**THE *UPANISHADIC* ART OF LIVING**

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**Abstract**

A human being though basically a physico-chemical and hence physiological being; is essentially a psychological being.  Psychology is physiology, but “appears” separate to most humans and will be dealt with as here. But attempts will be made to intermittently connect with modern scientific understanding in terms of nervous system – the brain, spinal cord, nerves and neurons- to get a comprehensive picture of mind and its functions for academic purpose.

Psychology is human consciousness and mind and their functions manifested as moods, thoughts, feelings, experiences, cognitions, re-cognitions and the like. Most of the difficulties faced by humans are financial and psychological.

The origin, structure, form, and function of human mind as revealed by Indian seers, wise-men, poets and intellectuals in the Upanishads and related spiritual and literary texts, will be translated into psychological and cognitive science elements. Thus an insight of human mental and related body functions will be deciphered.

This information then will be extended for its practical use to acquire a stress-free mind to face life in all its shades with equanimity and survive happiness, sorrow, natural and man-made calamities, and the like    and the vicissitudes caused by them; and live a purposeful and dignified life of fulfillment as is done by many Indians who follow tradition with discretion. Irrespective of what happens or does not happen as desired around in the outside physical world and inner mental world as a reaction to outside happenings as moods, urges, thoughts, feelings, in the individual and how absorb and transcend the associated pleasantness or unpleasantness will be presented; and how to keep focused on ordained personal, social or social like duties will be highlighted.

The art and science of mind management for fitting and proud survival through ups and downs of life with the help of spiritual and cultural attitudes developed by Indian sages and other learned persons will be presented with clarity. For this first we must know, what human consciousness, mind and their form, structure and function is. Upanishads give a beautiful and insightful idea about this aspect. So this article focuses on the Upanishads and the gist available therein about consciousness, mind and their functions and control of mind and the how we can learn Art of Living from this wisdom.

Key-words: The Upanishads, art of living, consciousness and mind,

Presentation at 2nd International Conference  - (A Three Day) On "Applied. Ancient Wisdom for Transformational leadership" in Delhi, INDIA, 20th February until 22nd February, 2018, at Delhi (InSIS2018).

**Introduction:**

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Psychology is human consciousness and mind and their functions manifested as moods, thoughts, feelings, experiences, cognitions, re-cognitions and the like. Most of the difficulties faced by humans are financial and psychological. A human being functions mentally as long as one is awake and stops functioning during sleep. Human mind, the aspect of human body and human body function in coordination for all the functions of the body and in the body too. The origin, structure, form, and function of human mind as revealed by Indian seers, wise-men, poets and intellectuals in the Upanishads, *Brahmajnaana*, *advaita* philosophy, *Sabdabrahma Siddhantasaddarsanas*, *Gayatri mantra*, and related spiritual and literary texts, will be translated into psychological and cognitive science elements. Thus an insight of human mental and related body functions will be deciphered.

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For this first we must know, what human consciousness, mind and their form, structure and function is. Upanishads give a beautiful and insightful idea about this aspect. So this article starts with the Upanishads and the gist available therein about consciousness, mind and their functions and control of mind. Before that let us have a glimpse of human needs.

**Truth and Reality:**

Daily at the end of my “*anusthaanam*”-(spiritual ritual)”, I make a strong, fervent and sincere prayer to the Divinity that intellectuals and scholars in the world should be fearless and speak the truth without any inhibitions. This has been the tradition of our ancestors and speaking truth is essential for the benefit of the society and the society will be able to know the actualities and act on them.

Truth is what it is or as it is irrespective of perceptions of the individuals. Reality is what we see of truth; how much we see of truth. Reality is always dictated by our mental make-up, likes, dislikes, limitations in our ability and willingness to see, view, comprehend and accept the truth. Reality is individual’s perception of the truth. Truth, most of the times, is only perceived and rarely understood or experienced. Thus reality is limited truth. Reality is either inability to be truthful or inability and limitations of the individual to see the truth unbiased. Also Truth corresponds to the individual, about himself, his Self and the reality corresponds to the objective world within and without the body of the individual.

Thus, most of the times, we are not truthful. We are all limited and confined to our perceptions of truth. Truth is best revealed when understood or experienced. Many times it appears that no absolute truth exists or known, perceived or understood and experienced. Just as feelings and perceptions of good and bad and other qualities, truth is also relative as “truth to me”, “truth to him”, “truth to you”, “truth to them” and a truth accepted by all is not possible and available to be expressed, accepted or spread and we all mistake our perceptions of truth as truth without understanding or experiencing the truth. But truth is like fire. It cannot be hidden or held in the palm. Truth sneaks through our cautions and suppressions and declares itself.

**Emotional and Intellectual needs of human beings:**

Human beings being animals as the rest of the fauna and especially vertebrates but for having the ability to express through languages, share all most all features with rest of the vertebrates. The common traits and needs identified for them as other animals are: “*aahaara-bhaya-nidraa-maithunaani*” – food, fear, sleep and copulation for reproduction. These are the things that motivate the humans to act. Their all actions are directed in fulfilling these needs and the trait fear makes them vulnerable physically and mentally too. Thus the body and mental needs make them engage in activities and take various professions too depending on their tastes, abilities and capabilities.

**Forms of ego:**

Ego is the characteristic of humans. It has different forms in different human beings. Our consciousness about our gender, social status, physical beauty, psychological traits, mental capabilities, spiritual aspirations, our achievements in worldly life form our ego. Ego is an essential ingredient of human mental make-up. It inspires us to be lively and sometimes causes inconveniences to our near and dear and others. The thoughts “I”, “me” “mine” arise in us making us joyful and also sad depending on the event, person, and our perception and understanding of them.

**The Meaning of Success:**

Definition and meaning of success is not the same for all. Depending on the individual’s value systems, mental-make-up, upbringing, culture, tastes, likes, dislikes, success varies from individual to individual. Many consider acquiring ability to earn and earning money is success. Some others consider becoming famous in chosen field is success irrespective of money earned. Some consider themselves successful when their work is recognized by the society and honors them with laurels. Some consider their life is successful if they live peacefully without causing any hurt or harm to fellow beings and life systems.

Any time, success in materialistic aspects overthrows other achievements and always the rich are respected and adored in the society. Earning money is the yardstick for success. In the list of recent and earlier, most successful Indians, compiled by a popular Indian magazine, we find all most all individuals coming from corporate world, politics, cinema and sports who earned lots of money. Individuals from literature, music, other fine-arts or simple folk who live and let live fellow citizens peacefully and comfortably may never be able to make to such lists. The lists reflect our measure of success.

Success can also be associated with average individuals who do their duties responsibly becoming nuts and bolts of the wheels of the nation and society and enable them move smoothly. But we also have individuals amongst ourselves who have developed vested interests in our divisions and dangerously play with our lives and are successful in becoming important individuals changing and guiding the destiny of our nation and destinies of fellow citizens. Success to one need not be success to all.

Still we must aim to be successful and achieve what we want. Best wishes to all of us.

**The Serenity of Mind:**

Human beings gain knowledge of the objective world through the five sensory organs. While the objects of perception are insentient, the mind is sentient and hence emotionally reacts to sensory perceptions in the form of likes and dislikes, joy and sorrow. Hence the mind is responsible for the pleasantness and troubles that beset human beings. The mind can be drastically changed to respond to the stimuli it receives through the techniques of yogic methods of enquiry to remain peaceful even in the midst of trying circumstances.

A mental world is created in us through sense organs during the /wakeful phase of mind. This inner mental world comprises of the sights and forms seen by eyes; sounds heard by ears; the tastes sensed by the tongue; the smells/fragrances smelt by nose; and the touches, warmness, hotness, coolness sensed by the skin.

All these are technically called *vishayas*) and the remembrances they simultaneously create are technically called *vasanas* (which remains is *vasana*). These *vasanas* (experiences –happiness, sorrow, unhappiness / insight / understanding / meaning / sense/ mood) constitute our memory.

Our memory is also made up of the traits we get with this body – the genetic/hereditary- in the form of personality traits, instincts, intuitions, urges, senses, comprehending abilities, intelligence, desires, longings, other intellectual and emotional abilities, common sense, power of imagination, dreaming capabilities. Thus our memory is constituted and composed of all experiences / moods/understanding/insight and the like acquired or inbuilt. Our language acquisition and communication abilities comprising of meanings/senses of words also fall under this.

Our mental functions start with mood, insight, remembrance, understanding, experience, urge, intuition, insight and instinct – our direct or in-built/genetic perceptions and experiences. These are then converted into thoughts and feelings which are then expressed. As is mentioned we cognize and know through our sense organs: through the eye we detect forms and scenes, through the ear sounds, through the tongue tastes, through the nose smells and via the skin touch and heat.  These cognitions are received in accordance with manas, and perceived.  Together with the experiences they create, they are stored within us as remembrances and memory. When our memory is activated, they generate moods, thoughts and feelings. This is the two-way (reversible or forward/ backward) functioning of mind when we express or perceive, understand/experience.

We have four phases of conscious states of mind which automatically are activated and changed. They are: (a) wakeful Sleep, (b) deep sleep, (c) wakeful or awakened and (d) dream. The above functions take place and cease to take place depending on mental phase.

Human consciousness is always on as conscious awareness and only mind rises or sets during these conscious states of mind causing cognition and cognition-related experiences, storing and retrieving them in respective phases. Human consciousness is the form, the structure and the consequence of breathing process and generates psychic energy that does all human cognitions and cognition-related functions. Cognition and cognition-related functions are the result of reversible becoming of this psychic energy and human consciousness bifurcates as consciousness that is aware of the cognitions and related activities and the occurrence of the activities themselves. When these activities are taking place, such a dual role is played by the human consciousness (during wakeful/awakened and dream phases or conscious states of mind).

There is also a phase when no cognitions or cognition-related activity is taking place and it is the original or normal or natural state of human mind, the non-dual or peaceful, blissful or silent phase of mind (Wakeful Sleep and Deep Sleep phases or conscious states of mind). The Wakeful Sleep conscious state of mind is also known as the Real I state. No experiences, thoughts, feelings or traits of the individual do not activated.

Once we think of or feel “I”, many moods, feelings, thoughts appear on our mental screen. We normally identify “I” with the body. And ”I” is also associated with the personality that is created in us through various mental traits, emotional and intellectual bonds, likes, dislikes, social status, age, gender, nationality, religion, region, language, culture, our mental faculties, abilities, emotional and intellectual aspirations and the like. This happens in wakeful and dream conscious or phases of mind. We rejoice, feel hurt, struggle within, with associated happy and unhappy experiences, thoughts and feelings.

If no pleasant or unpleasant mood is created or no experience is activated or no thoughts and feelings are generated and continuous peace, bliss and silence are in the experience as experience that is the Real “I” state. All the *Jnaanis*, seers, saints and realized souls live in this peaceful, silent and blissful state.

If we also become aware of this phase of mind, and convert that insight into experience we too can be like a water drop on a lotus leaf merely remaining, though on it and touching but untouched moves freely on the leaf. This is not a mere philosophical statement or spiritual injunction. It is the reality we are all experiencing during deep sleep phase of mind but are unaware of it.

When we cultivate this phase of mind we bear all the vicissitudes of life with less disturbed state of mind. We will perform our ordained duties with serene mind. Our intellect gets sharpened. We become efficiently intuitive and useful and pleasant *sphuranas* (intuitive feelings) are generated. Our mental faculties improve. We live cheerfully and cheer our near and dear.

This serene state of mind is the state of Atman/Brahman. This quietness of mind is state of Atman or state of Self. This is our real state. This is our real form. This is our real trait. This is our real person and personality; our real sound from which all languages originate; our real sounding.

This state is to be made our own rather we become and be that state. This state is always present in us. When the mind is functioning and various mental functions are taking place, they superimpose on this state. This state remains in the background as the “sruti” (constant frequency sound maintained behind for the benefit of the musician) while music is being played. It is one as sweetness in the honey and fragrance with the flower. When mental functions are not taking place this state becomes our current experience. We will be peace-bliss-silence filled. We will be peace, bliss and silence.

When mind is tuned to the Self and merges in the Self, we enjoy peace, bliss, silence. This is the serenity of mind and serene mind.

Various methods of yoga are designed to understand this working of the mind and cultivate it so that its vagaries are understood and taken care of and that psychological remedies are prescribed and implemented. Yoga is not merely about doing physical exercises. Physical exercises are just a starting point just as primary school is a starting point for more complex learning. Unfortunately, many practitioners and gurus of yoga teach and promote an incomplete type of yoga which starts and ends in physical exercises.

Kind of Yoga to be followed must be prescribed to the individual only after analyzing the individual’s culture, mental make-up, emotional and intellectual capabilities, social background and faith followed.

In brief, serenity of mind is cultivated by also changing the inputs we give to our sense organs and mental worlds we create. If the inner mental world is filled Divine Information, we get peaceful and blissful thoughts and feelings. If we give other fleeting, sensuous and like worldly inputs to our sense organs and mental world with them is created, we get those thoughts which cause us joy and sorrow. It is in our hands to be peaceful or disturbed. Let us cultivate serenity of mind consciously, intelligently and wisely.

*Human consciousness creates conscious relationship between body functions and mental functions and also can dissolve such relationship*. When such relationship is dissolved the right identification of “I” happens. The real identification of ‘I” provides the natural or normal or ground state of mind.

**Cognitive States of mind:**

Seven states of cognition are identified in relation to ego-transcending or egoistic or self-conscious state of mind. These cognition states function around the, ‘I’-consciousness, ‘I-sense, the I-thought or feeling and I-expression or utterance or in the absence of such identification. Then no individual- specific information will be in the mental awareness and the mind transcends to a state or phase when the mental awareness becomes one with the consciousness and non-duality in the form of peace, bliss, or silence is experienced. Cognitions cease to take place but will take place if willed or necessary. The seven cognitive states of mind are:

**Pure consciousness: Normal or original state of mind:**

1. “I” Consciousness – No “I” Awareness of and about individual
2. Meditative state of mind. One pointed awareness.

**Egoistic State of mind**

1. “I” Awareness/Sense/mood- Ego Sense - State of verb/meaning/understanding/experience/intuition/urge- Infinite form or present continuous form of verb without subject or object attached.
2. ‘I” Thought/Feeling (awareness of within of the body)- State of sentence with subject-verb-object-perception
3. ‘I” Thought/Feeling (awareness of without of the body) in relation to outside physical world. Mind tuned to outside world through sense organs
4. “I” Utterance/Expression/also reception of stimuli from outside world and expression through action organs.
5. No “I” Awareness of or about individual- No Self consciousness or ongoing of mental functions. State of cessation of all types of mental functions.

**Kinds of functional states of mind:**

(a). Getting tuned to and sensing stimuli from external physical world through sense organs and reception.

(b). Actions, reactions or interactions with external physical world activated by hormones or stored information.

(c). Perception/thinking/reasoning/feeling in accordance with the stimuli from external world or information retrieved from inner mental world.

(d). Conversion of above information into intelligible information as understanding or insight or experience

(e). Awareness of Understanding/intuition/urge/mood/experience/meaning/experience.

**Meditation on Meditation:**

*Eka Vastu Chintanameva Dhyanam* – is a definition of the meditation. This means that meditation is contemplation on a Divine Quality and finally merging mind into that Quality and Be That Quality; this is also known as SELF REALIZATION.

Theology proposes *Bhakti* – the path of devotion for this purpose. In this method the mind concentrates on a Name or Form of a choice Divine Being and meditation on that Name or Form- which are nothing but SELF’S MANIFESTATIONS, mind becomes one-pointed. At the appropriate moment Divine Grace showers and makes the mind to merge in that Name or Form.

*Dhyanam Artha Bhavanam* is another definition of meditation. This is the path of knowledge. This meditation process involves in concentrating the mind in the study and learning and hence understanding the Divine Nature. This is also the Path to calm the mind and live in and with peace.

In short, meditation or calming the mind consists in concentrating the mind on a chosen thing or contemplating on a chosen concept or expression or insight.

Upanishads contain descriptions of the SELF and many ways of meditation on the Self, known as *Vidya* or *Upasana.* The knowledge other than that of the Self is termed as *Avidya* by the *Upanishadic* Seers. According to their definition, *Avidya* consists of all sciences, arts, skills, learning- of languages and other disciplines and art-forms.

*Isaavaasyoopanishat* counsels to make use of both *Vidya* and *Avidya* while meditating on the Self to attain calmness within and warns that using only one of them leads to darkness- the *Upanishadic* term for ignorance (*sloka* 9). Eleventh *sloka* of this Upanishad gives us the proper way of meditating on the Self,

*Vidyaam cha avidyam cha yastadvedoobhyam saha*

*Avidyayaa mrtyum teertvaa vidyayaa amritam* asnute

This means that one must contemplate on and be aware of the Self by using both *Avidya* and *Vidya*. Through *Avidya* one crosses mortality and by *Vidya* one attains immortality. Immortality is release from births and deaths i.e., from the rise and set of egoistic mind *(mithyaaham*). Egoistic mind and self-consciousness are responsible for all the disturbances the individual experiences and suffers. Thus knowledge about both *Vidya* and *Avidya* is necessary for one to meditate on the Self and live as Self in and with calmness.

The *antahkaranas* manas, buddhi, ahamkaaram and chittam are responsible for us to get, revel on, entangled in and come out of, the perceived and experienced external world and also for acquiring knowledge and make active the in-built tendencies- i.e., the *arishadvargas*. All this knowing or mental activity which is named as *Tamas* (ignorance), blocks the SEER (*sat*) and makes one view only the seen (*jagat*). Hence all this activity of *antahkaranas* with perceived or experienced external world and respective experiences, is *Ajnana* in *Upanishadic* terms.

The term *Ajnana* herein is used not at all to belittle any of the acquired knowledge or their eminence but only to point out that Truth, Self, Pure Consciousness or *Prajnaam* outlives rather transcends all these perceptions, intellectual operations, self-consciousness, experiences and their recollections by Being, manifesting as and in, causing, maintaining and observing the origin, becoming and cessation of all these mental functions carried out by *antahkaranas*- and is the Ultimate *Jnaana*.

*A reading of this transcript is itself a de-learning, relearning and unlearning process i.e., a way to calm the mind*.

**Note:** *Method of meditation or calming the mind is not unique. Single general method with mass instruction will not be fruitful. Just as the psychologist treats each case individually so also method of calming mind is individual-specific and heavily depends on one’s mental makeup.*

1. Meditation / calming the mind is putting veil on our ignorance and unveiling our knowledge.

2. Meditation / calming the mind is putting veil on our false identification and unveiling our real or true identity.

3. Meditation / calming the mind is putting veil on our unreal or apparent or misunderstood nature and unveiling our true and real nature.

*Sri Ramana Maharshi’s Insight on Meditation*:

4. Find out wherefrom this ‘I’ springs forth and merge at its source; that istapas-meditation.

5. Find out wherefrom the sound of the *mantra* in *japa* rises up and merge there; that is tapas-meditation.

In the above piece the*Upanishadic* insight of human consciousness, mind, their form, structure and function are analytically presented together with the description of phases and states of mind to get an idea of working of the mind. Calming the mind is presented as a process of de-learning illusory knowledge, relearning the real nature of human-being and then practice the knack of completely unlearning or be unaware of all the new knowledge too but not the insight gained. It is pointed out that meditation and calming the mind are synonymous with Self Realization which are a process reverse to the process of generation of thoughts. The essentiality of possession of an open mind and faith together with cultivating and maintaining harmonious relationship with one’s near and dear for the aspirant are highlighted.

**Meditation on Time**

Time is of two kinds: physical and psychological. Time eternally flows transforming seconds into minutes, minutes into hours, hours into days, days into months, months into years, years into decades, decades into centuries, centuries into millenniums and like that.

All this is physical time and its flow.

We get tuned to this physical time and happenings in it by attaching ourselves to these happenings with an egoistic mind as I, me and mine. Our tuning and attachment through the egoistic mind creates another time and time-consciousness in us. This creation takes place in the wakeful conscious state of mind and is experienced in wakeful and dream conscious states of mind. This is called psychological time or time-space.

The eternal Self *(paramatma*) transcends both these physical and psychological times and their flows. Self exists in us as *prajnanam* (Witness) and makes us be aware of physical and psychological times and their passages. During those phases of awareness, *Prajnaam* as seer makes us experience the respective experiences.

The memories of happenings with self-consciousness though happened long time back in view of physical time flow or passage, get stirred and activated in the present causing happiness or unhappiness respectively. According to these we will get anger, lust, jealousy, arrogance etc,. We get thoughts and feelings accordingly and we will be disturbed in the present. Thus the remembrances and thoughts about past happenings and their impression on us form our psychological past.

Future disturbs us equally as our past. We fear, become anxious and wildly or romantically imagine about future happenings based on what has happened to us in the past, what we know and experienced. Thus the future which we feel will happen to us, is our mere thoughts in the present as imaginations, doubts, fears or anxieties. Thus when we carefully observe we become aware that both our past and future are our thoughts in the present. If somehow we can manage to arrest these unpleasant thoughts we will easily come out of this vicious circle of yesterday and tomorrow and live in the present.

We need to submit ourselves before Divinity by thought, word and deed. We then offer our self-consciousness and ego to the Lord and submerge ourselves in Him. When we do like this, we will avoid the thoughts relating to I, me and mine. These thoughts not only stop but will permanently cease to arise in us. This cessation of thoughts forms is time-or mind-transcendence. We will be rid of thoughts about past or future. We live peacefully and blissfully not getting reminded of ego transcending time. We live in the present. We live in tranquility.

**On Devotion:**

*Bhakti*  (Devotion) is the most profound human emotion that merges the individual’s identity with the Divinity. Bhakti has many definitions. Two definitions are discussed here;

“*Saa (bhakti) tu asmin paramaprema roopaa*” –is the most famous and popular definition of *Bhakti* from the *Narada Bhakti Sutras*. This means that *Bhakti* is the unalloyed love for God. This love is *paramam* (ultimate). *Paramam* also means that this love happens and exists without expecting anything in return. It is loving for the sake of loving. In this process we employ our sense organs (eyes, ears, nose, tongue and skin) to know about God and Divinity. Our eyes see his Divine Form. Our ears listen to his Divine Name and deeds etc.,. We also employ our action organs (movements of hands, movements of legs, movement of vocal chords (speech) etc., to reach God through daily worship and chanting His Name and other prayers.

*Swaswaroopa anusandhanaam bhakti iti abhidheeyate*– is a famous *nirguna* definition of *bhakti*. This has interesting implications. *Bhakti* is tuning our selves to our original state and form the state of *Saanta Rasa.* This original state (*rasa sthiti*) is the state of bliss, peace and silence. In these experience states, our identity as the individual is merged in the Real Identity that is- ego, time and thought transcending state of mind. This happens when we contemplate about spiritual expressions and arrive at the destination i.e., *rasa sthiti*. This approach is the path of *artha bhaavanam* (contemplation on the meaning). When we understand we experience. When we experience we understand. Experience and understanding are simultaneous. The experience of meanings and senses of uttered (heard) sounds and sentences or comprehension of Divine Utterances and their implications makes us reach the *tatpara* (absorbed and being one with *tat* (Divinity) or *taatparya* (purport or import or *rasa*) state of language. We must be aware that we use the same mind to learn and master the languages and rest of the disciplines as we use for doing our tasks in daily life. The state of thoughts or feelings is known as *vibhakti* state of mind. We all know that *vibhakti* is case forms, endings and terminations in the theory of language. *Patanjali* and *Bhartruhari* have initiated, nurtured and developed a theory of language acquisition and communication making use of the same *Advaita* concept of Vedantins. This will be dealt with in another article.

*Bhakti* thus is description of devotion to favorite Deity and also the essential part and essence of the theory of language.

**Concept of Yoga:**

Yoga is currently a very popular pastime. Many gurus and many systems of yoga are presently in vogue. Many innovative titles are given to their respective methods of yoga by yoga teachers. Before trying to enter yoga and practice it, you need to know what exactly yoga is.

Indian spirituality is replete with many systems of thought about God and mind. Yoga and Samkhya (a system in which the mind is split into 24 parts: the sense organs, action organs and so on) are two systems of thought which view God and the mind in their own way. The Yoga-Samkhya system views mind and its structure in a slightly different way to the Upanishads, the source books and guides to spirituality.

Yogaha chitta vritti nirodhaha  - ‘Yoga is the prevention of mental activity’ – is one of the most famous Patanjali yoga sutras. Here chitta vritti refers to mental functions. Technically vritti means antahakarana parinama – ‘transformation of the inner mental tool’ (antahakarana). The four antahakaranas are respectively manas, buddhi, chittam and ahamkaram.  Manas handles cognitions, their reception, storage and retrieval.  Buddhi takes care of all intellectual operations.  Chittam deals with the reception, storage and retrieval of all cognition-related experiences which include the meanings of words and senses of utterances, thoughts and ideas which form understanding and insight.  Ahamkaram is concerned with self-consciousness, i.e: the identification of the individual with one’s body, gender, mental traits, social status, nationality and so on. All these four together constitute the mind. The activities theses perform are the antahakarana parinamas –transformations of the inner mental tools – which account for all our mental functions.

Praanayaama – a focused inhaling and exhaling – is a way of calming the mind.  The mind is reined in by a proper understanding of its nature and functions. The mental make up of the individual plays an important role in this regard. There are many methods of yoga each of which is appropriate for a different type of individual. The simplest and best way is chanting the name of the favorite deity continuously. The chanting must go on behind mental functions or rest of mind as Sruti goes on behind the rendering of a tune in a musical concert. Many of today’s yoga practitioners choose their guru and yoga method more based on current trends than according to their individual mental make up.  Thus their practice of yoga is in vain.

As above, yoga is by definition the prevention of mental activity.  Yoga involves not allowing antahakarana parinama – transformation of the inner mental tool – to take place. This is what you call a negative definition. The positive definition of yoga is: cheto vritti rupetya tisthati sada -   ‘transcending chitta vritti (mental activity) is also yoga’. The technical term for this state is nivritti - the absence of mental activity. Yoga is a form of communion with divinity. Yoga is efficiency in mental activity; yogaha karmasu kausalam - yoga is skill in performing various assigned actions and duties.  Yoga thus is also about being able to control your thoughts, feelings and moods.  Managing these efficiently is yoga.

Yoga is of many kinds. That means we can manage the functions of our mind efficiently in more than one way. The various systems include: bhakti yoga (devotional yoga), Karma yoga (interpreted popularly as yoga through one’s actions) and jnaana yoga (yoga through knowledge). We are attracted to a particular yoga method depending on our mental make up, genetic composition and ultimately God’s grace. Raja yoga – learning, practising and performing yoga as a series of exercises (both physical and mental) as described and professed in Patanjali’s Yoga Sutras – is now the most commonly “sold” method of yoga. But unfortunately, as mentioned earlier, this type of yoga focuses more on physical exercise. Yoga is an inquiry and practice for attaining peace of mind and has to be knowledgeably cultivated and practiced. Nothing is impossible if we will it. But one must realize that yoga is designed to be practiced to transcend worldly concerns and to remain peaceful and blissful throughout all – good and bad – unaffected by the outside world.

Yoga is tuning our “selves” and ourselves with the divinity within us, and finally merging into that divinity. Meditation is the conscious cultivation of mind in this direction.  And the conscious or unconscious merger of mind in its source is what yoga (literally ‘union’) really is.

**Concept of *Bhakti* and *Vibhakti*:**

*Bhakti* defined *as*

*swa swaroopaanusandhanam bhaktirityabhidhiyate*-tuning the mind to its origin and original form (*Upanishads*) or *cheto vrittirupetya tisthati sadaa saa bhaitirityuchyate*-the state in which the mind disengages itself from all *vrittis* ***(Sivanandalahari)*- *antahakarana parinamas* (*manasika gathi*) -** functioning state of mind **-** reversible transformations of inner mental tools-*manas, buddhi, ahamkaram and chittam*- and attains *nivritti* state (*nirmala manasika sthiti*) stays as that -is the normal or natural or ground –energy state of mind.

This is the state of absence of mental functions - the two-way transformation of *maya* /*pranavam//sphota* and *antahkarana* This is the state of *Atman* or *Brahman as* ***tatpara* or *tatparya–****state of purport/essence/import* or *rasa.*. In this state the *chidabhasa* orvirtual chit -energy *maya/pranavam/sphota* – does not transform into *antahkaranas* (no *vivartanam* takes place) and no *antahkarana parinama* takes place.

The *chit*-energy pulses, being issued out by *Atman* ***(*** *Sat-Chit-Ananda****)*** and after getting reflected in the *medha* as virtual or *chit*- energy *(chidabhasa* or *maya* or *pranavam* or *sphota*) pulses , first get *modulated* from this *para / rasa / tatparya* state by cognizing stored energies in potential *(jada)* form–in the form of subject-object- free verbs/senses, experiences, intuitions, understandings, urges , volitions through the *antahkarnachittam* to be transformed in to the mode of *pasyanti;* then again gets transformed into subject-verb-object state, the *madhyama* mode - by simultaneously cognizing the object energy-forms –*vishayas,* stored as potential energy *(jada)* forms – as *idam*, *jagat* or *prapancham* through the *antahkarana, manas* in the awareness of within – *antarmukhadristi*- as *bhavas* or thoughts. Intellectual operations such as reasoning, decision making, take place in this awareness. When the *antahkarana, manas* is tuned to the object energy-forms (light-eye, sound-ear, chemical- tongue, nose and heat, mechanical-skin) through *jnanendriyas* –sense organs- then the awareness becomes *bahirmukha dristi*-awareness of without. This process (in expresser/teacher and the reverse of this process, (demodulation in listener/knower/learner) happen in human-beings while expressing/speaking or listening/learning- as transformation or reverse transformation respectively-together known as *vivartanam*- of *maya/sphota* and *antahkarnas* in conjugation with sense organs and action organs, *karmendriyas.*

**Entertainment and Enlightenment:**

Human beings need both entertainment and enlightenment. Getting entertained like, eating hot idlis and getting enlightened is like, possessing invaluable gems. But now- a- days it appears that we are having a heavy dose of entertainment. We are having access to entertainment through multimedia. Cinema, sports, music, dance etc., are being showcased to attract us. We are lured to spend money and time on these. TV and new channels are competing to entertain us more than enlighten us. Everything is programmed to attract more advertisements and of course to provide entertainment to us. Radio is also not lagging behind and scores of FM channels are in entertainment business presently. We are easily entertained. No effort from our side is needed to get entertained. It is enough if we spare our time. Our senses are designed to get entertained. It is easy and joyful to enjoy entertainment. All of us are having not much leisure and whatever free time we have, we are spending for entertainment.

Entertainment is not capable of reviving a grief-stricken heart. In human life, which is not a bed of roses but also of thorns, entertainment has limited role in human consumption. Enlightenment is a must for maintaining a healthy mind. Else we are easily stressed and strained by vicissitudes of life. A broken heart or a disturbed heart is comforted by enlightenment and entertainment can not do anything here. It is a healthy practice to know the ways of getting enlightened together with the ways of getting entertained right from the childhood. Parents play a prominent role in this regard. But how far present day parents are able, capable and interested to discharge their duties in this aspect is doubtful. They themselves are choosing dubious commercial spiritual gurus for enlightenment and are more entertained by these self-aggrandizing individuals and enlightenment received is less or almost nil.

**The Harmony:**

Harmony is the most beautiful word. Harmony is the most melodious utterance. Harmony represents, rejoices and manifests love, romance, togetherness, pleasantness, tuning, rhythm, music, dance and the like delighting moods, senses, tunes, steps and the like pleasant rhymes and rhythms. Harmony is peace generating and peace sustaining pleasantness, in mind and among communities.

Harmony is not only the most beautiful word but also is the most needed element in the Universe. Harmony is present in nature around us, in our human nature, in love, in faith, in understanding, in insight, in affection, in various dealings and doings of animate and inanimate subjects and objects.

The inbuilt rhythm in harmony as tuning between two or among many, makes hearts rejoice, gives hearts and societies peace, joy, and well-being. The welfare of the humanity and the Universe is harmony-based, -related and -presented.

The harmony or rhythm is manifested in the motions of heavenly bodies in the cosmos, in the onset of seasons on earth, in the growth of plants and animals, in the notes of music, in the steps of the dance, in the notes of the writers, poets, intellectuals, in the Compassion of the Divinity for the creation. Many such pleasant and useful happenings are possible because of harmony between and among the persons and things involved.

Serenity is the harmony between the individualistic ego and Divine originality and essence. Bliss is the harmony between two hearts and minds. Melodious music in its rhythmic harmonious notes in steps, gives base and basis for all tunes in music and steps in dance.

Disruption of harmony in nature around us through pollutions of all kinds, by modern humans, is causing climatic change which is hanging on us like scepter. We are depleted of clean water to drink, fresh air to breathe and comfortable climate to live in. Noise pollution disrupts the harmony of Music.

Pollutions of water systems, atmosphere and the like are disharmonious acts disturbing the harmony created as treasure through trillions of years of evolution. To these pollutions are added pollution of minds and hearts by the selfish perpetuation of divisions among humans in the name of complexion, gender, region, language, nationality, religion, faith, “spirituality” - leading to sanction of criminality on these divisions.

Lack of harmony among communities and societies is leading to terror and is causing tremendous damage to the fabric of human civilization and culture. The tearing of societal fabric like this is creating many damages which are not stitched by intellectuals, scholars, philosophers, poets, writers in the various societies on the globe. All are watching the chaos helplessly and are ending up blaming respective divisions, instead of recognizing and realizing the missing harmony and working towards it.

Harmony, between men and women, between spouses, between parents and children, between students and teachers, between the ruled and rulers, between friends, among near and dear, between and among communities, between man and nature, is unfortunately missing in all societies, nations, and on our globe. We do not know what disharmony is going on in this vast Universe.

We are allowing the leaders, narrow-minded intellectuals-scholars-ideologists-movement organizers, and fanatics to create disharmony among us and are not able to prevent these damaging acts of these selfish individuals. There is no universal guidance available to us; which counsels us to work for harmony among us. We are not attempting for one such harmonizing word, thought, understanding, faith or deed.

We are more emotive and less objective in matters of our affiliations to our gender, caste, community, region, language, religion, faith, ideology, and the like; and so we are easily divided and separated and we ourselves with our lack of sense of togetherness are mostly responsible for disturbances around us. These things are easier said, than done, but an attempt must be initiated to transcend these divisions; else our peaceful existence or co-existence becomes a rare commodity. In our interest we must devise, design, give shape to, and implement a work plan and program. The flow chart, programing and execution are immediate necessities for harmony among us.

Harmony, the tuning of minds and hearts, and rhythmic togetherness with nature and fellow living and non-living beings, understanding among us, must become our breath, insight, experience and expression. We, the old and the youth, can work in harmony to achieve such much needed state of affairs.

We must dissuade persons from all “isms” who are hell bent on dividing us based on gender, caste, region, religion, language, nationality, color, faith, rational movements and the like sophisticated words. We cannot make languages, religions, faiths, regions, nations disappear and should not attempt at such an impossible task; but can make these divisions disappear from our hearts and minds so that harmony prevails and shines in us as love, understanding, fraternity, togetherness, affection, friendship, brotherhood, comrade-ship, sweet bonds, delighting unions and compassionate Divinities. Let harmony and harmonious relationships be liveliness in our lives and give life and joy to our lives and enliven us.

Harmony between mind and Self leads to peace of mind. Harmony between man and woman leads to love and bliss. Harmony between and among all divisions brings down heavens and makes earth a paradise and our hearts and minds Divine.

**The Joy of Giving:**

Joy is a much sought after emotion welcomed and cherished by us all. We are joyful when incidents liked by us take place and incidents disliked by us do not take place. And that, persons near and dear to us, and their expression of love and affection, cause joy to us. We feel that joy causing things are outside us in this physical world. This is all a perception of joy.

Spirituality says joy is inherent in us and is our nature; rather we are the form and personification of joy. And joy and cheerfulness are our natural states of mind. Whenever pleasant things happen to us or unpleasant things do not happen, we are joyful, because then we are our Self, released of our ego.

But most of the times we expect others or things outside in the physical world to cause joy to us. Thus we are dependent on outside things and persons for joy to be experienced; and are joyless when such things do not happen. The real joy lies in our giving joy to our near and dear.

If we know that what all we are giving our near and dear is actually we are giving ourselves, we will just do that to be joyful.

In Narada Bhakti Sutras this aspect is very well expressed and highlighted.

The sutra is; *“tat sukha sukhitvam”.* “finding our happiness in giving happiness to our near and dear”.

This is a spiritual action full of significance. By doing so we are transcending our ego and are absorbing our ego in providing happiness to our near and dear.

Thus Gopikas (shepherd damsels) found their happiness in giving happiness to Sri Krishna. They have been very joyful when giving happiness to Sri Krishna and are thus blissful themselves. This secret of getting joy by giving joy to our near and dear must be noted by us all and make ourselves joyful by making our near and dear joyful.

We normally are intolerant of or indifferent to words, actions or thoughts expressed by our loved ones and are egoistic in our dealings with them. We love ourselves most. It is wise to love our loved ones more than we love ourselves. Actually if we love our near and dear, this happens automatically. Only when we do not love, and try making ourselves joyful all by ourselves, we run into problems and cause problems to our loved ones.

The best and shrewd way of being joyful is making our near and dear joyful by our words, thoughts, deeds and cheering and cheerful spirit and finding our joy in such gestures.

Many also say that contributing to charity, speaking lovingly and without hurting, being compassionate to all living and non-living beings gives happiness. Ordinary human beings may not have such wider horizon. If we find our joy in making our near and dear joyful the world will be much pleasant place to live. Let us practice giving joy and make it the art of living.

These aspects of human nature, consciousness, mind and its functions and language abilities when known, cultivated and used discreetly with discrimination, become the ***Upanishadic art of Living.***