THOUGHTS ON PATANJALI AND HIS TEACHINGS

Extracts from Yogacharya Dr. Ananda Balayogi Bhavanani’s talks at IYTA, Sydney, Australia in November 2012 transcribed by Yogacharini Jnanasundari (Janita Stenhouse), France.

So first of all, a very warm greeting to everyone who is assembled here, a very wonderful day, a day where I get a chance to be back in a place that is fast becoming home – Sydney – with an organization that my father, my mother, and now me, feel privileged to be associated with - the IYTA. You know, inviting somebody the first time happens, by mistake also. When you get invited a second time you say “Okay, not bad, I did not mess it up.” When you get invited back the third time you say “Wow. This is a group of people that is destined to be satsangha - a company of people searching for the ultimate truth, the ultimate reality. And so it’s with great pride, great privilege, great pleasure that I sit before you (and I’m going to be standing for most of the day before you) to share something that is my life.

Yoga is my life, my life is yoga. Every moment is yoga, everything I do is yoga, everything I say is yoga, everything I think is yoga, not at an ego-centric individual level but at a level that understands we are destined to be the divine. I’ll correct myself: we are destined to regain our divinity. We are already the divine but we don’t know it – that’s what Maharishi Patanjali tell us. So with these words of gratitude, respect, love, affection, for every one of you who has made it here today and for those who wanted to make it and couldn’t make it, we start with a few moments of quiet sitting, just sitting quietly, letting ourself find a sense of balance within, a balance that is natural, a balance that is spontaneous, a balance that is in the potential of every human being. Focusing on where we are right now, focusing on why we are here, focusing on our connection to that divinity that manifests through every breath of ours. Letting the mind focus as your breath comes in and as your breath goes out. Be aware of the breath as it flows down your nostrils, the back of your throat, down the windpipe, into your lungs. And be aware as it comes out of the lungs, up the air passages, the wind-pipe, the back of the throat and out your nostrils. The breath is a bridge between the conscious and the unconscious. The breath is a medium of integration, a medium by which we can reunite with our own Self. Slowing the breath down, calming the rate, rhythm, of the respiration, enables our mind and our emotions, to attain to a state of balance, harmony, integrated oneness. In this state I’ll chant a few verses of invocation, verses that are thousands of years old, reconnecting us with the teachings that are time immemorial, teachings that belong even beyond the concept of time.

(places hands in Namaskara Mudra)

Om, Om, Om. Tat Ganeshaya vidmahe, vakra thundaya dhimahi, thano Dantih, prachodayate Om. Om. Tan Maheshaya vidmahe, vaki shudhaya dhimahi, thano Shiva prachodayate Om. Om. Veenaganaya vidmahe, Vrincha patni cha dhimahi, thano Saraswati, prachodayate Om. Om. Tat Paramparayaya vidmahe, jnana lingeshwaraya dhimahi, thano Guru, prachodayate Om.

Om bhadram karnebhih shrunuyama devaa bhadram pashye maakshabhirajatraah sthirairangais tushtuvaam sastanooobhih vyashema devahitam yadaayuh swasti na indro vridhashravaah swasti nah pooshaa vishwavedaah swasti nastaarkshyo arishtanemih swasti no brihaspatir dadhaatu. om shantih, shantih, shantih om.

Keeping your eyes closed, gently rub your palms together, generating a nice warmth - warmth at the physical level signifying improved circulation, at the Pranic level signifying an improved Pranic circulation, of healing life energy. Placing the palms cupping them over your eyes without any pressure on the eyes but just letting these Pranic energies flow from your palms into your eyes, through the eye, the back of the eye into the optic nerve, criss-crossing from right to left and left to right, to the back of your brain, the optic area in the occipital cortex, energising your whole brain.
with these Pranic energies, energising each and every cell to bring out and manifest its potential in actuality. Into this semi-darkness, open your eyes and blink, continuing the blinking into the semi-darkness and then slowly bringing your hands down, as you get used to the light, opening your eyes, wide awake.

I offer my deep salutations to my reverend father, Swami Gitananda Giri, to my mother Meenakshi Devi Bhavanani, who I consider a living Siddha. A Siddha is an accomplished one, who has attained to a high level of spiritual awareness. I consider my mother a living Siddha, an embodiment of the very teachings of yoga, because without my father and my mother I would not be here in the first place. Not only did they give me this physical body, not only did they put the life energy into it, they tried to bring me up as best as they could - any faults are mine (and there are a lot!) - but more than the physical body and the life they gave me, I think the life they created for me, the teachings they gave me that have enabled me to have a wonderful life, makes me eternally grateful to them, makes me realise how much I must have done in some previous incarnations, some good, to be born to such wonderful human beings.

You know one of the best compliments I can give people is that you are a good human being. Because travelling the world in the last five or six years, meeting thousands of people, we have gone through about thirty thousand patients in our hospital in the last three years who have benefitted from yoga therapy – that’s a lot - ten thousand a year. You break it down into working days and you know how many people we meet each day. And you know what? It’s very difficult to find good human beings. So if I want to compliment you I would say you are a good human being. And you say “yeah, but that’s what I am”. Just because we walk on two legs it is not necessarily that we are human beings. A very famous Greek philosopher called the human race “featherless bipeds”. Chickens, birds, also walk on two legs; we don’t have feathers, that’s all. Imagine - thousands of years ago. We say we have evolved, we say we have grown, civilisation has matured; maybe we have better plastics, better computers, faster cars. Well, it’s nice that you know I can travel from India and be here with you in a matter of less than twenty hours of travelling. I think that is good. If I had to take two months to get here, I don’t know whether I would come so often. So okay, fine, but you know we have developed externally so beautifully. When I’m up in the air (not levitating but in the plane; it’s a form of levitation you know, it is! Because you’re not doing anything, you’re up there and you know I can travel from India and be here with you in a matter of less than twenty hours of travelling. I think that is good. If I had to take two months to get here, I don’t know whether I would come so often. So okay, fine, but you know we have developed externally so beautifully. When I’m up in the air (not levitating but in the plane; it’s a form of levitation you know, it is! Because you’re not doing anything, you’ re up there and you’re just sitting there. It’s the closest many of us get to levitation) but you know up the clouds, often I have the thought, I say we human beings have made such progress externally, if we had just made a small percentage of that internally, we would have such a wonderful world. Just a bit – not even fifty percent, maybe five, eight, ten percent. But you know it’s so difficult to go in, because when you want to go in you have to face yourself. In our six-month teachers training where people stay with us for six months, the difficult part is not getting up at four in the morning; it is not all the classes that go on till ten at night; it is not the different techniques they are going to learn; it is not the Indian food, it’s not the Indian heat, it’s not the mosquitoes in the ashram. It’s not the villagers fighting every day, it’s not the boats going by making a lot of noise now that the ocean has come next door to the ashram (we lost our wall last year in a cyclone and put up a fence and this year we had another cyclone and lost that, so I don’t know what Nature is telling us. We used to have hundreds of feet of beach and now we have ten feet. Global warming? Maybe.) You know, that’s not the tough part. The toughest part is that they have to live with themselves because you don’t have a hundred people to escape. This year we have eight people going through it. We don’t take more than ten people and some years you have three, four, five; we are not bothered about meeting the ends, only those who deserve to be there will get in that door. That’s my mother’s job – she scares most of the people off with her letters! She writes such letters and paints such a bleak scenario that people usually drop off, so if they get in our door, they are to be there. And you know what? You don’t have an escape (we lock the doors!), you have to face yourself through your fellow students day in, day out. At the meal table you’ll get to know who is going to eat that last chapatti, and you know what? You get to see yourself. That is svādhya; that is introspectional self-analysis. And sometimes when

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you take that look at yourself – oooh, ha! is it worth it? Will I make it? But you know what? That is a start.

The moment you start looking at yourself, you see yourself - not just all the negativities, please understand it’s not just the negativities, to see the positivities in us, we all have a bipolar nature. Anions and cations, positive and negative flux exists right at our cellular and subatomic level. The sodium and the potassium and the chloride that run through your body either have a positive or a negative flux – every cell! Okay, so it’s right down in us, and you know what? Nature tries to balance. Whenever a sodium goes in, a potassium comes out; whenever a potassium goes in, a sodium comes out; that is why for those who have high blood pressure, the doctors say “don’t take much salt” and they say “take fruits”, well that’s a good doctor should say that, not “take my medicine”, that is the first answer. The moment you take fruit which is rich in potassium, the potassium goes in and so the sodium cannot, and your blood pressure starts to fall. I’m being very simplistic but just to give you an example. Nature has an amazing balancing system, and when you start to look at yourself you start to see the positives and the negatives. Patanjali talks about the yama and the niyama in ashtanga yoga. The yama are those things that you should not do or you do not do, thus reducing the negative tendencies that are there within us. They are the controls. An example: being violent. The first of the yamas is ahimsâ – non-violence. You know, as a doctor, the first rule of medicine is “do no harm” – that is the first rule of medicine, it’s part of our oath. “Do no harm” is the first rule of medicine; the first rule of yoga: “do no harm”. Isn’t it interesting that both have something similar? If I get a patient who I cannot help, the first thing I should do is say “I am sorry, maybe I cannot help you and I refer you to somebody who can”. That is the first thing, to say “maybe I am not equipped enough to help you”. That is what I tell all my students, I tell my patients, I tell my students; I tell everybody “if I do not know the answer to your question, I am going to say I do not know”. That honesty is very essential in a teacher – don’t try to bluff your way through anything. As a parent I think again that same thing, to say that I don’t know, but it doesn’t end there. I say “I will say I don’t know, then I will try to find out where the answer lies, and I’ll let you know about that”. That way you get the answer that you were looking for, I learn something I did not know and we both grow.

Growth is all-inclusive. I repeat, growth at any level is all-inclusive, be it economic, be it political, be it spiritual. There is nothing like “I will gain kaivalya – liberation; I’m using these words because they are Patanjali’s words – kaivalya, others call it moksha, mukti, nirvâna, so many words for this, the final liberation, the final freedom. “My liberation, my freedom, my kaivalya”! I’m sorry, that “my” is not going to let you have it. Anyone who comes to me and talks to me and says “you know, in my enlightened state...” The moment that MY comes I know that they have not got to that state. It doesn’t exist. Your ego does not exist in kaivalya. There is nothing like a personal universal experience; there’s just a universal experience. But we all want “I” should get it, who cares about the rest of the room? Tsk tsk tsk, I’m sorry, it is all-inclusive, we are all going to get there, okay? The yogic prayer is a prayer which says “may all beings be at peace”. It doesn’t say “may I be at peace”, it’s “may all beings”. The moment I say “all”, I’m included. I don’t need to say “may all beings and me”. And by doing so, you know, the Divine, call it God, call it Nature, call it the Universe, label it as a He, She, It, I don’t care, something is there. You know, if I were God - and I don’t have a long beard but yes, fine, my father had, maybe one day I will grow it. I get up to about this far (indicates a point level with his clavicles) and then people around me say “you’d better get it off”, it reaches about this far, usually in December, I don’t know maybe it’s so cold in Pondicherry that usually in December I have i. Cold in Pondicherry! You know, in India we all think that Australia is always hot and hot and hot, and I get back home and I say “I was shivering in Sydney”. The first time I got here in April and I’m like “waaaah – that’s cold for me”.

You know, this experience of kaivalya, this experience of freedom is something where we lose our self. We lose our self to find our Self, just remember that. We lose our self to find our Self. Now what is it that we lose? We lose that sense of individuality, me, mine, I, me only, me first, and we gain that absolute universal identity. “But if I’m not there I’m going to lose something!” You say that “my ego
won't be there, I won't be there but then what's use the use of it, why should I do it?” Hm? Oh, my God! You know this ego creates such amazing rationality, irrational rationalities, that it really throws us off. Because your subconscious unconscious doesn’t want you to progress, it is happy where it is, that quicksand doesn’t want to let go of you and it will play any trick. (A bit more about that later.) But you know, when we lose that sense of individuality we gain universality. It's like that drop of water that jumps into the ocean. That drop of water doesn’t exist as an individual anymore but it has become the ocean, it’s taken on something, that’s what it is. We, as an individual I-drop, the universe is the ocean, that is what we want and Patanjali says we can become that ocean, we can realise, we can regain, re-attain (that’s why I liked your convention last time – re-union). It is so important because it's not just about union. We were united, we were one, but we have fallen away from it because of our ignorance, because of our avidyā. Getting back there, regaining our sanity. My father used to talk about that. Because you know the word, the Indian word, the Hindi word for the humans is actually insan, quite close to insane – insan. Regaining our sanity, well, not at the level the psychiatrists would tell you but this is something else.

When we talk about the yoga sutras, we are not talking about a book. Okay, recently I was at a book release function; in India we have a release for everything, and this person had written a couple of books, each was about thirty pages – okay, I think most of your IYTA assignments will be bigger than that! Thirty pages, three books were released at that function, nice books, and someone got up to speak about this and this person was to talk about yoga and mention about ashtanga yoga and said “and you know Patanjali wrote a book”. I was sitting there and I’m not supposed to speak at that function, just go and receive the book, receive the first copy, that was my role and I’m like “ooh” (shudder) ; very very deep breaths to control my mind and emotions and stop me from jumping up. You know for these people a book means thirty pages, something small which was written virtually overnight. And to say “Patanjali wrote a book” – ah! (more shudders) You know Patanjali gives us a hundred and ninety-six sutras, some versions say one-ninety-five, it doesn’t matter. He could have written, composed, presented something bigger than any encyclopaedia, with hundred and ninety-five, hundred and ninety-six volumes, with one volume for each of the sutras if he’d wanted – that is what we are talking about, okay? Just from a literary point of view, each of the sutras is like a bīja, is like a seed. You see these beautiful trees out here, they all came from a small seed, one small seed and you have this huge tree! Well, all of us living here, we came basically from one cell. It's very difficult to capture that one-cell stage except when you’re working with high technology, doing some cloning work. At one point in our existence we were just one cell, half the chromosomes from the mother, half the chromosomes from the father – look at us now! One cell! That is what a bīja is. A bīja is taken right down to the essence, a single-pointed essence from which everything can manifest. Now each of the sutras is like a bīja. Just one hundred and ninety-six, you could chant it in about twenty minutes. Yeah. You could say we are just one cell and you can just look at it in a few seconds. Each of the sutras has within it the entire code, like the DNA code, the code that when you chant it, when you contemplate it – I’m not even going to use the word meditate here – when you contemplate it, and when it starts to become a living entity within you, the blossoming occurs, the manifestation occurs.

And this is where the sutras become a living entity, they become part of you - well, you become them, they become you. It’s not just saying “Yeah, okay, I read the first ten sutras and I can memorise them and well, you know I listened to your CD and you taught us to chant and so I can chant it – Om. Atha yogānushāsanam. Yogas chittavrttinirdhaha. Tadā drashtuh svarūpe avasthānam. Vṛttisārūpyamitaratra. Vṛttayah panchatayāh kliṣṭākliṣṭāhā. Pramāṇā viparyaya vikalp anidrā smṛtyayaḥ. Yeah, I chanted them and no, it doesn’t end there. They have to blossom, just as that one cell has become you, just as that seed has become this tree, they grow, they flower and they manifest in you. That is why yoga lives through you, you become yoga. Now this is not an ego-trip again. You become yoga, your life becomes yoga. So these are teachings that come alive in us. These are teachings that become our nature – we talk about “second nature”, and I’m just using the word nature, not even second nature. They become natural, sahaj, they become spontaneous, and when
that happens, transformation starts, evolution, growth, and then we’re on the path to kaivalya. Now Patanjali tells us that basically, one day, we attain kaivalya. Everybody is going to attain it, okay? This is the good news; everybody is going to attain kaivalya someday. And once you attain kaivalya it doesn’t matter whether it took you ten years, eighty years, twenty lifetimes, two thousand four hundred and fifty-six lifetimes – it doesn’t matter because you reside in the Eternal Now, there’s no past or future, there’s no concept of time. So it’s going to happen. “Then why should I bother about it? I might as well continue with my life!” Well, we as human beings have been born with a purpose. The purpose of human life is not just to eat, drink and be merry, it’s not just to have an education, get a job, get married, have kids and die. If it were that, definitely we would not be equipped with the capacity we are equipped with.

Your brain – I’m not even talking about your mind, okay – your brain is thousands of thousands of times better than any super-computer invented till now. Just put that in perspective. Why should we be equipped with a brain that is thousands and thousands of times better than any super-computer just so that we can use a normal home computer, just so that we can get up in the morning and make our coffee, just so that we can get our jobs done and travel by the train – is that why we have that super-computer, super-duper super-computer? Now I’m just talking about the brain! What the rest of us can do is amazing. Every cell has consciousness; consciousness is not just in your head, consciousness is there in every cell! Why? So that we can dress up nicely and put on the latest perfume? Please understand, we as human beings are entitled to work towards fulfilment at the material level, at the emotional level, through living a good life as we should as human beings, and we are entitled to work towards liberation. These are our birthrights. Yoga doesn’t say you have to live in a cave, no! You are entitled to artha. Artha is the material prosperity – but through dharma, through the proper channels, proper way. You are entitled to kâma, the attainment of emotional prosperity, emotional fulfilment through dharma, again, you are entitled to it. But then: dharma, artha, kâma – moksha! All of these three are geared so that you work towards moksha (kaivalya, moksha, mukti). So Patanjali gives us hundred and ninety-five, hundred and ninety-six sutras. (Excuse my bad handwriting, but you know that is a prerequisite for becoming a doctor, so that’s what got me into medical school, bad handwriting. You know the story of the doctor who wrote his girlfriend a beautiful love letter, and she had to go to the pharmacist to find out what he said?) (Much laughter in background)

So we have hundred and ninety-five, hundred and ninety-six sutras, a sutra is basically as I said you know these seeds. Think of one seed and another seed, and another seed and another seed; and the sutras are basically the link in this garland. You know, a rosary, a mālâ, that is what a sutra is, these are all these beads, again I’m coming back to that – why am I putting that bead? Because I’m putting that concept of bija. So all these bijas, all these genetic codes – call it your spiritual genetics, okay? Your spiritual genetic code being held together, that is what the sutras are. Not just Patanjali wrote a book! Again, the other statement that really gets me is: “and Patanjali is the originator of yoga” – aargh! “Yoga started with Patanjali” – whoooo, deep breath - okay, now I’m back to normal. Please understand, all Patanjali did was codify pre-existing concepts, pre-existing teachings and put them together so that we could have a beautiful perspective of the Universe through Yoga. That is why it is called the Yoga Darshan. The word darshan, or darshana, is often translated as a view, a perspective. Now please understand; I do not say “I had a darshan on my aircraft”; I do not have a darshan of the building. I say I had a darshan of the Divine, I had a darshan of the guru, I had a darshan in the religious place. Darshan is a word that implies reverence – there is reverence behind that word. A reverential perspective of the Universe – that is what darshan means. It’s not just a view, it’s not just – people say darshan means a philosophy; fine! Coming back to philosophy, I have something to tell you there - later. I have a lot of stories rolled up my sleeves. You know when I teach the mantra class in ICYER, the students call it my mantra and story-telling class. They always get a lot of stories from me; it’s a very effective way of getting concepts in.

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But *darshan*, of which there are six primary *astika darshans*, the *darshans* that accept the divinity, of which Yoga is one, one of the six perspectives of the Universe. There’s *nyāya, vaishesika, yoga, mīmāṃsa, samkhya, vedanta* - all of these are different perspectives; they are called the *shat darshans*, *shat* meaning six. So the *shat darshans* are the six accepted philosophies, perspectives, views of the universe in classical Indian culture, of which yoga is one.

Now the word *darshan* implies reverence, an ability to see that we are the microcosm of that macrocosm. So it is a connection, it is an innate connection, *darshan* implies a connection, it implies a view that is tinged with reverence, it implies a sense of love, gratitude, respect – it implies growth, evolutionary growth. Now contrast this with just saying “one of the six views”. You know, you are on your balcony and you have a nice view. I was talking about the concept of people donating their bodies for medical education and we were having a small discussion on that, and I was just saying, you know, when I was a medical student and I had an opportunity to dissect a real human body – nowadays you really don’t get that opportunity – the amount of reverence, gratitude, respect I felt for that human being who I never met when they were living, who had given me a chance, an opportunity to learn something that would help other fellow human beings, was something very very very too very special. Someone died and their body enabled us to learn something that would help so many others, but you know what? Of hundred students in my class, I don’t think more than five of us had that view. For many it was just “fine, okay, cut it up”. For many it was “okay, look at that muscle going, look at this bone, and see what happens if I move this joint – isn’t that funny?”

Now – perspective, view: the same body, the same dissection class, the same group of students. I’m not saying this to put anybody else down, I’m saying this for that subconscious that is struggling for survival. And you know with animals when you put an animal into a dangerous situation they are putting it into a dangerous situation and it will do anything to survive. Patanjali calls that *abhinivesha*, and I’ll come back to that later. The subconscious is like the most vicious, dangerous animal and you are trying to go from that subconscious unconscious to a super-conscious state. Do you think it’s going to say “wow, congrats, do you want a lift?” No! I often say I’m going to make a movie, the Yoga *Sutra*.
Horror Movie (background laughter) where the person is walking along and suddenly these hands come from below the floor and they pull them down. That’s what your subconscious unconscious is doing, that’s what it does. It’s no good to say alright, I’ll give you a lift and oh it’s so nice and do you want some flowers and chocolates with that? No! It is a vicious animal that is not going to let you go. And so first it’s going to pull you down and then you learn to watch out for those holes where the hands can come up, and then it says “fine, this is not working”, and so it starts to give you all these branthi darshans, these illusions – you’re so evolved, you’re already there, you don’t need it because you’re already there so why do you have to make the effort and so you stop because what it has done is what it couldn’t do by pulling you by the toes and heels down, it has achieved by giving you this illusion. That is why Patanjali says branthi darshan, these illusions, are an obstacle; and you find it a lot. In the spiritual circles – wow! I meet more enlightened people or people who think they are enlightened than normal people. No. I recently had someone e-mail me that when I’m in Australia they would like to meet me and exchange notes with me and how enlightened they are. And I said the problem is I am not enlightened so I don’t think I have any notes to exchange. Fine! You know I am happy they’re enlightened, it’s wonderful, but there’s nothing for me to exchange because I am not at that level. So fine, maybe they are. Again, maybe we are, so fine, let’s just take objectivity and have a look back and move on.

So that is what vairagya is, whereas abhyasa is push push push push push! Vairagya is “let go”. Now you know when a rocket takes off it needs a lot of propulsion but then there’s one point where it’s let go so that the satellite can be in orbit. You don’t just keep pushing, pushing, pushing. See? Well, it’s like last time when I was in Sydney, my friend who lives down here from school days – he’s not here this time but anyway – he took us out to – Murali will know where it was – where they were doing the gliding, and it was wonderful to watch it. Now that is something I would not do, that and bungee jumping (background laughter); my mother wants me back safe, my kids and wife too, but there’s a point where you run and then there’s a point where you let go. Please understand, you need to run, you don’t just stand and let go; that doesn’t help. You need the running part; please understand that the running part is essential to gain the momentum, gain the propulsion, gain the power, and then there’s a moment where you say “let go” and you lift off. Okay? Same thing! Abhyasa is that push, vairagya is the let go. So that is why Patanjali says if you want to control the whirlpools of your subconscious unconscious mind, the chittavrtti which have to be controlled if you want to know yourself, because otherwise you’re so caught up with all these activities, you need abhyasa and vairagya. These are the twin wings on which you can fly to that higher state of chittavrtti nirodha which is yoga. Yoga is chittavrtti nirodha – the cessation of all these activities that prevent you from knowing yourself. Now the same abhyasa vairagya is extolled in the Bhagavad Gitâ by Lord Krishna when he teaches his disciple, friend, whatever you want – Krishna and Arjuna have such a wonderful bond; you know they talk about a friend/philosopher guide; that’s what Krishna was for Arjuna in all ways. And Arjuna tells Krishna: “Krishna, this mind is so fickle; it is like the wind – uncontrollable! What can I do about it?” And Krishna says: “abhyasa, vairagya”. The same thing Patanjali says, Krishna also says: abhyasa vairagya, and to me this is very essential because the Yoga Sutras and the Bhagavad Gitâ are the core of yoga. Now, there are many many scriptures but these two, they just give you what it is to be yoga – not do – be. Everyone’s caught up in doing yoga; it’s about being yoga. I told you about human beings, you find a lot of human doings, running around the planet. Just to be, see, when you are being you are in the Now already. Being is NOW, doing is not. Because what happens, now, again, you can say you are doing in the Now; why are you doing? See, it is about being and the concept of being is so deep in the Yoga Sutras and the Bhagavad Gitâ. The Bhagavad Gitâ’s message (huge – seven hundred verses with all its teachings) can be summarised as DO YOUR BEST – LEAVE THE REST. That is the Bhagavad Gitâ. Nishkâma karma. He says: karmanyevidhikâraste ma phaleshu kadâchana; ma karmaphalheturbhuma te sandhustvakarmani. Do what should be done for the sake of doing it, not for the benefits that are going to come. You have the right to action, not to the fruits of the action.

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This is a very commonly quoted statement of Krishna, but Do Your Best – Leave The Rest. Now you know what? The Do Your Best part is *abhyaśa*, Leave The Rest is *vairagya*. This is the key. You do your best, you propel yourself, you push yourself, you do all that is needed to be done and then, at the right moment, you let go – and you’re there. The Do Your Best part is something which I have been working a lot in my own life. Many times people ask me things and I say “okay, I’ll do my best”, and I do try to do it, whatever it may be. Maybe I often do it a bit more for others than for myself, but what happens is that this Leave The Rest is the more difficult part. I can work on the Do Your Best, I can really do it and sincerely I can feel a clean heart in that, but it comes to leaving the rest I really struggle because when you love other human beings, when you love humanity, when you have hope for humanity, there are times when, despite doing your best, a sense of despair, a sense of dejection, of disappointment comes in. And that is where it is so important to overcome that because if that comes into us, it will reflect and then, our doing less than our best. So *abhyaśa*, *vairagya*, do your best, leave the rest, and then the next verse that Patanjali said, or didn’t really say, is we take a break now to have a cup of coffee. 😊

*Om yogena cittasya padena vaacam malam sharirasya ca vaidyakena yopaakarottam pravaram muniinaam patajanjalim pranjiliranatosmi om*