



November 2020

## Spiritual World Society Theme of the Month

# Transforming Your Sense of Self

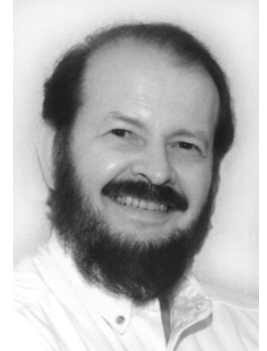
Yogically, the main transformation is not the mind or the heart—those are by-products. To be transformed is a change of your sense of self, a change of who “I” is when you are talking about “I” or “me”—a change in awareness of that one.

The Gayatri mantram talks about, “Oh, Lord, I don’t ask for other things than that you change my sense of self or enlighten, fill with light, wisdom my buddhi, my sense of self. That’s what I want changed.” To the yogi, generally, that’s where it’s all at. When we are lost, sad, cut-off, frustrated or arrogant or a confused or mean or jealous person, or unloving and unloved person, suddenly steps into a new state of realization of one’s true nature—that’s the transformation that is generally referred to and the magnificence of that transformation.

When you have a different sense of who you are, you feel different about all life. If you just can get a glimpse and maintain it about who you really are, it’s absolutely amazing. That sense-of-self change makes a change of heart and makes a change of thought. You begin to find your whole being transformed when you sense more clearly, the yogi

suggests, who you really are.

This sense of self, this feeling, “I’m the doer” is the outcome of ignorance. This is Ramakrishna talking. The feeling that God does everything is due to knowledge. This “I sense” is not what we call a *feeling* in the traditional sense. It’s a turning point of one’s whole being and this buddhi is called the “I sense,” so it could be considered a *feeling*, but it’s generally not considered a feeling in the sense of our emotions.



Ramakrishna Ananda

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*“The feeling that God does everything is due to knowledge.”*

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“God alone is the doer; all others are mere instruments in His hands. The feeling that God does everything is due to knowledge.” You have an enlightened viewpoint when you feel that God does everything.

“When the embodied soul says, O God, I’m not the doer; Thou art the doer. I’m the machine and Thou art its operator.” But just saying that doesn’t do it. I know people who like to blame God for every mistake they make. They are making all the mistakes. God is

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## Important Message

# Meet Us Online

Another month has gone by, and here we are in November, with Thanksgiving coming. Although the pandemic continues to be an issue, it is necessary for us to continue to suspend all in-person Yoga Center classes and events. Let’s be thankful though for the technology that allows us to get together virtually!

It’s uplifting to see everyone on camera in the Zoom events, on the chat in the WebinarJam classes and especially at the 50th Anniversary event. Our out-

of-town members have mentioned many times what a blessing it is to connect with everyone.

There are a lot more virtual classes and events coming up in November. You are invited to join our live weekly hatha yoga, pranayam, meditation and higher yogas classes. At the end of each class, there is an opportunity to ask questions. If you miss a class, you can access any or all of them on the Yoga Center members page. A new event, our Yoga Center Support Group, launched in October. This group gives everyone an opportunity to connect with others and hear how they’re dealing with *quarantine fatigue*.

## Transforming cont.

perfect truth, beauty and goodness. If you're saying God is the operator and you are but the expression of that divinity within yourself, there will be more and more accuracy in your life, not more and more latitude for excuses. "How can a man get rid of his ego?" "You cannot get rid of it," Ramakrishna said, "till you have realized God. If you find a person freed from ego, know that he has seen God."

"Does the ego disappear altogether after the realization of God?" The Master: "Yes. Sometimes God totally effaces the ego of His devotee, as in the state of samadhi. But in many cases, He keeps, God keeps a trace of ego, but it's the ego that doesn't injure anybody. It's like the ego of a child. A five-year-old child no doubt says, 'I,' but that ego doesn't harm anybody."

Well, the beautiful thing is that God throughout history takes people who feel definitely about their place and their kind of life and He changes them magically, it seems. Lovingly they get transformed. The thing that's very beautiful to notice, that the Incarnation who has come from age to age—who came as Christ and who came as Krishna and came as these various Incarnations—has always been able to take crude people, uncaring, downcast people and

transform them into saints! Sublime! That's sublime, mind-boggling!

What do I mean by saint? One who has realized that they are beloved of God, that they are created of God. They know it and *they live that way*. In a sense the Guru has many functions, but in another sense he has one function—to help the devotee receive a true realization of whom they are, just to keenly know "Who am I?" The Guru dispels the darkness and one clearly knows one's reality—pure, clear realization of one's *identity*.

Toward that end, the Guru through the grace of God and God Himself are continually striving—through darshan and through mantrams and meditation—for this transformation of self. It's a transformation that's not a snap, but a divine unfolding in which there are no big gaps and in which there are no falling back places and swamp lands, in which there is an unfoldment of one's being into one's true nature, so beautiful that the process maintains itself, so beautiful that there is nothing rickety about it. It's very strong, very powerful and it's established.

That's much of what a mantram is all about. Every time you say it, every time you utter it once, be open to a different, a subtle but different sense of self, different sense of you, your value, your life, its value, its purpose, its meaning, because there is a transformation of self.

## Posture of the Month

### The Jack Knife

The affirmation for this pose, "What in this world can hold me?" leads us to self-study and a new view of our world. Your mind is freed from gravitational bondage by being in a half upward, half downward position. The spine becomes supple and is lengthened. This invigorates the entire nervous system, increases blood supply to the brain and gives a complete stretch to the posterior of the body. How to do it:

- Stand erect with feet together.
- Inhale and raise your arms over the head.
- Rise onto your toes and elongate your spine.
- Exhale slowly as you stretch the body downwards, bending from the hips and keeping the knees straight.

- Hold onto the back of your legs and bring your forehead in as close to your knees as possible. Hold as long as comfortable.
- To come out, inhale and stretch back up with arms stretched over the head again. Then bring your hands into pronam and pause.



## Pranayam of the Month

# Bastrika Breath

This increases your energy, strengthens the nervous system, helps your mind become clearer and more focused, and stimulates the kundalini energy at the base of your spine to move upward.

- Sit in a steady, comfortable posture with your spine straight.

- Start with a passive inhalation through the nose. Exhale through the nose by contracting the abdominal muscles quickly and forcefully for 10 to 20 rapid repetitions. This is one round.
- Do one or two normal inhalations and exhalations in between each round.
- Do three rounds of this breath practice. Since Bastrika is a powerful pranayam, don't strain to do too many repetitions.

# CALENDAR

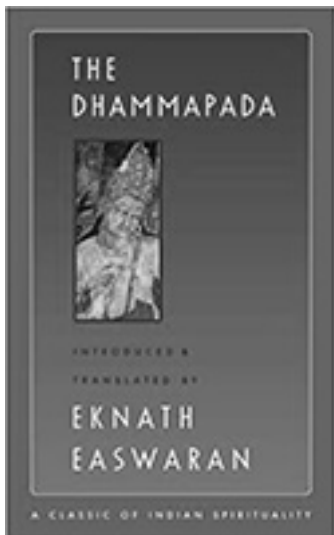
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|-----|---|------|--|
| SUN | <p><b>Ramakrishna Ananda Messages</b></p> <p><i>See Members page link for weekly messages</i></p>       | WED  | <p><b>Hatha Yoga Asanas</b><br/>Wednesdays 4:00 pm</p> <p><i>Join Radha weekly</i></p>   |
| SUN | <p><b>Sunday Morning Services</b></p> <p><i>See Members page link for a new weekly service</i></p>      | WED  | <p><b>Weekly Meditations</b><br/>Wednesdays 5:30 pm</p> <p><i>Join Bharata weekly with Ramakrishna Ananda's audios</i></p>   |
| MON | <p><b>Hatha Yoga Asanas</b><br/>Mondays 4:00 pm</p> <p><i>Join Kali Devi weekly</i></p>                 | THUR | <p>Higher Yogas with<br/><b>Ramakrishna Ananda</b><br/>Thursdays 5:30 pm</p> <p><i>Audios by Ramakrishna Ananda, hosted by Kali Devi</i></p>   |
| TUE | <p><b>Gentle Chair Yoga</b><br/>Tuesdays 11:00 am</p> <p><i>Join Radha weekly</i></p>                   |      | <p><b>This month's great topics:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Lifeline of Your Spine</li> <li>• The Eight-Fold Path of Patanjali</li> <li>• Yoga as the Removal of Hindrances</li> </ul> |
| TUE | <p><b>Experience the Power of Pranayam</b><br/>Tuesdays 5:30 pm</p> <p><i>Join Kali Devi weekly</i></p> | FRI  | <p><b>Open Your Heart Meditations</b><br/>Fridays 5:30 pm</p> <p><i>Join Sumedha on Zoom</i></p>   |
| WED | <p><b>Support Group</b><br/>Wednesdays 10:30 am</p> <p><i>Give and receive support</i></p>              |      |  |

## Book of the Month

# The Dhammapada

*Translation and commentary by Eknath Eswaran*

Dhammapada means *the path of dharma*, the path of harmony and righteousness that anyone can follow to reach the highest good. The Dhammapada is a collection of verses, gathered probably from direct disciples who wanted to preserve what they had heard from the Buddha himself. Easwaran's best-selling translation of this classic Buddhist text is based on the original Pali.



## Yoga Center Theme of the Month

# True Self-Esteem

Everyone is already on the path toward Enlightenment, and everyone has obstacles to overcome along the way. Our unique human individuality is God given. Yogis strive to understand our individuality, for this is a key to lasting happiness and fulfillment. Your yoga practice should suit your nature. To understand yourself and how to be fulfilled, consider your yearnings. For example, 1) to know love and emotional fulfillment, 2) to know, understand, and be satisfied mentally, 3) to accomplish, to do, to create. All three are important if we are to have lasting fulfillment.

The ancient yogi Patanjali identified the eight stages that are passed through: 1) Yamas, 2) Niyamas, 3) Asana, 4) Pranayama, 5) Pratyahara, 6) Dharana, 7) Dyhana, and 8) Samadhi, a high superconscious state and transformative experience. We know that we become what we focus upon. Whatever you lack, whatever you aspire for, can be realized through the practice of the eight-fold path and Samadhi.

## Gift of the Month

### Triumph Over Obstacles

Learn how you can triumph! Just when you think everything's going great, a challenge or obstacle pops up, right? Or sometimes it seems there are nothing but obstacles in your life. This month we are pleased to offer an online practical and inspiring event by Ramakrishna Ananda.

- Stay calm and centered when facing difficulties.
- Turn obstacles into opportunities.
- Access your third eye.

- Enjoy a new way of viewing your life that reduces stress and adds joy.
- Free yourself from angst and worry with a simple forgiveness technique.
- Find ongoing peace and well being with guided meditations.

### Inspiring Quote

*Yoga is the journey of the self,  
through the self, to the self.*

*—Bhagavad Gita*