

Sat Chit Anand

From: "Sat Chit Anand" <satchitanand@global.co.za>
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From darkness, lead me to the light. Isha Upanishad

The story of creation reveals the purpose of man's existence and culminates in the creation of a New Heaven and a New Earth. In the beginning, man existed in a state of unified consciousness, that was one with the Source of all life, one with nature, and with each other. There was a state of purity and innocence. Then at some point, this original purity and innocence was lost. This is depicted in the mythological story of the fall of man. Man gained self-awareness, which was the birth of the ego-centric consciousness. There was a split from the Source, and a move from unity consciousness to divided consciousness. We started to perceive ourselves as separate from the Source of life, and we lost connection with the oneness of all life.

At this point, man also gained the capacity to discriminate and reason, the result of eating the fruit from the Tree of Knowledge. Man gained the capacity to distinguish right from wrong, good from bad. He was given freedom of choice, which can be a blessing or a curse, depending on how one's free will is exercised. There are basically 2 possibilities: we can use our will to serve our own purposes, which is the basis of the ego-centric approach. Here we think of ourselves and our wants, needs and desires, and we do whatever we deem necessary to fulfill them. This is the path of self-satisfaction, self-gratification. We perceive ourselves to be centre of the universe. We have lost awareness of our interconnectedness with the rest of humanity – the sense that we are all brothers and sisters in this human family – and we experience increasing separation and alienation.

This choice leads to walking the path of ignorance and darkness. Egoism means turning away from the inner Source of godness that is within every human to a belief in oneself – in one's individual phantom of a self, and this leads to suffering. Ignorance means believing in a separate self, which is actually an illusion. As the Buddha taught, there is no-separate-self (the doctrine of 'no-self'). Buddhism is the most outright – it states categorically: there is no-self / ego to renounce, all you have to give up is a fantasy, an illusion of the ego being real. Still no easy task! The purpose of religion is to transcend the ego, or realize that there isn't one: to submit the illusory ego-self to universal Truth and Spirit.

Eastern religions characterize our belief in the ego as ignorance and Semitic religions (Judaism, Christianity, Islam) characterize it as sin. The doctrine of sin teaches that God will punish vice and reward virtue; while the doctrine of ignorance teaches that ignorance

causes suffering and awakening from ignorance removes suffering. This happens not through any judgment but through karma, the Law of Cause and Effect. Seen in this way, the gulf between the doctrine of sin and that of ignorance is not so wide. Both point the way to Ultimate happiness, whether we are told that it is sinful not to, or stupid not to, walk this path. Whether we are told that God will reward us for making the right choice, or that we will awaken to the beatitude that is our real nature, the goal – heaven, nirvana, love, joy, peace, bliss – is the same. [Next week: The other choice: walking the path towards the Light]

Gentle Mindful Hatha Yoga

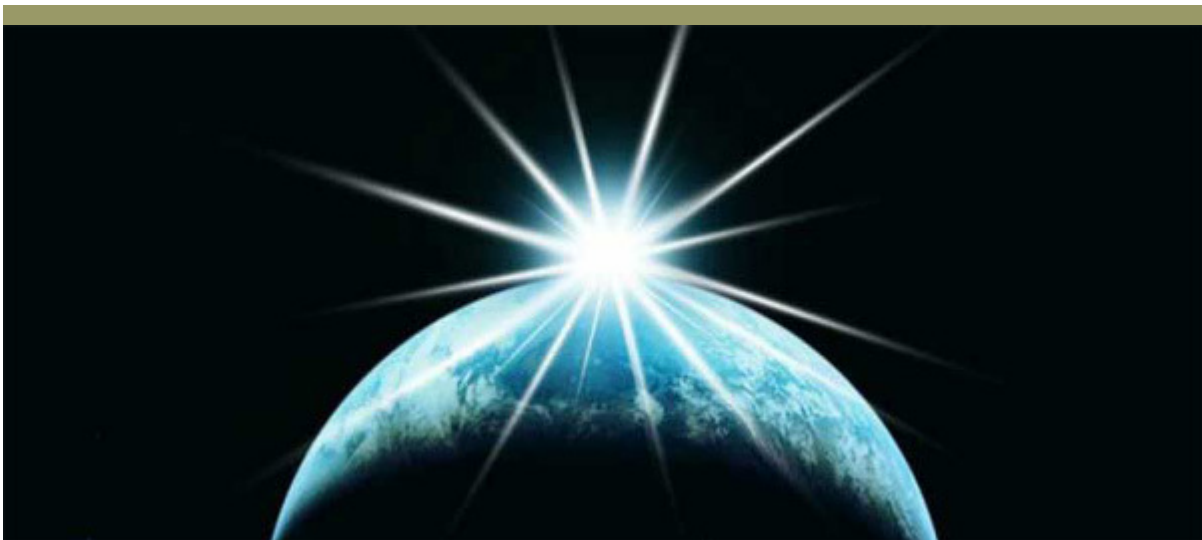
Tuesday evenings: 18h00 - 19h30 ... with Leela

Wednesday afternoons: 16h30 - 18h00 ... with Leela

Friday mornings: 09h00 - 10h30 ... with Richard

Cost: R50 per class

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*May the long time sun shine upon you, may all the love surround you,
may the pure light within you guide you on your way home.*

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