



ESHA (ईशा)

*Educators Society for Heritage of India*

[www.ESHAusa.org](http://www.ESHAusa.org)



**Harnessing the Powers of the Mind  
for Spiritual development**

Ved P. Chaudhary, Ph.D  
President - ESHA





# *Harnessing the Powers of the Mind*

- ⊕ The mind is the most dynamic thing we experience in our lives as humans. It travels faster than the speed of light.
- ⊕ Bill Gates learnt this from his Indian coworkers and popularised it.
- ⊕ Its reach and speed are the closest things to the experience of infinity.
- ⊕ The powers of the mind shape our lives, yet we simply fritter away its vast potential for the good of the self and the humanity: लोक संग्रहम्
- ⊕ Yoga is chitta-vritti nirodhah (stilling the constant chatter of the mind).
- ⊕ Bhakti is mind focused on loving devotion to the Supreme Consciousness.
- ⊕ In this webinar, we explore the multi-dimensional splendor of the mind for spiritual development.



# *Brain, Mind and Thoughts*

- ◆ Brain is a collection of tissues (hardware) that doctors can touch and feel, operate on it, prescribe meds to increase or reduce pressure, swelling, nuro-transmitters...
- ◆ Mind is software: doctors can not touch or feel. It controls sense organs (इंद्रियां) that control our body.
- ◆ Thoughts are constantly generated in the mind.
- ◆ It is not true to say that I am thinking, but that, this thought is coming to my mind.



## *Powers of the Mind*

- ❖ चञ्चलं हि मनः कृष्ण प्रमाथि बलवद् दृढम् ।  
तस्याहं निग्रहं मन्ये वायोरिव सुदुष्करम् ॥ BG.६-३४ ॥
- ❖ The mind is always restless, dynamic, churning, very powerful and tenacious.
- ❖ Controlling the mind is as difficult as controlling a powerful gust of wind, or a full blown storm.



## *Examples of Extraordinary Powers of the Mind*

- ◆ Dreams that come true
- ◆ Clairvoyance: the faculty of perceiving things or events in the future or beyond normal sensory contact.
- ◆ synonyms: ESP (extra-sensory perception) sixth sense, psychic powers, telepathy.



# *Yoga Sutras of Patanjali*

- Chapter 1. समाधिपादः Steps of meditation
- Chapter 2. साधनपादः Practice of meditation
- Chapter 3. विभूतिपादः powers of the mind
- Chapter 4. कैवल्यपादः Ultimate Liberation



## ***Yoga Sutra Chapter 1 समाधिपादः***

- ❖ Defines Yoga as:

*Yogah chitta-vritti nirodhah*      *YS-1.2*

Yoga is the stilling of the constant chatter  
of the thought-waves in the mind

- ❖ Covered in my webinar on “Spiritual dimensions of Yoga”



# *Ashtang Yoga: Eight Steps*

- Yam, Niyam: moral, spiritual foundation
  - Āsan, Prānāyām: Physical development
- 
- Pratyāhār: calming the mind
  - DhāraNā: focusing the mind, concentration
  - Dhyāna: Meditation
  - Samādhi: Final stage, Absorption



# *Yoga Sutra Chapter 2 साधनपादः*

- The first verse defines kriya yoga:

तपः स्वाध्याय ईश्वर प्रणिधानानि क्रिया योगः YS2.1

Kriyā-yoga – the Path of Action – requires Self discipline, study of shastras, upanishads; and surrendering the fruits of one's deeds to Ishwara.

- Covered in my webinar on 'Karm Yoga in Professional Domain'.



# *Yoga Sutra Chapter 3* विभूतिपादः

## Powers of the Mind

● देश बन्धः चित्तस्य धारणा YS-3.1

What is **Dhāraṇā?** (Concentration): fixing the mind in one place.

● तत्र प्रत्यय एकतानता ध्यानम् YS-3.2

**Dhyāna** (meditation): one pointed focus of the mind on the object of concentration

● तद् एवार्थ मात्र निर्भासम् स्वरूप शून्यं इव समाधिः YS-3.3

**Samādhi**: when mind is totally absorbed in the object of Dhyāna, mind is no longer aware of itself; that I am meditating on this object.



# *Samyam* संयम

◆ त्रयम् एकत्र संयमः ys-3.4

These three together, collectively, are called संयम

◆ तज्जयात प्रज्ञालोकः (तत जयात प्रज्ञा आलोकः) ys-3.5

From thorough mastery of samyam comes the light of wisdom,  
i.e., vision or insight into every thing !



## *Fear Powers of the Mind ?*

- ◆ Will some one use the powers for evil purposes?
- ◆ No!
- ◆ Different people have different tendencies, abilities, aptitudes, ...
- ◆ Powers come only when Rajas and Tamas have been vanquished.



# *Developing Mental Powers*

- By making samyam संयम on
  - friendliness towards the happy,
  - compassion for the unhappy, and
  - pure joy and delight in the virtuous,One develops the powers of these qualities.
- Thus, one becomes a friend of all who come in contact with him; they find him a source of comfort and friendship.
- Similarly, one develops such compassion that, in samyam, one can lift the suffering out of others pain.
- This is for the good of all - Lok sangraham.



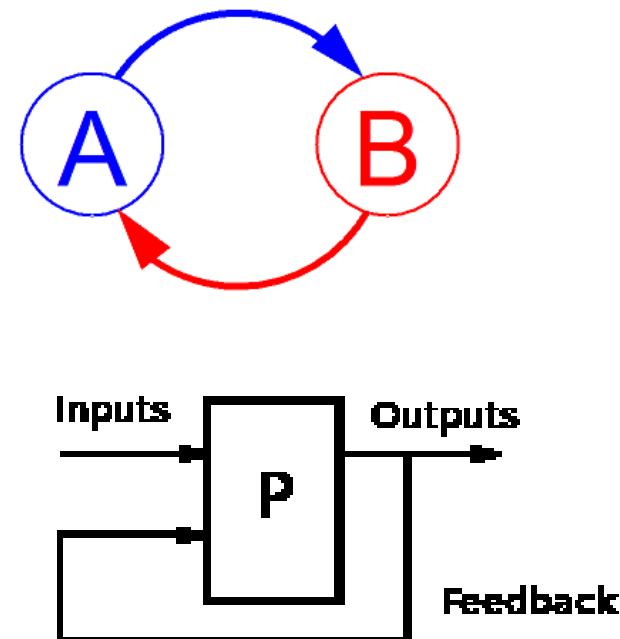
# *Developing Powers*

- ➊ When one becomes steadfast in uttering only the truth, then whatever he says comes true! YS-2.36
  - ▣ His blessings come true.
  - ▣ Even his dreams come true!
- ➋ Example: Mahatma Gandhi was steadfast in truth. He started Satyāgrah, asked British to Quit India, which at the time was an impossible demand. But, finally, British did Quit India!



## *Finding solution to a problem in your dream*

- A Scientist saw in a dream a snake biting its own tail, and got the idea of the feedback loop
- **Feedback** occurs when a fraction of output of a system is routed back as input as part of a chain of cause-and-effect that forms a circuit or loop.
- The system can then be said to *feed back* into itself.
- This Scientist held DhāraNā and Dhyāna (almost) on the object of his research even as he went to sleep.
- The invention has benefitted humanity





# *Bio-Feedback*

- ❖ Wikipedia: by harnessing the power of his mind and becoming aware of what's going on inside his body, one can gain control over his health.
- ❖ helps one to learn to relax. Relaxation helps prevent or control illness.
- ❖ biofeedback therapy is used to help prevent or treat conditions, including migraine headaches, chronic pain, incontinence, and high blood pressure...



# *Placebo effect*

- ❖ **Wikipedia:** Brain imaging techniques showed that placebo can have real, measurable effects on physiological changes in the brain. Placebos can produce some objective physiological changes, such as changes in heart rate, blood pressure, and chemical activity in the brain, in cases involving pain, depression, anxiety, fatigue, and some symptoms of Parkinson's.
- ❖ In other cases, like asthma, the effect is purely subjective, when the patient reports improvement despite no objective change in the underlying condition.
- ❖ The placebo effect is a pervasive phenomenon; in fact, it is part of the response to any active medical intervention. The placebo effect points to the importance of perception and the brain's role in physical health.
- ❖ Although not reached the state of Dhyāna and samādhi, still helps.



## *Prayer and Bhakti*

- ✿ If placebo effect happens even without the all-consuming, one-pointed focus in DhāraNā and Dhyāna (let alone Samādhi), then imagine the impact of Samyam संयम !
- ✿ Prayer and Bhakti are even more effective, but,... depends on the scale of one-pointed devotion.



## *Examples of Practicing Yogis*

- Maharshi Mahesh Yogi helped Harvard medical doctors to measure the effects of meditation on vital functions of the body and mind.
- Herbert Benson, Cardiologist, professor, Harvard Medical School, Pioneered Mind Body research.
- the mind and body are one system, meditation can play a significant role in reducing stress responses, diseases and improving health.
- These benefits accrue even without reaching the point of samyam !



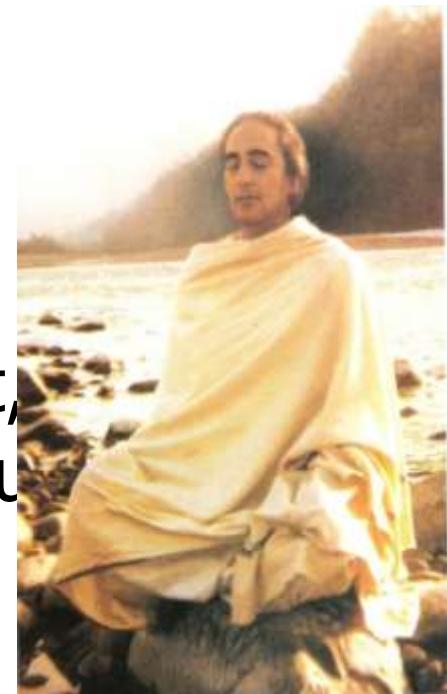
## *Training the Mind*

- ◆ Tibetan Monks practice a highly spiritualized yoga meditation.
- ◆ PBS made a video and reported:
- ◆ Swami Rama of Himalayas



# *Swāmi Rāma of Himālayas*

- Swami Rama was one of the first yogis to be studied by Western scientists.
- In the 1960s, he demonstrated to scientists at the Menninger Clinic his ability to voluntarily control bodily processes such as heart-beat, blood-pressure, and body temperature that were considered involuntary (autonomic) by medical profession.





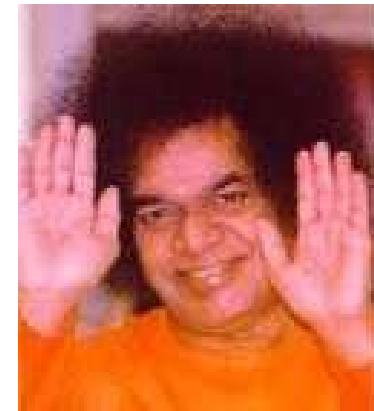
# *Swāmi Rāma of Himālayas*

- Reduced heart-beat to 12 beats/min.
- He could read words written on a paper without opening his eyes
- Could stop the flow of blood in one leg, or even to two fingers of a hand
- Could stop heart beat



## *Sathya Sai Baba*

- Sai Baba materialised vibhuti (holy ash) and objects such as rings, necklaces, watches, food
- Performed miraculous healings, resurrections, clairvoyance,
- Ability of bi-location, omnipotence and omniscience





# *A Wandering Monk in my Village*

- ➊ He had clairvoyance: knew what is happening in distant places
- ➋ Knew what is in your house
- ➌ Went to our mango orchard, picked some herbs, and treated illness.
- ➍ Foretold what was going to happen in future



## *A Master of Memory in India Credits Meditation for His Brainy Feats*

- ❖ The New York Times:  
By Max Bearak Nov. 17, 2014
- ❖ Until mid-afternoon, audience approached the stage, to show the young monk a random object, pose a math problem, or speak a word or phrase...
- ❖ After six hours, the monk opened his eyes and calmly recalled all 500 items, in order
- ❖ For details, [ESHIusa.org/yoga](http://ESHIusa.org/yoga)





# *Human Evolution*

- In the evolution of species, Humans became so successful due to our large brains and larger capacity of our mind.
  - For the evolution to still higher level, mind is the key ...
  - The Human Capacity for Transformational Change: Harnessing the Collective Mind
- By Valerie A. Brown, John A. Harris



# तोरा मन दर्पण कहलाए।

तोरा मन दर्पण कहलाए।  
भले बुरे सारे कर्मों को देखे और दिखाए।  
तोरा मन दर्पण कहलाए।

मन ही देवता, मन ही ईश्वर, मन से बड़ा न कोय।  
मन उजियारा जब जब फैले, जग उजियारा होय।  
इस उजले दर्पण पर प्राणी, धूल न जमने पाए।  
तोरा मन दर्पण कहलाए।

सुख की कलिया, दुख के कांटे, मन सब का आधार  
मन से कोई बात छिपी ना, मन के नैन हजार।  
जग से चाहे भागले कोई, मन से भाग न पाए।  
तोरा मन दर्पण कहलाए।

