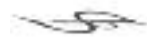


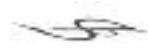
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APPARENTLY BY GODFRIDEV



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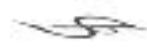
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THE YOGA DARSHANA



Yoga is one of those things that pretty much everyone has heard of, even if they don't know what it really is. Everyone has their own ideas about what it might be. When I first heard of yoga I thought it was lying on beds of nails and walking over glass. I thought this was what yogis did, swallowing poison. So first I'd just like to speak a little bit about the way that we in the west have become aware of yoga. Even amongst books written in India there are some very fundamental conflicts within what is said about yoga. If you add to that all the cocky people such as myself who've added to that noise by writing a book about yoga in the west, the conflicts become more and deeper. Nevertheless yoga is something very specific. And the fact that I wrote a book and used the word yoga in the title indicate not at all that it has in any way got anything to do with yoga. Not necessarily: depends what I said, not what I call it. Yoga is what it is, no matter who says what about it.

The culture of India is a very old one, much older than ours. It's a very ancient culture and it's a very sophisticated culture. However it orientates itself very differently from ours, so therefore it can look like it's not very sophisticated because it didn't develop mechanical engineering. So we think it is not as sophisticated as ours because mechanical engineering has allowed us to dominate all cultures that don't have it. But the orientation of the Indian mind is not to matter, not to the seen but to the invisible, call it what you will: spirit, energy, consciousness. And in that the Indian mind has been very sophisticated. It is proliferating now. Just as western science was based on certain things like biology, physics, chemistry, mathematics, logic, and now all those are proliferating into many, many different things. Likewise India has its six sciences or its six dharsanas, one of which is yoga: which is wildly proliferating and distorting now. Yoga is therefore one of the six sciences or pillars of Indian thought, in the same way, physics is one of the pillars of western technology, western science. Yoga has its own inherent set of principles. Just as physics does. These principles were laid down in the yoga sutras by Patanjali.

Patanjali doesn't say very much about doing. He says very little about practice. About technique he says virtually nothing. Whereas all of the medieval yoga books like the Hathayogapradipika are all

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about technique. Now they can truly be called yoga only if the application of those techniques points directly in experience to what Patanjali is talking about. If not then it is just a marketing ploy. What Svatmarama, Goraksha and the other johnny come lately hathayogis had to say is not at the root of Indian thought. But what Patanjali said is. He is regarded as one of the six pillars of Indian thinking which means one of the six ways to relate directly to the truth: just as physics is an attempt to directly relate to the truth of the way things actually are, to the way things actually happen. Physics is a description of how things actually happen in the physical world. And the yoga sutras are a description of how things actually happen in consciousness, in the mind.

So Patanjali uses 200 short verses to describe what happens in the mind, or the nature of human consciousness. But most of them are explaining some of the other ones. So there are only a few basic statements that he has to make. I'm going to take a few of those that are relative to what we are doing as yoga posture practitioners. The first one is at the beginning of the second chapter. Patanjali says "kriya-yoga-tapas-svadhyaya-ishvarapranidanah". Ok, this is five words but five words that are not like European words. A Sanskrit word is not really at all like a European word. A box is always an enclosure with six sides, even if one is missing. A box is never a spherical enclosure, or a rod or a motor car, or a feeling. A box is always a box. But Sanskrit doesn't work like that at all. The compound parts of a word don't point to objects in Sanskrit. They point to tendencies or in other words they point more to actions. Sanskrit is a process based language whereas European languages are object based and you can't make a direct comparison. So for example the word yoga can be inserted into a sentence where it means that whereby you enslave, bind oxen. Or it can be used as Patanjali does at the beginning of chapter 2. It means liberating, unbinding in that context. So we must be very careful when we look at Sanskrit and we think we are translating it into English. If Patanjali uses five words we probably use 25 to qualify the object nature of our language.

So when Patanjali says "kriya-yoga-tapas-svadhyaya-ishvarapranidanah" he is saying a lot more than we could say in five words. The first word Kriya means process or activity or happening. It depends how loose you can be. The more loosely you can get it the more accurate you can be when you come back to the point. The point is the context within which the word is found, which is the

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other words which neighbour it. So just for the sake of simplicity I'll take the word activity to represent kriya. Yoga means yoga and you're going to find out what it means if you don't already know. Tapas means burning, on fire. Sva means self - adhyaya means enquiry, investigation. You could say knowledge but that is a bit object based. Enquiry is more process based. You could say awareness but that is a little on the passive side. But all are ok, it depends on the context. Ishvarapranidana is a little bit more tricky. It is anyway made up of two words. Pranidana means realignment or finding the line. And ishvara means the choice making or maker.

Now, everything I have to say about yoga, about Patanjali, about Sanskrit, is just a matter of opinion. This is at the very heart of the Yoga sutras. That all knowledge, all mental activity is projection, interpretation, representation. It is not truth. You must also always remember that. That out of this mouth can never come the truth. So let the ears not think they are hearing the truth. Out of any mouth can only come an interpretation of the truth, according to that mouth's own prejudice. It's not possible to be free from prejudice, it's not possible to be free from your past experience and how that has conditioned you to see, to think and to feel. So the truth is never being spoken in here, or anywhere. I don't mean legal truth, where were you on Wednesday, not that kind of truth. But the truth that yoga and we all are probably interested in: what's really going on? Who am I really? What is the meaning of life? These kinds of questions. The truth relative to that.



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YOGA AS ENQUIRY



I have tried to navigate my prejudices and preferences as honestly and openly as possible to get as close as I could to what Patanjali might really mean. Not what Godfrey would like him to mean. I have done this based on my own experience above all else. I am not a dictionary scholar; I am not any kind of scholar and have no desire or pretension to be so. I am simply fascinated by human life, and the relationship between suffering and action. So in all honesty I don't care that much what the book scholars have to say. I care a little about what the masters have to say about consciousness, suffering and freedom. And I have had the grace to be guided by some, and they have prejudiced me more than any academic. So the translation I would give to Patanjali's definition yoga is: the activity of yoga is passionate enquiry into the source of personal action. In that action is always predicated on some kind of choice or selection, even if it is only occurring in the autonomic nerves.

He doesn't say what that action or choice should be. He doesn't make any evaluation of any kind of action or choice as good or bad, right or wrong, effective or ineffective. In fact he makes it quite clear that all actions are equal for the sake of this enquiry. His one qualification is of the process itself as having eight aspects. Or eight limbs which is ashtanga. So Patanjali says the process of yoga is "passionate enquiry into the source of personal action" and this process has eight limbs. And these eight limbs are: Yama, niyama, asana, pranayama, pratyahara, dharana, dhyana, samadhi. And that is all he really has to say about yoga, the rest is an explanation of what happens when you go into it. What is revealed when you investigate the source of personal action? The most practical, the most technical that Patanjali gets is in the second sutra that he uses to define asana, the third limb of yoga, when he says "prayatna saithilya" which means release of tension, or relaxation of effort. In other words what Patanjali is saying is that this enquiry into the nature of personal action should take place through and by releasing tension. So that the bodimind can establish itself in what he calls "sthira sukham", which you could say on the most external level is a "comfortable stability" but more deeper you could say to establish it in bliss, or to establish it as bliss.

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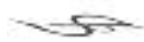
Establish means something quite specific. He does not say or indicate any word like "make", "fabricate" "bring about". He doesn't say yoga is to fabricate a body immune to death as is said in the Hatha Yoga texts. He doesn't say that yoga is to make the body immune to disease. He doesn't say that yoga is to make anything happen. He says that yoga is to investigate how things happen. To enquire into how things happen. And this misunderstanding of Patanjali is where most of the misconceptions about yoga come from. And carrying these misconceptions into your yoga practise you have to pay a very, very heavy price. Not so much in your practise but in your life. If you think that yoga is about making something happen. If you think that yoga is about making your mind become still or pure or your body become flexible or strong.

So right now I'm just asking you to suspend any assumption you might have that through your practise you should be making something happen, and just relax about it all. Instead consider the possibility that Patanjali might have been saying something of value when he said that yoga is an enquiry. An enquiry: it is not a factory. It is not for the fabrication of some preconceived objective. It is for the enquiry into the source of personal action. Why the source of personal action? Of course you could enquire into the source of any action, except you don't know enough about anybody else's actions, except how they effect you. But hypothetically, you should have a little bit more information about your own actions. I know that whenever you smile at me it's because you like me and you think I'm dead cool: well, that's bollocks isn't it. You smile at me sometimes because you don't want me to know that you're not happy with me. So there is no point me investigating your actions to find out what's really going on. So it doesn't matter what anybody else is up to; on their mat or in their life.

For this enquiry to bear fruit, for it's eight limbs to unfold, involves one practical concern only. Freeing the body from tension. So this is what you should be doing with yoga posture practice. You should not be concerned with how flexible you are, you should not be concerned with how strong you are. That doesn't mean you are not aware of how flexible you are. That doesn't mean you are not aware of how strong you are. But it means you're not trying to get stronger, and you're not trying to make yourself more flexible. If you use your body safely and effectively you will become stronger and you will become more flexible up to your genetic limit relative to how much you practice. Some people can become very, very flexi-

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ble and some people can not. There is a genetic determinate inside everybody which creates a limit. But there are other determinates that come into play long before that like age, time, circumstance, passion. If you don't have much desire you aren't going to go very far.



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YOGA AS RELAXATION



The journey which we are making is not relative to flexibility and it is not relative to strength. It is relative to relaxation. It is relative to an absence of tension and that's all. Because that's all Patanjali points to as a physical condition: freedom from tension. This can be very easy to hear and conceptually accept but that does not mean it is easy to apply to your practice. Especially when you are suffering from your blindness being lead by other people's blindness, which is usually the case. So you have people like me who think, "Right I'll put a photograph of me doing the most far out fucking posture when I look really sexy on the beach and then everybody is going to think that I'm really dead fuckin' cool. And then they will think if they give me enough money they'll end up being as dead fuckin' cool as me". This is called the blind leading the blind, so you have to watch out. If you select a yoga teacher on the basis of their physical capacity, or the size of their bank account or smile, you haven't done yourself a single favour. And actually if your yoga teachers have exposed themselves only through their physical capacity you can be pretty sure you've done yourself a disfavour.

It is possible to develop flexibility on top of tension and very often the development of flexibility is the creation of tension elsewhere, deeper, more subtle. So actually flexibility has got nothing to do with yoga. Luckily Paul is here so I don't have to do what I normally do which is talk about him behind his back. Paul is not particularly flexible. Paul doesn't need to be particularly flexible for his life. In fact when he first came here he was the least flexible person in the room. He's nodding his head in agreement. And yet on day three or four when I explained what Patanjali says results from freeing the body from tension, Paul said "I know that". He didn't need to be flexible to know what Patanjali was talking about. In order to have felt it in his body in the postures he just needed to enquire into the nature of his own tension.

To be physically gifted, to have a well developed physical capacity, can be a great disservice in yoga because you can take your movement, your actions and their source for granted. Whereas when you're really stiff and limited in your capacity, your limitations bring you into focus on what is actually happening: which is resistance. So I would honestly say that limitation is a gift to yoga practice.

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tice when yoga is effectively understood. If yoga is understood to be about maximum strength and flexibility, stamina or whatever: then no. But Patanjali says nothing about that. The fact that some contemporary chancer with a fine line in book marketing, like me for example, might do, has nothing to do with yoga. So right now all I'm really trying to do is to challenge the assumption that flexibility has got anything to do with yoga. But more subtly, under that, I'm also trying to challenge the assumption that yoga is about making anything happen.

More than the result of what you're doing, the emphasis i'm trying to give you is on what it is that you are actually doing. On how it is that you are going about that which you are doing. But even more than that the emphasis is simply on recognising that which is actually happening. Within you: because yoga is the passionate investigation of the source of personal action. And that means that no matter what you're doing, yoga, enquiry, can take place. Not just on your mat. It means that at any point in your life you can be doing yoga; provided what you're doing is not increasing tension. Providing what you're doing allows you to be relaxed enough to be sensitive to what's actually happening. In your body, so that through that investigation it might relax enough to invite the mind to relax too. And then you can investigate that actuality as deeply as possible. From that investigation all of the fruits of yoga come.

As you all know yoga brings enlightenment, liberation, self-realisation, freedom. These are all big heavy words which are carried around in the minds of most people without the slightest idea of what they mean. Hedged in with all kinds of assumptions that do one thing only: create anxiety. By creating judgement: "still not enlightened? After all this time. Still not at peace?". "I want to be." What does Patanjali have to say about the fruits of yoga? Well he does make one defining statement but in order to really understand what he means you have to know what he says in the rest of the yoga sutras. But his defining statement of the fruits of yoga is "consciousness-energy is established as the true nature of the self". He qualifies this by saying that it comes when we are no longer caught by the play of appearance that is the world. To be caught by it means to assume that the play in the mind is accurate, or true. To be free from it is to know that it is a conditioned representation that is not worth killing or dying for.

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He doesn't say that the tax man will not come calling anymore or that you will be free of financial obligation. Nor does he say that your wedding vows become null and void. Nor does he say that your children no longer need taking care of. He doesn't say that life stops. Although some people think he does and that at the end of the yoga sutras he says "your body and the entire universe will dissolve back into that from which it came." How terrible you must feel if you think that somebody once dissolved their body and the entire universe and then came back to write about it. He doesn't say any such thing. That's a projection of confused and anxious fools who are unwilling to trust their own experience in the face of thousands of years of exaggeration and metaphor.

What Patanjali meant by "establishes itself" is not that you have made the self become consciousness energy. It's not that you've even made anything happen. It's that you've recognised that it is constantly like that. You've finally recognised what's actually going on. So this is an epistemological transformation, it is not an ontological transformation absolutely nothing concrete changes. Your body doesn't become something else; your mind doesn't become something else, you self doesn't become something else. Simply the true nature of the self become patently obvious and then you carry on living your life almost exactly as before: but not quite. But the actions you take are the same kind of actions, the motivation for those actions are the same kind of motivations. The consequences of those actions are the same kind of consequences. It is not possible, despite what Svatmarama says, for you to drink poison and not die. If you drink poison you will die, this is the nature of karma. Unless you have been drinking poison incrementally for years. You can not escape from conditioning; you can not escape from karma. But karma can become irrelevant to your happiness. Karma can become irrelevant to your satisfaction, to your appreciation of life. In other words life can be appreciated no matter what it's specific circumstances. For us as spoilt westerners this might be difficult to conceive. But you only have to go to India, to the edge of a big town where you'll find families living under less canvas than it took to make that door and you see how happy they are, how delighted they are, how alive they are, how much joy they have in their movement and they have absolutely nothing. They do not even have tomorrow. They don't know if they'll be eating tomorrow.

So this is what yoga is pointing to. You do not need to establish some kind of special circumstances. Not even in your body relative

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to flexibility. Not even in your mind relative to concentration, relative to understanding, relative to knowledge. This is all irrelevant to yoga. It's not irrelevant to life. But it's irrelevant to yoga. What is relevant to yoga is simply that you be enquiring passionately into the source of personal action. This enquiry has to begin in the impact of personal action, not its source. You can't go straight to the source just because you want to. You have to feel the impact of your actions and then you have to follow the thread from the impact through the motivation through the impulses back to the source.

You don't have to worry too much about that while you're here. It's my job to take you on that journey. It's my job to instruct you in such a way that you are willy-nilly investigating the nature of personal action. I can't take you to the source. But I can inspire you to take yourself to the source. By inviting you to go a bit towards it. Then when you feel what happens, how much relaxation can happen as a result of that you just keep going because it feels so good to start to really relax. I'm not talking about relaxation of the drunken, stoned or well fucked kind. I'm talking about an ongoing state within which there is no resistance to life. This means no resistance to getting angry if you see something outrageous being performed in front of you. So this kind of relaxation doesn't mean you become a vegetable. That if Saddam Hussein comes towards where you live you say "hey cool baby, do your thing man". You capture the cunt, because you have to protect people and that's your natural tendency, if you've got children especially. So this ongoing relaxation doesn't depend upon flexibility, it doesn't depend upon strength, it doesn't depend upon stamina, it doesn't depend upon knowledge. It doesn't depend upon experience; it doesn't depend on what you've read or who you know, or how you dress, or what kind of tattoo you've got. Whether it's an Om tattoo or you're wearing an Om sign on your leotard makes no difference to your freedom and your being relaxed. In fact it can go the other way. You can think ok I've now got enough of the signs I can forget about what the signs are pointing to.

This relaxation is very, very simple: it's not resisting life. And this relaxation is the freedom of yoga. The freedom of yoga doesn't mean no longer in a body or no longer in a mind. It doesn't mean no longer in a social context within which you have obligations. It doesn't mean any of that childish wishful thinking. The freedom of yoga is very simple and down to earth and any good psychiatrist or psychologist would say "yes, thank you, thank god for that." Because

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it means a freedom from guilt, a freedom from shame. It means a freedom from resentment; it means a freedom from blame. It means a freedom from regret, from anxiety. This doesn't mean a freedom from fear, if a tiger leaps through that door you're going to be scared. What it means is you're not worried that a tiger might leap through that door. That you're not worrying about anything that is not actually happening. But if something scary happens, for sure you're going to be scared. That's the nature of a scary event, you get scared. You can never be free from that unless you become comatose or a junkie. So yoga is not the same as taking junk, if it were why bother? Just go and get some junk, it's probably cheaper I don't know how much money you've spent on trying to learn about yoga.



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YOGA AS FREEDOM



So bearing in mind whatever notions you may have about the purpose of yoga: let me ask you this. Can you imagine what it would be like if every person participating in your life was free from guilt, shame, pride, resentment and regret. Totally free from any kind of blame, however subtle. Imagine how different your life would be if not one person in it ever blamed another. Now I reckon if you've got a good imagination you can't imagine anything better than that. Try imagining what it would be like if everybody in your life was enlightened; you can't because you don't even know what enlightenment means. But you know what blame means and you can maybe imagine that you never blamed anyone for anything and no one ever blamed you.

"Joy on the highway"

Exactly: masses of joy on the highway. And on the byway. Everywhere. It's going to be "wow cool" after "wow cool". And this is all yoga is pointing to. It's very down to earth. So if you've ever spent money on a psychologist or a psychiatrist just send the next lot to me. Just kidding, but you don't need to do anything other than yoga if you understand what yoga is. If you don't understand what yoga is you are probably going to end up needing a psychiatrist as a result of what you've been calling yoga. Because yoga done as if it were a process of fabricating anything will either generate despair because it didn't work or pride because you think it has. And then when you become more and more proud you become more of a bastard. Like it or not you do and this happens a lot when people do yoga. They become proud of what they can do with their body. What's the big deal? Anybody can do it if they put in the time and effort so long as they haven't got a really deficient genetic endowment. So there is no need to do any knicker twisting around physical capacity relative to yoga practice. At least not here. If you want to twist your knickers up somewhere else then that's fine.

The recognition that attention is always necessarily oscillating is a key to freedom. When, in your practice or your life, you give yourself out of interest to that which is actually happening: when you give yourself out of interest to your breath, which is hypothetically always an option during your yoga practice, and then you find that
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you can't keep it up, freedom lies in not blaming yourself or judging yourself, or the person next to you for farting and distracting you or whatever. This oscillation in attention, that is observable all the time if we are being honest, is something that happens despite our interest and best intentions, yes. And there is the key to investigating the source of personal action. Things we are not inviting just keep happening and the more you relax about that happening the less unnecessary things happen. It's not a question of controlling or getting better at stopping. It's a question of relaxing into that which is actually happening anyway, despite your best intentions or your attempts to stay in control. So that if it is not absolutely necessary it will eventually stop. Now this doesn't mean that your mind will stop oscillating away from your breath or your practice, what it means is it's going to do it less often and less far.

For permanence is an attribute only of death. Permanence is not an attribute of life even though to a great extent our effort and our anxiety is directed towards attempting to establish permanence. In job security, love security, financial security. We're looking for permanence. We're looking for something that doesn't exist. That doesn't mean that in the fluctuation it can't go on in one direction so long it seems like permanence but death brings it all to an end. So I make no apology for making very clear that as far as I'm concerned what's going on in this room is not really about the body. What's going on in this room is yoga, the investigation of the source of personal action. Which requires a fair amount of passion, otherwise the mind just slips away on it's habits.

Passion means focused interest, in other words desire. Yoga rests not on willpower but on desire. Willpower is an illusion which will turn out to be pretty obvious if you don't already know it. But willpower is nothing other than a term for focused and effective desire. So it is upon your desire that you depend. Desire is not something to be killed in the name of holiness. Just as the mind is not something to be killed in the name of yoga. Or the body is something to be belittled in the name of yoga. There is no freedom outside the human body. And there is no way to freedom except inside the human body. And Patanjali says you go into the body to free it from tension: that's all and that's enough. You go into the body so that you can relax enough, become honest enough to that which is actually happening. So that you can see where actions really originate. And this is called by the Buddha "conditioned co-production". Or you could say the mechanics of karma which the

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Buddha was very hot about of course and so was Patanjali. How does this life work? Not why but how.

And only you can know how it came about. I can make assumptions from the outside based on my experience but only you can know how that pain came about in your knee. And you can only know that if you are paying attention to that which is actually happening moment by moment in your practice.

I have a question about interest and disinterest and in a way we can't make interest happen, what can you say?

Well that's it, you just said it. Sometimes you're really interested and then two seconds later you're not and then three seconds later you are. The thing is that you're being invited in your investigation of the source of personal action to see that this is how things happen. To see that no matter what your fundamental or generalised interest is, its activation moment by moment is not in your control.

What you're saying about yoga and tension, for me yoga sometimes goes hand in hand with tension.

Yeah, absolutely, inevitably.

Yeah, it's just the tensions are there and they come up. Sometimes it's physical tension like with my back when I feel things. And I remember last year being in here and one day going out of my mind thinking what the hell am I doing here, this is brazen, you know. My mind was driving me crazy and I was bending myself into all these things which I'm finding very difficult. Why I am I doing this? This is crazy.

Good question, only you can really answer that.

The thing is I couldn't really answer it because that tension went away.

So you don't really need to get stuck in the moment. But its helpful to know that there are two kinds of tension. Going into the yoga postures you are necessarily confronted with pre-existing tension that is normally below the threshold of your awareness. In a way you are looking for that tension so you can free the body from it. But

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the other kind of tension that can come is when you are struggling with the process and you are trying to do more than you can. Or you are going about it mistakenly, without understanding what you should be doing. And then if you are doing the wrong thing normally that will make you feel less stable perhaps and then you have to activate muscular stability which becomes tension somewhere else. Thus the generating of tension and the relieving of tension are two different things. And the first thing you need to learn is not to generate tension through your actions but in order to learn that you have to go through the process of generating it and see how it arises. You could say too much tension comes in the front thigh because you are not able to use the rest of the thigh because you aren't using the foot properly. When you start to use the foot properly and then the displacement of the load becomes more effective other muscles suddenly become available.

So you are actually investigating the nature of personal action right there through the process of generating and releasing tension. And also investigating how many things come about absolutely independent of your intent. And how few things come about in harmony with your intent. And when you're very interested, very close to what is actually happening it becomes very clear that you're not making most if not all of what is happening happen. That's called the flow: everything is just flowing. You're not saying "little toe do this, big toe do that": none of that. Intent is not operating. So basically actions appear to arise as an expression of intent, but its not really like that. So really we're investigating the nature of intent through investigating the nature of action. And having said that what we are really investigating is the nature of the self but that investigation is 'svadhyaya'. So superficially yoga is investigation of action, subtly it is investigation of volition; essentially investigation of self.

How come a lot of these hatha yoga guys have got it so wrong then, like the Hatha Yoga Pradipika?

Well, that's something else you know, its not yoga, even though it calls itself yoga. There's nothing wrong with the process of what he's talking about: it can give you a lot of juice and make you feel that life is really worth living if you feel very potent in the body and mind: but it doesn't give you freedom. It is not yoga. Yoga is defined by Patanjali and it's a very different flavour of juice altogether. But to really know that you have to go way down deep both ways: then

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you will see for yourself. And hopefully the price you pay wont be as heavy as the one I paid.

What you on about?

When you start to develop all that power that you do if you become accomplished in the magical techniques that these guys outline things get very weird. It gives you anxiety because you don't want to lose the power. That's bad enough, as you become more and more driven, hard and uptight. But so what, that's your problem and a problem for those close to you of course: but usually of course they didn't have anyone close to them. But worse than that is the pride that comes with the intensification of the illusion of personal power. This pride is deadly. It is so seductive to have people gazing at you with admiration and adoration, doing just what and when and exactly as you tell them. BUT only if your well fucked up. That only feels cool if deep down inside you feel like a piece of shit. And often that's exactly why an individual gets attracted in the first place to power techniques, and then masters them. Because deep down they think they are a pile of shit but they don't want anyone to know. Well, guess what, everybody knows. Anyone with a grain of honesty knows that we are all fucked up. We all had parents, right? We all went to school. We've all read fucked up mind and heart destroying fashion magazines. Civilisation is a crash course in fucking up the human psyche, and we are all slap bang in the middle of it and only one way out: death or really, really relax: let go: drop it all. But dropping isn't something you can do. It can only just happen.

So this is just for Hatha yoga not for Kundalini yoga?

Well what are these things? It's very difficult to understand what yoga is with a fragmented mind, with a mind that likes to separate because yoga is not about separation, it's about unification. What I was saying before is that: as far as the Indian sub-continent is concerned yoga is defined by Patanjali, it is not defined by a technique. Techniques that are associated with Hatha yoga, Kundalini yoga, or whatever, could be yoga if they reveal what Patanjali says yoga will reveal. So it doesn't matter what the technique is, what matters is how the technique is used and where it goes. Like if you have a car: as a result of driving that car good things can be done or bad things can be done. So it's nothing to do with the car, it's the way you drive it, how you drive it. It's the same with yoga; the technique is not the point. Some techniques are going to be helpful, some are not,

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others might be very helpful. But even a very helpful technique can be unhelpful if not applied in the right way. And even a very unhelpful technique can be helpful if applied in the right way. And the right way of application is always and only yama and niyama.

So if you've seen the film the Karate Kid that's a perfect example: "*even cleaning the fence can be a spiritual practice.*" Or whatever he was doing: washing the car. There is a really fantastic truth in that. In daily living there is an activity for almost all of us, very similar to Tai Chi, it's called washing up. We hate it. We resent it; we don't want to do it. "You do it, no you"...that's like saying, "will you do my yoga practice tonight?" Any activity can be like Tai Chi.

Does that mean I don't have to put myself into postures because this is something I've struggled with a little bit until recently where I thought I had to do sun salutes everyday but now I've thought maybe I can dance? It's bringing myself into my body.

Just do whatever you most feel like. Your body knows better than anybody's system, no matter how beautifully its been written down, what state it's in. And through experience you start to just know what actions will allow you to become more relaxed.



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DOING YOGA



Even though many people have written about yoga, including myself, that does not mean that that which has been written in the name of yoga is actually yoga. Yoga was first defined by Patanjali. Yoga is what Patanjali defines. If I or anyone else choose to use the word yoga to describe something that conflicts with what Patanjali says I am of course free to do so. But that does not make what I speak about be yoga. I say this because there are many different opinions about all of the different aspects of yoga, there are even different opinions as to what yoga as a whole is. Like Desikachar, like B.K.S Iyengar, like Pattabhi Jois, like their guru Krishnamacharya, I accept Patanjali as the one who has defined yoga. However it seems clear that what I might say about yoga, what Desikachar, Pattabhi Jois, Iyengar and Krishnamacharya might say about yoga are not necessarily the same: and may even be in conflict with each other.

This is because we are interpreting Patanjali. We can not represent Patanjali. Only Patanjali really knows what Patanjali really meant therefore, obviously, everything that I say is simply my opinion and should in no way be construed as being the truth. I speak it lightly and may you receive it lightly. If it conflicts with your pre-existing ideas allow that to be a light and fruitful conflict taking place without prejudice, without attachment to your own opinion because you're used to it, and without attachment to my opinion because I speak with authority. The authority with which I speak is simply an expression of my character, not necessarily wisdom. So be careful.

Patanjali defines yoga at the beginning of the second chapter as a process. A process which has eight aspects: ashta anga. These eight aspects of yoga are defined within the yoga sutras. The first two aspects are yama niyama. The way these two aspects are defined by Patanjali is quite different from the way the other six are defined. And it's clear if you go back to the Sanskrit that yama niyama relate to that which is done. Asana, pranayama, pratyahara, dharana, dhyana, samadhi relate to what happens. Provided of course that that which is being done is appropriate. And it is being done in the manner outlined, which is contextualising it within yama niyama.

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Patanjali says that asana, the first of the inner limbs by this definition, is joyful steadiness in the absence of tension manifesting the infinite beyond duality. So I'm going to start at the beginning of that. Joyful steadiness is sthiram sukham. They come first because they are the expression of the bodimind free from tension. In order to free the body from tension yoga postures must be established within sthiram sukham: steadiness and comfort. The actions being taken in the postures must be taken in order to cultivate sthiram sukham. Not in order to cultivate flexibility, not in order to cultivate strength, not in order to cultivate stamina. As sthiram sukham becomes possible in more simple postures, then deeper tension in the body must be challenged on the basis of sthiram sukham in more complex postures. As the body becomes free from tension it of course becomes more flexible, and stronger, as a by-product. Although not as a result of you trying to become flexible or strong. You are trying to become stable and comfortable. When the body is free from tension, it manifests the infinite naturally, inevitably, without any thought being taken with regard to what the infinite might be.

Yoga postures are very strange. We don't think so because we do them: but if you look objectively, at almost any yoga posture, you can't help but see strangeness. Kandasana, with the feet bent in towards the navel, it's pretty weird. Chakrasana, where you balance your hands and put your leg behind your head: pretty weird. This is not normal human activity. These postures can very easily create tension: if they are not done with care and attention. But if you use them judiciously they can challenge tension in the body. Provided you go slowly, slowly; step by step. Freeing the body from tension with the compass sthiram sukham.



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MUSCULAR CONTRACTION AND TENSION



There is no need for yoga practice to be a struggle. There is no need for yoga practice to be difficult. It's only difficult when you are acting beyond your capacity. If you go back and honour your capacity it becomes easy. If you honour your capacity where it is easier to do so your capacity increases. If you keep doing that you will soon be where you wanted to be in the first place, but with no struggle. If you keep doing that slowly, slowly, step by step, staying with your capacity as it is, and in doing so allowing your capacity to grow organically, your capacity will soon meet your ambition. This happens without struggle or injury, but simply with practice. How far you go depends how ambitious you are, and what your actual capacity is. But there is no need to be ambitious in terms of flexibility of strength in order to know what yoga is. We all have the capacity to totally relax no matter how much tension we normally carry, no matter how deeply held. If I were to inject you with anaesthetic the tension would immediately disappear, immediately. It is not inherent; it is a habit but a very deep habit. Yoga is established as a challenge to that habit of tension.

What is tension? Tension is muscular effort that is not related to action being taken. In other words tension is muscular effort that is not appropriate, not necessary. Whenever you are not lying down some muscular effort is required to resist gravity. This need not be tension but it sometimes is. So freeing the body from tension means to free the body from unnecessary muscular effort. This means to let go of deliberately making unnecessary effort, and to challenge chronic muscular activity that is there out of habit. So there are two kinds of tension. Tension that arises because you are working too hard or ineffectively. Tension that is there anyway, out of habit: chronic muscular contraction.

There is also a third kind of tension, which is a kind of blend of the first two. This is tension that arises automatically because you are in the situation that you are in. A tension that arises independent of the actions that you are taking. Some people become tense as soon as somebody looks at them. Some people become tense as soon as someone tells them what to do. This can happen to yoga students when they are being told what to do by yoga teachers. The

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situation itself creating tension. Underneath that kind of situational tension there is even deeper tension, tension that we carry around regardless of the situation. Residual tension that maybe left over from having been attacked by a dog. Tension left over from being told to be quiet all the time as a child. Tension left over from being told that you are too fat. Whether that is your friends telling you so or a magazine.

So yoga is addressing itself to all of these kinds of tension: active, situational and residual. But it's challenging them with action: and action involves and requires muscular effort. So muscular effort, or contraction, is being used to release muscular contraction, or effort. Necessary muscular effort is being required to release unnecessary muscular contraction. Therefore we can not just take the easy way out. Sukham, or comfort, does not mean least effort. Sukham means that the action being taken in a particular place is directly inviting deeper comfort in the bodimind as a whole. Effort is required. The particular efforts required can be unfamiliar. Learning them therefore can be difficult, and that difficulty can itself create tension. But once the actions are better understood and the body becomes better able to apply them they will not generate tension they will release it. This is a matter of practice, not study of anatomy or physiology.

The muscular effort required of yoga is directed towards stability or sthiram. Only within stability can comfort happen. If you don't feel stable you don't feel safe. Your body constantly feels more or less stable, more or less safe, no matter what your mind is saying or not. I'm speaking of the body feeling safe. The body will only relax if it feels safe. You can not force the body to relax; you can invite it to relax by establishing it in stability. This fundamentally means to ground the foundation. To actively and evenly ground those parts of the body that are supposed to be on the floor. To do only that which is required to bring that about. Upon that stability the body is then articulated in space as an opening of all of the joints, as a challenge to tension in the joints. All muscles begin and end in the joints. This opening into the body is sukham. Releasing as you open, flowering as you release, as your roots ground you sthiram. So this is sthiram sukham.



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BALANCED ACTION



Before he speaks of sthiram sukham Patanjali speaks of yama niyama. This is so that whatever technique we use to free the body from tension can be used effectively. The yoga postures are not the only ones available: tai chi, chigung, whirling, zazen. There are many things that can be used to free the body from tension. We happen to be using the yoga postures. Patanjali says nothing about yoga postures. The word asana in the yoga sutras refers to a quality in the bodimind. It is a state of awareness relative to the body, in which the body is free from tension, comfortable and stable manifesting the infinite beyond duality. I have a limited location in space; my body fills a finite amount of space. The experience of space is based upon the experience of opposites. Front relative to back, left relative to right, top relative to bottom: the polar coordinates of the three dimensions. It is our sense of these that makes us feel limited in space, it makes us feel finite.

In a symmetrical posture the articulation of the left hand and arm, when there is no tension in them, will be the same as the articulation of the right hand and arm, when there is no tension in them. If there is tension in one arm it will not be the same articulation as the other. But when the articulation of both hands and arms are the same, because they are both free from tension, there is no possibility of distinguishing between them. Unless you look at them, with your eyes or with your mind. But if you are simply experiencing your arms as actions and your hands as awareness, your arms as awareness and your hands as actions, you will not be able to distinguish between them. They will be singing the same song. Two voices one song, exactly in harmony, with exactly the same tone coming from exactly the same distance away and you can not distinguish between them.

When you apply this process to the whole of the body: every left part relative to every right part; every front part relative to every back part; every top part relative to every bottom part; every inner part to every outer part: the finite nature of the body no longer asserts itself. You all know this. You are no longer treating your body as an object at all. There is simply an effortless awareness of your undeniable existence which has nothing to do with the parts of your

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body be. Within that there is a feeling of being totally unrestricted. This is what Patanjali means by manifesting the infinite: unrestricted, no longer feeling limited or finite. This is a result of having gone beyond duality. Having balanced lefts with rights, fronts with backs, tops with bottoms, insides with outsides: in action.

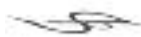
This is incredibly powerful. Simple though it may be, unexciting as it may sound. Nevertheless its power is undeniable when you start to see that left and right, front and back, top and bottom, inside and outside are simply functions of perception. They are all relative perceptions, and not absolute facts. They are how we perceive and explain objects and actions. This relates not just to the dualities of the body structure, but also to its implication: to self and other. That self and other are also functions of perception, not of actuality. And on the basis of the activation of your body in the postures, the objectification of the body dissolves. This has a deep conditioning impact on how you live. The objectification of life also begins to dissolve. The perception of self and other, and the separation that this implies, the warfare that this generates, begins to dissolve.

This is what it means to manifest the infinite beyond duality. To no longer insist that the left is separate from the right. To no longer insist that the right is better than the left; the white is better than black; female better than male; Muslim is better than Jew etc. This is the gift of yoga, being delivered in action. There is no need for philosophy, no need for opinions, agreement or disagreement. Yoga, freedom, only need actions and the recognition of the deep implications of direct experience. This is what yoga is for and when Patanjali talks about the deeper limbs of yoga, he's simply taking about how this unfolds. How the mind becomes free from right and wrong. This doesn't mean it becomes free from accurate and inaccurate; accurate and precise actions are required. However, if an action which is required is not possible, the action that takes its place is not wrong, it is right. The action that you are capable of taking is the right action to take. Trying to take an action of which you are not capable is wrong. Not taking an action of which you are capable is wrong. I'm talking about actions in yoga postures; there is a right and wrong. Let us not become too politically correct and damage ourselves as a result.



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INTEGRITY OF ACTION



All actions are not equal. NO! All actions are unique. If we do not keep our back leg straight in Virabhadrasana we will damage our lower back. If we cannot keep our back leg straight in Virabhadrasana then we should not be doing Virabhadrasana: because we are not able to. So we should not be pretending to because that pretence invites injury. But that injury can be very subtle, incremental and gradual. So that when you finally become aware of it you tell yourself that something else caused it. This is because you love your yoga practice and you don't want to say bad things about it. But you must be willing to do so in order to protect your body. Whatever technique it may be that you have chosen, in order that it not create injury, exhaustion, pride, frustration, anger, Patanjali gives us guidelines.

The first one is ahimsa. Mahatma Gandhi toppled the British Empire through the utilisation of this one principle, for once India was lost the British Empire could not sustain itself. Gandhi toppled the British Empire. This is how powerful ahimsa is: The greatest empire the world had ever known toppled by one little man dedicating his life to ahimsa. Imagine what we can do in our bodies if we do likewise. But Patanjali didn't just give ahimsa he gave more; he also gave satya which Gandhi also espoused. But he also gives asteya, brahmacharya, aparigraha, saucha etc. Five yama and five niyama.

Sensitivity is the application of ahimsa to practice. Honesty is the application of satya to practice. Openness is the application of asteya. Focus or presence is the application of brahmacharya. Generosity is the application of aparigraha. Integrity is the application of saucha. Acceptance is the application of samtosha. Passion is the application of tapas. Looking within is the application of svadhyaya. Directing that enquiry to the source of action is the application of ishvarapranidhana. These are the ten principles Patanjali gives us to guide our use of technique. So that our technique might free our body from tension.

Sensitivity means feeling what you are doing, not thinking about it, not talking about it, not judging, not evaluating: just feeling it. Honesty means responding to it. Sensitivity also means feeling the

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impact of what you are doing and honesty means responding to that also. Doing what you can to become more stable, more comfortable requires you be sensitive and honest, that you feel what is happening and that you do what you can on the basis of what you feel. In order to be sensitive and honest you also need to be open. If you are not open to the fact that you may not be able to straighten your back leg, you will not be honest about the fact that you aren't doing so, and you will stay there injuring your lower back by being insensitive. So you must be open to whatever may be possible, whatever may actually happen. In order to be open, honest and sensitive you have to be present, you have to be focused. Otherwise how do you know, how can you tell? In order to remain open you need to be generous to yourself about what you have found: what you can and can't do. In other words do not judge what you can or can't do according to your expectations, your desires, your assumptions or your ideals.

Obviously this is not necessarily easy to do. To be continuously focused, open, generous, honest and sensitive to what you are doing is not easy. However it is the necessary foundation of your integrity. So you could say that the five yamas invite sauca. If you come to your mat and you happen to find that you have very little integrity, or commitment to what you are doing today you are likely to hurt yourself if you do what you normally do when you have commitment. Your integrity and commitment are expressed in your tapas, your passion, the depth of your interest. Your tapas is an expression of your commitment. Your commitment is an expression of your tapas. Your commitment depends entirely on how interested you are. If you are not interested you will not bother. This is why tapas is so important. On the basis of your enthusiasm and your passion, your commitment arises and supports sensitivity, honesty, openness, generosity and focus. On the basis of your commitment, your passion arises and supports sensitivity, honesty, openness, generosity and focus. On that basis alone can integrity of action take place.



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THE PROCESS OF YOGA



The application or presence of tapas relative to yoga practise is a function of your interest being focused within. If you are more interested in what the person next to you is doing you can not be sensitive, open, honest etc. Therefore yama also rests on svadhyaya: looking within. Looking within in a very particular way: ishvarapranidanah. Looking for the source of action. Patanjali says kriya-yoga-tapas-svadhyaya-ishvarapranidanah. This is his definition of the process of yoga. Kriya means action, activity, process. Yoga means yoga. Tapas means passion. Svadhyaya means looking within. Ishvarapranidanah means finding the source of action, or more literally: clarifying the making of choices. Earlier in the yoga sutras Patanjali says that the deepest fruit of yoga can come from Ishvarapranidanah alone. Yoga's fruit can come from looking at the source of action. Not intellectually, not analytically, not philosophically or as a matter of opinion: but in action. Feeling where actions come from. This is the purpose of yoga according to Patanjali. Not according to my books, not according to Svatmarama, Goraksha, etc but according to Patanjali.

The yoga postures are absolutely brilliant at providing endless opportunities to investigate internal actions. All the actions of yoga postures are internal. Their purpose is inherently internal: they do not lead to anything external, except incidentally. Their actions are taken in order to create internal stability and comfort. Stability and comfort in the body and mind. They are not taken in order to get rich; they are not taken in order to become beautiful, or healthy. According to Patanjali they are taken in order to become sthiram sukham. But if you take action in the yoga posture looking for sthiram sukham, health will come, beauty will come, even money might come. But all of these things are incidental.

Ishvarapranidanah is sometimes translated 'surrender to God'. This is an interpretation. An accurate one, but not a helpful one. How do you surrender to God? Do you make sacrifices every Sunday? Six hour Pujas every Monday? You neither have the time or the knowledge. Some people do not believe in God. Patanjali is not so mean. The word Ishvara literally means the choice maker. We all take actions; we all take actions all of the time. Even those who

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don't believe in god still take actions and those actions rest on selection, choice making, whether conscious or unconscious. If we can find their source we will be surrendered to God as the source of all action.

This is the teaching of the Bhagavad Gita. That all actions are brought about through the agency of the Gunas, through the dynamic of Prakriti, through the agency of manifestation as the observable expression of their source: sometimes known as God. All actions express the matrix of manifestation, and thereby its source. The teaching of the Bhagavad Gita makes very clear that not only the fruits of our actions but also the actions themselves belong to the whole and its underlying source: belong to the one for which there is no other: which you can call God. The Bhagavad Gita calls God Krishna. It's just a name. God is just a concept that indicates that all actions come from the same source, and in a way that we cannot control.

Ishvarapranidanah is to find that source in your own actions: and when that source is found you can not ever, ever abandon God. Wherever you look, whatever you see, however much you do not like it, however much it challenges your desires, however much it confounds your understanding, you still and always see God. This is Ishvarapranidanah. This is what yoga is for. No philosophy is necessary; no blind faith is required; no belief is required; no argument is necessary, no opinions are relevant. All that is relevant and all that is required is that you investigate your internal actions. Then you will come to God: if you have found the source of your actions. So that's not a bad result from standing on your mat and doing funny things with your body, is it?

What does it mean to let go of effort within action? Ask Lao Tzu. Ask Chung Tzu. Their whole lives were dedicated to explaining how you let go of effort without giving up action. The Bhagavad-Gita is likewise a treatise on the non-action of action. As far as yoga practice goes, letting go of effort means training: repetition, practice, practice, practice. Then what were difficult actions become easy. Then actions that require effort become effortless. Then actions that need to be considered carefully, with great exactness, extreme precision, begin to happen effortlessly, easily, without conscious intent. This is what training means. Actions that are difficult and challenging, that require the application of conscious intent, happen by themselves. This is habit: nothing more, nothing less. Habit does not

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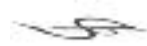
have to be bad. We could not survive without it. In order for Yoga to deliver its fruits, it must become a habit. The actions must take place because you've trained yourself.

When you've trained yourself enough in any action you need never think about it again. That doesn't mean you won't, but still, you need never make it an object of your perception again. Though it may become one if the situation gets a little bit weird and you no longer feel relaxed. Then you make take conscious account of that action again in order to make yourself feel safe. Which is really all that life is about: making yourself feel safe because it feels very unsafe when you regard yourself as an object called the body. Habit is necessary to life and habit is necessary to yoga. To free an action from effort is to turn it into a habit, something that just happens because of the context that you're in. The context is your practice, your mat; the context is a particular posture. As a result of prior practice the back leg in warrior pose stays straight without you having to tell it to do so. The back leg has been told over and over again by your intent, by your lower back, by your breathing, by your pelvis, to stay straight when in this context. So eventually it does if you have the energy available. If you don't you should get out fast because Virabhadrasana is a very dangerous place to be if your back leg is not working.

To free action from effort is what yoga practice is for. When all actions relative to a posture have been so well experienced and integrated as to become a habit then to do that posture can be sheer delight, pure delight. But usually it isn't. Why not? Because you are usually thinking about the next action, the next posture, the next experience, the next kiss. Because the monkey mind no longer needing to think about the posture that's being done, thinks about the posture that's not being done. And thinking about the posture that's not being done, the posture that's being done is being done only in the body, and not in awareness, not in delight. Talking about it is not the posture being done in the body; it's another posture, an imaginary posture, in the mind. Thinking about another posture doesn't necessarily mean the next posture, it can mean this posture. This posture is an action group, an action configuration. A posture in the mind is a mental impression, totally inaccurate, totally unreliable, as far as yoga posture practice is concerned. It is to the body you must give your trust in yoga practice, not your mind. That doesn't mean that you have to go to war with your mind or deny the value of your mind: it has its part to play. But the part that it has

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to play is before and after. When actions have become so natural, so inevitably spontaneous expressions of the situation, no conscious account need be taken by the mind of actions that previously had to be considered separately because of the difficulty their unfamiliarity caused.



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THE NATURE OF OBJECTS



When actions become free from effort, or when yoga postures become free from effort, an irresistible invitation is being extended. This invitation will eventually be accepted and this invitation is to reach the source of action, to reach the origin of choice. To know beyond all conceptualisation how actions arise, where they arise from. Yoga posture practice, the bandhas in particular, when expressed in the whole body, are a powerful and direct invitation to recognise that every object in the body is actually constructed in the mind. Its very existence as a separate entity is fabricated in the mind. Separateness is created in the mind on top of the inherent non-separateness of the body as a whole in order to function. Eventually it dawns that all objects arise in the mind: that outside of the mind there are no objects, there is only life as a whole. Out of which wholeness we extract objects into our perception in order for us to play our part in life. But you could invite into this room five different people and they would all experience five different things. A bunch of idiots all sitting round looking at a fool, one person might say. Oh really wise people becoming even wiser. Or whatever. Whatever there is to say about life is only what is being said. It is not that about which the words speak.

When I say Johnathon, some of you think you know what I mean. Those of you who know Johnathon and know me, you think you know what I mean. In fact you have only an idea what I mean. You do not know what I mean. You know only that whatever I mean refers to an object that you and I have both extracted from the field of life and called Johnathon. Many of you don't know which object I'm talking about, some of you do perhaps. If one of you were to say the word Johnathon, this would speak to my mind quite differently than it speaks to his, even differently again to his wife Rosie. Yet that to which the word Johnathon refers, and that which my mind claims to understand by the word Johnathon, what that understanding and Rosie's understanding and Jonathon's understanding point to absolutely does exist but we will never know really what it is as long as we regard it as an object. Which as long as we are talking to ourselves or anyone else about it we are doing.

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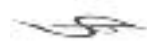
The bandhas, yoga practice, are a continuous on-going invitation to realise that the act of perception itself is an act of extracting certain information from life as a whole and giving it an identity. Each one of us making a similar but different extraction of similar but different information, and giving it the same name, the same identity: Johnathon. And yet there is something there which is absolutely independent of our definition of it until we start to try to impose it. But in and of itself that which we objectify as Johnathon is nothing other than life as a whole expressing in a unique space-time location; in a unique and irreplaceable way. This is true of any object, any action, any person, any entity, any event. It's an event happening in the mind that points towards a particular aspect of the wholeness of life.

But this pointing gives the impression that it is life itself. In the same way that in the movie the Matrix those people stuck in those incubators are under the impression that they are running around Manhattan, you are under the impression that you are running around Madrid. They are running around Manhattan, apparently, at least we can see them running around, and looks like Manhattan. You are running around Madrid: but what happens when you drop into that delight? You can still be seen to be in Madrid but are you, yourself, still effectively in Madrid? You only are if and when you make an object of yourself. Only if you start to talk about yourself. Only if you want to describe yourself.

Otherwise what happens? You've gone. You are not there. This is what the Buddha came to tell us: "you're not separate, you're not in control, don't worry." But it seems like you are, and thank goodness that it does. How boring would it be if you were always in the delight? You'd soon lose interest, and then it would no longer be a delight. The purpose of the bandhas is to give you experience after experience, moment after moment, breath after breath, second after second, the impossibility of pretending that what you actually are is an object: of pretending that you are a thing or a body; of pretending that you are a mind; of pretending that you are a person. And to realise that you are actually the unconditional delight of pure awareness. That you are consciousness itself. That you are not an object; you are not tall or thin; you are not beautiful or ugly; you are not intelligent or stupid; you are not lazy or committed; you are not useless or skilful; you are not young or old. You can appear to be any and all of these things. But actually, inherently, you are not anything, whatsoever. And this is the invitation that the bandhas are

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extending for you to stop pretending otherwise to yourself. Whilst still pretending that you are to others, otherwise life would stop.



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CONSCIOUSNESS IS WHAT YOU ARE



Objectness is the game that we are all playing. Being human is the game that consciousness is playing through us, when us is taken to be these bodies, these minds, these objects of perception. But when you are really relaxed, totally and utterly relaxed, just about to fall asleep perhaps, you disappear as an object before awareness itself disappears. And in between you are simply awareness. The same thing happens when you wake up again. Whenever you are deeply relaxed you let go of objectifying yourself completely. Then all that is left is impersonal awareness. This does not only happen in yoga, during meditation. It actually happens all the time, in all kinds of situations. And we are always looking to recapture those moments, recreate those situations. It happens when you finally get to the beach and lie down; when you fall in to the arms of a much missed lover; when you have just had an orgasm. You do not objectify yourself at all. You do not speak to yourself about your self, as if you were tall or short; young or old; stupid or intelligent. You are just present as consciousness, to consciousness.

Not matter how many years you have walked upon this planet; twenty odd, thirty odd, forty odd, fifty odd: every single characteristic of your mind as it is now, was not present on the second day of your life, nor in the third year of your life. Not in the form that they are now. Almost everything about your body and mind is different from when you were seven; even more so when you were three. The teeth have gone, the skin has gone, the ideas have gone, the fears have gone, the hopes have gone to be replaced by others. And yet, something remains, along with the DNA. Something was present then and you know that that exact same thing is present now and has been present throughout your whole life. No matter what changes something is always present. And because it was, you can remember and because it is you can hear these words. And these words are connected through memory to all those words from your past, by that which has remained constant through all of their changing.

That which has always been present is not you body, it's not your mind, it's not your opinions. It's not these constantly changing things which we identify with. And then we get upset when some-

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body says "you're fat!" or "you're stupid!" But we know that this is not what we are. Yes? We all know this, this is nothing profound or earth shattering, it's just easily overlooked. You are not the body however beautiful or ugly a mind could call it. Or hundreds of minds might call it. You are that which has never gone away from your life, and this you know. Fatness, ugliness, skilfulness are constantly coming and going from your life. But there is something that neither comes nor goes. Something that is eternally present.

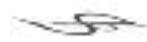
When people are saying bad things about you, you know they are not speaking about you. That their nastiness, though it may touch your mind, their aggression though it may touch your heart and it may produce actions in your body, doesn't change the fact that you are not those things. And deep down you know that. You are not a fat, ugly bastard. You know that deep down, even if you overlook it very often. When you are deeply relaxed you know it. When you are deeply relaxed you don't think about thinness, fatness, ugliness, cleverness. When you are deeply relaxed you know without ever having to tell yourself that there is no characteristic, no quality that defines you, that limits you. And that there is no configuration of characters or qualities, however complex and sophisticated that could ever define or limit you. You are unlimited, unconditioned, attributeless consciousness itself. And this is the invitation that yoga practice is extending to us all, especially through the bandhas.

But the bandhas are not required. All that is required is that you relax and let go of the controlling impulse that generates objects to perceive. When you deeply and completely relax there's no need to talk to yourself about objects, in particular the object we call myself. Yoga is a fantastic invitation to this. It is an invitation which you have already to a certain extent accepted. You are at this moment being conditioned by these words in such a way that you may accept that invitation even more, if you have been appropriately conditioned enough beforehand. You are however often going to forget it, especially when you come off the mat. This is the natural fluctuation of life, from awareness to objectness. A fluctuation to be enjoyed even when it hurts, as it does, as often as not, no matter who you are, no matter how beautiful people think you are, no matter how intelligent you supposedly are, no matter how successful you appear to be, no matter how rich you are, you will continuously forget. This is the dance of life. But the more often you remember through your practice or just in your life, in moments of relaxation, the less you will

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resent the forgetting. And the more you will just flow with it, even when it hurts.

The teachings of yoga have become shrouded in deep and desperate mystery. Layer upon layer of mystery has been laid upon the simplicity of life in the name of freedom, in the name of yoga. Yoga has only one practical purpose: that you relax. That you relax so deeply that you recover your inherent nature as unencumbered, unrestricted consciousness. One of the veils maintaining the mystery is that when the true nature of the self is realised everything will be fine. However freedom does not mean that legs can not be broken. It does not mean that skin can not be cut. It does not mean that hearts can not be broken. It does not mean that tragic events can not happen: they can, they will. Somebody you love will die before you do, unless your heart is a stone.



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THE SOURCE OF ACTION



Freedom, yoga, does not mean the end of life: it just means the end of resisting life. The end of complaining about life: of blaming yourself, blaming others. This can only happen if you stop saying "I should not have done that." You can only stop saying "he should not have done that; they should not have done that," when you've seen absolutely clearly how actions arise and where they come from. When you've seen that even though actions come through objects they come from life as a whole. Just as all objects are simply pragmatic perceptions extracted from life as a whole, just as all objects are expressions of life as a whole and nothing less, just so are all actions. All actions are simply extractions from total activity. Total activity is inherently whole and in itself indivisible. Though it can be, and always is, divided up as perceived extractions into this and that action in the mind. These extractions then gain the impression of independence, of separateness, of individuality: just as extracted objects do. An individuality, independence and separateness that they do not inherently have. Individuality, independence, separateness exist as perceived, or projected, characteristics of extracted objects and actions. There is no separateness from the indivisibility of the whole. Except in the mind.

There is not an action being taken in this room, right now, that was not conditioned, not a result of prior conditions. Anyone of those actions happening now could not be happening now if any one of those prior conditions were not present. But every single one of those actions that is happening now is happening now. There is no maybe, if or but about it. Every action that is actually happening is actually happening. Whether it is seen or not, described or not, whether it is understood or not: it is actually happening.

Everything that is happening right now, is happening right now. Nothing other than what is happening right now is happening right now. That is a matter of fact; it is not a matter of opinion. The only thing that can honestly and truly be said about all of these actions, after they have happened, for saying must and always be after the fact, is that they happened. That's the only honest and true thing that you can say. If you say that they should not have happened, or if you say that one of them should not have happened you are

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running away from reality. You are trying to imagine that the world could or should be the way you would like it to be. This is called playing God with the world in your own mind. But it doesn't make any difference to me if you tell yourself that I am not holding this bottle. I am holding this bottle. Just as it makes no difference if you say "you didn't have to pick up that bottle". The fact is I did pick up this bottle. What actually happened, actually happened. Which simply means that that which could have been, that which should have been, that which might have been are a figment of your imagination. And nothing more. They have no actuality. They are not real. They did not happen. They are not events. They are not actions. They are imaginings, fantasies.

When your yoga practice takes you deep enough into the nature of the object (the body) and the actions which appear to constitute your practice, then it becomes clear that however you might want to generalise what ever happened, if you try to extract just one thing from what actually happened the whole thing collapses. A pack of cards stacked on top of each other, "oh this one should not be here," take it out and they all fall. You can not, just because you don't like it or because you don't understand it, take out a single action: not one. They all happened, like them or not, every single one happened. Right now we have no idea what actions are coming next but in ten years time if we're honest, we are going to be able to look back and see that which happened. That something else could have happened or might have happened is pure fantasy. When you are looking to the future you don't know, but when you look into the past you do, it happened. You can not take out a single action from the matrix of actions that constitutes the past without changing the past as a whole to something that it is not, was not. You can not change the past. Children like to pretend that they can, over grown children like to pretend that one day they might be able to. But it is a sign of maturity to except that what has happened has happened.

Now I'm gonna leave you with this. Do you have the courage, the interest, the openness to find out for yourself, that if not one action from the past can be taken away from the past every single action that has ever happened had to happen? Every single thing that you have done had to happen. Every single feeling that you have ever felt, had to happen. Every single thought that you have ever had, had to happen. If you say "not so", on the basis of wanting it to be not so, you have repainted the past with the brush of you fantasy. And it is no longer the past: it's your little story about the past and

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you're going to stick to it at all cost. And the cost is your freedom and the freedom of those who interact with you. We can all sit here and beat ourselves up about the past but it wouldn't help and it wouldn't change anything about the past. This is what Ishvarapranidanah means: get back in line with what is really happening. Or in the Bhagavad Gita Krishna say to Arjuna, "give me back the fruits of my actions you bastard, their mine. Who said you could claim them for yourself, the fruits and the actions are mine. You are merely my instrument. Go forth and enjoy the delight of pulling back the bowstring. Enjoy the satisfaction of hitting the mark knowing that no one has ever been born and no one ever dies for there is but one, and that one is me. And I am Krishna and you are Krishna, that one is what we are."

I'll just say for the last time what I've been saying for four days. No matter what happens, no matter what you do, no matter what is done to you, no matter what you feel, no matter what you think: it is always and only God. This is probably the most powerful mantra in the world. Whenever things get weird, whenever you think "I shouldn't have done that", whenever you think "he, she, we, they should never have done that", if you can remember to tell yourself that it was only God and you believe it, you will relax and you will stop resisting life. This doesn't mean you won't stop trying to change things. The impulse to change is fundamental to life. It just means you won't resist what has already happened. Resisting what has already happened includes talking about it. Don't talk about it: just bring about the change you would like to happen in the future if you can. But whether it happens or not, is not a function of your intent, it is not a function of your skill, it is not a function of your desire, it is a function of the whole of life. An expression of everything that has ever happened.

Every action that has ever happened is the significance of the word God. This is the invitation that Patanjali extends when he says, 'ishvarapranidanah'. And this is the message of the Bhagavad Gita. It is an invitation to enjoy being alive, even when it hurts. To appreciate being alive. Like they do in the slums of Bombay without a house, without food, without a future: pure consciousness radiating out of their smile. Most of you have been there, you've seen it. Happiness has got nothing to do with your situation in life. It's a function of your resistance or your acceptance of it. This is called your dharma in the Bhagavad Gita. A Sanskrit scholar asked me the other day, "How do I know what my dharma is?" Stupid question.

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Your dharma is what you do, end of story. You might want to have a fancy dharma and be a Dalai Lama, but tough. You have your dharma, you can not escape it. It maybe part of you dharma to resist it. Your dharma is your life, your life is your actions, your actions are your gift to the world. God's gift to the world through you. Krishna is saying to Arjuna, "don't try and take that away from me because you can't". There is no escape from who we are, we are pure consciousness. You can overlook it but you can't escape it. Never.



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DELIGHT



Today I am going to talk about a subject which probably most of you are not really at all interested in, which is sex. As I know that most of you are not that interested in sex, I'm going to focus on kissing, which is a little safer for you. Maybe you can't remember your first kiss, but I'm going to be talking about a particular kind of kissing which when I was young was called French kissing. I don't know if it still is, although the French are known to be rather more daring and disgusting than the English. So I'm not talking about social "hello and how" are you kissing. But even if you can't remember your very first French kiss, which some of you might well, you might be able to remember the first one that you had with the person that you are currently interested in doing it with, or the last one if there sadly isn't a current one.

Perhaps before this first kiss happened there was a little bit of a build up; you wanted it to happen. Let's just assume that you were really in love with this person and that this person was really in love with you even if they were pretending not to be and even if you were pretending not to be. So there was probably quite a strong momentum for this first kiss to happen. And not only would there have been an energetic momentum for it to happen but the mind would have been going there, the mind would have been talking to you about kissing this person. Probably no matter how much the mind might have been making up stories about how you were going to make it happen and what it was going to be like, it actually wasn't like that at all. First of all hopefully it just happened and it wasn't really engineered, but of course it may have been. But even if it was engineered the chances are pretty high that all of your thinking, all of your anticipation, all of your expectation about what it would be like were totally absent and irrelevant during the actual kiss. Even though possibly afterwards you might have said, "Wow, that was great", to yourself or to them.

Let's just assume that it was really great, that the doing of the kissing was really fantastic which kissing the right person tends to be. Chances are pretty high that certain things would have happened in the mind, afterwards at least. First of all "good kiss": the kiss label comes: the deed label. Second one, another label, is prob-

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ably "good kisser", the person label: not the deed but the doer, or one of them. Now imagine this very same kind of kissing happens with somebody a thousand times over a year. It doesn't stay the same. Finally it gets to the very last kiss and you say "crap kiss: crap kisser". This has happened right? The "great kiss, great kisser" has become "crap kiss, crap kisser".

You can of course substitute this for any kind of experience. Kissing, fucking, listening to Mozart, eating an ice cream. Yoga is an invitation to find out how this happens. How it is that a "great kiss, great kisser" becomes a "crap kisser, crap kiss". Or how does a great life become a crap life? Even if only temporarily. In finding that out we are discovering the nature of kissing as representative of all activity: not kissing as a particular kind of activity but as an expression of activity itself. The nature of activity becomes evident and also what has to become evident is the nature of those elements that constitute activity, in particular the objects involved.

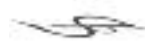
When you go "Oh, great kiss, must kiss him or her again because is a great kisser", you've made two objects: you've made the kiss the object and you've made the kisser an object. Whereas because of all of the anticipation, the desire, the love, the excitement, when you were actually kissing there was no object; there was no kiss, there were no kissers, there was just kissing and there was no labelling. Hopefully. You could say the same about eating an ice cream. It very often happens on the first mouthful there is just tasting and especially if somebody is asking you for some of it, the last one also. But the ones in the middle you often don't really notice. Well, I speak for myself of course, and that's why I'm starting a dessert company called 'Twobites'.

First of all though before going into objectness and actionness, I would like to look at what is really happening, what is really going on when you have a fantastic anything you like: insight, kiss, yoga posture, yoga practice, day, conversation, year, life. But looking at them all through the lense of kissing. When you have that kiss, that amazing first kiss that blows you away and so you tell yourself, "yeah, I really am in love", or whatever, or "I've really got her", or whatever the way your particular mind happens to work.

You can have a kiss with the same person that is technically exactly the same but doesn't have the same effect a year later or two years later, or a week later if you are really impatient and real-

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ly fast. So the delight that you took in that first kiss is not even in the technique. It's not in the person because you know you can kiss that person without it two years later, ten years later, and it's not even in the technique. But there is delight and that delight is an expression of something and it's not that you are a great kisser because you are the same as them. Pretty soon you too are going to be the other half of a crap kiss.



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PRESENCE DELIGHT



What it makes it so delightfully juicy is that you are totally and utterly fascinated and that through that total and utter fascination with what is actually happening, you are totally present. Your attention is totally there: so you feel everything without needing to label; and you drown in the feeling without having to identify and the delight is an expression of your attentiveness. The delight is an expression of the quality of your attention.

This is one of the great secrets of life, the great secrets of meditation: that you can be delighted by anything provided you are interested enough: passionate enough. So when you discover that delight resides in the quality of your attention or the quality of your awareness, you are half way to freedom. Because delight is so appealing it can act as an invitation for you to stop objectifying life, to stop looking for objects to satisfy and delight you as you realise that delight is always inherent in awareness of that which is actually happening. And that awareness like this, awareness which has no room for subjects and objects is very much a function of passion, of fascination, of interest, of desire. So just from the very self indulgent angle of loving to be in delight, loving to be delighted, you can transcend objectness and actionness. This kiss, the kissed and the kisser becomes not the point, you realise that that's not the point. The point is what is happening within that.

And to a great extent you could see yoga practice as a process whereby your initial interest in the possibility of something good arising from the posture practice gets kidnapped. By subliminal necessity: through the fact that in order to get whatever it is you think you are going to get, you are going to have to do it right: safely, effectively. And in order to do it right, in order to articulate your body safely and to use your mind effectively you have to become sensitive, ahimsa, to that which is actually happening. And through becoming sensitive to that which is actually happening you feel things that you don't normally feel and your perception, your attentiveness is becoming more subtle and more refined. And as this process continues, just inevitably by itself, what happens to most people who do yoga, very quickly, is that as an inherent function of that internalisation of awareness, of that subtilizing of perception,

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delight in simple actions is discovered. This of course really is the delight in being deeply and sensitively attentive. Delight in broadening the finger bases and rotating the biceps is discovered. But this could be jogging: delight in the legs rhythmic pumping; or washing up: the floating choreography of the wrists and fingers.

And it soon becomes obvious that delight does not reside in the hand; I mean, we know that. That's not so hard to get. That delight does not reside in the kiss is not so easy to realise. We think that delight does very often reside in the kiss, because kissing itself is so juicy. But it turns out that delight does not reside in the object, nor does delight reside in the action. Delight resides in the awareness. You could say that awareness itself is delight. But when awareness becomes awareness of an object the delight is lost: for a split second maybe only; you can oscillate back into the delight. So this could have happened on your first kiss: you probably did have the odd moment where you go, "wow, fantastic". But when you are saying "wow, fantastic", you are not in the delight. And if it goes, "wow, fantastic" too much you soon think, "This is a bit boring. Let's do something else. Maybe i can get her/his knickers off now". So you could say that the body relative to the yoga postures is a lense for focussing your attention not really on to any particular thing but more and more subtly onto the dynamic of perception itself. This is simply the alignment of awareness.

There is an apparent paradox here because there is a sense that when you are focussing something you are gathering it in, condensing it. But really it isn't like that in awareness. When attention deepens and subtilises it is narrowing and opening at one and the same time. The narrowing is a selection from the original field of objects; the opening is into that narrowed field. As you come closer it narrows, as you go deeper it opens. The aperture of your awareness is opening. If it opens enough and objects are no longer imposing themselves then in that openness of awareness, delight is all that there is left. You can feel this delight when you are in *balasana* when you are in *savasana*, when you are sitting, as a very subtle, gentle humming, oscillating, *priti*, is the word the Buddhists use, rapture, physical rapture. *Ananda* is the word that the yogis use. You could say the inherent oscillation; the inherent vibration of awareness is delight. You could also say the inherent nature of the body is awareness and the inherent nature of the body is therefore delight and in yoga esoterics, it's called *anandamayakosha* which means the bliss aspect of the body.

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When, as mine are right now, your feet start to burn and to claim their objectness of your attention saying, "get me out of here" and you don't, you just listen to what the feet are saying as deeply as you can because you are relaxed, you listen and you can hear and in that hearing you very soon hear the song of delight. And then within that listening you begin to realise that if I say that my feet are uncomfortable, or my shin bones are uncomfortable, or my ankles are uncomfortable, the pain fundamentally is the resistance of the mind to that which is actually happening. The habit of moving away from what is to talking about it to yourself. While what is actually happening is just ion exchange up the nervous system. And what the hell is that? It's just a flipping of energetic potential from sodium to potassium to sodium to potassium; there's nothing there! It's just a transmission of electric potential through the nervous system. The mind says, "Pain, hurt, get out, don't like, must stop". But no damage can possibly be done here unless I try to get away from the pain and I wriggle. And in the wriggling I might end up in a bad position where pressure does some damage. But if I've established myself initially in a safe position I can stay there for many hours before any damage would be done to tissues because of blood no longer flowing. But the mind finds it very difficult to accept that. The mind finds it very difficult to accept discomfort. It also finds it very difficult to accept stillness, lack of stimulation. The mind is looking for pleasure all the time. So when that first kiss becomes that last kiss three days later, you go looking for another kisser. And of course the first kiss is good again, but it's nothing to do with the kisser. And it's nothing to do with the kiss. Not fundamentally. Its to do with novelty, with the interest that novelty generates.

So when you relax out of the specific content of your consciousness: when you do no longer have to process, recognise, label, understand, identify everything, the background delight becomes apparent even when perceptions are occurring, even when perceptions are arising. Delight is another aspect, another word for emptiness. Delight is the tone, the quality, the face of emptiness. And if one tries to understand all this stuff about objects and actions, form and emptiness, just from the mind, it doesn't matter how well you can understand. It doesn't matter how much you agree. That's not enough. You have to know from experience what objectlessness is like. And you all know what it's like: it's there when you have that first kiss. You all know exactly what it's like. This is emptiness. And its not a void. Its a fullness, a fullness of delight.

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You could say, you know, well why not learn about yoga by kissing? You could say, yeah, more chance of you finding out what it really means to go beyond actions and objects. But the problem is the tendency that we all have, that we are all in, to identify the kissing with the kisser or the kissers very strongly because we want it again, simply because it is so juicy. Whereas yoga is more subtle. It doesn't give such overt pleasure. In fact very often it doesn't give pleasure at all for a long time so you don't have that same kind of manic or compulsive attachment. The attachment that we have to yoga is very often based on assumptions of the benefits it brings: whether immediate or long term. That it's good for the quality of life rather than it's really fantastic fun. It's not really fantastic fun to do yoga for most people most of the time



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UNIVERSAL OSCILLATION



The voice of delight is not so hard to hear. It's a subtle voice and we recognise it deeply if not overtly: and this is, to a great extent, what brings us back to the mat, back to the cushion. So when we're doing yoga postures we are not as we are when we're going for a kiss. When we're going for a kiss we are overtly looking for some kind of pleasure, some kind of satisfaction, something juicy right now; but when we are doing a yoga posture we are not. It's pretty hard to say what we are doing really! But we are doing it anyway, we are here. And when we are not so much any more caught up with either trying to make the body open, or trying to make the body more flexible, or even trying to make the body more perfectly aligned, or even trying to make the body be more stable and relaxed, but when we're more just enquiring, when we're more just using the postures to enquire into whatever interests us: maybe we're enquiring into the possibilities of the body, maybe we're enquiring into the possibility of stability, maybe we're enquiring into the possibility of movement, or maybe we're enquiring into the possibility of going deeper than that. Then other unasked for possibilities begin to naturally arise.

Of course there is always an oscillation, there is always a fluctuation: sometimes you just do something to get more flexible, but two seconds later you do something to enquire into the possibility of breathing freely and then you do something to get strong. So this kind of fluctuation is happening all the time inevitably. But within the deepening or the subtling of the enquiry you start to notice, for example, the presence of aggression. You start to eventually notice that you just pushed for more turn or whatever the equivalent might be: pulled for more movement in the hamstring, or whatever it is. Eventually you even notice these things arising as they happen. Sooner or later what happens is you go, "Shit! I shouldn't do that." And then you stop because you shouldn't and then it happens again. And if it happens a lot you start to get pissed off with yourself or with the teacher, or with the mat, or with your leotard, or with something, the music in the next room or whatever it is; if you keep judging yourself for the presence of aggression. But after a while you just notice its arising all by itself and in that arising it just fades away, all by itself. Without either the coming or the going resulting from your

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intent. This is what ahimsa is there for as the basic principle of yoga, so that you are always involved in enquiry through that particular lense: the presence or absence of sensitivity or aggression. Of course this enquiry is not going on consciously, not intellectually. It exist in terms of orientation and in terms of awareness; and it takes place through action: through being sensitive to the nature of your actions.

Within this focussing of your internal enquiry through the principle of ahimsa, honesty also starts to manifest itself in a very particular way which is the recognition that the aggression just happened. Sometimes it doesn't. Sometimes the thought comes; "I think I maybe can go further" and you push. But after a while you start to notice that very often aggression just happens. And when you start to notice that aggression just happened over a while you start to notice within that noticing that it seems to happen less, and even if it's not less in terms of less often, its happening is less of a big deal in that you are no longer saying, "that shouldn't happen". You are no longer getting your knickers twisted about something that happened. So it does happen less in that way, in that sense. And eventually actually the less you get your knickers in a twist, the more you see what actually happens when you push. The more you see that when you push harm comes and the more you see that, the less you push without having to stay in control of that. Without having to constantly tell yourself not to push, this just happens, as a result of what? As a result of honesty or satya, as a result of openness or asteya. Which all arise within awareness. So yamaniyama, as the lenses through which your enquiry is being focussed, deepen as a result of awareness. As a result of awareness being invited to be more present (brahmacharya) by enquiring into that which is actually happening. Enquiry that is focussed through the lenses of yamaniyama.

So after a while you start to notice aggression, dishonesty, end gaining or exploitation, judgement of what's happening in terms of good and bad. Then you start to notice that interest and disinterest, passion, (tapas), commitment or lack of commitment, (sauca); seem to have a life of their own. It begins to become clear that they all just come and go despite the fact that you are not inviting them to come they come; even though you are not telling them to go they just stop in the light of your awareness. When you really notice this you also begin to realise that the actions that are the result of these tendencies are therefore not the result to your intention, your stu-

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pidity. They cannot honestly be said to be yours. They just happen. You haven't asked them to happen, you haven't told them to happen. You haven't got a background agenda that you want them to happen, but they are happening.

The pushing that's an expression of the breaking of ahimsa in himsa is an action that's happening by itself. The by itself means independent of your specific intent, independent of your invitation but obviously it's not happening out of the blue. Obviously there has to be a cause. A part of that causation is habit: it's a habit, it's a push for more; it's a habit to reach for more; it's a habit to want more. But there are all kinds of other factors that actually contribute to the conditions that together cause that action to arise: the heat, you were distracted by the crickets, I said the wrong thing, or you heard me wrong, or you saw somebody next to you who never before looked more flexible than you looking more flexible than you. You don't even have to think it. You don't even have to think it. But this is going to have an impact on your expectations, on your self image, on your desires, on all of that; it's going to be impacted on by seeing somebody all of a sudden more free in their body.

So eventually the recognition of this is deepening, clarifying, becoming more familiar, not as an intellectual process but in action; it's happening day after day on your mat. It's not an intellectual debate trying to figure out the truth. It's just seeing what's actually happening within the lense of your body in your practice. So then you are starting to see that all of these actions happen as a result of all of these tendencies arising without so much as a 'by your leave'. These actions are not arising through your intent. You might even ask yourself, "where did that come from?", or exclaim "I didn't do that". In that kind of response the habit of personalising, of claiming actions is being undermined. And at the same time as that's going on in your yoga practice, it can go on in any situation, even in a conversation with somebody you can notice the presence of aggression or insensitivity. You say something. You don't mean to be aggressive, but somehow something somewhere has triggered you so, just for a moment without realising it, you are feeling a little nervous. And so you say something a little aggressive without at all meaning to be aggressive to the person that you are talking to. You might not even realise that it's aggression until you see the look in their eye and then you don't know why they are looking like that. Maybe you don't even know it's because you just said something. So this is happening not just in yoga, this is happening all of the time

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and this seeing, this recognition of the coming and going of whatever you like: greed, fear, anger, it doesn't have to just be the ten principles that Patanjali gives. In the recognition of that coming and going, that uncalled-for oscillation, the impersonal nature of, at least some, actions is becoming clear. You see quite clearly that so many actions happen despite your personal intent and despite your personal agenda and despite your personal preferences. Sooner or later you're going to realise that all actions happen in exactly the same way. With only incidental reference to your intentions.

The beauty about yoga practice is that at the same time as giving you this insight into the impersonal nature of at least some actions, it's giving you an insight into the objectless nature of the body. So at the same time as actions are being challenged in the way that they are normally understood, so also are objects. And in your yoga practice and also in your life, the inherent oscillation that pertains to everything becomes apparent: your attention, your awareness, your breathing, your heart; whatever it is, it doesn't matter. It becomes clear that everything has oscillation in its expression. Within the oscillation of your attention and with the oscillation of your awareness objectness and actionness is coming and going in your life but when we take stock of our lives, we take stock of it only in terms of actions and objects. But when you are in that first kiss, or when you are in the flow of your yoga practice or whatever it is that allows you to flow you are not in objects and actions, you are in the flow of delight. And for some people this is happening actually more than objects and actions, but even when that's the case it's the objects and actions that are used to define the life. My life is these actions linking these objects.

After a while the recognition of the impersonal nature of at least some actions broadens and starts to include more and more actions until it's very hard for you to actually really honestly say for sure that any action is personal, that any action truly originates in a person, whether it's yourself or another. It becomes impossible to say it originates purely and exclusively in that person: and impossible to say that they could have not done it, they should have not done it. In other words "they could have not", "they should have not", can no longer be said, can no longer happen. Or when there's a space, a period when it's not happening then you are being invited to recognize the impersonal nature of a particular kind of object, the person.



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YOU ARE NOT THE DOER



This is really a deep way down or a long way in: this is the kernel; this is the crux of the matter. When what you've learned about actions, when what you've learned about objects in the body starts to express itself as an understanding of human interaction, of human relationships. Let's say I've been in love with Lily since she first came here two years ago and she, as we know, is in love with me, and not Andrew, despite that huge diamond. So then finally we get to have this kiss. How can I not personalise it? How can I not attribute it to Lily and me kissing? Very hard to do. Very hard to see. And there's no way that you can make an intellectual conviction alone that that was impersonal. And of course, externally, apparently, in terms of overt motivation it is highly, totally personal.

So you have to have a lot of support to be able to see its deeper, impersonal nature. And that support is available very strongly in your yoga practice when you are not objectifying your body and you are not personalising your actions. Now if Lily and I were to kiss now, no matter what the feeling was, it would be impersonal as far as what I'm saying is concerned. But that doesn't mean it wouldn't be specific. Of course it would be specific. It would involve her mouth and tongue and nobody else's but mine. So it is specific. It is specific to a body or two. It is specific to a mind or two. So you could say it is specific to a person or two, if a person is a body mind.

Now you have to decide for yourself how you use language. So what I'm doing is I'm clarifying what I mean by personal or person. Because there is no reason why you can't just say Lily, the bodimind, is a person. You can. Then what I'm saying about impersonal doesn't make any sense. So I'm not meaning that that's not a person. A person to me is an 'autonomous entity with volition'. A person is something who is able to freely make a decision and freely act on it. And that's normally how we see it don't we? This is not a person, it's a microphone. But what's the difference? You could say a cat. But what's the difference? Or a monkey, it's not a person, it's a monkey. What's the difference? So you see we do make a difference. We are saying that what makes a person is something very specific. Its not just a body with awareness. Its not life, its not motion, its not sentience, its not even consciousness: it's

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autonomous, deliberated intent. Autonomous intent giving the impression that you are in control. Giving the impression that this body mind has a separate controller and it's the controller that you get pissed off with when somebody does something wrong. Not the body. Somebody hits you; you are pissed off with the person, the controller. So obviously, if I'm saying everything is impersonal you have to get your head round what i mean by person and what it means but also what is the nature of that sense of there being an autonomous controller

Making a person out of consistently localised actions is an assumed habit based on a deeper habit. It's an assumed habit based on the ongoing habit of personalising actions. Saying, "my sweat" when you're meditating. "My ankle aching, my distracted mind, my salacious mind, my", whatever. This habit, the 'my' habit, produces the 'me' habit. The 'me' habit, produces the 'you' habit. Without the 'my' habit there can be no 'me or you' habit. If you recognize at all for a minute or two minutes, that mental activity and physical activity can go on in the space that has your name around it, and it be totally impersonal, not yours, then the me is dying. The me is fading away because the me depends upon the mine and the habit of mine leaves the residual habit of me; an assumption that if those were mine they must belong to something, an object. If those actions were mine they must belong to the subject which is nothing other than an object. A very special object of course, but an object nonetheless. So it's to this object in particular, the subject, the person or the self that the recognition of the impersonal nature of all phenomena must come. Not so that you can sit in a cave with your legs crossed and tell yourself how brilliant you are, or have other people tell you how brilliant you are. But so that you can live a life in which you don't blame anyone for anything; not yourself and not others, not your mother, not your father, not your brother, not your sister, not your husband, not your wife, not your lover, not your boss, not the guy who ran over your daughter, nobody.

Now the only understanding you need of this is intellectual. There is no other understanding, because understanding is an intellectual process. But very often you hear people say, "Well I understand it intellectually but I don't really get it inside" and what this means is that you don't really understand it actually. That your intellectual understanding is limited. That there is a gap somewhere. Or there is a little subtle conflict which allows you to say, "The bastard shouldn't have raped my daughter". Because we

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already know this organically. The heart requires no education. Its already in love. Its already perfect. Its already awake. Its just that the mind is not listening. To get the mind to listen you have to challenge its assumptions. You do this by enquiring into the source of your actions. To investigating the causation of actions down and through the fallacious assumptions upon which they rest.

So the process that goes on during your yoga practice, whereby you experience objectlessness and the impersonal nature of actions, has to have a fabric of understanding around it for it to percolate into your life because you don't spend your life on your mat. For you to realise that the person whose presence is so disturbing to you is not operating out of autonomous volition. In other words the very so-called person is impersonal. That the actions that are arising through the so called person are all totally conditioned expressions of inevitability. But actually you don't ever see a person you just see objects, many of which are human bodies. You see body acting, you see a hand moving. This is what you see: the body and sometimes you might hear, "I'm going to hit you", so the mind, you hear the mind, you observe the mind, but you assume a person. And into that assumption based on the past comes fear for the future, anxiety for the future; that same person might do same thing again or similar kind of person might do a similar kind of thing. So if your father has done lots of horrible things to you, you are fucked as far as men are concerned. Or if it's your mother. Doesn't really matter. Because there has to be an association in your mind based on the assumption of person.



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CONDITIONING AND AWARENESS



So hanging out in the delight, delightful though it is, which yoga can give so easily, is not enough. You have to understand the significance of the delight. You have to understand what the relationship is between delight and actions, between delight and perceptions which you could say is that perceptions and actions are the impersonal expression of delight, or of emptiness, or of God, or of consciousness, or of awareness, or whatever you want to say. Within this process, when you are realising that aggression arises independent of your intent, you realise that actually it is not arising by itself. That there is a set of conditions which generated it and actually there had to be. This is what physics is all about relative to objects. Establish a certain set of conditions and objects will respond in a definite way. Which means very simply take a knife and cut the stem of an apple on a tree and it will drop. That's inevitable unless you put something underneath, in which case, if it supports it, it won't. So these are the conditions and they are fixed of material objects which are being described. These conditions are described by the laws of physics. Krishnamurti for example was really hot about psychological conditioning which is the same: establish a certain set of conditions and a given mind will respond in a certain way.

What's happening in yoga is that the practices are an invitation to awareness. Now awareness is a condition. Awareness is the primary condition. Awareness is the condition within which all other conditions are recognised. Awareness is the condition amongst all conditions that makes the biggest difference. So that's why you can stop acting compulsively when you become aware of the compulsiveness of your actions. Because awareness is a condition that conditions all other conditions in the same way. The conditioning of awareness is to dissolve objects and actions into itself, into emptiness. So awareness always invites change. Potent change.

So when a particular thought arises into the mind while meditating, and it's a thought that keeps coming back, after a while you start to notice how it comes about, what triggers it. Whether it be other thoughts or feelings, whether it be sounds, or whatever, and you start to notice that there is a web of conditions that produces

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that thought and if those conditions are there that thought will come. And if the condition of awareness is there maybe soon that thought will stop coming. But what you see very clearly is that when you are meditating and you are relaxed enough, you realise that you actually stopped being present to your practice some time ago and you have no idea when. But eventually what starts to happen as you relax more, is you notice the gap between noticing thoughts and forgetting your technique gets shorter and shorter and shorter. And if you are relaxed enough, you can get to the point, and you may well have been there, where you can actually feel the impulse that would have generated that first thought arising and then maybe that first thought comes on the impulse. And when you are that close to your mind, when you are that relaxed about what's happening, then you can see that that impulse just comes; not from your mind. Doesn't come from your intent. The impulse simply arises.

And let's say the first thought is a thought that you don't like. Let's say it's about money: constantly find that you are thinking about money or sex, you know, these things that are so bad, we are not supposed to think about when we are meditating but we do. It soon becomes apparent that you are not in control of your mind in the deepest level. You are not in control of your mind. Okay maybe once you have started thinking about sex you can stop yourself or once you've started thinking about money you can make it practical and you can decide, "Yeah I'll swap banks". And then you'll stop thinking about money. But it soon becomes apparent that you can't stop yourself starting thinking about money. You can't stop yourself starting thinking about sex because to try doing that you have to be thinking about it, "I won't think about sex now". Too late.

So you start to see that a thought comes as a result of the conditions of the life that you are living; that you don't have enough money in the bank, or you haven't had enough sex lately, or you've had too much sex lately, or whatever it is making this thought come. And you start to see what actually has been making this thought come. Let's say that you're thinking about sex because you've been having too much so your sex centre is over stimulated and you start to see that. But you also start to see this thought open out into the whole of your life. And of course in the opening out into the whole of your life, especially if it's a thought about you've been having too much sex lately and you've been having it with lots of different people, it opens out into lots of other people's lives also. And what you're discovering about your life is also likely to be going on in their

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lives, which is that there's this huge web going back, and back, and out, and touching everything and it's a web of conditions, or a web of conditioning, or a web of factors that condition your action.

And this is what karma means. That all actions are conditioned. That all actions are the result of not a cause, but of causation, of an interconnected network, a web, or a matrix of forces and factors, actions and objects that led to this (sound of stick hitting mat) hitting the mat with the stick action. Now you can see how many actions led to that: I'm just going to take one angle behind that. Let's forget the fact that a particular kind of person designed black mats and lives in Germany and I happened to find out about him and all that. Let's forget the temperature and the fact that a friend of mine built this house and offered it to me, let's forget all of that and let's just focus on the stick. Now this stick could not exist if Kim's parents hadn't made love the day they did. And Kim's parents couldn't exist if their parents hadn't made love on the day that they did. Sperm is dying all the time. A child, a particular child is born because of a particular sperm making it with a particular egg. The egg, okay, takes longer. So if you look at the sperm you can see it. So if you have sex five minutes later a different child is born, a different genetic potentiality. It could be even five seconds. You know? There's millions and millions of those little things so it's quite likely that they die really fast when they start to die. Five seconds later, five minutes later for sure. Five weeks later it's clearly a different child. So if Kim's parents hadn't produced Kim I wouldn't have this stick because Kim made it. So the whole of the history of Kim's family going back to the origin of time contributed to that action and mine and the guy who made these mats, and the guy who built the house, Juan, and the guy who bought the house next door that allowed Juan to have a little corner of his land, yeah, everybody. It doesn't take very long to discover everybody participating, everything participating in that one action. This means that that action was conditioned by every other action that's ever happened which means it had to, it had to happen. Just like Kim had to happen if that particular sperm met that particular egg. Likewise this particular action has to happen in that moment because of the factors and forces that go back, go back forever and each one of them was also conditioned in exactly the same way; inevitably by that which came before. And this is where it gets scary for the person. We have already got rid of the person, but you haven't. The person is still in there. You have still got your personal belief system operating,

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yeah? You are trying to figure out if what I am saying is right or wrong. True or false.

So the impersonal nature of actions and the fact that you are not in control of them, very soon leads you to inevitability. But if inevitability is too hard to stomach let's try another one before we go to inevitability. What would happen to this action if Kim had not, if Kim's father and mother had not made love that day? That action wouldn't exist. Now, all actions sit in the web equally, every single action is conditioned and conditions all other actions in exactly the same way. You can not find one action that you can remove without everything else disappearing. Not just that action but everything else disappearing. When you can see that: that you can't take anything out from anything and it remains the same. Then you can see that each action, every action, is inextricable from the matrix. You can not take an action out of the matrix. You can not change the matrix.

Sorry guys, you can't. And if you can't change the matrix then everything is inevitable and if everything is inevitable then why get your knickers in a twist about what you should do? You will do what you will do. But the journey into seeing that you will do what you will do has made it clear that you are not doing it. That you are not the doer, that you, meaning the person that you maybe still think you are, are not the doer. But in the person disappearing; or the freedom to make an action or not, disappearing; or the extractability of an action disappearing then personal volition has disappeared. In other words we are back to where we started: everything is impersonal. Doing is impersonal. Deciding is impersonal. Choosing is impersonal. Deliberating is impersonal. Intent is impersonal. Volition is impersonal.

But how can you say that if Lily and I have this fantastic kiss? Well, I just explained how so don't get confused. I can use the word personal with it simply meaning specific to a particular bodimind. And I have to sometimes. Because that's how most people also do it and I have to talk to people so I'm not going to walk around using unfamiliar language confusing people. So if somebody says "Lily's a really nice person", I'm not going to say, "No she isn't. There is no person there". They're going to think I am crazy which maybe I am, but it's not going to make any sense. It's not going to be a very helpful thing to say. So I'll say, "Okay, Lily's a nice person". But all I mean by that is that the actions that come out of that bodimind

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tend to be okay by my standards. Okay meaning meet with my approval. And of course the criteria by which i give approval are very specific, uniquely so. They are mine, from my bodimind. But they are not personal, at least not according to my usage. Nevertheless they are very specific to the preferences that are operating over here, or in what is called me. This must be operating over here in expression of a specific history; in expression of the experiences that have been centred over here. Or you could say angled over here, because if I have an experience of kissing Lily the kiss is not centred in me, but my experience of it is. It's different from hers. She might have thought it was crap and I'm thinking, "wow, juiciest, best ever", and she's gone, "oh my God, not another one. I don't want another one". Now that's another way you can see that experiences are specific. But that doesn't make them personal: if personal means subject to autonomous volition. This simply cannot exist, no matter how much we may want it to, if all actions are irreplaceable, inextricable and inevitable.

This is just a concept, like all of this, but something that can help with the conundrum of everything being impersonal is to look at the matrix, to look at this web of conditions, to see the inextricability of all actions that confirms its inevitability as a whole. No matter where we start from, we keep on finding links in the chain of causation that spread out infinitely in all directions. Then we have to see that it doesn't have an end, it doesn't have a beginning, it doesn't have a centre. You can pick any place you like and say that's the beginning or that's the end or that's the centre. And of course as far as the centre is concerned we do that all the time: and we call it myself.



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THE PRESENCE OF GOD



When you really go into it the matrix turns out to be so huge it's actually infinite. How can it end? How can you go back to the beginning? Philosophers have been looking for this forever. Where is the first cause? You can't find it. It goes on forever in time, eternity, and in space, infinity. In doing so it includes everything, absolutely everything, absolutely every action, absolutely every object is in the matrix. So when you see what that might mean, that the inextricability of an action from the matrix means that the matrix is undividable, indivisible that you can't take anything out, that the matrix is whole, that it's infinite, it's eternal and it's one, you come to God. Okay, it's just a concept, a concept that you can lay onto the implications of the infinitely indivisible inevitability of conditioning factors behind all actions. But they are all just concepts, vrttis, too.

When you start to understand how any action is conditioned, the more deeply you understand it, the closer and closer you come to the significance of the concept God. You don't have to take concept the God, but it's a very powerful concept to help you to see the impersonal nature of all things because you can tell yourself that it is always and only God that does everything. It is always and only God that feels everything. That it is always and only God that experiences everything, that thinks anything, that wants anything, that likes anything, that dislikes anything, that causes birth, that causes death, that causes delight, that causes suffering; it is always and only God. So when you are taking things really personally, and you remember that you've derived some relaxation, some benefit when you are not taking things personally, you can invite the possibility of not taking things personally by reminding yourself that it's always and only God.

But Godfrey, if everything is in the matrix what's outside the matrix?

Go outside. Go on. Find your way out. You are assuming that the dialectic modality of the thinking mind, the dualism of the thinking mind is an arbiter of reality. Is an arbiter of that which is. It isn't. That's called arrogance: assuming that the human mind is shaped in such a way that it can determine the shape of that which is. So out-

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side the matrix is just a concept. Nobody has ever been. Simply because we are making objects all the time inside and outside is really a big deal but from the space of delight, objectlessness, samadhi, whatever you want to call it, there is neither inside nor outside and it is not a big deal. In fact it's an intrusion, and you think, "fuck, take your inside and outside away. I'm not interested". The matrix is only an appearance. Every action and every object is only an appearance and in fact that's the beauty of that film, The Matrix, it is just an appearance. It is just an appearance. Why is it such a cult movie? It's got Keanu Reeves in for God's sake! The most wooden actor on the planet! But why does everybody like it? Because it's touching a truth. It's touching the truth that this is a projected matrix: we are in a matrix and it is just an appearance. It's the appearance of God and they make it an appearance of a bunch of robots but that doesn't matter. The impact is the same relative to your own perception. Every perception you have is just an appearance, an invention. You know I thought it was a great kiss, she thought it was crap. What was it? It wasn't a kiss. We just made it a kiss. We called it a kiss. That's the appearance that we give it, the label that we give it. It's just a couple of tongues going lubulubulubu. What's the big deal? Yeah, that is how I kiss! That's why Lily didn't want to do it again!

If there is no personal volition, and somebody does something that pisses you off, and you go okay it stopped then but you are still pissed off, I mean is that just living in the moment and going, well okay I'm aware that I'm pissed off? Or are you still attributing something to that person really?

Well not necessarily, it depends how it happens. Being pissed off, the reaction of anger to certain actions is conditioned into the organism. So some people get pissed off by the fact that I swear. Because it's supposed to be holy yoga, you're not supposed to swear. The people that get pissed off by me swearing, they swear. It's not that. But they have a set of conditions within them based on their expectations and their beliefs and all of this stuff, that when they hear a swear word in a yoga class, they get angry. Nothing can be done about that in the moment: as long as they are carrying those foolish beliefs they are gonna get pissed. But once the notion of freedom of choice, of personal volition has started to crumble then things begin to change. Then even though anger may arise, neither the anger, nor the trigger are attributed to personal volition, to a person. They are seen to be inevitable expressions of the conditions

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operating in the organisms involved. They are seen to be the inevitable and impersonal expression of the matrix.

And in the seeing of that you don't hold a grudge. You don't walk around thinking, "I don't like Godfrey because he swears", but if you really don't like swearing you don't go near Godfrey teaching. That's all. You just don't go. But you don't not go because he is a wanker, because he is this, because he is that. You just don't go because it doesn't feel good. It doesn't feel right. And so this kind of reaction is necessary and is the juice of life because otherwise we would all have the same reactions and it would be so boring. We would just be sitting doing nothing. And it's hard when you are disappointed: when you are angry it's kind of easier and clearer, but if somebody disappoints you it's coming from deeper and it's less obviously not fun. You know when you are angry it's obviously not fun, but when you are disappointed it's not so obvious that it's not fun and you can really get into disappointment. You can really get into indulging it by story telling. You know this person shouldn't have, this fucking bitch, this bastard, this and that, you know it goes on like that. And then after a couple of hours maybe suddenly you go, "oh wait a minute, it's not personal", or whatever. So to the extent that you have an understanding of the impersonal nature of actions, the more you have it, the quicker, and deeper, it comes in to your life.

What does that mean then for good actions? We've talked about examples of people doing nasty things and then you say well it's not them. What if somebody does some really nice things? If somebody does nice things, it's a bit disappointing if you have to then say, well that person might seem nice but she's not really.

No but it doesn't have to be like that because what you're seeing as nice behaviour is the conditioned expression of that organism, of that what we normally call a person. Now it's pretty likely that that nice behaviour is going to continue so you can say nice person. But just remembering that person is just a conventional symbol that you're using for consistency in location of a set of conditions that tend towards certain actions: but it doesn't actually indicate autonomy. Let's say you think that about me, that you think I'm really nice. Am I free to be nice? Do I choose to be nice? The very actions that you might think make me nice other people might think make me not nice and anyway, I'm not free to choose them. They are just there. They are expressing that way. My parents did this. My mother did that. My school teacher did this, my brother did that, my first

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yoga teacher said this and as a result I am a certain way and I am going to stay that way in terms of what I express if the conditions that brought about those expressions are similar, until perhaps further unpredictable experiences change my conditioning, my programming.

When the illusory nature of volition and the impersonal nature of action are being recognised then dislike of an action may happen, but resentment of the actor doesn't happen. So resentment doesn't happen, blame doesn't happen, bitching doesn't happen, gossiping doesn't happen. All of these things don't happen. But still the fundamental conditioning of the person, the mind body organism, the human being, whatever you want to call it, is still the same. But that doesn't mean we have to stay around the locus of those actions. If we are sensible we won't do that. Within the recognition of the impersonal nature of action we are still able to recognise the tone and tendency of the organisms conditioning. So if we dislike certain types of actions, we will, if we are sensible and we can do so, avoid their instrument. But we don't blame.

You can't erase the past. So that means I still like sandy beaches over pebbly beaches. I still prefer cold weather to hot weather. I'm always going to be like that. No amount of yoga, meditation, awareness is going to change that. But a certain amount of awareness can make me not resent hot weather. You know I can either say, "Well fuck off. Go back and live in England if you don't like hot weather", or "here it is, you are here for other reasons than the weather so stick it out". So many things do change and many things don't. But of the things that don't change, they become contextualised very differently because of the things that do change.

So your liking things creating an impulse to reach for them, this can change. I don't have to be somewhere cold: I don't have to resent living somewhere warm. The reaching happens only if the reaching is an easy and inherent expression of the total situation and if the total situation invites its success. If the total situation does not invite that action it is not reached for. Then something else happens without any, "oh fuck, I really wanted to do that". "What bastard, what bitch, what cop, what road, what planning, what political party stops me from doing?" that doesn't happen. So the context changes and the context changes from everything being personal to everything being impersonal. Or from everything being personal to everything being God. And when everything is God things become very

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simple. You don't have to worry about the future; you don't have to worry about the past. The past you know was inevitable because it happened. The future you know will happen out of inevitability so you don't need to worry about it. It's going to happen. That doesn't mean you don't have to prepare for it, plan for it, ponder it. That might be part of its inevitability; that you see the clouds coming you think rain, you get rain coat, fine. But you don't worry the day before, is it going to rain or not? You might think, "is it going to rain or not?" but that isn't the same as worrying about it. So anxiety goes away, same as guilt goes away, same as blame goes away, worry goes away.

Relative, it's all relative. As your understanding deepens, they go away more and more and that's the beautiful thing because you don't have to have a very deep understanding of this concept of impersonal action for big changes to happen straight away. It's an amazing thing. I think it's incredible. I don't know how it works but it just fucking works. It's the most incredible process I've ever come across. It has so much liberating power on people immediately. The recognition that, say it how you like, it's always and only God, everything is impersonal, there is no personal action or object anywhere, there is no personal doer, however you want to say it that concept and its impact is magic, pure magic.

Its like a virus, the first time it gets in your head, that's it. You're fucked. It's true. It's the most potent virus on the planet. It's called truth. And as soon as it drops into your brain, that's it, you're fucked. It goes as fast as it can into every neuron, into every cell. It may not go as fast as you might like, but it's going. There is nothing you can do about it. There is nothing you can do to make it go faster, there is nothing you can do to make it go slower, but that's its impulse. That's what it does. When it's heard. But that doesn't mean that anybody who hears the word hears the concept. Many people don't. But when the concept is heard, just even the most basic understanding then that's it.



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IDENTIFICATION



In order for all the juicy fruit that's associated with yoga to manifest, what most needs to be seen through is this whole process of claiming physical and mental activity as your own. Imposing proprietary rights over actions, feelings and thoughts that happen to happen specifically within or to or through or by your organism, your body-mind. Patanjali gives us a blueprint for understanding this process of the personalisation or the identification of actions at the beginning of the yoga sutras. In the first chapter he is defining the process of going beyond duality in cognition. Transcending the duality of cognition, closing the subject object split. Then he says that the problem of being human is a splitting of subject from object. A split within which you feel cut off, you feel separate from objects of perception. Then you feel the need to control them. Patanjali says this split rests upon five things which he calls the hindrances or the afflictions: the word in Sanskrit is klesa.

The thing about the five hindrances is that they are just there and all you can do is see through them. They are not to be got rid of. When you see through them they lose their power. The five hindrances are: avidya, asmita, raga, dvesa and abhinivesa. Of course they can't really be translated one word to one word. Avidya is a negation of vidya which means understanding, seeing clearly. Avidya means no understanding or ignorance. But it particularly means no wisdom. It doesn't mean no knowledge, it means no wisdom. No understanding of the way things are is the first hindrance. The second one, asmita, is translated normally as egoism, that which creates the sense "I am something". I am alive. I am conscious. But within the, I am something, asmita is the, I am. The principle of identifying with the vehicle of experience. With the bodimind. Body and mind are not separate so asmita is the principle of identifying with the bodimind: which also means identifying with the label of the bodimind or the name. So it's identifying with name and form

The next two are attachment and aversion. These are obvious; you know what attachment is and you know what aversion is. And the fifth one is abhinivesa which means literally self clinging or, egoism as opposed to egoism. A little 't' in the middle making a big

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distinction between egotism and egoism. They are both part of the same process whereby egotism feeds and expresses egoism. The dynamic of this process is the oscillation between aversion and attachment. All of which rests on and feeds ignorance. This is the dynamic between the five.

But it all arises from ignorance. As long as there is ignorance there is identification with the body. As long as there is identification with the body you have attachment or aversion. "I like this, I don't like that". But this is a statement of ignorance. There is no liker or disliker in the body. The body itself likes the taste of this food and not of that food. This body likes beer, this one likes shandy. The mind also has its likes and dislikes. Bodiminds have attachment and aversion and what happens when the consistency of attachments and aversions become evident then you start saying, "I like beer" or "I like blue eyed blond guys who do really good Uddiyana bandhas". Or whatever. So attachment and aversion are quite simple. But Patanjali makes it very clear where they come from. They come from pleasure and pain. Obviously pleasure creates attachment and pain creates aversion. Very simple, a child can understand that.

Egoism is identification of consciousness with its instrument: the human body. It's not a big problem. It's not inherently a problem. Not only is it not inherently a problem that consciousness is identified with the body, but it is necessary. Otherwise if I say "Lily", she ain't gonna respond if there isn't identification of consciousness with the instrument. The problem comes with abhinivesa which can be defined very simply as identification of the instrument with its actions. So you've got two layers of identification or two levels of personalisation and the first one is not really personalisation. You could say that it is but in terms of my language and how I'm using it, it's the second one, when you identify actions with their instruments or you identify instruments by their actions that is personalisation. The former, egoism, is just the necessary recognition of the separateness of the instrument. Without this recognition the organism can not only not relate to other organisms, but it cannot survive.

The identification of consciousness with the body is one thing and is not inherently a problem. It's a little problematical because it leads to the other but it's not inherently a problem. But identifying the body mind, the instrument of action, the instrument of behavioural action being the body, the instrument of psychological action being the mind, identifying the body mind with those actions is the

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problem. Those actions are not the problem. The instrument is not the problem. The body is not the problem. The mind is not the problem. The action is not the problem. The problem is personalising the actions as if they belonged to, by some kind of proprietorial contact, the instrument whereby they become evident.

So that means of course, I took no thought whatsoever to raise that cup to my mouth and to drink the tea, so as far as I was concerned I didn't do anything, but as far as you're concerned I did. That's the assumption that you're likely to make: Godfrey just took a sip of tea. But actually there was no Godfrey participating in that. There was a body; there wasn't even really a mind. And the body made that action because it had to. Because its own understanding of fluid levels and hydration levels in the body was such that it had better take some more liquid and so it did. The body taking care of itself. Now that doesn't mean that my mind could not have gone, "oh I think I'm thirsty perhaps I need some liquid. I think I've got some tea, let me have a look. Yes I do. Maybe I'll let go of the stick and take it". This happens sometimes. When you're really not in a trusting relationship with life and your body, this happens all the time. You reckon that things can only happen effectively if you think about them. Whereas it's not the case and you know it's not the case at other times that things only happen effectively when you don't think about them. You know that when you are driving a car, when you think about it it's not happening effectively. When you no longer have to think about it's happening effectively

So this morning all of you came into the dome. Some of you perhaps didn't really feel like it. Tom! So he wakes up and after a certain amount of time he remembers he is in Ibiza. You don't necessarily remember where you are straight away when you wake up just as you don't always necessarily remember who you are when you wake up. Just as you don't remember what you are, man or woman is not self evident immediately. Your personal identity is not self evident immediately. That you've even got a body is not immediately self evident. Sometimes all these things come on really fast, sometimes they don't. Awareness, consciousness is not dependent on identifying itself with the body or any of its aspects, DNA, chromosomes, x and y. But anyway, Tom woke up this morning and "oh fuck I'm still Tom". And then he goes, "oh shit, I'm still in Ibiza". And then something happened. So what happened to Tom was he thought, "Oh shit but it would be such a waste of money, no I don't care about that. But oh shit Godfrey will think I'm a wanker, I'd bet-

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ter go. I'd better go to the class because he keeps catching me down town when I haven't been to class looking really chilled and having a good time". So Tom has this little debate and as a result he comes to the dome instead of going down town and doing what he thought he really wanted to do. You can look around you and you can see there's a few spaces and some people didn't make that choice. Some people decided to do what they really felt like or not. Perhaps not. Perhaps in this debate that Tom had, perhaps the reason why he came to the dome was even though it might have been the harder option than rolling over and going back to sleep he actually felt like it more. Now like it more doesn't mean going to the dome. Like it more means what happens as a result of going to the dome also. How he's going to feel in his body after having done the practice. How he's going to feel in his mind after having done the practice.

In other words the so called decision to go to the dome was not about going to the dome. The so called decision was about his quality of life. And the so called decision which was really about the quality of life rather than about "ah, must make myself go and sweat for two hours", this so called decision to do that can hardly be really said to be a decision when it's looked at really closely. It's just the inevitable recognition of a preference operating in the moment with greater insistence than any other preference. I would rather that than anything else.

In other words a decision is just the mental recognition of the inevitability of a desire preceding an action that seems to be able to bring about that desire, however indirectly. But many actions are taken relative to a desire such as mine to lift the cup which had no decision. No thought. No consideration, no apparent choice, roll over or go to dome, pick up the cup or not. But it's still desire driving the action but when desire drives the action without a decision, without a sense of a choice, without a sense of freedom of choice to make a decision, there is no decider. There is no thinker. Not only is there no thinker because there is no thinking, but there is no arm mover. Arm is just moving. There is no tea taster. Tea is just going down. And this is all that it means, the absence of the self. Godfrey is not there. Tom may have been participating in his discussion about going to the dome but when he got to the mat there would have been moments when Tom was just not there. The impact of that decision no longer requiring any more decisions for some time. So then Tom can go back to sleep where he wanted to go in the first

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place while the body continues in action and the mind continues taking stock of those actions and sometimes taking stock of them with the help of Tom but not always.

So when Tom says "I'm doing this" or when you say "Godfrey picked up the cup", this is *abhinivesa*, this is self clinging. This is identifying an action with its instrument, which means that you are attributing the action to the instrument in such a way that implies a choice, which implies options, that implies that maybe it didn't have to happen. In other words if Tom broke his neck in headstand, it would be quite likely that he would say "shit, I should never have gone to the dome, should never have listened to that bastard", or whatever. Those kinds of thoughts are likely to arise in a result of a situation like that happening. Yet this is just pure speculation that he could have not come to the dome. All that can be actually said is that something happened. He came to the dome and that can be said to be true and he broke his neck. That can be said to be true. But if he is attributing the breaking of his neck to the fact that Paul fell out of his headstand and dislodged his elbow and is thinking about if there is a lawyer present that he can get onto the case and sue Paul or Godfrey, then he is extracting Paul's falling from the whole and Paul's falling was not a consequence of anything other than the moment as a whole; the heat, his genetics, his available energy, what the last thing that was said to him last night was which affected his sleep in unpredictable ways, etcetera, etcetera, etcetera, going back to the beginning of time. In that extraction the action is identified with its instrument. It is personalised.

So this is what Patanjali is talking about when he is inviting us to investigate actions. It doesn't just mean, "Who hit me?" It means investigating how hitting happens, how hitting arises, how feeling, how receiving the blow arises. And into the investigation of the interconnecting web of factors and forces that coalesce in an action, which inevitably coalesce in an action, into that recognition of that network the claiming of the actions or the attributing of actions to instruments disappears. And when there is no attribution of instrumentality to an action, which an action belongs to its instrument, when that isn't happening, then the happenings of life happen very easily, very freely without serious complaint. Now it doesn't mean without liking and disliking. You might go "oh shit, I don't like this". But not personalising it means you don't go, "oh shit, I wish it hadn't happened" or "oh shit, I wish I wasn't doing it". Well if you really wish you weren't doing it, don't do it. And if you find that you

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can't not do it then you are seeing through the illusion of volition and personal self and you're seeing that that's just a picture that's being painted by your perception because your perception is by its nature limiting. Perception is limiting and through habit is focussing on isolating a few objects whether they are actions or objects that you are extracting from the whole field of the happening of life. And you are saying that this, this, this and this exist in a linear, exclusive relationship and they are the cause of this action. Because awareness has become limited. Because awareness has shrunk, contracted. But when you start to relax and the body becomes more spacious and the mind becomes more spacious and there is more room for awareness to open then you see that this line of cause and effect is just a tiny fraction of a multidimensional web of cause and effect.

This is the web which in Zen they call the OneBody; in Hinduism they call Indra's net for one. This is the net, the web, and the nodes of the net are the actions or the instruments that you are extracting. My net has different nodes from yours because my extraction is different from yours. When you get used to seeing this web, in the seeing of the web, in the seeing of the whole, the significance that you gave to the part disappears and you can no longer attribute causation into a narrow field or a narrow line. And causation is seen to be distributed evenly throughout the whole network. Throughout the whole web.

Philosophers, they have their distinctive terminology for different kinds of cause. The instrument is what is normally called the immediate cause, but it's not the primary cause, it's not the true cause, it's not the essential cause, you know and you've heard of the word first cause. That's what philosophers are looking for. First cause. But there is no first cause, that's why philosophers can't find it. Because wherever you go in the net it's multi-dimensional, you can't see the beginning. The so called first cause is total causation. The cause is the net. There is no single part of the net that can be extracted and said that's the cause of life, or that's the cause of my life or that's the cause of my action. Each aspect of the net, each action that arises is an inherent expression of the whole, is generated by the whole and is necessary to the whole. And into the recognition of that wholeness, separateness is seen through. Now this doesn't mean that separateness disappears; I can still make a distinction between all of your different bodies otherwise I wouldn't be able to help you. But, you know there was a time not so long ago where I couldn't really see through separateness and so I might

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have hit Sarah, as I hit Sarah today, with anger instead of hitting her more with amused affection. Because I would have thought she is being wilfully stupid. She is stupidly ignoring what I am saying and not responding, is how I would have interpreted it in the past. But now I can see well, for some reason that it is happening like that; maybe if I slap her on the head things will change and she'll start to realise that left means left and foot means foot and knee means knee and that they all have their particular relationship to each other. And maybe not: lets just see what happens. And of course this is not happening in the minds thinking but in the dynamic of instantaneous action as I drift round the dome responding to your collective and individual trauancies.

So in Patanjali's presentation of the five hindrances he is giving a slightly technical but very clear insight into how we personalise from and into ignorance; how we personalise actions by attributing actions to their instruments within the context of having identified consciousness with its instrument. So that part of it leads to the idea that there is a separate consciousness in here. When consciousness identifies with the instrument identification means, and this is the impression that we have but it's not the conclusion that need be drawn, the impression that we have is that the consciousness operating within the instrument is different from the consciousness in other instruments because the instruments are different. Because the instruments are separate and because the actions done by the instruments are different but more importantly because the mental activity of each instrument, because the perception, because the content of consciousness is different. So then instead of actually looking at consciousness we are looking at its content and in seeing the difference and the separateness between content we are assuming a difference in consciousness.

But just to take something that you are all familiar with, when you say "oh let's go and see Bill", "oh, I was just going to say that". This is an indication of no separateness in consciousness. Happening within separateness within the instruments of consciousness and it's only through the instrument of consciousness that consciousness can have any content. Without the instrument there is no content. Without the instrument there is no consciousness-of. So that means when you drop the body in asana, when you let go of the body and you drop the breath in pranayama and you drop the mind, there is no content. You have these moments of no content to your consciousness but you are not unconscious. You are still awake. But

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there is nothing to be said about being awake because consciousness no longer has a content, so consciousness then is no longer being identified with its instrument and asmita is not working and because asmita is not working avidya is not happening.

I know I've actually discussed habit before but it continues to interest me. It seems to be to have an opportunity for a false experience of autonomicity in the sense that the breath can be autonomic. People can feel that they are not controlling and that they are not the doer inside the habit and in that situation the habit would have to be re-associated with the person, you know, re-clung to, in order to work on it or do anything about it or let it go.

I'd like you to talk more about habit.

So in order to let it go it has to be clung to but actually you can't really let go of some habits. They finish when they finish but the letting go or the surrender that Patanjali talks about is just the identification with it. So then the habit in its continuation is no longer problematical in terms of your appreciation of your life. It can be still be problematical to your lungs if it's a habit of smoking cigarettes. But there's a level of the problematical experience that's not there when you are no longer saying to yourself "this is a bad habit. I must give it up". This fails very often anyway, as you know. Sometimes it succeeds and sometimes you get the impression when you succeed in breaking a habit that you did that through the force of will but it may not actually be like that. It might just be that force of circumstance was leading to that point, elicited that desire now, "why now to give up the habit?" in the recognition that it was about to stop and then applying will out of habit. The habit is then I will stop this habit. And then it stops. And so then there is an identification with the stopping, the stopping is identified with the thinking I must stop it and attributed to it.

So all I would really like to say is you don't have to worry about stopping your habits. All you can do to give up a habit, or to invite the letting go of a habit, is to see into it, to see the habit. And some habits you don't realise how harmful they are and very often in the seeing of the harm, they start to be undermined just by the seeing. So a lot of people don't really realise, they have heard but they haven't experienced that smoking is bad for you, but then one day, after having smoked a lot you get up in the morning and you do your pranayama and you feel something. If this happens day after day

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after day you are going to give up smoking from the desire not to have that unpleasant feeling in your practice which is so precious to you. Each time you have that desire you say "I must give up smoking" and eventually when you do, you can tell yourself that you stopped because you kept saying "I must give up". Whereas perhaps it was just simply you had to give up because of the seeing into the harm that was doing being done and the innate, you could say integrity of all organisms to survive was operating.

So one of the most difficult things I think, which is perhaps why this question interests you, one of the most difficult things is to understand how to relate to habit. Because if you go with the idea that you are not in control then you think "oh my God, then I'm at the mercy of my habits". Which you could say that you are, but the question that you are looking at is what is at the mercy of what? And then what happens is when the what that is supposedly at the mercy of the habit is no longer given its authority of power then what's the problem with the habit, one, but two, what has the habit got to hold on to? It's not just us holding onto habit, but the habit has to hold on to something also. So as the centre to which the habit clings dissolves the habit is less able to assert itself.

It's going to become a habit isn't it! You see not all habits are bad and that's the thing, we consider habit as a bad word, but you know you as a climber, Simon as a dancer are necessarily operating out of habit, training we call it. But its habit and that's not bad so when people use the word habit in the way that you introduced it, it's more like so called bad habit like smoking or biting your finger nails or always being rude to people who look a certain way or whatever. But habit in itself is a part of life and necessary to effective functioning. That's what training is. That's what yoga training is. That's what anybody who trains for anything is using: the principle of habit so that you can become unconscious of that, so that you can become conscious of something else: the delight that you have in dancing or the delight that you have in climbing. If you had to think about everything then you wouldn't have the delight.

I think you have uncovered a real confusion of truth in that type of unconsciousness.

Well the thing is there is a deep confusion in spiritual practice about spiritual maturity, freedom, enlightenment, wisdom, peace, whatever. There is an almost universal assumption that there is a

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direct relationship between that, whatever it is, whatever you want to call it, and consciousness. And that this as it increases, consciousness increases. Now that's true but as consciousness increases, consciousness-of decreases. And when it's true that consciousness increases people assume out of habit that consciousness-of increases and therefore you become conscious of more and more and more and more and more things and you become enlightened. How hellish that would be. How absolutely hellish that would be. So consciousness does increase, consciousness-of decreases.

You know you get a lot of people who walk the spiritual path and they try to become more conscious-of. And in becoming more conscious-of they assert their authority over people who do things unconsciously like knock a glass over. Not very aware. You've heard that, "you're not very aware". That's one of the first things Anita said to me, I knocked a glass over, "not very aware". It's a spiritual one upmanship going on. Not very aware but look at me. I'm aware of everything. Well that's very foolish.

Can you give an example of this self clinging that you talked about, simply because you said something like, say like, Lily hit Godfrey? Well, that actually happened. It didn't but you could make it happen ...

The Lily hit Godfrey, the Lily bit is asmita. Identifying consciousness with the instrument, which is okay, you have to do that in order to navigate. It's necessary. But hit Godfrey, if the hitting is like that, Lily hit Godfrey, if Godfrey goes Lily hit Godfrey out of some kind of sense of recrimination, then that's abhinivesa, then I'm attributing the action that did come through that instrument as originating in that instrument. So you chose to hit me but if you chose to hit me you were not free to do anything else. And if I'm able to see that then how can I possibly hold it against you? That doesn't mean that I don't avoid you. I might well avoid you because I might see that the factors and forces that bring that about are likely to occur again. You know, maybe you don't like the way I say something, or whatever, so then I'll avoid you but I won't go around saying that to other people "you should avoid Lily she's a bitch she hits people", I mean you are a bitch and you should be avoided but not because you hit people!

But isn't that aversion though?

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Yes, but aversion and attachment are just a dynamic of reality. They're the dynamic of embodiment; they are the dynamic of separation. Aversion and attachment or desire and aversion. You can't escape them.

So wait a minute, if you go back to the five, wisdom, understanding life and you mentioned aversion attachment, if you get too involved with them.

So all these things are not to be got rid of, but to be seen through. And when the seeing through deepens the last one, abhinivesa, can be totally seen through so that it doesn't really happen but before that happens what can happen is, and there are people here that I know this is happening to a lot, you have all of a sudden an action, let's say it could be one that you take but it's more likely to be an action of which you are a recipient that you don't like and you have this momentary attribution of it to the instrument and then you remember that that's an illusion and then you relax and you stop and, you know, that's happening all the time. So eventually that momentary attribution doesn't happen. And then the dynamic of aversion and attachment becomes different but it's still there. And then difference is that you still have your preference, moment by moment, always you desire something more than you desire something else, always. So this is still there but when that fifth one, abhinivesa, has gone then if that desire is un-fulfillable, you do not mind even if you are actively asking it to be fulfilled. So let's say it's your day off, you are a karma yoga apprentice at some horrible place on the top of hill on a beautiful hill surrounded by sea and really gorgeous guys on the beach and all you really want to do is go to the beach. Finally you get your day off and you manage to persuade the guy who owns all the cars to lend you a car. Half way down the track it breaks down. You just fix it. You want to go to the beach but you don't get caught in a "fuck, I wanted to go to the beach. Why didn't the bastard give me his new car", or whatever. You just fix it. And if you get to the beach, great, enjoy it. And if you don't get to the beach, great you enjoy it.

The washing up is exactly the same.

Yes. Exactly, exactly that. Like and dislike is still there and aversion and attachment do drop away, but pleasure and pain are still there and like and dislike are still there.

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Can I just give you a quick example? I had an ex girlfriend working in the same town that I was living in. So rather than drive past the fucking shop she worked at I would drive right, in order to get where I was going to in my job, I would take a huge detour.

What a wimp!

Yeah, but things had happened that made me feel Now that was identifying.

Absolutely, identifying the actions that came through her instrumentality as being hers, identifying the experience that you had of them as being yours, etcetera, etcetera, etcetera. So it's as soon as there is attribution of action to instruments the whole thing kicks in, aversion kicks in, attachment kicks in, ignorance kicks in and egoism becomes a problem. Egoism kicks in also. You are not normally walking around saying "Adam is conscious, Adam is conscious, Adam is conscious. I wonder what he's going to become conscious of". And then all of a sudden it's "Adam doesn't like the way he is treated by this woman". And all of this just dissolves into the net when you see the net, Indra's net, or the OneBody, operating way, way, way beyond our ability to actually influence it, even though it can seem as though you can. And we are living in the appearance; we are the appearance so there is nothing wrong with it seeming like it can. And what Ramesh says very nicely is live your life making decisions as if you had the free will to do so but within the recognition that it is always and only consciousness that is making that decision. So then it feels like you are making a decision so you make it but the recognition that it's consciousness allows you not to get your knickers in a twist about the result whatever the result may be. So that's a halfway house, when you haven't really totally accepted the way things are. You can use that as a reminder; okay, as if, I'm living as if, but I'll try to remember that it's always and only consciousness. Or always and only God.

In the Bhagavad Gita it also explains that the doer of a deed is the gunas and the gunas means the dynamic of the net. It's the dynamic of the net that does every deed. So you don't have to rely on Johnny comes lately like myself or Ramesh. You can go right back to the Bhagavad Gita or the Buddha. The Buddha says events happen, deeds are done, but there is no individual doer thereof. But there are instruments thereof. And it's the association of the action with the instrument that create the personal doer or as Ramesh says

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creates the sense of personal doership that is at the heart of everybody's life and is at the root of everybody's suffering. And is so cherished by everybody and yet it is that that is so deeply cherished that is at the source of all our suffering.

Well it's just so incredibly powerful, do you know what I mean?

It's habit. The power of habit is amazing and thank goodness. Otherwise we wouldn't be able to do so much. So it's not a bad thing. It's just the way things are. Habit, when it is reinforced, becomes a power to be reckoned with. A huge power.



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SELFLESSNESS



Patanjali defines the process of yoga with the statement: kriya yoga tapas svadhyaya isvarapranidhana. This means that the activity, the practice of yoga is a passionate investigation of the source of personal action. He then says that this process has eight aspects or eight limbs, ashtanga: yama, niyama, asana, pranayama, pratyahara, dharana, dhyana and samadhi. Their purpose is to undermine the imposed sense of self through the clarification that arises in samadhi. So what he is saying is that the process of enquiring into the source of personal action takes a particular course which reveals samadhi and undermines the sense of self. That course consists of seven factors or limbs along with samadhi. Yama, niyama, asana, pranayama, pratyahara, dharana, dhayana and samadhi. The last six of these are a description of a transformation in awareness that happens when the nature of personal action is investigated within the context of freeing the body from tension and the mind from effort. Which is the pragmatic fulcrum of yoga according to Patanjali: to free the bodimind from tension; the beginning of asana is to free the body from tension, which can free the mind also.

When this is done as an enquiry into the nature and source of personal action, then the actions being taken to free the body from tension become the ground of your enquiry into the source of personal action. So that you don't have to be operating in your mind. You don't have to be operating in the abstract. You don't have to be operating on the basis of assumption. You're operating on the basis of action in the moment. So the enquiry that Patanjali speaks of is not an intellectual enquiry. That doesn't mean it doesn't have an intellectual aspect to it. But it's a pragmatic enquiry that's based on the actions being taken in order to establish the body in certain shapes and then free the body from the tension that might be restricting the establishment of that particular shape.

These actions that are required to do this, to establish the body in the shape and then to use the shape to free the body from tension, depend for their effectiveness on yama niyama. Both in freeing the body from tension, and in revealing the nature and source of personal action. Asana depends upon the ten factors: sensitivity, honesty, openness, focus, generosity, commitment, equanimity, pas-

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sion, self awareness and selflessness with regard to that which is actually happening; the actions being taken. So these are the lenses through which the enquiry into the nature of the action is focussed into that which is actually happening.

And this journey through the eight limbs of yoga to samadhi which is supposed to undermine the sense of self can be seen in a number of different ways. Patanjali's description of it is very technical and if you are not really familiar with dharana and dhyana then it's very easy to get confused and lost. However, familiarity with samadhi does not require familiarity with dharana-dhayana. Dharana-dhayana just help to clarify the nature of samadhi. So one way that you can simplify the technicality of the eight limbs is to see that the imposed sense of self is being undermined in different ways by the different aspects of the different limbs of yoga. This corresponds with the fact that your sense of self has different aspects. Most obviously your sense of self is your shape, your form, your body in its structure; I'm fat, I'm thin, I'm flexible, I'm stiff, I'm young, I'm old, I'm beautiful, I'm ugly. You know, one day I'm one, the next day I'm the other.

The sense of self as a physical object is undermined in asana. But the sense of self also is embedded in the body not just in its shape, its form, but also its functioning, its activity: what we can do with the body, what the body is inherently doing. And as far as yoga is concerned the most pertinent aspect of the activity of the body is breathing. And breathing is a very powerful tool because breathing can be equally voluntary or involuntary. And it's very easy to shift from one to the other whereas a lot of the processes of the body can never be voluntary, and a lot of them can not be involuntary. But the breath is inherently both. So you could say the breath reveals the nature of volition very easily because it works perfectly happily without the will and it can work perfectly happily with the will, with intent, with volition.

Pranayama is the process whereby the sense of self as the body's activity, particularly breathing, is undermined. So when the sense of self as a physical object, as a physical structure, as the body, is being undermined in asana this means that you are beginning to wean yourself from identifying yourself with and by the shape of your body. And pranayama takes this weaning deeper into the activity of the body. It's easy to understand how we identify with the shape of the body and it's easy to understand to a certain extent

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how we identify with the overt gross actions that the body can take. It's a little bit more tricky to see how we identify with our breathing. But in that trickiness, if you start to see it, is the gift, is the invitation to freedom; when you start to see into the process. "My breath is deep. My breath is smooth. My breath is shallow." Breathing action identified with the sense of self, through the claiming of perceived actions. And yet it's not difficult to realise the state of your breathing, the quality of the inhalation, the length of the exhalation, etcetera, have actually got little to do with your intent, little to do with anything that you could control. And when you start to see into this, putting the claiming mind in front of the breath begins to look a bit spurious, a bit hard to justify. And when you notice in your yoga practice that the breath does what it does according to circumstance and you might try as hard as you can to make the inhalation the same length as the exhalation on every breath, but it never ever happens. Never. You can tell yourself that it's happening, if you like to be dishonest, if you like to convince yourself that you are fulfilling your programme, but you can never know. How can you measure your breath when you're doing your yoga practice? If you really, really want your inhalation to be as equal as your exhalation you just tell yourself it is and it will feel like it is. So then is it? Or does it just appear to be? You can never know, you can never know whether your inhalation and exhalation is the same, or different duration, unless you deliberately manipulate it a little bit and you can make it that way. But when the breath is allowed just to be a natural expression of the circumstances of the body in the posture, you don't need to be measuring your breath; you don't need to be controlling your breath.

Pratyahara, the next limb of yoga, is when the sense of self is being undermined more deeply, from the point of view of sensorial activity, sensory activity. Where you're no longer saying my perception, my hearing, my sweat; my disturbance by the crickets or whatever. These things are just part of the general nonpersonalised happening of awareness in the moment. The effortless and impersonal flow of awareness is not being broken into specific extractions: extractions of specific perceptions, which within their specificity point, apparently, to a centralised perceiver, experiencer. There is simply an unbroken flow of awareness or perceiving that is simply pointing inwards, no longer labelling information coming through the senses. So here, the sense of self as a perceiver of sensory data is undermined, though that which produces the data is still flowing.

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And dharana, dhayana and samadhi constitute different aspects of the sense of self being undermined from the level of the mind itself. My thought, my feeling, my beliefs, my knowledge. As you start to see that they come and go all by themselves. Especially you can see with thoughts, how can you say it's my thought if it just pops up by itself? Okay, you could say it's my thought because it happens here in this location. How come you don't know if it's happening in another location at exactly the same time? In fact you know perfectly well it does, a lot of the time. When you say something and your friend who you are very close to says, "Oh, I was just thinking about that". So who's thought was it that was being articulated? Only arbitrarily can it be called my thought. But not honestly and not accurately. "Hey, you're reading my mind, don't read my mind. It's my thought. I was thinking about Jimmy. You're not supposed to be thinking about Jimmy without my permission." Okay, that's a bit foolish, but that's what's going on when you're talking about "my" thought. I have clear lucid thoughts. I have really confused thoughts. I'm so intelligent, so perceptive. I'm so stupid, so confused.

So this is the process of yoga that you're being invited to by establishing the body free from tension in sthiram sukham, joyful steadiness, tranquil stability, or however you want to see it. And then this transformation into awareness where you start to see the foolishness of "my" body, "my" breath and "my" mind happens by itself. Then you start to just see things more as simply a flow of thinking, feeling, breathing, moving, without this deep identification with processes of which you have only apparent control. Your ability to control them is just a tiny, tiny aspect of their arising, of their existence, of their being. And when you get over the shock of realising that it's not your thought, that they are not your feelings, that it's not your breathing, that it's not your body, and there is a lot of resistance to accepting that, but when you start to get over the shock of not being able to say, "here I am in this thought", as Descartes did, "I think therefore I am". A lot of space starts to arise, and into that space you just relax, you let go of so much worry, so much concern. But I think is not a given fact when you start to examine the process of thought from thought, not from intellectual analysis, but inside the action of the mind. By relaxing into the action of the mind and seeing how the mind goes its own way. You think you're going to be relaxing into the flow of your breathing and you're thinking about the beach. Or whatever.

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But when you do start to become more relaxed about not having to say "mine" all the time, "mine, this is mine, this is me" all the time, then you could say that you're opening your mind to the possibility of finding out who's actions are they, or to whom do these actions belong or from where do these actions arise, or from where do these thoughts arise? And then what will happen, it's bound to happen, if you're curious and you're bound to be curious if you've been shocked, if something's been getting to you and you're going, "wow, what's this?", you're bound to be curious to find out what it is. If it isn't me what is it? If these are not my thoughts what's going on? And then you are in the investigation of the nature and the source of personal action. And it's in particular on the level of the mind, recognising thinking as activity, recognising feeling as activity, that the investigation of the nature and the source of personal action bares its deepest fruits.

When you are in stillness, whether you're lying down or sitting, whether you're in a headstand or Pascimottanasana, stillness is an invitation to meditation. Stillness is an invitation to recognise the uncontrollable nature of originating thought and feeling. Stillness is an invitation to recognise the involuntary and impersonal aspect of mental activity. Stillness is an invitation to undermine the sense of self from the level of the mind. And the link from undermining the sense of self from the body to the mind is the breath. Or pranayama. Pranayama is the link between asana and meditation. The normal understanding of the fragmented divided mind, when the fragmented and divided mind which is the usual mind, looks at yoga it goes asana is asana and is separate from pranayama. Pranayama is pranayama and is separate from meditation. So we do our asana practice, then we do our pranayama practice and then we do our meditation practice and none of them ever reveal their true nature. This is that they are simply three different aspects of the same thing. The three different aspects of the same thing being awareness, embodied as a mind. Awareness, body and mind. So actually being embodied, as long as awareness is in a body and therefore there is a mind, an invitation to meditation. And that invitation is being accepted when you are still. When you are quiet, when you relax. And then the mind slows down and samadhi is revealed.

According to Patanjali samadhi is apparent form radiating the singular significance of emptiness. We went into this at great length last week. What that means relative to daily life is that actions can take place; thoughts can arise without their source being obscured.

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Actions, which are perceptibly separate events, and thoughts, which are also perceptibly separate events in the mind, can be focussed on so exclusively that that is all that is really noticed, that is all that is really experienced and it's in that focus that you tend to feel a little isolated, you feel a little bit vulnerable so you say "mine, this is mine! I'm ok here. Here I am!" And this is not samadhi. Samadhi is when thoughts and actions which are simply the expressions of form, arise and the background context within which they arise, which is awareness of the whole, is not obscured. And when the awareness of the whole is not obscured you don't feel vulnerable, you don't feel unsafe so you don't bother to say "I am this thought. I am this object" or "I am this action".

The whole is a difficult concept to understand. It's as difficult and absolutely equivalent to the concept of emptiness. The whole means nothing in particular. The whole means nothing specific. The whole means emptiness. You could take the w off the beginning of the English word whole and say it's a hole. Empty, you just drop into it effortlessly and there's an infinite space. Infinite spaciousness and lightness. So it doesn't mean that actions and thoughts, objects, arise in the context of some other thing that's much bigger than them. It means that they arise as expressions of the whole so actually your attention can be entirely on them. But you're not grasping and saying "I, me, mine". You're just aware of form as a fluctuating expression of emptiness or you're just aware of a part as a momentary expression of the whole. And in that awareness of the whole being expressed in the part there is no vulnerability, there is no sense of separation, so there is no need to say "I, me, mine".

So these kinds of moments when thoughts and actions arise without you personalising them and saying "I, me, mine", because you don't feel cut off and separate, are in fact happening all the time. These are not the result of yoga. Yoga is just designed to show you this. To show you that this is what is going on so that you can stop thinking that what is going on is isolated objects taking isolated actions. One against another in some kind of chaos of conflict within which, if you can, you better try to establish a little lagoon of harmony. Get friends around you and keep the door closed. Because as you well know, it's your friends that cause you the greatest pain. So if you bring your friends around you and keep the door closed, that's an invitation to suffering. Your brother, your sister, your mother, your father. They're the ones that really give you the shit. Your lover. So this process, or this invitation, that is yoga is simply to

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see the revealed face of emptiness or the revealed face of God as form manifesting in and as an expression of emptiness: as the parts occurring and arising as and of, as and in the whole.

Now this invitation is accepted only through relaxing. Only through letting go. Relaxing and letting go of something. Obviously it doesn't mean, if you're doing a yoga posture, even if you're just sitting still, it doesn't mean letting go of all muscular activity. But by examining the nature of the muscular activity that's going on and seeing the relationship between stability and ease and certain kinds of muscular activity being hindered by some and helped by others. Then finding that when you have these moments of sthiram sukham, when you are comfortable and stable, and you are experiencing no tension, no resistance in the body to the extent that you're not really feeling the body as a limited capsule any more, it can sometimes become obvious that this just happens by itself. That these moments just arise. The actions that allow the experience to happen are happening: but they are really happening by themselves, you could say out of habit, you could say out of training; but not as a result of you constantly applying your intent to those actions. So when you are applying your intent to the bandhas, the bandhas are not there. That means the bandhas are not present. It means you are looking for the bandhas. When the bandhas become available, they happen by themselves. When the postures become available, they happen by themselves. Which means that what's been let go of, what's been relaxed, is the personalisation of action. And the personalisation of intent, the I, me, mine, claiming the action, claiming the intent, claiming the result and identifying with the result. "This is me. I can do the bandhas now. This is me. I can do a headstand now."

So if yoga is designed to undermine the imposed sense of self, all you have to do is relax. Which means all you have to do is see if there is any tension present in your body, and challenge it in the light of your awareness. Don't fight it; just challenge it in the light of your awareness on the dynamic of the bandhas. Then through that process over time, find out what the challenge was all about, what that tension was all about, where those actions came from, where those objects came from, and just see what is revealed in that. In other words, doing yoga, living life, according to this perspective, is really just like going to the movies. You just sit down and say "I wonder what's going on. I wonder what it's like, this movie". And then you walk out at the end of the movie and it does-

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n't mean anything to you does it? So you walk out at the end of this life and what's the big deal?

The thing is you can't make yourself relax because obviously then the effort is being made so you can't make yourself relax. You can only relax when relaxation has to happen. And to a certain extent you can invite relaxation by making yourself uptight. That's actually a possible way. Because nothing lasts forever and if you keep winding yourself up you're going to have to let go at a certain point. I'm not really suggesting you wind yourself up totally. But in a way that's what you're doing in the yoga postures because deep down you believe that you can improve matters. Deep down you believe that if you just do a, b, c, then x, y, z will happen as a result of your doing a, b, c. If you can just get that heel right, done right, then breathing will become free, samadhi will happen, life will get better, somebody will fall in love with me. Whatever you think it is. Deep down you are thinking like that. "If I can just get it right it will become good."

So you could say that yoga is just an invitation to see this. To see these assumptions, and to see how these assumptions are generating tension. To clarify those assumptions you have to bring them up in action. Let them act. Let them try to do their thing and watch them fail. So you could say that yoga is an invitation to grab the bull of paradox with both hands, by both horns at the same time and jump onto its back and ride off into the sunset. Effort and relaxation happening together. No problem if you're not personalising them. Life and death happening together. Not a problem if you're not identifying with it. How many people do yoga and become paranoid about death? Mustn't kill the cows. Mustn't wear leather. Mustn't eat meat. Well ok fair enough, but why not the insects. So you become a Jain, you get a brush and you sweep the path in front of you. Yeah sure, how many insects get killed when you do that? Loads! Probably more than if you just walk. Life and death are the twin faces of manifestation. You can't have life without death so when you are trying to escape death you basically are trying to escape life. So these are the two horns of the bull of life. If you want only one you are likely to get gored by the other as it comes up behind you.

