that of Rama-Sita which lasts 12 generations (this is remembered as the "Moon Dynasty.") The souls are discharging their original power and qualities through their actions and this naturally has an effect on the whole kingdom. Comparing the Golden Age and Silver Age is somewhat like comparing the effect of the sun on colors at full-light and its effect at half-light. The color and beauty of things are still there but their richness is a little dulled.

In the relationship amongst souls there is still pure love, but the population is increasing, the kingdom is expanding and for convenience is divided into principalities. Material resources are therefore being spread more thinly over a wider area to meet a greater demand. "The souls having first entered into this play are gradually becoming attracted to the things of the senses. The material beauty is pulling the soul towards itself. With each successive birth, the soul is more and more pulled into the world of senses and sense desires. Though there is no negativity or sorrow, the quality of all things is a little less. There is a difference in the degrees of bliss, power, purity and prosperity.

Heaven to Hell

"If the world was so perfect why did it have to fall?", "Why did we leave the 'grace' of God and enter 'sin?'" These and similar questions have been debated and discussed throughout the history. Many attempts to explain the "fall of man" and his subsequent "banishment from paradise" have been made. Adam and Eve, Satan and the fruit from the tree of life is a symbolic attempt to describe what in fact was just a natural process. Together, the Golden and Silver Ages constitute the period that we know as "Heaven on earth" (the "Garden of Eden" of the Jews and Christians, the "Garden of Allah" of the Muslims, the "Vaikunth" of the Hindus, the "Fields of Osiris" of the Egyptians and so on). It is not a place "up in the sky" nor is "Hell" a fiery pit underground where we are

sent to pay for our sins. They are merely periods of history. The idea that Heaven is "up there" and Hell "down there," comes from the fact that they are periods of history in which the consciousness of human beings is either "higher" or "lower." The level of intuitive soul-consciousness goes down with time. And ultimately the point is reached in which souls no longer have sufficient strength to withstand the encroachments of the material world. Souls gradually lose authority over the sense organs of their consecutive bodies. It is not that matter suddenly acquires power over souls. Souls simply lose their dominance and start to become the slaves of matter. The subtle transformation marks the change from "Heaven" into what we call "Hell;" from a unified and integrated existence into disunity, divergence and degradation.

Though the process is gradual, the point at which souls lose their self-control can be called "breaking-point." When the subtle forces that have held souls and nature in a mutually beneficial working relationship are suddenly no longer there, the crystal shatters and for a time there are a series of earthquakes and natural calamities, making the internal confusion in the souls even worse. Inside the soul the first inklings of desire make them felt; a feeling that the qualities the soul has lost may be gained from others around. There is uneasiness due to the loss of self-certainty and at the same time natural calamities are experienced for the first time. The same subtlety that allowed the deities (as the souls of the Golden and Silver Ages may be called; human beings with divine qualities) to live in perfect health and enjoy a natural technology of the highest order is now forfeited. This puts them for the first time at the mercy of the elements. The "breaking-up" of paradise is a recurring theme in the world's mythologies. It is not that a continent ("Atlantis") sinks. The consciousness of these previously divine beings "sinks." The civilization of the Golden and Silver Ages that was centered on the Indian subcontinent starts to spread out in search of itself. Amidst this turmoil of matter and souls "Hell" is born.

The Copper Age- "Dwapur Yuga"-The Age of Duality

This age marks the beginning of the period that we know of as "Hell," the beginnings of recorded history. The period of self-forgetfulness begins. Souls now become body-conscious. They have lost the power and the purity, which had been reflected in the Golden and Silver Ages. The virtuous state, or the ability to perform truthfully, was lost and that missing gap has to be filled in. Thus the search to gain back the lost paradise begins, though it is truly "lost." The elements of nature combine to produce changes of catastrophic proportions, so much so that even the buildings are buried to such a depth that no architectural traces remain. The ways and acts of the deities, however, are remembered and they become the figures of our myths and legends, devotion and worship.

The system of kingship is upheld but the rulers have lost their "divine right." They have power, but purity no longer. Instead of winning the love of their subjects they make themselves to be held in awe, and hierarchies start, based not on a divine order but on a temporal one. In this way kings start to abuse and misuse their position and thus lose respect. Kingdoms become separated from others through difficulties of communication, not only in terms of distance but modifications in language also begin to divide

humanity. Nations start to form within natural geographical boundaries and lack of communication or envy for the others' resources breeds distrust, hegemony and eventually wars. Internally the trust and respect between king and subjects is broken and strife starts to penetrate the affairs of the kingdom. Advisors and counselors are required to deal with the growing problems of state.

The Rise of Religions

The one religion of the Golden and Silver Ages is later known as the Adi Sanatan Devi-Devta (literally: "The Original Eternal Religion of Deities.") As described already, it has no external trappings. The lives of the deities are a reflection of the qualities they had absorbed from God Shiva at the end of the previous cycle, and because there is nothing lacking in the souls, there is no need for a living relationship with God. After all they are "gods" created in the image of the Father. There is no remembrance of the Supreme and no worship. The fall from the soul-conscious state to the body-conscious state brings with it the fall of this natural self-religion. Having no means except the physical to replenish ourselves, we turn to others in search of support, love and peace. We develop relationships with others to compensate for this insecurity and they soon become bondage, which create further suffering and dispossess us further of our emotional and mental independence. We are attracted to physical bodies as the once purely spiritual love changes into lust. We become aware of our "nakedness."

The instability that fills the soul impels it to search for compensations. What we have is not sufficient so we fool ourselves into believing we need more and more, thus sowing the seeds of greed. The same internal state forces us to put the labels "my" and "mine" on the ideas, things and people we surround ourselves with, giving birth to attachment. Recognizing our own vulnerability, we fight to preserve what we attach ourselves to and which we project to others without even seeing that it is a mere shell of what we used to be. With anger we seek to protect that image. Thus we enter the vortex of sufferings and illusions, puncturing the soul and provoking an unstoppable hemorrhage of whatever original qualities are still left. Life begins to be dictated by these five negative forces.

In the darkness of this ignorance we try to find God, whom we instinctively feel to be the only one who can set right what has gone wrong. But instead of a living relationship of mutual respect, we bow our heads in shame and start to worship and sing His praise, vainly hoping that He will act to stop our fall if we exalt Him sufficiently. The first form of worship is of the incorporeal God whose oval image we make and call Shiva Lingum (the image of Shiva.) The first temple built at the beginning of the Copper Age was called Somnath (the Lord of Nectar) where we installed a diamond image to represent the self-existent beauty of God. As the intellect becomes weaker the souls are less able to comprehend the subtlety of a single, incorporeal supreme being and resolve to bring the "God head" to earth by imagining Him to have incarnated in human form or even animal forms, or by calling Him omnipresent. The deity-souls who are still on earth though in different bodies, begin to worship what they themselves used to be, and construct temples to Radhe, Krishna, Lakshmi, Narayan, Ram, Sita and innumerable others. The same "gods" are remembered all over the earth with different names. The religion of India, no longer meriting the title "Deity religion," is called Hinduism after the place in which this type of religious practice develops; Hindustan.

The scriptures start to be written: the Bhagavad Gita, the Vedas, Puranas, Upanishads, the epic Mahabharata and Ramayana and so on, in an attempt to explain and return to the former higher glory. The Shrimat Bhagavad Gita (literally God's song of Supreme Instruction) becomes like a mother for all scriptures of all lands. Its principal message is summed up in the phrase "Manmanabhav"- "remember Me (God) alone;" but though we remember Him we don't know Him, and in this ignorance we begin to venerate a thousand substitutes. Hinduism degenerates into polytheism and pantheism. Other ideas and ideologies emerge in an effort to reverse the fall that had occurred, but no one has sufficient power to bring the tatters of humanity back together. Attempts were made which instead serve to separate the various cultures even more.

Pure souls come directly from the soul world with the specific role of founding the different religions and thereby permitting the souls who have roles to play within those religions to also come. Abraham (in approximately 500 B.C.) arrives with the role of creating a religion based on the law of God, under the fatherhood of the one Supreme God Jehovah (a word which seems to have etymological resemblance to the word Shiva). A religio-socio-political system develops around him, which gives initial birth to what is later called Islam (literally, surrender to God). Judaism develops later through one of Abraham's family branches in the person of Moses, who seeks to codify that, which his ancestor Abraham had initiated. In India, where there is a growing dissatisfaction with the now rampant idolatry and confusing pantheon of "gods" Buddha arrives (in approximately 250 B.C.) with a basically humanistic approach. With great honesty he makes no mention of the Supreme God but says that suffering is due to desires and that liberation involves their suppression, by following what he calls the Noble Eightfold Path:

1. Right action
2. Right belief
3. Right aspiration
4. Right speech
5. Right livelihood
6. Right endeavor
7. Right thought
8. Right meditation

The key word of course is "right" and it is that very word which has been, tossed back and forth between the religions and even within Buddhism itself, as it splintered into various sects. Without the knowledge of, or relationship with God, all attempts by souls in all cultures to do what is "right" only meet with further downfall. All are locked into the entropy system which says that no matter what actions take place, unless there is replenishment from an external source, the energy of things has to get lower and lower and the order of them more chaotic.

Next comes the Christ soul to found the Christian "dynasty." He shows through this life

that we should love one another as brothers and sisters and uphold the commandments of "Our Father who art in Heaven." He also bears the message that the lost paradise will come again and that the ones who will be able to be born there are those who have "reconciled themselves to God." You have to be twice-born to enter the Kingdom of Heaven." This his gospel "good news." The paradise that had finished only 500 years before would come again.

Shankaracharya 500 years after Christ, teaches the path of renunciation, isolation and penance in founding the religion of the Sanyasis (renunciates.) The leading members of this order are called "Swamis" and are revered as "gurus" or "spiritual guides." Physical systems of yoga, such as Hatha Yoga, Kriya Yoga, Kundalini Yoga, Mantra Yoga and so on are developed under the tutelage of the Sanyasis in attempts to establish the real yoga or link with God. The idea of God being omnipresent is given weight by this branch of the family of religions. One hundred years later (about 600 AD) Mohammed comes to start a revival movement within Islam which had degenerated since Abraham's time. He codifies their practices in the chapters of the Koran and attempts to unify the scattered Islamic states under the banner of Allah, the one God.

Each soul who comes onto the earth stage stays here as has been happening since the beginning. The population continues to grow in geometric progression as each soul arrives and occupies his place within one or another of the religions. From one birth to another, because of different karmic accounts with other souls, some take birth in other religions where they feel completely out of place. Others are converted from one to another. The deity souls themselves are dispersed all over the planet through rebirth but the majority still remains in India. All souls seek to establish a relationship with God or some being higher than themselves but the very search takes them further into abyss of death, confusion, waste and ultimately madness.

The Iron Age - "Kali Yuga" - The Age of Death

The search for something higher is becoming desperate, yet at the same time impurity and decadence are becoming extreme. Human beings by this time are totally chained to the vices, creating unlimited sorrow and unrest. It is the age of utmost decline in moral, ethical and spiritual values. Conditions of chaos and anarchy even under the guise of democracy have totally overtaken the system of divine monarchy. The masses are continually being incited on the basis of differences of language, religion or political belief. People are against themselves, others and nature. The world becomes divided into many groups and powergames develop, conditioned by self-interest and expediency. The actions of one group may benefit some but it is always at the cost of others.

In this age, for many, religion as a basis for living is supplanted by scientific thinking. Science becomes a "god" and everything is reduced to mere material values. Perverse thinking starts to permeate all levels of society. The poor and the rich, the blacks and whites, stand against each other, brothers stand against sisters through total forgetfulness of our common origins. There is a total disruption in family life. This disruption is then reflected in the community, in the city, in the nation and in the world. Towards the end of the Iron Age (i.e. now) all the above conditions become extreme. Society becomes degraded and dehumanized. The pursuit of material ambition is held to be the sole aim and object of existence. "Eat, drink and be merry" is the catchphrase of the masses,

without thought for the consequences of actions.

Respect has been totally replaced by conceit, mistrust and sexual promiscuity. There are many demonstrations and revolutions. Power changes hands rapidly and in the final hours of the Iron Age, the necessary equipment is made by which there can be the physical transformation of the world. The super powers of the day, with the help of the Scientists build such weapons that can disintegrate all of the old forms and systems developed in the course of history and permit souls to be liberated from their respective bodies in order to return to the soul world. Thus the river of history has run its full course. All the "drops," the souls, are now weighed down by the burden of their collected impurities. As with rivers in nature, they thankfully do not flow forever downwards. Human history flows downward only for a period of 5,000 years. The fall at first is very gradual but as the population increases, it becomes exponential. At the end of the Iron Age it is time for God Shiva to perform that task of total world renewal.

The Confluence Age - "Sangam Yuga"-The Age of Illumination

When there is the absolute decline of practiced truth, it is then necessary to re establish the world of truth. The one Being beyond the effect of memory loss, the one who is able to perceive all events of all time periods, comes to relate to us the story of our history. It is a story of long ago but of only yesterday. That story of a world of truth, of love, joy and purity stirs deep feelings from the long buried past in our hearts; how these original divine human beings danced their way gradually into the stage of distress and then began a search to discover that world. What were living memories had faded into forgotten dreams. But now the vision of a united and spiritually regenerated humanity, something that all religions have dreamed about, is given concrete existence in the teaching that He reveals.

Numbers

According to Shiva Baba, the cycle has 5,000 years which is divided into four equal periods of 1,250 years for the Golden, Silver, Copper and Iron Age. In the Golden Age there is a maximum of eight births; Silver Age, 12 births; Copper Age, 21 births; and Iron Age, 42 births; with one spiritual birth in the Age of Confluence. This makes the maximum total of births for a human soul to be 84 and naturally the minimum is one. The number of births (that a soul has) is determined by its own intrinsic purity and powers. The population at the beginning of the Golden Age is 900,000 (the children of survivors from the previous cycle) and at the end of the Iron Age is 5,500,000,000. When this number is reached the souls return to the soul world by means of world destruction leaving survivors who give birth again to the population who initiate the Golden Age.

The Law of Cyclic Repetition

To see time as cyclic and absorb the implications of cycle requires some deep contemplation. It is really like discovering a new dimension. If we move around the earth we eventually get back to the spot where we started. Arriving back again we can traverse the same circumference again and again. One can imagine the difficulty that there was at the time that this was discovered, or rather re-discovered, in the 15th and 16th centuries. At any moment the navigator of a ship will swear that the surface of the sea is flat. However he knows he is completing a path of circular movement around the earth's surface, (a paradox yet true.) By limitations of perspective and so on, it is not possible to "see" this "two dimensional" movement on the surface in its three-dimensions.

In the same way the soul, a non-dimensional point of conscient energy, moves and acts in the dimensions of space and in cyclic time, which with our limited consciousness we can only see as linear. We think, "This life starts and finishes, so this universe started with a big bang, and will probably finish." We do not have sufficient perspective to see in fact that the line we individually trace through time in birth and rebirth brings us back to the same point we started from; then again we repeat that same course. The episodes, which are recorded subconsciously, are repeating. Often we have the experience of "deja-vu;" the sense of a whole scene in front of you having been lived before, down to the forest detail. It has! It has happened in all previous cycles and will happen in all future ones. There is one cycle and it repeats identically. As discussed already, that which exists cannot be destroyed and that which does not exist cannot be created. This law applies itself to both the physical and the spiritual levels. It means there are a fixed number of components, souls and atoms that combine to form the drama of life.

When we know the three eternal entities that exist (God, souls and matter) it then remains to be known how the play of these eternal entities moves. This movement has no beginning or end. At any point in time, there are countless different scenes occurring in this drama, yet everything is moving with the needle of time. All souls and all matter are moving around tracks of time in a circle creating the drama of life. Once the circular track arrives at the point where it began, it repeats that motion again. World history and geography repeat in identical spans of 5,000 years. The Creator is one, the creation is one and perfect. Being perfect it needs no substitutes.

The Creator's acts repeat and so do the acts and movements of the creation. Each one's part is fixed forever. We can use the example of the gramophone record. The song exists in latent form even before the record is played. As the needle passes over the record, the part where the needle is at that moment is audible. That part that has just been played becomes latent again, and the part that is yet to be played is still latent. In the same way each soul is like a record. The impressions are the parts the souls have to play. That part exists already in the soul world from each previous cycle. When it comes down onto this physical plane, the "needle" of time begins to operate. The part, which was latent emerges and then becomes simultaneously latent again. When each soul has translated all those impressions into action and thoughts in the physical world, the part is rewound. The soul goes back to the soul world and again repeats the same part in the next cycle.

As the history of the individual repeats, then the collective history of humanity also repeats like a film that can be replayed. This is a world drama of unparalleled pageantry of five and a half billion human souls for 5,000 years on this three-dimensional space stage. It provides a colossal and eternally recurring space-time continuum in which life is

a well-balanced equation governed by the law of karma. The laws that govern this drama expose the most secret act, punish every crime, reward every virtue and redress every wrong in an incognito manner but with absolute certainty and precision.

Practical Application of the Knowledge of World Drama Cycle

- Understand the urgency and shortness of time.
- Appreciate the role of each actor in the unlimited drama.
- Appreciate the significance of meditation in understanding drama – Value the significance of the Confluence Age.
- Understand that the quality of my actions makes me responsible for the future

Meditations

Meditation Experience On the Cycle The Soul World-The Stage of Inaction

I am resting in my home ... a world of golden-red light .. I am not aware, but am immerse in peace and silence ... I am in a state of inaction, dormant ... I am waiting 'backstage' before going to play my part in the world drama ... The moment I descend into a body, I begin to perform action ... I begin to create accounts with other souls.

The Golden and Silver Ages (The Stage of Neutral Action)

I am a pure soul in a new world ... I am full of my original qualities ... I feel no lack, so I have no desire ... The sanskaras of perfection go immediately into action ... There is no worry, hesitation or indecision ... There is no difference between thought and action ... The pure thoughts I think are spontaneous ... The balance is me is reflected in the whole world ... When my thoughts equal actions, I am truly a natural ruler ... My actions are therefore not bondage, but there is no question of doing good or bad ...

To whom will I do good, when all others are perfect? ... I do not have the capacity for evil ... This state of the soul is one of the complete bliss.

The Copper and Iron Ages (The Stage of Negative Action)

I become body-conscious ... I forget my original attributes ... I am confused ... My judgment about which actions will bring peace and happiness is impaired ... Between thought and action the block of conscience appears ... I begin to act in such a way as to cause loss and pain to myself and to others ... This pain creates the desire to be free from it ... Desire become the springboard for all my actions ... With other actors on the world stage, this desire becomes the basis for all my relationships. When I act with another under the impulse of a body-conscious desire, this manifests as anger, greed, ego, lust or other attachment ... The immediate or long term suffering will be experienced by the other and, by the law of reaction, he must return that suffering to me in exact proportion ... An account is thus created between the two souls ... We are bound to be in contact again to balance the account ... I go further down into the spiral of suffering and desires ... more body-consciousness ... In ignorance, I continue to create bondage that reinforce

my ignorance ... I become more and more attached to the fruits of the seeds, which I sow, and I find many disappointments and deceptions... With no knowledge of my true self, I can never break this "vicious circle" ... The more I am brought into bondage, the more I seek the one who is above bondage, God ... I look for release by going to others and find that they are also in bondage ... They also are looking for a way out.

The Confluence Age (The Stage of Positive Action)

Through the highest form of karma I am able to balance my accounts of negative actions or "sins" and become light ... If I act as the "world benefactor" like my Father, then the reaction is automatically beneficial ... When I meditate, or have communion with God, extreme peace and bliss flow into me and through me into the world ... The yoga I have affects the entire world ... It is just like the fragrance of incense burning ... It pervades the whole room ... I am able to spread the fragrance of God's love to every part of the world.

I now fix myself in my eternal consciousness ... I sit with my Baba; I sit with God as a soul ... I sit as the soul in the awareness of my eternal relationship with God ... I understand that in this awareness, I can spread the fragrance of complete purity, complete love and complete peace to all souls ... I understand how I can be beyond the limits of limited physical consciousness ... I dance internally with joy of this pure experience ... I experience within me the joy, the peace, the power and the purity which will later emerge creatively in a world where every member of society expresses such pure emotions.

Now I come back to the awareness of this Confluence Age; the age when the soul with knowledge must act with total detachment ... I move in the world with this awareness that I am pure soul, constantly showering gifts of peace, purity and love on all souls through the means of good vibrations and good wishes ... I maintain pure soul-conscious relations with others. I see how once before I did such action ... I see how I have previously risen and fallen ... so my destiny is already assured ... I am merely re-creating my role of eternity ... and my eternal fortune flashes before me ... I carry with me my constant link with God the Supreme, the Ocean of Knowledge ... constantly showering happiness on my fellow souls.

Lesson 09 - The Tree

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Lesson 9: The Depths of the Kalpa Tree and the Ladder

Objectives

At the end of the sessions the students would have:

1. Appreciation of different religions and how each relates to the Seed (Shiva Baba) and the roots the (ancestor souls),
2. Realization of the value of spiritual knowledge compared to the path of devotion,
3. Appreciation of the significance of the present time of the confluence age when we play direct role with God, the Supreme Soul.
4. Realization of the significance of the ladder showing process of degradation of humanity.

Procedure

(Start with 10 minutes meditation)

- Check with the students what they remember about the first lesson on the tree of humanity or tree of religions. Draw from them their insights and even questions about this concept.

Explain how the world Drama is related to the Kalpa Tree.

The Tree of World Religions

A Synopsis of the World Drama

The Cycle of history can be expressed in the form of a tree. The "Tree of Life" is an analogy used in all religions. It symbolizes the beginning, growth and decay of civilization. God the Supreme is the seed, the essence from which the whole tree grows. From the seed comes the roots, the foundation and from them the tree grows. The seed gives complete knowledge about the tree. Those souls who take this knowledge and assimilate it in their practical lives form the roots. From their pure actions a healthy young shoot emerges which later becomes the trunk of the tree.

The Roots of Change -The Confluence Age

The tree finally reaches its maximum growth towards the end of the Iron Age and various factors inherent in the scheme of things are brought into play. The roots themselves have also reached a state of decay. The trunk had disappeared and all that remain are a tangled mass of branches; religions, languages, cultures and ideologies. God's role as creator comes into action. He knows that in order to plant a new tree He has to prepare the roots anew.

Just as with an ordinary tree, both the seed and roots are incognito. In the case of the tree of history or "kalpa" tree (as it is called in India) the part of the Supreme Soul and instrumental human souls in the work of world transformation is largely incognito. At the same time as the Iron Age is reaching its climax, the Creator is doing His work.

The fifth age, designated the Age of Confluence or "Sangam Yuga," is in fact two confluences; the meeting of the souls with God and the meeting of the old world and the new. Both the process of creation of the new golden-aged world and that of its necessary corollary, the destruction of the old iron-aged world, are sparked off by the advent of the Supreme Being, the only soul whose power never diminishes and who is never bound by the cycle of history.

He comes to reactivate the potentialities of the "root-souls," or those very souls who had participated in the creation of the tree at the end of the previous cycle and who had later taken birth during the Golden and Silver Ages. He rejuvenates those souls by reminding them of who they are and through them His message spreads to all souls of all religions.

The Role of God in the World Drama

For pure communication with the Supreme Soul, pure knowledge is necessary. As with human relationships, the more we know about the other's role, the more affinity we can experience with them. So too, precise knowledge of God's actual role in this world

endears Him to us and creates a real foundation for the complete experience of Him. As we have discussed:

- God does not motivate human acts. - God does not guide the behavior of the elements. - God is not a creator of matter or souls.

So what is His creation? Let us examine this a little further. According to His own revelations He performs three acts, namely creation, sustenance and destruction.

What are the Acts of God?

In India God is called "Karan Karavanhar." That means He is the one who does and gets things done by others. However, this is traditionally taken wrongly to mean that everything moves according to His will.

Being physically minded we have taken creation as a physical phenomena. Just a little application of common sense logic will tell us that God did not make human bodies out of dust. The procreators of human bodies have always been other human beings. All human beings that have existed, and that will exist, come in the same way that they always have, from the womb of a human mother. All physical beings exist as a result of the union of the sexes in some form. If God were the giver of birth in this sense, why then should some wish to escape the cycle of birth and rebirth?

Likewise, if God had created this material universe, then He is also controlling and interfering with it constantly, creating rainstorms, droughts, plagues, good harvests, sunrises, sunsets, etc. These are all natural processes. The earth, moon, sun and planets keep their position because of attraction and repulsion, not because of some supernatural force. In imagining God to be generator, operator and destroyer in the physical sense we have confused so much His real role with the simple processes of nature.

Creation

Creation is actually the regeneration, rejuvenation or reshaping of what is already there. When the whole of humanity becomes weak spiritually, God rejuvenates the souls by imparting knowledge and divinising their intellects. He puts life-energy back into the souls. In that way He sows the seeds of the new Golden Age, and reveals the purpose of creation. In doing so, He is the moulder of souls. He brings souls nearer to each other. In this way, He is the creator of a world of unity, peace, love and harmony on the earth. The task of making a plan for the whole of humanity is beyond the capacity of human beings. It is the function of God, by virtue of His unlimited attributes. When peacelessness, lawlessness, disease, violence and misery pose a serious problem for the whole world, the bestowal of health and abundance, purity and peace to all of suffering humanity becomes the task of the Supreme Soul. No one else is competent to do it. The main task of God is to purify souls. Creation is really the purification of souls, the act of establishing once again the divine order.

Nothing created is permanent, just as when a seed is sown in a field, the seedlings sprout and grow, then later the crop is harvested, but then a new crop has to be planted. When the New World order is being established, the old world order must be destroyed. When Shiva Baba performs the role of creator, there is world-scale transformation. Souls are not destroyed. Matter or nature is not destroyed. Only disease and pollution in nature and

the negative forces within human souls are destroyed. The physical transformation is enacted by the human souls themselves. As the revealer of the laws of action, Shiva Baba must come onto the field of action and demonstrate them. He could not just remain in the soul world and perform the act of creation from there. Sending vibrations is just not enough, primarily because human beings have become so body-conscious that they are not subtle enough to pick up such vibrations. Their link with Him has been severed, and human beings through their own efforts and fantasies have not been able to reconnect themselves with Him. Besides that, He is not, as we have discussed already, some sort of cosmic magician who can transform the world by an act of magic or "will."

He comes in an incognito way like a "thief in the night," as it says in the bible, at the end of the Iron Age. He "borrows" the body of the first soul to enter the cycle. That soul in fact happens to be the most experienced of all human souls, the very one who is called Brahma or "Adi Dev," the first deity. In India, "Adi" which means the first, original one, is the probable root of the word "Adam." So, the soul of "Adam" or Brahma, after passing through the cycle of births, again becomes the instrument for the recreation of the world of Heaven. Shiva Baba is able to make full use of Brahma's experience in revealing all the secrets of the human world drama. The very fact that He has come has unleashed the forces of transformation.

Destruction

In all mythologies, the aspect of God as a destroyer figures prominently. God is not the destroyer of human beings, just as He is not the creator of human beings. He is the destroyer of evil and the creator of virtue. All these tales of huge armies being destroyed in one swipe of the Supreme's army are mere allegories. For example, there is the tale of the crossing of the Red Sea by the Israelites and the subsequent destruction of their Egyptian slave masters. This tale appears in many cultures, only with different names, places and dates.

On one side, there is the land of affliction and suffering (in this case Egypt,) and on the other side the land of "milk and honey," the "promised land" etc. In between, there is a seemingly impassable sea, which by the grace of God, suddenly opens up and the "chosen ones" cross. Behind them, their former captors are swallowed up as God closes the water on them. The story is obviously symbolic. The "chosen ones," the true lovers of the true God, have the path made easier for them through His unswerving guidance. Such a one is thus able to leave the experience of suffering behind him and make the journey across to the other side to a world of perfection and purity, the Golden Age. The weaknesses, our former "captors," try to follow but are exterminated completely by the effect of God's help.

Others believe that God finally destroys the world because of His wrath. But this too happens as a result of our own actions. After all it is not God that makes the nuclear bombs or natural calamities. This destructive aspect is shown by the symbol Shankar. He is shown sitting in the deep stillness of meditation; naked to show the complete freedom from body-consciousness and conquest of evil in the self. It is said that the flames of destruction emerged from Shankar's third eye.

The Supreme Soul in fact, inspires us to reach this powerful stage of meditation. It is from the center of this fire of love and yoga that the vibrations of world transformation

spread. This purifying influence on the consciousness of humanity actually fans the fires of the destruction of the old world. Destruction is thus a reflection of the power of yoga, the necessary companion of creation.

Sustenance

The result of knowledge and the deep fire of yoga is the all-virtuous state. Vishnu is a symbol of this purity and sovereignty. Vishnu is shown with four arms and represents the perfect male/female couples; pure and equal. It is the perfect couple Lakshmi and Narayan who rule this world throughout the Golden Age. Vishnu also symbolizes the perfect family life which acts as a sustaining force in the early part of human history. As the family life becomes more impure, so too the world. It was God Shiva who had bestowed the kingdom of paradise of the Golden and Silver Ages to the human souls. When there is this initial confusion at the beginning of the Copper Age, we turn our minds automatically to Him in the form of pure, single-minded worship. It is during this time that other parts of the world are explored and colonized as groups of human beings travel here and there in an effort to regain the art of living in peace and harmony.

The prophet souls, Abraham, Buddha, Christ, Mohammed and so on, establish their various religions. Though each professes universal kinship and dedication to one God, there is no universal application of their teachings. Each shows a different aim and a different set of beliefs. The trunk religion thus becomes many branches as the world population expands in search of itself. The one kingdom becomes many new ruling dynasties spread over the globe. New languages develop. The harmony the world once knew is shattered. We enter into an era of strife, which later becomes full-fledged war. After the prophets died, scriptures supported religions and a faith based on the glorification of their lives and words.

The Twigs and Leaves - The Iron Age

This is the age of ignorance and darkness. Worship and blind faith in fact lead the souls further into degradation and hence further away from God, the seed of truth. Almost anything is worshipped in an attempt to bring back the former purity and power. More branches appear on the tree. The four main religions of Hinduism, Islam, Buddhism and Christianity divide into sub-branches. After passing through their own different stages of purity, they too reach their last stage of total diversification and disunity. In this spiritual confusion many cults, sects and "isms" also emerge. Both religion and philosophy becomes more materialistic. The last twigs of the tree are extremely distant from the seed. Our lives and relationships with others become devoid of the essential qualities of real love, peace and happiness. Life is controlled by the vices. The status of women is lowered and they are treated as objects of sexual indulgence.

Societies develop, motivated by the ever-growing demand for material goods. We become slaves to our desires. Differences of opinion dominate individual families, communities and nations. Religion becomes involved in the accumulation of wealth and temporal power. Science becomes involved in the development of the means of mass destruction. The world is divided by color, sects, religion and politics. We fall into the bondage of culture, family, traditions and government legislation. Natural calamities

increase. Disease, premature death, accidents, poverty and suffering make life in this world a veritable "hell." People become complete slaves to their sense organs, yet still at the time of suffering they pray to God to remove it. However, great confusion exists as to the true identity of God. Ever increasing peacelessness turns more and more people towards God but without knowing who or what He is and does, they remain powerless. This need provides fertile ground for the emergence of "pseudo-gods" or "god-men" who add to the confusion with new and more fashionable interpretations of traditional teachings. People are made to perform an astounding amount of rituals, either inspired because of some boon offered or doing so out of fear. Each soul hangs as helplessly as a leaf on the twig of what it believes in.

The Ladder of 84 Births

Show picture of The Ladder and ask the students how this picture relate to the cycle of time and/or the tree of religion. Each step of the ladder represents a birth. Every time a soul takes birth it loses (spiritual) energy. It takes 83 physical births to completely use up one's spiritual energy. It takes one spiritual birth to regain or recharge the source through the teachings of Shiva Baba who teaches us Raja Yoga.

Application

My Choices at the Confluence Age

Recognition of the Confluence Age as the only time that God comes in a cycle of time to do His task of re-creation, one has to make certain choices and/or: - role I want to play with God at this time

- let go of my limited fortune and create my fortune forever

- take direct benefit from God's presence, from His powers and qualities.

- let go of my old ways, life style, mental set, etc., become a Brahmin. "A Brahmin is a soul who recognizes Shiva Baba, a soul who takes spiritual birth through the mouth of Brahma and follows the highest code of human conduct in order to serve humanity spiritually. It is not a birth by a change in body but by a change in consciousness."

Meditation Exercise

The Cycle and the Tree

Putting the knowledge of the cycle and the tree together I come firstly to a realization of the time ... Now and only now is the time that I can rise up out of the depths of my own ignorance and create my part for the next cycle ... I see the contrast between the old world and the new, the impure world and the pure and am inspired to cut the ropes that

keep the boat of the soul tied to the shores of the Iron Age knowing that every effort I do now will create loss or credit for many lives to come. Seeing my own role throughout the tree I start to have an incredible internal security with the knowledge of my own "reason of being" ... Firmly anchored in this self-faith I see the myriad roles that I and others have played and am instilled with a sense of detachment ... I was a deity in the Golden Age ... a divine being. Little by little I lost both my crowns; the halo of purity and the crown of temporal authority ... I became a worshipper, a beggar for peace ... I grew with the tree and lost sight of the trunk by trying to comfort myself in the branches, the human-made religions ... Then Baba came to explain it all to me. Seeing it from His point of view I can see just how perfect the drama is.

(Pause)

I feel like a person who has fished all his life in the same spot without even imagining that the water passing by his feet had a history of its own; a pure phase, an impure phase, a pure phase again ... I can see how body-consciousness prevents me from seeing the perfection of creation and how soul-consciousness, i.e.. seeing myself as a soul, who has passed through the history of this world, allows me to have a bird's eye view of the whole process of creation. I can see how I myself am also like a tree too ... I started as a seed in the soul world. Then I came here and became a part of the trunk; the Golden and Silver Ages ... During this time I was in harmony and there was unity within myself Then the internal divisions began with the coming of the Copper Age as different desires started to pull the intellect this way and that ... "The answer is here, " "No, it's there! " "Peace is in this! ", "No, it's in that! ", "Come here! ", "Go there! ", "Do this, " "Do that, " "No, " "Yes, " "No, " "Yes. "

(Pause)

This was the beginning of the branches of my confusion ... I grew and grew in this way, birth by birth with more and more complications, the branches threading the webs of my anxiety... Now the Seed of it all is explaining to me how it all came to pass, how I too am a seed in my original form ... Knowing this I can leave the branches and twigs of useless and impure thoughts ... With the knowledge of the cycle and the tree and the recognition of the master of the tree, Shiva Baba, I can truly become a traveler of the three worlds. Om Shanti .

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Lesson 10 - Stages

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Lesson 10: STAGES OF RAJA YOGA MEDITATION

Objectives

At the end of the sessions the students would have:

1. Appreciation of three stages of Raja Yoga meditation,
2. Understanding the difference between the different stages of Karma Yoga, Angelic stage and Seed stage
3. An initial experience of a conversation with Baba in the subtle regions.

Procedure

All about Karma Yoga

Review Karma Yoga: The method of settling karmic account is one of the major aims of Raja Yoga. To be a raja yogi means to be a ruler of the self. It's not just a question of learning to discipline the physical senses but, more importantly, of directing the energy of the mind, emotions and the personality in a positive and constructive way.

- **Definition;** Raja Yoga can also be called Karma Yoga. It means to perform action while having a mental connection with Supreme Being or to have a meditative consciousness while talking, sitting on a bus, driving a car or working, in fact, doing anything. Relationship can't exist without karma or interaction. The same applies in my relationship with Supreme Soul. Actions that are just for my own sense-gratification or for the development or sustenance of relationship with another human being are called karma. Actions performed out of love for or obedience to God are called karma yoga. Certainly there is no question of doing anything for God. He doesn't need or want anything. Karma yoga means to live in the world but to maintain the link of yoga so that it transform one's life and one's life can help transform the world.

IMPORTANCE OF KARMA YOGA or MEDITATION IN ACTION (Karma Yoga)

- is the spiritual consciousness during everyday action.

Raja Yoga meditation is much more than sitting down every now and then to mediate for a while. It will become a part of your life, it will become apparent in everything you do. With an elevated consciousness you can add quality to everything you do. It then becomes less important what you do, and more important how you do it. Karma Yoga is the spiritual consciousness whilst in action. Yoga means connection with your real T and with the Supreme. Karma literally means 'action'.

Our attitude and expressions reveal the consciousness we are in, that is, our underlying thoughts and feelings. It's important to realize that our thoughts, consciously and unconsciously, have a great effect on our attitudes and actions. Everyone vibrates something. We cannot hide this vibration, it is something that others feel. Even if our words are positive, if our inner attitude is negative, people will feel this. They sense it in the atmosphere. The vibration behind the words is what really accounts. So, karma yoga is about being able to maintain the spiritual consciousness you experience in meditation in your everyday actions. Gradually the difference between how you experience yourself

to be in meditation and the way you express yourself in everyday life will diminish. A karma yogi has learned to keep a state of soul consciousness anywhere and everywhere.

Behaviour; quality, significance and essence

Quality to your actions means performing actions with a positive inner attitude. So, you can do something with joy because you want to do it or you can do the same action with complaints or because you are told to do it. In both cases your task will probably be accomplished, but the result will be very different. Cooking is a good example. You can literally taste how a meal is prepared, whether it is with love or with compulsion or in haste. Significance - With the right consciousness you can add something to everything you do. Through this, feelings of boredom, uselessness and frustration begin to disappear. Thus giving most significance to the things you do, making life more fulfilling. You don't have to do very important or great things for this. Anything from vacuum-cleaning, washing up, driving the car, to running an office, directing a company, etc. is a matter of your state of mind.

There is a simple law that states "You can either influence the circumstances, or the circumstances influence you". If you feel controlled by a situation, you only react negatively, instead of being able to contribute to it. You will feel there is nothing you can do. You then feel angry or apathetic, afraid or useless. You feel a victim of circumstances. Essence - is important in behavior and in speech. It has to do with the art of leaving unnecessary things out. Check your use of words, gestures to make something clear. How long does it take you to get to the point? Another aspect of being essenceful is of seeing others in their essential form of being souls. A Raja Yogi learns to distinguish between form and the contents. The form might be of anger or rude behavior, but inside there is a soul, a being who might be frightened or distressed. It's really an art to always see the essence. It's the art of living!

Time-consciousness

Time-consciousness and action-consciousness prevent us from having that feeling of consciously adding something beautiful to everything we do in life. Time-consciousness means 'pressure'. These types of thoughts create haste, tension, stress and impatience through which the action loses quality. Often, while we are doing something, we are thinking what we have to do next. Or maybe we are still thinking of what we have just done. So, we are not living in the present. We are not 'here'. Thus we lose the power and opportunities offered by the present. Check how many times your thoughts took you away from what you were doing, even whilst listening to these words. Adding quality to your actions in the form of accuracy, contentment and patience is only possible when you live in the now.

Action-consciousness is getting too caught up in the action itself, which makes us forget that we are supposed to be light and peaceful. We forget to be easy and contented since we are caught up in the desires of our actions. When we learn to pay more attention to our thoughts and motives, we get less tangled up in the action itself. Through meditation you can develop a consciousness, which you could call, being a 'detached observer'. You

learn to look at things from a distance. You learn to look at your own thoughts and feelings without getting too caught up in them. You learn to look at others without negative feelings. Being a detached observer makes it possible to work on details without losing sight of the whole picture. This doesn't mean you are less involved in what you do, it just means there is more balance.

Summary

In summary here are a few ingredients of karma yoga:

1. Soul consciousness - the foundation of meditation and karma yoga
2. Relationship with the Supreme Soul - whilst in action means more power, more energy, more tolerance, more patience, more love, etc. In order to get extra power to constantly check and change, we need a mental link with the Supreme Source of power. Baba is like a friend who is always around when you need Him. One thought is enough to establish the mental link.
3. Practicing Specific Stages - You need to practice different types of consciousness. An actor-consciousness is a good one, or be a benefactor wherever you go, or try seeing everyone around you as a soul. You can also practice qualities of the soul. Take one every day. Monday is 'the day of silence'. Tuesday is 'the day of power', etc.
4. Traffic Control - during traffic control you remember who you are, what your form is, what your qualities are, whose child you are and where you are from. Timing for traffic control is: 7:00 AM, 10:30AM, 12:30PM, 5:30PM and 7:30PM.
5. Beginning of the Day - It's important to start the day with early morning meditation (about 4:00AM). It is the foundation of the day. The thoughts you have at the start your day will determine the rest of your day. See it as a spiritual breakfast to get through the day (similar to the body needing breakfast).

Changing Deeply Ingrained Sanskars

Karma yoga functions in two ways:

1. by filling the self with power, the transformation of action is possible. This in turn brings about change in my sanskars.
2. by drawing on the qualities of the Supreme Being my sanskars change. On one level, whatever I have done, I have to receive the return for that. On another level, whatever my past karma may have been, the fire of God's love is able to resolve it and remove its impact from within the soul, in terms of negative personality traits and also in terms of karmic effects in physical situations. Thus it can be seen why yoga or the union of love with God is so crucial.

All about Angelic Stage

1. Angelic or Subtle Stage 2. Angel remembered as a being of lightness 3. A constant practice of soul consciousness "I am an incorporeal soul and not the physical body," others begin to notice my behavior becoming subtle . It is not that the body become invisible but they will feel that it is subtle, made of light.

First pairs of wings of angels are gyan (knowledge) and yoga. These first pairs of wings are transformed into the wings of love and purity. Love and purity are instantly experienced by those who have encountered the Dadis. Dadis are embodiments of these qualities. As we listen to gyan, give gyan think gyan, it starts to take on a different form and become something else. Yoga can be practiced in the same way. Once we are angels we are not sitting in meditation anymore. There is another stage that has been attained as a result of yoga. When you are training to become an angel you use the wings of gyan and yoga, but when you become an angel then you have the wings of love and purity.

How to Become An Angel

When the soul has had a total deep connection with God, and been cleansed by God through yoga and thus settled all its past accounts, then the stage of purity is attained. The lightness of an angel radiates that sparkle of being free from all karmic accounts which means purity. An angel is completely pure so can protect itself from the influence of evil. In the company of Dadis there is the influence of their purity on you. There is the feeling of being natural and easy, totally light and pure, without any waste thoughts.

Transforming Gyan to Love

If yoga fulfills itself in a stage of purity, then gyan fulfills itself in a stage of love. The power of gyan first removes the bitter poison in the soul and has a mellowing influence on the soul. Through exchange of spiritual knowledge the relationship becomes sweeter and sweeter. So, through the power of gyan, there is such a development of understanding that sweetness comes in. In the final stage of gyan you understand and so you are able to love totally without reservations.

Avyakt Bapdada on Angels

- **Becoming an Angel;** "This will help you experience your angelic form away from physical consciousness. It makes you play the role of a world server, an angel in the subtle regions like Brahma Baba, whilst playing your role in this corporeal world and corporeal body. With this subtle consciousness or consciousness of an angel, you will automatically transform your mundane feelings and mundane ways of talking, walking, behavior and sanskars. If the consciousness is changed everything will be changed. Therefore, always bring this subtle consciousness in you. The consciousness is that "I am a Brahmin who is going to become an angel.' Now bring that consciousness in a practical form." (22/2/84)
- **Service Through the Mind;** "When giving visions of your angelic form you should make a special plan to make the service through the mind more powerful. Together with words, it is service through the mind that will enable the message to reach very far away. Just as nowadays, flying saucers are seen, so too, your angelic form will be visible all around and there will be the sound emerging, "Who are these beings who are circling all around?" People will begin to research

into this and will have visions of you coming down from above. They should realize that it is these Brahma Kumars and Brahma Kumaris who are giving visions of the angelic form. You should now create such an upheaval. You should practice taking your subtle body on a tour. At the present time, it is most essential that you practice traveling with your internal subtle body. You should practice this so that everyone is able to see this in a practical form and everyone comes together. Others should experience that These are the same angels who came to us.' They should start searching around for these angels. If so many of you all begin to circle around like angels, then what will happen? Everyone's attention will automatically be drawn. So now, together with the corporeal form, it is essential to serve in the subtle form. In the early morning hours of Nectar, you should become detached from your body and you should circle around this way."

- "Subtle Regions"; Meet and Talk with Baba in the Subtle World: How can I lead the mind into the subtle regions? The intellect is so sensitive, it requires some material object for concentration.

Conversation with Baba

I lead myself to the subtle world by going through these thoughts and after putting before Him my life story, surrendering it to Him, then I put before Him my whole chart of self effort together with any problems I, the soul, may have. The problem can be about: 'I am not convinced about something.' 'I cannot understand a murli point.' 'I am having some difficulty with an old sanskar or another soul.' 'I need some advice about service.' Problems encountered in the spiritual path are the ones we present to Baba.

All about the Seed Stage

Essence of the Seed Form Stage

Firstly seed form means to be completely overflowing with knowledge, virtues and power. Secondly it means to be equal with Baba. When there is equality and completion with Baba then there is practical experience of the seed form stage. We have to pay attention to our efforts before we can become fixed in this stage. We must first check, if I understand the knowledge properly, am I practicing the virtues, and am I keeping the intellect linked with the Supreme and taking power. If the soul is not making these efforts then there will be no benefit.

To fulfil the self we must pay attention to:

1. Check our daily timetable.
2. Check there is no burden of waste words and thoughts, to create the stage of double light that is filled with purity and knowledge.
3. Practice creating pure thoughts. This is important; if we don't have meditation and don't create pure thoughts, then we cannot experience being lost in the Ocean of Love.

The Experience of the Seed Form

1. No need to create thought. There is the experience of being the embodiment (of soul consciousness, a virtue, a title, etc.) It begins when repeating - 'I am a soul, God the Supreme is my Father.' Then gradually become the form of this.
2. There is no weakness

or shortcoming. 3. No attraction to the world and the body, ignorance of the vices and no conscious thought 'I am a body.' or I am not a body.' 4. Ignorance of what it is to forget because you have become the form of the soul. Only then will soul consciousness emerge. 5. Automatic consciousness 'I am a resident of Paramdham.' 6. It is as if I am the light and might. 7. Experience that just as Baba is World Benefactor, I am the same together with Him. 8. Experience of being equal to Baba, equal with him in His work. An experience of being full and complete. 9. All the specialities are experienced in an emerged form. In particular the experience of peace, power and bliss. 10. The stage is as if I am totally above. Not just detached but I am beyond things of this world. 11. When soul comes down from that experience, it seems as if I have incarnated from Paramdhan and taking this body on loan. 12. Stage of detachment, of observer beyond and above. 13. Experience of a second will remain for a long period of time. Even without effort the soul will be drawn to that stage again and again.

The effect of such a state of mind will affect the whole atmosphere all round. Just as it is said the saints could tame the wild animals around them, in the same way this powerful stage will definitely have an effect all round. By such a stage you will be able to benefit the world. By this stage you can purify nature.

Special Points to Experience Seed Stage

1. Introversion
2. Practice controlling waste thought
3. Follow shrimat at every step
4. Extreme distaste and detachment, so that in a second it is easy to go beyond the body and consciousness of the body
5. The line of the intellect absolutely clear. If there is interference, there is no connection
6. Unadulterated remembrance. No attachment or attraction towards anyone or anything, otherwise this bondage pulls soul down.

How to Stay in the Seed Stage

Come to the Subtle World, take help from Brahma Baba and Shiva Baba. Make round trips from the Soul World to the Subtle Regions and back. We may feel it is difficult because we have not seen Brahma Baba, but actually it is just a question of emerging that stage. It may take 50 years or 10 days. With sincere and honest efforts I can connect within days. This is where the hourly chart and regular practice of sitting and traveling to the incorporeal world and back will help. As my intellect clears, slowly the picture will emerge. Just keep repeating the process without expecting any experience to begin with. Expectation causes tension and stops us in moving forward. Gradually I will begin to experience that stage.

Two essential qualities for Progress

1. Firstly I need 100% faith that the Supreme Father is mine, and although Baba shows me the way I have to make effort. 2. Secondly I need to be patient. We tine if we expect

quick results. Baba says, 'Be tireless.' I can only go deep into the experience of yoga when I begin to clean the intellect and burn the past.

Assignment

Keep a chart of soul consciousness for a week and start Amrit Vela at 4:30-5:00

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Lesson 11 - History

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Lesson 11: ROLE OF BRAHMA BABA & YAGYA HISTORY

Objectives

At the end of two sessions, the participants will be able to:

1. Recognize the role of Brahma Baba, 2. Realize the importance of the yagya as the institution through which God's task is being accomplished in this auspicious confluence age, 3. Realize one's role and the personal transformation one has to have in order to claim the inheritance of heaven.

Procedure

(Start with meditation experience)

Briefing

Ask them to take note of the different information they can gather about the institution as they watch the video "Welcome Home." Let them watch the video then, ask them for their feelings about the documentary and also the information they got about the Brahma Kumaris.

Start the information about the Yagya

Brahma Kumaris World Spiritual University (BKWSU) was founded in 1936 in Karachi, Sindh (now Pakistan) by Brahma Baba. Inspired by a series of revelations, Brahma Baba dedicated the remaining 33 years of his life to bringing into reality his vision of people of all cultural, economic and religious backgrounds coming together to rediscover and develop the spiritual dimension of their lives.

In 1951 the University's world headquarters moved to Mount Abu in Rajasthan, India, where it remains to this day. In 1969 Brahma Baba passed away, aged 93, passing the mantle of leadership to Dadi Prakashmani as the Administrative Head of the organization joined by Dadi Janki as Additional Administrative Head.

A University for the World

- As an international university with around 3,500 branches in over 86 countries, the Brahma Kumaris offer to people of all background an opportunity to learn meditation and deepen their understanding of universal principles and innate values through a variety of educational programs, courses and learning resources.
- As a worldwide family of individuals from all walks of life, the University provides a caring cooperative and supportive environment which encourages individuals to bring out the best in themselves.

- As a global organization which coordinates international and community projects, the University has created opportunities for people in 129 countries to participate in a variety of initiatives aimed at creating a better world where people live in peace and harmony.

Learning for Life

The BKWSU recognizes the intrinsic spirituality and goodness of every being and helps people to rediscover that goodness within them, encouraging and facilitating the development of spiritual awareness, attitudes, behaviors and skills through a process of lifelong learning. Recognizing the importance of understanding the wider context of human existence, the University's core curriculum addresses the spiritual significance of religious and cultural traditions and explores such themes as life after death, our relationship with God and the purpose of life.

The University organizes and participates in dialogues across a wide spectrum of issues promoting peace and understanding in many local and global fora.

Working With the United Nations

The overarching and global spiritual perspective of the Brahma Kumaris helps to highlight and strengthen the ideals and motivating principles underlying the work and spirit of the United Nations. Speaking with the authority of increasingly large segment of civil society concerned with human and social values, the University's work supports UN programs on a wide range of developmental, humanitarian and other issues. Its special competence allows it to bring a particularly ethical approach to world concerns and these to be expressed clearly within the broad forum of UN circles.

The BKWSU is a non-governmental organization in general consultative status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations, and in consultative status with UNICEF. It is also affiliated to the Department of Public Information. The University's book "Visions of a Better World" is a UNESCO supported publication and UNESCO officially supports Living Values: an Educational Programme, which is sponsored by the Brahma Kumaris and the National Committees of UNICEF of France and Spain and the Planet Society of UNESCO. The University has also sent sizeable delegations to most major UN Conferences over the past years.

The Brahma Kumaris pursue the goal of upholding the Human Rights of all People worldwide by calling into focus the worth of the individual and the dignity and integrity of the human family. Working with UNICEF and UNESCO at headquarters as well as within the national committees and commissions, the University promotes values-based programs and initiatives through its local and national centers, including some activities specially for women, youth and children.

International Projects

The Million Minutes of Peace

In 1986, during the United Nations International Year of Peace, the University launched the Million Minutes of Peace project. It reached 88 countries involving millions of people and winning support of hundreds of companies and organizations. With the

purpose of emphasizing that peace begins within each individual, the project gathered over one billion minutes of prayer, meditation and positive thoughts.

Global Cooperation for a Better World

As a result of the Million Minutes of Peace project, the Brahma Kumaris received from the United Nations seven Peace Messenger Awards. This inspired the first International Peace Messenger Initiative dedicated to the United Nations, Global Cooperation for a Better World, which was launched from the Houses of Parliament in London in April, 1988. The project brought about the increased cooperation and understanding between nations, communities and individuals, gathering the hopes and visions for a better world of hundreds of thousands of people in 129 countries. These were then synthesized into the Global Vision Statement which forms the United Nations Peace Messenger and UNESCO supported publication "Visions of a Better World."

Sharing Values for a Better World

In September 1994, the University launched its third international project Sharing Values for a Better World, which adopted as its central focus the tenet in the Preamble of the UN Charter, "To reaffirm faith in the fundamental rights, in the dignity and worth of human person". The project aimed to raise awareness of core spiritual values and the development of those values at both an individual and collective level.

Living Values: An Educational Program

Sharing Our Values for a Better World identified 12 universal core values, which were the central focus in the publication "Living Values: A Guidebook". This book was published in honor of the United Nations 50th Anniversary and contained a section on how to integrate values in the classroom curriculum. Twenty educators from around the world gathered together in 1996 in New York City to explore the issues of values, attitudes and behavior and to share their experiences of working with values in the classroom and within the community. The purpose of the meeting was to develop a strategy to support values-based education for all. This included exploring new skills, pedagogical approaches and training programs for educators and caregivers. The needs of pre-school, primary and secondary age groups were addressed as well as those children in emergency situations.

Opportunities to learn about values were found to be interwoven throughout the educational process crossing traditional lines of specific subject areas. Using "Living Values: A Guidebook" and "The Convention on the Rights of the Child" as a framework, the educators agreed to work together to develop a program to set the pace for lifelong learning and to commit to testing it in their school communities. The educators produced the "Living Values Educators' Kit" in consultation with UNICEF, UNESCO and the Brahma Kumaris. This kit is currently being piloted in 57 countries.

The Founder - Brahma Baba

Born in 1876 into a humble home, the son of a village schoolmaster, Brahma Baba was brought up within the disciplines of the Hindu tradition. However, he did not follow in his father's footsteps and instead entered the jewelry business, earning a considerable fortune as a diamond trader. As a businessman, he maintained a highly respectable

position within the local community and was known for his philanthropy. He had an inherent ability to cope with change. At age 60, when most of his colleagues were planning for retirement, Brahma Baba entered into the most active and fascinating phase of his life.

In 1936, over a period of several months, he felt the need to invest more time in quiet reflection and solitude. Then one day, while in a meditative state, he felt a warm flow of energy surrounding him, filling him with light and exposing him to a series of powerful visions. These visions continued periodically over several months, giving new insights into the innate qualities of human soul, revealing the mysterious entity of God and explaining the process of world transformation. The intensity of the message they conveyed was such that Brahma Baba felt impelled to wind up his business and devote himself to understanding the significance and application of his revealed knowledge. The sound of the words ringing in his mind seemed new, yet felt so true and real.

Over 60 years have passed since Brahma Baba received the series of visions. Apart from those touched by the same visionary experiences, who could have guessed that the young women he placed at the fore of the institution would now be on the world stage, sharing platforms with political and religious leaders at the highest level, and leading a lifestyle revolution, together with over 450,000 people from all cultural and religious, racial and social backgrounds? Or that millions of others would be taking benefit from the teachings he received and passed on, finding empowerment in the present and hope for the future, when loss of integrity in human hearts and minds has plunged so many into despair?

The living skills that he taught have stood the test of time. The young women with whom he entrusted leadership of the organization, now in their seventies and eighties, have become beacons of love, peace, and happiness in a world increasingly troubled by disordered relationships, greed, addiction, anger and violence.

Brahma Baba left his body in 1969 at the age of 93. In Madhuban, the Tower of Peace stands as a tribute to the invincible spirit of an ordinary human being who achieved greatness by rising to the challenge of the deeper truths of life.

Chariot of Shiv Baba

(Excerpts from Adi Dev pages 49-51) "Dear child, consider yourself a soul and remember Me." In these words, Shiva Baba, the Highest on High, sums up His teachings. But behind this simple phrase lies a limitless treasure of Knowledge and experience. Each day, therefore, Baba would descend anew from the Incorporeal World to explain another aspect, another unseen implication, and most of all, He would exemplify His words in very practical ways, so that the lessons became indelibly engraved into the minds of his "sweet children."

People everywhere are familiar with the expression "God is love." But how many have had the unparalleled good fortune to experience His limitless love directly? By entering the body of Dada, He showed what it really means to be the Father. God raised His divine family with such meticulous care and attention that even the simplest soul could understand immediately that here, indeed, is the Ocean of Love. When Shiva entered Dada's body, He renamed that soul whose chariot He now shared, with the name Prajapita Brahma, (Father of the People). All those who heard the Knowledge, which

Shiva spoke through Brahma's mouth became the mouth-born progeny, or Brahmins. And so, no matter what age they were, old mothers or teenagers, all who recognized Him became His "sweet children." They took the name Brahma Kumars and Brahma Kumaris, "the pure sons and daughters of Brahma."

They gathered to him like needles to a magnet, and they stayed. And so an institution was created, out of the love of souls for God; an institution of purification, a sacrificial fire, a Yagya. And the Yagya grew and grew, as more and more souls heard and understood. Their hearts simply melted to grasp the nature of the process, which was going on: the world was actually being transformed before their eyes. It began with one soul, that of Prajapita Brahma. Soon 400 souls had dashed headlong into the Flame. Today, there are 500,000 Brahmins whose minds are firmly turned to Baba, who are purifying their natures, their sanskars, (innate tendencies or personality). And they are also channeling Baba's incredible vibration into the material world, secretly affecting Nature itself, causing the present Iron Age to finish, and paving the way for an Age of Gold, heralding the reappearance of the Royal Dynasty of the Sun.

The story of the birth of the Yagya is told in the following pages largely through the words of those who experienced those ecstatic days themselves: those who witnessed Baba's arrival, who surrendered to Him, and who underwent the testing by "fire" which made the young company invincible. The story, of course, is not yet complete, for the Final scenes have yet to be played. Now the time has come for Baba to be hailed and recognized, by the entire world. The face of every atheist will pale, the mind of every devotee of every bodily religion will boggle, and the truth of the present moment will be clearly visible. And then.... the fireworks will start.

World War III, the Final War, the Great Mahabharat War, will be launched. The terrible, swift sword of nuclear destruction will separate us all from these worn-out bodies, and we shall rise again in our subtle form, to the visionary planes, and meet with our Creator to be judged. After that, our loving Father, Shiva Baba, will guide us on our final homeward flight, to Shantidham, the World of Peace.

Day of the Daughters

Was it an accident that most of Baba's children in the beginning were women? Or that he put women exclusively in charge of the Yagya? Of course God does nothing by accident. Many reasons can be adduced. For one thing, it was a question of physical safety. If it had been brothers who went out into the world to announce Baba's revolutionary spiritual teachings, they would have been attacked and killed. Coming from the mouths of young girls the Knowledge seemed less threatening, and even Baba's enemies were forced to act with some restraint.

It cannot be too strongly emphasized how much opposition arose against the Spiritual University. Baba spoke truthfully and clearly about the diseased state of life in modern India, the corruption which affected every soul. The truth was painful. Moreover, by demanding purity by every one of His children - something never attempted by any religious movement in history - those obsessed with sexual desires felt their very identities threatened. As indeed they were. Baba was intent on causing us to dis-identify with our bodies, He made us transcend the false ego structure in which we had been

trapped. On the whole, the male ego was a greater enemy than the female. Yet more importantly, Shiva Baba had by His very Presence challenged the authority of every guru - not to mention all the scholars, priests, philosophers, and scientists in every corner of the world. Baba had announced Himself as the Supreme Almighty Authority.

He was not simply a high soul. He is the Supreme Soul, the one and only God. No one had ever said that before. Even the gurus who claimed to be God were careful to qualify it by saying that God was in everyone. Were they all wrong and Baba right? Should the entire body of Indian scriptures be thrown out the window? Who would dare say such thing?" Usually it was a young girl sitting peacefully, dressed all in white, sweet and demure, with eyes that could sear the soul of an evil man. Shiva Baba is the gentlest Being in the universe. Yet simply by His now into making the most crucial and difficult of his life. For if Baba is not God, then one should instantly surrender to Him. On the other hand, if Baba was not God, then he was committing a great sin by making such a claim, and ought to be opposed. Shiva's descent thus divided humanity into two camps: those who loved God and those who did not.

For most recorded history, men had dominated women in religious as well as worldly matters. Baba had come to bring that state of affairs to a close. So He put His authority into the capable hands of females: it was the day of the daughters. The switch of roles had a remarkably therapeutic effect on all Baba's children, with women in front, and the men working powerfully behind the scenes. Mutual respect was fostered, and purity more easily maintained. The daughters learned to deliver the lectures, to sit on the gaddhi ("the guru seat") and lead meditation. They were given the authority to read the Murli in centers around the world. It was daughters who went into trance to visit Baba in the Subtle World. These women learned to tolerate adversity, and to remain unaffected by praise, which is even harder. Their performance was so astounding, that based on what they accomplished in the last Confluence Age 5,000 years ago, women have been idolized even until today.

In early pagan rituals, virgins were sacrificed, in an echo of the sacrifice of fragility and vice which Baba's daughters had made into the Yagya. Another symbol of womanhood is the cow. Not only are such animals still sacred in India, but even at the foot of Mt. Sinai while Moses was receiving his divine inspirations, the Hebrews worshipped the Golden Calf, representing the purity of the virgins.

Even in the West, women have been the traditional keepers of the highest human values. Purity, chastity, and modesty were always terms of praise bestowed on that fair sex, who for that reason were placed on pedestals until modern times, when they along with men tumbled down into the mud of vice. Today, it is no longer even admitted that lust is a sin. This is the measure of how far we have fallen. Now it was women who were once more taking their rightful place on the pedestal of Baba's heart.

The brothers also performed nobly on the battlefield, however, and so are memorialized in a host of scriptures. Since they gave up their monkey-like desires, they are remembered in the form of Hanuman, the monkey god who served the Lord. In the Ramayana, it is told that God required an army of monkeys to help Him defeat the evil Ravan. In the Mahabharata, the story of the five heroic Pandavs is recorded. They were only a handful but they defeated the world, with the help of God. Now the real Pandavas

were defeating the evil army of vices within themselves, and thus transforming the earth.

Three Acts of God

God comes when there is extreme darkness of ignorance, unrighteousness, and irreligiousness in the world. He comes to bring back truth and establish a kingdom of truth. This is something many sages and holy men in India believe in. In a way the Christian do also believe in the second coming of Christ whom they consider as God. God's existence has been demonstrated philosophically over the centuries in a number of ingenious proofs, such as the famous ontological argument of St. Anselm (which many philosophers still consider valid), but it is unlikely any of these have even altered anyone's prior beliefs. Beyond the realm of logic, however, is that of experience. And many people have indeed been transformed by what others refer to as "mystical encounters", but which may be understood simply as an intellectual (some would say telepathic) link with the Supreme Soul. This is called Raja Yoga, and is the real foundation of all religions.

It stands to reason that people become confused about their relationship with God, they will run into great difficulties. Today the world as a whole had run into great difficulties; should we not wonder whether we may have become confused about the nature of God? Since the great majority of people either believe in no God or in a God who is omnipresent - which in terms of logic comes down to the same thing - it is reasonable to consider that this may be the source of the confusion. If God does exist, it stands to reason that He would have to descend personally to this corporeal realm and rectify the confusion. Since if we already possessed the correct beliefs, He would have to come, it is also obvious that some of His teachings would contradict widespread beliefs; but those teachings would of necessity always be on the highest ethical and spiritual plane, always aiming at the transformation of lives of His students, so that with behavior royal and pure as gods, the souls who learned from the Great Teacher would be able to revitalize the world after the present corrupt and oppressive societies had destroyed themselves. (Excerpt from Editor's Preface to *Adi Dev* by Robert Shubow, 1982)

When Shiva Baba comes in the corporeal world He performs three great tasks. He establishes heaven (which are the Golden and Silver Ages) through Brahma; He destroys the old iron-aged world of vices through Shankar by teaching us Raja Yoga to conquer our vices and inculcate divine qualities; and He sustains His creation through Vishnu the symbol of perfection. Through His teachings of Raja Yoga He enables us to transform ourselves and reach our original perfection. He comes to become our Father, Teacher and Satguru.

(Explain further the three acts of God how creation is carried out through Brahma.) Shiva Baba enters the body of Brahma and adopts us as His children. Through Brahma's mouth, He tells us of the inheritance we are to receive as His direct children. Using the body of Brahma, He becomes our Teacher and He gives us the truth about Himself, about the soul, and about His creation. As the Satguru, He teaches us how to go back home. In fact He will lead all of us, souls, back home at the end of physical time.)

Self Reflection

How do all of these informations relate to you personally? How do you see your original

aim of learning meditation changes now that you have these informations about Brahma Baba and God's task of transformation?

- Entertain questions for clarification. Recommend to students the book: "Adi Dev - The First Man" as reference in getting to know yagya and Brahma Baba.
 - End the session with meditation.
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Lesson 12 - The Murli

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Lesson 12: SPIRITUAL EDUCATION AND THE MURLI

Content

The Purpose of Spiritual Education

1. To gain insights into the self, God, others and life
2. To understand the laws of life and their application
3. To give meaning to life
4. To change oneself through conscious choice

The subjects of a spiritual study

1. Knowledge 2. Yoga 3. Dharna or inculcation of Virtues 4. Service
 - The Spiritual Student
 - The Spiritual Teacher & His teaching method
 - The Lessons: Sakar Murli and Avyakt Murli

Objectives

At the end of the sessions (two session-hours), the participants will be able to:

- Recognize the importance of spiritual study
- Identify the subjects in a spiritual study
- Recognize and appreciate the difference between Sakar Murli and Avyakt Murli.

Procedure

- Meditation Experience for at least 15 minutes at the start and end of murli reading
- Spiritual Education is based on universal spiritual laws. Such laws apply to every human being regardless of his or her place of birth, culture and religious or political background_ The goal of a spiritual education is to develop the original qualities of the soul. This has nothing to do with a person's intellectual capacity. Anyone, with or without previous knowledge or training, can enhance the quality of his or her life through spiritual wisdom. Spiritual study teaches you to make optimal use of your mind, so the concentration, clarity and the ability to make positive choices, increase.

Look around you and you will probably have the feeling that many of the universal laws

of life have been forgotten. After all if, we truly understood these spiritual laws, wouldn't we also have the wisdom to apply them? However, this does not seem to be the case.

Clarification of spiritual concepts

Love is only one of them. For example: · What exactly is renunciation? · What does a virtue like serenity really mean? · Who is God? · What is the meaning of life? · Where do we come from? Where are we going? · What is the influence of religion on the soul? · What is the difference between religion and spirituality?

Even if we know all of these things, are we also integrating these understanding into our everyday life? For most part, no. On the contrary, it's as though we have lost the meaning and value of the soul and its relationship to the body and nature. It's as though we have forgotten what life is all about.

A spiritual education is aimed exactly at this - at rediscovering the value of life in a practical way. This is why a good spiritual education needs to include a thorough explanation of these vital, spiritual laws and concepts, in addition to creating a good meditation practice. As mentioned previously, the deeper you go into such understanding, the deeper will be your meditation experience. A good spiritual education teaches you how to live life as an art - happily and with fulfillment.

The Purpose of a spiritual study

Gaining Insight into the Self, God, Others and Life - insight to these aspects create answers to four main questions that humanity has been asking throughout the ages: Who am I? Who is God? What is the purpose of life and How should I interact with others?

Why haven't we been able to find satisfying answers to these questions up to now? The most obvious reason is that we are too involved in the problem itself, too much a part of the questions and there is too much at stake. Therefore, we do not have sufficient 'distance' to see reality as it is. However, there is one Being who retains total objectivity, One who never comes into the cycle of birth and death, and so alone maintains the 'distance' needed to be an impartial observer. Such is the part of the Supreme Soul. He alone sees the complete cycle of time, knows the past, present and future. He alone has the reliable overview. Also, He is without any selfish motives. For all the above reasons, the Supreme is ideally positioned to teach us great insights about ourselves and the state of the world.

For Raja Yogis, a relationship with the Supreme is not so much a goal in itself, as much as it is a means to get to the self, and realize the full potential of the self. God is sometimes called the Seed of the human world because it is as though He holds the 'blueprint' of human life. To know Him means to know the self, others and life itself. The aim of the Supreme Soul is to liberate all souls from the bonds of body-conscious thinking (learned, acquired, limited) thinking.

Understanding the laws of life and their application

Insights into the laws are useful only if we are able to apply them to our daily life. Otherwise it is armchair knowledge. Such impractical knowledge can result in mental tension - we know a lot but aren't necessarily able to live up to it. Knowledge of this sort

just make us unhappy. It is only when we thoroughly understand the spiritual laws (such as the laws of karma, entropy, love, etc.) that we can then start applying them in our life.

In short, the study of Raja Yoga is based on a practice, which is oriented towards the situations of everyday life. It is not knowledge for the sake of having large discussions or philosophical debates. Rather, it is knowledge for studying, inculcating and applying in our own lives.

Giving meaning to life

Many of us might have had the feeling that (our) life is not very fulfilling or meaningful. We might have wondered at the use of getting up every morning at the same time, to go to the same job, etc. Or we might have wondered at the meaning of so much suffering on earth. What is the purpose of the increasing violence everywhere? And what can I, just an insignificant, single human being in a big world', possibly do to make this world a little better?

Thinking about life in this way can lead to feelings of frustration, hopelessness, apathy, aggression or boredom. However, the more we begin to understand and see the spiritual reality behind the visible reality, the more interesting life becomes. It is as though a new dimension opens up to us. We begin to understand that behind each action, each gesture and each outer appearance, there is a world of significance. Nothing happens in a vacuum, everything has purpose, meaning and consequence. Looking at life in this way makes life exciting; it makes it a challenge.

When we begin to understand the way events are interconnected, we see that our 'one small insignificant life' can be very important indeed for the whole life in this planet. One person's personal growth and spiritual development has an effect on everything and everyone, even on people who live far away from us. We are all interconnected. When we begin to realize this, life becomes more meaningful; it becomes more valuable. This is when we begin to live!

Changing the self through conscious choice

If there is one thing certain in life, it is that everything is constantly changing. And whether we like it or not we will also have to change. If we do not consciously choose to change, we might end up feeling forced to, later by circumstances. This usually creates a general feeling of resistance to change - the feeling of being pressured, like swimming against the stream. This attitude is a source of tension.

Knowledge and understanding of the current time and the condition of the human soul gives us the insights and power to consciously choose to make changes in our life. Through such action it is as though we change ahead of time, before time forces us to change. We no longer simply react to change, but actively take part in the process of creation.

The Subjects of Spiritual Study

There are four subjects taught by the Brahma Kumaris World Spiritual University.

- **Knowledge;** The first subject. In each BK center there are early morning lessons. These lessons begin with half hour meditation followed by 45 to 60 minutes of class. These classes - called the Murlis- take up in greater detail subjects we

already discussed during the basic and intermediate courses. The interesting thing about this study is that people who have been studying here for over twenty years listen to the same Murli as do people who have only been studying here for a few months. God's teachings are so deep and yet so clear that each and everyone can extract from them whatever he/she is looking for.

- **Yoga**; Apart from the study of knowledge, yoga is also important. Yoga means linking the mind to the Supreme Soul, and it is this which gives us power and enables us to have the realization and experience of everything we learn. (This the importance for the 30 minutes meditation before the Murli class and at least 10 minutes meditation after listening to the Murli). Knowledge without yoga is impractical and burdensome. Yoga without knowledge will not have any power - it will be an experience, but there will be no understanding thus we will not be able to recreate that experience at will or integrate it into our personality. It is only when both knowledge and yoga come together that there can be deep insight - wisdom.
- **Dharna**; A Hindi word that is not very easy to translate. It is precisely for this reason that we have chosen to retain the Hindi word. (The Hindi language is rich in subtle connotations and words that have more than one meaning). As we progress further in this study we will come across many such words that deliberately have not been translated into English for this reason. Dharna means the inculcation of divine virtues and powers. Dharna is the result of taking up this knowledge through a combination of study and yoga. When the experience of the union with God (yoga) and insight (knowledge) come together, thoughts, feelings, words and actions all become the same. There is no longer a difference in what we think, feel, do or say. This is dharna - when we start to embody the teachings.
- **Service** - When dharna increases, we automatically begin to share our treasures with others - treasures like peace, love, patience, respect and happiness. The experience of our own spiritual efforts and transformation is what enables us, in a very natural way, to explain to others and also to sustain them in different ways. This is called service. The most powerful and subtle service is to sustain other souls through pure, positive (elevated) thoughts. We might find it difficult sometimes to explain to others in words about who they really are or how a connection with the Supreme would be of so much benefit to them. But we can always support others in a subtle way, simply by having pure, elevated thoughts, by showing respect for who they (really) are, even though they may sometimes act in a negative or hostile way. Through this we give others hope and confidence in their own spiritual personality. We are often not aware enough of the effect of our thoughts on others, nor of the fact that we souls are all interconnected.

The Spiritual Student

Motivation

The more motivated we are, the better will be our results. In this study, motivation increases as we gain deeper insight into the Supreme, time and ourselves. Our appreciation for the unlimited advantages of this spiritual study will grow.

Consciousness

A clear mind is an important ingredient of this study as the clarity of our consciousness determines the degree to which we will be able to take this knowledge in. It is good to be reminded that alcohol, drugs and other mind altering substances (and also watching television for long stretches of time) have a negative effect on our clarity and should be avoided as much as possible. In any case be sober when you come to the Raja Yoga centers. Only then will you experience maximum benefit from the lessons and the experiences you will have during meditation.

Responsibility and regularity

The interesting part of this education is that everything done here is done for the self. There are no examinations (other than those in our daily life) and we do not get any kind of certification or diploma. Regular meditation and study is our own responsibility. This gives us the opportunity to build a certain discipline and regularity into our own life. It is an enormous challenge to really do something for one's own benefit, out of self-respect and not for our friends, our parents, our teacher, but for ourselves alone.

Results of a Spiritual Education

The results of this spiritual education be divided into short term and long term. You have undoubtedly already experienced some of the short term results.

The Spiritual Teacher

An important aspect of the spiritual study offered by the Brahma Kumaris is the realization who exactly is teaching it? You have already met different teachers in the last couple of weeks from this institution, and you will meet more. But all of what you have been taught, has been taught to them by the Supreme Soul. All the teachers here are, at one and the same time, students. Brahma Baba also saw himself as a student of God. He stressed this point to prevent people from seeing him as a guru. Brahma and the more senior students of this institution (whom we call brothers and sisters) are models, not gurus. It is important to be aware of this, otherwise we might be tempted to start praising or even defaming others. If we become attached to a certain teacher or fellow student, we will miss the point of these teachings. So, the best way to proceed is to remember that all of us here are students, and that it is God who is the Teacher.

How God Teaches

It was in 1936 when Brahma, at age 60, had a series of visionary experiences. Brahma first saw visions of the soul as a point of light, followed by visions of the Supreme Soul with the same form. He also saw images of a new world in which people lived together in harmony. In another vision he saw this old world going through a delicate and turbulent phase. Brahma Baba understood that a time of intense transformation lay just ahead of us and that he was to play an important role in this transformation process. What that role would be he did not yet know. After these intense experience Brahma Baba decided to quit his worldly business (he was a wealthy diamond merchant) in order

to devote the rest of his life to Godly service.

From that day onward, Brahma Baba became the "instrument" of the Supreme to communicate His teachings. The Supreme spoke daily through the mouth of Brahma Baba. The wisdom that God shared was just as new to Brahma Baba as it was to the many who came to listen to this new knowledge. A group of people formed around Brahma Baba, most of whom were women. This group ultimately became the foundation of this worldwide spiritual university. From the very beginning, Brahma Baba put the women in front and made them the administrative heads of the university. And even today the Brahma Kumaris is still run by women.

One might ask why the Supreme Soul chose this method to communicate with His children. Why didn't He just give visions, or why didn't He just transform the world Himself? Why teach and explain? The problem with visions is that they have to be interpreted. As we know from the scriptures all religious founders had clear insights, but they were always interpreted later on in many different ways, causing a lot of confusion. Aside from this, it is we human souls, who have made this world into what it is today. It is not God's world, it is our world. It is out of love and mercy for his children that the Supreme Father gives us the power (yoga) and the insight (knowledge) to put right what we ourselves have done wrong. God gives us the tools to take responsibility for our own world. He puts every soul in the position of settling his own karmic accounts and thus regaining self-respect and happiness.

From 1936 to 1969 the Supreme communicated His teachings through the mouth of Brahma Baba. In the same way that we human souls use our physical organs to speak, listen and see the Supreme used Brahma Baba's organs. By the way, this phenomenon occurred with the complete approval and permission of Brahma Baba. He was not possessed and did not go into trance. He was always completely conscious of what was going on and was able to hear the lessons himself, too. He used to make jokes about this: "My ears hear these things first". The lessons were recorded and typed out later. In this way, by talking to us directly, the possibility of misinterpretation was eliminated.

The Lessons

Sakar Murli & Avyakt Murli. The lessons Baba taught and still teaches are called 'Murlis'. The word 'Murli' literally means flute of knowledge. The flute is a symbol of communication (of knowledge). In India the deity Krishna, for example, is shown playing a flute.

Sakar Murli

There are two types of Murlis. The first is called Sakar Murli. 'Sakar' means corporeal. The sakar murlis were spoken from the beginning until 1969, when Brahma Baba passed away. The word Sakar refers to the fact that Brahma Baba was still in a physical body in this period. The Murlis spoken after 1969 are called Avyakt Murlis. 'Avyakt' means subtle, non-physical and refers to the fact that Brahma Baba now plays a subtle, non-physical role from the Subtle Regions. We will come back to these matters later on in the

lessons.

All the knowledge that has been revealed is found in the Sakar Murlis. God takes up many, many different subjects of human life. The Sakar Murlis are the foundation of all knowledge. The things you have been hearing about in the basic and intermediate courses, like the Cycle of Time, the role of the Supreme, the original powers and qualities of the soul, etc. were all revealed in the Sakar Murlis.

Ayvakt Murli

The Ayvakt Murlis usually go deeper into specific subject. The tone is also slightly different. In these Murlis Baba takes up very specific powers and qualities of the soul and gives directions that are relevant for the time we are living in now. At the end of this lesson we will read a part of each kind of Murli. (Prepare samples of both types of Murlis. Read excerpts from them. Read the Murli straight and then clarify or explain concepts or words students do not understand.)

The Murli goes into a huge variety of subjects. Through the Murli, Baba teaches us how life used to be, compared to what we have made it now. His objective view is very enlightening. Listening to the Murli we will hear new points every day points that are important to our personal transformation. Some points are repeated almost every day in different forms. This is because it takes a while before the real meaning of a certain aspect becomes clear to us.

The Murli talks of sanskars of many births, In this way we become aware of our subconscious conditionings, ideas and experiences. Sometimes a sensitive spot is hit, sometimes something falls into place, and sometimes a mental or emotional block is removed. The Murli always clarifies and gives solutions. It is interesting to hear how God looks at our world and us. His perspective is also different He looks at everything from a different reality. It's the reality of spirituality.

The reality that is visible to us is, in fact, only a limited vision of reality. There is another reality, which is invisible to our eyes, because it is incorporeal. Baba explains to us the relationship between the invisible (the soul, the Supreme Soul, the soul world) and the visible (matter and the material world). In fact, the whole creation is about the relationship between these three things: the soul, matter and God. The human soul and matter are constantly changing. Through an increasing body consciousness an imbalance has developed in the relationship between soul and matter. The soul forgets its spiritual identity (soul consciousness) and gradually becomes a slave to matter. The only constant factor in this `game' is the Supreme Soul, who is forever pure. It is for this reason that only He can give us insights into the relationship between the corporeal and the incorporeal.

Teaching Methods of the Supreme Teacher

The Supreme Soul explains in different ways. First of all He shows us contrasts. For example, the contrast between Heaven (Golden Age) and Hell (the Iron Age), between love and hate. Baba not only explains what love and happiness mean, but He also explains what hate and sorrow really mean, as most of us no longer understand these things anymore. We have been in this uncomprehending state of mind for such a long time that we have become used to it. We are not able to clearly see our present condition

until the contrast with happiness is made clear.

Baba compares things to the world we know in order to clarify certain concepts. For example, sometimes He compares all human beings to children of one big family who have forgotten their parents - the result of this is we keep fighting amongst each other. Sometimes Baba compares us to the thorns in a jungle. Baba is the Master of the Garden who has come to change us thorns into flowers. Baba also uses images so that not only the left side of the brain (mental, rational energy), but also the right side (intuitive, creative energy) is addressed. For example, Baba uses the image of the lotus flower to explain to us what detachment really means. The lotus flower grows with its roots in the mud, but the flower is above the surface of the water and reaches out to the sun. In the same way we must stand with our two feet firmly on this earth, but our thoughts are turned to the Spiritual Sun, to God.

Baba also gives new facts to think about For instance: "You are a soul". Many people think: "I am a body and I have a soul". Baba says: "You are a soul and you have a body". When the meaning of this fact touches us our world view changes completely. Facts are also given about the identity of God. These are of great importance, because religious arguments are among the major causes of war among people everywhere. Every religion claims God for itself and claims to act in the name of God. But only God Himself can reveal His true identity and true motives.

God sometimes calls Himself a surgeon. He makes diagnoses and makes very clear statements: "Your souls have become sick. You have become unhappy and are trapped of body consciousness". These are rather bold statements, but the Supreme has such authority that He can make them. He looks at the world and us from such a pure, true and unbiased perspective.

Assignment

Give the student a copy of a sakar murli for him or her study according to the 4 subjects. Note down some points about the 4 subjects. Note down an inspiration he/she is taking from the Murli. Note down also points from murli he/she wants to clarify.

(End the class with meditation)

Lesson 13 - Principles

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Lesson 13: PURITY AND MARYADAS

This lesson is best given after the souls have been listening to murlis after a period of 6 weeks. Souls should have deeper experience of meditation and love of the murli before they can truly appreciate purity and the maryadas.

Objectives

At the end of two sessions or three hours, the participants will be able to:

1. Recognize the importance of purity,
2. Define purity,
3. Identify the levels of purity, and
4. Discuss the ways on how to practice the different levels of purity.

Procedure

Meditation Experience

"I, the soul see my thoughts flashing before me in variety ... some may be pure and powerful, others impure and weak ... others may merely be wasteful or useless thoughts ... I see my thoughts standing before me ... I see those thoughts ... I judge those thoughts ... I relate them to the eternal relationship between I, the soul and the Supreme Soul ... Those thoughts which harmonize with this relationship I treasure as being jewels which add to my realization.. . I nurture these pure thoughts ... the intellect grasps only the highest thoughts of knowledge and the feelings of deep love for God ... I find these pure thoughts carry me beyond the limits of active thought to the realm of pure experience ... I the pure soul have such a clear link with God ... this is the highest experience of bliss ... My pure thoughts have created not a tree but the very seed itself - the awareness of soul."

Trigger Activity

Ask for initial feelings about purity. Explore initial questions they have about purity. Write them down on the board.

Definition of Purity

After the importance of Purity has been drawn out, clarified and explained, the different aspects and a broad definition of Purity can be presented. Given enough time, some suggested answers or analogies can first be taken from the students prior to giving the prepared definition.

Purity is the soul's original and eternal form and nature of being clean and free of vices or negativity. Among the soul's seven original qualities, it ranks first being known as "the mother of peace and happiness." Other than peace and happiness/bliss, it is also generally accepted as the mother of all the other original and eternal qualities (love, power, knowledge, mercy from which the thirty six virtues emerge (a diagram can be shown to elaborate this).

The importance of purity in Brahmin life is such that purity has been called "the elevated decoration and greatness of Brahmin life; the breath of Brahmin life which is the basis of the reward for 21 births (Golden Age/ heaven). Meaning to say, depending on how much one has cleansed the soul and imbibed or practiced this virtue, one's time of entry in the cycle and one's status in Golden Age or heaven is determined.

Without becoming pure, there cannot be the inculcation of knowledge. Knowledge needs

a golden vessel. At the present Confluence Age, the basis of all attainments is purity. It is the personality of purity that is the uniqueness and attraction of Brahmin life. It is also the basis of service.

Consequences of Impurity

"Impurity of any variety gives an experience of sorrow or peacelessness. If at any time there is a wave of sorrow or peacelessness, its seed is impurity. Whether it is due to one of the main vices (anger, greed, lust, ego, attachment) or due to the subtle forms of the vices." Ask real life examples from students or give your examples.

Hence, we can see that purity acts as a canopy of protection that saves one from the innumerable suffering and obstacles of Maya or the vices. Thus, to safeguard one's peace and happiness as well as the many attainments received at this auspicious time of Confluence, the practice of purity in its different levels is important to insure continuing experience of benefit for the soul.

Levels of Purity

Physical or External

1. **Food**; The preparation of and taking in of pure or satwic food is necessary in sustaining a spiritual lifestyle. By pure food we mean one that is strictly plant-based or vegetarian; i.e., no meat, no seafood, no eggs. A plant-based diet is not only a healthier diet for the body but also for the mind. (A brief explanation of how the negative energy of violence, anger, fear etc. connected to the slaughter of animals for food have a subtle negative effect and influence on the mind and intellect). It can also be mentioned that for a serious practitioner of meditation, onion and garlic are likewise not taken because they have a very stimulating/ agitating effect on the senses.

Note: Explain that this subject of taking pure food will be taken in depth later. Simply underline the importance of eating and preparing pure food - it helps purify the mind and the body.

2. **Clothes we wear**; one of the things that help sustain the level or degree of purity of the soul is soul consciousness. Body consciousness easily attracts the vices, which include lust and ego - the direct opposite of the soul's original quality of purity. Simple clothes that do not pull the mind and the senses to body consciousness and to impure visions and impure thoughts are the safeguards of purity.

3. **Physical Cleanliness**; "Cleanliness is next to Godliness." Maintaining physical cleanliness contribute in creating a pure and good atmosphere. Such atmosphere helps in creating yoga vibrations.

4. **Caution**; However, being pulled or impressed by a virtue, speciality or personality is the seed of lust. We are bowing to that one and have stepped down from our own throne of self-respect. It leaves the soul in a vulnerable position where it is easily influenced by whatever the other says or does; the soul loses its power of discrimination and judgement. Because the awareness often gives a "good experience" ... the soul does not realize that it is a form of lust.

Subtle or Internal

1. **Celibacy**; Purity is not just observing celibacy on the physical level. To be constantly celibate means to be free from impurity by not allowing your attitude to cause mischief. You are first defeated in your attitude, then your vision and then your behavior. Our pure thoughts purify the five elements. They become a light for the world. Service expands through this. Many weak souls will also take from our power of purity. Hence, we pay attention to our thoughts, vision, ode, dreams and relationships in such a way that Baba can work through us. After all, the definition of perfect purity given by Baba is "None but One".

2. **Thoughts**; our thoughts are said to be the "food of the mind." Whatever it is that we read (magazines, newspapers, books etc.) listen to (radio, gossips, etc.), and watch (TV, movies, theatre etc.) have a great influence and bearing on what we think, say and do. Oftentimes, they become the raw ingredients that constitute the main diet of our whole thinking process. Therefore, make sure that the contents of what you read, watch and listen to only carry positive inputs and do not pull the mind and the senses towards body consciousness and towards being influenced by any of the five vices.

A general guideline when caught in a situation where the eyes and ears are exposed to something impure and negative is to "see but don't see, hear but don't hear." That is, do not focus the attention on these negative inputs and simply watch / listen as a detached observer. Give more examples.

3. **Words**; The words we speak are audible expression of our thoughts, which as we mentioned earlier are greatly influenced by what we read, watch and listen to. Depending on the content and the manner by which we speak them, the words we say can have a great impact and influence on others. As such, positive words that uplift and bring happiness to others and even those which maybe direct and firm yet are said in a gentle, objective and or sweet manner help sustain the consciousness and experience of purity. On the other hand, negative words (insults, curses, gossip, green jokes, etc.) that cause hurt and give sorrow as well as encourage dirty thoughts, physical desires and attraction towards others are considered impure.

4. **Interactions and Relationships** - There are "many attitudes that interfere with our being able to maintain pure feelings and respect for ourselves and others. We label others and ourselves with the degrading titles of black or fat, or white or skinny. We fulfill our inner emptiness with feelings of attraction or repulsion, hatred or infatuation, compulsion or dislike... As the consciousness becomes less and less pure, others become just the means to fulfill our own desires, and we become totally self-centered. By contrast, in the state of self-respect (the awareness of being a soul having all attainments) there is a growing and natural regard for others, and the innate purity of the self is revealed.

When one is constantly in this state and awareness of self-respect, closeness to others is based on virtues. Co-operation, encouragement, good wishes and elevated vision are signs of purity in a relationship.

Yuktis in attaining the levels of purity

What to do when Impure Thoughts Enter the Mind? Suppose you remember a past, impure thought. Bring this thought before your mind and ask "Why did I remember this person, or this brother or sister?"

- Bring this picture before you. Ask the questions:

Do I have any desire?

Do I want something from this physical body, do I have any attraction from this physical body?

Is there any part of this body that I like or love?

This body is made up of the five elements, it is a bundle of bones, blood and leather. How can I love it? No, I definitely love the soul. It is my brother. All souls belong to one home. They are children of the one Father.

- But when thoughts do arise out of body consciousness, clarify for yourself that this is not your thought, and that you have not done this action, but that it was done in the past.
- "Now, I am a pure child of a pure Father. So I have to see and create the same consciousness in me and in others, and to see other persons as souls. They, too, are pure souls like shining stars." Create this consciousness.
- Sustain the mind with pure and powerful thoughts from the Murli and classes of the seniors. By acknowledging and not suppressing impure thoughts you will easily clear negative thoughts within a short period of time. Your concentration power will increase. You will be able to clear, complete and burn impure or waste thoughts, and easily become an embodiment of original thought.

Methods of Uplifting the Consciousness Away from the Senses

1. By attention on yoga, we uplift our energy. This is converted into subtle energy. This energy helps our mind. When we think of Baba our mind and intellect is pulled upward and then the sexual energy reaches the pineal gland and is converted into subtle energy. The gross energy can be converted into mental energy.
2. Through the practice of churning, the soul utilizes the power of the thoughts. Through this, the gross energy is converted into subtle energy.
3. Hard physical and mental work. This hard work becomes the easy way to maintain purity. In the hard work, energy will be utilized and we will not be disturbed. Hence, do the work so lightly as if you are dancing.
4. Renounce the attachment to one's appearance. Dress according to your role, not in order to impress or attract. Baba says this old body is impure - why do you want to decorate it? Give it the decoration of simplicity. One should have such decoration that one looks like an angel. The way you look, listen and speak - all should be so pure that people are attracted by that purity.
5. In taking food, we eat in the consciousness of feeding the body not for the sense stimulation of enjoying the taste.

Methods to Ensure Purity in Relationships

1. Practicing celibacy in this last birth of yours in Iron Age. Sex-lust is the number one enemy of the soul. It is a vice, which leads to other vices such as anger and attachment. In relationships we have brotherly drishti (Bhai-bhai) vision or vision with the understanding that we are all "soul brothers" with one parent - God. We are one family

and can have a brotherly/sisterly vision.

2. Seeing the greatness in each soul.
3. Being easy and making others easy, this brings love and forgiveness in our relationships.
4. Giving loving cooperation and encouragement.
5. Giving unconditional love.
6. Being free of expectations in our relationships so they become pure and sweet.
7. Maintaining an attitude of detachment to create constant and relaxed relationships. Such mutual sharing creates a problem-free environment.
8. Recognizing that we have all come here to become pure, and I am cooperating with each one in this great task.

Methods to Make Our Dreams Pure

1. Have at least 15 minutes yoga before going to sleep at night.
2. Aim to wash off the effect of the day to get rid of any tension or disturbance in the mind. One way to do this is to practice surrendering everything to Baba before sleeping at night.
3. When you are lying on your bed, think Baba is giving me rays of might. The rays creating a protection above me, like a curtain. Maya can not enter through this curtain of rays of might. This consciousness will protect you.
4. Sleep in the lap of Baba and experience that there is protection all around.

Connection between the Maryadas and Purity

The soul who has the desire to change into a Brahmin has to follow the lines of conduct. By following the Maryadas the soul is having that incognito link with Baba.

1. If the soul is honest in study, he will get the power of purity. If you keep on thinking about spiritual knowledge you will find that you have no time for impure thoughts. When the mind is pure, the soul wants to listen to the Murli and concentration is good.
2. Those who have the deep love for becoming pure have love for Baba's teachings.
3. At Amrit Vela, Baba says "Come, come children, I'll make you pure." Baba is the Purifier. If throughout the day we have pure thoughts, tomorrow's Amrit Vela will be good. If tomorrow morning Amrit Vela is good, then throughout the day we get the power of purity and we can have pure thoughts.

(Refer to the written Maryadas found in the Center.)

Assignment

Selecting Points of Awareness and Inculcation for the Day

- Consider the following points that make purity possible:
 1. Baba made us realize that you are a soul and your nature is purity. Lust may be the desire of your body but it is not the desire of the soul. The soul is always searching for purity and peace.

2. Baba made us realize that we were pure in the beginning. In India if you want to have a vision of a deity then you must maintain celibacy for 12 years. The faces of the deities prove that they must have been born by the power of purity, because their bodies reflect divinity. We ourselves were the deities.

3. Baba says, "I am the Ocean of Purity, you are my children, so you must be pure."

- In addition, you may chum these points on the nature of purity in which you will be able to dive deep into the Ocean of Purity and be with the Purifier, Baba. Deep introspective churning pulls you into the experience of purity within the self.

I am an incarnation of purity.

Purity is my original religion of truth. I follow it at any price.

Purity is a gift from God.

I give souls the vibrations of purity.

I choose the path of purity spontaneously. I am becoming perfect so I experience only positive feelings.

Purity is the divine key to open the fortune of life.

Purity is the natural beauty of the world.

Baba has brought the light of purity and has enlightened my life birth after birth.

Coming to Baba's homes purity becomes merged in my life. I want this forever.

Only God's drishti attracts me.

Harmony and peace reflect the pure nature of my relationship with the five elements.

Principles of purity are the dignity of the world.

Baba comes as a guest to share the treasure of purity.

- Keep this vision or image of purity on oneself:

Let the tilak of the awareness of brotherhood, that is, of soul consciousness, constantly be sparkling.

Let there be the smile of the attainment of God and of all attainments.

Let there be on your face the splendour of happiness of having found the Mother and Father and the elevated family.

In your words, let there always be the words of greatness and of making others great.

On your head, there is the sign of purity, which is the crown of light.

Keeping a Chart

Check that day by day there is progress. In this journey we should think in terms of our progress. You may use any of these points in your daily chart.

1. Is there any upheaval of wasteful thoughts in my mind?
2. Is there any sanskar of impurity that emerges in my thoughts?
3. How often do I practice this: "See no evil, hear no evil, think no evil."?
4. Do I have any type of confusion of how, what or why in the mind?
5. Has there been humility and contentment in my actions?
6. Is there truth and sweetness in my words?
7. Do I use my time, words, actions, breath, and thoughts according to Baba's directions?
8. Do I still get influenced by the dictates of my own mind and others?
9. Is there any relationship that pulls me away from remembering Baba?
10. How much have I been honest; that is, are my thoughts, words and actions congruent?

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