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Svaroopa® Vidya Ashram

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A Yogi in the World #6

Your Mind's True Capacity

By Gurudevi Nirmalananda

Brilliance. Creativity. Insight and intelligence. Generosity and boundless love. Compassion, strength, fortitude – these go together, for you cannot act on your compassion unless you also bring strength and fortitude with you. Your mind is capable of all this and more. You currently use such a small portion of your true capacity that I call it “puny little mind.” This is a trap you can end up living in for lifetimes, as it is baited with sensory delights.

Every athlete knows to restrain their appetites before a competition. They refrain from intoxicants and sexuality plus they carefully regulate their sleep and food. This is true of chess players as well. If you want to get optimum results from the use of your body and mind, you need to take care of them, like you would with any other type of equipment.

For those who wear eyeglasses, you have to clean them regularly. If you wait too long, you don't realize that you're living in a grey and blurry world until you do clean them. Then you put them back on and wow! The world is so bright! And so beautiful!

The yogic sages say that it is not merely your glasses that need cleaning. It's your mind. How can the light of your own Divine Essence shine outward if your mind is dense and foggy? But what will clear the fog?

When the sun comes up, it burns away the fog. Thus you need the light of your own Divinity to rise within you, to burn away everything that creates shadows. Shaktipat awakens your own inner light, empowering you to understand life and to function within it in a whole new way.

We've been told to play Mozart for our babies. I remember when this advice first came out – we played Mozart for the kids, but after they went to bed, we played acid rock for ourselves. We wanted them to be brilliant and shining with light, but we came to life only after dark.

When do you begin to take care of your own mind and body? You've got a good idea of what to do for your body, but how do you take care of your mind? When you get a puppy, books and websites tell you how to take care of it and train it. But no one tells you how to take care of a mind. Only yoga.

First, you must understand the true capacity of your mind. Then you can consider its current condition and what it needs from you.

Citireva cetana-padaa-davaruu.dhaa cetya-sa.mkocinii cittam.

— Pratyabhij~nah.rdayam 5

Divine Consciousness contracts herself into individual mind, descending from the plane of pure Consciousness by morphing to match the objects perceived.

Your mind is made of Consciousness. It's like a pure blue, cloudless sky, expansive and peaceful. Its vastness can even be covered by clouds yet remains undiminished. The clouds come and they go, but the sky, like Consciousness, endures. Your mind is made of this Divine substance, Consciousness-Itself.

However, your mind is a contracted form of Consciousness, so it's like you're looking at the sky through a window. It's blue. You know it stretches farther than you can see, but you cannot see it all. The edges of the window limit your view. Your mind is Consciousness in a contracted form. Its edges get in your way.

Worse, you tend to focus on the objects around you instead of the sky. At the beach, I love to look at the sky, but my gaze gets pulled down to the ocean. From there, my mind looks at the boats, then the people in the water, then all the other people around me. Next, I want a snack.

Your mind morphs, literally changes its shape, to match what you perceive. It can expand, wide and high, to take the shape of the sky. But it is easily distracted by beach fries. Now you've

lost the inner expanse with the feeling of freedom and infinite potentiality you had when gazing at the sky.

It's because you are caught up in your mind. Again. Technically, you were caught up in your mind when you were looking at the sky as well. While the sky gives you a hint of the inner vastness that is hidden inside, there is more. Yoga's purpose is to give you the deeper expanse, not to have you always looking at the sky.

You're not going to find the inner expanse if you're always having it morph into beach fries or other things. Your mind must morph into peaceful, expansive quietude for you to be able to perceive the deeper dimensions of your own being. This is why there are sutras about meditating on the sky, as well as why some meditative systems have you stare at a blank wall – to expand and quieten your mind.

We do it differently. A Shaktipat tradition uses a lightning bolt to pierce through your mind and open the deeper inner level for you. Once I received this initiation from my Guru, the deeper inner expanse became constant, not a mere mental phenomenon.

Inner clarity comes from this deeper source. The light of Consciousness shines through, unimpeded by clouds of desire or fear. The creative power of Consciousness is on tap, ready to solve problems as well as to create fascinating new opportunities. And everyone is seen as the incarnation of Divine Consciousness that they are.

This is how you want to live. And it is possible. This is yoga's promise.

tat-parij~naane cittam-eva-antar-mukhii-bhaavena cetanaa-pada-adhyaarohaata citi.h.

— Pratyabhij~nah.rdayam 13

By looking inward, knowing the source of all your actions, the mind itself becomes Consciousness by ascending to the plane of pure Consciousness.

Chitta becomes chetana – individual mind becomes Divine Mind. You see these Sanskrit words in both sutras. In sutra 5, Consciousness is contracting to become your mind. The sutras I skipped include more explanations and some practices, bringing us to sutra 13. Here, your mind expands to the level of pure Consciousness once again.

What are the practices? Through meditation and contemplation, you come to see the source of your brilliance, your creativity, your bliss and your ability to love. These two practices work together. Contemplation expands your mind so you can understand where your inner impulses arise from. Meditation merges you into their source, your own Divine Essence, your own Self.

The limitlessness of your own Beingness is inexhaustible, the source of unending generosity and personal empowerment. Fueled by Consciousness, you step into the world, making different choices than before. A body and mind powered by Consciousness is very different than a body and mind running on anxiety.

Meditation gives you this deeper inner knowing. It is not that your mind knows about your own Self — it is your own Self knowing your own Self. Now your mind morphs into the shape of Consciousness-Itself. Still able to see the objects of this world, your mind is never distracted, always drawing from the highest and bringing it into the world. You live in total awareness, perfect bliss and full contentment.

You get a little taste of this after every meditation. Even if your mind was busy during meditation, and you had to return to the mantra many many times, there is a magical moment when you open your eyes. Take your time with it. Continue repeating mantra as you first linger within, then slowly open your eyes. Your mind is as clear as if you just cleaned your glasses.

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