



BRAHMA KUMARIS
WORLD SPIRITUAL UNIVERSITY

Foundation Course
in Raja Yoga Meditation

Teacher Resources

for

July 2004

Foundation Course in Meditation

Note: Handouts follow each lesson

Foreword

Introduction

Section 1

Level One - Beginners

Aim of the Foundation Course

Lesson 1: Consciousness

Lesson 2: The Journey Inward

Lesson 3: The Journey Upward

Lesson 4: Relationship with God

Lesson 5: Eight Spiritual Powers

Section 2:

Intermediate Level

Lessons 6-10: The Big Picture

Lesson 6: Understanding Karma

Lesson 7: The Eternal Cycle

Lesson 8: The Tree of Life

Lesson 9: Yagya History

Lesson 10: Video Session

Section 3:

Advanced Level

Lessons 11-14: Baba's Murli

Lesson 11-Avyakt Murli on Thoughts

Lesson 12-Sakar Murli on Soul & Churning

Lesson 13-Avyakt Murli on Satyug

Lesson 14-Sakar Murli on Cycle

Lesson 15: Spiritual Lifestyle

Section 4:

Graduation Gifts

Section 5:

Additional Resources

Information Sheet

Preparation Checklist

Registration Form

Picture of Ravan

Conversation with Baba – sample meditation

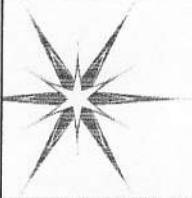
Class on Purity and the Maryadas

Murli Glossary: Hindi/English (GCH-London-2002)

Good Teacher Practices

Qualifications of a Teacher

Special Points for Teachers (Sr. Mohini)



Foundation Course in Meditation

Level One - Beginners

1

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Remember, as is your aim, so will be your achievement. Make your qualifications equal to your aim.


First and foremost we want to teach people how to meditate, because that's generally what they come to learn. In the process we give Baba's introduction/ experience and, if they take to the knowledge, we then begin to prepare souls for ongoing contact/ study/ Murli class. To whatever extent a soul grasps knowledge, even if they only understand the importance of their thoughts and of thinking elevated thoughts, they are contributing to the transformation of human consciousness.

Teaching others is also a primary way to benefit ourselves; a primary method of self-progress :

- We learn what else we need to learn
- We come closer to Baba
- Our intellect becomes purified
- Our understanding of gyan deepens, improving our dharna & karma
- We reap joy and satisfaction

NOTE: On the following pages, words in square brackets are instructions for you, the teacher. Otherwise, the text on the notes pages is more or less written as one would speak it to students—as an example of how to express some of the points and concepts.

REMEMBER: Do not give too much material in any lesson, just the essence. There is a lot of material included here—as a resource only. A lot of it is optional and not really integral to the lesson. If there's time, if students seem to need further clarification or other examples, include it as appropriate. Otherwise, study it for your own churning and depth of inculcation.



Lesson 1: Consciousness

Objectives—At the end of the session the students would have:

- an overview of the full course
- understood the meaning & benefits of meditation generally, and of Raja Yoga meditation specifically
- become aware of the power of thought and 4 types of thought
- become aware of the nature of the true self
- understood the difference between body consciousness and soul consciousness

> Meditation Experience: Om Shanti

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LESSON MATERIALS to prepare beforehand

Poster(s): The Ultimate Union
Indian poster of soul + body (optional)

Handout(s): (some or all of the following)
R.Y. Brochure
Mind & Meditation Article
Contrast of Soul & Body/ Awareness of Self as Soul
Coping with Negativity (Sr. Jayanti, Retreat #12)
Original Nature of the Soul
How to Make up Your Mind (Mike George, Retreat #1)
Soul & Matter (Ken O'Donnell, Retreat #13)
Foundation Course Information Sheet (see Additional Resources)

Copied together

CDs/ tapes: Positive Thinking CD (Sr. Christine Bell, Australia)
Knowing Myself CD (Sr. Jayanti)
Inner Treasures audiocassette (Sr. Denise) [optional]

Other: Course registration cards and pencils


[PLEASE REVIEW THE OBJECTIVES of this lesson before you begin, so that you are mindful of what you want to cover. Be sure to SIT WITH BABA before the student(s) arrive.]

[Put yourself in the shoes of someone coming for the first time and make sure that the environment is tidy and appropriate for learning; and that students will feel relaxed and comfortable.]

This first lesson is the basis of all the other lessons. That's why it's so important that students get an EXPERIENCE during it. And this means that you must be as soul conscious as you can possibly be, very aware and sensitive to their needs.

Although the word 'God' has been mentioned in the succeeding pages, you will have to be very sensitive because sometimes people have a big allergy to the word 'God'. Initially you may need to use the word 'Supreme' or 'Source' or 'Higher Consciousness'.]

- **Welcome:** to the Foundation Course in Meditation. My name is _____ and I'd like to congratulate you for taking the first steps on—for what I hope will be for you—a fascinating spiritual journey of discovery, expanded awareness and understanding. [or other such words of enthusiasm]



Lesson 1: Welcome & Introductions

- Welcome
- Introductions
- Introduce the Brahma Kumaris
 - This center in relation to the whole
 - Glimpse of origins, founder, role of women
 - Brief international profile

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- **Facilitate introductions:** How many of you have done meditation before? [ask for a show of hands] Why don't we go around the room and introduce ourselves to each other by name and a short sentence sharing what motivated you to enroll in this course. [You can also be creative and ask them to introduce themselves by mentioning a virtue that describes them i.e., Cheerful Peter, Merry Mary].
- **Introduce yourself:** [When the students have finished, you can say more about yourself...how long you've been a student/ teacher, etc.]
- **Introduce the Brahma Kumaris BRIEFLY.** [A few things you might mention include:]
 - o This meditation center is one of [#] centers in [name of country], over 6,000 worldwide in over 80 countries. **[Know your statistics and keep them up-to-date! They change every year.]** The international headquarters are in Mt. Abu, in Rajasthan, India and there is an international coordinating office in London, UK. I mention this so you know that we are part of a much larger organization. You can find out more by visiting the website (www.bkwsu.com) listed on the center's brochure.
 - o The organization was started in 1936 in what is now Pakistan by a wealthy businessman who had profound mystical/ visionary experiences. He saw that the world would be going through a massive global crisis and that it would be women and the power of feminine qualities (nurturing, intuition, self-sacrifice) that would enable humanity to pass through it. He was guided to set up this organization as a spiritual university, where people of any faith could learn universal spiritual principles and a simple, effective form of meditation.
 - o We have been affiliated with the United Nations as a non-governmental organization since the early 80's and are well-known at the UN for several international peace projects and educational initiatives. **[There is no need to describe our different projects at this point. They came to learn meditation!]**

	Lesson 1: Administrative Matters
1.	Commitment
2.	Missing a lesson
3.	Dropping out
4.	Bringing someone new
5.	Lesson format
6.	Traffic Control
7.	Start & end times
8.	Word of Caution

Before we begin, I'd just like to go over a few administrative & 'housekeeping' things [Note: these may vary with your center, so please edit them accordingly]

[EIGHT IMPORTANT ITEMS about which to explain*:]

Commitment: Each lesson builds upon the preceding one, so it's important to take them in sequence. You'll get the maximum benefit if you can commit to the full series.

Missing a Lesson: If, due to illness or emergency, you are going to miss a lesson, please call as much in advance as possible and let us know. If you wish to continue, you will need to make up the class you miss. Make-ups are usually scheduled two hours before the next lesson, however other times can be arranged if necessary. If you do miss a class, please do not come to the following class without making up the one you missed.

Dropping Out: If you decide you do not want to continue with the course, we would appreciate your letting us know. You will remain on our mailing list and receive notices of our monthly special programs and workshops featuring guest speakers and a variety of topics. *Please let us know if you wish to be removed from our database.*

Bringing Someone New: Please do not bring anyone new along with you to a lesson in the middle of the course. Spiritual knowledge is increasingly subtle. Newcomers would not be able to relate to subsequent lessons without having the explanations and meditation practice that you will have had. If you have friends who are interested, suggest they enroll in the next course.


Lesson Format: We'll begin each lesson with ½ hour of meditation, and end with ±15 minutes of meditation.

Traffic Control: [If Traffic Control will occur during a lesson, you need to explain what it is.] In all of our centers, recorded music plays for a few minutes at 5 specific times during the day, one of which is 7:30 p.m. Just as when you are driving and have to stop at a traffic light, this music signals us to stop activity as well as the traffic in our minds and enter a state of silence and spiritual awareness.

Start & End Times: [Encourage students to be on time (especially important if you are teaching more than 1 soul).] We will start promptly on time. This initial meditation time will give you an opportunity to review and experience what you've learned in the previous lesson. If you are late, please come in quietly. Our ending time may vary by 15 minutes or so, depending on your questions and level of participation.

A Word of Caution: If anyone has a history of psychological problems, we recommend that you check with your psychiatrist before continuing this course, as meditation is contraindicated in some forms of depression and mental illness.

[*NOTE: These, and some items on the next page, can be given as a handout. See the additional resource section.



Lesson 1: Housekeeping & Miscellaneous

1. Cell phones
2. Restrooms
3. Water
4. Anything else like parking, etc.
5. Note-taking, recording of classes
6. Handouts
7. Contributions
8. Additional Learning Resources
9. Questions/ Answers & Registration

Here are a few **additional things** I'd like to explain:
 [Note: these may vary with your center, so please edit them accordingly]

9 ADDITIONAL ITEMS:

Explain:

- Please turn off your **cell phones** or put them on vibrator only
- location of **restrooms**
- availability of **drinking water**
- **parking**, etc.
- **Note-taking**: [You may or may not wish to encourage them to bring notebook and pen. You may allow recording if you are comfortable with it. Emphasize this is a study; a branch of a university!]
- **Handouts**: [If they would like them, explain that they need to bring \$1.00 (or whatever your center decides to charge) each week.] Though the course is free, we do have to charge for the handouts because of the cost of copying them. For this first lesson the handouts are free.
- **Contributions**: As mentioned, this course is free, and some of you may be wondering how we sustain our activities. We are supported by voluntary contributions of people who have benefited by our services and want to give a return. Should you feel inclined to help us continue our work, there is a box _____ [state location] for this purpose. Contributors can receive charitable contribution receipts if you write a check or if you leave cash in an envelope with your name on it.
- **Learning Resources**: We also have a variety of resources in the form of books, tapes and CDs that we will recommend from time to time which can help you with your study and practice. The money from the sale of these items does not go to support the center; it is only used to produce additional literature and audiovideo resources.
- **Questions?** [Ask if anyone has any. Ask them to fill out the registration card. Anyone who arrives early can be given the card to fill out as they're waiting for others to arrive. Try to ensure that all have filled and handed in the cards before leaving. **Be sure to read the card(s)** as it will help you to 'take the pulse' of the student(s).]


[**Provide Course Overview:** This gives students an idea of course content and of what they can expect. If your format varies from what is described below you will have to modify what you say accordingly.]

Beginning Level

- o This evening we'll begin by defining Raja Yoga meditation and then taking a look at the nature of thought, the kind of thoughts we entertain in our mind and how thoughts affect us. We'll start to consider who the thinker is and begin to get to know ourselves from a spiritual perspective.
- o In our next class we'll go deeper into understanding the dynamics of consciousness and the process of meditation.
- o Then we'll explore the nature of belief, and other dimensions of experience that are important in meditation, which will lead us into talking about the Supreme or God.
- o In our fourth class we will look at communication and relationship with God.
- o Finally we will talk about what can be achieved through Raja Yoga meditation in the form of spiritual empowerment.

By the end of these 5 lessons you should have a clear understanding of the nature and method of Raja Yoga meditation and have begun to apply it in your life and experience its benefits.

- ***Intermediate Level*** – If you decide to continue your studies with us at the intermediate level, we'll introduce the philosophy of karma and an understanding of the **CONTEXT** in which we exist (the Big Picture) and why meditators need to know about it.
- If you go on to the ***Advanced Level*** – you'll find that this is where the pieces start to come together in an integrated whole.



Lesson 1: Course Overview

- **Beginning Level**
 - Meditation & the power of thought
 - Knowing the self & the process of meditation
 - Beliefs & other dimensions of experience
 - Knowing and understanding the Supreme
 - 8 Powers of self mastery
- **Intermediate Level**
- **Advanced Level**

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[In this lesson it's very important to describe what meditation is. If there's time, you could stimulate participation and interest by doing a brainstorm to get the group's ideas about what meditation is.]

What is meditation? The dictionary says 'meditation' means to reflect upon, ponder, contemplate; to plan in the mind, intend. The Latin roots of the word are: *meditari* —to think about, consider, reflect; *mederi* — to look after, heal, cure.



Lesson 1: What is Meditation?

- Developing greater self-awareness
- Dialogue with the self
- Inner healing
- A spiritual journey; a way of life

What are the benefits of meditation? How will it benefit your mind, the development of cleaner and more stable emotions, your relationship with the outside world? [If time permits and you want to encourage participation, you may want to ask students what kind of benefits they expect to obtain from this course. (This question is also on the registration card.)]

Meditation develops greater self-awareness: Meditation is about discovering, exploring and understanding one's inner world of thoughts, feelings, opinions, attitudes, values, motives, and intentions—and developing the spiritual skills/ inner strengths to face the realities of the outer world. In other words, meditation is the art of bringing inner and outer realities into balance—starting from the inside out, not from the outside in. Becoming more aware of our internal environment enables us to check, choose and change. We realize that we always have a choice in what we think. We learn to be more kind, tolerant, and accepting of ourselves and others. In this process you will start to recognize your spiritual independence and realize the inner resources that you have and your ability and responsibility to use them to create a better quality life.


Meditation also means **dialoging with oneself**. You'll learn to become introspective, converse with yourself and get to know your deep desires, strengths, talents and qualities. You'll examine the ways you think, act and react. You'll learn to look at, accept and respect all aspects of your personality, and begin improving yourself with out criticism or condemnation. In this way, you develop a positive relationship—the most important relationship—with yourself. Unless one develops a fulfilling relationship with oneself, it's difficult to develop a good relationship either with others or with God.

Having a silent conversation with oneself is very **healing**. Meditation literally makes one 'whole' again, because within you is where the answers lie. Healing has a lot to do with attitude, vision and with disconnecting, connecting and reconnecting. Our thoughts and feelings are plugged into many people and situations that constantly give us currents of sorrow or pain. You'll learn to unplug/ disconnect from these and shift your consciousness to connect with the positive resources of your inner self. When connected with that inner strength, you'll be able to use your subtle energies to reconnect in a constructive way with the outer world. This is the healing process that takes place.

Meditation is a spiritual journey, a quality way of life: Being spiritual means living values in your interactions with others; it means taking care of your mind and nurturing a wholesome approach to life.

[The main thing is to show people how meditation will be of practical help to them; it's not about escapism, living on the clouds and not facing reality. If time permits, you may wish to go into the specific benefits on the next page. Otherwise skip to page 10.]

OPTIONAL MATERIAL

 Lesson 1: 8 Benefits of Meditation

- Clear thinking
- Clear decision-making
- Concentration power
- Positive attitude
- Ability to relax
- Ability to work under pressure
- Ability to rejuvenate one's energy
- Healthy mind & body

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Clear thinking: Most people complain they don't think clearly; their minds are muddled. By direct the mind & slow down the thoughts, the mind becomes clear.

Clear decision-making: People find it difficult to make decisions. Some people phone their friends & relatives to get answers and end up getting more confused. Clarity of the mind increases decision-making ability.

Concentration power: We learn to focus and concentrate the mind in meditation. By pulling back our scattered energy and focusing it positively, concentration power increases.

Positive attitude: Most of the time our thinking is negative. Meditation teaches us to be positive, because positive thoughts produce positive attitudes and a positive approach to life.


Ability to relax: We learn to relax the mind as well as the body, so we become less uptight about life and the situations we face.

Ability to work under pressure: Stresses will always be there. A change of attitude conserves our energy and allows us to cope better and work under pressure.

Ability to rejuvenate energy: Meditation rejuvenates and recharges us. The most common complaint in today's world is tiredness. Meditation focuses and conserves our energy.

Healthy mind & body: We are what we think. The mind affects the body. Meditation is used by many people to improve health by reducing stress. Meditation is not necessarily a cure, but it is a good method of prevention.

There are many kinds of meditation. They all yield some of the benefits we have mentioned. The type of meditation you'll learn here is called Raja Yoga. Raja literally means King and Yoga comes from the Sanskrit word 'Yuj' meaning yoke, link, communion. (It originally referred to the wooden yoke joining two oxen pulling a cart.*



Lesson 1: Raja Yoga Meditation

- King of all yogas
- Mastery of self
- Union with Supreme
- Based upon the quality of our thoughts

[If someone has heard of Raja Yoga you may have to explain that this is not the Raja Yoga as expounded by Patanjali (Pa-tan-ja-li)]. Although there are similarities, here we do not work with the breath (pranayama). This Raja Yoga is based on recently revealed spiritual knowledge.]

This form of Raja Yoga also does not involve physical postures, chanting, reciting mantras, practicing rituals or penance. Nor does it deal with psychic phenomenon, auras or the occult. There is no reliance on a guru/ master; rather it requires a high degree of personal responsibility.

It's an open-eye form of meditation; when proficient at it you will be able to maintain a meditative state throughout the day.

There are three meanings to Raja Yoga which will help you understand it better:

- First, Raja Yoga is the **King of all the yogas**, and is traditionally regarded as the 'highest' form of yoga because it works directly with the mind. Hatha Yoga is actually the lowest level of yoga, as it focuses on the body. There is also the yoga of emotions (bhakti), the yoga of chanting (jappa), kundalini yoga, Karma Yoga, etc. Although it's the highest, it's also the easiest in the sense that it doesn't involve austerities or drastic changes of lifestyle.
- Raja Yoga secondly means that **yoga which leads to Mastery** (Sovereignty or Kingship) of the self. Usually we don't have control over our mind/ thoughts, or sense organs; we are often slaves to our habits and addictions. This yoga enables mastery of the mind as well as our senses. [Give some examples of why we need this mastery]
- Raja Yoga means **Link/ Connection/ Union with the Supreme**. This connection is the ultimate relationship.

Yoga = connection. Connection = influence. Influence = experience.

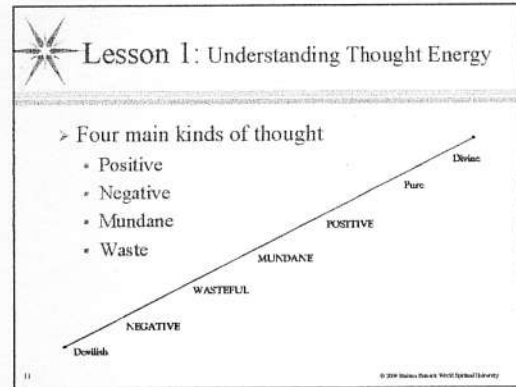
To begin, we must first understand the nature of thought, because **Raja Yoga meditation depends on thoughts**. Think about thought. What is thought? [Do a brainstorm to get their ideas of what thought is.]

Our definition is that "Thought is the energy of the mind." It's a form of energy, the energy of consciousness, energy that potentially leads to action through the body. The mind is always thinking, but what percent of the day are you even aware what you're thinking? Every thought is a drop of energy. Think how many thoughts you create in a moment. How many drops of what kind of energy are you accumulating inside?

Thoughts are very powerful. As we think about ourselves, so we experience; we experience thought as feeling. In other words, feeling follows thought.

[*NOTE: When introducing Hindi words you can add a bit of humor by letting them know that they're learning another language as well!— but do not hesitate to introduce them, especially those that are used all the time in the Murli: Brahmin, Ravan, Maya, bhakti, etc.]

Explain the four main kinds of thought: [Ask them to come up with them; they rarely do. Occasionally some souls get the 1st two, positive and negative. Give examples of each. It's helpful to describe thoughts as being on a spectrum from the lowest to the highest, mundane being in the middle.]



Positive thoughts make you feel good, make others feel good, generally bring benefit to oneself and others. Thought is energy and **one makes one's thoughts positive by looking at the value system within oneself**. Do you believe in peace? Do you believe in forgiveness? Do you understand what tolerance is? Positive thinking is based on spiritual values like patience, tolerance, trust and forgiveness; in other words letting go of holding onto the past or to value judgments about other people. Higher than positive thoughts are **pure thoughts** and at the highest level of consciousness thoughts are divine. A person who is by nature peaceful & tolerant has **pure thoughts**. A person with a great reservoir of pure thought energy, who donates that energy unconditionally, like angels and some saints, is a person with **divine thoughts**. He or she is like a lighthouse—stable and constantly giving light & guidance.

Negative thoughts do not make you feel good; they make others feel uncomfortable or worse; and they generally cause harm to the self or others. For example, what do thoughts/ feelings of animosity do **to you**? Negative thoughts are based on a limited sense of the self and give rise to selfishness and feelings such as anger. At the lowest end of the negative spectrum are devilish thoughts—extremely egocentric, destructive and violent thoughts which violate other people's rights and existence.

Mundane or necessary thoughts include factual thoughts. They generally result in mundane things getting done. Examples: "my phone number is ___"; "it's time to take out the garbage." One can color these thoughts with negative or positive feelings, but the thought by itself is neither positive nor negative.


Waste thoughts waste one's time and energy. Examples: regretting, speculating, worrying, wishful thinking and especially thinking useless and unnecessary things about others, such as keeping the past of someone in mind. Wasteful thoughts make your mind work harder, faster, under more pressure. Worrying, for example, leads to stress. Stress can be so intense it can even lead to mental breakdown.

The **difference between waste and negative** is a matter of degree. It's easier to throw off waste thoughts than negative thoughts. For example gossiping is a kind of waste which also wastes one's time. It becomes negative when it leads to slander, and destroys a person's reputation and character. A person who slanders has bad feelings about someone and doesn't have courage to speak directly to that person so they go behind their back. Bad feelings create lack of courage in communication. When a person has wasteful and negative thoughts they don't communicate properly. They half communicate, or communicate wrong things..

[Make sure they're clear about the four main types before proceeding.]

You have absolute freedom to think any type of thoughts that you wish. The aim of meditation is to spend more and more time on the upper end of the thought spectrum.

Thoughts are very powerful. We've mentioned how our thoughts dictate our feelings. Thoughts also define our capacity to achieve things. If you really think you can be or do something there's nothing that can stop you, but if you think you can't be or do something there's no way you can be or do it. That's why we have the slogan **"Whether you think you can or whether you think you can't—you're right!"** It's very important to think that you **can** meditate!



Lesson 1: The Power of Thought

- The power of thought
"Whether you think you can or whether you think you can't—you're right!"
- Managing thoughts: S.O.S.
- Anchor thought

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Precisely because thoughts are so powerful it is very important to think elevated, positive thoughts, especially about oneself. Meditation harnesses the energy of thought. In meditation, we **manage thoughts** by cultivating a pro-active (not passive) state of mind. We change our thinking. When negative or waste thoughts occur in the mind, **S.O.S. = Stop, Observe, Steer***. Step back and simply observe the energy of your mind manifesting in those thoughts & feelings. Then consciously steer your mental energy in a more positive direction.

For example, take a person who constantly has waste and negative thoughts about the past and character of others. They justify their dislike/ disapproval/ hatred on the basis of "I'm right, it's unfair. It's not just." If that person wants to become more positive, s/he has to stop applying that kind of thinking, that "I'm right, the other is wrong." No one is completely right, no one is completely wrong. Each one's perspective is right in some ways. To become more positive it is necessary to stop putting blame on others or on one's self, to forgive and forget. Forgiveness and tolerance do not come easily because our strong habit is to justify our waste and negative thoughts and feelings. Also we fear getting 'trapped' or 'taken' again if we forgive and forget. But if you don't forget you haven't really forgiven. Then how will you become more positive? So put one word in between forgive and forget, the word "Learn". Meditation means the ability to learn. You cannot think positively unless you're willing to learn—about yourself as well as others. Learning means becoming detached (gaining a respectful distance) where you and the other can breathe; it means becoming a little more patient, a little more willing to understand, coming a little less into the emotional reactions of "I'm right". Keeping peaceful is a very important value or power in keeping yourself positive.


Administering/ directing the mind; developing concentration and focus: Even if we're not struggling with waste or negative thought energy, rather than allowing the mind to roam in different directions (horizontally), in meditation we direct the mind to explore our positive values and ideals (vertically), aiming to take up a thought or several thoughts and go deeply into them. This concentration brings stability to the mind.

Anchor thought: You can choose an anchor thought to think—a positive thought which you deliberately create to help you throughout the day. Think about it powerfully to create a new experience. [Blessing cards, angel cards, thought for a day, etc.] Remember, as we think about ourselves, so we experience; we experience thought as feeling.

Meditate: [Recommend doing a bit of meditation at this point. Play Positive Thinking CD (Sr. Christine Bell, Australia) : #1 "Creating Positive Thought" (7 minutes)]

*Did you know that the original meaning of SOS is 'save our souls'!

So who is it who is thinking all these thoughts?
 Who am I? Who are you? [You can ask them - they will usually respond with labels]. In the practice of meditation there is a need to know and understand who is thinking. Who is it who experiences positivity & negativity? happiness and unhappiness? To understand who your are, **you must understand the difference between consciousness and matter.**



Lesson 1: Who Am I?

- Who is doing the thinking? Who are you really?
- Understanding consciousness vs. matter
 - Attributes of matter
 - Attributes of consciousness
 - When the difference is most obvious

13
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In school you probably learned about the attributes or properties of matter: volume, density, mass, geometrical size, etc. [You can ask whether they recall them before giving the answers.]

But what are the attributes of consciousness? awareness, memory, creativity, reasoning, decision-making ability, thinking, observation, intuition, opinions, imagination, abstract thinking, etc.

The difference is most apparent at the moment of death, when consciousness separates from matter. The body returns to dust, the five elements. But what happens to the being who expressed and experienced through the body? It is said, "The soul left the body." Without the soul, the being, the body doesn't function; it is a corpse. So who are you? The body or the soul/ spirit? You are consciousness itself, the conscious, animating force, the conscient self, the psyche, the spirit, the soul*. You can do things physical objects cannot, like relive the past and dream of the future. You have no physical attributes. You are META-physical.


Another way to think about this: Every 7 years every cell of your body gets replaced. You were once only 2 feet long; everything about you was very different from now—even every cell in your body has changed since then—but still you say you're the same person. What has remained the same?

So a human being is 2 things, soul + body. Who says "My body or my hand"? - Who is speaking? Who is the owner? [You can also explain using Atom/ Atma. The most powerful point of energy is the atom; in nature the most powerful point of energy is the seed; in spirituality it's the soul.]

So how can you conceive of yourself if you are not the body? If something has no volume, density or mass, the only way it can be conceived of is as a point, because a point has no physical dimensions. It has a **form** which is infinitesimal. It's a wonder how something small can contain so much: analogies of microchip (info) & atom (Power).


*For our purposes the words soul, spirit, consciousness and psyche are synonymous.

Imagine a tiny point located where thoughts come from...a precious point of conscient light energy that thinks, decides and remembers, that gives birth to emotion...the spiritual being that acts and interacts through the vehicle of the body...the source of life and life's experiences...this precious point source of living energy is you.



Lesson 1: Perceiving the soul

- Form of the soul
- Soul's location in the body
- Using the third eye
- Soul/ body connection
 - Mind over matter
 - Reason for lack of peace of mind
 - Psychosomatic illness



14
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Because the soul is not physical there is nothing physical that can destroy it, neither fire nor water, bullets or bombs. This means that you the soul have always existed and always will. You are immortal. You cannot die.

Where in the body is the soul located? [You can ask. Many will say in the heart; a few will say in the forehead.] Our understanding is* that the soul is located in the forehead, near the major sense organs. It is the operator of the body, and uses eyes as windows. [Use analogies: Brain is hardware, soul is software; Soul is driver, body the car; Or body is like a puppet. You can refer to 'Ultimate Union' poster or Indian poster.]

If you use the car/driver analogy you can compare how one can drive a car by habit 'on automatic pilot' barely aware of how one is getting from A to B; likewise this is how we generally 'drive' the vehicle of the body. Just as car accidents happen more often when the driver is not paying full attention to driving, so 'clashes' with others occur more easily when we are not mindful of directing our actions from our seat in the forehead.

The soul is invisible to the physical eyes, so to see the soul we have to use our 3rd eye, the eye of understanding. When someone describes how to get somewhere and you say "Oh, I see." You 'saw' with your 3rd eye—the mind's eye. In the same way, once we know about the soul we can perceive it with the understanding/ awareness that it sits within the forehead.

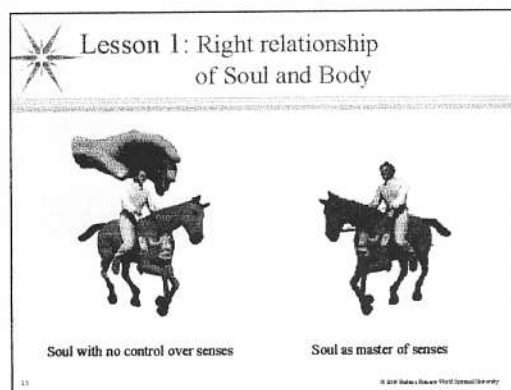
Raja Yoga meditation deals primarily with consciousness. However we need to be aware of the close **connection between the soul and body, between consciousness and matter**. The mind is naturally a higher level or purer form of energy than matter. Therefore the mind is ideally designed to rule over the body, and to be the steward of the material world (mind over matter). However nowadays the mind is under the control/ rule of the sense organs.

Due to this loss of control, the mind wanders here and there and has developed habits of negative thinking. This has led us to a state of **peacelessness**. Stress has caused us to produce thoughts of fear, worry, doubt, insecurity and anxiety and these thoughts have had their impact on the body as well. In fact 85-90% of all illness today is thought to be **psychosomatic**—directly related to one's mental state. An example of this is a stress-induced ulcer.

Our materialistic approach to life without quality, caring, or right sensitivity creates lots of burden and pressure. [Most people who come to the center are stressed and it's good to gently help them realize that it's very much linked to their materialistic value system.] However, by simply paying attention to our thoughts, we can bring the mind under control and use the mind to relax the body. People with a healthy mind, a strong will and a positive attitude recover quickly from accidents and illness.

*"Our understanding is"—this phrase is an excellent way to begin an explanation of Baba's truth.

The body has immense value. We cannot express or experience without it. So what we need is the RIGHT relationship between the soul and the body, not the rejection of the body. In soul consciousness, the relationship of body and soul is correctly balanced.



One uses the organs of sense as tools of perception, but always maintains one's position as a master, the user of the senses. You can use the examples of a horse and rider, charioteer and driver, costume and actor, piano and pianist, etc. (The talent of a pianist (soul) can't be expressed if the piano (body) is not properly tuned; a pianist can play many pianos and a variety of different tunes.)

[In the illustration (which is unfortunately only available as a training illustration, not as a course poster), the rider on the left is not in control. He has no reins to guide the horse of sense perceptions, so it takes him where it wants to go. The hand over him indicates that he is under the influence of possessions, attachments and prior actions performed by the senses.]

The rider on the right, on the other hand, controls the horse of sense perceptions through the reins. In other words, he uses the sense organs as tools of perception never forgetting that he is the master. There is no hand above him, which means that he is free from or unaffected by external and internal influences.]

In order to become the master, we first have to become free from the negative thoughts that are the source of tension. We have to let them go & think/ feel something different in their place.


Let's practice this in the form of a three-step exercise: Let go, breathe and relax.

[Offer a brief Guided Commentary: Have them close their eyes, focus mind on the feet, tense and then let go the toes, feeling them become heavy and warm; then the feet, ankles, lower legs, thighs, hips, stomach, chest, shoulder, arms, neck, face and head. End at the forehead with a powerful feeling of centeredness. Have them open their eyes. Ask them to share their experiences.]

You can do this exercise silently, without anyone even knowing it, whenever you are in stressful situations.


Now let's look more closely at 5 main characteristics of the self as a soul:

We have already described the **form of the soul** as an infinitesimal, conscious point of spiritual (metaphysical) light energy which cannot be seen by the physical eyes.



Lesson 1: Characteristics of the Soul

- Form
- Location
- Lifespan
- Purpose/ role
- Innate Qualities/
Inherent Virtues



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The location in the body is, as we have mentioned, the center of the forehead, just above and behind the eyes, inside the brain but separate from the brain. [You can give use the analogy of the brain as the computer; the soul as the programmer.] This is your seat within the body.

The lifespan of a soul is eternal. A soul is immortal, imperishable. This means that you and I have always existed and always will. The soul cannot die; as it is meta-physical there is nothing physical that can do away with it. Like matter, the soul can neither be created or destroyed. However unlike matter, the soul is conscient and intelligent; consequently the soul can absorb, not only energy, but also ideas, influences and qualities. Thus, although a soul is incorporeal, indivisible and indestructible, it's quality and strength are subject to change. Meditation is a method of experiencing one's immortal, eternal nature.

The soul's **purpose** is to express and to experience. For this we need the vehicle of the body. Without the body the soul cannot express itself or experience anything. The soul occupies no space in the physical body since it is not physical, but it's **role** is to animate and direct the body via the brain and nervous system. The soul also receives signals from the body.

Lack of knowledge of the true self, the spiritual self, the soul, is the root cause of all sorrow, as well as the cause of emptiness, confusion and the experience that life has no meaning. The soul tires to end these states by satisfying the desires of the body, but any happiness experienced through the senses is only temporary.

[Note: You may want to write up the table in the illustration on a white board or flip chart; it is also part of one of the handouts.]

What is the nature of our original or natural state of consciousness? It's a state of consciousness characterized by the **inherent qualities** of peace, purity, love, happiness, light, truth, power. These primary qualities naturally comprise secondary qualities or **virtues** such as honesty, selflessness, confidence, etc...

 <h2>Lesson 1: Original Nature of the Soul</h2>	
<u>Innate Qualities & Inherent Virtues</u>	
➤ Peace	patience, calmness, introversion, silence, serenity, stillness, centeredness
➤ Purity	cleanliness, authenticity, beauty, flexibility
➤ Love	gentleness, caring, kindness, generosity, respect, giving, sweetness, mercy, selflessness
➤ Happiness	cheerfulness, humor, lightness, contentment, spontaneity
➤ Truth	honesty, integrity, knowledge, understanding, clarity, light, discernment
➤ Power	tolerance, discipline, determination, strength, creativity, stability, reliability, confidence
➤ Balance	equanimity, fairness, resilience, wisdom

How can you be sure that these are your natural qualities? Although you might experience some of them some of the time, they also seem not to last. Why do we search for peace, love, etc? Why do we react so strongly when we are confronted with dishonesty or injustice? We're always trying to get back to the experience of peace and contentment. When we feel good we never make effort to become unhappy... [You can use the analogy of the Queen & her necklace to show how we look outside for that which can only be found within. (The Queen could not find her most precious necklace and had everyone in the kingdom looking for it; then her handmaiden spied it around the Queen's own neck.)]

Part of getting to know one's true self is experiencing each of these original (innate) qualities and virtues. They can be experienced in meditation when the soul subtly detaches from the consciousness of the body. [You can invite everyone to do the following exercise with you]: Sit comfortably and let your eyes be gently half-open. Become aware of yourself as the being of awareness. (pause). Notice that awareness is silent. (pause) You may be aware of some sounds (cars passing, birds chirping, children playing, etc.), but *that which is aware of those sounds is itself silent*. That silent awareness is naturally peaceful. (pause) There is natural intelligence present within it. There is a natural openness/receptivity/ acceptance, which in essence could be called love. There is a natural positivity, which is the most subtle form of happiness. There is a quality of innocence, or purity there, as well as a natural strength or resilience. These are some of the qualities inherent in your natural state of awareness, the primary one of which is peace. This is why we often use the words "Om Shanti" in greeting each other and in saying farewell. It's a reminder of who we really are. "Om" I am, I exist. "Shanti" peaceful. "Om Shanti" means "I am peace".

So to summarize: You, the soul are living, metaphysical, subtle and eternal, and you are the rightful master of the body.

Experiencing yourself to be a soul through meditation will:

- 1) help you understand, face and reduce the fear of death—your own as well as that of others;
- 2) offer you the possibility of enlightened self-control rather than reliance on force to discipline yourself;
- 3) allow your original qualities to emerge which will enable you to see the good in all others;
- 4) facilitate your overcoming tendencies towards criticism, discrimination and prejudice;
- 5) reduce your attachments;
- 6) become the basis of your true self-respect.

The soul is conscious of the external world through the physical senses: touch, sight, hearing, smell and taste. When there is *preoccupation* with sense perceptions and the sense of yourself as a soul hardly exists, you are **body consciousness**. Over the course of lifetimes we became body conscious as we began to rely more and more on the senses as our only source of experience.

Lesson 1: Body Consciousness & Soul Consciousness	
Body Consciousness <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ego, inferiority, low self esteem • Lack of control over senses; compulsions & addictions • Prejudice, judgmental-ism, comparisons, stereotypes • Happiness doesn't last; sorrow results from unfulfilled desires • Afraid of death 	Soul Consciousness <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Positive self image; true self respect, confidence, you love yourself • Self-mastery; you respect your body and treat it well • Improved Relationships • Inner happiness, not based on external gratification • Not afraid of death, or of yesterday

We became conscious only of our physical-ness, forgetting our spiritual identity, and began to identify the self with the body. This made us look to external things for happiness and peace.

But in the physical world, everything changes and comes to an end. When our experiences through the senses change and end, we become unhappy and peace-less, caught in an endless circle of desire and greater dependency on external stimuli. Our moods go up and down according to how satisfied our senses are. Anger results when we don't get what we want. When we do get what we want, we become greedy and want more. Then we flaunt what we have and develop ego. Anger, greed and ego, as well as sorrow and depression, are negative characteristics of body consciousness. Body consciousness is the root cause of sorrow.

On top of these mood swings, in body consciousness we label ourselves and each other according to nationality, lineage, religion, profession, race, gender, age, etc. Each identity has its own set patterns of thinking and acting and the differences become the basis of conflict in our relationships.

In contrast, you are 'soul conscious' when you are consciously aware of your existence as a soul, and are consciously expressing yourself through the medium of the body. To be soul conscious means that there is both intellectual and experiential consciousness of the self as a soul. In our original, natural state of consciousness, we are naturally conscious of ourselves as souls. Soul consciousness is the seed of happiness.

When your identity is based on your physical form, possessions, position or people (relationships)

- You feel anxious and uptight
- You are motivated by short-term desires
- You have low self-esteem and lots of ego
- Your happiness doesn't last
- You criticize & find fault with others
- You are afraid of dying
- You reminisce about the past & worry for the future
- You lack control over your sense organs
- You are superficial and often two-faced
- You blame, complain about, and resent others
- You seek approval and are often defensive

When your identity is based on your true form

- You feel comfortable no matter what happens
- Your heart is open and loving
- Your confidence & self-respect soars
- Your life is meaningful
- You are motivated by wisdom
- You are not afraid of death
- You live in the present, not the past or future
- You respect your body & treat it well
- You are the same inside and out
- No human being is your enemy
- You experience patience and contentment

[Note: Similar tables are included in the handout. You don't need to go too much into all these details. Use them just for reference.]



Lesson 1: Self-Realization

- Self respect
- Self esteem
- Self confidence

When we become soul consciousness we naturally begin looking at the self in a positive way. Continued looking at the self in soul consciousness will develop 3 things: **self respect, self esteem and self confidence**. All people need this. What do these mean?

True **self respect** comes when one starts to recognize, realize and experience one's eternal spiritual identity, because then you start to respect your right to be here, your value as a being of consciousness. You become naturally humble.

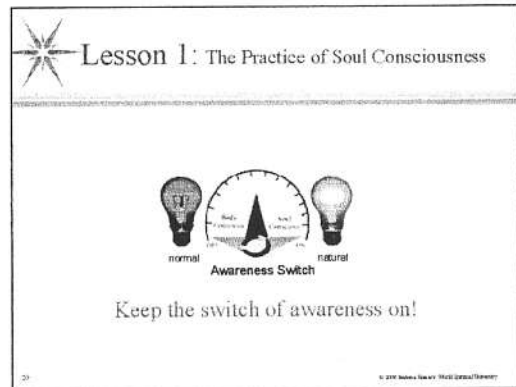
Self esteem has to do with the value of one's own uniqueness. Each soul is an actor in this drama and each actor has to be different for the drama to have variety and make sense. Until you recognizes your uniqueness you can't value yourself; rather you'll compare yourself to others, try to copy others, compete with others. When you recognize and value your uniqueness you recognize that it's been given you as a gift to nurture and use, so you can't get attached to it and claim it as 'mine', for then arrogance comes and you're back in body consciousness. So it's a fine balance between deep appreciation of the self and detachment. [You can use the example of the human face: two eyes, mouth, nose ears. Which is the most important sense? It's a ridiculous question because each organ has its value; together they make the human face. Self esteem means valuing our own position but similarly valuing the position and role of others. A soul conscious person, a person who has realized the self, has a vision of equality and respect and understands the great beauty of difference.

Self confidence emerges when you recognize your inner treasures and realize you have something to contribute to life—this gives your life meaning and purpose. Because we exist we all have something to contribute.

The wellbeing of a person is only possible when there's this sense of identity—self respect, self esteem, self confidence and sense of purpose, giving something to life, offering something. We can't be happy unless we share, unless we care. And to feel well, a human being has to have a sense of belonging, to be able to love and be loved. Soul consciousness, self-realization means having all these things. This enables love for oneself. Only when there is love for the self can there truly be love for others. Also, when you experience your spiritual identity, others may try to undermine you, but no one can destroy your inner reality.

[You may want to talk about the two forms of 'I'. The real self (the big I) and the adopted self (the little i).. See Prashant's book, "God's Wisdom"]

How can we practice of Soul Consciousness?: Part of our meditation practice will be to continuously monitor our own state of awareness and practice to consciously identify ourselves as souls. Identification with the body may be conscious or unconscious, but identification with the soul can only be conscious. Only when we are soul conscious are we able to be the master of the mind and the senses. Only in soul consciousness do we act in a state of awakened self-awareness.



If one thinks the body is ME and that one 'has' a soul, then one's consciousness is inverted. When we forget ourselves in this way we do things wrongly, we make a mess of our lives, we get into trouble and cause trouble. Then we have to spend a lot of time and energy to put it right. Sometimes we can't.


The most important exercise and effort of will is to keep checking: "Am I the right way up, am I soul conscious, am I aware of who and what I am, or did I forget for a moment?" The effort is to remain aware of our ourselves as a soul, to keep the light of awareness ON. We accomplish this simply by thinking about it. When we forget about it, the switch goes OFF and we are no longer aware of ourselves as souls. If we're attentive, we can keep creating the thoughts necessary to keep awareness switched ON.

It takes time and practice to change something that has been 'normal' our whole life. We need patience and determination. Everything depends on our thinking process. Remember that you can change your consciousness at any moment, even right in the middle of an action.

How do you know you are really soul conscious? You will have:


- **Positive thoughts:** When you are soul conscious you only have positive thoughts about yourself and others. No criticism, jealousy, fear, hopelessness, etc.
- **A Clear mind:** There should not be any confusion, lack of concentration or waste thoughts.
- **Freedom from inner conflict:** The conscience biting, the experience of guilt or shame, worrying about yourself or others, confusion about what is right or wrong, good or bad, true or false—all are inner conflicts and are signs of body consciousness.
- **Introspection:** Your eyes and ears are open and yet you are able to remain centered within yourself, able to create and control your thoughts no matter what is happening around you. When you are introspective you respond rather than react. You are able to consciously think and decide what to do or say and how, rather than automatically react on the basis of your sanskaras.

Now that we've understood soul consciousness, and the difference between soul consciousness and body consciousness, let's use meditation as a method to deepen our understanding and begin to experience it.



Lesson 1: Method of Meditation

- Open eyes; sitting posture
- Focus attention
- Create specific thoughts



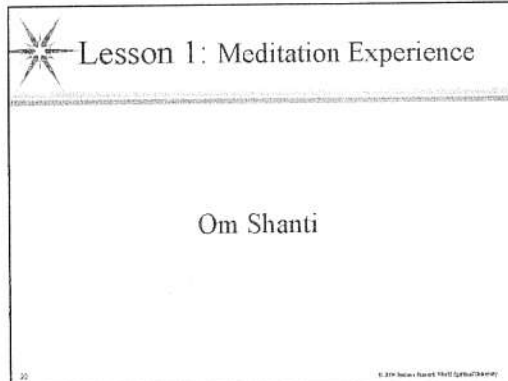
21
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Method of Meditation: Begin meditation with the aim to experience yourself as a soul.

- **Open eyes:** The eyes are the most powerful organ of the body and the energy of the mind is transmitted through the eyes. Raja Yoga is an **open-eyed meditation**, because we need to learn to develop inner awareness to such an extent that we can maintain it whilst in action.
- **Sit comfortably:** The body's position needs only to be balanced and comfortable. If you sit on a chair keep your back straight, feet together and legs uncrossed so the subtle energies of your body may flow unobstructed.
- **Focus attention:** Sit in a comfortable position; try to forget about/ let go of the sounds and sights around you and turn your attention inward. Focus your attention on that point in the forehead where you the soul sit. If your mind is running with many thoughts or memories, just observe—watch them come and go. Gently keep bringing your attention back to yourself in the here-and-now, sitting on your seat of consciousness. Gradually your mind will become more peaceful and your thoughts will slow down. If you experience a headache or tension, you're trying too hard. Relax completely.
- **Create specific thoughts:** Create the thought of peace, concentrate your attention on that thought and gradually peace will become your experience. As you concentrate on peace you're able to bring the feeling of peace into your consciousness. You are elevating your consciousness, becoming soul consciousness.

When you're in peace consciousness—only then can you deal with anything negative. One has to go above negativity to see the truth of things. If you want to change a person, you don't keep telling them what's wrong with them because then that's what you're emphasizing in their consciousness. This is especially important in working with the self. If you want to change, to move from puppet consciousness to master consciousness, to be a king of the self, you have to focus on your original good qualities. This empowers the self and it has to be done daily, because it's very easy for one negative thought to come and destroy everything.

- **It's a daily practice.** How often do you breathe, do you eat? They're daily practices—otherwise the body doesn't function properly. In the same way, the health of the soul requires the oxygen of daily practice—even 5-10 minutes will do. Start with this and naturally it will increase.



[NOTE: In Sr. Jayanti's commentary (below), the meaning of "Om Shanti" is explained. If you have not already done so, after the meditation you can mention that this is a phrase that they will hear frequently at the center, that we use it as a greeting and a goodbye, and as a calming reminder.]

[Play a commentary: You may need to explain how to listen to it. Suggest to them that they try keeping their eyes open. **IMPORTANT:** Please remember that you must meditate with them, following and experiencing the commentary your own self.]

Recommended commentaries:

Knowing Myself CD:

1 "Introduction"

#2 "Turning Inwards"

#3 "Directing My Thoughts"

(Total time-15 minutes);

[NOTE: if you do not have time to play all three, you can move #3 (6 minutes) to next week's beginning half hour of meditation.]

OR Inner Treasures Audiocassette:

#1 "Peace" (10 minutes)]

[Give a commentary: If you feel comfortable to do so]

Example: Om Shanti...Om means: I am...Shanti...peace. I, the being of peace...the soul...the owner of this body...I, that being of light...the being that sits within the center of this forehead and radiates light...thoughts...energy...I look down through these eyes...into the physical world around...I, the being of awareness...am seeing through my eyes, am hearing through my ears. I, the soul within...am now choosing to focus my attention within...I think about my true identity...that I am an immortal being...an invisible being...a being of light...I am shining the light of my awareness into a darkened world...I am like a star...a tiny point of light...unlimited and free from any limitations...I realize I am quite separate from my body...I exist independently of it...I the soul am a being of inner beauty...loving...full of peace...so full of peace that I am only peace...In this higher consciousness my thoughts have become less...my mind has become like a treasure-store...full of valuable, elevated thoughts...this is true wealth...I am overflowing with the treasure of peace...radiating the subtle vibrations of peace...I have become so pure...so subtle...so peaceful...and I remain in this tranquil state, in my true nature... I am a peaceful soul...Om Shanti.



Lesson 1: Tips for Success

- Create a meditation place in your home
- Regularity
- Formula for success:
Results = Understanding + Application

20

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Encourage students to create a place for meditation: It's a good idea to create a place especially for meditation in your home. A conducive environment helps you focus. Keep it simple and clean. You will gradually build up vibrations and atmosphere in this place and this will facilitate good meditation experiences.

Encourage regularity: Practice once or twice a day to start with, in a quiet place at home or at work. These are the first steps to learning how to meditate and regain control of your thoughts, feelings and your life experience. If you find it a little difficult, be patient. Don't give yourself a hard time. Meditation is cumulative. Frequent, short meditations are effective. [Introduce Traffic Control if you haven't already.] Regular practice will make you perfect. It's better to practice a little bit every day than to practice for a longer time only 2-3 times a week.

Explain the formula for Success: If you understand and don't practice, no results. If you practice and get no results, maybe you need further understanding. Practice what you're learning each week. The content of each class is the basis of the your focus. Meditate to apply what you've learned, i.e., this week, think about yourself as a soul.



Lesson 1: Common Q & A

- Common questions that may arise:
- How is this meditation different from TM (or Zen, Vipassana, etc.)
 - Why did we become body conscious?
 - What is the difference between spirits & souls?
 - Why is the soul in the center of the forehead?
 - Do we take birth on other planets?
 - Do you believe in reincarnation?

- **How is does this meditation differ from other forms of meditation?** [You do not need to become an expert on other types of meditation to answer this question.] Other types of meditation are also beneficial in bringing quiet to the mind and developing concentration. Raja Yoga meditation is additionally effective in bringing about transformation of the whole person. See the handout "Mind and Meditation" for more information*. Other forms of meditation generally fall into two categories:
 - a) those that focus attention on
 - the breath (as in Vipassana meditation, Tibetan meditation or the Anapanasati form of Buddhist meditation);
 - on an image (some forms of Christian meditation);
 - on a candle (New Age or Pagan meditations); or
 - on a sound/ mantra (Transcendental Meditation/ TM)/ or a chant (Soka Gakkai Buddhism) in order to still the mind; or
 - b) those that focus attention on simply observing the thoughts (Zen and some forms of Tibetan and Vipassana meditation).
- **What is the difference between spirits & souls?** None.
- **Why is the soul in the center of the forehead?** [Use the analogy of being in the control room (near the brain), the proximity to major sense organs. Point out that the eyes are always said to be the windows of the soul. A driver sits always sits in front near the steering mechanism and the instruments. This is the place from which the soul puts thoughts into action. Etc...]
- **If we are souls, why did we become body conscious?** We'll discuss this in depth later in the course, but a simple answer is we FORGOT (lost it through forgetfulness) as we began to identify with the body.
- **Do we take birth on other planets?** Not according to our understanding.
- **Do you believe in reincarnation?** [It's OK to say that yes, in our understanding the soul does reincarnate. There is some evidence for it and it makes sense out of a lot of otherwise inexplicable things. One way of understanding this is to think that as the soul is immortal, we therefore have but one life; however we change our bodily 'clothing' or costume many times. If reincarnations a problem for them, then just request that they keep an open mind.]

*An additional resource is David Fontana's book, *The Meditator's Handbook: A Comprehensive Guide to Eastern and Western Meditation Techniques*, Thorsons Pub; (June 2002)

[Field any remaining questions. Distribute Free Handouts (Remind them to bring \$ next week):

- o Mind and Meditation Flyer
- o RY Brochure
- o Contrast of Soul & Body/ Awareness of Self as Soul
- o Coping with Negativity/ Original Nature of the Soul
- o How to Make up Your Mind
- o Foundation Course Information Sheet

[optional]

Suggest Homework]

- o Monitor how you spend your thought-time until the next lesson—stopping or redirecting negative or waste thoughts.
- o Practice seeing others as subtle beings of spiritual light sitting in the forehead. "I am a soul and I am seeing my brother soul."
- o Upon awaking, remind yourself: "I the soul have entered this body to express my original qualities of peace and love." Spend 5-10 minutes (before you get involved in your day) experiencing the self as a soul, making a program for yourself of practice through the day.
- o Before sleeping, spend a few minutes reviewing, checking and setting an intention for the next day. Then remind yourself, "I the soul am putting my body to rest. I am closing the windows of the senses to allow myself to rest."
- o Practice while you do your activities and work throughout the day that "I am a soul acting through this body of 5 elements. I am the actor in this costume of the body."


[Suggest Resources:

BOOKS: Thought for a Day; Learn to Relax

CARDS: Inner Beauty; Virtue Reality; Heart & Soul Virtue Cards; Self-Mastery

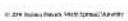
CDs: Positive Thinking; Relax; Knowing Myself


TAPE: Inner Treasures]



Lesson 1: Wrap Up

- Field any remaining questions
- Distribute handouts
- Suggest homework
 - Monitoring thoughts, redirecting negative & waste
 - Seeing self and others as souls
 - Thoughts on waking and sleeping
 - Practice during activity

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Lesson 2: The Journey Inward

Objectives—At the end of the session students would have:

- understood the 3 aspects of consciousness
- understood the dynamics of consciousness
- understood the process of meditation



➤ Meditation Experience: The Journey Inward

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LESSON MATERIALS to prepare beforehand

Poster(s): The Ultimate Union
Anatomy of Consciousness

Handout(s): (some or all of the following)

- Who Am I? (Correspondence Course Lesson 1)
- Who on Earth Are You? (Retreat #2)
- The Dynamics of Consciousness (Graphic)  Copied together
- Body or Soul: A Question of Consciousness (Roger Cole, Retreat #11)
- Reincarnation & the Faculties of the Soul (Retreat #3)
- Four Year Old Recalls Previous Life!
- Stop for a Moment (Back cover of Retreat #2)  Copied together

CDs/ tapes: Peace of Mind CD (Sr. Carmen)
Positive Thinking CD (Sr. Christine Bell)
Knowing Myself CD (Sr. Jayanti)
Link of Life CD (Br. Anthony) [optional]
Traveling Beyond audiocassette (Sr. Denise) [optional]

[PLEASE REVIEW THE OBJECTIVES of this lesson before you begin, so that you are mindful of what you want to cover. Be sure to SIT WITH BABA before the student(s) arrive.]

[Begin with ½ hour of meditation. Recommended commentaries for this half hour:

Positive Thinking CD#2: "Freedom from Influence" (6 minutes)

AND

Peace of Mind CD: #2 "Who Am I"? (12 minutes)

AND, if you did not have time to play it last week (or even if you did!):

Knowing Myself CD #3: ("Directing My Thoughts" (6 minutes)

If you feel comfortable, you can give a 6 minute commentary to finish up, or you can have 3 minutes of silence between commentaries and 3 minutes of silence after the second one.]



Lesson 2: Transition from Lesson 1

Transition into Lesson 2

➤ Brief review of last lesson

Did you monitor your thought time? Did you try to stop or redirect negative or waste thoughts? Who tried to perceive themselves and others as souls? What was your experience?

➤ Link last lesson to this lesson & briefly overview today's lesson

In the last lesson we looked at the nature of thoughts, learned about the thinker, i.e., the soul, and our spiritual identity: form, location, lifespan, original nature, purpose and role. Today we will consider 3 important components of consciousness and how they interact dynamically. We'll also examine the process of meditation.

27

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Welcome the students back and check:

- Who did the homework of monitoring their thought time?
- What was your experience?
- Did you try to stop or redirect negative and waste thoughts?
- Who tried to perceive themselves and others as souls?

Review: In the last lesson we not only looked at the nature of thoughts, we learned about the thinker, the soul, and began to develop our spiritual identity: form, location, lifespan, original nature, purpose and role. [As a means of review, you may want to get them to brainstorm (you can write their comments on a flip chart) the difference between the soul and body or the difference between body consciousness and soul consciousness.]

Offer brief overview of this lesson: Today we are going to go deeper into three main aspects of consciousness which you need to understand fully in order to practice meditation, and we'll see how they work as an integrated dynamic in the psyche. We'll also look at the process of meditation.



Lesson 2: 1st Aspect of Soul—Mind

Essential functions:

- Thought
- Imagination
- Creation of ideas
- Sensation
- Desire
- Feeling

We have now understood that the self means consciousness. This includes the ability to think, remember, understand, decide and express. A conscious being has these abilities. In order to work effectively with our own consciousness, it is useful to distinguish three aspects or faculties of the soul.

One aspect of consciousness is **the Mind**, which is simply the thinking part. It is the most superficial level of consciousness and it functions with the energy of thought.

The soul, using the mind, generates thoughts, imagines things, creates ideas, and experiences sensations, desires, feelings and emotions. The mind can be compared to a factory, a screen or train station with various trains of thought arriving and departing. (The mind is not part of the brain.) The mind has 2 modes, active (creative) & passive. Raja Yoga meditation uses the active mode. You can also think of the mind as the mother of your thoughts.

The soul uses the mind as a screen on which it projects thoughts, sensations, images and ideas. According to the impact that they cause, an experience, feeling or emotion is created. For example, if you think 'banana', immediately that curved and yellow image appears on the mental screen, possibly with the sensation of its taste or texture. If you remember something abstract, like your colleague's irresponsibility, that thought brings with it a feeling of negativity, perhaps related to something you haven't quite worked out yourself.

The mind has the amazing capacity to take on the form of whatever it is thinking about and extract a feeling of the quality that comes with the form. Nothing could be a greater incentive towards positive thinking than this simple fact. If you want to feel good, you have to have the types of thoughts that bring the quality of goodness.

The ideal state of mind is one in which there is clarity of thought. Elevated, pure thoughts have long wavelengths and big spaces of silence between each crest of the wave. Negative thoughts are very fast, like wild horses racing. They run together. The screen itself is silent, the backdrop on which the thoughts are projected. As you become more experienced in observing your thoughts it becomes easier to see the patterns of thoughts which clutter this screen.

[NOTE: You can use analogy of the body & digestive process (with its organs of ingestion, digestion and assimilation) to illustrate the 3 aspects of consciousness. The soul has 3 'organs' which process the 'food' of consciousness, i.e., information which enters the mind through the senses. Explain how one can eat junk food at this level too (gossip, TV, waste thoughts). Refer to the *Anatomy of Consciousness* poster (see page 31).]

Another more subtle aspect of consciousness is the **Intellect**, which filters, discerns, decides, wills, and balances. Your intellect right now is evaluating, choosing what information it will accept or reject. Raja Yoga is the yoga of the intellect. The intellect is the **faculty of understanding** and is sometimes called the 3rd eye. This eye has to be very open if we're to transform and better the quality of our lives. Understanding is very important, because if you don't understand something properly you won't practice it properly and if you don't practice it properly then the result will not be positive.

Lesson 2: 2nd Aspect of Soul—Intellect

Essential functions:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discerning • Remembering • Recognizing • Associating • Creating • Filtering • Identifying 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding • Knowing • Reasoning • Decision-making • Judgment • Will
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28
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For example, some understand tolerance means putting up with people one doesn't like and not saying anything. If you practice tolerance on this basis, you'll start suppressing what you don't like; you'll suppress the energy of your opinion; you'll lack the courage to say something and become fearful. But that suppressed energy will create an aggression inside and you'll conclude that tolerance doesn't work and that it's necessary to be forceful. Same with humility—people think others will walk all over them if they're humble. Or they feel they can't be honest in a world where everyone is so dishonest. However one needs to understand these values better to practice them effectively. So a key function of the intellect is correct understanding. How do you understand tolerance? love? trust?

The intellect can work like a **microscope**, understanding by examining details of everything. Or it can work like a **telescope**: seeing ahead and understanding the consequences of an action, thought or word.

The intellect also keeps a balance between one's values and virtues, for extremes of anything are very bad for the self. For example, if you're extremely sweet you're like a sticky flypaper, you trap others in yourself. Ultimately you get trapped. So you have to balance sweetness with detachment. If you're too flexible you could end up compromising the basic principles of your life; so you have to balance flexibility with right focus and determination. The intellect works out what's appropriate for the situation.

For the intellect to have right understanding and keep balance, it needs BOTH silence and knowledge. Silence means becoming still, calm and detached from one's emotions and ways of thinking, and just observing. Silence enables the intellect to see the bigger picture, gain some perspective, stand back. If you don't step back from a person or situation, if you identify with it all the time—conflicts continue. The intellect therefore also has to work like a **periscope**—which comes out, observes and goes back in. We call this introspection. It's very important in being a good meditator as well as a good participant in life.

The intellect also has the power of **choice**. You choose how you respond to situations. When you realize you have this power of choice, you stop blaming/accusing others or situations for your unhappiness. We sometimes make wrong choices, but fortunately the intellect has a special capacity to learn and relearn.

As the ruler of the inner state, the intellect is the principal faculty of human consciousness. Just as a powerful and benign ruler is of immense benefit to any country and a weak, confused leader is manipulated and over-ruled by clever subjects; so a feeble, weak intellect surrenders itself to the external world of senses and their objects, and the internal world of thoughts, feelings and habits of personality. A sharp intellect quickly, clearly distinguishes truth from falsehood, real from unreal. A dull intellect makes choices that are incorrect, dishonest or meaningless. A sluggish intellect is confused, or justifies dishonesty, accepts incorrect assessments and is unable to distinguish between reality and fantasy.

If you want peace, you need an intellect that can create and decide on the thought patterns and actions that lead to peace. Thus the intellect also acts as **doorkeeper or filter**, allowing or refusing entry into the dynamic process of consciousness. Through meditation the accuracy of this role is heightened so that positive qualities are permitted entry and continuity while negative ones are weakened and transformed.

The intellect is strengthened through meditation and vigilance. You can know, for example, that to become irritated is detrimental. Even so, when faced with a person who is a traditional trigger for your irritation, when once again he is doing exactly that action which you find so annoying, then all theory is of no use. At that moment you need **power** not to get irritated. Meditation will give you that power.

We'll use a Hindi word to explain the 3rd aspect of consciousness. It refers to the subconscious and unconscious impressions of every experience. When the intellect makes a decision, it comes into expression, into action. The action when repeated becomes a habit, part of the personality and after a time it works naturally within the self. Every action that you perform leaves its mark in the soul as a sanskara. The tendency of the sanskaras is to self-organize, that is, to group themselves according to quality and function.

Lesson 2: 3rd Aspect of Soul—Sanskaras

Essential functions:

<p>Stores impressions as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Images • Sounds • Feelings • Thought patterns 	<p>Organizes them as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Memories • Habits, tendencies • Values, beliefs • Learnings • Talents • Instincts • Personality traits
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These impressions (sanskaras) are stored as thoughts and thought patterns, feelings, sounds & images; they are grouped together as memories, beliefs, opinions, attitudes, behavior patterns, habits, & personality traits. What we are aware of is only the tip of the iceberg (10%). As the repository of all experiences, the sanskaras form the basis of the personality. They are the basis of our individual uniqueness. When we describe a person as good, evil, happy-natured, boring, arrogant, altruistic and so on, we are basically referring to his or her dominant sanskaras.

These sanskaras could also be called recordings. They're recordings of life and they're influencing you. If something strong happened to you when you were young, that recording is still influencing you today. Sanskaras are always 'playing' background music (Musak!) in the mind, i.e., impressions constantly arise on the screen of the mind one after the other from one's archives of previously recorded experiences.

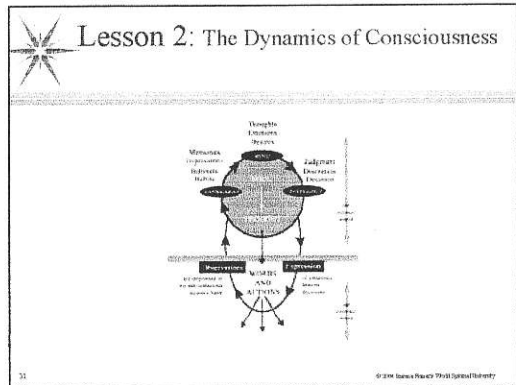
[Give an example of how sanskaras are formed. Can use the positive example of their coming to the course and the impressions that are being reinforced].

Sanskaras are not bad; in fact they're essential and are the basis of all learning [example of learning to tie one's shoelaces]. Our sanskaras, both positive and negative, have accumulated over one or more births. This explains the phenomenon of child prodigies. For example: Mozart, at age four, wrote minuets, a concerto for piano and a sonata. These compositions were not only technically accurate but extremely difficult. At seven, he wrote a complete opera! Where could he have learned music so well? It's obvious that such musical mastery at such a young age was not a genetic inheritance. He must have developed his talents in a previous birth and they were carried as sanskaras into his 'Mozart' birth.

The negative or body conscious sanskaras are based on 'I-ness' or 'my-ness' and include anger, fear, competition, insecurity, revenge, hopelessness, inferiority and superiority complexes. There's also another recording, the original recording of the self, the soul, which includes love, peace, happiness, purity and truth, knowledge—the qualities of our original state of consciousness. Our sanskaras have become mixed; that's why we do feel positive sometimes but can't hold onto it.

Sanskaras are not fixed. Growth & change is as possible as degeneration. If it's from within you, you can eliminate the negative. You can reclaim, return to your original state of consciousness, experiencing only the natural sanskaras (qualities) of the soul: peace, purity, love, joy/ happiness, clarity, wisdom, strength, selflessness.

Summarize: The understanding of these 3 subtle abilities and how they work and interact helps you immensely in managing your personal world.



The mind, intellect and sanskaras all affect each other, and functioning jointly they produce one's state of consciousness. Let's look at the flow of the energy of consciousness in a clockwise direction. A thought arises in the mind. The mind is fed by thoughts that come from the external world via the sense organs and thoughts also reach the mind from the subconscious, from the stored memory of past actions.

The mind is subject to the strength or weakness of the intellect. Just as the force of gravity pulls the tides to whatever the side of the world the moon happens to be on, if the intellect is strong and positive, the mind automatically follows; if weak, the tides, whims and moods of the mind fluctuate.

All thoughts, being energy, have a tendency to come into action. Before that, however, the thought passes before the intellect, where it is judged as to its quality, truthfulness, usefulness, appropriateness, purity, correctness or incorrectness. The thought then is either allowed or disallowed. If allowed, it is expressed as an act (emotion, word or deed). If disallowed, it ceases or disappears.

Take the habit of smoking. One sees others smoking and thinks, "Maybe I should try it." The intellect judges, "If I do it I'll relax, be accepted, etc." So one decides to smoke, again and again; and the consciousness is imprinted with that action until it becomes an addiction. Addictions promise happiness but create needs that you have to fulfill. But fulfilling them doesn't fulfill you, because you need again and again. You are left empty—a puppet of your needs, not a master. All addictive habits begin with choice but eventually dominate the person. Sometimes there's realization that this isn't good, but the force of habit is so strong that even with understanding it can't be broken.

Many psychological habits have become addictions in human personality, such as feeling inferior or superior, being suspicious, not trusting, the habit of thinking things always go wrong (what's the next bad thing that will happen), the paranoia of not being liked, feeling the victim, etc. These thoughts become one's world. Everyone has this to a major or minor extent.

Trying to get rid of these things by force makes them bigger. An example of using force would be someone who's trying to stop smoking saying, "OK, no more; I don't want to think about smoking. Don't. No." By saying 'no' to your addictions you're actually concentrating on it and that concentration gives it energy so the habit continues. Instead, there has to be understanding and then, more importantly, a positive alternative. When there's a positive alternative, something you really believe in and feel is worthwhile, then the energy of the mind and intellect can be redirected. Otherwise, the habit will continue and you'll feel guilty—shame, blame or regret. Meditation is a **natural process of transformation**. You do not need to struggle against the negativity. When you re-emerge the original nature, negativity finishes automatically.

In meditation you link your mind and intellect to your original sanskaras. When you believe in and want to experience these inner treasures, it's a powerful, positive alternative to the negative. You need knowledge, understanding and also faith in what you're understanding in the intellect; then the mind can concentrate, travel inside and experience your original qualities: of spiritual peace, love and purity. The original self is made up of these things.

As we said in the last lesson, if you want to change from puppet consciousness to master consciousness, to be a king of the self, you have to focus on your original good. This aspect of meditation empowers the self and it has to be done daily, because it's very easy for one negative thought to come and destroy everything. It's a daily practice.

The Process of Meditation:

At this point our aim in meditation is to free the mind from the influence of negative sanskaras by emerging the positive ones, and to enable it to work harmoniously with the intellect.

Meditation is the process of creating thoughts of high quality which release the mind from its stream of ordinary, mundane and negative thoughts. It is not thinking routinely, or something you do rhythmically like a chant, or a repeated prayer.

Nor is it about making the mind blank or stopping thought. Rather it's about transforming the *quality* of thought. This naturally slows the speed of thoughts. It's a creative process. It is an internal dialogue with yourself and with the Divine.


Meditation is a time to practice being fully aware of one's thoughts and creating very powerful, uplifting thoughts. Remember that according to what you think, this will be what you experience.

The process can be described in four distinct stages. In the Initial Stage, you decide to meditate. So you go to your meditation place and sit with the intention of meditating for a particular period of time and on a particular theme or topic. The intellect decides this. At first, you'll probably find your mind is flowing in various directions. You need to use the intellect to shift your sense of identity to the soul, turn your attention within and become aware of your inner state. Relax the body and focus attention on the forehead, thinking "this is where I sit".

Because your consciousness is used to being engaged with the external world, there can initially be an inner battle or conflict. You want to go within, but the habit of your mind is to remain external and scattered. You may need to persist. Do not worry if you remain in the initiation stage for a long time.

During this time of focusing inward, using your intellect, consciously choose to experience an original, positive quality, one *that is of deep interest to you at this particular time*. Ask your mind to think about it, to explore it. For example, you might choose to try to experience your original quality of peace, to explore the meaning of 'Om Shanti' (I am a soul, a being of peace). Or you might choose the quality of spiritual love.


If you persist with your intention, your mind will catch the flow of spirituality and before long you will move gently and imperceptibly into the next stage.

 **Lesson 2: Process of Meditation – 1st Stage**

➤ Initiating or Focus Stage

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The next stage is called Contemplation. In the initial stage you began by turning the mind within and considering yourself to be a soul. You told your mind to set aside all other thoughts which are connected with your work, relationships, feelings, pre-occupations, etc. You set your mind to focus on a certain topic or theme of elevated consciousness, such as peace or love.

 Lesson 2: Process of Meditation – 2nd Stage

➤ Stage of Contemplation

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In this second stage, you call to mind all your ideas and feelings about your chosen spiritual theme. You might call up thoughts about your spiritual essence, your inner beauty, your purity, love and serenity. One by one, pick up all the things you know about being a soul. "I am immortal, invisible, a point of light, eternal, a being of peace, etc." In this way, the knowledge in your intellect about the soul begins to guide your mind.

Each sentence is not something to repeat, but something to consider. Questioning helps keep the mind focused. 'I am a being of peace. What is peace? How does it feel to be peaceful?'


In the same way contemplate other aspects of the soul. What does it mean to you to be immortal? Can you think about yourself as never dying? Try to imagine it, try to feel what it would be like to be forever. What you are actually doing is evoking the memory that is latent within you.

What does it mean to be invisible? Can you think of being invisible? Your face is not you. Your body is not you. What you see in the mirror is not you. What do you look like? ... a non-material, very subtle, infinitesimal, invisible point of spiritual light, like a star in the night sky. You are an extraordinary star of consciousness, sitting in the center of your forehead.

This stage of the meditative process is when distractions occur. The number of distractions is directly related to your degree of motivation, to your interest in experiencing your chosen topic. Once you're aware that your mind has started down a path not appropriate to your topic, use the intellect to bring it back gently. Use the intellect to clarify distractions and set them to rest; don't suppress them. If the mind starts to think of food, for example, either a) tell it that you will think about what to have for dinner in five minutes after you finish your meditation; and/ or b) work with the thought of food by thinking how, just as it is nourishment for the body, in the same way positive, elevated thoughts about the self, nourish the soul; and/ or c) exploring which are the thoughts which best feed the mind and give energy to the spirit.

If you have too many distractions, maybe you need to find a more interesting topic, or consider your topic more deeply. If something comes to mind that's important and needs attention, gently tell the mind to put it aside for now—you'll give it full attention after meditation. [It's OK to suggest that they keep a notepad with them to jot down things that they suddenly remember and fear they may forget if they put it aside.]

Once you have set aside distractions and are really deeply contemplating your theme, you have naturally entered the next stage, of **concentration**. Concentration means no distractions! You are beginning to experience yourself as a peaceful, pure, loving powerful soul. Acknowledge that this is what it feels like to be you. Allow yourself to be at peace with yourself, with the world, at peace with God.

Lesson 2: Process of Meditation – 3rd Stage

> Stage of Concentration

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Consider that before anything ever happened, you were at peace— quiet, peaceful, silent, serene, no upheavals, no strong emotions, just quietly being yourself. Can you remember this peace? Peace is a state of very deep serenity, harmony, balance, patience. Evoke that feeling. It will come quite easily when you just think about/ remember it. Then savor the feeling in your mind. Automatically you have slowed your thoughts. Your elevated thoughts are producing elevated vibrations and you are experiencing them.


In the same way, consider your original, natural state of purity— no flaws, no guilt feelings; pure means completely natural. Purity means cleanliness, being clean—not externally—but in the sense of being true. Pure means to be like a perfect diamond, completely transparent and light. Evoke the memory of the feeling of complete purity. You'll feel as if you have an inner glow; you'll feel very good about yourself. That is natural and correct. This is the real you.

Continue your exploration of the original qualities of the soul by thinking of yourself as loving. You are a child of God, the Ocean of Love. You are full of love. Spiritual love includes tolerance, respect, mercy, acceptance. All other beings are your brothers and you feel natural love and respect for all. Regardless of what anyone does, their being is also essentially pure, peaceful and loving, so on that level you can feel love for everyone.

This shift from thinking to feeling is the stage of concentration. Once you begin to feel and to remember and experience, distractions no longer occur and your thoughts flow naturally and effortlessly in one direction. The longer you stay in a certain consciousness, the deeper the experience of those thoughts will be. Focusing on a certain theme is done by the intellect and when the mind and intellect are stable in one consciousness, this is called concentration. Check the clock, and you will see that 10 to 15 minutes have flown by. This is easy meditation: you knew what to think, you savored and considered each idea, you created the thoughts in a logical sequence, step-by-step, you evoked/ began to recall or call forth from within you the experience. This is how meditation works.

[NOTE: Emphasize that these steps are not a formula to be followed, but rather a description of the natural flow of consciousness when you are using your mind and intellect in the right way.]

Realization is the fourth stage, when you arrive at your destination; when you become the experience you are seeking; where you are totally still and radiating the pure bliss of your experience in a serene silent state. It's not so much the "AHa!" state, as it is the "Aaaa" state. Let yourself be content if you find yourself experiencing only the first three stages for many meditations.



Lesson 2: Process of Meditation – 4th Stage

➤ Stage of Realization

Realization can be both sudden and cumulative, but generally the stage of realization comes over you imperceptibly in its own time. When you have thought so deeply, with such concentration that you reach completion, you attain a state of stillness, in which there is total comprehension of your theme. You know it on the deepest level. There is no longer the need to create thoughts about it. That realization sinks into your soul indelibly. As you progress, realizations continue and your soul undergoes real and permanent change. It is a very subtle and special process, which continues through your life.

As you begin to understand this process, you'll also begin to understand that:

- Change implies responsibility for the state of your mind and your actions. Becoming master of your thoughts, feelings, reactions and responses means you 'cut' puppet consciousness—being pulled here and there by everything and everyone, getting into cycles of bad feelings, blaming, complaining, accusing.
- You have within you both the sources of any suffering as well as the solution to it.
- The intellect has a crucial role in guiding and transforming the self.
- The positive qualities, which are in you as *sanskaras* can only be brought to the surface of the conscious mind through intervention of the intellect.

Summarize: Raja Yoga meditation requires making a conscious choice for a connection with your original self, and recreating your self image based on your original intrinsic divine qualities. What kind of self image do you have? What thoughts come to mind when you think about yourself? If they are thoughts about your gender, role, personality, etc. remember that these are concepts that you have acquired over time. They are not your original 'you', your spiritual identity.

To create your spiritual self-image, ask yourself these 3 questions: Who am I? What is my form? What are my original qualities? Try to answer with understanding and to really experience your answers. Visualize, experiment and experience. Resist going to the next question until you've gotten something out of the preceding one.

The success of your meditation will depend on how long you are able to think about these questions without being distracted by things around you or by other thoughts coming up. If you don't have an experience right away, just keep practicing. Consider it gymnastics for the soul.



Lesson 2: The Importance of Silence

- Inner power
- Inner sanctuary

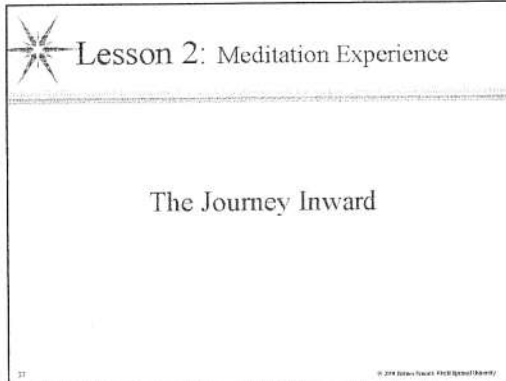
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For this connection with your own self, silence is very important. Silence is a quiet place behind all thoughts, feelings and emotions. From this place of quiet you can, like an observer, look at the world from a distance.

Silence enables us to disconnect from everything around us and even from the 'noise' inside the mind. Silence is an enormous **inner power**. In silence we are able to know ourselves and the secrets of life. In silence we are able to connect with the essence of our being, with that original point of peace, of harmony, of wholeness.

Silence is something you can store inside yourself; you can create a space for silence. In this space you can build up a stock, a reservoir of silence which you can tap at a time of need. It's an **inner sanctuary**, a meditation room in your mind, a place of silence you can always go to.

Silence comes automatically when you learn to focus your mind on one idea, and Raja Yoga is the art of stabilizing the mind in one consciousness, like peace for instance. It is not about making the mind empty of thoughts. When you think deeply about peace, you'll find your mind gradually becoming more and more quiet, until only a few essential thoughts remain. Learn to give your thoughts the right direction so that they take you into silence.



[Play a commentary: Recommended commentaries:

Knowing Myself CD:

#4 "Discovering the Inner Being" &

#5 "Using Soul Consciousness-a talk" (10 min.)

OR *Link of Life* CD:

#1 "Uplifting Thoughts" (18 minutes),

OR *Traveling Beyond* audiocassette:

#1 "Soul Consciousness" (12 minutes).]

[Give a Commentary: If you feel comfortable to do so.]

Example: *I now withdraw my attention from my physical organs...my eyes are open...my body is at rest. Recognizing my identity as a form of powerful energy, I can begin to understand the human spirit, or soul, as a point of light. In fact, all living beings share this same fundamental form—that of a soul. I focus my thought energy on myself...on the inner self...as the pull of thoughts of the world diminishes...I begin to feel light. I am thinking, remembering and observing my original self...I am a point of light...a point of life energy...the life energy that powers the body. I am non-material light...an eternal soul...thinking, deciding, acting, observing, remembering...I perform actions through this body...I observe the results of my actions...I am the actor, my body is the costume. I am the rider. My body is the chariot. I concentrate on this one thought...that I am a point of life energy...radiating light...as my thoughts focus I am filled with power...I become light...floating...and I experience deep, powerful peace...I am in total peace.*

[Group Commentary: Or, instead of using a CD/ tape or giving a commentary yourself, you could ask students to relate something that they found meaningful from the lesson. This becomes a group commentary. Ask them to speak slowly, softly and sweetly, giving space between each person's contribution]



Lesson 2: Tips for Success

- Regular practice
- Attention
- Experimentation

Emphasize regular practice as you did in the first lesson: Meditation is something we ought to do daily. Regularity is important. Through consistent practice you will experience yourself to be improving and progressing. Changes will start to happen in your life. Meditation is not just sitting down to experience a bit of peace. It becomes a part of your life, a way of living.

So it's better to practice a little every day than only once a week for a couple of hours. Regular and consistent meditation makes you alert. You will find that you won't have to work so hard to get rid of all the 'cobwebs' in your mind, that is, the wasteful impressions you have to clear away before the actual meditation can begin. Regular moments of introspection like traffic control [explain this if you haven't already done so] can sustain the experience you had during your morning meditation. **Attention is needed** to keep regular pauses in your daily activities to re-affirm who you are; otherwise you lose yourself in activities.

Remember that you're creating sanskaras around meditating! So if you only do it when you feel like it or when you're under stress, then that's the sanskara that will develop. If you do it regularly, it will become a natural part of your life like bathing or eating. It is said that it takes 40 days of regular practice to establish a habit and 90 more days to confirm it. After 120 days the effects will be unmistakably visible in your life.

Encourage Experimentation: To experiment with everything you learn is very important. In this way the theory becomes practical and life becomes a joy, well worth living. See your mind as a laboratory in which you can experiment with new thoughts, feelings and ideas. Experimenting is an individual and incognito process. Allow yourself the time to understand and practice the ideas you have learned.



Lesson 2: Common Q & A

- Common questions that may arise:
- Do plants, animals and insects have souls?
 - Do we take birth in other species?
 - What if I don't believe in reincarnation?
 - How do you know this stuff?
 - Why can't I concentrate?
 - What if someone has brain damage from an accident or a stroke?
 - What is the difference between sanskaras and the subconscious mind?
 - What is the difference between the unconscious and the subconscious?


Field any remaining questions:

Common ones are:

- **Do plants, insects and animals have souls?** Plants do not; insects and animals do because they have awareness, memory and the capacity to learn. (Fleas, for example, really can be trained; see http://www.learnenglish.org.uk/magazine/magazine_home_fleacircus.html.) However the souls of insects and animals do not have other attributes of human consciousness.
- **Do we take birth in other species? (transmigration):** Apple seeds always produce apples. Monkeys give birth to monkeys. In the same way, human beings always produce human beings.
- **Reincarnation** – Simply try to keep an open mind. Reincarnation explains many things, for example: why, even when heredity and environment are the same there are very different personalities among children of one family; this is especially apparent in the case of twins who have very different personalities. Another thing reincarnation makes sense of is the phenomenon of child prodigies. Dr. Ian Stevenson, former head of the Department of Psychiatry at the University of Virginia, and current Director of the Division of Personality Studies at the University of Virginia, has collected over 3000 cases of children who (without hypnosis) recalled their past life; he has meticulously corroborated what they say with the details of the deceased whom the children claim to have been. [You may want to read a real life recent example of one such child from the handout "Four Year Old Recalls Previous Life" included in this lesson.]
- **How do you know this stuff?** Where do you get this knowledge from? We will explain that in due course. For now, have the willingness to be open, to learn, to experiment. You're not required to accept everything right away, but simply keep the intellect open and see.
- **Why can't I concentrate?** The reason why we find it difficult at times to concentrate is because the intellect has become weak. There are many things that influence our intellect in a negative way. Obvious things are liquor, drugs and cigarettes, watching TV for long periods of time. Also overwhelming emotions such as anger, fear, worries, sorrow or desires can cloud the intellect. If you are not attentive during the day and do not filter the impressions that come to your intellect, it becomes polluted. Then when you want to meditate at the end of the day, you will struggle for a while to get rid of all the unwanted impressions. You are influenced by whatever you connect with, so whenever you feel a certain emotion coming up, ask yourself, "Hey what's happening? What did I connect my thoughts to which makes me feel the way I feel?" As a Raja Yogi, practice consciously choosing with whom or with what you are connecting your mind.
- **What if someone has brain damage from an accident or a stroke?** The soul cannot experience or express itself as well if its organs are defective.
- **What is the difference between sanskaras and the subconscious mind?** Semantics. Understanding *sanskaras* is a useful way of accessing and working with what is normally sub-conscious.
- **What is the difference between the unconscious and the subconscious?** This question is generally beyond the scope of this lesson and it's fine to say this to the students, or simply to say that many of our sanskaras have been developed over previous lifetimes; also that some of our sanskaras are collective and cultural in nature. We are normally completely unconscious of such sanskaras until situations or circumstances bring them to our awareness.

Distribute Handouts (collect \$):

- o Who Am I?
- o Who on Earth Are You?/ Dynamics of Consciousness
- o Soul & Matter
- o Reincarnation & the Faculties of the Soul
- o Four Year Old Recalls Previous Life!/ Why Silence?



Lesson 2: Wrap Up

- Distribute handouts
- Suggest homework
 - Set a place and set aside time to meditate
 - Continue practicing soul conscious vision
 - Practice speaking more softly, sweetly, less often
 - Take silence breaks
 - Start each day new


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Suggest homework:

- o **Create a place and time:** Meditate AM & PM; Get up 10 minutes early & wash your brain! Spend 3-10 minutes.
- o **Observe thoughts,** sanskaras frequently - If your thinking becomes negative, S.O.S! Stop, observe and direct your thoughts elsewhere. Past is past. Live in the present. Identify habits of thought.
- o **Practice soul conscious vision:** in the mall, at the bus stop. See people as points of light coming towards you and walking away. Make program for intellect for the day, use associations to remember.
- o **Work on changing speaking sanskaras.** Take silence breaks/ traffic control.
- o **Check in with yourself before bed.** Learn from mistakes, resolve to not repeat and then let go. Do not allow feelings of guilt or remorse or fear of repeating mistake. Send good wishes to any soul you may have hurt. Start each day fresh and live in the present.

Suggest Resources:

- BOOKS: Discover Inner Peace; Dreams & Reality
- CDs: Understanding Myself; Peace of Mind; Relaxing the Mind
- TAPES: Being Light; The Jewel; The Healing Mind



Lesson 3: The Journey Upward

Objectives—At the end of the session students would have:

- Understood the 3 Dimensions of Consciousness
- Learned the identity & nature of the Supreme Soul
- Understood similarities & differences between the soul & God

➤ Meditation Experience: the Journey Upward

LESSON MATERIALS to prepare beforehand

Poster(s): The Ultimate Union
The 3 worlds (possibly more than one version)
The Universal Light

Handout(s): (some or all of the following)
What is Raja Yoga? (Correspondence Course Intro)
The Three Worlds and The Supreme Soul (Retreat #4)
Similarities & Differences Between Soul and God (Table) Copied together
The Three Worlds/ Who is God? (Correspondence Course Back Covers)
Opening the Heart to God (Sr. Jayanti, Heart & Soul #18)

CDs/ tapes: Practical Guidelines CD (Sr. Jayanti)
Knowing Myself CD (Sr. Jayanti)
Knowing God CD (Sr. Jayanti)
Link of Life CD (Br. Anthony) [optional]
Traveling Beyond audiocassette (Sr. Denise) [optional]

[PLEASE REVIEW THE OBJECTIVES of this lesson before you begin, so that you are mindful of what you want to cover. Be sure to SIT WITH BABA before the student(s) arrive.]

[Begin with ½ hour of meditation. Recommended commentaries for this half hour:

Practical Guidelines CD:

- #1 "Explanation of the Soul" (meditative talk) &
 - #2 "Meditation Commentary on Soul"
- (total time = 28 minutes)

OR

Knowing Myself CD:

- #s 6-9 (side 2) "Introduction", "Discovering Peace",
"Pure Love", "Awakening Joy"
- (total time = 29 minutes)]



Lesson 3: Transition from Lesson 2

Transition into Lesson 3

> Brief review of last lesson

Who practiced soul conscious vision? Did you continue to observe your thoughts? Did you notice some sanskaras? What positive sanskaras did you notice? Who meditated every day?

> Link last lesson to this lesson & briefly overview today's lesson

In the last lesson we covered three important aspects of consciousness and the 4-step process of meditation. Today we will explore three levels of consciousness, the experience of which is like being in three different worlds. We will also begin to consider the identity and nature of the Supreme Soul, or God.

42

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Welcome students back and check:

- Who practiced soul conscious vision? What was the result? Did you think about and begin to notice your sanskaras? Did you identify any positive ones? [Note: often souls will focus on their reactive-ness and negative sanskaras. Try to help them see a positive sanskara in themselves.]
- Who meditated every day? What's been your experience?

Review: What do you remember from Lesson 2? We covered three important aspects of consciousness and the 4-step process of meditation.

Overview: In today's lesson we will explore three levels of consciousness, the experience of which is like being in three different worlds. We will also begin to consider the identity and nature of the Supreme Soul, or God.

In this and succeeding lessons we will present some concepts that may sound new and unfamiliar to you. We do not expect that you will accept them or agree with them, but we hope that you will keep an open mind, consider them deeply and try to work with them in meditation. With sincere efforts, allow your own experience to confirm the validity of these concepts.

[SOMETHING TO BE AWARE OF: Many people don't like the idea of God because all kinds of bad things have been done in the name of God. God hasn't done them or allowed them, but people have used His name for personal motives, the results have been disastrous and God's name has been defamed. Also many have been taught to believe in a punitive God. Or they have had bad experiences with father figures. Many people have fear, guilt, shame and unworthiness sanskaras because parents or other authority figures have 'put the fear of God' into them, or because of the belief that humans are fallen and sinful due to 'original' sin. Such souls will find it hard to really accept/ believe in God's unconditional love.]



Lesson 3: 3 Worlds: Physical dimension

➤ Characteristics of the Physical Dimension

- Light, sound, color, motion
- Change, time, limitation
- Governed by physical and moral laws
- Where we, as embodied souls, play our parts (like Shakespeare said)
- 5 elements, sun, moon, stars, planets, etc.
- World of expression and experience
- Sometimes we call it the movie/ talkie world

Sometimes when we think about the soul, questions arise such as, "Where do souls come from?" or "Was there ever a time when I was not taking rebirth, when I existed just purely as a soul?"

Our understanding is that yes, there is such a time and at that time we were in a different 'dimension' or world, and that it is beneficial to know about it and experience it in meditation. In fact there are two other 'worlds' or dimensions of experience beyond the physical that are available to us.

But let us look first at the world with which we are most familiar, the **physical or corporeal world**. The characteristics of the physical dimension are:


- Light, sound, color, motion
- Change, time, limitation
- 5 elements, sun, moon, stars, planets, etc.
- It is a world of expression and experience
- It is governed by physical and moral laws
- It is where we, as embodied souls, play our parts
- Sometimes we call it the movie/ talkie world

*All the world's a stage,
And all the men and women merely players:
They have their exits and their entrances;
And one man in his time plays many parts...
From Shakespeare's "As You Like It"*

This is the manifest world. It is the world around us. It is a world we experience through our physical senses. It is a world in which we directly relate to and interact with other human beings (or embodied souls or souls in bodies). In our relationships, we express what is inside our consciousness through our words and actions. **This is the purpose of "life", our reason for living: to express, to experience, to enjoy.**

Since the soul is metaphysical, and there is nothing physical about it, its home must be beyond the boundaries of the physical earth, in other words beyond the bounds of time, gravity, etc.

If we could go beyond this physical, or corporeal, world (which we can't with anything physical like a rocket or our body) we would discover that the physical world is enclosed by another, **subtle world**, a dimension of the metaphysical. In the simplest terms, the subtle world can be considered as a world, a dimension of consciousness, where there is total purity of thought.



Lesson 3: 3 Worlds: Subtle dimension

➤ Characteristics of the Subtle Dimension

- Light, color, motion but no sound
- No time, no qualitative change
- Absolutely pure realm (not the astral)
- Subtle bodies of pure souls
- Dimension of consciousness where visions of heaven, angels, etc. are seen
- Sometimes we call it the silent movie world

44
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Scientists, believing that matter is primary and that consciousness is an epiphenomenon of it, cannot conceive of this world. They have, incidentally discovered that space (or, more accurately, space-time) is curved, which means that it therefore must be contained by something!

What are the characteristics of the Subtle Dimension? From our understanding, they are:

- Light, color, and motion—but no sound
- No time (timeless), i.e., a place where no qualitative change occurs
- It is an absolutely pure realm (not the astral*)
- It is where subtle bodies of pure souls (angels) reside
- It is the dimension of consciousness where visions of heaven, angels, etc. are seen
- Sometimes we call it the silent movie world

How can we experience this world? We can travel there as a soul because the soul is not physical, and we can travel beyond this physical world by directing our consciousness beyond it, in other words, by using thought. We actually travel all the time in our thoughts—whenever we reminisce about somewhere we've been; whenever we re-live an experience; whenever we feel close to someone who is far away—our body may be here, but we have traveled 'there' with our consciousness. Since we are beings of consciousness, for all practical purposes we have gone there.

The light of the subtle world is not visible to the physical eyes. This is the dimension of consciousness that souls are in who see visions of angels or deities, so it's also sometimes called the angelic realm.

In meditation, we can rediscover and experience this subtle world of pure thoughts. However, this is a subject for advanced study, and so we will not go into it further during this level of the course.

[*Some people ask if this is the same as the astral plane. Because it is not a region of purest thought, the astral plane is still part of the physical world and is the dimension in which souls have out of the body or near death experiences. In a Near Death Experience (NDE) the soul, when it comes to the end of the tunnel and experiences light, perhaps touches the subtle world. However because it's relationships and connections are still with the physical world, it is still in the astral plane.]



Lesson 3: 3 Worlds: Incorporeal dimension

➤ Characteristics of the Incorporeal Dimension

- Light, color, but neither sound or motion
- A world of total stillness, silence and light
- Absolutely pure realm
- Only souls reside there, like stars
- Original home of all souls
- Sometimes we call it the world of silence, or Nivandham, Paramdham, Brahmand

If we go even further, beyond the physical world of constant change, constant noise, constant movement and beyond the subtle world of pure thought, there is a dimension of complete silence and stillness, where nothing changes and time has no reference.

This is the soul world, or the home of all souls, from where each of us has come, and will eventually return. It is from here that you come to take on your bodily forms. What are its characteristics?

- Light and color, but neither sound or motion
- It is a world of total stillness, silence and light
- It is an absolutely pure realm
- Only souls reside there, like stars
- It is the original home of all souls
- Sometimes we call it the world of silence, or Nivandham, Paramdham, Brahmand

It is a dimension of subtle, self-luminous, soft golden-red light in which all souls are totally absorbed in their own being, dormant, but with a complete future plan of living expression inside. This home of all souls can be visualized during meditation.

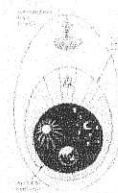
This is the unmanifest world. When we are in this world we are like seeds. Think of an apple seed. Within that seed is everything that will one day grow into an apple tree, produce hundreds of bushels of apples and many generations of other apple trees. Even if you kept that apple seed in a sealed container for centuries, still it would be in its very nature to one day be planted, grow into that tree and produce those apples and other trees. In the same way, in the soul world you are like a seed. You no longer have your senses. You cannot see, hear, touch, smell or taste. You cannot speak or communicate. You just are. You are not asleep or nonexistent, you are totally absorbed in your own being. There is nothing to think about there, so your mind is dormant, totally silent.

In meditation you can experience this 'seed state'. This is our most natural state of being, where we are concentrated in our original form as a point of spiritual light. We are totally blissful, enjoying complete rest and peace, unaware of the noise and action of the material world, or the subtle world of elevated thought.

No matter how long we stay in this timeless realm, at some point it is in our very nature to come into the physical dimension to express and experience all that is within the soul. Actors, after all must have come from somewhere—they do not live on the stage.

Lesson 3: Going Home


- Rest & Comfort
- Recharging
- Perspective
- God



Why do we need to know about this world? There are many benefits to traveling on the wings of thought to the Soul World in meditation.

- The experience of this world is like going Home, to an ultimate experience of **rest and comfort**, security, and peace.
- When we experience this world in meditation, the soul is **recharged**.
- Taking our consciousness so far away from our physical world of roles and relationships, actions and reactions, gives us **perspective**, changes our consciousness from a limited fixation on our this lifetime's circumstances to an expanded awareness of the whole.
- It is our original Home, and home indicates a spiritual family of all souls in which there is a spiritual parent: **God** or the highest among souls, the Supreme Soul. So going there in our minds takes us into a dimension of consciousness wherein we can begin to experience a connection with that Supreme Being of Consciousness.
- When people say, "Remember God", they sometimes point upward with their index finger, do they not? The steeples of temples and the minarets of mosques also direct the intellect and the eye upward.

All of us in one way or another are in search of God—perhaps without even knowing it. All of us seek a love that never leaves us or puts us down; truth that is unshakeable, unpolluted by falsehood; and beauty that is eternal, not artificial. Our search for these things is in essence a search for God, for these three aspects—love, truth and beauty—are God's primary qualities. Unfortunately just as the word GOD has been so much used and abused out of context, love, truth, and beauty have all but lost their deeper meanings.



Lesson 3: Our search for God

- Love, truth and beauty
- Faith
- Belief

The **love** we have between us or between two persons is often conditional, selfish and not lasting. What one feels is **true** today is discredited tomorrow. **Beauty** has come to be associated with the temporary, often bodily beauty, which is easily disfigured.

Faith

Spirituality by nature requires **faith**, because spirituality deals with META-physical matters which cannot be proven scientifically. They can, however, be verified by experiences in meditation.

There are two kinds of faith: blind faith and faith based on experience. We believe many things blindly, simply because they have been passed down to us through generations, rather than because we had a direct spiritual or mystical experience of their reality.

It's worth repeating that in this course we offer new interpretations of traditional ideas, and some thought provoking concepts which we hope you'll ponder deeply. We do not expect you to accept these concepts without question, but ask that you keep an open mind and experiment with them.

Belief


Beliefs are powerful thought forms, which are not without implications and consequences. Some people believe that beliefs create reality. However we all know that, at one point in our history, everyone believed that the sun revolved around the earth; yet that belief did not make it so. However, beliefs do create our *experience* of reality. For instance, if we believe that the universe is a friendly place, we'll notice the people who smile at us, we'll attract souls who are helpful and cooperative. If we believe that it's cold and heartless, cruel and meaningless—then we'll continually be on the lookout for the next thing that's going to go wrong, and sure enough, something we don't want will show up.

There's a story about a disciple instructed by his guru to sit in a hut and meditate on being a rhinoceros. After 3 months of this practice, he couldn't come out of the hut, saying he couldn't fit through the door. He was convinced he was a rhino, though he still looked, spoke and acted like a human being. This illustrates that beliefs have consequences in terms of our attitudes and actions, and it's important to examine our beliefs to be sure we are comfortable with their possible consequences.

Many beliefs held by human beings today have been handed down by other human beings and implanted in young minds in autocratic ways which discouraged thinking through the implications inherent and the contradictions often implied in those beliefs. Therefore faith in those beliefs is essentially blind faith, i.e. faith that is not based on reasoning or experience, but believed blindly as a result of conditioning, psychological pressure, etc.

Spirituality by its very nature of being metaphysical and un-provable through the 5 senses requires belief and therefore faith. Faith that is not blind, which welcomes questioning and which is based on reasoning and experience is the kind of faith that is needed in order to fully practice Raja Yoga.

Who is God? It's a big question, but just as the truth about "Who am I" is simple, similarly, the truth about "Who is God?" is simple, but equally profound and of great consequence. There are many different ideas about God. What is your concept of God? What does God look like? What do you think God's task or role is? [You can start the session by having students reflect on these questions. Solicit & write up their answers, grouping ideas according to the headings such as: Form of God/ Names for God/ Attributes of God / Tasks of God / Relationships With God, etc.]



Lesson 3: Contradictory beliefs about God

- God is Love? Or not?
- God is a Being?—or an omnipresent energy?
- Why God at all?
 - Understanding self alone isn't enough for transformation.
 - Need source of power, pure energy.
 - Need reference for discerning what's good and what isn't.
 - Need method of cleansing the inner self

Looking at the answers, we can say that God is considered as higher than any human soul; is powerful and almighty; is a Giver or Bestower (rather than a Taker or Receiver); source of everything good; etc.

[Note: some contradictory ideas may also have come up, such as:

- **Whether God is love or also wrathful and vengeful.** Point out the contradiction—God can't be both. You may want to explain that, just as we 'project' in our relationships with other human being, we have done the same to God, projecting upon that being our anger and spitefulness. However in our understanding and experience, God represents the highest of all positive qualities, a Being who gives only happiness and never sorrow, therefore a being who neither rewards or punishes.
- **Whether God is a bearded Authority Figure or an Omnipresent energy.** Again, point out the contradiction. You can explain that:
 - If God is Omnipresent God's qualities of truth and love would be everywhere present.
 - If God were omnipresent, we'd think of ourselves as a Fatherhood, not a brotherhood.
 - If God were omnipresent there would be no question of searching for God, praying to God or having yoga with God.
 - We see God, not as omnipresent, but someone who can still be all-knowing, like an observer at a party.
 - The concept of omnipresence leads to absurdity (God is in the knife, the victim, the criminal, the police, the jail bars); and can also lead to negative consequences (Serial killer Charles Manson believed that if God is all, everywhere, then what is bad?) It is a belief that renders the intellect incapable of discernment.
 - God is experienced as being omnipresent because God can be experienced anywhere (radio and incense stick analogies).
 - The meaning of Almighty Authority (God is an authority on the subject of reality)
 - God's beauty is reflected in nature but God's not IN nature. Neither does God doesn't interfere in nature (calamities are not acts of God). We'll explain more about this in the intermediate level.]


Why God? Isn't understanding the soul enough? Firstly, understanding the soul isn't enough because we lack power even when we 'know' what's right and wrong. For example, smoking—we know it's bad but don't have strength to stop. Knowledge about the soul only goes so far toward helping you change. [And of course God gives knowledge of the soul, but this can't be said at this point.]

Secondly, support. People and support groups are one way of getting support, but human beings have limited power and energy and they're not always available.

Thirdly, knowledge about God gives us a reference for right and wrong—wrong being that which causes sorrow and suffering. Even many things that give happiness initially cause sorrow later on.

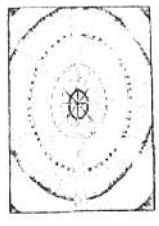
Fourthly, as we shall see, yoga with God can actually cleanse and free us from our burdens, our negativity, our shadow or dark side.

In spite of the many different opinions and controversies about God, it is not too difficult to understand that out of all the billions of souls, there is one soul who could be designated as the Supreme, because of His* perfect love, total truth and absolute beauty. Let's consider the nature and identity of that Being. The term "Supreme Soul" implies that there can be no other creator higher or superior to that one.



Lesson 3: God's Form

- Point of Light
- Difference between soul and Supreme Soul



49
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[If people have trouble with the concept of Supreme, explain that there can be a Supreme only if all souls are not equal, i.e., if there is a hierarchy of being. Using the example of the plant or animal kingdoms—dandelion/oak, ant and elephant—explain that although there is a hierarchy, especially in terms of the relative impact of individual plants or animals on their environment, every being in nature is essential. In the same way, every human being, though having differing capacities, is essential. Even in the world of machines, the loss of a single tiny screw can render useless a complex machine like a photocopier. God's superiority lies in the unlimited depth, sharpness and continuity of His attributes, as well as His impact on the world. While human souls fluctuate between qualities such as peace and peace-less-ness, love and conflict, knowledge and ignorance, God is ever constant. He remains beyond the fields of change and relativity.]

What does God look like? Any entity or thing that exists must have a form. God's qualities are formless but the Source of those qualities has a form. God is not only love but the Source of love; God is not only truth but the Source of truth, etc. As the soul is a point of light, of conscious energy, surrounded by an oval-shaped aura, the form of the Supreme Soul is also a **point of light**. We're made in God's image. Actually, only when you begin to understand yourself as a soul, an infinitesimal point of living, conscient energy, can you begin to understand God, the Supreme Soul. Both seeds & light have an oval form. **The difference between the soul and Supreme Soul** is in degree and intensity of qualities. God is understood as a separate and distinct Being, a radiant, invisible star of blissful light.

The near-death experience (NDE), in which the soul leaves the body temporarily—usually due to some traumatic happening—lends meaning to this point. Individuals who've experienced NDE relate how they pass through a long tunnel at the end of which they perceive a Light, which is self-luminous and conscient. The Light gives them a sense of relationship and warmth, of non-judgmental love and compassion. The interesting thing about these reports on NDEs is that, independent of their religious or even non-religious background, people's NDEs of this Being of light and love are identical. [You can show the poster 'Universal Light' which gives examples of remembrance of God as the form of light in different religions.]

So God is essentially incorporeal, like I, the soul, but **another difference is that this Supreme Soul never takes birth in a body**. Birth and death are means by which we forget who we are. The Supreme Soul is the one soul in the universe who always retrains the awareness of the self. In the handouts for this lesson are tables showing numerous similarities and differences between a soul and the Supreme Soul (also see next page). [You may want to write some of these up on a whiteboard or flip chart.] In fact there are so many differences between souls and the Supreme Soul that it is not logical to consider the self as being equal to God, either in terms of function or in terms of power.

*[This is a good time to **talk about God and soul being beyond gender**, having attributes of both genders.] Although we sometimes use the pronouns She and Her or His/ Her to refer to God, generally we rely on the conventional use of the male pronouns.


[Tables that are reproduced in the handout.]

Lesson 3: Similarities & Differences Between Soul & God	
SIMILARITIES	DIFFERENCES
Same form and size, Being of light, Mind, intellect, sanskaras.	Differs. God never comes into the cycle of birth and rebirth.
Same eternal metaphysical power.	We forget who we are and where we are from; God retains knowledge of the Himself; Human souls oscillate in terms of their nature while God remains eternally stable.
Same original state: pure, full of virtues and spiritual power.	Human souls lose their original attributes, owing to identification with the body.

COMPARISON BETWEEN SOUL AND SUPREME SOUL

GOD	SOUL	DIFFERENCE
<i>Being</i>	<i>Being</i>	
<i>Light</i>	<i>Light</i>	
<i>Immaterial</i>	<i>Immaterial</i>	
<i>Immortal</i>	<i>Immortal</i>	
<i>Constantly self aware</i>	<i>Sometimes self aware</i>	<i>u</i>
<i>Eternal</i>	<i>Eternal</i>	
<i>Father of souls</i>	<i>Child of God</i>	<i>u</i>
<i>Indestructible</i>	<i>Indestructible</i>	
<i>Invisible</i>	<i>Invisible</i>	
<i>Weightless</i>	<i>Weightless</i>	
<i>Immutable</i>	<i>Mutable</i>	<i>u</i>
<i>Influences souls and matter</i>	<i>Influences other souls and matter</i>	
<i>Infinitesimal</i>	<i>Infinitesimal</i>	
<i>Not limited by time or space</i>	<i>Gets limited by time and space</i>	<i>u</i>
<i>No beginning, no end</i>	<i>No beginning, no end</i>	
<i>Incorporeal</i>	<i>Incorporeal</i>	
<i>Beyond happiness and sorrow</i>	<i>Sensitive and affected</i>	<i>u</i>
<i>Supreme Judge</i>	<i>Accountable for own actions</i>	<i>u</i>
<i>Not limited by birth or death</i>	<i>Takes birth and leaves the body</i>	<i>u</i>
<i>Can use anyone as an instrument</i>	<i>Is bound to body until death</i>	<i>u</i>
<i>No human can ever become God</i>	<i>A soul is a human self</i>	<i>u</i>
<i>Ever pure</i>	<i>Sometimes pure</i>	<i>u</i>
<i>Oceanic, unlimited</i>	<i>Limited</i>	<i>u</i>
<i>Omniscient, knowledge-full</i>	<i>Forgetful</i>	<i>u</i>

Anything that has a form has a name, so too God has a name. There are as many names used for incorporeal God as there are languages* (Ishwar, Allah, Prabhu, Lord, Jehovah, Yahweh, Ahura Mazda, OM), and each name highlights one of God's specialties, but there is one name that perhaps describes God best. When the human soul takes a body, it is the body that bears the name and not the soul. God's name is eternal and is based on the Supreme Soul's attributes and functions.



Lesson 3: God's Name

- Shiva
 - Point
 - Seed
 - Benefactor

There is one particular name which is connected with God's attributes of benevolence and the role God plays of giving happiness and removing sorrow, and that name is Shiva. Shiva** has three meanings:

- **Point** (In India a decimal and period are called a Shiv.)
- **Seed** or Source of creation, of humanity—of all the positive attributes of consciousness
- **Benefactor**—a personality that only gives, never takes

The word **Shiva** is God's formal name, but affectionately we can call God "Shiv Baba" or simply, "Baba". The word **Baba** or **Father** (literally Father or Elder One), conveys the closeness and sweetness of the relationship one has with God. *** The word Baba includes both feminine and masculine. ('Ba' in many cultures also means mother, grandmother or aunt. The word 'Baba' itself means grandmother in Ukranian.)

Actually, what gender is a soul? (Most students will say it has none, or that it has both.) Actually, every soul has both masculine and feminine qualities (creative/ receptive, rational/ intuitive, etc.). It is the conditioning that begins at the moment of birth that favors the development of one set of qualities over the other. [There is no need to explain at this point that the soul is 'male', as this has more to do with it's right to inheritance as well as to the fact that it 'enters' or 'penetrates' matter, than to do with its inherent qualities.]


God is first of all Mother, giving birth to our awareness of Him as Father. 'Baba' is what a child says. It brings us close. So the name **Shiva Baba** conveys God's role and one's relationship with that One. In our relationship with God, being his children, we stand tall. A child doesn't bow at his father's feet. [Start using the term Baba regularly from now on, then they will also become comfortable with it.]

* The Koran says that there are 1001 names for God.

** When God was talking to Moses, He said, "*And I appeared unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, by the name of God Almighty, but by name, Jehovah, was I not known to them.*" The word **Jehovah** is probably related to the Sanskrit word **Shiva** which describes God quite accurately.


*** It's interesting to note that Jesus often referred to God as 'Aba'.

Where does God live?: When we turn our minds to God, wherever we may be and from whichever culture, the first thing we normally do is to close our eyes in order to go beyond the world of people and objects. It is normal for people the world over, to look upward and beyond when they direct their attention towards God. Intuitively we know that God exists beyond matter.



Lesson 3: God's Place of Residence

- Sweet, Silent Home of All Souls
- Paramdham
- Shantidham
- Muktidham
- Nirvana
- The 6th element, Brahm



20
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If we are souls and not bodies, our real and eternal existence is on another plane. It's in that same dimension, that **sweet home of all souls**, that God exists. This is why it's called the Supreme Region, or **Paramdham**. It's also sometimes referred to as **Shantidham**, the place of peace or **Muktidham**, the land of liberation. Because it's beyond sound, it is sometimes called **Nirvana**, which literally means, beyond sound. It's also known as the **6th element, or Brahm**.

Just as your real home is the soul world, it is also the home of the Supreme Being. It doesn't mean that Baba is millions of light years away from me. You can reach Baba in one thought, just as a dialed phone-call connects instantly. He/ She is only one thought distant from you.

In this region of absolute stillness, silence and purity, Baba remains above and beyond, eternally free from any bondage to the material world. He/ She is able to remain perfectly stable, constant and unchanging, while the rest of the universe and the souls go through constant change. That is to say, God remains ever pure, ever the ocean of love, peace, power, knowledge and bliss.


We can have strong experiences of the presence and qualities of God, without God actually having to be physically present in this world. From His highest dwelling place, whenever we are in prayer or meditation, Baba automatically feels the loving thoughts of any of His children here below and sends His love to them in response. When people naturally turn with great faith toward God for relief at times when they experience insurmountable pain, trouble and confusion, they do experience genuine relief and comfort.

God has often been described as the Ocean of all Qualities—limitless and constantly available—the Source, the **Ocean of Knowledge, Love and Peace**. It is said, “God is **Truth**.” And God is believed to be omnipotent. People seek God’s **mercy and forgiveness**. He/ She has also been described as the Intellect of the Wise, the Knower of all things, and also as Unchangeable, Omniscient, the Selfless, Altruistic One; Giver of virtues/ values to people of all religions and cultures.



Lesson 3: God's Attributes

- Ocean of Peace
- Ocean of Love
- Truth
- Almighty
- Ocean of Knowledge
- Merciful & Forgiving
- Intellect of the Wise



In Raja Yoga, you connect your thoughts with the personality of God. God is not a person, but God has personality. Anyone who has a physical or subtle body can't be called God because they have to go through the cycle of birth and death. As God doesn't go through this cycle, God's qualities always remain absolute.

So God's personality is **Peace**. This is why they say, “No God, no peace. Know God, Know peace.”

God is **Love**. Anything which is love will not give sorrow or perform any act of violence. Love accepts, understands, forgives. So God, as a personality of Love, accepts, understands, gives and forgives. This is why they say, “God gives and forgives. Man gets and forgets.”

God is **Truth**. This is given so much importance that people even say, “Truth is God.” But in fact, why Truth is God is because God is constant, ever-lasting, ever-existing. Truth can never die. There can be death to falsehood, but truth prevails.

Another term that is often used is **Almighty Authority**. This title is usually interpreted to mean that God is authoritarian and controlling; however another interpretation is possible: God is the ultimate authority on the subject of reality, The **Ocean of Knowledge**; and as knowledge is power, in that sense God is an Almighty Authority. Because of this, people believe God to be omniscient and omnipotent. Someone who is omnipotent can give the experience of His presence without being omnipresent. This powerful aspect of God's personality helps us recharge our personality.


God is **Merciful**. That is why today, no matter which religion one belongs to, one always asks God for Mercy.

God is **Forgiving**. No matter what we do, the door is always open in front of God, there's no need to fear.

In meditation, when you connect with God, you're connecting with the Intellect or the Wisdom of the Wisest of the Wise. So gradually what happens is that your conscience, which was sleeping, is awakened (which is one of the proofs of making connection with the living, Supreme Light).

[NOTE: Notice that no mention of **when** God comes has been made at this point, because souls have not been introduced to the cycle as yet. Of course you can mention that the best time to connect is early morning, explaining that, as most people are asleep in their respective time zone at that time there is much less influence of human thought (mental static) in the realm of consciousness. Probably best not to mention 4 a.m. at this point, but you can suggest that they get up a few minutes earlier than normal and try to meditate for a few moments before starting their day.]

God must have done something that made an impression such that all souls remember that One. It must have been something positive, as people call Him the Remover of Sorrow and we mostly remember Him when we're in sorrow. He must have freed souls from something, because He's known as the Liberator. Certainly He's often referred to as the Creator.



Lesson 3: God's Role

- Remover of Sorrow/ Bestower of Happiness
- Liberator
- Creator
- Giver of Knowledge/ Truth/ Bringer of Enlightenment
- Purifier
- Giver of Inheritance of peace, love, happiness
- Supreme Guide to take us Home
- Sustainer
- The One who changes human beings into divine beings or deities.

Some other ways in which God's role has been remembered are:

- Giver of Knowledge/ Truth/ Bringer of Enlightenment
- Purifier
- Giver of Inheritance of peace, love, happiness
- Supreme Guide to take us Home
- Sustainer
- The One who changes human beings into divine beings or deities.

God exists to give us peace, love, power, happiness and bliss. In the next lesson and especially in the intermediate level classes, we will look more closely at God's role.

How do you use all this knowledge about God in meditation? Knowing where God is, you take your consciousness beyond the things of this world. Knowing God's form, you can bring that image onto the screen of your mind and knowing God's name you begin to feel a relationship with that Supreme Soul, immediately experiencing God's powers and qualities by associating them with that beautiful form. There is so much value in meditating on God's form and attributes.

Usually we have yoga with everyone and everything outside of ourselves—trying to satisfy an inner emptiness. However it is never satisfied until one learns how to give loving attention to oneself and accept God's love within. Mastery accompanies inner self-understanding; loneliness disappears and we experience a state of inner contentment and fulfillment. On the basis of our similarities of form and abode, one learns from God of one's own original attributes of peace, purity, love, truth, power, happiness and balance. By tuning one's thoughts to Baba, the influence begins to activate these qualities.

It is important not to think of this Being of light abstractly, as an abstract Source of all positive attributes; it is also essential to experience God with one's heart in a variety of ways. We will explore our relationship with Baba in the next lesson.

In lessons 1 and 2 we took the first step of Raja Yoga meditation, the journey inward to connect with our true spiritual self. The second step in Raja Yoga is the journey upward to the spiritual dimension, the soul world, the non-physical world. In this original home of all souls, in which time, sound and movement do not exist, we experience ourselves as we truly are in all eternity. Here we are separate from limitations such as form, role, age, race, religion, expectations, time and space.



Lesson 3: The Journey Upward

- The power of silence
- The experience of your essence
- Fuel for the journey
- Churning
- Visualization

Here, in this world of silence, we can heal, we can experience ourselves as we truly are without any disturbance. Here we can experience being in God's presence. This journey requires five elements:

The power of silence: Just as silence is important for connection with your own self it is essential for connection with God. In silence we can journey to the silent home. When our mind is silent, we can receive Baba's vibrations and 'touchings' or silent thoughts.

Experience of our essence: Going back to the essence gives power. Think about the essential oils of a flower, how concentrated and potent they are. Just a drop spreads so much fragrance. In the same way, our concentrated elevated, accurate thoughts about the self are also a very powerful booster for the journey.

Fuel: For the journey upward we need fuel, first of all to get off the ground and secondly to be able to stay at our destination, at least for a while. Powerful, positive thoughts are our 'fuel'. Positive thoughts 'lift us up' while negative thoughts make us heavy and bring us down. As long as you have uplifting, powerful thoughts, you will be able to stay in spiritual consciousness. When your 'fuel' or stock of positive thoughts runs out, you fall back into ordinary thinking, ordinary consciousness. The art of the spiritual upward journey is to have a large fuel reservoir of powerful, positive thoughts and keep increasing this reservoir.

Churning: To keep increasing the reservoir you need to supply it with spiritual knowledge. Spiritual knowledge is the basic material that the intellect works on to produce pure, refined thoughts. These thoughts are the fuel for the upward journey. This is why Raja Yoga meditation is not about making the mind empty or blank, but rather it's about focusing the mind on a spiritual quality or concept, churning or ruminating about that quality or concept and refining it until you come to the essence. The power of the essence lifts you up.

Another way to think about this is this: In order to communicate with the Supreme Soul, whose consciousness is constantly at the highest level, you must learn to elevate your consciousness, for the Supreme is not going to bring His/Her consciousness down to your limited level of awareness to commiserate with or respond to you when you are fearful, depressed, angry or dissatisfied—because then God would be like any other human soul. Rather, if you want to be on that Soul's wavelength, if you want to experience a relationship (i.e., resonate) with God, you have to take your consciousness to God's level. Only then can a meeting of minds take place. This is why we have learned how to discern and direct our thoughts.

Visualization: Although the soul, Supreme soul and soul world exist and are real, they are invisible. Visualization helps make the invisible 'visible', thereby making it easier to understand and experience.

[Play a commentary: Recommended commentaries:

Knowing God CD:

1 "Intro to Part I"

#2 "A World of Light"

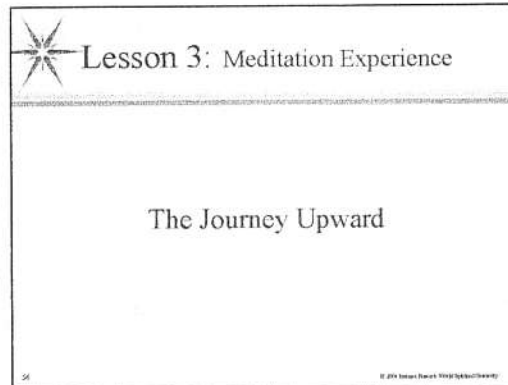
#3 "God the Being of Light" (total 20 minutes)

OR Link of Life CD:

#2 "The Journey Upwards" (14 minutes)

OR Traveling Beyond audiocassette:

#2 "Traveling Beyond" (11 minutes)]



[Give a Commentary: If you feel comfortable to do so.]

Example: *Om Shanti...I, the being of light, the tiny star...here in the center of my forehead...now prepare myself for a journey...a journey beyond time...a journey beyond space...I am peace...and I lift my peaceful consciousness as though I am floating upwards on a wave of peace...I am light...and I find everything around me becoming light...as though I am in a world of light...the physical world, the world of ordinary consciousness appears dense and dark below me...but I am free and floating in a world of light...here I feel the subtle vibrations of God's company...the sweetest, most accepting love...the clear light of truth... absolute peace in the arms of the Ocean of Peace...I have come home...and I remain here, in this peace and stillness...shining...silent...light...for a timeless moment. Then slowly, gently, my consciousness glides back into the awareness of the physical dimension and I re-enter the awareness of my body of matter. However I bring with me the awareness of God's company and His rays of peaceful, loving light still shining down on me from above. Om Shanti*

Lesson 3: Tips for Success		
➤ Self-Checking		
Time	Affirmation	% of Time
8-9am	I am the soul, not the body	
9-10am	My true nature is peace	
10-11am	I am light	
11-12noon	My home is the world of light	
1-2pm	I am an actor, playing a part	
2-3pm	My inner beauty includes _____	
3-4pm	Everyone around me is a soul	
➤ Increasing Meditation Time		

Explain and encourage self-checking:

In order to change your consciousness, you can keep a simple self-checking chart to monitor your thoughts.

Make a simple table [you can write one up on a flip chart or white board] and write 8 affirmations. If you write it on a small note card, you can keep it handy, perhaps in your pocket. At the end of each hour, stop to reflect on how much you were able to retain the affirmation in your awareness. Then take up the next affirmation for the next hour.

Suggest increasing meditation time:

If comfortable to you, try to extend the time you meditate a bit, perhaps to 15 or 20 minutes.



Lesson 3: Common Q & A

Common questions that may arise:

- Do I need to change my religion?
- Is this knowledge based on Hinduism?
- How did God get to be God?
- How do you know God doesn't give sorrow as well as happiness?
- Why isn't God omnipresent?
- Is there life on other planets?
- What about extraterrestrials and UFO's?
- If we have to go into silence, why do we listen to commentaries?


Field any remaining questions:

Common ones are:

- **Can I still follow my own religion?** This meditation could actually enhance it.
- **Is all this based on Hinduism?** It has originated from India, so there are some cultural similarities, but many of the philosophical concepts are at variance with Hinduism.
- **How did God get to be God?** Always been that way, meaning of eternity.
- **How do you know God doesn't give sorrow as well as happiness?** Please see explanation on page 48.
- **Why isn't God omnipresent?** Please see explanation on page 48.
- **Other worlds, UFO's, Life on Other Planets.** Quest for outer space reflects quest for inner space
- **If we have to go into silence, why do we listen to commentaries?** The commentaries are a temporary help as you are learning how to direct your thoughts in meditation; they are part of the learning process, just as multiplication tables are used initially when you are learning math. However as you learn to meditate, your own inner commentary or dialogue will be able to take you into silence.

Distribute Handouts (collect \$):

- o What is Raja Yoga?
- o The Three Worlds and The Supreme Soul
- o Similarities & Differences Between Soul and God
- o The Three Worlds/ Who is God?
- o Opening the Heart to God



Lesson 3: Wrap Up

- Distribute handouts
- Suggest homework
 - Continue Lesson 1 Homework
 - Examine your feelings about God
 - Examine belief sanskaras
 - Try to travel to the Soul World

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Suggest Homework:

- o **Continue** to monitor your thoughts, see yourself and others as souls and learn about your inner world.
- o A good way to stay focused in meditation is to **ask yourself questions**, so ask yourself the following questions in meditation to **examine your feelings and beliefs about God**:
 - How do I really feel about God?
 - How does God feel about me?
- o **Try to get in touch with sanskaras** that may have been impressions left in your soul through any religious upbringing or lack thereof. Particularly try to notice your positive sanskaras.
- o **Experiment! Especially with traveling to the Soul World.**

Suggest Resources:

- BOOKs: Discovering Spirituality; Pearls of Wisdom
- CDs: Knowing God; Time Out
- TAPES: Learn to Meditate

Lesson 4: Relationship with God

Objectives—At the end of the session students would have an understanding of:

- the benefits of connection with the Supreme
- deepening connection through exploration of God's qualities
- the nature of a living relationship with the Supreme
- cultivating a variety of relationships with God

➤ Meditation Experience: Link of Love

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LESSON MATERIALS to prepare beforehand

- Poster(s):** Shiv Baba Poster
The Universal Light (if not shown previously)
- Handout(s):** (some or all of the following)
 God the Supreme (Correspondence Course Lesson 2)
 God As Father & Mother (Br. Anthony Strano)
 Encounters with God (Br. Anthony Strano, Retreat #13)
 Points for Meditation on God (List)
 Union with God (from Adi Dev)
- Copied together
- CDs/ tapes:** Practical Guidelines (Sr. Jayanti)
 Knowing God CD (Sr. Jayanti)
 (or possibly Peace of Mind CD (Sr. Carmen),
 or Link of Life CD (Br. Anthony)
 and/ or Traveling Beyond audiocassette (Sr. Denise))

[PLEASE REVIEW THE OBJECTIVES of this lesson before you begin, so that you are mindful of what you want to cover. Be sure to SIT WITH BABA before the student(s) arrive.]

[Begin with ½ hour of meditation. Recommended commentaries for this half hour:

Practical Guidelines CD:

- #3 "Theme of God" (meditative talk)
 - #4 "Meditation Commentary on God"
- (total time = 28 minutes)

OR

Peace of Mind CD:

- #4 "Going Home" (15 minutes)


AND

Knowing God CD:

- #4 "God the Being of Truth" (9 minutes)

AND 3 minutes of silence in between and 3 minutes at the end.]

[Remember: This lesson is about giving the *experience* of God. If we have experienced Baba deeply, others will come close to Baba because they feel the reality of the experience of God. Make the relationship real for them.



Lesson 4: Transition from Lesson 3

Transition into Lesson 4

- **Brief review of last lesson**
 Who is still monitoring their thoughts? Did you examine your feelings and beliefs about God? Did you think about how God might feel about you? What was the result? Have you been meditating? Did you try to travel Home, to the world of light and silence? What's your experience?
- **Link: last lesson to this lesson & briefly overview today's lesson**
 Last time we covered 3 dimensions of consciousness, the form, name, residence and attributes of God, similarities and differences between the soul and God and looked at some of the benefits of a connection with God—strength, support, reference for right and wrong, cleansing, & freedom from bondage and negativity. This week we'll learn how to deepen that connection by understanding God's qualities and how to establish a variety of relationships with the Supreme.

Having said the above, it is recommended that you do not spend a lot of time and attention going into the analogies on pages 62-64 for, although they are intellectually satisfying, there is the danger that the student will stay at a level of conceptual understanding of the connection with Baba, rather than experiencing a real relationship, even though this is emphasized on page 67 & 70.]


Review the last lesson:

- Who did the homework, i.e., who is still monitoring their thoughts? Did you examine your feelings and beliefs about God? Did you think about how God might feel about you? What was the result? Have you been meditating? Did you try to travel Home, to the world of light and silence? What's been your experience?
- What do you remember from Lesson 3? We covered 3 dimensions of consciousness, the form, name, residence and attributes of God, the similarities and differences between the soul and God and we explored the Journey Upward.

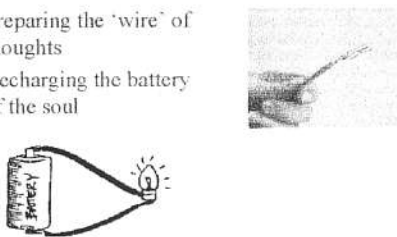
Link with last lesson and overview of today's lesson:

Last week we looked at a few of the benefits of a connection with God—strength, support, reference for right and wrong, cleansing, freedom from bondage and negativity (see p. 48). This week we will explore deepening that connection by understanding God's qualities and learn how to establish a variety of relationships with the Supreme.

In the first lesson, we said Yoga means connection. We've explored re-connecting our awareness with the true self and re-establishing that important relationship. In the same way, we'll begin to explore the connection between the soul and God, because it is a most beneficial connection to experience. It's a purely spiritual connection entirely based on the power of the mind. The more stable, concentrated and subtle the mind, the clearer the connection.

Lesson 4: Connection with the Supreme Soul:
Energy


- Preparing the 'wire' of thoughts
- Recharging the battery of the soul



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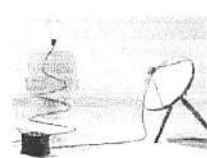
A good analogy is an electrical connection. Yoga with the Supreme is like being connected to that spiritual power source through the 'wire' of your thoughts which brings great positive energy to the soul and enables the light of awareness to remain powerfully lit. In order for this power to pass through to your soul, body consciousness, which is like an insulating sheath covering the wire of your intellect must be peeled away; otherwise there is no conductivity. So the first step of connecting with the Supreme is stepping into the consciousness of the soul. Then we can direct our consciousness towards the Highest energy of consciousness, the supreme power source, the Supreme Soul, using our elevated thought power.

Another important reason for connection with the Supreme is to **experience your own original nature of being eternal and imperishable**. Eternity is the feeling of being beyond the consciousness of time and matter, that is, being beyond limitations—especially the limited thought of having just one life, of being a mortal being. This thought is a source of great fear for many.



Lesson 4: Connection with the Supreme Soul: Eternity & Empowerment

- Experience of being eternal and imperishable
- Spiritual empowerment



63
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When you connect with Baba, you feel yourself to be above time and matter. Your eternal relationship with the Source of Life is once again being established. This experience gives peace and contentment to the soul. Your attitude towards life changes by experiencing yourself to be something more than just a name, a body, a role.

Another benefit of meditation is **spiritual empowerment**. The soul has become weak in terms of experiencing a significant loss of moral and ethical power. Therefore we need to take spiritual or moral power from Baba, who is Truth and the Ocean of purity, in order to make our good intentions real and enable them to take practical form.

The analogy here is generation of electricity by absorbing power from the sun and converting it into electrical power through photo-electric cells. When you absorb the spiritual power generated from the remembrance of God, you are empowered to do what is right and follow your conscience.


Imagine you are inwardly concentrated and like a solar dish, and that you are facing towards the bright light of God, focusing the rays of light and might on the single point of your soul, and you are intensively absorbing the power of truthfulness, integrity, love etc.

Practice this for some time and for a few days. Think deeply about the symbolism and how this concentration of your soul, in a state of soul consciousness, allows you to experience a direct and close connection with the Supreme.

When you feel close and connected to Baba, then any temptations, negative influences, wrong tracks, old bad habits etc. have much less power to delude you, or pull you into an activity you would later regret.


When you have power, your conscience works well. Your powers of discernment and good judgment are fully operational, and you automatically and naturally do the right thing.

Connection with the Supreme purifies the soul. After a deep meditation there is the experience of lightness, as if a heavy weight has fallen off your shoulders. Connecting with Baba cleanses the soul. Ingrained negative feelings and emotions gradually dissolve and the soul's original pure sanskaras emerge.



Lesson 4: Connection with the Supreme Soul: Purification

➤ The Fire of Yoga



64
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A deep period of meditation is sometimes called a 'bhatti', meaning 'furnace'. This refers to the fact that the impurities of the soul are being burnt away, dissolved. In this purification, misconceptions that consciously or subconsciously dominate the soul are also removed.

A symbol for purification is burning by fire. An analogy that shows the effect of concentration is when the sun's rays pass through a lens and paper is placed at the focal point. The concentrated heat and light of the sun will catch fire to the paper. In the same way when we focus our mind and intellect on the light of God, we catch the concentration of His qualities, His light and His might.

Your internal concentration upon your self in soul consciousness creates the effect of the lens, and when you turn your attention to the Supreme Being beyond, your experience of Baba's qualities. His light and His power is greatly intensified. In that silence and stillness of perfect concentration, the impurities are burned out of the soul. This is called the '**fire**' of yoga. After such a meditation, you feel fresh, clean, renewed and lighter.

We also experience the purifying effect of fire when gold containing alloy is placed in a crucible and put over a hot fire. It melts the gold and burns out the impurities, leaving only pure gold which is not destroyed by the fire. In the same way when we have intensive meditation, it burns out all the unwanted negativities and character defects, leaving only the pure, original, inherent qualities like love, peace and bliss.

We human souls are affected by all types of influences. Wherever our consciousness is directed, and whoever we spend time with, will influence us. This is why there is the saying, "**as is the company, so is the color.**" Meditation is one way to enjoy the company of God.

 **Lesson 4:** Connection with the Supreme Soul:
Absorption of Qualities

➤ Being colored by God's company

- Yoga = Connection
- Connection = Influence
- Influence = Experience

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When our **connection** with Baba is strong and frequent, we are benefited a lot, and we find visible change in our activities and behavior. When we turn our mind again and again towards Baba in meditation, we are **influenced** and affected by the qualities of God, and keep on being fed by the source of values, virtues and qualities.

The scientific analogy that applies here is "osmosis." Plant material is permeable, so water passes through. If you get an almond and put it in a glass of water overnight, by the next morning it has grown much bigger and the texture has changed. Water has passed through the cell walls and the almond has absorbed the water. It is a scientific fact that water always seeks its own level.

Osmosis happens when there is dryness on one side of the cell wall and wetness on the other side. In the same way when the soul feels depleted of power, love, peace and the other divine qualities, when it makes contact or sits peacefully in Baba's company, there is a natural transfer of power and qualities. The soul will absorb the qualities of God and **experience** its original natural qualities returning.

First we need to understand God as He truly is and then connect with Him. We know that God is a Point of Light; however we do not simply relate to God's form, but to the qualities within the form. To understand God as He truly is, is to understand His qualities and experience them. Baba gives His qualities to us generously, constantly, selflessly. By experiencing God's qualities of truth, love, peace and happiness, we once again discover our own source of truth, love, peace and happiness.



Lesson 4: Understanding God's Qualities

- Truth
- Love
- Peace

[NOTE: If there's not enough time to go into the depth of all these qualities, just pick one. The point is that students understand how this process of meditating deeply on a quality works.]

Truth

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

Love

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

Peace

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

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

Note: Material on this page and the next 3 pages was taken from a Madhuban class by Br. Anthony Strano.

Raja Yoga is actually the yoga of *relationship* with God. A relationship is more important than a connection, because it is characterized by shared feelings and experiences. A relationship means ongoing *communication*. The relationship between the human soul and the Supreme Soul is a purely subtle one; communication is experienced through thoughts and feelings.



Lesson 4: Relationship with God

- More than a connection; a communication
- Requires transcending old, limiting beliefs
- Enables me to become complete
- The only eternal relationship

To be able to relate to God, we need to know Him as He is. Without some depth of knowledge we cannot form a relationship. To know Him is to love Him. In order to experience this relationship, we need to understand the wrong beliefs we have held about this Being—otherwise it's just about impossible to start a relationship with Him, let alone experience it. ***If we carry beliefs about this Being that cause fear, guilt and regret, it will be impossible to experience God as the totally pure and loving Being that He/ She is.*** A true relationship with God can never be polluted by sorrow, exploitation or possessiveness.


God is a complete Being and a complete being would never need to take anything in order to be fulfilled. A complete being gives unconditionally, in such a way that the one receiving does not feel afraid or diminished.

In meditation there is the awareness that one is turning to the Source of Love who will never expect or demand anything in return. The experience of the true love that Baba gives is so pure, so real, that the soul wishes of its own choice to remain in this relationship.

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

This is the only relationship we can have that can transcend the span of a lifetime. Being beyond time and distance, it is the only relationship which is continual. Even if you forget or lose touch with God, Baba never forgets you.

Feelings and experiences we might have missed in relationships with human beings are now possible with God. Everything we have ever longed for in our relationships and didn't get, we can get now. In this way, our dependencies, projections and expectations are removed. This in itself, will automatically improve relationships with others. Instead of taking, we start giving. Instead of wanting, we start sharing. Instead of needing, we start loving.



Lesson 4: Relationship of Parent

God is the Supreme Parent of all souls

- Baba is my eternal Mother and Father
- Baba loves and accepts me unconditionally
- Baba sustains and protects me with love

In the perfect personality of the Supreme there is the feminine principle of loving, giving and accepting. This is perfectly balanced with the masculine principle of power, authority and strength.

God is the **eternal Parent of all souls**. When a soul has a genuine feeling of love, wherever the soul may be, the Parent responds. The Parent also supports and in one way or another fulfills the needs of the child. The constant love of the Supreme Parent, when it is felt by the child, strengthens the child, enabling him to experience a sense of self worth.

God is the **Supreme Mother** whose love is totally accommodating. No matter what has happened, no matter whether one has been good or bad, you can experience unconditional acceptance. It is a love that empowers and cleanses. God is also the **Supreme Father** who offers protection and provides the inheritance of divine qualities. It is a question of just being an innocent child and claiming that inheritance—letting go of the sorrow and pain which have been burdening the soul.

These are the first relationships that have to be experimented with: God as the gentle, understanding Father who, on the basis of love, creates one's life anew. God as the wise, accepting Mother who, with patience and care, sustains the growth of one's spirit. Baba is always there to assist and guide the soul towards the goal of happiness and wholeness.

These parental relationships with God as Mother and Father are the foundation of one's spiritual development. The concept of taking a new spiritual birth—of letting go of the past and developing a new consciousness—is a familiar one. It refers to becoming an innocent child again in the sense of purity, openness and wonderment.

The awareness of the self as a soul changes one's perspective enormously, but the consciousness of being a child of God and seeing others with that same vision, brings self-esteem, dignity, love and respect, which in turn spills out in one's connection with others.

God is One, but all relationships are possible with that One. As a human being, all these relationships are necessary to feel completely fulfilled in one's life.

Because God has the most perfect personality, He/ She can be all things to you, and in many different ways you can entertain yourself in this highest and purest of all relationships. Any relationship in which affection can exist is possible between the soul and the Supreme Soul.



Lesson 4: Other Relationships with God

Cultivate all your relationships with God

- Friend
- Teacher
- Satguru (Supreme Guide)
- Beloved
- Child
- Etc.

So Baba can be our true **Friend**. A real father and mother are friends to their children. They do not dominate or misuse their role, but whatever they have, they give for the child to mature into a complete individual. As your Eternal Friend and Companion, Baba is available to talk to and to support you at any moment.

God wants friends, not worshippers. Friends understand each other. Friendship means trust, because you know you'll not be judged, but accepted as you are. With trust, one can be open and not afraid of weaknesses being seen or known, because a true friend's vision sees that which is innately good and pure in spite of external appearances.

Baba can be your Supreme **Teacher**, helping you discover wisdom and truth.

As your Supreme Guide or **Guru**, Baba provides directions for each step on the spiritual path.

By making Baba your **Beloved**, you share intimacies and develop into a mature and equal partner.

If you think of Baba as your **Child**, you feel that you want to do everything possible for such a Child.

Of course every relationship requires that the individuals in that relationship fulfill the responsibility of the relationship. For example, in the relationship with God as your Supreme Teacher, in order to have a good quality relationship, you must be a good student. In your relationship to Baba as your Supreme Parent, you must be a good child.

One's human relationships are not often ideal; in fact they often leave us very unfulfilled. When we are fulfilled through experiencing all relationships with Baba, then we are freed from the expectations, disappointments, need to take, dependency, etc. which characterize human relationships. One becomes a source of love and benefit in the lives of others—without any co-dependent strings attached!

By now it should be clear that, in Raja Yoga meditation, one meditates both on oneself and also on the nature and qualities of the Supreme.

Through knowledge one creates a link with Baba, but, if it's only an intellectual connection, it will not remain stable. Through the understanding of the method of Raja Yoga, one can build a bridge between oneself and the Supreme Being, but it's only with love that one can cross it.



Lesson 4: Nature of Relationship

- A Link of Love
 - more than an intellectual connection
 - love can be immediate or develop gradually
 - love leads to transformation
- A Transformative Experience

Because of the subtle nature of meditation practice, ***an intellectual approach is inadequate***. Both the soul and Baba are incorporeal. It is only love that can propel you towards God and keep you connected in a concentrated way.

Perhaps you have already had an experience of deep love for God without any conscious information. In that case, meditating on or remembering Baba with love probably comes easily for you. For others, love grows on the basis of deepening experiences.

Whether your relationship with Baba begins out of pure love or the love gradually develops, the most powerful discovery is that it's on the basis of this relationship that you can actually start changing yourself.

Knowing oneself is one thing; recognizing one's own weaknesses and strengths is another. The negativity in the world outside stimulates our defects even though we know that somewhere inside are precious positive qualities. *Learning to access the beauty of the self and one's original qualities is definitely the first step.*

Still, one needs power to be able to break free from the difficult traps that we have gotten ourselves into. On your own you are not able to generate that power. If you turn to another human being, it becomes another trap in itself—one addict trying to support another is not the most effective way to generate the power to transform.

The alternative is to turn to the Source of spiritual power, to God. *Coming to the realization that you need help from the Supreme isn't a sign of weakness, but of wisdom.*

Soul consciousness is the foundation for you to realize that you need to take strength from Baba and gives you the understanding to take it. Besides being the Source of truth, love and peace, Baba is also the Source of power and light. Relationship with God takes on new meaning when you discover that Baba's power and light enable you to overcome your weaknesses and their consequences.

So what is meditation? In Lesson 2 we learned it was Inner Dialogue & Inner Healing. Now, understand that it's also developing a relationship with the Supreme Soul in order to recharge, purify and most of all, to enjoy Baba's company and be influenced by it in the best possible way.

[**Play a commentary:** Recommended commentaries:

Knowing God CD:

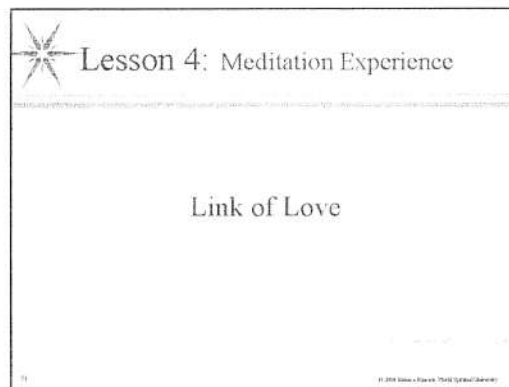
- #5 "Introduction to Part II";
- #6 "God as Mother
- #7 "God as Father" (16 min. total)

OR *Link of Life* CD:

- #4 "The Heart Link" (17 minutes)

OR *Traveling Beyond* audiocassette:

- #3 "Sweet Conversations w/ the Supreme" (8 minutes).]



[**Give a Commentary:** If you feel comfortable to do so.]

Example: *Om Shanti...I, the being of light...the living energy within the body...radiating...radiating thoughts...thoughts of peace...thoughts of lightness...of power...of mercy...pure thoughts of truth...I, the being of light...originally from the Home of Light...and as I remember my Home...I experience that Land of Light...I am a radiant star, in a sky of golden-red light...surrounded in the eternal...in the peace of the Home...the Land of Silence...my Home...just a star, radiating light...and there before me...coming closer...so beautiful...so attractive...such beautiful light...a tiny star yet the Ocean...waves of love flow between us...I the soul am being bathed in the love of the Ocean of Love, the Supreme Soul...my Mother...my Father...I the soul in this ever-flowing, Ocean of Light...of Love...of Might...This One is revealing Himself to me with all His Beauty within this divine encounter. I merge into that embrace of total love...that light...into total unison...with Baba, my beloved Father...and as I float down and take on my costume once more, that memory...that link...continues here...that relationship...I have realized what it means to be a child of God...Om Shanti*



Lesson 4: Tips for Success

- Talk to God first
- Experience God as the Spiritual Sun

Cultivate your relationships with Baba: For example: Before rushing to the phone to share good or bad news, before turning to a friend for understanding or comfort, try sharing it with Baba first!

Develop an *ongoing* relationship and connection: For example: While walking and moving around, try to experience Baba as the Spiritual Sun, so high above the world—feel His cool rays of peace, His warm rays of love, His sparkling rays of the light of Truth and Beauty, etc. falling on you as you, His beloved child, play your part on the earthly stage.

Common Questions and Answers

Most of these would be the same as those mentioned in Lesson 3, page 58, and usually they would have been answered by this time.

Field any remaining questions (See Lesson 3—most are generally covered in that lesson)

Distribute handouts (collect \$):

- o God the Supreme
- o God As Father & Mother
- o Encounters with God/ Points for Meditation on God
- o Union With God



Lesson 4: Wrap Up


- Field any remaining questions
- Distribute handouts
- Suggest homework
 - Continue revisiting previous homework efforts now and then
 - Experiment with the relationships
 - Write a letter to Baba
 - Draw a picture of your relationship with God

Suggest homework:

- o **Revisit previous homework from time to time:** Monitor your thoughts, observe your sanskaras, journey to the world of light, etc.
- o **Experiment with relationships:** Make a different relationship your meditation focus for a few days. As you sit in meditation, or even as you move, walk around and do things, keep this relationship with you and see what benefits it brings.
- o **Write a letter from Baba to you:** Set aside a half an hour and consciously experience how God loves you unconditionally and sees you as His/ Her beloved child. Then write a letter from Baba to you which appreciates your good qualities and encourages your growth.
- o **Draw a picture of your relationship with God.** It can be abstract, just colors, or anything you like. You don't have to be an artist!

Suggest Resources:

- BOOKS: The Alpha Point; Invocations (called *The Source* in Australia);
Companion of God
- CDs: Understanding God; Link of Life
- TAPES: Meditation for Extremely Busy People (set of 3)



Lesson 5: Eight Spiritual Powers

Objectives—At the end of the session students would have:


- understood the 8 powers
- recognized the benefits of applying the powers
- Meditation Experience: Spiritual Empowerment

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LESSON MATERIALS to prepare beforehand

Poster(s): 8 Powers (Indian and/ or Western)

Handout(s): (some or all of the following)
 The Master Powers (Retreat #9)
 The Eight Powers (compiled by Glenn Bailey)
 Acquiring Powers Through Raja Yoga (Calendar image)
 Powers Profile (graphic)
 But How Do You Meditate? (Sr. Jayanti, Retreat #4)
 Roads to Relaxation (Mike George, Retreat #12)

 Copied together

CDs/ tapes: Link of Life CD (Br. Anthony)
 Knowing God CD (Sr. Jayanti)
 Positive Thinking CD (Sr. Christine Bell)
 (Possibly 'Explorations of the Soul' audiocassette (Sr. Denise))

Other: Feedback sheet
 Grad gift (Possibly a *Small Image of Shiv Baba*) [see additional resources]
 Toli

[PLEASE REVIEW THE OBJECTIVES of this lesson before you begin, so that you are mindful of what you want to cover. Be sure to SIT WITH BABA before the student(s) arrive.]

[Begin with ½ hour of meditation. Recommended commentaries:

Link of Life CD:

#3 "The Supreme Link" (23 minutes)

AND

Knowing God CD:

#9 "God as Friend" (5 minutes)]



Lesson 5: Transition from Lesson 4

Transition into Lesson 5

Brief review of last lesson

Did you write a letter to Baba and one from Baba to you and/ or draw a picture of your relationship with God? Did you experiment with experiencing different relationships with Baba? What's been your experience?

Link last lesson to this lesson & briefly overview today's lesson

In the last lesson we looked at the benefits of connecting with the Supreme in terms of recharging the self, experiencing an eternal relationship that goes beyond this one life; about purification and absorption of Baba's qualities. We also explored the variety of relationships with God that can be experienced when there's a link of love. Today we'll look at some specific strengths that come to us through Raja Yoga, in particular the 8 main inner powers which enable us to master our senses, and use our mind, intellect and inner resources effectively and wisely.

15

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Review last lesson:

- Who remembers the homework? Did you write a letter to Baba and one from Baba to you and/ or draw a picture of your relationship with God? What was the experience of doing this?
- How about your meditation? Did you experiment with experiencing different relationships with Baba? What's been your experience?
- What do you remember from Lesson 4? We talked about the different benefits of connecting with the Supreme in terms of recharging the self, experiencing an eternal relationship that goes beyond this one life; about purification and absorption of Baba's qualities. We also explored the variety of relationships with God that can be experienced when there's a link of love

In today's lesson we'll look at some specific strengths that come to us through Raja Yoga. Having a relationship with God, the Source of spiritual power, brings into the soul many powers. The process of using the intellect to direct or focus the mind in meditation means an automatic strengthening of the soul and the acquisition of various powers which in turn enable us to live our lives more effectively, more peacefully and more productively.

Without tremendous power or strength gained from the continuous experience of peace and bliss, a soul is unable to remain above the influence of its own body conscious sanskaras, those of others, and the negative atmosphere of today's world.

These powers are not flashy and showy. Unlike occult powers such as aura or mind-reading, palmistry, feats of mind over matter, black magic and other impure powers which involve manipulation of matter or of others, these powers are not only of personal benefit but are necessary for building a good society.

Nor are these powers able to be used to control or dominate others, for they are inner powers and they enable us to master our senses, and use our mind, intellect and inner resources effectively and wisely.

We have been looking at the original qualities or **divine virtues** of the soul and also focusing on God's qualities. Qualities or attributes of moral excellence, of goodness, when expressed in action are often called virtues and there are many of them, permutations of the original ones. A **virtue** is something others can sometimes see in us; something which others appreciate but do not necessarily feel they can possess.

Lesson 5: Virtue & Power

- What's the difference?
- Divine Virtues
- The Master Powers

A spiritual **power**, on the other hand, cannot remain hidden. It is a constant source of inspiration to others, motivating them to change and become powerful.

Our level of spiritual energy is our capacity for experiencing the original qualities of the soul. Spiritual power is the extent to which we are able to put these qualities to work in our relationships. We bring about change through our power to remain in a state of truth, in the face of life's tests and challenges.

You are a soul, you are consciousness, you are light, you are spiritual energy, but are you in control of that energy? Are you in control of yourself? Are you self-empowered?

The energy of consciousness is your personal power. Are you the master of that power? When you are, you will use your power to shape your responses to people and the world around you. When you take responsibility for your ability to respond, you are able, at will, to use your power in many ways.

Spiritual powers are the secret tools for self-change. They are the fruits of meditation. Regular practice develops them naturally. These powers strengthen the mind and intellect such that the soul can pass through any situation in a state of inner sovereignty and wisdom.

There are actually many spiritual powers (Concentration, Realization, Truth and Transformation, for example), but the following 8 powers are the **Master Powers**. Develop them and all other spiritual powers will automatically belong to you as well. All the divine virtues will also develop as you develop these powers.

[Introduce the powers by using the Indian chart or the German one. Present each power by calling the attention of the students to its image, which will help them remember the power. **NOTE: the images on the following pages are not the ones you will be referring to when you teach!**]

[Key to German 8 Powers Picture:

Night Sky: Humility & the Power to Withdraw

Rose: Love & the Power to Let Go (Pack up)

Leaves (of healing plant): Tolerance & Power to Accept

River: Patience & Power to Adjust


Diamond: Purity & Power to Discern

Comet: Self-respect & Power to Decide

Fire: Courage & Power to Overcome Obstacles


Sun: Happiness & Power to Cooperate]

The Power to **WITHDRAW** is represented by a tortoise. What does the turtle do when it senses some kind of danger or when it wants to rest? [Draw answer from the student(s)]. In the same way that a tortoise goes within its shell in a moment of danger or just to rest, you are able to retract yourself from any situation and remain protected in the “shell of soul consciousness.”



Lesson 5: Power to Withdraw

- Ability to control attention
- Enables freedom from influence (protection)
- Enables detachment



77
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The Power to Withdraw is also sometimes called the Power of Introspection. It is the **ability to disengage from the world around you**. It's where everything begins—with a change of consciousness, a change of perspective. The first step in restoring calm and finding internal focus is to withdraw attention away from everything external. You need to 'unplug' from your many different activities and from any negative 'sockets'. A tortoise is good at this as it pulls head and arms and legs inside its shell. Can you do this with your senses? To see but not see, to hear but not hear, or to see and hear but not be influenced or disturbed by what you see and hear?

This power is not only to disconnect from everything outside, however. It's also the power to connect with what's inside. You need to be able to just be still; to find that point of peace and stillness within which refreshes and makes your mind very clear and detached. From that inner peace you then examine how you are using your energy of thought, your intellect, how you're dealing with your sanskaras in the form of feelings, motives, intentions.

It helps to value periods of solitude and introspection and take time to reflect and be quiet—perhaps a few moments, minutes, may be half an hour in a day. *This is actually the first step of personal mastery*. If you are not the master of your senses and all incoming stimuli, you will be their slave.

Withdrawal is often sensible; it doesn't reflect cowardice. You use this power to detach the mind from the current situation while maintaining full awareness, i.e., to **become a detached observer**, detached from the scene, from the role you are playing, from the body you inhabit, from your own 'story' and its pain, sorrow, needs and desires (not to deny but to understand and to heal). To withdraw in this way allows you to observe with an objective perspective. Then you are in stronger control of your thoughts and behavior and can more astutely understand your emotions because you are looking at the scene as a third party, or as a director would. If you don't have the ability to stand back and observe, you immediately react, judge and assume what the other person is saying on the basis of first impressions, coloring what is being said with your own feelings and references. This clouds the issues.


Going within at regular intervals during the day enables you to both accumulate and draw on your stock of inner strength. The **ability to control attention** inside while being aware of everything outside **protects you from being influenced** or controlled and is therefore the basis of true independence. Open-eyed meditation helps develop the ability to withdraw into peace no matter what the senses of body are experiencing.

This power means you are able to be free from your own needs and limitations when others are in need, and thus bring them benefit. It is the power to listen, to really hear what is being said and also what is not being said. This power brings **controlling power** and leads to mastery of the senses. **Detachment** also enables us to tap the other divine powers.

Other aspects of this power: Silence, concentration and focus

Corresponding virtues: introversion, detachment

The Power to PACK-UP is represented by luggage. What is the symbolism behind this? [Draw some answers from the student(s).] What is spiritual packing-up? Just like an expert traveler will carry only what is necessary and useful to enable him to **travel light**, similarly we must learn the art of not carrying wasteful thinking about the past, present and future and take with us only that which is essential. Then we will remain light and positive constantly.



Lesson 5: Power to Pack Up

- Ability to leave behind negative, waste and past
- Full stop to what you leave behind
- Ability to 'travel light' carrying with you only what is essential and beneficial
- Enables letting go

Once you have withdrawn inside, you will be met by the second challenge of mastering yourself: a racing chattering mind, an analytical intellect with an endless queue of questions, and a bubbling memory, constantly throwing up images and experiences from the past. To live effectively in the world, you must be fully 'present' and to do this you need to be able to finish these challenges whenever you choose. Otherwise you are not really mentally 'available' to respond appropriately to situations and your ability to plan, prioritize, delegate and fulfill your responsibilities is severely compromised.

So many people cannot let go of the past, therefore their present is heavy and depressed. The Power to Pack-up is, on the one hand, the **ability of the intellect to stop, to cut away and let go of unwanted, unnecessary, harmful or wasteful thoughts, negative influences and past conditioning** so there is lightness and freedom from burdens and worries. It is the strength to say 'no' to negativity'.

This power is also called the **Power of the Full Stop**. Sometimes we become too introspective—too caught up in analyzing ourselves, discussing our choices and obsessing over our options. This can lead to self-doubt and anxiety. At some point you need to put a full stop, decide and just do something and learn from the result. So this power means to know the limit of things—doubts expressed as why, what or how; feelings about others based on animosity, dislike, attachment—just stop it and move in another direction. Bring the mind back to its essence, Om Shanti.


Letting go —of what history says that you are, of what others expect of you and what you expect of them, of limited thinking and limiting attitudes and beliefs, of so many things that you are attached to—requires clarity, forgiveness, and purity. It means your life starts anew in each moment and is key to growth. This power could also be called the power to choose. It helps you keep the past in the past and avoid carrying any excess baggage into the present.

On the other hand this power also represents the intellect's ability to recognize the learning in a situation, to glean insight and realizations from experience which will be useful down the road. It means extracting meaning or a lesson even from seemingly non-beneficial events.

Other aspects of this power: Full stop. Traffic control. **Ruling power.**


Corresponding virtues: clarity, forgiveness, renunciation, positivity, simplicity, discipline

The Power to TOLERATE is represented by a boy throwing stones at a fruit tree or by lightning striking a tree. This power is the ability not to be affected by external and internal events and to respond to those events positively. How is the tree tolerant? [Draw from the student(s) some answers.] The boy is pelting the tree with stones, and the tree is not only tolerating such abuse, it's even giving the boy fruit in return. This is the real Power of Tolerance.



Lesson 5: Power to Tolerate

- Ability to put forth positive energy when on the receiving end of negative energy
- Enables response rather than reaction
- The Power of Love



79
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Responding positively and proactively bestowing good wishes, pure vibes and positive energy—even in the face of criticism or abuse—requires great inner power. Tolerance is necessary when you fully engage with situations and people and they say and do things which stimulate buried negative memories and emotions. Firstly you have to tolerate your own inner reactions and that is only possible when you can consciously disengage and detach from the thoughts and feelings accompanying those reactions. *Remember, you are not your thoughts and feelings, they are your creation.* This power enables us to think before speaking, to change your reactions into responses.

The Power of Tolerance is the ability to be undisturbed inside by any event going on around you and within you—an ability that comes with ease when you are *involved* and yet *detached* at the same time. It's the ability to work under pressure and in highly demanding, even chaotic, situations. It enables you to handle both positive and negative feedback with maturity and equanimity, to remain unaffected by praise or criticism.

When tolerating others remember you are simply watching a massive drama going on around you. Consider it the greatest production in movie history and that nothing in the script can disturb you. In fact your role is a vital one—not just to tolerate/ transform your own reactions, but to tolerate the actions of others by accepting their energy (but not taking it on) and giving a higher quality of energy as your return: giving a blessing in the face of an insult; acceptance in the face of rejection; love in the face of hate. The one who hurls 'rocks' is in body consciousness. One must give only sweet fruit in return.


In fact, the Power of Tolerance enables you to respect the differences that you see. Any person who has ever wanted to succeed positively and peacefully in their task had this power. Sadly, today most people lack this power, which is why there is so much friction and conflict.

If your frame of mind is light and positive, you will be able to tolerate all types of situations and people to the extent that there isn't even the feeling of having to tolerate. This power enables you to harmonize yourself with others. It prevents and heals conflict and restrains you from doing negative actions. Actually, to tolerate the inconsistencies, the failings of the self and others, to see past limitations and accept the self and others unconditionally is to truly love. The Power of Tolerance can also be called the **Power of Love**.

To develop this power check, "Am I giving benefit to myself as well as others?"


Corresponding virtues: love, self-respect, patience, acceptance, understanding, generosity of spirit, stability, detachment

The Power to ACCOMMODATE (or Adapt/ Adjust or Merge) is represented by an ocean. All the rivers flow into the ocean, carrying with them all sorts of silt and debris. How does the ocean deal with this? [Draw from the student(s) some answers.] The Power to Accommodate / Adjust... is the ability to expand and accept the presence, ideas and desires of others. To let everyone be the way they are, without trying to change them.



Lesson 5: Power to Accommodate

- Ability to merge
- Ability to adjust to situations & people, letting them be and still making the most of everything
- Enables forgiving and forgetting



81
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Just as the ocean accepts all types of rivers that flow into it, whether polluted or clean, with this power one is able to adjust oneself and accommodate all that is happening. You can ‘merge’ the past and stay open. Even though someone has ‘always been like that’ he could change tomorrow. Adjusting your vision so you’re open to seeing newness opens the door for change to happen. To ‘merge’ in this context means to dissolve negativity and weakness until there’s nothing left. It’s possible that with the Power to Tolerate there could be a trace or shadow left—a little dislike, displeasure or irritation inside and no feeling of complete peace. This power to merge/ dissolve is very connected to **forgiving and forgetting**.


At a spiritual level, and in the context of our relationships, we learn to accommodate or to evict. Your simple acknowledgement of someone’s presence is your first gesture of accommodation as you “let” someone else into your universe.

The other thing about the ocean is that it follows the shoreline. Water always adjusts itself to the shape of the vessel it’s in. The ability to accommodate means accepting and going with someone else’s flow, working with another’s ideas, seeing from another point of view, putting oneself in someone else’s shoes. It means expanding yourself to allow someone else in who may in a clumsy moment trample all over you. The power to accommodate is the **ability to adjust to the other person or the situation** with the consciousness of creating benefit from each opportunity.

Softness, flexibility, and humility are the virtues that accompany this power. Flexibility is the ability to adjust to many different personalities and situations with understanding and empathy and without sacrificing your integrity; thus you can withstand the winds of change and fortune. Flexibility and strength go hand in hand.


Corresponding virtues: cheerfulness, contentment, flexibility, humility, integrity, mercy, gentleness, openness

The POWER TO DISCERN (or to Know or Discriminate) is the ability to discern the subtle; to separate what is true from what is false, what is reality and what is illusion, what is of benefit and what brings loss. A jeweler (or gems) represents the Power to Discern.



Lesson 5: Power to Discern

- Ability to tell right from wrong, truth from falsehood
- Enables accuracy & appropriate behavior



11
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Discernment is the art of seeing, not with the physical eyes, but with the inner eye, the third eye—seeing what is true and what is false. It is possibly the most important of the Master Powers. Today it is possible to create an artificial diamond, which looks and directs light as well as the real thing. An experienced jeweler, however, can tell the difference immediately.

Spiritual discernment is the eye of experience and knowledge, which, like a jeweler's eye, is able to notice subtle flaws in one's own character as well as the truth about situations. Seeing what is true is only possible when there is an understanding of the laws and principles which govern the course of human life. It is knowledge of these laws, both natural and spiritual, which restore inner clarity and give the ability to discern truth. It gives us the perspective to consider the past, present and future implications of any action and select, analyze, synthesize, organize and prioritize information. When this power is weak, how often we deceive ourselves!


Using this power you understand what's right and wrong, not in the sense of judging and labeling, but in terms of what's appropriate for you or a person or situation now—not tomorrow, not yesterday, but now. A person with discernment doesn't work with formulas; rather such a person has a lot of empathy and awareness in the moment as to what is needed. Discerning in a benevolent and peaceful way requires love in the intellect, truth and humility in the heart and pure feelings. Some think discernment operates on the basis of knowledge, however one can only discern truth when there's love and humility in the intellect. If there's even subtle ego one comes into labeling others or the self. Someone who understands things only by formulas or rules ("Do this, don't do this") becomes rigid and has little empathy—often such a person becomes fanatical.

The Power to Discern helps to distinguish the real truth from the apparent truth, to discriminate between things of temporary value and those of eternal value, between the superficial and the subtle. This power helps us recognize traps of illusion, however sweetly decorated and enticing. Through this power, we see through disguises and act confidently and wisely. This power requires listening to the deepest part of yourself and relying on/ trusting what your highest self, in relationship with the Supreme, understands to be true—even in the face of opposing opinions.

This power is the power of a divine or divinized intellect.


Corresponding virtues: purity, honesty, clarity, truthfulness, accuracy

The POWER TO JUDGE WISELY (or of Good Judgment or of Decision-making) is the ability to evaluate the choices before you, make decisions and carry them out. The image of a scale represents this power. What is the significance of the scale in relationship with the Power to Judge? [Draw from the student(s) some answers.]



Lesson 5: Power to Judge Wisely

- Ability to evaluate, weigh, take a decision and follow through
- Enables balance




10
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Accurate judgment has several dimensions.

1. In terms of oneself, the Power to Judge Wisely helps us know when an action is appropriate and relevant and how much or how often to perform it. Judging oneself is done, not with the aim to punish, but simply to assess and see that your thoughts, words and actions are consistently of the highest quality and appropriate to the situation.
2. In terms of situations, the Power to Judge Wisely helps assess any situation accurately, with clarity and precision to see what is the correct response that one needs to create and express. Sometimes we have to decide between two good things. We have to weigh each one and evaluate their relative merits. Things are not always black and white, right versus wrong. For example, sometimes we have to decide between telling the truth or being loyal; between siding with an individual or with the community; between short-term gratification or long-term achievement; between applying justice or showing mercy. These 'moral dilemmas' require great wisdom in decision-making.
3. In terms of others, we use the Power to Judge Wisely not to judge people but to judge behavior, to judge actions for their rightness or quality, for their ethic or value. With a detached, impartial state of mind, if we do see someone doing something wrong according to universal laws, values or codes of conduct, we can use this power to help determine if that person perceives he/ she is acting wrongly. If so, we can feel mercy and inspire him/ her to make the correction through our own example or with accurate and empathetic "coaching". If he/ she does not perceive the inaccuracy and is making no effort to overcome his/ her weakness, we can generate respect and good wishes for that individual, which at least subtly encourages them to realize their mistake.
4. This power enables you to evaluate situations and make decisions. But how do you decide? Do you do what brings the greatest benefit to the greatest number? Or do you stick to principles regardless of outcome, reasoning that ultimately sticking to principles will result in the greatest good down the road. Or do you apply the Golden-rule, putting yourself in the other's shoes, and decide things on that basis? Even the basis of your decision-making requires wise judgment.
5. Once you judge a situation and make a decision as to an appropriate action or response, power is required to follow through, carry out or implement that decision. Therefore the Power to Judge Wisely also reflects your strength of will or will power.
6. Also, this power helps you keep inner equilibrium. In Lesson 2 we mentioned that extremes of anything are very bad for the self. So you have to balance sweetness, for example, with detachment and flexibility with right focus and determination. Using this power, the intellect works out what's appropriate for the situation.


Corresponding virtues: wisdom, intuitiveness, impartiality, compassion, strength, determination, balance

The POWER TO FACE (or to Destroy Obstacles)— is the ability to accept the consequences of our decisions, fulfill our responsibilities and to confront and resolve external and internal obstacles, tests and challenges with great faith, courage and resolve. The picture, which symbolizes the power to face, is either a tidal wave or a 2-part image depicting bodily death as well as the fire and fury of internal storms.



Lesson 5: Power to Face

- Ability to accept the truth and overcome obstacles, confront falsehood
- Enables one to stand up for oneself



13
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The spiritual journey home is a return to full awareness of what is true and what is right. But there are numerous obstacles, tests and challenges along the way. It is only with your inner strength restored by knowledge and spiritual power from the Source that you are able to face and deal with the inner dragons that rear their heads during the journey.

Raja Yoga meditation will help you recover the strength to face and destroy the obstacles which come from inside and out. 1) *Internal obstacles* are old habits of behavior born out of false understanding and wrong beliefs. 2) *External obstacles* are souls who seem to deliberately stand in your path of change, wanting you to stay the same. 3) *Tests* come when you meet those who yesterday triggered fear or hate within. Can you face them, walk towards them, see their beauty and their value—however deeply hidden—and respond to that? Horror, terror as well as error will test the strength of your ability to look at such souls in the face, forgive yourself and move on. 4) *Challenges*: Every moment on this journey home is a challenge, and masters thrive on challenges. There are no problems, only opportunities to learn, grow and help others in the process. There are no such things as failures; there's only feedback. Change and chaos are one's traveling companions. And there is no other time than the present. The mantra of the Master is "Just face it, face it right now." Masters know that delay is expensive.

The Power to Face is opposite the power of Tolerance. It is necessary especially when confronted with illusion, falsehood, ego, greed, lust, attachment, jealousy or anger, because these things should not be tolerated.

The Power to Face is based on faith in the self. Sometimes called the Power of Courage, it gives confidence to deal with any person or situation. Faith which is based on understanding and experience give one courage which has the positive energy of enthusiasm within it, as well as peace and wisdom. This power helps conquer all types of fears, insecurities, and doubts, especially about our own abilities. This power enables one to 'feel the pulse' and act rather than stand back and hesitate. Therefore it is not the reckless, wild type of courage that prompts saying or doing things without thinking.


The Power to Face includes the ability to face one's own weaknesses and fears (death), the ability to stand up for what we believe in, the skill to draw the line when tolerance is no longer appropriate. Equipped with this power, nothing is too fearsome to handle; there is nothing with which one cannot cope. Anyone who possesses this power has great inner stability.

To develop this power, fill the self with the power of knowledge and yoga. Worrying prevents us from facing. Stop worrying.


Corresponding virtues: courage, self-confidence, dignity, patience, peacefulness, purpose, determination, faith

The **POWER TO COOPERATE** is the ability to give one's attention, time, experience and wisdom in the service of others. The picture of fingers lifting a mountain symbolizes the power to cooperate. Why? [Draw from student(s) some answers.]

Cooperation is necessary because an individual by him/ herself can't do much. Together we can even lift a mountain. And there is a mountain which is oppressing all of humanity today, and it requires all of our cooperation to remove it.

 Lesson 5: Power to Cooperate

- Ability to work with others
- Enables accomplishment of tasks beyond the self's ability



It is the mountain of sorrow. Using these master powers, if you give your finger of cooperation and remove the piece of the mountain that's sitting over your head, you will have done your part to enable the world to become free from sorrow.

Real cooperation comes from the deep spaces of attitude, feelings, thought and vision. For example, seeing someone's highest qualities of character instead of their weakness is an act of cooperation. Offering powerful subtle thoughts for another's success is invisible but priceless cooperation. The generation and generous sprinkling of good feelings when friend or foe are down is selfless cooperation. A constantly positive attitude regardless of the size of the perceived disaster is an inspiration of uplifting cooperation. This kind of cooperation inspires cooperation.

To perceive someone's specialty, and to accept, acknowledge and appreciate another's contribution is to cooperate with their journey, thus providing the fuel of encouragement.

Cooperation is the basis of team spirit. It is fabric of unity, of shared values and common purpose. It is the song of harmony and the only way in which we can take collective responsibility and prosper together. And as Benjamin Franklin once said, "if we don't hang together, we will surely hang separately."

Cooperation allows you to share your virtues and specialties and to learn from the qualities and talents of those you are cooperating with. The Power to Cooperate acknowledges our interdependence.

To develop this power: accept, acknowledge and appreciate others.

Corresponding virtues: sweetness, practicality, centeredness, enthusiasm, lightness, easiness, sense of humor, resourcefulness, respect, harmony

Summarize: The ultimate aim of Raja Yoga meditation is the soul's return to it's original state of purity, peace, love, happiness, truth and power. Elements within our psyche, within our sanskaras, that are not that—anger, greed, attachment, ego, lust, jealousy, fear, hatred, laziness and carelessness, for example—must leave us. We each have the master powers. When we develop them through meditation and enable transformation there is no situation in which we will not be successful.

It's not surprising that, as we begin to pour elevated, positive thoughts into our psyche with the practice of meditation, the 'sediment' of these vicious elements stirs and rises to the surface of our awareness. This is nothing to be afraid of, for in drawing strength from Baba we develop the powers within us to conquer these vices (which are the only real enemies of humanity). [Here you may want to introduce the personification of vices or evils which is known in the west as Satan and in the east as Ravan. There is a picture of Ravan you can show them under Miscellaneous Resources.]



Lesson 5: Meditation Experience

Spiritual Empowerment

[**Play a commentary:** Recommended commentaries:

Positive Thinking CD:

#5 "Developing Inner Power" (7 minutes)

OR Explorations of the Soul audiocassette:

#6 "Power of Yoga" 10 minutes)]

[**Give a Commentary:** If you feel comfortable to do so.]

Example: *Sitting quietly, I go within and remember that I am a child of the divine...I recognize the value of my life, of my consciousness...in this state of self-respect I connect with Baba, my eternal Mother/ Father/ Friend/ Teacher/ Beloved/ Companion/ Guide...As I focus on this infinitesimal Being, the Almighty Authority, the Source of all virtue and spiritual power...I begin to absorb God's qualities and powers...God's love enables me to let go of all the things that trap me into limited consciousness...and I begin to fill myself with God's love, truth, joy, purity and peace...I know that this state of fullness and God's company will enable me to deal with any and all obstacles and challenges of life...in such a way that only goodness and truth will prevail...my conscience is awake and able to accurately discern situations and people...free from desires and attachments I have the wisdom to make effective and appropriate decisions...I feel a great enthusiasm to work with others to make a difference in the world around me...as I sit with Baba, together our light and might reach out across the world...I see the darkness ending and the coming dawn of a new day and a better world. Om Shanti...*



Lesson 5: Tips for Success

- Meditate on each power
- Use the powers in every situation

Meditate on each power. Think deeply about each power and its attendant virtues. Visualize the self in various situations, discerning which power is needed and see the self using the power effectively and what the result would be.

Use each power. Your spiritual powers will increase, not only by meditating on them, but also to the extent that you consciously evoke them in practical situations. Use them, they are God's gifts to you!

Field any remaining questions:

A common one is:

- **How long does it take to become accomplished in these powers?** It depends on motivation and effort of the student, but just being aware of them and beginning to use them yields positive results. They are so profound and subtle, it could take a lifetime to become complete with them.



Lesson 5: Wrap Up

- Field any remaining questions
- Distribute handouts
- Suggest homework
 - Reflect on these powers and write down any realizations you have
 - Experiment with using the powers, particularly those you feel you need to develop

87

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Distribute handouts (Collect \$) and feedback sheet:

- o Master Powers
- o 8 Powers
- o Acquiring Powers Through Raja Yoga/ Powers Profile
- o But How Do you Meditate?
- o Roads to Relaxation

Suggest homework:

- o **Notice which power you need most often:** Are you consistently finding yourself in situations where you need to tolerate? Pack up waste thoughts? Cooperate?
- o **Create your Powers Profile:** Using the handout graphic, look at the shape of your Powers Profile. Do you have a balanced one? What else is it telling you?
- o **Meditate on a different power each day.** Perhaps spend two days on those powers which you especially need to cultivate. Try to use them in action.

Additional Suggestion: If continuing on to the Intermediate Level, bring one example of practical application where a power helped you in a situation.

Suggest Resources:

- BOOKs: Wings of Soul; Inner Beauty; Today I Will; Just a Moment, Making Virtue a Reality; Practical Meditation
- CDs: Link of Life
- TAPES: Creating Self-Esteem; The Power of Values



Lesson 1 through 5: Wrap-up

- > Review Level One, Lessons 1-5
- > Ask them to share benefits, experiences
- > Have them fill the feedback sheet
- > Recommend further resources
- > Introduce Intermediate Course
- > Introduce Other Programs
- > Toli and gift

Summarize Level One, Lessons 1-5: By now you should have a pretty good idea how to meditate as a Raja Yogi. You should also have a good sense of yourself as a soul, a spiritual being, and have begun to establish your relationship with Baba.

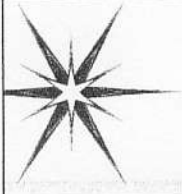
Ask them to share benefits, experiences: [especially whether they feel that they have a good foundation for the meditation.]

Have them fill the feedback sheet

Introduce the Intermediate Course: In the next level of the course we'll be looking at the karma, the dynamics of action and reaction—what the 'law' of karma is, why we need to know about it, and how it relates to meditation. We'll also be understanding the self in the wider context of time and the drama of life, and getting a deeper appreciation of God's role, not only in one's life, but in relation to the entire human family.

Other programs: [Now that they know how to meditate you may want to invite them to your weekly group meditation sessions or to other special events.]

Toli and gift: [Invite the Center Coordinator to meet the class and to graduate them by giving toli and gift. You may want to call her/ him into the class a little earlier, just before people start sharing their experiences. A small image of Shiv Baba makes a nice 'graduation gift' from this level of the course.]



Foundation Course in Meditation

Intermediate Level



Lessons 6-10: The Big Picture

Objectives—At the end of five sessions the students would :

- Have an understanding of karma and drama
- Understand how spiritual knowledge gives us a complete picture of reality
- Understand God's role in the drama
- Have begun to understand one's own part in the larger scheme of things.

90


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Baba's knowledge answers all questions and gives us peace about who we are, where we came from, where we're going and why we're here.

To the extent that you churn and use Baba's depth of understanding of the big picture practically in your life, to that extent students will also appreciate this knowledge.

Are you trikaldarshi when performing actions? Do you spin the cycle of self-realization? How well do you understand the Kalpa Tree? Do you feel comfortable explaining the role of Brahma?

Even if a student is not destined to become a Brahmin, many souls find the integration of the concepts of karma, time, history and renewal awesome, and are interested to hear Baba's actual versions in the advanced level of the course.



Lesson 6: Understanding Karma

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

- * understood the basis concept of the Law of Karma
- * appreciated the different ways to settle karmic accounts
- * realized the deep aspect of creating positive accounts through positive consciousness while doing actions
- * understood that the quality of one's actions makes one responsible for the future

➤ Meditation Experience: Karma Yoga

91
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LESSON MATERIALS to prepare beforehand

Poster(s): Shiv Baba Poster

Handout(s): (some or all of the following)

Secrets of Karma (Correspondence Course Lesson 3)


Philosophy of Karma (Retreat #5)


Conquest of the 5 Senses (Last page of Correspondence Course Lesson 3)

5 Types of Karmic Accounts (Br. Anthony Strano, Madhuban class transcript)

Spirituality in Action (Sr. Mohini, Retreat #7)

Spiritual Language (Based in Silence) (Murli extracts)

 Copied together

 Copied together

CDs/ tapes: Peace of Mind CD (Sr. Carmen)

God CD (Sr. Carmen)

Hourglass Meditations CD (Sr. Denise)

(or possibly Explorations of the Soul audiocassette (Sr. Denise)

or Dancing in Inner Space audiocassette (Sr. Denise))

[PLEASE REVIEW THE OBJECTIVES of this lesson before you begin, so that you are mindful of what you want to cover. Be sure to SIT WITH BABA before the student(s) arrive.]

[Begin with ½ hour of meditation. Recommended commentaries for this half hour:

Peace of Mind CD: #3 "Free to Forgive" (10 minutes)

AND

God CD: #4 "Light of God" (16 minutes)

OR, if you haven't already played it, you may prefer to choose

Peace of Mind CD: #4 "Going Home" (14 minutes)

and finish with 16 minutes of silence or your own commentary]



Lesson 6: Transition from Lesson #5

How to transition into Lesson 6

- Brief review of last lesson

Did you analyze situations to see which power was needed? Anyone have an example of using a power? Who did the Powers Profile? What did you find? Did you meditate on a different power each day? What was your experience?

- Link last lesson to this lesson & briefly overview today's lesson

In this series we'll explore the role the self plays in the context of time and relationships with others. Due to loss of self-awareness we've declined from our natural state of positive qualities. The thought-decision-action cycle now includes negativity. Actions, or 'karma', are no longer elevated and accurate. These "inaccurate" actions affect others as well as the self. We'll start our exploration by looking at the phenomenon of karma.

- Ask what they already know about karma

92

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Review last lesson:

- Who worked with the 8 powers this week, for examples, analyzing situations to see which power was needed? Did anyone bring an example of where using a power helped you?
- Who did the Powers Profile? What did you find?
- Did you meditate on a different power each day? What was your experience?
- What do you remember from Lesson 5? We looked at 8 master powers. What were they?

Overview: In today's lesson we will look at the subject of action and reaction or karma. This physical world is the field of action on which we embodied souls play our parts. Here is where we need to use the powers effectively to stay peacefully in integrity in every situation.

Link to beginning lessons: The internal cycle of mind, intellect and sanskaras means one is responsible for one's experience. Actions leave impressions. Impressions give rise to thoughts. Thoughts affect decisions. Decisions lead to further actions. At any moment one is both experiencing the sum of one's past thought-decision-action pattern and creating the possibility of future patterns and situations.

Actually "Everything that surrounds me, pulls at me or pushes me is a result of my own past thoughts, decisions or actions... There are no accidents." (Ken O'Donnell) You yourself have created all the conditions in which you find yourself.

Due to loss of self-awareness there's been a decline from our once natural state of all positive qualities. So the thought-decision-action cycle now includes negativity and the experience of pain. One's actions are no longer elevated and accurate. These "inaccurate" actions affect others as well as the self.

Human life is characterized by awareness, relationship and expression. These cannot happen in the silent, still world of souls; they require action and a stage on which to act. Actions are 'Karma'. "Karma" means action.

Actions are like seeds. Physical seeds grow and bear fruit according to the laws of nature. In a similar way, the seeds of human action and interaction are subject to the **Law of Karma**, which operates on the moral plane in much the same way that Newton's 3rd law operates on the physical plane. Every action has an equal and opposite reaction; or, in other words, what you sow, you reap. This universal law of **cause and effect** brings self justice to the soul.

This means that **whatever you do**, think or speak (positive or negative) **will come back to you** with the same energy (a boomerang thrown hard, comes back hard). What goes around, comes around. There is no other reward or punishment and this law can not be adjusted, circumvented or manipulated.

The invisible actions of thought affect the visible, and this is why we don't often see connection between karmic cause and effect. Also, the time between sowing and reaping is different for each action, just as physical seeds take different amounts of time to germinate, grow and produce fruit. [Examples: Alfalfa/soybeans, mango/ coriander, radish/ apple tree.] The seeds of certain actions bring instantaneous results; others take years, even lifetimes to bear fruit.

Explain the three types of karma: Actions are basically of three types:

Positive Karma (Sukarma): arises from being soul-conscious. The action is purely benevolent and there is no motive or desire for any return. Actions carried out in soul consciousness help others rediscover their own soul consciousness. Such actions bring only happiness to the self and others.

Even in body consciousness, souls perform what seem to be good actions; however the return is limited. For example, if a soul gives money to the poor he will be wealthy in his next birth, but not necessarily peaceful and happy. If he endows a college, he'll be highly educated, but perhaps he could be sick. If he builds a hospital he'll be healthy but could still experience some other form of suffering.

Negative Karma (Vikarma): Actions performed to gratify the senses or to develop or sustain a relationship with another human being often fall into this category. They include all actions done in the consciousness of 'I and my', 'I want', 'I need', 'I possess'. These actions sooner or later result in some kind of loss of health, wealth or happiness—either one's own or someone else's. Negative karma is motivated by body consciousness.

In body consciousness one is influenced by the vices of lust, anger, greed, attachment, ego, fear, slander, jealousy, laziness and carelessness. In this state one seeks self-gratification or gets angry at someone because one's desires are not met. [You can introduce Ravan, the Hindu personification of evil, at this point, and even show them a picture (see Miscellaneous Resources sections)].

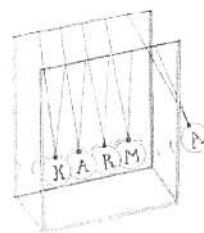
Self-centered actions over a period of time cause great loss. Anger can even create a ripple effect and pass from one to another—the person who started it bears some responsibility for the whole chain.

Neutral Karma (Akarma): does not really exist in today's world. It is characterized by a completely equitable exchange of energy, no gain or loss. Neutral karma is only possible when we have no sense of give and take, only of sharing.



Lesson 6: Law of Karma/ Types of Karma

- A universal law of cause and effect
 - Whatever you put out comes back to you
- Three types of karma
 - Positive
 - Negative
 - Neutral



93

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Lesson 6: Premises of Karmic Law

- Freedom
- Choice
- Responsibility
- Consequences
- Motive
- Ignorance is no excuse

The Law of Karma is based on **freedom, choice, responsibility, motivation and consequences**. Human souls have the freedom (internally if not externally) to act as they wish. Even God can't intrude on that. *Do you believe you are free?*

[Most people give excuses: "Yes, but my husband's been like this for 30 years; it's very difficult." Or, "I'm not free; I have to work." It's very important for people to understand that they're free to create their happiness, no matter what their circumstances.] **Freedom** is essential for changing karmic patterns.

To be a master of the self one has to understand that one is free—no matter what may be happening from the past. You are free. Once you accept this you can **choose** to act in a different way. If you feel you're a victim of your country, parents, spouse, employer—you're finished. No one can create your feelings or thoughts—only if you let them. You are the creator of your experience.

Because each soul is free each soul is also totally responsible for its actions. Freedom and responsibility are two faces of the same coin. You can't be free if you're not responsible. An irresponsible person is never free—s/he is still bound to the consequences of her/his thoughts, words and actions.

Responsibility implies **consequences**. It's not that one's sorrow is caused by someone else. Those around you may be negative, but you have the freedom to choose how you respond to that. You can keep peaceful and in your dignity. This doesn't mean being passive and letting others do what they want. Rather it means choosing to not go down to the same level; because once you go to the same level of negativity as the other person, the result is an escalation of negativity possibly even to the point of violence. One's world becomes hell on this basis.

Motive is accountable in the result. It is not only the act that determines the return; the quality of intention behind it is also a factor. In the simple task of brushing the body's teeth the intention can be varied. "I need to clean them well; I don't want cavities." (care & concern) "What terrible teeth! What am I going to do?" (anxiety) "I have the most splendid teeth in the world." (vanity) However, even the road to hell can also be paved with good intentions. (Example, giving \$ to a beggar may not have a good result if he uses it for drink and ends up in a brawl.) So we need to check the consequences of actions as well as the motives.

All suffering is due to wrong actions or to actions performed in a false state of consciousness (ignorance, body consciousness). There is a cumulative effect. In ignorance, we have done many things against the universal and divine laws. But **ignorance is no excuse**. We cannot just say "I didn't know". Above a certain age it is our responsibility to know.

The understanding of the karmic process is fundamental, if you want to:

- reduce the weight of the past;
- eliminate any type of suffering;
- modify the course of your life;
- start to experience a positive return from your spiritual efforts;
- understand many questions which surround your daily life: Why do things happen the way they do? Why do bad things happen to good people and vice versa? What did I do to deserve this? How can this be?



Lesson 6: Understanding Karma

- Understanding the law enables you to:
 - reduce the weight of the past,
 - eliminate any type of suffering,
 - modify the course of your life,
 - start to experience a positive return from your spiritual efforts;
 - understand all the "whys" which surround your daily life.
- Karmic justice and balance
- Developing response-ability
- Karma and sanskaras

95

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In fact, such questions tear at the fabric of consciousness, waste our time and energy and lead to tension. They have only one answer: karma. One doesn't need to go into detailed causes of each situation. Simply understand that your sorrow is not caused by someone else. Nor is whatever happens in life the will of God. It's not Baba's fault when unpleasant things happen to us. Why bad things happen to good people is due to karma.

The Law of Karma is the silent thread of justice running through all of life for every human being. The aim of this subtle, divine justice is to keep the **balance**, which means keeping respect for the right of all things to exist. When that respect is lost there's imbalance and imbalance is an unnatural state.

The Law of Karma teaches us that 'I am in some way responsible for whatever is happening to me — I caused it at some point in time'. Although this can be a bitter pill to swallow—particularly if one doesn't like what's happening—the knowledge of karma is the pathway to real freedom. When you understand that nothing can happen without having had a just cause in your past or in that of others, life becomes much easier to face with responsibility and courage.

When you accept that the responsibility for whatever has happened to you up to this moment cannot be attributed to any another person, to your ancestors, to the government or even to God—it is yours and yours only—then only can you change things. If you're blaming something or someone else, you're a victim and have no power to change. When you accept responsibility for your own karma and sanskaras **you develop response-ability**, the ability to respond with karmic appropriateness. (It's important to see and accept responsibility for *good* karma, as well as for negative karma. It's also important to realize that we can only be responsible for our own karma—we cannot protect others from their karma.)

Karma teaches that each one of us is the creator of our own little world. Whatever one chooses to do at the moment is already creating one's destiny for tomorrow. If you choose to exchange love and peace in your interaction with others, you create relationships based on those qualities. [Thus the connection between karma and *dhama*.] On a greater level you become a co-creator with God of the world of tomorrow. We shouldn't forget that the only real time we have for creating the future is now, in the present.

Karma and Sanskaras: Everything one does or produces registers within the self as a sanskara. Sanskaras are not only the basis of our talents, personalities and propensities but also of our karmic accounts. Karma is written in one's consciousness, embedded in the sanskaras like an 'energy graphic' and it acts like a magnet that pulls a soul to wherever it has debts to pay, whether to persons or situations. There's no running away from it. In the impossibility of complying with karmic obligations in one life, we take a new body to guarantee that all beneficial and negative actions receive their due return. Looking at the process of human existence stretching back into the past and continuing on into the future helps us understand personal affinities and aversions. The feeling of having met someone before or having passed by a specific place are so common that the idea of cosmic randomness just cannot remain.

Karma is very complex. The simple act of buying a toothbrush involves us in a huge long chain of karmas. It's as though we're caught in a huge web from which there's no escape. In other words, we are not just individuals acting alone. We act in this extraordinary play of existence with other actors, with matter and nature. Everything is interconnected. Relationships can't exist without karma or interaction.

In every relationship there are exchanges of energy—actions of giving and taking. We therefore have karmic relationships with everything, not just with other souls: with the elements of nature, with our own body, with our government, our religion and culture. [Please read handout by Br. Anthony which explains the 5 main karmic relationships: mind, body, human relationships, matter and time.]

Individual vs. Collective Karma: When a plane crashes or when an earthquake occurs, many are affected collectively, but they are affected differently according to their individual karma. Our races, nations, cultures, religions, etc. carry collective karma. Because people lack love, the cycle of 'paying back' keeps going in the direction of increasing violence. The ethnic clashes and various other upheavals that are happening in the world today are evidence that we are passing through a time of unprecedented karmic reckoning.

In the course of our relationships, our exchanges create **accounts of karmic debt and credit** that become the basis of further relationship. Of course the greatest amount of interaction takes place with those who are closest, and we generally have the largest accounts of karma with our significant 'others'.

Accounts of karmic debt occur when we have disrespect for people or things, when we misuse or abuse them, when we blame others or tempt them to engage in actions that are harmful to themselves or others. This creates an imbalance, an indebtedness or loss which needs to be settled. Negative karma is basically a state of imbalance—mentally, emotionally, spiritually and even physically.

Creating an account of karmic credit is also possible. Charitable acts may give us some temporary credit, but the highest positive karma is spiritual: giving peace, happiness and love through thoughts, words and actions. If a soul teaches someone to be peaceful, love-full and blissful and directs a soul to the permanent Source of happiness, then the fruit of this service will be reaped for lifetimes to come. Baba as your teacher, teaches you how to perform the highest karma. If one does only good karma from now and settles all 'bad', then a happy future is guaranteed.



LESSON 6: Karmic Accounts

- Karmic complexity
- Individual vs. Collective Karma
- Karmic debt
- Karmic credit

56

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How can we settle our karmic debts?. The hard way to do this is through simply reaping what we've sown, i.e., through **suffering**—whether in the form of physical illness, mental or emotional problems, financial crises or upheavals in relationships. Often, however, reaction to suffering increases rather than settles karma. Note that karmic debt cannot be settled on the principle of 'an eye for an eye'. This does not settle the score, it ups the ante. Fortunately, there are **better ways to settle your debts and set**

yourself free. There's a clear understanding of the difference between soul consciousness and body consciousness, actions done in a state of body consciousness, actions which create debt, can be stopped. You can develop controlling power, renounce doing anything that harms or hurts and refrain from 'taking' (things, money, sorrow) from others. You can begin to perform **actions in soul consciousness**. Actions performed in eternal consciousness not only benefit you, they give happiness to others.

Secondly, you can begin to repay your outstanding debts by **serving** the souls with whom you have karmic accounts. The thing which clears these accounts quickly is the power of forgiveness, which comes from the power of love. If you forgive then you're automatically forgiven. If you make excuses ("They hurt me very badly") then there's someone else somewhere who's saying the same thing about you. The power of forgiveness stops the cycle of violence. Forgive and don't look back. If something has been very bad, then leave it to God—don't play God yourself and judge, or argue like a lawyer. Free yourself and others. One's own attitude of forgiveness and love will restore the balance.

This can take time and is of course difficult to do because the emotions are very strong. Sometimes one can't free oneself by oneself. Thinking and analyzing too much make things worse. When settling a karmic account is beyond one's own power and effort, then one needs to connect with the Supreme, because God gives you purifying and cleansing energy which releases you from the negative habits that perpetuate your negative accounts. If you're very angry and get angry easily or if you're sensitive and hold things inside, then the connection with divine energy is essential for the release of the account. To do this, keep silent and still, and with faith and trust offer it to the Supreme. The Supreme Soul sees you with unconditional and pure love—you simply have to remain open and trusting, then God's power can enter you. Just be still, open and absorb. Don't think "I have to get rid of this or that..."

God definitely helps. God never gives sorrow—this has never happened and never will—God is the remover of sorrow. Connection with God, together with your own attitude and attainments will help you settle your accounts. You become free from being influenced, free from your old self.

Not only does the power you gain from connection with Baba transform your old habits, which created the debts in the first place, but the accumulation of **yoga power** is also like an income which you're earning that can be used to pay off your debts comparatively quickly.

- At the level of thoughts: The effort to have a meeting of minds with Baba goes a long way to settle the negative thoughts we've had for self and others.
- Words: Sharing words of upliftment and encouragement goes a long way toward settling the 'put downs' & gossip we've engaged in.
- Acts: When we remember we're a child of God, we pay attention to the quality of our actions. The purest karma is to bring yourself and those around you close to God.

One needs daily commitment to this. By settling karmic debts it's possible in one lifetime to become **Karmateet**—free from effects or bondages of action, completely liberated from cause and effect.



Lesson 6: Settling Karma

- Settling karmic accounts
 - The hard way
 - Suffering
 - Better ways
 - Soul conscious action
 - Conscious service
 - Yoga power
- Becoming karmateet

97

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Lesson 6: Karma Yoga

- Definition of Karma Yoga
- Spiritual consciousness in action is revealed by:
 - Attitude
 - Expressions
 - Vibrations
- Spiritual behavior is characterized by:
 - Quality
 - Value
 - Essence

98

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Raja Yoga meditation is much more than sitting every now and then to dialogue with the self and the Supreme. Keeping the connection with your true self and with God whilst performing action is also important. With practice, this link becomes part of your life and is apparent in everything you do. **What** you do is less important than **how** you do it. This is why Raja Yoga is also called **Karma Yoga**, which means performing actions while linked with God.

Karma Yoga comprises soul conscious action, conscious service and connection with the Supreme. It's possible to maintain this link while walking, talking, working—while doing anything. Karma Yoga is therefore about maintaining the spiritual consciousness experienced in meditation in everyday actions. Gradually the difference between how you experience yourself in meditation and the way you express yourself in everyday life will diminish. A karma yogi has learned to keep a state of soul consciousness anywhere and everywhere.

It's important to realize that our **attitude** and **expressions** reveal the degree of spiritual consciousness we are in. Our underlying thoughts and feelings are revealed through our **vibrations**. We cannot hide these vibrations; they are something that others feel. If our words are positive but our inner attitude is negative, people will sense the vibration behind our words.

By maintaining the elevated consciousness of a positive inner attitude, you add **quality** and **value** to your actions. You can do something with joy because you want to do it, or you can do the same action with complaints because you resent it. In both cases you will accomplish your task, but the result will be very different. Cooking is a good example. You can literally taste whether a meal was made with love, or with compulsion, or in haste. Karma Yoga even helps purify the senses.

The actions of a person in spiritual consciousness are **essence-full**. Such a person knows the art of keeping expansion to a minimum, of leaving out unnecessary things. Check your words and gestures. How long do you take to get to the point? Another aspect of being essence-full is seeing others in their essential form as souls. As a Karma Yogi, you learn to distinguish form from content. The form might be of anger or rude behavior, but inside there is a being who might be frightened or distressed. Seeing to the essence of things is the art of living!

[Optional Exercise: Pass the Pen: Have students pass a pen around the circle. (They will do this matter-of-factly, in ordinary consciousness.) Then have them pass it a second time, as a 'Karma Yogi', i.e., in soul consciousness and remembrance of Baba. Ask them to share their experiences. Was there was any qualitative difference in the actions?]

With the right consciousness you add something of value to everything you do. Feelings of boredom, uselessness and frustration then begin to disappear, making life more fulfilling. You don't have to do great or important things for this: vacuum-cleaning, washing up, driving, running an office, directing a company—all reveal your state of mind.

You also see the results of your yoga through your karma. If you're experiencing a link with Baba, then God's peace, light, love and purity are going to manifest themselves in your actions. If your actions are still aggressive or motivated by greed, your relationship with Baba cannot be a very good one. Karma Yoga means living in the world while maintaining the link of yoga. This transforms ones life and that is what helps transform the world.

Two things that prevent us being karma yogis and that get in the way of adding value to our actions are **time-consciousness** and **action-consciousness**. Time consciousness means pressure. Thoughts created under the pressure of time create haste, tension, stress and impatience through which actions lose quality. Often while we're doing things under pressure, we're thinking of what we have to do next. Or maybe we're thinking of what we have just done. We're not living in the present; we're not 'here'. Thus we lose the opportunities offered by the present.

Check how many times your thoughts take you away from what you are doing, even whilst listening to these words. Adding quality to your actions in the form of accuracy, contentment and patience is only possible when you live in the NOW.

Action-consciousness means getting too caught up in the action itself, which makes you forget to be light and peaceful. When we learn to pay more attention to our thoughts and motives, we get less tangled up in the action itself. Through meditation, you can develop the **consciousness of being a 'detached observer'**. You can learn to look at your own thoughts and feelings without getting too caught up in them. You learn to look at others without negative feelings. Being a detached observer makes it possible to work on details without losing sight of the big picture. You're not any less involved, but there is more balance in your life.

Awakening the conscience: Understanding karma gives one a solid criterion for right and wrong. Through the link with Baba, one's conscience awakens. You see right and wrong more clearly. The conscience is the voice of the original state of the soul. When awakened, the original qualities of peace, love, purity and power arise and assume control of the self. The quality of your personality begins to change and develop in a positive direction.

However, even after realizing this difference between right and wrong, being able to extract oneself from one's own trap of negative vicious cycles as well as from both substance abuse and emotional addictions, requires power, spiritual strength. Attaining it is the purpose of meditation. In meditation you receive the power to make the right choices and the strength to follow them through. The quality of your karma changes as a result.

Changing Deeply Ingrained Samskaras: A simple law states "You either influence the circumstances, or let the circumstances influence you." If you feel controlled by a situation, you tend to react negatively. Instead of being able to contribute something positive, you feel angry or apathetic, a victim of circumstance; or you feel afraid or useless, that you've nothing of value to add. These and other body conscious samskaras are deeply ingrained and difficult to change. Karma Yoga fills the self with power; thus transformation of action is possible. This in turn brings about change in one's samskaras. Secondly, by drawing directly on the qualities of the Supreme Being one's samskaras also change. On one level, whatever you've done, you have to receive the return for that. On another level, no matter what your past karma, the fire of God's love is able to absolve it and remove its impact (in terms of negative personality traits and also in terms of karmic effects in situations) from within the soul itself. You become whole (healed). This is why yoga, the link of love with God is so crucial. Karma Yoga deepens your self respect to the point where you neither give nor take sorrow; you give and take only happiness. As you develop all relationships with Baba, you are freed from karmic bondages and old samskaras.



Lesson 6: Time & Action Consciousness

- > Time Consciousness
- > Action Consciousness
- > The Consciousness of a Detached Observer
- > Awakening the Conscience
- > Changing Deeply Ingrained Samskaras

39

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Lesson 6: Meditation Experience

[Experiment with walking meditation.
Play some instrumental music and have the students walk slowly around the room (if there's enough space) practicing soul consciousness as they move. Encourage them to occasionally look into the eyes of the others as they move and to smile, but to otherwise move in an introverted state.]

Karma Yoga

[Play a commentary: Recommended commentaries:

God CD: #1 "The Garden" (13 minutes)

Other Suggestions:

Hourglass Meditations CD: #4 "Soul Conscious Action" (8 minutes)

Explorations of the Soul audiocassette: #3 "Change Myself to Change the World"

Dancing in Inner Space: "Inner Actor in Time"]

[Give a commentary yourself]

Example: *Om Shanti...I am peace...I am the creator of peace...In this new awareness...from the heart of my being...I the soul...give peace...As I move...as I talk...I am consciously peaceful and loveful...I radiate peace towards other souls...I the invisible entity...I the soul...change in each moment...to bring benefit...to transform...to hear...My mind becomes an instrument to serve...I remain aware of my self as a soul...I remember my Guide, the Ocean of Knowledge...I remain connected to the Source of unlimited spiritual power...I play my part with confidence and accuracy...giving and receiving blessings and good wishes...destroying any obstacles or negativity before it has a chance to come into expression...I experience a life of liberation from bondage...a life of contentment and service.*



Lesson 6: Tips for Success

Essential Ingredients of Karma Yoga

- Soul consciousness
- Relationship with the Supreme
- Practicing different stages of consciousness
- Traffic Control
- Beginning the day
- Ending the day
- Action Planning

101

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Soul consciousness: Keep practicing this! It's the foundation of meditation and Karma Yoga.

Relationship with the Supreme: Baba is like a friend who's always around when you need him. One thought is enough to establish the link, so keep Him in mind and experience not only more energy, tolerance, patience, love, etc., but also more power to check and change.

Practicing different stages of consciousness: Variety is good! Practice 'actor consciousness' sometimes, or be a benefactor wherever you go; or try seeing everyone around you as a soul. You can also practice radiating the qualities of the soul, choosing a different one each day. (Silence on Monday, power on Tuesday, etc.)

Traffic Control: Pause for 3 minutes at 5 set times during the day. During that time remember who you are, what your form is, what your qualities are, whose child you are and where you are from. Timings are: 7:00 a.m., 10:30 a.m., 12:30 p.m., 5:30 p.m. and 7:30 p.m.

Beginning the day: Start the day with early morning meditation and you'll establish a good foundation for the day. Choose the most elevated thoughts with which to start your day. Studying something spiritual in the morning is a good spiritual 'breakfast'.

Ending the day: Just as important as the beginning. Think about the things that went well, gain clarity and perspective on the things that didn't and set new goals for tomorrow.

Action Planning: You might want to make a two-week action plan for self-progress as follows:

The habits or actions I will:

Week	Stop doing	Start doing	Continue doing
Week One			
Week Two			



Lesson 6: Common Q & A

- Hitler - how can he possibly settle his karma?
- Hitting back
- Being born handicapped, poor or disadvantaged
- Who is responsible for a child's negative karma—the parent or the child?

102

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[Field any remaining questions. Some common ones are]:

- **Hitler** – How would he ever settle his karma? Maybe he would take innumerable, rapid births, in which he experienced deformities, illness, etc. and died after a short time. It's impossible to know, but rest assured, it is a just universe and that soul has to reap the fruit of its karma.
- **Hitting back**, i.e., revenge, doesn't settle the score but escalates the negative karma.
- People who are **born crippled or in poverty**, are abused as a child, etc., are very likely experiencing the fruit of some previous karma. While this is difficult to accept, especially if you happen to be such a person, we have to have compassion (and forgiveness) rather than be cold and think it's just their karma (or feel guilt, blame and shame if it's yours). Otherwise people will not be compassionate toward us when our karmic accounts come up for settlement (or if it's one's own karma you will be aggravating rather than settling it if you do not endure it with understanding, forbearance and grace.)
- **Who is responsible when children do bad karma? The parent or the child?** Above a certain age in most cultures, the child is considered legally responsible for his or her actions. Before that, the parent, who is anyway karmically connected to the child, is responsible for the child's actions.



Lesson 6: Wrap Up

- Distribute handouts
- Suggest homework
 - Observe the seeds you are planting
 - Try to perform actions in soul consciousness
 - Intensify your yoga practice to burn negative karma
 - Answer the following questions in your own words:
 - Who is responsible for our sorrow or happiness?
 - How can a soul erase negative karma?
 - How can a soul create a stock of happiness for the future?

103

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Distribute handouts (collect \$)

- o Secrets of Karma
- o Philosophy of Karma/ Conquest of the 5 Senses
- o 5 Types of Karmic Accounts
- o Spirituality in Action/ Spiritual Language (Based in Silence)

Suggest homework

- o Observe the seeds you are planting
- o Try to perform actions in soul consciousness; check time and action consciousness
- o Intensify your yoga practice to burn negative karma
- o Answer the following questions in your own words: [You could hand out slips of paper with the questions printed on them.]

Who is responsible for our sorrow or happiness?

How can a soul erase negative karma?

How can a soul create a stock of happiness for the future?

Suggest Resources:

- BOOKs: Pathways to Higher Consciousness; The Art of Thinking;
Spirituality in Daily Life
- CDs: Hourglass Meditations
- TAPES: Understanding Karma

Lesson 7 : The Eternal Cycle

Objectives—At the end of the session the students would:

- have a deeper understanding of eternity
- understand the process of change
- make the connection between self-transformation and world-transformation
- understand the following realities:
 - Nothing is new
 - Past is past
 - The present is most auspicious

➤ Meditation Experience: Spinning the Cycle

104
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LESSON MATERIALS to prepare beforehand:

Poster(s): Shiv Baba
Cycle

Handout(s): (some or all of the following)
 The Cosmic Cycle (Correspondence Course Lesson 5)
 The World Drama (Retreat #6)
 The World Drama Cycle (Last page Correspondence Course Lesson 5)
 Of Frogs, Captains & Icebergs...& Eagles (Marc Fourcade, Retreat #3)
 The Paradoxes of Our Age (Inside Cover H&S#15)

Copied together

CDs/ tapes: Understanding Karma audiocassette (Sr. Jayanti)
 Moving On 1 CD (Sr. Carmen)
 God CD (Sr. Carmen)
 (possibly Traveling Beyond audiocassette (Sr. Denise))

Copied together

[PLEASE REVIEW THE OBJECTIVES of this lesson before you begin, so that you are mindful of what you want to cover. Be sure to SIT WITH BABA before the student(s) arrive.]

[Begin with ½ hour of meditation. Recommended commentaries:

Understanding Karma (meditative talk) Side 2: (25 minutes)

OR

Moving On 1 CD: #2 "The Forest" (15 minutes)

AND

#4 "Inner Self" (14 minutes)

(total time – 29 minutes)]



Lesson 7: Transition from Lesson 6

How to transition into Lesson 7

- Brief review of last lesson

Were you aware of karma? What seeds did you plant? Were you soul consciousness or were you time/ action conscious? Did you answer the questions? (Who is responsible for our sorrow or happiness? How can a soul erase negative karma? How can a soul create a stock of happiness for the future?)

- Link last lesson to this lesson & briefly overview today's lesson

We looked at action/ reaction, different types of karma & how to settle accounts and create credit for the future. Actions and reactions travel in cycles. Today we will look at these cycles from a cosmic perspective and come to a deeper realization of our own nature as a result.

105

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Review last lesson:

- Were you aware of karma during the week? Did you observe the seeds you were planting? Did you practice doing actions in soul consciousness or were you time/ action conscious? Who wrote answers to the questions [If anyone, ask if they'd like to share]:
 Who is responsible for our sorrow or happiness?
 How can a soul erase negative karma?
 How can a soul create a stock of happiness for the future?

- Did anyone intensify their yoga practice to burn negative karma? If so, did you feel lighter?

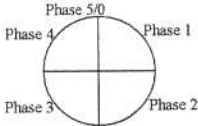
Link last lesson to this lesson: What stood out for you from Lesson 6? We looked at the phenomenon of action/ reaction, the different types of karma and how to settle our karmic accounts and create a credit account for the future.

Overview of today's lesson: The soul is energy and uses it in exchange through actions. Karma takes place in time on this earthly plane. Actions and reactions travel in cycles. Today we will look at these cycles from a cosmic perspective and come to a deeper realization of our own nature as a result.

NOTE: In some centers teachers are finding that teaching the tree first and the cycle second is a better approach. Experiment! How would you link the lesson on karma to the lesson on the tree?

Lesson 7: Concepts of Time

- Only 3 aspects of time
- Baba's perspective on time
- Linear Time vs. Cyclic Time
- Law of entropy



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- We can see that our sense of time has changed over time: look how timepieces have changed from sundials to lever clocks to pendulums to dials. While they once gave a sense of continuity, our modern digital timepieces only flash 'now'. We feel time speeding up, we never have enough time; we even say we're running out of time!
 - There are only three aspects of time—past, present and future—so where does the past go
 - For And where is the future coming from?
- From God's perspective, time is linear. We focus on beginnings and endings. From God's viewpoint outside of time, time is a cycle. Past become the future; future the past.

Cycles usually exhibit four main phases or periods, and include a smaller final phase, the transition towards the new cycle.

The aging process is characterized by dissipation or loss of energy. After the first phase of abundant energy, comes Phase 2, that of expenditure. Although there is still considerable energy, some has been expended, utilized. Using the analogy of the seasons, Phase 2 would correspond to summer.

Phase 4, the final major phase, corresponds to winter. By this time nearly all the original energy has been expended. In order to restore the energy, fresh input is needed.

It's interesting to note that the Law of Entropy applies to physical systems as well as to metaphysical entities within physical systems.

Now we're nearly ready to consider the history of human nature from a cyclic perspective. Before we do, however, there is one additional factor we must understand and that is the relationship **between** consciousness and matter.

In Lesson 1 we discussed the difference between the attributes of consciousness and those of matter. In terms of the relationship between consciousness and matter, our understanding is that the condition of nature or of matter **'reflects'** human consciousness.

In other words, when human consciousness is pure, the elements of nature are harmonious, and benign. When consciousness becomes confused, chaotic, neurotic, full of violence etc., nature also becomes polluted and exhibits imbalance and upheaval. Other examples of this principle include psychosomatic illness; how pets reflect their owners; how plants respond to vibrations.

Until recently, science considered consciousness an epiphenomenon of the brain. They still consider matter and its forms of energy to be the primary substance of the universe, regarding consciousness as an evolutionary emergence. People with spiritual perspective, however, see consciousness as the original, primary stuff of the cosmos, with matter existing independent of and secondary to it. From a spiritual perspective, consciousness is of a higher order than matter; mind over matter being the ideal.

The story of the cycle of human nature is analogous to the seasons of nature. It illustrates the primacy of consciousness over matter and also illustrates how matter reflects consciousness.

[NOTE: experiment with telling the cycle like a story!]



Lesson 7: Consciousness & Matter

- Relationship of Consciousness to Matter
 - Nature, matter reflect human consciousness
 - Consciousness is primary

107

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Once, long ago and far away, we were souls in the soul world. Coming from there, the soul, i.e., consciousness, is at its peak of purity, power and perfection. So when it comes into the physical world, nature reflects this perfection; the material world is also pure and perfect. There's nothing in the human psyche that could cause sorrow, so nothing in nature that could cause sorrow. Therefore no biting insects, pollution, illness or untimely death. Aging proceeds very slowly, so there is long life, and the soul sheds its body naturally.

Words for sorrow and death do not exist; it's therefore a **world of immortality** (link to legends of the immortals found in some cultures, especially the Chinese).

Souls at their peak of purity, power and perfection are divine in nature, and are remembered as deities, gods and goddesses. They are human beings, but their character is divine. They are naturally soul conscious. Memory of their existence can be found in nearly every culture. Peace and harmony is their way of life, therefore there's **no need for religion**, so no temples, priests or Gurus. No one remembers God at that time. Everyone is happy.

There however is a system of governance—it's been remembered as a **kingdom** of heaven, not a democracy, or a socialist republic. But it's really a meritocracy. Each member of society plays exactly that role for which he or she is best suited. It is a "hierarchical society" based on divine virtues. "Status" is based on intrinsic qualities and not on false notions of grandeur or on social inequalities—as the present connotations of "hierarchy" and "status" imply. Though there are rulers and subjects, there is neither enforced authority nor submissive subordination to that authority. The rulers are simply those who have the greatest virtues and natural wisdom.

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

It is paradise. There is the peak of civilization in every field of human endeavor, whether it be the arts, music, government, drama, linguistics and science. For example, there is the purest use of science and technology is at its highest level of development.

The earth has one enormous landmass, which has been remembered in India as Bharat, or elsewhere as Pangea or Gondwanaland. The Americas were under the ocean and the continents of Australia, Europe, Africa and Asia were combined together.

This age is called The Golden Age, or Sat Yug (Yug, or Yuga means Age):

Golden = pure or uninfluenced

Satyug = Age of Truth

Season = Spring

Karma = neutral karma. No accounts are being created.
All exchanges are equal and based on love.



Lesson 7: The Springtime of Human Nature

- Descent from the Home of Light
- Springtime
 - Natural soul consciousness
 - Immortality
 - Peace, purity, prosperity
 - Health, wealth, happiness
- Golden Age: Gold - unaffected by elements
- Sat Yug: Age of Truth

108

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The transition from Spring to Summer occurs due to entropy. The soul loses energy taking rebirth. This energy loss manifests as a slight decline in the level of consciousness. However, as the energy of the soul is full in the beginning, there is no awareness of any depletion. The world, which mirrors or reflects consciousness, matures into summer. The Golden Age paradise becomes the "semi-paradise" of the Silver Age.

The souls are discharging their original power and qualities through their actions and this naturally has an effect on the whole kingdom. Comparing the Golden Age and Silver Age is somewhat like comparing the effect of the sun on colors at full-light and its effect at half-light. The color and beauty of things are still there but their richness is a little dulled.

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

- Souls are still 80-87% pure.
- The average life span is marginally shorter.
- There is more complexity, and less quality.

This age is called The Silver Age, or Treta Yug

Silver = precious but able to be influenced, tarnished

Treta Yug = 'Three-quarters' Age, i.e. three ages are left of the cycle

Season = Summer

Karma= Is still neutral. No sinful acts are being performed, no accounts are being created and there is no sorrow.



Lesson 7: The Summer of Human Nature

➤ Summertime

- Slight decline in level of soul consciousness, but still experiencing peace, happiness & prosperity
- A reflection of the spring; semi-heaven
- Maturity, expansion, complexity, more people
- Systems and traditions develop
- More attention on form than on content/ essence

➤ Silver Age: Silver - still precious but affected by oxidation

➤ Treta Yug: 3/4 Age

109

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The level of soul-consciousness continues to decline naturally with time. Ultimately a point is reached in which souls lose authority over the sense organs of their consecutive bodies. It is not that matter suddenly acquires power over souls. Souls simply lose their dominance and start to become the slaves of their senses and thus of matter. This marks the change from "Heaven" into what we call "Hell;" from a unified and integrated existence into disunity, divergence and degradation.

Though the process is gradual, the point at which souls lose their self-control can be called a "breaking-point." The natural world reflects this precipitation from soul consciousness into body consciousness and for a time there are a series of earthquakes and natural calamities, traumatizing human consciousness into amnesia, splitting apart the human family and putting human souls at the mercy of the elements.

The sudden shift from soul consciousness to body consciousness is reflected in the shift of the earth's axis. Continents break apart, resulting in floods and deluges, and drift into their current configurations. Primitive cultures emerge, as survivors are washed up in new lands and must struggle merely to survive for several generations.

Souls have now "fallen" into complete identification with the body (body consciousness) resulting in:

- Attraction or attachment to the body; fear of death.
- Negativity (vice) entering the psyche due to trauma, pain and shock. The 'immunity' of the soul to sorrow is shattered, and it is as if the 'viruses' of the vices begin to infect us.
- Duality begins: Imbalance, happiness or sorrow, spirit and matter, male and female.
- Suddenly there are many countries. Diversity of language and culture (due to people being isolated, and lack of communication) arises. The unity of the human family is shattered.
- Recorded history begins. In the Golden and Silver Ages, no one wrote things down in order to preserve them for posterity; no monuments or memorials were built. People lived in the present. Now, however, because souls are identified with the temporal, the temporary, there is a need to preserve the memory of those and that which has passed.



LESSON 7: The Fall of Human Nature

Fall

- Sudden precipitation into body consciousness
- Corresponding drastic/ cataclysmic changes in nature
- Human family splits apart; rise of primitive cultures in addition to existing cultures
- Trauma/ amnesia

110

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At this point humanity enters the 3rd season, the fall. This age marks the beginning of the period that we know of as "Hell," and the beginning of recorded history. The period of self-forgetfulness begins. Souls now become body-conscious. The search to gain back the lost paradise begins, though it is truly "lost." The elements of nature combine to produce changes of catastrophic proportions.

The ways and acts of the deities, however, are remembered and become the stuff of myths and legends, devotion and worship.

The fall from the soul-conscious state to the body-conscious state brings with it the fall of our natural self-sovereignty. We turn to each other in search of support, love and peace, developing relationships which dispossesses us of our emotional and mental independence. As time goes on we even become dependent on facilities and external supports and comforts for happiness. In the darkness of this ignorance we remember God, whom we instinctively feel could help; but we no longer know how to connect. This age is called the Copper Age. It has these features:

- Scriptures are written and temples are built.
- Founders of religions come to play their parts of uplifting humanity. Their efforts, however, are not wholly successful, although they do slow the decline.
- Religions also begin to go through their stages or phases, from pure to impure.
- The population continues to increase as more souls come down. There is less to go around. Scarcity begins, as does the law of supply and demand.
- Entropy at the level of consciousness continues in spite of efforts of religious founders.
- Yet this fall season also yields a beautiful, harvest of art, music, literature, architecture; there is the flowering of many ideas, religions, and cultures.

This age is called The Copper Age, or Dwapur Yug.

Copper =	The metal copper is an alloy, a mixture, very influenced by acids and even by human touch. It symbolizes souls who have lost their integrity and are now subject to influence. It is a good conductor
;	easily affected or influenced and the influence is irreversible.
Dwapur Yug =	Dwapur means division, duality
Season =	Fall
Karma =	Vikarma or negative karma. Accounts begin as actions are performed in body consciousness. Sorrow and suffering begin.



Lesson 7: The Fall, continued

Fall, continued

- Duality, sorrow & search begin
- Memories of Supreme Being resurface
- Worship begins
- Memories & visions of lost ages result in deity worship
- Part of Founders of the Faiths begins

Copper Age: copper is a good conductor, very affected by elements

Dwapur Yug – Age of Duality

111

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Lesson 7: Winter

Winter

- Season of least light, cold, barren
- Confusion, sorrow & suffering peak
- Material dominates the spiritual
- Vices are accepted as the norm
- Irreligiousness, poverty, war, suffering
- Iron Age: iron a strong metal but done in by water
- Kali Yug - Dark Age

112

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The search for something higher is becoming desperate, yet at the same time impurity and decadence are becoming extreme. Inevitably, Fall turns into Winter. Human beings by this time are totally chained to the vices, creating unlimited sorrow and unrest. It is the age of utmost decline in moral, ethical and spiritual values.

In spite of the establishment of all the religions we have continued to decline rather than return to the Garden or Heaven. In this age, therefore, religion, which has itself become a source of conflict and sorrow, loses credibility. For many, religion as a basis for living is supplanted by scientific thinking. Science becomes "God" and everything is reduced to the level of material values. Towards the end of the Iron Age society becomes degraded and dehumanized. The pursuit of material ambition is generally held to be the sole aim and object of existence. In this Age:

- Consciousness is confused, polluted, weakened by negativity, doubt and sorrow.
- Population stretches the limits of the planet's resources; scarcity is widespread.
- Sorrow and suffering are widespread.
- It is the winter of our discontent.
- There is widespread war, violence and poverty.
- Nature is in upheaval: disease is rampant, pollution threatens our very breath.
- Irreligiousness occurs even within religion.
- Purity is at its lowest ebb.

[You may want to bring out the picture at this point for dramatic effect.]

This age is called The Iron Age, or Kaliyug

Iron = Iron is a hard, brittle metal, yet it can be reduced to nothing merely by water. Again this is symbolic of a soul which has completely lost its integrity and is influenced by everything.

Kali Yug = Age of darkness (kali means black)

Season = Winter

Karma = Vikarma. Ravan, or the vices, governs the actions and interactions of human souls who are completely forgetful of their true identity as spiritual beings.

It's interesting to note that in the cycle of nature, winter does not return to fall, then summer, then spring. In the same way, the cycle of human nature must go from a time of greatest darkness and lowest energy to a time of greatest enlightenment and highest energy.



Lesson 7: Confluence

Confluence

- Shift from time of greatest darkness to time of greatest light occurs rapidly
- How diamonds are formed
- Time when God plays a part
- Hidden, concurrent with Iron Age
- Age of consciousness

Diamond Age: Age of Illumination

Sangam Yug

113

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How do we get back to spring? Energy must come from somewhere to renew the world. Only God (the Supreme Power Source) has sufficient energy for this task; all other souls are tired. Only God, the One Being beyond the effect of memory loss, the One who is able to perceive all events of all time periods, has the knowledge of the whole, the truth about the nature of reality and our true

When there is the absolute decline of practiced truth, it is then necessary to re-establish the world of truth. This can only occur through a change in human consciousness, through an injection of truth into consciousness in such a way that the light of that truth illuminates and vanquishes the darkness of ignorance. Humanity must move from the period of greatest darkness to the period of greatest light.

This transition from winter back to spring occurs rapidly, during a short phase known as the Confluence Age or Diamond Age. During this age there is much chaos, as the old meets the new, as God's energy of renewal begins to reverse entropic forces. It is the most auspicious, the most beneficial age.

It is also an age of purification. Purification of human consciousness happens through realization, either by the process of yoga or through the 'Day of Judgment', when God is like a perfect mirror in which any flaws (negative sanskaras/ unfinished karmic accounts) still remaining in the soul are acutely visible. God Himself doesn't mete out punishment, but each soul 'punishes itself' through the suffering of the realization of its past mistakes and the sorrow it has caused. At that time the soul can't do anything to transform itself or settle its karma by performing redeeming actions; and so the soul suffers intensely until the karma is burnt; then it experiences sweet peace.

Souls who purify themselves through the fire of yoga, however, suffer less or not at all. In addition, because they will have made efforts to create pure karma for themselves by serving others, they will carry the effect of this fortune with them into the next cycle.

In other words, the fruit of the karmas performed by the soul in this final age is reaped when the soul enters the new cycle. It is this karmic fruit that determines the time in which a soul appears in the cycle as well as the role it plays at that time.

Diamond = is formed from coal under intense heat and pressure; changing from being black and valueless to being a most precious gem which refracts light into the seven colors of the rainbow and cuts through anything. It symbolizes the process of transformation of human consciousness from being relatively worthless to being invaluable, clear, able to reflect divine virtues and so full of Truth that no falsehood can withstand it.

Sangam Yug = Sangam means confluence, so the Confluence Age

Karma = Sukarma, positive actions. Souls who serve others with pure intent accumulate karmic credit

To understand time as cyclic and absorb its implications requires deep contemplation. It's a new perspective on reality.

Due to limitations of visual perception, the navigator of a ship sees the surface of the sea as flat yet knows the course he sails is a circular movement around the earth's surface. Similarly we do not have sufficient perspective to see that the line we individually trace through time in birth and rebirth brings us back to the same point we started from.

[You may not want to mention the next two paragraphs at this point. Sometimes identical repetition is best left until encountered in the Murlis. Please be sure to feel the pulse!]

Then again we repeat that same course because the episodes, which are recorded subconsciously, are repeating. Often we have the experience of "deja-vu;" the sense of a scene in front of you having been lived before. It has! It has happened in all previous cycles and will happen in all future ones. There is one cycle and it repeats identically. This is the truth behind the saying, "There is nothing new under the sun". That which exists cannot be destroyed and that which does not exist cannot be created. This law applies to both physical and spiritual levels. It means there are a fixed number of components, souls and atoms that combine to form the drama of life.

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

The cycle of human nature is called the original, eternal world drama cycle. It's also called the cycle of Self-realization, or in Hindi, Swadharshanchakradhari. Some self-realization implications of the cycle include:

- In the context of one's eternal part, a disastrous scene one may be experiencing at the moment is not 'the end of the world'.
- Past is past - no need to keep looking back.
- Realize the time now and create the best future.
- The cycle is self-oriented. Sometimes it is shown with a swa-stika (swa=self; astika=to know), which has been a symbol of luck and fortunes in many cultures. (Hitler turned it around.) You were perfect before, will become so again and have become so many times.
- Everything leads to benefit.



Lesson 7: Cycle of Self-Realization

- As you once were, you are destined to be again: pure, perfect, peaceful, prosperous, happy and complete
- Past is past
- The present is most auspicious

114

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Lesson 7: Other Relevant Points

- Whenever souls come down it's their Golden Age
- Souls ultimately get the part they want
- Once they come down they stay here—this is why the population increases
- How does one use the concept of the cycle in meditation?

115

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Souls have differing capacities. One analogy that helps us understand this is to compare the soul to a battery. The power contained in a battery used in a semi-truck is greater than the power of a battery in a wristwatch. When both are new, both are at their maximum potential. But a new wristwatch battery could have more juice than an old semi-truck battery whose power is fully discharged.

Similarly, a soul that plays a part from the beginning to the end of the cycle has great power, whereas a soul that takes only one birth has comparatively far less. Yet at the end of the Iron Age, a one birth, or 'new' soul might appear to be more powerful than an old, original soul. The new soul might appear to live a charmed life (money, health, fame) and be quite charismatic. He might have heard of something called sorrow, but it won't touch his life. And yet, within that one birth he will pass through his golden, silver, copper and iron stages.

Explain: How does one use this information in meditation?

- 'Spin' around each of the ages of the cycle, thinking about what *you were like and how it felt to be* in each of those times. Begin in the world of peace and happiness in your form of perfection. When you get to the Copper and Iron Ages, don't think about your degraded form. Instead, think about how your true self is being worshipped at that time (maybe even by you!). Then come to now, the Confluence Age, when you are a spiritual seeker, effort maker and server. As you regain your self-mastery and return to your original nature, you become positively angelic! So see yourself as an angel, bestowing powerful thoughts and vibrations of peace, love and truth to the world. Finally, go Home as just your essence-full self, the tiny point of pure conscient energy. Then come down again into the world of peace and happiness in your form of perfection. Cycling your thoughts and awareness in this way in your intellect will help your intellect become 'unplugged' or 'unstuck' from its limited role in the present.
- Meditate on the sanskaras you would have acquired during each segment of the cycle.
- Think about karma in terms of the cycle:
 - Soul World – Stage of Inaction
 - Golden & Silver Ages – Stage of Neutral Action
 - Copper & Iron Ages – Stage of Negative Action
 - Confluence Age – Stage of Positive Action- NOW



Lesson 7: Meditation Experience

[Play a commentary:

Recommended commentary:

God CD:

#2 "A Meeting" (13 minutes).

OR

Traveling Beyond audiocassette:

#4 "The Cycle of Time" (10 minutes)]

Spinning the Cycle

Give a Commentary:

Example: Om Shanti. This world drama spins in repeating cycles...there is no beginning or end for either physical or spiritual energy...it is merely in a constant state of change...in a cyclic pattern...I am eternal...Nature is eternal...each moment is eternal...it has been witnessed countless times in the past, and will be seen again in the future...I am a soul...I am eternal...I am at the Confluence Age of the world cycle once again...I sit very still...The memory comes back to me...I have enjoyed this relationship with God eternally...I am the eternal child of God...God is my eternal Father, Mother...my eternal Teacher...teaching me the knowledge of eternity...my eternal Guide...showing me the way back Home...I enjoy eternal peace...I enjoy eternal bliss...I am enjoying Baba's eternal gifts in these eternal moments...I will dance with the knowledge for all time...Oh, my sweetest, Beloved Baba...such joy will stay with me for all time...as we dance out this eternal drama of souls, God and nature...when I experience eternity it is impossible for me to know worry...rather I know and understand the laws of this universe...this eternal game...Dearest Baba...eternally you show me the very essence of peace and bliss...I sit for a long eternal time with you, my Baba, in the purity of silence...and then the thought comes that now is the time to awaken and create my eternal fortune...and again I become aware of the physical dimension and the drama of life...Om Shanti



Lesson 7: Tips for Success

This knowledge, while it can be very intellectually satisfying, should not just sit in one's intellect. It is meant to be continually reflected on and its implications are meant to be understood to such an extent that one's limited attitudes and perspectives completely change.

Appreciate & Apply Spiritual Knowledge to:

- Make the soul powerful
- Cause feelings of happiness to dominate the consciousness
- Attain a naturally peaceful outlook
- Change one's personality

117

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Consider the benefits of appreciating and applying the knowledge:

It makes the soul powerful. It makes you aware of your powers and true self-respect. You were divine originally and so you are destined to become again. Any inferiority complex ends and one experiences oneself as a great soul. Self-confidence awakens as weak thoughts diminish. Weak thoughts are replaced by more powerful thoughts such as "God Himself is with me. I will definitely be successful."

Causes feelings of happiness to dominate the consciousness: Happiness and intoxication can only be attained by understanding and experiencing knowledge.

Gives one a naturally peaceful outlook: Only what happened before will happen, so there's no point in worrying. Understanding and experiencing take us to the depths of the ocean of knowledge. In the depths, there are no storms, but only peace and limitless treasures.

Changes one's personality: Limited views and thought patterns which give birth to various obstacles can be finished by churning the knowledge.



Lesson 7: Common Q &A

- Why does a perfect world 'fall'?
- What's the point?
- What about the dinosaurs?
- What about animals?
- What about evolution?
- Why not a spiral instead?
- Destruction...
- Duration and identical repetition (only if mentioned)

111

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Field any remaining questions. Some common ones are:

- If the world was so perfect why did it have to fall? This and similar questions have been debated throughout history. The many stories about the 'fall' are symbolic attempts to describe what in fact was just a natural process.
- What's the point if it just keeps repeating? Only in sorrow do we question this. We have been brainwashed with the concepts of evolution and 'progress' but the 'purpose' of life is simply expression and experience. Within the cycle the entirety of human experience and expression are encompassed. During three-fourths of it there is primarily happiness and benefit.
- What about the dinosaurs? They are the result of mutations from the nuclear fallout which occurs during the final scenes of destruction of the old world.
- What about animals? They don't need to be purified; as our consciousness deteriorated, so did theirs. As our consciousness becomes non-violent, so they are also transformed. In the Golden Age they are vegetarian.
- What about evolution? Evolution is really de-evolution (revolution!). But be careful not to make too light of evolution. For some people it is a 'sacred cow' and to put down evolution is like defaming their religion.
- Why not a spiral instead? During this time, our ascension back to a state of elevated consciousness is like a spiral. Time itself, however, functions like a clock.
- Destruction... World as we know it has to transform in order for the Golden Age to come. Karma has to be settled. Destruction is actually a natural process, inherent in any task of creation. This old world needs to be purified and cleansed and brought back into balance environmentally. However, we do not put a lot of attention on destruction, (which we prefer to call transformation) because we are busy working to establish the new world. Anyway we must leave these bodies; we are preparing to do so with detachment and peace.
- Duration and identical repetition. [We have suggested that it is best not to mention this aspect of the drama in this lesson. If it has come up, suggest that they keep an open mind. If students ask why it can't be different, an answer that Sr. Mohini has given is that it is already the best. It can't be improved upon. And if any scene were removed it would be incomplete.]



Lesson 7: Wrap Up

- Distribute handouts
- Suggest homework
 - Emerge the memory of how you were when you were whole and complete. Realize you're going to be that again.
 - Identify sanskaras you might have acquired during each of the different ages.

119

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Distribute handouts (Collect \$)

- o The Cosmic Cycle
- o The World Drama
- o The World Drama Cycle
- o The Laws of Karma & Time
- o Of Frogs, Captains & Icebergs...& Eagles / The Paradoxes of Our Age

Suggest homework

- o Emerge the memory of how you were when you were whole and complete. Realize you're going to be that again.
- o 'Spin' the cycle in your meditation and cultivate detachment from this old world, the old body, etc.

Suggest Resources:

BOOKS: Eternal Drama of Souls, Matter and God, The Voyagers

CDs: ANY previously mentioned

TAPES: World Drama Cycle



Lesson 8: The Tree of Life

Objectives—At the end of the sessions the students would have:

- an appreciation of the different religions & how each relates to the Seed and the roots
- realization of the value of spiritual knowledge compared to the path of devotion
- an appreciation of the significance of the present time when we play a direct role with God
- Meditation Experience: Sitting under the Kalpa Tree

120

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LESSON MATERIALS to prepare beforehand

Poster(s): Shiv Baba Poster
Tree

Handout(s): (some or all of the following)
Eternal World Tree (Correspondence Course Lesson 6)
Tree of Life (Retreat #7)
In Their Hearts (Retreat #10, back cover) Copied together
Women and Spirituality (Sudesh Didi, Retreat #2)
Unity (virtue sheet) Copied together
How to Take Yourself Lightly (Br. BrijMohan, Retreat #3)

CDs/ tapes: World Drama Cycle audiocassette (Sr. Jayanti)
Moving On 1 (Sr. Carmen)
God CD (Sr. Carmen)
Explorations of the Soul audiocassette (optional)
World of Relationships audiocassette (optional)

[PLEASE REVIEW THE OBJECTIVES of this lesson before you begin, so that you are mindful of what you want to cover. Be sure to SIT WITH BABA before the student(s) arrive.]

[Begin with ½ hour of meditation. Recommended commentaries:

World Drama Cycle (meditative talk) Side2: "Self & World Transformation" (½ hour) OR

Moving On 1 CD: #1 "Orbs of Light" (16 minutes)

AND #3 "Balloon" (11 minutes)

(total time – 27 minutes)]

[If you were formerly Christian, Muslim or Jewish, etc. please be aware of any subtle tendency to place more emphasis (either positive or negative) on that branch. Also be aware that students can be vastly more knowledgeable about some branches than you are. This is not a course on comparative religion and we are not experts in that field. Our aim is simply to give the essence of the tree and its branches.]



Lesson 8: Transition from Lesson 7

How to transition into Lesson 8

▪ Brief review of last lesson

Did anyone try to picture themselves as a divine being, or emerge the memory of feeling whole and complete? Did you 'spin the cycle' in your meditation in order to help you cultivate some detachment from the current scenes of the world drama?

▪ Link last lesson to this lesson & briefly overview today's lesson

We have now covered the 5 Ages of the World Drama Cycle and the characteristics of each age, understanding what time it is now and what's coming next. Today we will look at the cycle from a different perspective, that of the 'Tree of Life'.

121

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Review last lesson:

- Did anyone try to picture themselves as a divine being of the Golden Age, or emerge a memory of when you felt whole and complete? Did you 'spin the cycle' in your meditation in order to help you cultivate some detachment from the current scenes of the world drama?
- What do you remember from Lesson 7? We covered the 5 Ages of the World Drama Cycle and the characteristics of each age, understanding what time it is now and what's coming next.

Link to today's lesson: Today we will look at the cycle from a different perspective.

- The cycle of history can be expressed in the form of a tree. The "Tree of Life" is an analogy used in all religions. Often called the Kalpa Tree (Kalpa means cycle) or the "Tree of Humanity. God is the Seed of this tree. From the Seed come the roots, the foundation and from them the tree grows. Each one's relationship to the Seed reveals their path and part. Whereas the Cycle tells us what time it is, the Tree reveals what we should be doing now.
- Sometimes the Tree is also referred to as the "Religio-political Tree of World History". History is primarily about religion and politics. Originally they were integrated, but over time they have become completely separate and often conflicting sectors.
- This lesson will give us an even greater understanding of the depth of drama. Whereas the Cycle is self-oriented, the Tree is a **tool to see the self in relation to the world and its variety of actors and plots**. It shows us that we truly are one family, and that everyone has a valid part. It helps us to see our place in the scheme of things and appreciate the part of other actors.
- The Tree reveals the **unity of the human family**, showing us that souls of all religions have a rightful place in the eternal scheme of things. It shows our interconnectedness, our roots and our ancestry.
- The Kalpa Tree is sometimes called "the wish-fulfilling tree". The idea is that if you sit beneath it, all your wishes will be fulfilled. Where would you wish to come in the tree? Consider the role you wish to play with God at this time.

From Baba's perspective in the Soul World, the tree is inverted (upside down)! Baba, as the Seed of the tree ***contains the knowledge of the whole Tree, the essence from which the whole tree grows.***

Souls who draw nourishment in the form of this knowledge and assimilate it in their practical lives establish the roots, the foundation of the tree.



Lesson 8: The Seed & the Trunk

- The Seed
 - God is the Seed of the Tree of Humanity
 - The Seed is perfect
 - The Seed contains the knowledge of the whole Tree, the essence from which the whole tree grows
- The Trunk
 - The first emergence from the seed is pure and divine
 - The Trunk is characterized by unity, integrity, stability—a strong foundation
 - 'Religious' values are an integral aspect of governance

122

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From their pure actions a healthy young shoot emerges which later becomes the trunk of the tree.

Souls who populate the Golden and Silver Ages comprise the trunk of the tree. Their **unity** is reflected in the fact that there is only **one religion, one culture, one language and one system of government**. The 'one religion' of the Golden and Silver Ages is later known as the Adi Sanatan Devi-Devta Dharma (literally: "The Original Eternal Religion of Deities"). It has no external trappings. Since each soul is perfectly fulfilled during this time there is no search for any type of higher values, no one is worshipped and even God is not remembered. The first half of the cycle is the experience of the results of the efforts of each individual in the previous Confluence Age towards self-realization and perfection. The lives of the deities are a reflection of the qualities they had absorbed from God Shiva at the end of the previous cycle.

As such, each one is the embodiment of Baba's qualities number-wise according to those prior individual efforts and hence has no need to remember God or praise Him. **At this time there are no churches, temples, priests, scriptures, rituals or any paraphernalia of the path of devotion and worship.** The Hindi word for religion is Dharma, which means 'way of life'. The 'religion' of this time is the practical lives of the people. The 'temples' are their bodies. Because the people embody God's qualities, they are later remembered as "gods" and "goddesses" and also "deities."

What is the political system of governance at this time? This was the time of heaven on earth and heaven has always been remembered as a kingdom. We always say the kingdom of heaven, never the democracy of heaven or the socialist republic of heaven.



Lesson 8: Branches Begin

The Copper Age is when the branches emerge. This is the age of worship and duality. The deities fall and the balance is lost. True values are gradually replaced by artificial ones. Harmony gives place to conflict and competition. In an effort to regain the bliss of the former state of the world, we begin to search. We first of all turn to the One whose impression is laid deepest in us from the end of the previous cycle.

It was God Shiva who had bestowed the kingdom of paradise of the Golden and Silver Ages to the human souls. So when darkness and confusion begin, our minds turn automatically to Him in the form of pure, single-minded worship. The first form of worship is of the incorporeal God whose oval image we make and call Shiva Lingum (the image of Shiva.) The first temple built at the beginning of the Copper Age was called Somnath (the Lord of Nectar) where we installed a diamond image to represent the self-existent beauty of God.

However, as the intellect becomes weaker the souls are less able to comprehend the subtlety of a single, incorporeal Supreme Being. They begin to imagine God to have incarnated in human form or even animal forms, or they believe Him omnipresent. The deity-souls — still on earth though in different bodies—begin to worship what they themselves used to be and construct temples to Radhe, Krishna, Lakshmi, Narayan, Ram, Sita and innumerable others. The same “gods” are remembered all over the earth with different names. The religion of India, no longer meriting the title “Deity religion,” is called Hinduism after the place in which this type of religious practice develops, i.e., Hindustan.

During this period the scriptures start to be written: the Bhagavad-Gita, the Vedas, Puranas, Upanishads, the epic Mahabharata and Ramayana and so on, in an attempt to explain and return to the former higher glory. The Shrimat Bhagavad-Gita (literally God’s song of Supreme Instruction) becomes like a mother for all scriptures of all lands. Its principal message is summed up in the phrase “Manmanabhav”—“remember Me (God) alone;” but though we remember Him we don’t know Him, and in this ignorance we begin to venerate a thousand substitutes. Hinduism degenerates into polytheism and pantheism.

It is during this time that other parts of the world are explored and colonized as groups of human beings travel here and there in an effort to regain the art of living in peace and harmony. Out of this search, religions spring up. The solid trunk begins to branch out, reflecting the change in consciousness from integrity to duality, from soul consciousness to body consciousness. As the tree ages and energy disperses into the branches, there is a decline in both spiritual and material power.

As time goes on even the branches begin to bifurcate. Religion and politics go their separate ways (separation of Church and State) and art also becomes divorced from being an expression of the divine.

- The ‘fall’ triggers remembrance of God
- Worship, at first unadulterated, takes on a variety of forms.
- The branches represent the Copper Age, the age of search and of worship.
- Each branch is an attempt to bring truth, peace and happiness to the world.
- Religions are established by their founding fathers, scriptures are written.
- Church and state begin to separate.
- Duality and conflict of belief emerges.

123

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Lesson 8: Abraham

During this period, pure souls come directly from the soul world with the specific role of founding the different religions and thereby permitting the souls who have roles to play within those religions to also come. Abraham (in approximately 500 B.C.E*) arrives into a world where the polytheistic worship of the deities is the order of the day.

- 500 B.C.E
- Arrives in a polytheistic culture with a message that God is One
- External effort to reach the Promised Land
- Emphasis on God's law
- Moses & the 10 commandments
- Scripture: Old Testament (Torah)

His **message is that God is only One**. His role is to create a **religion based on the law of God**, under the fatherhood of the one Supreme God Jehovah (a word which seems to have etymological resemblance to the word Shiva). He sets out with his people to reach the 'promised land'.

A religio-socio-political system develops around him, which gives initial birth to what is later called Islam (literally, surrender to God). Judaism develops later through one of Abraham's family branches in the person of **Moses**, who seeks to codify that which his ancestor Abraham had initiated.

From this branch come the **10 Commandments**, which are necessary basic moral parameters at that time to give people a sense of the bottom line of right and wrong.

Unlike many other religions, Judaism does not focus much on abstract cosmological concepts. There is substantial room for personal opinion on all of these matters. Judaism is more concerned about actions than beliefs. Also Judaism focuses on relationships: the relationship between God and mankind, between God and the Jewish nation, between the Jewish nation and the land of Israel, and between human beings.

The scriptural basis of Judaism is the **Torah, or old testament**.

[Show how the branch goes through its golden, silver, copper and iron stages. Now there are 5 main sub-branches: orthodox or Hassidic, conservative, reform, liberal, and progressive. The same thing happens to all the branches.]

Some basic Jewish beliefs [for background information only. Please do not share all these with students! It's way too much information!]:

1. God exists. God is one and unique, incorporeal and eternal.
2. Prayer is to be directed to God alone and to no other. God knows the thoughts and deeds of men.
3. God will reward the good and punish the wicked. There will be a Messiah. The dead will be resurrected.
4. The words of the prophets (Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, Aaron and others) are true. Moses' prophecies are true, and Moses was the greatest of the prophets.
5. The written Torah (first 5 books of the Bible) and oral Torah (teachings now contained in the Talmud and other writings) were given to Moses. There will be no other Torah.

*NOTE: In deference to the non-Christian peoples of the world, 'B.C.E.' is now officially used rather than 'B.C'. B.C. meant 'Before Christ'. B.C.E. means 'Before the Common Era'. Instead of A.D., C.E. or Common Era, is now used.

In India, where there is a growing dissatisfaction with the now rampant idolatry and confusing pantheon of "gods" Buddha arrives (in approximately **250 B.C.E.**) with a basically humanistic approach. He makes no mention of God but says that suffering is due to desires and that liberation involves their suppression. The core of the Buddha's teaching is the **Four Noble Truths**: There is suffering. There is a cause to suffering. There is an end to suffering. There is a path out of suffering (the **Noble 8-fold path**).

Right action	Right livelihood
Right belief	Right endeavor
Right aspiration	Right thought
Right speech	Right meditation

The key word of course is "right" and it is that very word which has been tossed back and forth between the religions and even within Buddhism itself, as it splintered into various sects.

The main Buddhist scripture is the **Dhammapada** ("dhamma" meaning teaching and "pada" meaning path). It comprises "423 verses in Pali uttered by the Buddha on some 305 occasions for the benefit of a wide range of human beings." (About.com)



Lesson 8: Buddha

- 250 B.C.E.
- Arrives in a world where suffering exists
- Internal path of mindfulness, compassion & service
- Emphasis on karma rather than relationship with God
- 4 Noble Truths; 8-fold path
- Scripture: Dhammapada, Sutras & Texts

125

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Some basic Buddhist beliefs [for background information only. Please do not share all these with students! It's way too much information!]:

1. There is no transcendent or immanent or any other type of God, Gods, Goddess, and/or Goddesses.
2. Humans are trapped in a repetitive cycle of birth, life, death and rebirth. One's goal is to escape from this cycle and reach Nirvana where the mind experiences complete freedom, liberation and non-attachment. Suffering ends because desire and craving -- the causes of suffering -- are no more.
3. The Buddha referred to his teaching as a raft to leave this shore of suffering and impermanence, and to get to the other shore of bliss and safety, True Permanent Reality, or Nirvana. Upon realization of Nirvana, the raft is no longer needed.
4. Buddha referred to his teaching as the Middle Path because it avoids the extremes of both self-indulgence in the world and the self-mortification of strict asceticism.
5. Buddhism is rational and requires personal effort. Only one's own efforts can Perfect Wisdom be realized. The emphasis is on seeing, knowing and understanding Truth. Each individual is responsible for his or her own emancipation from anguish and suffering. Buddhism allows each individual to study and observe Truth internally and requires no blind faith before acceptance.
6. Buddhism advocates no dogmas, no creeds, no rites, no ceremonies, no sacrifices, no penances, all of which must usually be accepted on blind faith.
7. Buddhism is not a system of faith and worship but rather a path to enlightenment.

Next comes the Christ soul to found the Christian "dynasty." He appears at a time in the 'drama' when **people are oppressed by both political and religious leaders; where the letter of God's law has become more important than its spirit.** He taught that God is not only lawful, **God is also loveful.** He therefore taught that we should **love one another as brothers and sisters** and uphold the commandments of "Our Father who art in Heaven."

He also bears the message that the lost paradise will come again and that the ones who will be able to be born there are those who have "reconciled themselves to God." However the focus on Christ as the Savior, rather than on his teachings, had a detrimental impact on human responsibility. Attention became so focused on the personage of Christ that he became equated with God. The scripture of Christianity is primarily the **New Testament** of the Bible.



Lesson 8: Christ

- Arrives where people are oppressed by both political and religious leaders; where the letter of God's law has become more important than the spirit of it
- Emphasis that God is Love, a gentle Redeemer, giver of salvation
- Teaches brotherly love, mercy, tolerance, sacrifice
- Teaches internal truths but becomes an external icon
- Scripture: New Testament

126

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Some basic beliefs of Christianity [for background information only. Please do not share all these with students! It's way too much information!]:

1. God is a single deity who exists as a Trinity of three separate personalities: the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
2. God created the universe and the first couple, Adam and Eve. There was an original golden era in the Garden of Eden.
3. Adam and Eve were seduced by Satan into disobeying God's instructions and eating forbidden fruit. That act brought sin into the world, which has been inherited by all of humanity.
4. The ancient Israelites were God's chosen people, to whom he gave a complete set of laws to govern their behavior until the arrival of Jesus. (Christians have various conflicting beliefs about the status of God's covenants with the Jewish people today.)
5. Conservative Christians generally believe that the original writings of the Bible were without error.
6. There is evidence, however that the Bible originally was full of references to rebirth, and that all such references were removed around the time of the Emperor Justinian because he did not accept the idea of Christ having to reincarnate. (If anyone can corroborate this, please email bkeugene@msn.com)
7. Christians believe that God appeared on earth in human form as Jesus because there is a need for a personal savior. Through Jesus' death, the relationship between God and Man (which had been damaged by Adam and Eve's sin) can be restored through the process of salvation.
8. Almost all Christians agree that everyone has eternal life. However, Christianity had traditionally taught that the destiny of most people is to go to Hell for endless torture because of their sins, without any hope of mercy or an end to their suffering. Only that very small minority who have achieved salvation before death will live forever in heaven. Whether one has been saved is thus a topic of great importance—more important to a traditional Christian than any other factor in life.
9. Salvation is achieved through good works, specific beliefs and/or sacraments.
10. There will be a return of the savior to earth at some time in the future.
11. Most conservative Christians believe there will be an end of the world as we know it in the near future at which time there will be a **Rapture**. This involves the resurrection of all saved Christians who have died in the past. Both they and currently living, saved Christians will rise towards Jesus Christ in the sky.



Lesson 8: Shankaracharya

[Note: because in the west we do not have much knowledge about Shankaracharya, you may have to provide a little more information about this branch. However please use good judgment and provide just the essence!] In medieval India, a new religious movement breaks out that emphasizes devotion to God as the sole means of salvation. Remembered as the Bhakti Movement, it leaves a profound impact on the life and culture of Indians in subsequent centuries.

Shankaracharya is the first of three acharyas (teachers) of this movement who reforms Hinduism by interpreting and writing ancient sacred texts so that all people have access to them. These acharyas are credited with the status of present day Hindu thought and philosophy.

Shankaracharya lives only for thirty-two years, but during this time, he consolidates the various schools of worship and brings them under the umbrella of one philosophical principle, *Advaita* (monism philosophy). He establishes (through scholarly argument) that the original teaching of the Vedas was that God is one (*omnipresent*) and the study of the Vedas is the only way to salvation.

[Basic belief: In *Advaita*, worldly life is illusory because it is continually coming and going, like images on a screen. Shankaracharya declared: "The self is real, The world is illusory". He also declared that the Universe is permeated by God. When scholars pointed out the contradiction between the two statements, he said that worldly life is lived like the moving scenes on a permanent screen. In this process the world and the Divine become one as it were, like the oneness of the screen and the picture in it.]

Shankaracharya is not the founder of Hinduism. Hinduism is the only religion that has no founding father. It is an eclectic blend of beliefs and practices that developed over time among the souls who were once deities, members of the original deity religion. The word 'Hinduism' was ascribed to these people by the British, according to the region in which they lived, i.e., Hindustan. [Hinduism in one sense continues as the trunk of the tree; however Shankaracharya's teachings branch out from its ancient form, which is why he's shown on a branch.]

Shankaracharya is important because he structured the religious landscape of India, establishing four monasteries in the four corners of the country: Kashmir in the North, Dwaraka in the West, Puri in the East and in Kanchi in the South. All the heads of these institutions are today known as Shankaracharyas and wield tremendous political power in India. To distinguish these pontiffs from the first preceptor, Shankaracharya is referred to as Adi Shankaracharya.

Coming **500 years after Christ**, Shankaracharya arrives in the drama when **life is becoming increasingly degraded; where people are being oppressed by karmic bondages**. Shankaracharya is considered an ideal Sannyasis (renunciate), one who practices the path of **renunciation, isolation, purification and penance**. Leading Sannyasis are called "Swamis" and are revered as "**gurus**" or "spiritual guides." Physical systems of yoga, such as Hatha Yoga, Kriya Yoga, Kundalini Yoga, Mantra Yoga and so on are developed under the tutelage of the Sannyasis in attempts to establish a link with God or the element of light (Brahm). Many develop occult powers or 'siddhis' as a result. The Vedas, Upanishads and the Shrimat Bhagwad Gita are the principle religious texts utilized by sanyassis.

- 500 C.E.
- Arrives when life is becoming degraded; where people are being oppressed by karmic bondages
- Brings belief in the omnipresence of God
- Reorganizes Sannyasis into 10 main orders.
- Popularizes the scriptures: Vedas, Upanishads, Gita, etc.

127

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One hundred years later (about 600 C.E.) Mohammed arrives **amidst political disunity and religious degeneration** to start a revival movement within Islam which had degenerated since Abraham's time. Emphasizing that **God is One, the Light**, and that all others are simply messengers, teaches **surrender to God**. He codifies their practices in the chapters of the Islamic scripture, the **Koran** and attempts to unify the scattered Islamic states under the banner of Allah, the **One God**. **no images or objects of worship** in Islam, only the Word, beautifully woven into the structure and design of the mosques.



Lesson 8: Mohammed

- 600 C.E.
- Arrives amidst political disunity and religious degeneration
- Emphasis that God is only One; all others are messengers
- God is Light, the Noor
- No images or objects of worship; only the Word
- Teaches surrender
- Scripture: Koran

128

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Some basic beliefs of Islam: [for background information only. Please do not share all these with students! It's way too much information!]:

1. God, or Allah, exists. God is one, unique, and incomparable. God has no son nor partner, and none has the right to be worshipped but Him alone. He is the true God, and every other deity is false. God is All-Hearing, the All-Seeing, and the All-Knowing.
2. Muslims believe in the prophets and messengers of God, starting with Adam, including Noah, Abraham, Ishmael, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, and Jesus. But God's final message to man, a reconfirmation of the eternal message, was revealed to the Prophet Muhammad
3. God revealed books to His messengers as proof for mankind and as guidance for them. Among these books is the *Quran*, which God revealed to the Prophet Muhammad. It deals with: wisdom, doctrine, worship, transactions, law, etc., but its basic theme is the relationship between God and His creatures. At the same time, it provides guidelines and detailed teachings for a just society, proper human conduct, and an equitable economic system.
4. The *sunnah* (what the Prophet Muhammad said, did, or approved of) is the second source in Islam. The *sunnah* is comprised of *hadeeths*, which are reliably transmitted reports by the Prophet Muhammad's companions of what he said, did, or approved of.
5. Muslims believe in the Day of Judgment (the Day of Resurrection) when all people will be resurrected for God's judgment according to their beliefs and deeds.
6. Muslims believe in Divine Predestination and that God has given human beings freewill to choose right or wrong; also that human beings are responsible for their choices.
7. The belief in Divine Predestination includes belief in four things: 1) God knows everything. He knows what has happened and what will happen. 2) God has recorded all that has happened and all that will happen. 3) Whatever God wills to happen happens, and whatever He wills not to happen does not happen. 4) God is the Creator of everything.

As the Iron aged period commences, the harmony the world once knew is now completely shattered. We enter into an era of strife, which later becomes full-fledged war. This is the age of **ignorance and darkness**. Worship and blind faith in fact lead souls further into degradation and hence further away from God, the Seed of truth. Almost anything is worshipped in an attempt to bring back the former purity and power.

More branches appear [see the example of Sikhism on the next slide] and the four main religions of Hinduism, Islam, Buddhism and Christianity divide into sub-branches as there is no universal application of their founder's teachings. After passing through their own different stages of purity, they too reach their last stage of total diversification and disunity. The human souls coming into this time are represented by the twigs and leaves.

In this spiritual confusion many cults, sects and 'isms' also emerge. Not only has **religion become irreligion**, but both religion and philosophy become materialistic. **Politics becomes corrupt**. The last twigs of the tree are extremely distant from the Seed. Our lives and relationships with others become devoid of the essential qualities of real love, peace and happiness. **Life is controlled by the vices**.

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

Natural calamities increase. Disease, premature death, accidents, poverty and suffering make life in this world a veritable "hell." People become complete slaves to their sense organs. Great confusion exists as to the true identity of God. Without knowing who or what He is and does, people remain powerless.



Lesson 8: The Twigs & Leaves

- The twigs and leaves represent the Iron Age, the age of ignorance and darkness
- Religion becomes irreligion
- Politics becomes corrupt
- Materialism dominates and souls are ruled by the vices

129

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Lesson 8: Guru Nanak

An example of an Iron-Aged branch is Sikhism. In a part of the world where the concept of omnipresence has become widely held, the founder, Guru Nanak, emphasizes that **there is only One God** and that **we have been separated from Him** for a long time. By this time religion has become irreligiousness. Guru & nature worship are common and faith and belief are characterized by spiritual pride & superstition.

Guru Nanak passes on his leadership of this new religion to nine successive Gurus. The final living Guru, Guru Gobind Singh dies in 1708. Before his death in 1708 Guru Gobind Singh declared that the Sikhs no longer need a living guru and appoints the scripture Sri Guru Granth Sahib as his spiritual successor. This Sikh Holy Book (Guru Granth Sahib) is the perpetual Guru, there is no place in Sikhism for a living Guru today. Sikhism is the only religion which has given a Holy Book the status of a religious preceptor.

The name of the religion means learner. It is often mispronounced 'seek' It should be pronounced 'se-ikh', with the final 'kh' sound like the 'kh' in Mikhail Gorbachev.

Historians and specialists in Eastern religions generally believe that Sikhism is an amalgamation of many beliefs, originally related to the Bhakti movement within Hinduism and the Sufi branch of Islam, to which many independent beliefs and practices were added.

Sikhism is a good example of how, as human consciousness became more material-minded over time, spiritual concepts began to be portrayed physically and believed in literally. The Golden Temple at Amritsar (the Lake of Nectar) which contains a golden throne (Immortal Throne) is a symbol of the seat of the soul in a body purified by spiritual knowledge (nectar).

At the very end of the Iron Age we see the extremes of this materialistic trend. Religion has degenerated to the level of superstition and ordinariness, witness the "plastic Jesus on the dashboard of the car" (Line from a song in the 70's) and the plastic Krishna on the dashboard of nearly every vehicle in India.

Sikhism is a **religion of the heart** rather than religion that focuses on external forms and rituals. Chanting is a predominant religious practice, and the scripture is the **Guru Granth Sahib**.

Some basic beliefs of Sikhism. [for background information only. Please do not share all these with students! It's way too much information!]:

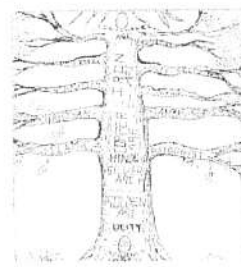
1. There is a single, Formless, Immortal God, with many names, who can be known through meditation. There is only one God, he is the Creator, Sustainer and Destroyer. God cannot take human form.
2. There is a repetitive cycle of birth, life and death, karma, and reincarnation. The goal of human life is to break the cycle of births and deaths and merge with God. This can be accomplished by following the teachings of the Guru, meditation on the Holy Name and performance of acts of service and charity.
3. The five cardinal vices are *Kam* (lust), *Krodh* (anger), *Lobh* (greed), *Moh* (worldly attachment) and *Ahankar* (pride). If one can overcome these, they will achieve salvation. However, celibacy or renunciation of the world is not necessary to achieve salvation. The devotee must live in the world yet keep his mind pure.
4. All forms of blind rituals such as fasting, religious vegetarianism, pilgrimages, superstitions, yoga, as well as any form of idol worship are discouraged.
5. Sikhism rejects all distinctions of caste, creed, race or sex, believing that everyone has equal status in the eyes of God. (In contrast to Hinduism, full equality of women is advocated and there is rejection of female infanticide, sati (wife burning), and *purdah* (women wearing veils). Widows are allowed to remarry.)
6. Honest labor and work, rather than begging, are the approved way of living ones life. Individuals are expected to help others in need through charity and community service is also an integral part of Sikhism (for example, the free community kitchens found at every *Gurudwara*).

- 1500 C.E.
- Arrives at a time of irreligiousness, guru & nature worship, spiritual pride & superstition
- Restores concept of One God in a culture of belief in omnipresence
- Reminds us that we have been separated from God for a long time
- Emphasis on religion of the heart rather than religion of external forms and ritual
- Scripture: Guru Granth Sahib

130

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- Maximum expansion of branches and twigs
- Decay sets in



The tree finally reaches its maximum growth towards the end of the Iron Age and various factors inherent in the scheme of things are brought into play. Life on the planet is becoming unsustainable due to: poverty, violence, hatred & despair; population growth; depletion of arable land; peaking & decline in agricultural yields; loss of biological diversity; decreasing availability of useable energy; depletion of the ozone layer, proliferation of nuclear weapons.

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At this time, God's role as Creator comes into action. He knows that in order to plant a new tree He has to prepare the roots anew. The ***time of root development is the Confluence Age.***

Just as both the seed and roots are incognito (hidden underground) in an ordinary tree, so the ***work of world transformation being done by the Supreme Soul and instrumental human souls is largely incognito.***

At the same time as the Iron Age is reaching its climax, the Creator is doing His work.

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

Baba reactivates the potentialities of the "***root-souls,***" or those very souls who had participated in the creation of the tree at the end of the previous cycle and who had later taken birth during the Golden and Silver Ages. He rejuvenates those souls by reminding them of who they are and through them His message spreads to all souls of all religions who begin to understand that now is the time to have connection with the Seed.



Lesson 8: The Roots

- The roots represent the Confluence Age, a time of creation and destruction.
- It's a confluence of the old world and the new as well as a time when souls meet God again.
- The root souls are rejuvenated.
- The work of the Seed and the Roots is incognito.

132

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How can we use the information of this lesson in meditation? Sit in meditation as though you were sitting underneath the tree as one of the roots, drawing nourishment directly from the Seed of the Tree. Seeing the myriad of roles that have been played out over the life of the Tree, experience contentment and detachment. (No two leaves are identical, so why should I expect anyone to think or feel the way I do?)



Lesson 8: Meditation Experience

Sitting under the Kalpa Tree

133

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Imagine withdrawing yourself from the influence of all of the branches and filling with Baba's qualities. Although there is some truth in the teachings of all branches, which accounts for their strength, no branch has the whole truth. The branches on the western side have given us an awareness of relationship with God; however they didn't give us the awareness of karma and rebirth. The other side diminished the role of God and took us away from Him, however they also gave us mindfulness and meditation. One's connection with the Seed restores one's understanding of the whole.

Now think of yourself as one of the root souls, one of the ancestors of the Tree of Humanity. As you draw love, peace and truth from the Seed, send the energy of those pure vibrations throughout the Tree, so that even the souls at the ends of the tiniest branches experience a moment of peace, a moment of freedom from desire, a moment of relief from sorrow.

[Play a commentary: Recommended commentaries:

God CD: #3 "Solutions" (15 minutes).

Other Suggestions:

Explorations of the Soul audiocassette : #2 "The Tree of Life" (9 minutes)

World of Relationships CD: #4 "Good Wishes, Pure Feelings"]

Give a Commentary:

Example: Om Shanti...I...am...light...pure light...pure consciousness...I am the life force that controls... rules... and lies within...this physical costume... As I look towards others...I no longer look at them in terms of their dress...religion...sex...education...all labels disappear...I see my brother...a being like me...a being whose original, true qualities...are as mine... peace...love...truth...light...whose true form is identical to mine...that of a tiny star...a being of light...I learn to see specialties rather than weaknesses...latent potentials which lie hidden...within myself...within my brother...this is my family... of humanity...we souls once came from the same Home...our land of golden-red light... beyond... we once had only one Father...one Mother...the Supreme Being of Light...each one of my brothers remembers this Being...I see us all with respect and unconditional love...as the children of that Being...My Baba is the Seed of the Tree of Humanity...the family of humanity in the form of a tree shows me that we all come from the same Source...we are interconnected...everyone of us belongs here...the branches have lacked the knowledge to come together...so each as claimed their path to be the tree...yes, each branch is unique and has added its beauty to the tree...but now it is time to remember the Seed... and the common heritage we share as children of that Seed. Om Shanti

Try meditating (for 20 minutes) twice a day: Regular meditation during the day builds and strengthens spiritual awareness, enables you to experience the natural positive qualities of the soul and achieve freedom from fear. Best times are early morning before your routine begins and before going to bed. **Taking time each morning to meditate, study and understand spiritual principles and values** provides mental and spiritual nourishment all day.



Lesson 8: Tips for Success

Spiritual Discipline

- Meditation (for 20 minutes) twice a day
- Traffic Control
- Maintaining a chart for self progress
- Churning & writing down your realizations

134

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Traffic Control: [We touched on this in Lesson 6, but it's good to mention it again.] As days become busier in an increasingly busy world, Traffic Control is a short, practical and empowering exercise which you can easily integrate into your daily lifestyle. At regular intervals throughout the day (7:00AM, 10:30 AM, 12:00NOON, 3:00PM, 5:30PM, and 7:30PM) stop whatever you are doing (if practical at that time) and withdraw your attention from everything around. Bring your attention back to yourself. You will become aware of the heavy traffic in the form of your thoughts passing through your mind. Now, step inward and begin to observe your thoughts and they will naturally begin to slow down. As your thoughts slow down, begin to remember who you are: "I am a peaceful soul who is the master of my mind and body." Keep this consciousness for 2-3 minutes and experience calmness, focus and inner silence. The practice will enable you to re-charge yourself and get added energy, which you can redirect and use, in accomplishing your task and activities more effectively.

Maintaining a chart for self progress: This is something else we've mentioned before, but it's a fast, effective way to change our old body-conscious habits and enhance our practice of soul consciousness. Design your own chart around questions such as: "For how long did I remember 'I am a soul, a peaceful soul.'? Did I practice seeing others as souls? For how long was I in body consciousness?" An hourly chart is best, but if it's too much, just do one at the end of the day. Experiment with this for few days (5-7 days) and observe the effect on your early morning meditation.

Churning & Writing Down Your Realizations: To churn means to think deeply about any point of spiritual knowledge. The purpose of churning is to extract insights which can be used to better manage our personal life and relationships. Churning also helps us to put spiritual knowledge into practice. Try to churn for 15 minutes daily and write down your insights and realizations. Churning is also a form of meditation using pure and elevated thoughts.



Lesson 8: Common Q & A

- What is the difference between cults and religion?

Field any remaining questions. A common concern is:

Is this a cult? Characteristics of a cult are these:

- Cults are usually focused around a personality of one individual.
- Often the belief system is one they demand people to accept.
- Religion is often associated with ritual and dogma (religion comes from the Latin *religio* : to 'link back'. The Hindi word for religion is Dharma and it means 'way of life'.



Lesson 8: Wrap Up

- Distribute handouts
- Suggest homework
 - Try to get in touch with sanskaras of devotion, renunciation and worship from previous births
 - Practice seeing souls of other faiths as members of other branches of your family
 - Consider where you wish to come in the Tree

1.16

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Distribute handouts (Collect \$)

- o The Eternal World Tree
- o The Tree of Life
- o Women and Spirituality
- o Unity
- o How to Take Yourself Lightly

Suggest homework

- o ***Try to get in touch with sanskaras of renunciation, devotion and worship from previous births.*** There are basically 3 paths of search that we seekers of truth are likely to have sanskaras of:
 - o ***The Path of Renunciation ("Sanyas")*** In every religion there have been monks, nuns, gurus and sanyasis who have renounced worldly life and dedicated their lives in pursuit of God through penance and prayer. Perhaps you have been one.
 - o ***The Path of Worship ("Bhakti")*** Most people are worshippers or devotees of one sort or another. Worship includes all the customs, rites, religious practices, chanting, and modes of prayer as well as the philosophies contained in the scriptures, texts and so on. It also includes devotion to a guru or deity. What are the sanskaras of a worshipper?
 - o ***The Path of Knowledge ("Gyan")*** The path of knowledge consists of putting into practice the knowledge revealed by God Himself, knowledge not contained in any scripture. Baba's knowledge includes His own introduction, as well as knowledge about souls, this world and the worlds beyond, the beginning, duration, and end of the story of humanity. It explains the complete philosophy of cause and effect as it applies to human souls as well as all that is considered necessary for the purification of souls. If you are really resonating with the knowledge presented in this course, then you have the sanskaras of knowledge.
- o ***Practice seeing souls of other faiths as members of other branches of your family.***
- o ***Consider where you wish to come in the Tree.***

Suggest Resources:

- BOOKS: ANY previously mentioned
- CDs: ANY previously mentioned
- TAPES: The Family of Humanity



Lesson 9: Yagya History

Objectives—At the end of the session the students would be able to:

- Understand God's role as Creator, Sustainer, Destroyer
- Recognize the role of Brahma Baba
- Realize the significance of the Yagya as the institution through which God's task is being accomplished
- Meditation Experience: Being with Baba




137

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LESSON MATERIALS to prepare beforehand

Poster(s): Shiv Baba Poster
Yagya pictures if you have them

Handout(s): (some or all of the following)

Mysteries of Creation (Correspondence Course Lesson #7)  Copied together
Brahma/Adam (Correspondence Course Lesson #7, Back Cover)  Copied together
The Footprints of an Extraordinary Spiritual Leader (Heart & Soul #17)  Copied together
The Story So Far (Retreat #8)
Inner Space: Great Escape or Return to Reality? (Retreat #3, Back Cover)
The Nature of Respect (Anthony Strano, Retreat #6)

CDs/ tapes: The Family of Humanity audiocassette (Sr. Jayanti)
Moving On 1 CD (Sr. Carmen)
God CD (Sr. Carmen)
OR Healing Heart & Soul CD (Sr. Carmen)
OR Moving On 2 CD (Sr. Carmen)

[PLEASE REVIEW THE OBJECTIVES of this lesson before you begin, so that you are mindful of what you want to cover. Be sure to SIT WITH BABA before the student(s) arrive.]

[Begin with ½ hour of meditation. Recommended commentaries:

The Family of Humanity (Sr. Jayanti, meditative talk) Side2: "Role of God" (30 minutes)

OR

Moving On 1 CD : #5 "Self Esteem" (12 minutes)

AND

#6 "Acceptance" (16 minutes)

(total time = 28 minutes)]



Lesson 9: Transition from Lesson 8

Transition into Lesson 9

➤ Brief review of points of last lesson

Did anyone get in touch with sanskaras of renunciation, devotion/ worship from previous lifetimes? Did you see souls of various faiths as being from other branches of your family? Did you discover where you come in the Tree?

➤ Link last lesson to this lesson & briefly overview today's lesson

Review the last lesson:

Did anyone get in touch with sanskaras of renunciation, devotion and worship from previous lifetimes? Did you practice seeing souls of various faiths as being from different branches of your family? Did you discover where you might come in the Tree?

Link last lesson to today's lesson: In the lesson on the Tree we looked at religious and political aspects of each age, focusing especially on the role of the religious founders from the Copper Age onwards.

We've seen from the lesson on the Cycle & Tree how at the end, God plays a part. But how? What does Baba do? This is the topic we'll explore today.

For pure communication with the Supreme Soul, pure knowledge is necessary. As with human relationships, the more we know about the other's role, the more affinity we can experience with them. So too, precise knowledge of God's actual role in this world endears Him to us and creates a real foundation for the complete experience of Him.

Certainly Baba must have done something beneficial to souls in sorrow because He's remembered as the Remover of Sorrow, the Bestower of Happiness. He must have freed souls from something, because He's also known as the Liberator.

He's also remembered as the Creator. But in what sense is God the Creator if the world is eternal? We have mentioned that the drama is an interplay of 3 eternal entities: souls, God and matter. None of these three can be created or destroyed (the sum total of matter and energy in the universe remains constant). So how and what does God create?

Being physically minded we have taken creation as a physical phenomenon. Yet common sense tells us that God did not make human bodies out of dust. The procreators of human bodies have always been other human beings. All human beings that have existed, and that will exist, come from the womb of a human mother.

Likewise, if God had created this material universe, then He is also controlling and interfering with it constantly, creating rainstorms, droughts, plagues, good harvests, sunrises, sunsets, etc. Yet these are all natural processes. In imagining God to be generator, operator and destroyer in the physical sense we have confused so much His real role with the processes of nature.

[Note: We'll now explain the *Trimurti*. This is a very key principle. You don't have to show the picture right away.] Baba regenerates the whole tree only at the Confluence Age when all souls are on stage, because He has to benefit all. He does this in three ways. He **creates** out of love, He **sustains** with knowledge and He **transforms** with silence.

Creation: The power of God's love gives new life, a new vision of the self.

With love Baba opens your mind and heart and lets you have a relationship with Him. This relationship of love shows you who you really are and gives you faith in yourself.

When the whole of humanity becomes spiritually weak, God rejuvenates souls by imparting knowledge and divinizing their intellects. In this way, He creates a world of unity, peace, love and harmony on earth. No one else is competent to do this.

God doesn't create something out of nothing, but He creates in the way that a gardener or painter or a cook creates. A gardener, for example, can create a place of beauty out of a weed patch: he doesn't create the seeds, tools, sun and rain, but he knows how to work with them to create the garden. In the same way, when the world becomes a jungle of thorns, God knows how to turn it back into Paradise. Creation really means re-creation, regeneration, rejuvenation, purification and transformation of what already exists.

Transformation: Baba guides you to go deep within yourself, recognize and discard old patterns and habits that are causing sorrow and pain. Through your deep connection with Baba you feel a very deep, new current of divine energy that totally changes and recharges the soul.

Creation implies destruction (making a suit destroys the original form of the cloth). When Baba performs His work, there is world-scale transformation. God is not the destroyer of human beings, just as He is not the creator of human beings. He is the destroyer of disease and pollution in nature and the negative forces within human souls. God's silence is a purifying influence on the consciousness of humanity. As the old consciousness of the self is destroyed, the soul's original purity emerges in a stable way. Collective purification fans the fires of destruction. The old world must be destroyed in order for the new world to manifest.

Sustenance: Many think that God sustains us in the sense that He gives us our goods, wealth, health, food, water, air, etc. If that is so, why does He give more of these things to some and not to others? Why does poverty, starvation and disease exist if God is a sustainer and provider in the physical sense?

God sustains by providing human beings with a glimpse of their highest potential. With knowledge, Baba opens the eye of your intellect (3rd eye) so you're able to understand the subtle importance of spiritual concepts, powers, values, etc. He gives you the power of discernment and fills you with wisdom and truth.

When we have regained our purity through loveful yoga with Him, that purity sustains the systems of the new world. God is remembered as the provider because He is the provider of love, peace, happiness and all the virtues. It is the absence of these which results in our world gradually falling apart.



LESSON 9: Three Acts of God

- Creation:
out of love
- Transformation:
with silence
- Sustenance:
with knowledge



139

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When the tree reaches its limits of growth; when the world is nearing the end of the iron age and the suffering and sorrow being experienced in the world are beyond being relieved by human beings, governments or international agencies, the Supreme Soul must enter the drama to play His/ Her part of renewing the world. Because he doesn't have His own body, He uses the physical form of the first soul to enter the cycle in order to communicate knowledge to human souls.

Souls who choose to listen, accept and make effort for the transformation of consciousness based on this knowledge ultimately number in the hundreds of thousands. Once a 'critical mass' of souls has regained an elevated state of soul consciousness, once the light of truth has risen above the horizon of human awareness, the darkness of ignorance is dispelled; the illusion of body consciousness shatters. This is accompanied by cataclysmic change in the physical world.

One might ask why the Supreme Soul has to enter a human body to communicate. Why doesn't He just give visions, or just transform the world Himself? Why teach and explain?

The problem with visions is that they have to be interpreted. As we know from the scriptures all religious founders had clear insights, but they were always interpreted later on in many different ways, causing a lot of confusion. Aside from this, it is we human souls, who have made this world into what it is today. It is not God's world, it is our world. It is out of love and mercy for his children that the Supreme Father gives us the power (yoga) and the insight (knowledge) to put right what we ourselves have done wrong. God gives us the tools to take responsibility for our own world. He puts every soul in the position of settling his own karmic accounts and thus regaining self-respect and happiness. As the revealer of the laws of action, Shiva Baba must come onto the field of action and demonstrate them. He could not remain in the soul world and perform the act of creation from there. Sending vibrations is just not enough, primarily because human beings have become so body-conscious that they are not subtle enough to pick up such vibrations. Our link with Baba has been severed, and through our own efforts we have not been able to reconnect with Him.

He comes in an incognito way at the end of the Iron Age. In the Hindu scripture, the *Bhagawad Gita*, it says that God comes at a time of extreme unrighteousness, when religion has become irreligion. We believe this time is now. The soul whose body He enters happens to be the most experienced of all human souls, the very one who is called Brahma or "Adi Dev," the first deity. In India, ("Adi" means the first, original one; it's the probable root of the word "Adam.") So, the soul of "Adam" or Brahma, after passing through the cycle of births, again becomes instrumental for the recreation of Heaven.



LESSON 9: How God Communicates

- Has to come
- Has to borrow a body
- Whom would He pick?

140

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Lesson 9: Brahma's Story

But who really is Brahma? In many respects he was an ordinary man, a self-made millionaire, having come from humble village origins, who was known as Dada Lekraj. He had achieved his considerable wealth as a **diamond merchant**. His clientele were the Maharajas of the different states of India and the Kings of Nepal.

Prior to 1936

- Multimillionaire diamond merchant
- Married with 5 children
- Devoutly religious
- Philanthropic and highly regarded
- Special qualities of character

Dada Lekraj was born in 1876. His mother died at an early age and he lived a good part of his youth with his elder brother's family.

He eventually married, fathered 5 children, and lived in Hyderabad Sindh, in what is now Pakistan; but his business was mainly conducted out of an office in Calcutta.

He was devoutly religious. Dada was a strict Hindu who worshipped Vishnu as God in addition to worshipping the deity Narayan. He had had 12 gurus during his life. He never missed his meditation/devotions—would even keep his kingly clientele waiting.

He was philanthropic and highly regarded throughout his community as well as India itself as an outstanding person. He was so trusted that he was allowed in the women's quarters of his royal patrons, who used to tell him it was a pity God hadn't made him a king because he was so like one in his personality.

He also had some special qualities of character: He had great love for God. He was mature and experienced, full of self-respect and confidence, and yet humble. He loved children and had great respect for women, and for his gurus.

But still, you may think, why him? Of course, no matter whose body God entered, people would question: "Why that one?" Perhaps he was chosen because he had the greatest capacity to respond to the task of the Supreme, for which he had to let go of many things—wealth, many of his family members, his standing in the community—and also completely transform his consciousness. He had to have a lot of courage, especially in the work of uplifting women, some of whom had been married since the age of 5 or 6 and were bound totally by their fathers, husbands and sons. He had to go against a lot of social opinion, and in doing this he observed the ancient principle of Ahimsa, non-violence. He did everything with peace.

[Explain how later his name was changed to Brahma & why we call him Brahma 'Baba' (founding father)]



Lesson 9: Brahma's Story, cont'd

1936-37

- Series of visions
- Teachings (Murli)
- Role of Women
- Effect on Sindhi Community
- Opposition/ Move to Karachi

142

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How did this man become God's instrument? At the age of 60, Dada experienced a series of visions—Firstly, a **vision of Vishnu**, the combined form of the first Emperor Narayan and Empress Lakshmi of the Golden Age, which symbolically represents the fully integrated, perfected personality (balance of masculine & feminine attributes) which human beings will have then.

Secondly he saw a **dual vision of a) the eternal form of the Supreme Soul as a Point of Light; b) destruction: cities exploding in fireballs** (9 years before Hiroshima), civil wars, natural calamities. After this he lost interest in his diamond business and sold it. He left Calcutta to return to Hyderabad, Sindh to visit a sick uncle, but his uncle died before he arrived. He had another **vision of his uncle's soul leaving the body**. Then again **he saw Vishnu**, who this time spoke to him saying: "I am the four-armed one. You are also this."

Back in Hyderabad, one day he was hosting a religious gathering at his house at which his current guru was present. He was pulled to leave and meditate. His wife and daughter-in-law, followed, concerned for his health. They witnessed Shiv Baba speaking through him for the 1st time, saying: "I am the Blissful Self, I am Shiva; I am the Knowledgeable Self, I am Shiva; I am the Luminous Self, I am Shiva; I am the Form of Self, the Form of Knowledge, the Form of Light".

After this Dada saw his **last vision in which 'stars' were descending on earth and becoming princes and princesses**. The Supreme Light and Power said to him, "You have to make such a world." But did not tell him how.

From that day onward, Supreme began to speak daily through his mouth. His name was changed to Brahma and the discourse became known as the **Murli, the flute of knowledge**. Thus Brahma Baba became the 'instrument' of the Supreme to communicate God Shiva's teachings.

The wisdom that God shared was as new to Brahma Baba as it was to those who came to listen to it. A group of people formed around Brahma Baba, most of whom were women. This group ultimately became the foundation of this worldwide spiritual university. From the very beginning, Brahma Baba put the women in front. He made them the administrative heads of the university. Even today the BKWSU is run by women.

Within the BKs, Brahma Baba is **not regarded as a guru or as someone who saves**, but as someone who became a true example of a Raja Yogi by giving himself completely to the purifying energy of the Supreme Soul. On the basis of his experience of the strength of God's love he had the courage and faith to become the instrument to establish the BKWSU.

[Explain the effect on Sindhi Community, how others around Dada began going into trance, seeing him as Krishna (explain connection); about the **Anti-party's** attempts to stop the community and the **move to Karachi**.]

[Explain the 14 years of Tapasya (through WWII and partition), how the community of 375 individuals lived in several bungalows around Karachi. They had several buses, were self-sufficient, and lived in relative isolation to the rest of the world. During this time they became spiritually powerful.]

Then explain the relocation to Mt. Abu in 1951 and the Beggary Part (1952-

1954).] were difficult times; there were hardships. Some became ill, some left and others were sent back to their homes to serve; how **centers opened** throughout India as a result.

[Explain the events of **January 18th 1969** (same year as Woodstock) when Brahma Baba leaves his body. Describe his leaving.]

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

[Explain how, after Jan. 18, 1969, *Murlis continue in the Avyakt form*, and how we get Murlis until today through Dadi Gulzar.]

[Briefly mention that *in 1971, this knowledge begins to be taught in the west, in HK & London*, that the 1st center opened in London in 1973; that in **1980 - BKWSU became an NGO** (Non-governmental Organization affiliated to the Department of Public Information of the United Nations. We were one of the first (if not the first) spiritual organizations to obtain consultative status on the roster of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), UNESCO and UNICEF. (Examples of other NGOs include Peace Corps and Red Cross).]

[You do not necessarily need to mention, but you should know that in 1998 the BKWSU was **recommended by Committee of NGO’s for General Consultative Status**, which is the highest possible status for an NGO; it requires rigorous scrutiny and approval by 19 members states; it enables us to observe public meetings of ECOSOC, submit written or make oral statements and propose inclusion of agenda items.]

[Explain that *Avyakt Baba comes in Madhuban* (Forest of Honey), Brahma Kumaris headquarters; and how we continue to meet Baba. Describe the 3 campuses there.]



Lesson 9: Yagya’s History

1937-1969

- 14 years of Tapasya
- Relocation to Mt. Abu/ Beggary Part
- Centers open
- January 18th 1969

1969 to Present

- Murlis continue in Avyakt form
- 1971 - Western service begins in HK & London
- 1980 - BKWSU becomes an NGO
- 1998 - recommended by Committee on NGO’s for General Consultative Status
- Madhuban

142

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[If it seems appropriate (which it usually does not), briefly describe the current scope of the BKWSU, its International Projects & Initiatives. You should know enough about them to be able to do this well. You should also know how we facilitate the *application* of spiritual knowledge in all sectors of society through 17 Wings, especially in India.]

International Projects & Initiatives

Million Minutes (1986)

Global Cooperation for a Better World (1988-90)

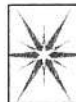
Living Values Educational Program 1996

Call of the Time (international leaders)

Images & Voices of Hope (media)

Self-Managing Leadership (business)

Global Hospital and Research Center (health)]



Lesson 9: A World Spiritual University

International Projects & Initiatives

- Million Minutes (1986)
- Global Cooperation for a Better World (1988-90)
- Living Values Educational Program 1996
- Call of the Time (international leaders)
- Images & Voices of Hope (media)
- Self-Managing Leadership (business)
- Global Hospital and Research Center (health)

God's Plan

144

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Review and summarize God's plan, or method of regenerating the world through His 3 divine Acts [at this time you may want to show the picture of the Trimurti] as follows:

- Through Brahma, ShivBaba recreates or re-generates the world by revealing the method of purification of human consciousness and demonstrating, through Brahma Baba's example, how to live a divine and harmonious life.
- God sustains the soul when we develop a personal connection with Him in our daily life, through which we absorb divine qualities and pure consciousness so deeply that we become a spiritually mature, balanced personality, as symbolized by Vishnu, for many future births. Vishnu's four arms hold symbols for deep realization and liberation:
 - o The **discus** symbolizes self-realization. Not only does one realize one's eternal roles, one becomes a master of time by learning from the past and understanding that whatever one does creates the future. [Straight finger means the straight, clear intellect.]
 - o The **conch** symbolizes spiritual communication in which understanding and truth are conveyed in appropriate ways to elevate the consciousness of others.
 - o The **mace** symbolizes self-mastery, deep dignity and self-respect; one who has conquered the hearts of others with love;
 - o The **lotus** symbolizes the ability of purity to exist in a world of negativity, the purity of self-transparency, where one is the same inside and outside; also the ability to get nutrients from the mud [tests and challenges make one strong]
- Simultaneously with the above two processes, negativity (evil, sin) within the soul is destroyed (transformed) and the soul is freed from all limitations and karmic accounts. The image of Shankar represents a state of deep tapasya (very concentrated state of mind and heart) in which this cleansing takes place.



Lesson 9: Meditation Experience

Being with Baba

145

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[Play a commentary: Recommended commentaries:

God CD: #5 "Be With Me" (15 minutes). *NOTE: Use this ONLY if you feel comfortable with it and like it. Some souls react strongly in a negative way to this commentary and some have strong positive reactions.*

Other suggested commentaries: (If in doubt, use this one:)

Healing Heart & Soul CD : #5 "Divine Healing" (13 minutes)

OR Any of the *Moving On 2* CD Commentaries.

Conduct a meditation with drishti: If it feels right at this point, you may want to introduce conducted meditation, if you haven't already done so. Explain drishti, etc. and then conduct meditation with a song that brings you close to Baba. If you feel Baba very powerfully during this meditation, so will they.]

To explain drishti: A definition of drishti is 'spiritual eye contact'. The person sitting in front is in a state of soul consciousness and Baba's remembrance. S/he will not really be looking at you, seeing you, so much as s/he is in deep remembrance of Baba. If you rest your eyes on her/ his forehead, the vibrations emanating from the soul will help to pull you into a state of soul consciousness and Baba's remembrance, much like a lighthouse shows the ship the right direction.



Lesson 9: Tips for Success

Healthy Lifestyle

- Physical exercise
- Smooth sleep: early to bed, early to rise
- No smoking or drinking
- Food
- Standard of thoughts throughout the day

146

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

Smooth sleep: early to bed and early to rise. As a spiritual student, prepare yourself to sleep with pure consciousness by avoiding watching TV or reading novels or non-spiritual materials before bed. Sleep at the latest at 10:30 PM after a 20-minute meditation. During meditation pack-up all waste and negative experiences of the day and stay in Baba's pure company. Your last thought will likely be your first thought when waking up in the morning. Experiment with waking up at 4:00 AM! Whenever you awaken, freshen-up by washing your face and brushing your teeth and then sit in meditation for 20-30 minutes. After meditation read something spiritual.

Eliminate drinking of alcoholic beverages and quit smoking. These habits won't allow you to deepen your meditation. Nicotine and alcohol have an adverse effect on mind and emotions.

Pay attention to your food: Natural food, plant-based (vegetarianism is non-violent) types of food (i.e., no meat, no seafood, no eggs) is the purest and has the best effect on body and mind. Preparation and eating of pure or *satwic* food is important in sustaining a spiritual lifestyle. [Give a brief explanation of how the negative energy of violence, anger, fear etc. connected to the slaughter of animals has a subtle negative effect and influence on the mind and intellect. It can perhaps also be mentioned that for a serious practitioner of meditation, onion and garlic are also not eaten because they have a stimulating/ agitating effect on the senses. [NOTE: Explain that the subject of food will be taken in depth in the advanced course. Simply underline how eating and preparing pure food in soul consciousness helps purify the mind and body.]

Thought standard throughout the day: If you maintain a chart and observe traffic control you can be sure that the quality of your thoughts will improve. These different disciplines for the body and the mind will greatly help you in your spiritual journey.



Lesson 9: Common Q & A

- Does God enter anyone else?
- Does God enter the other messengers?
- Is Brahma Baba a guru?
- How do we know this isn't channeling or possession?
- How do we know this is really God, or really God's knowledge?
- Why does God come in India?

147

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Field any remaining questions. Some common ones are:

- **Does God enter anyone else?** No. Baba has said that He only comes in this one [actually two] fixed official chariots.
- **Does God enter the other messengers (founding fathers)?** No. We understand that they are a combination of two souls, the pure one of the religious founder and the soul of the body whom they enter.
- **Is Brahma Baba a guru?** No. We respect and revere him, but don't worship him. We try to follow his example.
- **How do we know this isn't channeling or possession?** It's been so consistent – every day for 33 years, and frequently ever since. Thousands of witnesses.
- **How do we know this is really God, or really God's knowledge?** We do not expect you to simply accept our word for it, but we suggest that you study the teachings and draw your own conclusions. (You will be introduced to Baba's direct teachings in the advanced level of the course.)
- **Why does God come in India?** No matter where He came, the question would always be asked, why there? Also, just as the sun rises in the east but doesn't remain there, so also, the Supreme Soul requires a specific place of arrival; however His knowledge is for everyone and eventually it will reach all souls.



Lesson 9: Wrap Up

- Distribute handouts
- Suggest homework
 - Consider the following questions and possibly write answers to them:
 - How does all of this information relate to me personally?
 - Has my original aim of learning meditation changed, now that I have all this information about the cycle and God's task of transformation?

148

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Distribute handouts (Collect \$)

- Mysteries of Creation
- The Footprints of an Extraordinary Spiritual Leader
- The Story So Far
- Inner Space: Great Escape or Return to Reality?
- The Nature of Respect

Suggest homework

- Consider the following questions and possibly write answers to them:
 - How does all of this information relate to me personally?
 - Has my original aim of learning meditation changed, now that I have all this information about the cycle and God's task of transformation? If so, in what way?

Suggest Resources:

- BOOKs: Adi Dev
- CDs: ANY previously mentioned
- TAPes: ANY previously mentioned



Lesson 10: Video Session

Objectives—At the end of the session the students:

- Would have a sense of the Brahma Kumaris University as a family as well as an organization
- Would have a feeling of Madhuban's atmosphere of love and sweetness
- Meditation Experience: Being in Baba's lap

149

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LESSON MATERIALS to prepare beforehand

- Poster(s):** Shiv Baba Poster
- Handout(s):** Anger Management (Br. Yogesh, H&S #16)
Deep Personal Change (Sr. Denise, Retreat #3)
- Video/ VCD:** Instruments of Change
Welcome Home
Discover the Spirit Within DVD if you have not already shown it
- CDs/ tapes:** A Time for Healing
Jewel Purpose
A Song CD
- Other:** Feedback sheet
Grad Gift (possibly *The Powers of Nature*) [see additional resources]
Toli

[PLEASE REVIEW THE OBJECTIVES of this lesson before you begin, so that you are mindful of what you want to cover. Be sure to SIT WITH BABA before the student(s) arrive.]

[Begin with ½ hour of meditation. Recommended commentaries: (Suggest you play 5-7 minutes of music, then a short commentary, then 5-7 more minutes of instrumental music, etc.) as follows:

Jewel Purpose CD #1: (7 minutes) (Instrumental by EarthStar)

Time for Healing CD#3: (6 minutes) (Experiencing Inner Silence) (Br. Anthony Strano)

OR silence for 6 minutes

Jewel Purpose CD#2: (5 minutes)

Time for Healing CD#8: (6 minutes) (The Power of a Gentle Heart)

Jewel Purpose #3 or a song: 7 minutes while giving drishti

Note: It's good to conduct this session with *drishti*, if not for the full half hour, then for 5 or 10 minutes towards the end. (If you only have one or two students you don't want to give drishti for a half an hour!) Of course you will need to introduce the concept of drishti if you haven't already done so.]

To explain drishti: A definition of drishti is 'spiritual eye contact'. The person sitting in front is in a state of soul consciousness and Baba's remembrance. S/he will not really be looking at you so much as s/he is in deep remembrance of Baba. If you rest your eyes on her/ his forehead, the vibrations emanating from the soul will help to pull you into a state of soul consciousness and Baba's remembrance, much like a lighthouse shows the ship the right direction.



Lesson 10: Transition from Lesson 9

Transition into Lesson 10

- Link last several lessons to this lesson & briefly overview today's lesson

You've now understood the source of the knowledge you've received in this course and how it is being disseminated through the Brahma Kumaris World Spiritual University. Today we'll review some of your lessons in multimedia form, meet through video some of the original members of the Brahma Kumaris and experience a journey to BK headquarters through the eyes of a modern corporate executive.

159

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Review the course up to now

Through the lessons you've taken so far, you've embarked on a journey inward and begun to discover your inner world of thoughts, strengths of character, positive qualities and patterns of action and interaction. If you've been doing the homework and practicing the meditation in earnest you could be feeling more peaceful and positive and optimistic about your ability to create a fulfilling life for yourself based on a relationship with your true self and self-mastery. You've also learned a method of journeying upward to tap the highest source of spiritual power and could be feeling, perhaps for the first time, that you are loved and valued by God Him/Herself.

In recent lessons you've become aware of the 'big picture', the context in which we act and interact in this drama of life. Your understanding of why things are the way they are and where they are headed has expanded and you could be feeling a sense of relief and peace about the state of the world, as well as a feeling of significance and purpose as you consider your role within the whole, particularly at this time.

You've now understood the source of the knowledge you've received in this course and how it is being disseminated through the Brahma Kumaris World Spiritual University.

Link to today's lesson

Today we'll meet through video some of the original members of the Brahma Kumaris and experience a journey to BK headquarters through the eyes of a modern corporate executive.

[Note: Sometimes it is nice to hold this lesson on a weekend and include a luncheon. Then you can show all the three Video/ VCD items, in which case you would also want to mention that you will be reviewing some of the lessons in multimedia format.]



Lesson 10: Multimedia

- Instruments of Change Video
 - The Knowledge
 - The Founding Father
- Discover the Spirit (Optional)
- Welcome Home
 - Journey to Madhuban through the eyes of a delegate to the Peace of Mind retreat

151

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Play Instruments of Change Video--Total Time for 2 segments is 36 minutes.

You can skip the intro and cue it to start with ***The Knowledge segment***, which is 14 minutes long and includes:

Dadi Ji talking about the soul; Dadi Janki; Dadi Gulzar talking about the 3 worlds; Jayanti on Karma; Ramesh on Pure Money Economics & Trusteeship (including how we are funded); Diane on cooking in Madhuban, cooking in yoga, and vegetarianism.

Then you can play either *The Founding Father segment* which takes 22 minutes and comprises:

Dada Anand Keshore: Baba's experience (including visions); Dadi Janki: What the original members saw in Brahma Baba; Jagdish: Br. Baba's love; Didi Nirmala: how Br. Baba fostered self-realization; importance of balance; Brij Mohan's experience of the founder; Jayantiben's experience of becoming a BK; Nirwair: difference of Br. Baba when Shiv Baba entered; Ramesh's experience of meeting Baba in the hospital (how he was not worried about himself); his perfect eyesight and perfection in life; Chandruben's experience of Brahma Baba just before he became avyakt.

OR

Alternatively, you can play the *Discover the Spirit Within VCD* which lasts for 34 minutes. If played on a computer* you can cue individual tracks as follows (the following settings omit the segues between segments):

1-Introduction to 1:35 seconds

2-Soul: 1:46 to 5:00

3-Soul World: 5:52 to 9:20

4-God: 10:17 to 13:45

5-Reincarnation: 14:43 to 18:39

6-Karma: 18:33 to 21:40

7-The 8 Powers: 22:20 to 27:42

8-Meditation: 28:38 to 33:48 (including credits)

* Unfortunately on a DVD player you may not be able to select the segments.

Lastly, play *Welcome Home* (either video or VCD/ DVD) which is 19 minutes long.



Intermediate Level Wrap Up

- Summarize Level Two, Lessons 6-9
- Ask them to share benefits, experiences
- Conduct closing meditation
- Have them fill the feedback sheet
- Recommend further resources
- Introduce Advanced Course and other programs
- Toli and gift

152

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Ask students to share their experiences from watching the videos.

Summarize Level Two, Lessons 6-9: By now you should have a new perspective on this world and the drama of life, probably quite different from the one you were raised with. Ask them to share benefits they've received in the course and any feedback.

Conduct a closing meditation with drishti, possibly with a song.

Through These Eyes CD #2 (by Bliss) is a good choice.

Distribute handouts (Collect \$) and feedback sheet:

- o Deep Personal Change
- o Anger Management

Suggest Resources:

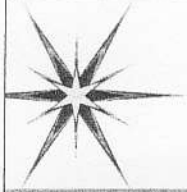
- BOOKS:** *The Soul Illuminated* by Judy Pemmell
 Soul Power by Nikki de Carteret
- CDs:** ANY previously mentioned
- TAPES:** ANY previously mentioned

Have them fill the feedback sheet

Introduce Advanced Course: In the next level of the course we'll introduce you to Baba's direct teachings, to the Murli.

Make them aware of any other programs: You may want to remind them about your weekly group meditation sessions or other special events.

Distribute toli and gift: Invite the Center Coordinator to meet the class and to graduate them by giving toli and gift. (You may want to call her/ him into the class a little earlier, before people start sharing experiences. S/he could also be invited to conduct the meditation.) The little booklet "The Powers of Nature and How We can Help Recreate a New and Peaceful World" makes a nice gift at this point.



Foundation Course in Meditation

Advanced Level

153

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Lessons 11-14: Baba's Murli

Objectives—At the end of four sessions the students would :

- Have an interest and appreciation for the Murli.
- Understand how the Murli is a practical aid in one's life.
- Recognize the importance of spiritual study.
- Understand the Murli's magic for giving the intellect clarity, good judgment, farsightedness and broadmindedness.

154

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If you have love for Murli so will the students.

If you are absorbing it, so will they.

If you feel you're being taught by God Himself, so will they.

If you're making the effort to remove vice from your sanskaras and emerge virtue, so will they.

Be sure to start each class with meditation and finish with a commentary.

Be sure to explain all new terminology and concepts. ***It is often useful to write these up on a whiteboard before the class so that students can see the way they are spelled.***

Lesson 11-Avyakt on Thoughts

Objectives—At the end of this session the students would:

- Have understood the difference between an Avyakt & a Sakar Murli
- Know the Four Subjects of the study
- Understand how to accumulate the treasure of thoughts

155
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LESSON MATERIALS to prepare beforehand

Poster(s): Shiv Baba Poster

Murli: Avyakt dated 25 March 1995 (abridged version)*

Handout(s): (some or all of the following)

Fruits of the Tree (Correspondence Course Lesson 8)

Spiritual Education

Learning to Be Positive (Leslie Edwards, Retreat #8)

The Art of Window Cleaning (Br. Charlie, Retreat #6)

Courage (Mike George, Retreat #7)

Copied together

CDs/tapes: Healing Heart & Soul CD

[PLEASE REVIEW THE OBJECTIVES of this lesson before you begin, so that you are mindful of what you want to cover. Be sure to SIT WITH BABA before the student(s) arrive.]

NOTES:

1. Before class, **conduct ½ hour meditation** with some live commentary (use your favorite instrumental background) in which you give the experience of communicating with Baba in the subtle regions and being with Baba in the incorporeal region.
2. Introduce the information about the Murli on the following page.
3. Stop for a moment of silence, then read the Murli, stopping to explain terms such as:

BapDada	The Four Subjects, especially Dharna
Brahmin	Double Foreigners
Paramdham	Ekantvasi
Churning	Diamond Jubilee
Namaste	
4. After the Murli, ask for questions or comments, etc. and conduct a closing meditation. *Healing Heart & Soul CD: #1 (10 minutes)*

*This is only half the Murli. One paragraph which contains some of the essence has been moved from the latter half to this half. The full Murli runs to 6 pages including group meetings.



Lesson 11-Avyakt on Thoughts

The lessons Baba taught and still teaches are called 'Murlis'. The word 'Murli' literally means flute of knowledge. The flute is a symbol of communication. In India the deity Krishna is shown playing a flute. [Explain this link to Brahma Baba.] Murli is the spiritual 'food' which keeps the soul alive and constantly dancing. But I have to 'churn' or think deeply about it to extract all the nourishment.

- Meaning of the word 'Murli'
- Two types of Murlis
 - Explain meaning of Avyakt & Sakar
 - Share your own experience of hearing Avyakt Baba's Murli directly

156

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There are two types of Murlis. The first, called **Sakar Murlis**, were spoken from the beginning of the Yagya until 1969, when Brahma Baba left the body. 'Sakar' means corporeal and refers to the fact that Brahma Baba was still in a physical body during this period. Murlis spoken after 1969 are called **Avyakt Murlis**. 'Avyakt' means subtle, non-physical and refers to the fact that Brahma Baba now plays a subtle, nonphysical role from the subtle regions. We will come back to these matters later on in the lessons.

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

The Avyakt Murlis usually go deeper into specific subjects. The tone is also slightly different. In these Murlis Baba takes up very specific powers and qualities of the soul and gives directions that are relevant for the time we are living in now. Today we will listen to an Avyakt Murli and next week a Sakar one.

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

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

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

Listen with an aim to become what Baba is talking about. In this Murli, try to experience your thoughts as treasures and begin to work with them as such.



Lesson 11: Wrap-Up

- Distribute handouts
- Suggest homework
 - Pay attention to saving your thought energy from going into a wasteful account.
 - Especially notice if you are wasting time regretting or feeling bad about anything.
 - Experiment with remaining in inner solitude.

157


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Distribute handouts (Collect \$)

- Fruits of the Tree
- Spiritual Education
- Learning to Be Positive
- The Art of Window Cleaning/ Courage

Suggest homework

- Pay attention to saving your thought energy from going into a wasteful account.
- Especially notice if you are wasting time regretting or feeling bad about anything.
- Experiment with remaining in inner solitude.



Lesson 12-Sakar on Soul & Churning

Objectives—At the end of this session the students would:

- ✓ Understand some of Baba's teaching methods
- ✓ Be familiar with the format of the Sakar Murlis
- ✓ Understand the importance of churning

128
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LESSON MATERIALS to prepare beforehand

Poster(s): Shiv Baba Poster

Murli: Sakar dated 21 January 1996

Handout(s): (some or all of the following)

Tips for Listening to Baba's Murli

Watch Your Thoughts

Don't Take Sorrow (Sr. Kiran, H & S #15)

Healing the Heart (Roger Cole, H&S #17)

Happiness Is... (Retreat #13 back cover)

The Actor, The Entertainer and the Ego (Sr. Denise, Retreat #7)

Copied together

Copied together

CDs/tapes: Healing Heart & Soul

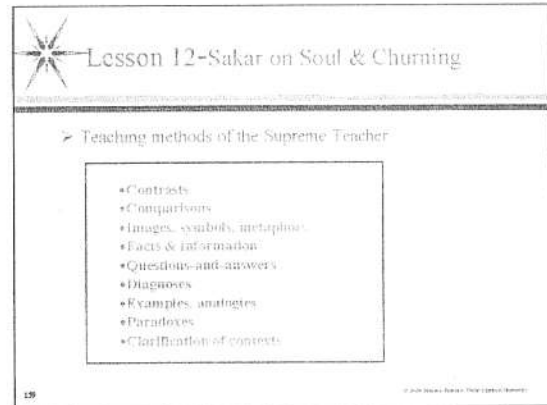
[PLEASE REVIEW THE OBJECTIVES of this lesson before you begin, so that you are mindful of what you want to cover. Be sure to SIT WITH BABA before the student(s) arrive.]

NOTES:

1. Before class, **conduct ½ hour meditation** with some live commentary (use your favorite instrumental background) during which you give the experience of expanding awareness into the unlimited and becoming a World Benefactor.
2. Introduce the information on the following two pages.
3. Stop for a moment of silence, then read the Murli, explaining the format (Essence, Question/Answer, Song, yaad pyars at the end, Essence for Dharna & Slogan) and stopping to explain terms such as:

bhakti	Krishna, Satyug, deities (if not already covered)
Lakshmi & Narayan	Maya, Ravan (")
Bharat	The True Gita
Alpha/Allah	Prajapita Brahma
Buddhu	Mahavir
Ram	Saligram
Rosary	Kalpa
4. After the Murli, ask for questions or comments, etc. and conduct a closing meditation. *Healing Heart & Soul* CD: #2 (10 minutes).

[Explain the different teaching methods of the Supreme Teacher:] First of all Baba shows us **contrasts** like the contrast between heaven (golden age) and hell (iron age), between love and hate. Baba not only explains what love and happiness mean, He also explains what hate and sorrow mean, as most of us no longer understand these things. We're not able to clearly see our present condition until the contrast with the world of happiness is made clear.



Baba **compares** things to the world we know in order to clarify certain concepts. For example, sometimes He compares all human beings to orphans who have lost their parents – the result of this is we keep fighting amongst each other. Sometimes Baba compares us to the thorns in a jungle. Baba is the Master of the Garden who has come to change us from thorns into flowers.

Baba uses **images** to engage both the left side of the brain (mental, rational energy) as well as the right side (intuitive, creative energy). For example, Baba uses the image of the lotus flower as a **symbol** and a **metaphor** to explain what detachment really means. The lotus flower grows with its roots in the mud, but the flower floats above the surface of the water and reaches out to the sun. Similarly our two feet stand firmly on the earth, but our thoughts turn to God, the Spiritual Sun.

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

Many age-old **questions** are answered by Baba's knowledge and many confusing and contradictory beliefs are explained.

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

Sometimes Baba uses **analogies**, as in the first Murli we heard, in which Baba said, "Physical illness initially may not be major; it appears in minor form but grows from something minor to something major... In the same way, if there is wastage, you have not accumulated anything, so the account of wastage keeps on increasing, increasing and increasing."

Paradox is another tool for helping us understand. For example, Baba has said, "Those who have no knowledge continue to worship. You now know those whom they worship and so there is no need to worship anyone. You have now been liberated from worshipping. You are making effort to become worthy of worship."

And finally, Baba **clarifies the context** in which He speaks. For example, He often says, "Sweetest, spiritual children, sit here whilst considering yourselves to be souls, because it is the soul that listens, plays a part and acts through the body. It is the soul that carries the sanskaras and experiences the fruit of good and bad actions through the body. No one experiences anything without a body."



Lesson 12-Sakar on Soul & Churning

- Importance of Churning
- Insights into the difference and relationship between
 - Corporeal-Incorporeal
 - Material-Spiritual
 - Body Consciousness-Soul consciousness
 - Visible-Invisible

It is very important to **churn**, or reflect deeply upon the points Baba has raised in the Murli, as this is the purest form of 'food' for the soul. It nourishes us in a number of ways:

- The Murli talks of **sanskaras** of many births. In this way we become aware of our subconscious programming, ideas and experiences.
- Sometimes a sensitive spot is hit, sometimes something falls into place, sometimes a mental or emotional block is removed.
- Baba is the Ocean of Yuktis (methods) on:
 - o how we should transform
 - o why we should transform
- The Murli always clarifies and gives solutions.
- As our intellect becomes pure, we gain invaluable insights into the difference and relationship between:
 - the **corporeal and incorporeal dimensions**;
 - the difference between God's **invisible, spiritual** reality, and the limited **material** reality **visible** to us (Baba repeatedly contrasts His unlimited and our unlimited realities.);
 - **body consciousness and soul consciousness.**

As you listen to this Murli, try to experience soul consciousness as Baba talks about it. Making effort to experience or embody what Baba is speaking about whilst Baba is speaking is like a spiritual 'drill' (exercise) for the intellect.



Lesson 12: Wrap-Up

- Distribute handouts
- Suggest homework
 - Check how much time you spend thinking about this knowledge and contrast the value of such thoughts with the comparative 'rubbish' of ordinary and waste thoughts. See how much you can maintain a cheerful stage.
 - See whether you consciously or unconsciously cause anyone sorrow.
 - Experiment with putting a full stop to all thoughts about what others are doing and why.

160

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Distribute handouts (Collect \$)

- Tips for Listening to Baba's Murli/ Watch Your Thoughts
- Don't Take Sorrow
- Healing the Heart/ Happiness Is...
- The Actor, The Entertainer and the Ego

Suggest homework

- Check how much time you spend thinking about this knowledge and contrast the value of such thoughts with the comparative 'rubbish' of ordinary and waste thoughts. See how much you can maintain a cheerful stage.
- See whether you consciously or unconsciously cause anyone sorrow.
- Experiment with putting a full stop to all thoughts about what others are doing and why.

Lesson 13-Avyakt on Satyug

Objectives—At the end of this session the students would:

- Have a feeling, if not a vision, for the Golden Age
- Understand how the ideal world must first be established on the level of human consciousness before it can manifest in reality

162
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LESSON MATERIALS to prepare beforehand

Poster(s): Shiv Baba Poster

Murli: Avyakt dated 2nd January 1980

Handout(s): (some or all of the following)

Silence (Anthony Strano, Retreat #12)

Why Silence? (Inside front cover, Retreat #10)

Cultivating Spiritual Values (Retreat #11)

Love (Inside front cover, Retreat #14)

Life in the Balance (Br. Charlie, Retreat #2)

Living with Myself (Jacqueline Berg, Retreat #13)

The Aha! Moment (Mike George, H&S #18)

Copied together

Copied together

Copied together

CDs/tapes: Healing Heart & Soul

[PLEASE REVIEW THE OBJECTIVES of this lesson before you begin, so that you are mindful of what you want to cover. Be sure to SIT WITH BABA before the student(s) arrive.]

NOTES:

1. Before class, **conduct ½ hour meditation** with some live commentary (use your favorite instrumental background) during which you give the experience of having a heart to heart conversation with Baba. (See "Conversation with Baba: Yoga" under Miscellaneous Resources.)
2. Have a bit of discussion about perfection as per the following page and suggest the way to listen. Pause for some moments of silence, then read the Murli in such a way as to give the experience or a vision of the Golden Age. You will need to explain the term "veeman" and also the concept of Baba and Brahma Baba as "Lord and Master".
3. After the Murli, ask for questions or comments, etc. and conduct a closing meditation. *Healing Heart & Soul* CD: #3 (11 minutes)



Lesson 13-Avyakt on Satyug

- Baba gives us a vision of perfection and a perfect world and enables us to contemplate it in a realistic way.
- Memories and Visions of Paradise.

163

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Murli on Satyug:

Many people today have a negative concept with regards to perfection. Have you ever heard someone remark reactively "I'm not perfect!" when they disappointed someone else's expectations? Sometimes people also say, "I've stopped trying to be perfect."

What does perfection really mean? Do you believe it's possible to become perfect? What would that look like?

Listen to this Murli and let your imagination and churning have a heyday. Think what it would have been like to live in that Golden Aged world, and what it will be like to live there again!



Lesson 13: Wrap-Up

➤ Distribute handouts

➤ Suggest homework

- Think about the Golden Age as a future reality for yourself. Practice moving, speaking and eating as you would have in the Golden Age.
- Experiment with being quickly able to get into the incorporeal dimension of consciousness (bodiless experience in the Soul World). How ever-ready is the airplane of your intellect? Are you able to go beyond all obstacles? If not, what obstacles prevent you from getting there? What is the solution?

164

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Distribute handouts (Collect \$)

- Silence/ Why Silence?
- Cultivating Spiritual Values
- The Art of Window Cleaning
- Life in the Balance
- Living with Myself/ The Aha! Moment

Suggest homework

- Think about the Golden Age as a future reality for yourself. Practice moving, speaking and eating as you would have in the Golden Age.
- Experiment with being quickly able to get into the incorporeal dimension of consciousness (bodiless experience in the Soul World). How ever-ready is the airplane of your intellect? Are you able to go beyond all obstacles? If not, what obstacles prevent you from getting there? What is the solution?

Lesson 14-Sakar on Cycle

Objectives—At the end of this session the students would:

- ✓ Have understood that the cycle repeats every 5000 years
- ✓ Have begun to appreciate Who is teaching

163
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LESSON MATERIALS to prepare beforehand

Poster(s): Shiv Baba Poster

Murli: Sakar dated 12th February 2004

Handout(s): (some or all of the following)

Tips for Studying Baba's Murli

Avyakt Murli on the Murli (14/04/02, originally spoken on 7/12/83)

The Teachings of God (Correspondence Course Lesson 8 last page)

Path of the Slave, Path of the Master (Mike George, Retreat #10)

Is Success More? (Mike George H&S #16)

The Holy Grail of High Self Esteem (Lesley Edwards, Retreat #13)

Virtue (Back Cover, H&S #17)

Copied together

Copied together

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CDs/tapes: Healing Heart & Soul

[PLEASE REVIEW THE OBJECTIVES of this lesson before you begin, so that you are mindful of what you want to cover. Be sure to SIT WITH BABA before the student(s) arrive.]

NOTES:

1. Before class, **conduct ½ hour meditation** with some live commentary (use your favorite instrumental background) during which you give the experience of the 5 forms: incorporeal, deity, worthy of worship, Brahmin and Angel.
2. This is the Murli in which Baba mentions 5000 years and identical repetition. (See pages 114 & 118 for explanation of identical repetition.) It is not necessary to mention these two aspects before reading the Murli (it's more powerful if they hear it directly from Baba) but prepare souls by reminding them that the knowledge of the cycle is meant to be spun in terms of self-realization. Share a few points such as those on the following page. Pause for some moments of silence, then read the Murli in such a way as to give the experience as though you are reading it and they are hearing it again after 5000 years. As you read, stop to explain any unfamiliar terms such as satopradhan, tamopradhan, Shiv Jayanti, tapasya, Shrimat, rishis & munis, Ramayana, Bhagwad, Gita.
3. After the Murli, ask for questions or comments, etc. and conduct a closing meditation. *Healing Heart & Soul* CD: #4 (12.5 minutes) or #5 (13 minutes)



Lesson 14-Sakar on Cycle

- How Murli helps us know God as He/She is
- How it therefore gives us the power to develop relationship with God
- Who is it that could teach these things?
- Who is teaching me?
- What's the point?
- How does matter return to its original location?

166

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In many Murlis Baba spins the cycle, making us aware of the 3 aspects of time, the philosophy of karma, the 3 worlds, etc. This is what is on Baba's mind, in Baba's awareness. Thinking about these things makes my own intellect broad, subtle, refined, versatile, and flexible like Baba's, enabling universal service.

The Murli gives us the power to develop relationship with Baba. It reveals God's personality in depth. Investigate through the Murli how Baba is the perfect Father, Teacher and Mother.

Churning the Murli leads to realization. Realization leads to growth. Growth leads to relationship. Realize who is teaching you and who He wants you to become.

Common Questions and Answers

This lesson can bring up many questions about identical repetition, such as:

• **What is the point?** This question comes because of our need for purpose. We have been sold on the idea of evolution and eternal progress. But the drama is really just that, a drama. It is for entertainment and enjoyment. Because the last few births have been difficult (and the villains, i.e. vices, have had the upper hand), due to body consciousness we have not been able to perceive the drama as detached observers; therefore we have not enjoyed our parts so much. Thus this most recent perception colors our ability to see the beauty of the drama as a whole. (Also see page 118.)

• **How does matter return to its original location?** If at the end of the cycle all matter returns to its original location for the start of the Golden Age, what about the rovers on the moon and satellites that have left the solar system? How do they return? One answer is that, on the earth, the process of transformation at the end of the cycle will reduce much of matter to its elemental state; it will reform itself in the next cycle along the same lines as it formed in the previous cycle. We do not know all the answers to these questions, but because so many of the things that Baba has said would happen have actually happened, we have faith that everything will repeat.



Lesson 14: Wrap-Up

- Distribute handouts
- Ways to study the Murli
- Suggest homework
 - Try to simply observe the drama of life. Think of each scene as having occurred before.
 - Take notes on the Avyakt Murli handout using any of the above methods and bring any questions to the next class.

167

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Distribute handouts (Collect \$)

- Tips for Studying Baba's Murli
- Avyakt Murli on the Murli/ The Teachings of God
- Path of the Slave, Path of the Master/ Is Success More?
- The Holy Grail of High Self Esteem/ Virtue

Talk about ways to study

Go over some of the tips for studying in the handout "Tips for Studying Baba's Murli", such as:

- Collect points under the 4 subjects.
- Write an essay based on the Murli.
- Extract 2-5 points you will personally work on, then meditate on them, visualize yourself doing them, emerge feelings, explore any blocks with love and generosity, check progress.
- Write any instructions in "I" form as if telling it to yourself.

Suggest homework

- Try to simply observe the drama of life. Think of each scene as having occurred before.
- Take notes on the Avyakt Murli handout using any of the above methods and bring any questions to the next class.

Lesson 15: Spiritual Lifestyle

Objectives—At the end of the session the students would :

- Understand the disciplines of a yogi lifestyle & how they maximize success
- Understand the importance of purity

168
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LESSON MATERIALS to prepare beforehand

Poster(s): Shiv Baba Poster

Handout(s): (some or all of the following)

A Spiritual Lifestyle (Retreat #10)

The Face of Honesty (Sr. Mohini, H&S #14)

Debunking the Myths About Onion & Garlic (Lokik article)

Food for Thought (Barbara Ramsay, Retreat #7)

Benefits of Eating in Baba's Remembrance

Dying to Be Thin (Jillian Sawers, H&S #15)

The Divine Relationship (Judy Pemell, H&S #16)

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CDs/tapes: Healing Heart & Soul

Other: Feedback sheet

Grad Gift (possibly *The Method of Purification*) [see additional resources]

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[PLEASE REVIEW THE OBJECTIVES of this lesson before you begin, so that you are mindful of what you want to cover. Be sure to SIT WITH BABA before the student(s) arrive.]

Begin with ½ an hour of meditation with a live commentary (use your favorite instrumental background) during which you give the experience of different stages in meditation such as World Benefactor, Light House/ Might House, Master Almighty Authority, etc.

NOTE: There are several ways of presenting the principles or main pillars which support yoga and a spiritual life style. The traditional Yagya list is: Diet, Dharna (inculcation of virtues), Divine Company, & Celibacy. In Australia, however, Study (Murli), Diet, Purity (in thought, word and action), and Good Company (which includes Amrit Vela) are presented. Sister Jayanti mentions Diet, Routine, Company, Relationships (which includes celibacy) and Service.

The method presented here is to talk about the pillars of a spiritual life as being:

- The practice of Yoga (timetable)
- Diet
- Purity (which includes celibacy)
- Study (which includes the 4 subjects as well as good company)

You will have to experiment to see what feels comfortable to you and appropriate to the souls you are serving.



Lesson 15: Transition From Prior Lessons

Transition into Lesson 15

- We have learned how to meditate.
- We have also learned that meditation is a way of life, a process of transforming self.
- Those of us who want to pursue this transformation must realize we are swimming upstream, against the current of humanity which is rushing headlong into even greater suffering.
- This lesson is about what can help us.
- The lifestyle principles which we follow facilitate our yoga experiences.

In this course you have learned how to practice Raja Yoga meditation. You have also learned that meditation is a way of life, a process of transforming the self. Those of us who want to pursue this transformation must realize we are swimming upstream, against the current of humanity which is rushing headlong into even greater suffering. This lesson is about what can help us. The lifestyle principles which we follow facilitate our yoga experiences.

Points to Emphasize:

- The methods which Shiv Baba explained to Brahma Baba and which he practically followed, found effective and therefore taught, form the basis of our lifestyle.
- ***We do not expect you to follow them***, but you might want to *experiment with them* and see what effect they have on your life and your meditation experiences. If you do want to experiment with them, you will have to do so over a period of time, say at least two weeks, in order to assess the results.
- ***They are not a requirement for you to continue*** studying with us. They are **ONLY** a requirement if you want to go to Mt. Abu and meet Baba, in which case you will have to observe them for 8 months prior to going.
- They are what we do. Sooner or later you will find them out anyway, so we're just being candid about them. Nowadays we find that many people are already doing some of these things, but if any are surprising or disquieting to you, then remember that you are not being asked to follow them. Simply try to understand why they are considered important. If and when you become ready to take them up in your life –that will be the time that is right for you to do so.



Lesson 15: The Four Pillars

➤ Yoga:

- Amrit Vela
- Traffic Control
- Evening Meditation
- Meditation before & after class

➤ Diet:


- No's: meat, fish, poultry, eggs, onions & garlic, alcohol, tobacco, drugs
- Cooking in soul consciousness
- Vices affect food hazards of eating out; eating only food cooked by those who fully follow our principles
- You are what you eat
- Offer food to God

Yoga - Go through the daily timetable, showing how we get in over 2 hours a day of meditation without difficulty. You might want to mention that Amrit Vela is an advanced spiritual practice and if they're not ready for that then instead they can practice just getting up a few minutes earlier than they usually do.

You can also talk about good company in this context because the best company is God. Possibly revisit the benefits of all relationships with the Supreme.

Diet

- o Non-violence is karmically important. In Satyug, no food is consumed which is the result of violence to any creature. So we don't eat meat, fish or poultry. Dairy is OK, because it does not harm the animal, however we are particular to find cheese without rennet (which is made from the lining of a cow's stomach). The human digestive tract is actually not designed for flesh foods, because the long transit time leads to unhealthy putrefaction.
- o Eggs are a waste product of the hen when unfertilized or food for a growing chick, so we don't eat them either. They also putrefy in the human stomach.
- o We avoid foods which create a bad effect on body, make the mind race and create a strong body odor. These include garlic, onions, leeks, chives. (You may want to explain tamasic food—meat, heavy food, stale food, food cooked in improper environment, greasy food), rajasic food (stimulants such as coffee, tea, hot spices) and satwic food (brown rice and vegetables and also milk).
- o We practice remembering God while:
 - Shopping for food
 - Cooking
 - Offering the food, giving it drishti
 - Eating (We try to eat in soul/ God consciousness, and, if possible, in silence)



Lesson 15: The Four Pillars, cont'd

- Celibacy
 - Purity is Power
 - Dharna
- Study/ Good Company
 - Daily Murli Class
 - 4 Subjects: Gyan, Yoga, Dharna, Seva

15
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We practice **celibacy**, even in family life. [Talk about how purity empowers the soul and is key to dharna. You can cite the examples of Sumo wrestlers and other athletes who are advised to abstain to keep up their strength. Our aim is strength of intellect.]

Sexuality pulls consciousness into the body more than any other act. But celibacy is much more than physical purity; it includes purity of thoughts, words, and actions. The knowledge of karma and the drama cycle give us the understanding that having children now will be a tremendous karmic bondage during this time that we have been given to clear all accounts. Also, at this time of the cycle, souls coming into the womb may not be powerful and will thus cause more sorrow than happiness.

Many famous personalities and a number of powerful leaders are celibate. Religious leaders today may not advocate celibacy because of the fear that they would lose followers. [Here are some books by worldly authors that you can mention if people need more information:

1. C.J. Van Vliet - The Coiled Serpent: A philosophy of conservation and transmutation of reproductive energy (Navajivan Publishing, Ahmedabad, 1963)
2. Liz Hodgkinson - Sex is Not Compulsory (Sphere Books, London 1988)
3. Michael H. Crosby - Celibacy: Means of Control or Mandate of the Heart? (Ave Maria Press, Notre Dame, Indiana, 1996)
4. Elizabeth Abbott - A History of Celibacy (HarperCollins, Toronto, 1999)
5. Ghandi's autobiography]

We practice regular **study** through a daily morning Murli class. Regularity and discipline bring results. [Although the four subjects may have been mentioned in the first advanced class it is worthwhile going over them again:

- Gyan (Murli)
- Yoga
- Dharna [explain principle of seeing virtues rather than defects and importance of refraining from bad company, bad books and bad thoughts]
- Service]

Also, it's very important to have the **good company** of others of like mind on the spiritual path. We enjoy getting together for service, retreats and celebrations.



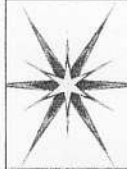
Lesson 15: Meditation Experience

- Concluding Meditation
- Give drishti

172

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After presenting the principles, ask for questions or comments, etc. and conduct a closing meditation.
Healing Heart & Soul CD: #6 (11 minutes)

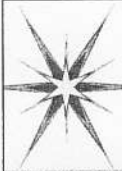


Foundation Course: Wrap Up

Summarize the essence of each lesson:

➤ Soul

- Clear understanding of soul separate from body
- Ability to experience one's own state of peace
- Ability to take responsibility for one's own thoughts, decisions and even subconscious mind and with power of yoga, become the master
- Ability to discriminate between body consciousness and soul consciousness, understanding the root of sorrow and the basis for true self respect



Foundation Course: Wrap Up, cont'd

➤ God

- Wisdom to be able to know God as He/She is
- By thinking God to be everywhere the intellect had become dull and senseless
- By not going beyond the religious founders no consistent experience of the fullness of God's light, love, peace and power
- With knowledge of three worlds, soul can free self from limitations of mundane consciousness, experience relief from stress and struggles and empower the self with God's energy



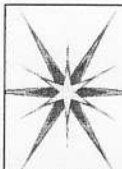
Foundation Course: Wrap Up, cont'd

➤ Cycle

- Ability to understand how this world can become heaven through the soul being purified, which in turn purifies nature
- Ability to realize one's true nature and emerge divine sanskaras
- Clear understanding of what time it is, where we've been and where we're going

➤ Tree

- Ability to understand and accept the variety roles of the actor souls
- Ability to know one's own role within the multitude of being



Foundation Course: Wrap Up, cont'd

- History
 - Understanding of God's role
- Principles
 - Guidelines for a yogi lifestyle

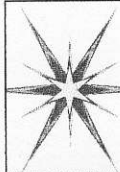
177

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Comment: At this point, you should have experienced the following short term benefits of this spiritual education:

- Inner calm
- Insight
- Enthusiasm
- some autonomy (realization of the power and potential of one's own soul)
- some control over the self
- greater self-confidence.

If you continue studying and meditating with us over a longer term, you will expect these short term achievements turning into long term benefits, i.e., peace, wisdom, happiness, independence, self-mastery and self-respect.



Foundation Course: Wrap Up, cont'd

- Sharing of experiences
- Invite student to Morning Class
 - give timings
 - explain seating
- Invite her/him to other appropriate events
- Show the Library (tapes, books, videos)
- Show Baba's room
- Introduce students to Center Coordinator who gives Toli, and gifts

178

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Ask students to share benefits, experiences: How does everything sit with you?

Invite them to Morning Class: Be sure they will know what to expect.

Invite them to other programs: You may want to remind them about your weekly group meditation sessions or other special events.

Show them the Library and Baba's Room

Distribute toli and gift: Invite the Center Coordinator to meet the class and to graduate them by giving toli and gift. (You may want to call her/ him into the class a little earlier, before people start sharing experiences. S/he could also be invited to conduct the meditation.) The class "The Method of Purification Through Raja Yoga (or How to Have a Good Life)" makes a nice gift at this point.