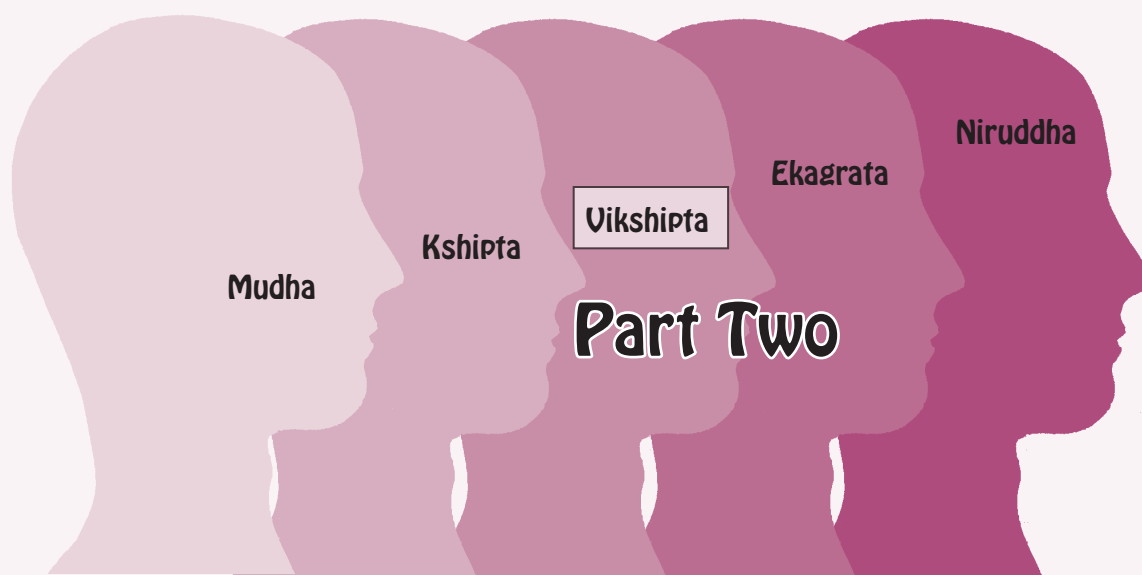




The Five States of Mind

by Swami Jyotirmayananda

Vikshipta

The third state of mind is *vikshipta*, the state in which the mind is partially concentrated and partially distracted. In this state, *rajas*, the principle of restlessness and outward activity, is gradually brought under control, while *sattwa*, the principle of purity, harmony, and clarity, begins to increase noticeably. The mind is becoming more refined, more disciplined, and increasingly capable of turning toward higher values.

People established in the *vikshipta* state are generally recognized as good, virtuous, cultured, and responsible members of society. They may possess admirable qualities such as kindness, patience, self-control, generosity, and a sincere concern for others. From the ordinary point of view of society, they may be considered great men and women, and rightly so. They have risen considerably above the restless and self-centered condition of the *kshipta* mind.

However, from the standpoint of Yoga, the journey is not yet complete. Although the grosser expressions of the mind may no longer appear openly,

the deeper impressions that produce them have not necessarily been eradicated. The seeds of anger, attachment, pride, jealousy, and other disturbances may still remain in the unconscious, waiting for the right circumstances to awaken them.

Therefore, a person in the *vikshipta* state may appear calm and self-controlled under ordinary circumstances, yet lose that balance when confronted with a powerful provocation. In a peaceful environment, it is relatively easy to behave with patience and kindness. The real test comes when one is insulted, frustrated, disappointed, or confronted with something that strongly challenges one's desires and expectations.

This is an important distinction in spiritual life. Suppression is not the same as mastery. A person may control an impulse because circumstances do not give that impulse an opportunity to express itself, while the underlying tendency remains alive within. Yoga seeks something deeper: not merely to prevent negative qualities from expressing themselves, but to transform the inner impressions from which they arise.

Thus, *vikshipta* is a beautiful and important stage of spiritual development. The mind has begun to turn toward *sattwa*, and the aspirant is capable of experiencing periods of concentration, serenity, and higher inspiration. But these experiences may still alternate with distraction and emotional disturbance. The task now is to strengthen *sattwa*, deepen concentration, and continue the disciplines of Yoga until the mind becomes increasingly steady and one-pointed.

As this process matures, the aspirant moves toward *ekagrata*, in which the mind is no longer merely capable of occasional concentration but becomes naturally established in one-pointedness. The higher states of Yoga begin to unfold when the mind is no longer at the mercy of its old tendencies, but becomes a clear and peaceful instrument for the revelation of the Self.

Expressions of Increasing Sattwa

As *sattwa* begins to increase within the personality, certain distinctive qualities gradually begin to emerge. These qualities become increasingly apparent as the mind progresses from the *kshipta* state to the *vikshipta* state, and they reach greater perfection in the higher states of *ekagrata* and *niruddha*. The scriptures describe four principal expressions of increasing *sattwa*: *dharma*, *vairagya*, *aishwarya*, and *jnana*.

These four qualities reveal a profound transformation taking place within the aspirant. As *sattwa* increases, one does not merely become a better person outwardly. The entire orientation of the personality begins to change. One becomes increasingly drawn toward truth, virtue, inner freedom, spiritual strength, and knowledge of the Self.

Dharma—The Awakening of Ethical Consciousness

The first expression of increasing *sattwa* is *dharma*, the ethical and virtuous dimension of life. As the mind becomes purer, one's conscience becomes more sensitive. One begins to recognize intuitively what is right and what is wrong, not merely because of social rules or fear of consequences, but because there is an inner appreciation for truth and goodness.

A person whose mind is filled with *sattwa* naturally enjoys doing what is beneficial to others. Kindness, honesty, compassion, self-control, and generosity become increasingly spontaneous. Such a person does not have to force themselves to be good. As the mind becomes purer, goodness begins to express itself naturally.

This is an important stage in spiritual development. The aspirant begins to understand that happiness cannot be found by living only for oneself. The more one becomes established in *dharma*, the more one's thoughts, words, and actions become harmonious with the deeper purpose of life.

Vairagya—The Awakening of Dispassion

The second expression of increasing *sattwa* is *vairagya*, or dispassion. As *sattwa* develops, the mind gradually discovers that the pleasures of the senses cannot provide lasting fulfillment. This does not mean that one must hate the world or reject everything that gives pleasure. Rather, one begins to understand that no external object can provide the deep and lasting happiness for which the soul longs.

You begin to feel that you are the master of the sense-enjoyments rather than their servant. Objects of the senses no longer have the same power to dominate your mind. Something deeper has awakened within you—a taste for inner peace, reflection, meditation, and spiritual discovery.

As *vairagya* deepens, the mind naturally turns inward. You do not have to force yourself to give up worldly attractions; your understanding of their limitations gradually weakens their hold over you. You discover that the joy of inward communion is far more satisfying than the temporary excitement provided by external objects.

True *vairagya* is therefore not deprivation. It is freedom. You are free to enjoy what comes into your life without becoming psychologically dependent upon it.

Aishwarya—The Awakening of Inner Majesty

The third expression of increasing *sattwa* is *aishwarya*. This word conveys the idea of spiritual majesty, inner strength, and a growing awareness of

the remarkable potential that lies within the human personality.

The spirit within us, moving through its karmic process, encounters both favorable and unfavorable circumstances. When the mind is predominantly influenced by *rajas* and *tamas*, one is drawn toward situations that engender confusion, agitation, humiliation, or degradation. The person may begin to identify with these experiences and think, “This is what I am.”

As *sattwa* increases, however, a profound change begins to take place. You start to recognize that you are not merely the limited personality shaped by past tendencies and circumstances. There is a deeper dignity within you. You begin to sense that the Self is endowed with extraordinary possibilities for growth, wisdom, strength, and freedom.

This inner awakening creates a kind of spiritual magnetism. Your thoughts become more harmonious, your actions become more purposeful, and your presence begins to influence those around you. People may feel encouraged simply by being in your company. Your increasing inner majesty reminds others, perhaps without words, of the dignity and spiritual potential within themselves.

True *aishwarya* should therefore not be understood merely as worldly power, prosperity, or the acquisition of extraordinary abilities. Its deeper significance is the awakening of the inner sovereignty of the spirit. You begin to discover that your true strength does not come from controlling the world around you, but from gaining mastery over yourself.

Jnana—The Awakening of Spiritual Knowledge

The fourth expression of increasing *sattwa* is *jnana*, or spiritual knowledge. As your mind becomes purer and more refined, your intellect becomes increasingly sensitive to higher truth. You begin to question more deeply: Who am I? What is permanent and what is transitory? What is the source of true happiness? What is the relationship between the individual personality and the Divine Self?

This knowledge is not merely the accumulation of information. One may possess enormous intellectual

knowledge and yet remain bound by attachment, fear, anger, and egoism. *Jnana* is a deeper form of understanding that gradually transforms the way one sees oneself and the world.

At the *vikshipta* level, however, this knowledge is still developing. The intellect may understand profound spiritual truths, and the heart may be deeply inspired by them, but the unconscious may still contain subtle impressions of attachment, hatred, egoism, and fear. Under favorable circumstances, these tendencies may remain quiet; when strongly provoked, however, they can still emerge and disturb the mind.

Thus, the aspirant must continue the disciplines of Yoga. It is not enough to understand the truth intellectually. The truth must penetrate the deeper layers of the personality until it becomes a living realization.

The Four Expressions of Sattwa

The development of *dharma*, *vairagya*, *aishwarya*, and *jnana* represents a remarkable progression in spiritual life. *Dharma* purifies conduct. *Vairagya* frees the mind from excessive dependence upon sense-enjoyment. *Aishwarya* awakens the dignity and inner strength of the spirit. *Jnana* opens the intellect to the truth of the Self.

People who are normally regarded as good, generous, kind, and noble—the great men and women of human society—may have developed these qualities to a considerable degree. They have moved beyond the restless *kshipta* state and are established to some extent in *vikshipta*. Yet Yoga asks us to continue even further.

The subtle seeds of attachment, hatred, egoism, and fear must ultimately be removed. The mind must become increasingly pure, steady, and one-pointed. As *sattwa* becomes more and more dominant, the aspirant moves toward *ekagrata*, and eventually beyond even the modifications of the mind in *niruddha*.

To understand why these subtle tendencies continue to obstruct spiritual progress, we must now turn our attention to the *kleshas*, or afflictions of the mind. By understanding these hidden forces, we can better understand why even a virtuous and spiritually inclined person must continue the journey toward complete mastery and Self-realization.

Kleshas and the Five States of Mind

According to Raja Yoga, there are five *kleshas*, or fundamental afflictions of the mind: ignorance (*avidya*), ego-sense (*asmita*), attachment (*raga*), hatred (*dvesha*), and fear of death or clinging to life (*abhinivesha*). These *kleshas* lie at the root of human bondage. They exist as subtle impressions within the unconscious, and as these impressions become stronger, the mind moves downward toward the dull and distracted states of *mudha* and *kshipta*. As the impressions are weakened and eventually dissolved, the mind gradually ascends the Yogic ladder toward *vikshipta*, *ekagrata*, and finally *niruddha*.

Understanding the *kleshas* is therefore extremely important. They explain why the mind behaves as it does and why even a person who sincerely wishes to live a spiritual life can still experience powerful reactions, attachments, fears, and disturbances. The work of Yoga is not merely to suppress these tendencies. It is to understand them, weaken their roots, and ultimately transcend them.

Avidya—Ignorance

Of the five *kleshas*, *avidya* is the primary one. *Avidya* means spiritual ignorance—the failure to recognize one's true nature. You identify yourself with the body, mind, emotions, and changing circumstances of life, while remaining unaware that your essential nature is the Eternal Self.

The body changes, the mind changes, emotions change, relationships change, and circumstances change. Yet there is something within you that remains the witnessing presence throughout all these changes. *Avidya* is the failure to recognize that this deeper Self is your true identity. From this fundamental ignorance, the other *kleshas* arise.

Asmita—The Ego-Sense

When *asmita* arises out of *avidya*, you become identified with the mental process. Instead of remaining the witness of the mind, you become absorbed in whatever condition the mind happens to be experiencing.

When the mind is serene, you think, “I am serene.” When it is agitated, you become agitated. When it is dull, you feel dull. When the mind is praised, you feel important; when it is criticized, you feel diminished. In this way, you become psychologically glued to the mind and its changing conditions.

This identification is *asmita*, or the ego-sense. The mind is constantly changing, but the Self is the witness of those changes. Yoga teaches us to gradually loosen this identification and discover the difference between the changing personality and the unchanging Self.

Raga and Dvesha—Attachment and Hatred

From this ego-sense arise *raga* and *dvesha*, attachment and hatred. The ego says, “I like this,” or “I dislike that.” It seeks certain experiences and tries to avoid others.

These preferences are constantly changing. You may intensely desire something today that you disliked yesterday, and tomorrow you may no longer want it at all. Yet every strong attachment or aversion leaves an impression in the unconscious. As these impressions accumulate, they influence future thoughts, emotions, and actions.

These tendencies are called *kleshas*, or afflictions, because they disturb the mind, create karmic entanglements, and ultimately become seeds of future suffering.

Abhinivesha—Clinging to Life

The fifth *klesha* is *abhinivesha*, the deep instinctive clinging to life and fear of death. When the prospect of death arises, it can produce a powerful sense of fear and frustration. According to Raja Yoga, this fear is rooted in the accumulated impressions of countless experiences of embodiment.

The body has been born, aged, suffered, and died again and again. These deep impressions remain within the unconscious. Therefore, when the prospect of death appears, the ancient instinct to preserve the body can become intensely activated.

From the deeper standpoint of Yoga, however, death does not touch the Self. What dies is the physical body, while the Eternal Self remains

untouched. As awareness of the Self becomes stronger, the fear of death gradually loses its power. The aspirant begins to understand that the deepest “I” is not the body and therefore cannot be destroyed when the body passes away.

Thus, *abhinivesha* is ultimately overcome through a deeper realization of the soul's innate freedom and immortality.

From Density to Dissolution

The *kleshas* exist in different degrees of density according to the state of mind. In the *mudha* state, the *kleshas* are like great rocks buried within the unconscious. They are dense and deeply rooted, and the mind is heavily conditioned by them. They are like thick clouds obscuring the light of the sun.

In the *kshipta* state, the *kleshas* are still powerful, but they are less dense. They resemble shifting clouds that constantly move across the sky of the mind. Attachment, hatred, anger, fear, and desire arise and disappear, continually disturbing one's peace.

In the *vikshipta* state, the *kleshas* become more refined. The image is now that of layers of clouds—sometimes dark, sometimes light. The person has gained some control over the mind, but the deeper tendencies have not yet been completely removed. Under ordinary circumstances, they may remain quiet, but a sufficiently strong provocation can bring them to the surface.

In the advanced states of *ekagrata* and *niruddha*, the *kleshas* are progressively weakened and ultimately destroyed. The mind becomes like a vast, luminous, cloudless sky. The light of the Self can shine without obstruction.

The Five Conditions of the Klesha-Samskaras

Using more terminology from Raja Yoga, the *kleshas* exist as subtle impressions, or *samskaras*, in the unconscious. These *klesha-samskaras* pass through five conditions, ranging from latency and full expression to their eventual destruction. They are known as *prasupta*, *udara*, *vichhina*, *tanu*, and *dagdha*.

Prasupta—Latent

The first condition is *prasupta*. In this condition, the *klesha-samskaras* remain dormant or latent. They are present, but they are not actively expressing themselves.

This condition can be observed in children and in people whose minds are predominantly in the *mudha* state. A young child does not yet have the elaborate likes, dislikes, prejudices, ambitions, and emotional complexities that develop later in life. Nevertheless, the seeds of these tendencies are already present in a latent form and may emerge as the personality develops.

Thus, *prasupta* means that the *kleshas* are present as seeds, waiting for the appropriate circumstances to become active.

Udara—Fully Expanded

The next condition is *udara*. *Udara* means expanded, and in this state the *kleshas* are operating openly and with considerable force.

A person who has not disciplined the mind can become completely colored by whatever emotion happens to arise. If he is affectionate, he may become completely absorbed in affection. If he is angry, he may become the very personification of anger. There is little inner restraint to moderate the expression of these emotions.

People established in the *mudha* and *kshipta* states commonly experience the *udara* condition of the *kleshas*. A negative quality can completely take over the personality. You might look at such a person and say, “Oh, no. Here comes Durvasa, the Angry Sage!” The person is temporarily so identified with the emotion that it seems to become his entire personality.

Vichhina—Partially Obscured

The third condition is *vichhina*, which becomes prominent as the mind enters the *vikshipta* state. The aspirant has begun to exercise greater discipline and can restrain the outward expression of negative tendencies. However, the underlying impressions have not yet been eliminated.

The word *vichhina* suggests that one tendency can be interrupted or overpowered by another. One layer of conditioning may cover another layer beneath it.

Consider, for example, a businessman who goes to meet a client with whom he is extremely angry. Internally, he may be frustrated and may have a strong desire to express harsh words. Yet he has educated himself to behave according to accepted standards of social conduct. He restrains himself, smiles, shakes the client's hand, and even says, "It is wonderful to see you. I hope you have a very nice day."

This is certainly preferable to uncontrolled anger, and it represents an important degree of self-discipline. But it is not yet a complete transformation.

Human society often considers a person civilized simply because he has learned to conceal unacceptable thoughts and emotions. It may not matter what he says or thinks behind someone's back, as long as he maintains an outward appearance of respectability. As a result, a great deal of artificiality can develop in human relationships.

This condition is by no means the final goal of Yoga. Nevertheless, the ability to check one's thoughts and restrain negative emotions is an important step forward. Once you can prevent destructive tendencies from expressing themselves, you are in a much better position to work on their deeper roots and lead the mind toward the higher states.

Tanu—Thinned Out

In the Yogic state of *ekagrata*, or one-pointedness, the aspirant begins to purify the deeper layers of the mind. The *kleshas* become greatly weakened and exist in a thinned-out condition known as *tanu*.

This state develops through *satsanga*, selfless service, meditation, spiritual discipline, and profound reflection. The *kleshas* have not yet completely disappeared, but they have lost much of their former power.

It is like a snake that becomes harmless in extreme cold. The snake is still present, but it is unable to move with its usual strength. Similarly, the *kleshas* may still exist within the unconscious, but they have become too weak to dominate the mind easily.

However, aspirants must remain vigilant. If they abandon their *sadhana* and begin to associate with negative influences, the weakened tendencies can regain their strength. They may fall from *ekagrata* to *vikshipta*, and from *vikshipta* to *kshipta* and even *mudha*.

Spiritual progress therefore requires continued practice. One must not become complacent simply because the mind has become peaceful and concentrated. The deeper transformation must continue until the seeds themselves are destroyed.

Dagdha—Burnt Up

When *ekagrata* becomes fully perfected and the Yogi enters the *niruddha* state, the fire of intuitional knowledge burns away the very seeds of the *kleshas*. They are then described as *dagdha*, or burnt up.

Consider the difference between an ordinary seed and a roasted seed. An ordinary seed can be planted and will eventually produce a new plant. A roasted seed may retain its appearance as a seed, but it can no longer germinate.

In the same way, the *dagdha kleshas* may appear to remain in the practical life of a Sage, but they no longer possess the power to generate new karmic entanglements. A Sage may appear to have preferences or may perform various actions, but these do not bind him because he is established in the awareness of the Self as the Non-doer.

Thus, the liberated Sage can move through the world without becoming bound by the world. Actions continue, but the sense of personal doership has disappeared. Experiences may arise, but they no longer create bondage.

This is the culmination of the Yogic process: the *kleshas* have been understood, weakened, and finally burned at their roots. The clouds have disappeared, and the light of the Self shines unobstructed.

The aspirant who begins in the darkness of *mudha* and progresses through *kshipta*, *vikshipta*, and *ekagrata* is gradually moving from unconscious conditioning toward complete freedom. In *niruddha*, the mind has become perfectly controlled, and the Eternal Self is revealed as one's true nature. This is the cherished goal of Raja Yoga—and, indeed, the ultimate goal of all mystical movements.

(To be continued)