

What does one seek?

Human pursuit is divided in four parts, artha, kama, dharma, moksha. Artha is the seeking of survival which relates to physical and material well-being. Kama is seeking more of what gives pleasure and avoiding what gives pain. Dharma are moral and ethical values by which a good human being lives life. Moksha is the freedom that comes from following these values and seeking the answer to the question “Who Am I?”

One can summarize these into a single factor of seeking happiness. A little closer examination shows that one is seeking freedom from unhappiness rather than happiness itself. One seeks freedom from being a “wanting” person.

The most powerful instrument that a human has is the mind. The biggest problem that blocks the path to moksha is the same mind. The mind-body-sense complex together make up the ego. It is generally not understood that this ego is an image and is not real. Hence, because of that ignorance one pursues artha and kama to support that image rather than using that pursuit to seek moksha.

Properly practised yoga should lead to moksha. However, if the practice leads to pride it will lead away from moksha. Whatever you are able to do in yoga practice must be understood to be a gift from nature. Without that gift one cannot even lift one’s own finger.

Whatever knowledge one has also should not lead to pride. A simple careful examination will show that all knowledge is built on previous knowledge. If that is traced back to the source, the primordial knowledge, as well as the ability to build on it, were all gifted by nature.

Pride with regard to the asana or pranayama practice, with regard to any knowledge, and for that matter with regard to any so called 'achievement', is sad and basic ignorance. One has to teach the mind to recognize and celebrate the blessing of every thing one has. Otherwise the pride will lead to jealousy which will destroy any chance of moving towards moksha.

Learning to see all life forms as expressions of the the same grand CONSCIOUSNESS is helpful to keep such pride in check. Life experiences happen within the sphere of TIME. This time is contained in consciousness, and without consciousness, it has no existence. The mind, borrowing from this consciousness, gives reality to time. The mind then does not readily see that time is an illusion. This may be a tall order; so at least see that the mind understands the following.

Four steps in yoga practice:

Life gives rise to variety of sensations. Mind takes a sensation and almost immediately wants to do something with it. In an asana or pranayama, unless there is a danger, resist this immediate reaction. Instead, take a little time to see how this sensation changes. Be in touch with pure sensation, if at all possible without even giving it a name, and without calling it good or bad. Conclusion based on pure observation that the sensation is or is not desirable is not a judgment. This is the first step.

If the sensation is desirable, see that the mind penetrates into subtle varieties of that sensation. No sensation is purely only one sensation. Every sensation includes an element of other sensations. One learns to hear the sound, perceive the smell, feel the vibration, the taste of each sensation that eye (eye of

the eye) sees.

If the sensation is not desirable, find out which other parts of the body (or the senses or the memories) are negatively triggered by it. Carefully see that these secondary negative reactions dissipate. This is the second step.

Ask the mind then to draw a boundary around this negative sensation to decide how big it is. If the mind does not cooperate, insist on its cooperation. Then as you breathe, imagine the life-giving prana penetrates into this boundary. One generally discovers that the boundary begins to get smaller, the unpleasantness decreases, and sometimes, completely disappears. Over a period the mind learns not to exaggerate such sensation, and certainly not to imagine them by anticipation. This is the third step.

The fourth step may be too big to take without a lot of good guidance and help from an accomplished guide or teacher. Briefly stated, it is the step to teach the mind that all such sensation belongs to the body and the mind, and they have no impact on Consciousness. Consciousness pervades through time but is not contained within the realm of time, just as in a dream the dreamer pervades through but is not contained within the dream-time.

Diligent practice of these four methods will help turn the practice, and even the whole life, into a form of meditation. That is union with the whole, YOGA. That will answer the question of Self Knowledge. This is already there; it is not knowledge *to be gained* but simply a shedding of *the ignorance with its many layers*.