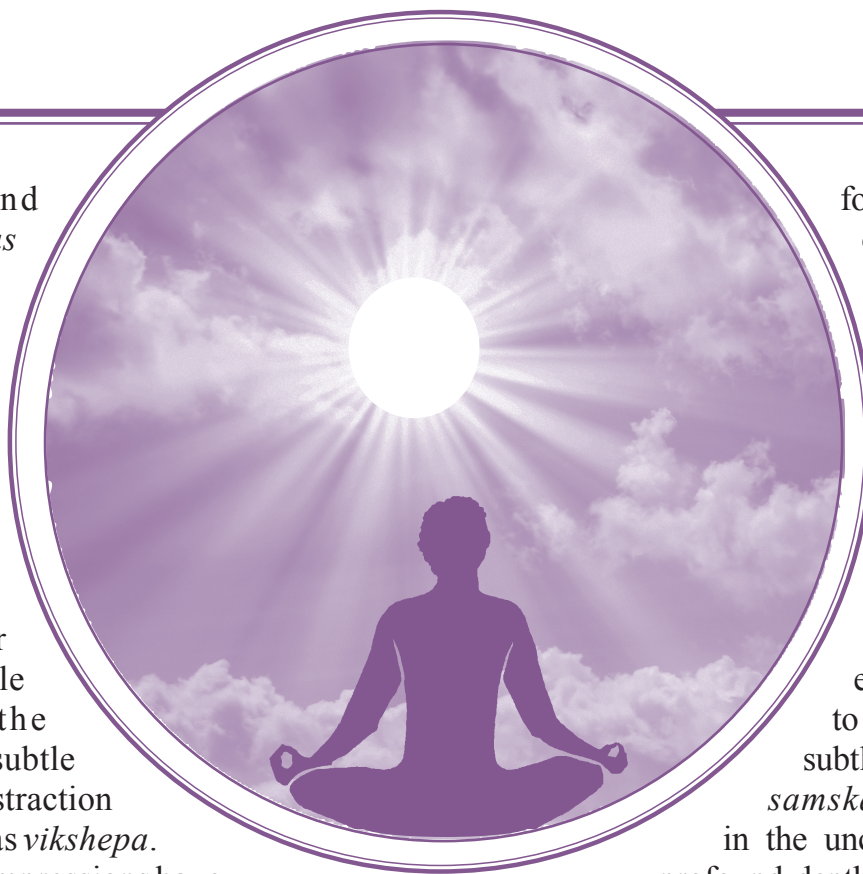


To understand the *shad-ripos* more profoundly, one must look into their roots. The *shad-ripos* themselves are the ramifications of *mala*, or gross impurities of the conscious mind which derive their nutrition from subtle impressions of the unconscious. These subtle impressions cause distraction or agitation, known as *vikshepa*. In turn, these subtle impressions have as their ultimate root *avidya* or ignorance, also referred to as *avarana*, or mystic veiling of one's essential Divine nature.

Sediments of the Unconscious

Year after year, the vast ocean brings sediments to its depths, and these sediments turn into rocks. In the same way, the mind, through waves of diverse functions, brings to its subconscious depths layers and layers of sediments which go to



form subconscious obstructions in the manifestation of the soul's essential energy.

As thought waves and desires rise and fall day by day, you gain experiences.

Those experiences lead to the formation of subtle impressions or *samskaras* that abide in the unconscious, in the profound depths of one's being.

They cannot be easily brought to the conscious purview, and yet they continue to exert their influence in one's daily life. From the depths of the unconscious, from time to time, there matures a group of impressions, and the thought waves bring these impressions to the shore of normal consciousness. In other words, now and then there is an emergence of the unconscious contents in life's movements.

What is generally spoken of as the fructification of karmas in one's life is nothing but the emergence

The Art of Positive Feeling Part Ten

Exploring the Roots of Impurity



by Swami Jyotirmayananda

of the matured impressions from the unconscious which take over the realities of one's day-to-day life, and force one to pass through diverse experiences of pleasure and pain.

Human personality is a mold prepared by the mind, which continues to fashion it, to change it, to modify it. All events in life, all developments in circumstances, all associations and opportunities are explained in the terms of the workings of the subconscious impressions. Yoga does not consider the events of life as mere accidents.

It is not just the physical facts of your life but even your circumstances which are fashioned by the karmas or actions of your past. Yoga not only explains your physical diseases as expressions of your mental ailments, but also your circumstantial adversities as expressions of the contents of your unconscious.

However, this does not place you in the hands of a blind destiny, but rather it gives you a vision of freedom in life. No matter how much the past has built its sediments in the subconscious and the unconscious, it is you who has the power to modify and reconstruct their contents. You have fashioned your past, you are fashioning your present, and you are the architect of your future.

Thus, in brief, from the unconscious impressions there arise the subconscious desires or *vasanas*. These subconscious desires express themselves in the form of inclinations and urges in day-to-day life. What we call complexes in the mind mostly refer to these subconscious desires of the mind, which express themselves in the form of thought-waves or *vruttis*.

You can observe your mind. You can see how diverse thought-waves arise from the unknown regions of your mind, and continue to float in your conscious mind as merry ripples. But soon these tiny ripples come into contact with the functions of imagination, misconception and

egoistic interest. Then they turn into conscious desires.

When there is a vexing desire, the mirror of the mind becomes clouded. As a result you do not perceive your Self, you do not feel the depths of your being, wherein lie peace and bliss in abundance. It is through the imagination of the mind that you impose your own intrinsic joy on the objects outside of you, and then due to ignorance, you feel that it was the object that gave you happiness.

When a desire is not fulfilled it turns into craving. Cravings, desires and mental confusions continue to form diverse impressions in the subconscious, and from the subconscious, the sediments of experiences, the subtle *samskaras*, continue to deposit themselves in the unconscious depths of one's being. Thus the cycle of the mind continues revolving. With it continue the realities of one's day-to-day life, the stories of pleasure and pain, the dramas of comedy and tragedy.

The Kleshas or Mental Afflictions

According to Raja Yoga, there are five *kleshas* or afflictions which exist in the form of subtle impressions in the subconscious and unconscious mind. These are *avidya* (ignorance), *asmita* (egoism), *raga* (attachment to objects that seem to give pleasure), *dwesha*, (aversion or hatred towards objects that seem to give pain), and *abhinivesha*. (clinging to life or dread of death). These *kleshas* govern the life of man by injecting their venom in the mind's functions.

Human life is an elaboration of the subconscious and the unconscious contents. When the impressions of afflictions exist in the depth of one's being, their life expresses various forms of mental eccentricities, physical maladies, and circumstantial adversities.

These *kleshas* are the basic roots for the development of any evil quality in one's personality. Therefore, in order to fully conquer any evil, those basic roots must be removed. Removal of the *kleshas* and attainment of Self-realization is, thus, the ultimate remedy for eradicating all that is negative in one's personality. Yoga aims at reducing and sublimating these subtle impressions and freeing the *chitta* or mind-stuff from all afflictions that distort the perception of the Reality of the Self.

Avidya or Ignorance

The most subtle and deep-rooted of the spiritual afflictions is *avidya* or spiritual ignorance. When the intellect is impure and its luminosity is clouded, one loses the glimpse of one's innate, essential universality and becomes identified with the ego-center. It is as if the sun comes to believe it is only the reflection of itself in a puddle, or the ocean believes it is only a wave, or a patch of blue has forgotten that it is the sky. This error is called ignorance or *avidya*. It is like a veil that covers the reality of the Self, and shows the ego to be the all-important entity in life.

Ignorance consists in considering that which is not-self as the Self. Ignorance is a strange confusion of matter and spirit. The spirit is eternal, but due to ignorance you view the spirit within you as dependent on body, mind and intellect. You have forgotten, so to speak, that your real identity, your essential nature, is the immortal and eternal *Brahman*, the Absolute Self.

Asmita (Ego)

Avidya gives rise to a sense of ego, a sense of individuality. Actually, the term ego is used in two senses, pure and impure. Pure ego is good and auspicious because it is characterized by humility and surrender to God, and it is in union with the Supreme Self.

But an impure ego is colored, restricted and disfigured by the limitations of the mind, giving rise to the illusion that "This is me; these things are mine." The impressions of the defective egoistic functions go to form *asmita klesha*—the affliction of egoism—which is a very deep-rooted malady. The presence of *asmita klesha* is a result of identification with the body, mind and limited personality, rather than with one's own true identity, which is *Brahman* the Absolute.

Raga-Dwesha (Attachment-Hatred)

Asmita becomes the basis of *raga* and *dwesha*—attachment and hatred. The human mind is attracted to things that are pleasant and repulsed by things that are painful. Thus, when pleasant objects are encountered or when pleasant conditions arise you develop a feeling, "May I have this object or condition more and more." The subtle impressions of this feeling sink deeply into the subconscious and unconscious mind and give rise to the affliction of attachment, or *raga klesha*.

On the other hand, when an object or a circumstance is uncomfortable, or when it threatens your security and happiness, you wish to remove it, as one would remove a thorn from their tender foot. A sustained attitude of repulsion casts into the unconscious a subtle stream of the impressions of aversion. These go to form *dwesha klesha* or the affliction of hatred.

Human life witnesses alternating currents of love and hate, intense affection leading to mutual interdependence and gross identification, kindling hatred leading to a sustained animosity and deep-rooted aversion.

Attachment and hatred are the powerful forces that disrupt one's mental serenity. When mental life is disturbed and the depths of the mind are filled with the impressions of like and dislike, one is not able to draw spiritual energy from the Self within.

The impressions of *raga* and *dwesha* are the cause of all the miseries that arise in human life.

They force one to create selfish karmas and these karmas lead one to embodiment or incarnation into the physical body with an individualized consciousness. You would be released from future cycles of birth and death if you did not have attachment and hatred. The presence of these emotions implies that your mind is not at rest, your desires have not been fulfilled. Therefore, you have to return again and again to fulfill them.

Abhinivesha (Fear of Death)

Entering into embodiment brings with it the fear of death. So *raga-dwesha* becomes the basis for the next affliction: *abhinivesha* or clinging to life and fear of death. To most people, the idea of losing one's life, of death to the physical body, seems like a total loss, complete darkness. No matter how much one might have read about the immortality of the soul and the illusion of the body, the fear of death strikes hard because it is deep-rooted and instinctive.

How Can the Kleshas Be Eradicated?

Consciously, you can't directly attack the impressions of *avidya* or ignorance abiding in the deep unconscious. However, all your profound spiritual practices create new and powerful impressions which reduce the pressure of ignorance and allow your intellect to confront a more accessible affliction: ego or *asmita klesha* along with its inseparable companions, *raga* and *dwesha*.

Although egoism is a more direct target than ignorance, it remains a very slippery opponent. It requires great discipline to target the ego. If you stare directly into the eyes of the ego, it shrivels, shrinks, and disappears. However it is easier to listen to your ego than to stare into its eyes.

An aspirant must realize that the ego is a strong and enduring adversary with great

mesmerizing powers. Although one must work tirelessly to outwit and reduce ego, one must understand that it cannot be fully conquered in a day. You can escape from ego temporarily by the practice of humility and other Divine virtues, but it will assert again whenever you relax your spiritual self-effort. This should not baffle you. Even anger, hate, irritability, jealousy—which are lesser enemies than ego itself—return again and again to haunt an aspirant.

When one succeeds in bringing a high degree of integration in their personality, the *kleshas* become thinned out or attenuated. Subtle seeds of ignorance, egoism, attachment, hatred, and identification with the body continue to exist; but in expression, the life of the aspirant is decked with excellent virtues of the head and the heart. However, if they were to stop their mystic practices of meditation and enquiry, these seeds will manifest again in the form of gross afflictions, and many of their virtues will vanish, giving rise to negative qualities they never imagined they would have to confront.

The *kleshas* can be truly overcome only when one has become established in *samadhi* (superconsciousness), and one enjoys the sense of universality that results from this profound experience. Until that time, patience, faith and persistence are an aspirant's best weapons against the *kleshas*.

(to be continued)

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