UNDERSTANDING YANTRA: A MEDITATIVE CONTEMPLATIVE EXPLORATION

Ed Note: A talk by Yogacharya Dr Ananda Balayogi Bhavanani delivered on his 41st birthday at the OM Yoga Studio in Cardiff, Wales. Yogacharini Jnanasundari of France has transcribed this talk from the recording made by Yogacharini Kalavathi Devi, Founder of the Om Yoga Studio.

Passed down to him from his guru Swâmî Kanakânanda, there are three aspects that are often found running together: mantra, yantra and tantra. All of them have that ending sound tra – t r a - with the suffix of man, yan and tan. Tra means a tool, an instrument. Mantra is an instrument of the mind – man-tra. Yantra is a tool by which we can understand the psychic nature of the universe – name, number, form. And tantra is a tool of energy: the creation, maintenance/sustenance, awareness of energies, becomes tantra.

Today I thought let’s take a short look at the concepts of tantra, yantra, mantra, with special focus on yantra, the science of name, number and form. Last evening we were talking about mantra as a tool through which you invoke energies of the universe and evoke those energies within yourself - those potential energies of the universe manifesting in the forms of gods and goddesses in the iconography of Indian tradition. Well, many of you today are dressed in such a beautiful way, you look like goddesses! A manifestation of those energies, when understood through name, number and form, we start to understand why we are here, where we are, and where we are going. Numbers go through cyclic patterns and it is a constant clock within clock, within clock, within clock type of pattern, wheel within wheel, within wheel, within wheel, and actually it’s very beautiful because you have all these multiple wheels – you have wheel within wheel, within wheel, and within that you have a wheel, within that you have a wheel, within that you have a wheel. Similarly you keep on going outward - you have another wheel, you have another wheel, each of these wheels having their own inner wheels, and anyone who loves clocks, you can find a bit of this in clocks that keep time. Interestingly the concept of Time itself is part of that. All of this within a small wheel, you can keep on expanding it out as far as you want, and in as far as you want. In fact we start to realize that each of these units, the small units, affects the larger unit because when one of these small wheels turns, it turns the other smaller wheels within it, which turn the bigger wheel, which influences the other wheels as well as the bigger wheel. And so we have this constant interplay going on, an interplay that can become staggeringly frightening at times, when you realize cause and effect are so deeply interconnected. There is a danger of going into “I’m not going to do anything, I’m not going to do anything, I’m not going to think anything because what am I setting up when I think, let alone say and do?” In fact many years ago I was in Berlin, at the Indian cultural centre, and after what I thought was a decent lecture of two hours, I had a very nice old lady came up to me and she said “Doctor, that was very awesome, but now I’m scared to do anything. What do you think?”, because I had been talking about the connectivity of mudrãs. When you bring the index finger and the thumb together you are creating an amazing connection; when you don’t do that you create another amazing connection. For example, when we do the chin mudrã, we are creating a connection between the individual and the divine – the divine, god, the highest paramâtma, the universe; the individual - you, me, us. Creating that link between the jîvâtma and the paramâtma, creating that link between the individuality and the universality, a mergence, which becomes possible when you control the senses, those senses that are always going out, looking for nourishment. When you start to control all the three gunas, the three aspects of Nature – tâmasika, râjasika, sâttvika – when your physical, subtle and causal bodies, they start to get aligned, this becomes a mudrã of consciousness – chin mudrã.
cannot but tell you one crazy story about this. I’m sure you have seen there are quite a few of my DVDs put out there by the nice man in Chennai. Whenever I want to do anything he says “Doctor, whatever you want – no problem, let’s put it out. Maybe put out another five?” So I say I don’t have time. Well, in the last two years I only managed one. Lack of time. Of course the Yoga Sutras which are on a different level altogether for me.

But you know we had made one of the very first DVDs and he in his enthusiasm said “I’m going to put it out in Italian, French, Spanish”; some of the later DVDs don’t have that because I have learned the lesson! Navin is the owner. I said ‘Navin, you know I know a bit of English, not much’. In fact my mother who used to teach me English as a kid thought I’d never learn to speak English at all! And – not too bad, okay? Leaves a lot of room for improvement! I said “I think I can be confident of the English part of my script but not the Italian, French and Spanish because I don’t know those languages”. He said “okay, we would give it to a professional translator who just knows absolutely what they are doing – you don’t have to worry, doctor!” I said “okay, you’re the marketing guy, you know the market, I don’t know that”. And so it was put out and I got feedback from many people and they said “well the translations were good and it nice and all fine”. And then when I got to Italy and my Italian yoga family, Hamsananda and others at the Gitânanda âshram and I said “Hamsânanda, how is it?” And she said “Doctor, it is excellent and very good but”. I said “What?” You know those buts come; you don’t really want to know what those buts are! She said “well, chin mudrā had been translated as mudrā of the chin”. La mudrā de menteo or something like that, mento. Hamsânanda said “that is Italian for the chin”. Be careful with translation. And translators! Chin mudrā is not mudrā of the chin, it is the gesture of consciousness, chit, but because the sound of ta and ma cannot come together except in the word âtman, that chit mudrā becomes chin mudrā. In fact that Dakshinamûrti Shiva, Shiva as a teacher is said to be sitting facing south – that’s the only problem with this place, I should be up there, but Swâmîji is behind me so I don’t worry. The teacher faces south, dakshina mûrti, he faces south – the dakshin, and he is said to be chin mudrâ ânanda lokam, he is the blissful form, holding the chin mudrā, the gesture of consciousness. Mauna vâkyam – he doesn’t talk (totally opposite to me, okay! I have no off button, he has no on button). Without vocal communication he is able to transmit the teaching from the mind of the guru to the mind of the disciple. Wow! Isn’t that beautiful? The highest level of teaching is that. The lowest is when I have to give you class notes and hand-outs - that is the lowest level of teaching actually, the highest is when it can just flow. That chin mudrā is that.

Anyway coming back to my story in Berlin. I have talked about mudrâs and how to be specific and you know finger has to touch finger tip - we cannot be aware. In fact it’s very interesting because Amma has used this for so many years as a beautiful illustration; that if you are not careful, instead of having a gesture where the individual unites with the cosmos, instead of having a gesture where there is control, you move the fingers away into this, and this becomes the demon, the asura, the rakshas, the one who refuses to have the individual meet the cosmos. “I will not control”. You hold it here and you have the teeth or the horns in the dance, and it’s very interesting to find Yoga books and other things, and it’s like – “what are you invoking?” Really! Ignorance is bliss, they say. Well... So I’m giving this talk in Berlin about all of this and the old lady says “well you know I’m scared to do anything because anything could be...” And I told her and I continue to tell everyone – and I tell myself! – is whenever you see the DVDs of Indian culture, all of them are standing in the abhaya mudrâ. A-bhaya; bhayam means fear. Abhaya means fear not. That is the beauty of the divine. The divine does understand when we are making a sincere effort, even if we make mistakes.
And though you have to be specific, if you’re making a few mistakes but your intent is good, the divine says “fine, no problem”. So you know there is a definite connection with the divine and when we come to yantra we start to understand that we have opportunity within opportunity within opportunity happening every moment including now! And we just missed that moment – gone! Every moment you have an opportunity at each moment to grow and if you’re conscious of every moment - and that is why it’s become so popular to talk about being in the Now, living in the Now, and you are reading a book about the Now but written ten years ago. (Sorry! Sometimes I make these statements which, hm!) It’s not somebody’s book, okay? It is your life and it is what you do with your Now that’s going to matter. People ask me “which is the good commentary of Yoga Sutras?” I say it’s the one you are going to write with your life. Which is the best commentary of the Bhagavad Gita? - it’s the one you are going to write with your life, because when you live the teachings and those teachings become part and parcel of you, that is going to be the best possible commentary, not somebody else’s. Commentary of the commentary of the commentary of the third commentary of the fourth commentary of the fifth author and there’s nothing left! I have heard people say “oh, Patanjali says” … Patanjali never said that. It was the fourth commentator who was commenting on the second commentator’s statement, who said something, and people say “Patanjali said...” and you say “where?” When you want to understand yantra it’s all about you, you and you and nobody else. It is the responsibility we take for our action, our thoughts, our deeds. And if you’re going to be responsible, you’re going to grow. I was telling them the other day dharma is responsibility. When we are able to understand the responsibility we are to take in this life, that becomes what is called the dharma mârga. What is your responsibility for this lifetime, why have you incarnated as a human being endowed with amazing potentiality of the human being, a kind of wealth, with consciousness that can think, a body/mind/soul, emotions. You think you are incarnated like that to sit on a couch sitting eating potato chips watching the latest soap opera on television? No! That’s for couch potatoes, not for human beings. You think we are able to go out and shoot each other? No! We are incarnated as a human being with a specific purpose that each and every one has a purpose. The problem is: most of us don’t know the purpose; we don’t know why we are alive! Well, yantra gives us a bit of a glimpse – and please, never refer to it as numerology – please! Because I get tired of what happens with the concepts of numerology, because people tend to “can I put an extra A so I can make a lot of money?” Please don’t ever ask me such questions again! You’ll find me transforming into maybe Swâmîji with his powerful kick! Two obligations I have to develop – one is Swâmîji’s lion roar, the other is this kick in the back. Two things, eh? Maybe Amma’s hug, tie them all together there. That used to be the combination that Swâmîji’s students had to put up with: the roar, the kick and the Amma hug. We had that balance!

It is about finding out why we are here and then doing something about it, not just playing around with numbers and taking the numbers and saying let me be as stupid as one wants to be in the first place and just keeping stupid. No, come on, you have to wake up! You have to do something. No-one can do it for you; no-one can save you; as simple as that, that’s the bottom line of yoga. If you want the benefit of sarvângâsana, you you YOU have to do it! “Doctor Ananda, can you do sarvângâsana and give me the benefit?” That’s what people want – can somebody else do it for me? Oh, come on, you have to do it for yourself because that is the first lesson; self-responsibility is the dharma mârga. Dharma mârga, what is it? Dharma is the responsibility for the self.

I’m often reminded when you go and travel by airlines and they have the safety videos that say when the pressure falls in the aircraft there will be the oxygen masks that fall down, and the say “first put
one on yourself before trying to help somebody else” – very sane advice, seriously. First, you be on terra firma. I’ve had a lot of those experiences of people not learning swimming trying to save someone from drowning. Then you have two people you see, instead of one. We have had a lot of those experiences in the ashram when we had the swimming pool, lot of those experiences. Make sure you know how to swim before you try to save someone. It’s nice about saving, but again, first you have to make sure you are capable, which means you have to build your responsibility. Again: “oh, I don’t think I will ever be able to do it”, okay, fine, that’s the cop-out. Let us cop out of the whole thing, then why do you want to be born human, to make the effort? Dharma is about effort; dharma is about responsibility; dharma is about right-use-ness – using everything that happens, even when in this human birth as it is meant to be used. Using your body as it is meant to be used, using your mind, your emotions, and including the spirit too. That is right-use-ness: right use ness, that is what is righteousness. Righteousness - dharma; responsibility – dharma. And what is responsibility? The ability to respond in the appropriate manner, adequately, which means it has to be adequately, appropriately, in the appropriate manner, in the appropriate way, for the appropriate person, at the appropriate time. Normally I would say “responding in the right way for the right person at the right time, and I would say right starts to happen and with the right appropriateness. What is appropriate response at a certain moment? Doing the right thing for the right person at the right time and in the right way, in the right manner, all of this comes together and becomes dharma. And this is what we try to understand, and to cut a long story short, this is a two-week course being condensed into a two-hour lecture, okay? It’s a struggle, in case you didn’t know this!

We have the numbers one to nine, that makes up a cycle. 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1, and there’s a cyclic pattern, and normally when manifestation occurs, manifestation occurs from the most subtle, the most causal down to the gross, and so manifestation occurs 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1. And you are on one – what is one? That is the terra firma, that is: Earth. You are right down on Earth, you are at the point you need to start. This point that you start on is a stepping stone, it is the launching pad and it is right now – not yesterday and not tomorrow, and that is why, coming back to where you are now, what is the launching pad from where you can move at this incarnation we have been incarnated at? In this incarnation. This incarnation is a now also; now is not just this moment, now can be this whole lifetime, now can be this week, now can be this month also, in the context. And this is where one starts to understand that the now that we are living, this lifetime itself that we are living, that we need to do something about. So when we start to understand this we can find that dharma that we are to fulfill. Let’s call it the lessons that need to be learned in this incarnation – each incarnation you go through different lessons, and once you get all the lessons then you pass out. That’s moksha, mukti, nirvāṇa, samādhi, whatever you want to call it. If you don’t learn the lesson, well, you’ll come back and learn it out. It used to happen in schools, I don’t know about it nowadays. Because in India up to a certain age, schools are not allowed to fail a student and so you get students who don’t study, and don’t get to pass and they get to a certain point and they know the thing, then the teachers don’t know what to do and the students don’t know what to do, the authorities don’t know what to do and it’s quite a mess! There’s the situation here in learning disorders instead of being noticed at the age of five, you begin to notice when they are thirteen or fourteen! And it’s very difficult to deal with someone of thirteen or fourteen with some of these disorders which could have been dealt with very beautifully if you’d caught it when they were five or six.

Now coming back to where we are. Our dharma, the lesson to be learnt, can be understood by looking at the month you are born in – one to twelve months; by looking at the day you are born on;
and by looking at the year you are born in. So this is the basic data you need to calculate what is known as the dharma mârga or what is the lesson to be learned in this lifetime. What are the major qualities, positive and negative that that are going to come up in our life, how to deal with it. Forewarned is forearmed! And by knowing about it you can deal with it a bit better. If I have a plan on how to get here, it is going to be a bit easier than if you don’t have a map. What we are looking at is three bits of information – the month you are born in, the day you are born on and the year you are born in. Now these bits of information help us to understand two things at least, if not more. One, it gives what is known as the dharma mârga, commonly known as the birth-path, the path that you are to walk in this lifetime. And Abraham Maslow very beautifully when he said a painter has to be a painter, an engineer has to be an engineer, whatever you ought to be you have to and actualise it in this lifetime. It’s a very beautiful aspect of his teachings if you look at it. Recently Amma had a nice article on Abraham Maslow and conscience in Yoga.

What does this give us? The month you are born in, you would reduce the number to a single digit, especially if you are born in October November December – instead of 10 11 12 they will become 1 2 3. So you are going to have a number 1 to 9 for the month you are born in. You are then going to have a second number which is the day on which you are born, which again you are going to be reducing; say you are born on the 27th of the month, it is going to be a 9; if you are born on the 17th of a month, it is going to be an 8. So what you do, you add them up and create a single unit of a number there. The third information is the year in which you are born. So these three bits of information give us the influences that we are going to have from birth through the first 27 years of your life. Your month – the number you get from the month – gives you an idea of the influence you will have in the first 27 years of your life. The day you are born on gives the influence up to 54 – that is between 28 and 54, the second part of your life, the house-holder stage as it is called. The first stage is the studentship stage, that is the brahmacharya âshrama, the second stage is the grihastha âshrama, the house-holder phase, 27 to 54, and then you have the phase which goes up to 81 which is the phase known as vânaprastha âshrama, the retirement phase where you can go into the forest and not worry about the day-to-day affairs of stuff, yet you are available to share your experience with those who want it. And after 81 you go into the phase known as the sannyâsa where you can just be yourself. It’s one of those things where there’s no more worrying about anyone, you can just be yourself after that and you don’t have to care about anything after that. Now these three influences are going to be coming and at the same time, the total of these three numbers is going to give a number which you put in a very nice diamond shape, and this is going to be the number which is your dharma mârga, also called the birth-path. That number is going to be an individual unit number that is going to be influencing you, making out who you are, creating you as you – the best you that you can be. Well, that’s what that number’s all about. And this number is the dharma mârga, the lesson we have to learn – again, it’s going to be a number between 1 to 9 because you add them up and get them all into a single unitary number between 1 to 9. So this is going to be the influence that is going to be throughout your life and along with this you’re going to have additional influence for the first 27 years of your life, along with this you have additional influence during the middle part or the third part – the three minors. So you have the first minor, you have the second minor and you have third minor cycles – these are the three minor cycles of 27 years. So a 27-year period in which a certain quality is going to be coming through you, in addition to the major quality which comes through the major life lesson which runs throughout your life, from birth right up to death.
How do these come through? Well, these numbers are basically a mathematical expression of the chakra that opens when you are born – or rather, when you take the first breath of life. And you remember me saying at some point - this morning I believe it was - that when we take that first breath of life, energy comes into us, the energy of the universe, and a certain chakra opens up. An energy source opens up, a generator of energy starts up. Often you know you need to get it going a bit, holding the baby upside down and many things are there. This is one reason why you sometimes don’t want the father in there because he won’t understand what you are doing and he says “you hit my son!” No I say, I just helped him to breathe.

One of the commonest mistakes is just to use the second 2 numbers of a year – 87, instead of 1987, 85 instead of 1985. You need all the numbers to get the right number for the birth path. How does this number come into play? This number comes into play the moment you take the first breath of life the universal energy that is coming in on that day, at that moment in time, opens up a centre so a person who is in the first birth path if you say one is the dharma mārga, it means mūlādhāra opened on that day and is going to be open all the way until you leave the body and the final prāṇa leaves. I told you about being born on inspiration and dying on expiration – that last expiration, it shuts down. Up that point it’s going to be there and the energy of that chakra is going to create who you are. So how does the number come about? The number is our way of understanding which of the centres was open and it is not because you are a one birth path that mūlādhāra opened, your mūlādhāra opened and hence you are a one birth path. And how do you know the mūlādhāra opened? Because that was the month, day and year you were born.

Now, people get confused because there are only 7 chakras – no! There are 12 chakras and this is the first lesson we need to redo, then. After the first seven chakras you have another five chakras – you have the chakra which is related to Brahma: Brahmānanda; the chakra related to Vishnu: Narāyanana; you have trikuthi, you have the Svāmīnāna, and Muktāna. Muktāna is the highest level centre where you have the mukti (the moksha, the kaivalya). Now, these highest chakras are called the andha chakras. They are the universal vortices of energy as opposed to the 6 which come down and which are called the pinda chakras, that come through the human head and spine – they come down, energizing the human being. So you have the six higher, the six lower, and the 6 lower are nothing but a manifestation of the 6 higher. You have these 6 up to the ājnā, the Sahasrāra as 7, the Brahmānanda as 8 and the Narāyanana as 9. If you are a 9 birth path, it means the Narāyanana was open at the time of birth. To understand the 9th, what you have to do is go back down. The simplest thing is to go to chakra 1, take it to a new level, a more universal level. 7 will be Sahasrāra. You know that mūlādhāra is the terra firma, the launching pad at the physical level; Sahasrāra is the launching pad at the universal chakra level. Similarly the second chakra here is related to chakra 8 which is the Brahmānanda. So you want to understand that the 8th chakra, you take the second chakra, take it to a new level of interpretation – you get the 8. And you want to know about 9 – you take the third chakra which is the one related to Vishnu, Narāyanana, and the ninth which is Narāyanana, and you take three to the power of itself is 9 so you start to find that relationship. So that is how the relationship comes, which is a bit much to give at this lecture, but just to give you a clue about it. And it is like, the number 2 to the power of 2 – 2 into 2 into 2, you have the 8, and 3 to the power of 2 you have 9. And that is how these numbers go into each other. And similarly the interpretation goes in. Just so that you get an idea.
Now in addition to being a 9 birth path, a 9 dharma mâyârga, which is basically a lesson of universality – learning to give to the wider circuit, that is what the 9 is all about, it’s about spreading yourself out but you have to remember not to spread yourself too thin that you break! That is the lesson. I’ll go through these numbers in a very simple way because there’s a huge amount of lessons for each one so I’ll just give you a few key words. One book which I do recommend (and i’m not pushing my books but I do recommend it) the Yoga One to Ten, where I dealt with yantra in a very adequate manner for those who would like that. The yantra book by Swâmîji is only available to those who have completed the correspondence course, we are not giving it out as a book, it’s a more intense study for people. It’s not so much about how to calculate the numbers but what each number means. In addition to this major lesson, there are these minor lessons. The lesson of the minor number 3, during the first 27 years, what starts to happen is that you have one number going through your whole life, and you will have these numbers coming up at different points, and along with this, from the age of 0, that is from being born to the age of 27, the third chakra, interestingly, is also activated. So you have two chakras working at the same time, which means it’s like you are working with 2 lights, you have the main light which is a yellow light coming through, and you have a bit of a bluish light being pulled in and what do you end up having? a greenish colour. (I’m just using the blue and yellow for simplicity.) And just as you have this combination of different colours coming through, when the chakric energies are working, there’s going to be this primary light that is shining through you, your guiding light, your guiding star, if you want to put it that way. In fact Swâmîji used to say that the highest 3 chakras – 10, 11 and 12, the trikuthi, Swâmînâna and muktâna, they are the 3 wise men who come to every birth, just as they came to see Jesus when he was born. The 3 wise men are these 3 chakras that open with every birth but they are really no use to you because they are the connection with the cosmos but they don’t come down to your level. And so all of us have those 3. They are commonalities so they don’t really change things but then you have this primary guiding light that is your guiding star, along with one more light which then changes how it manifests. Now in this case the 3 and the 9 go together very well so you have a creative outlet coming through that 9 which is quite clever. The 1 becomes a 9, the mûlâdhâra can shut down now – you could continue it if you are working in a certain way, but otherwise not normally. Then you have the next 27 years, when you have the next energy light coming on, you have here the 1 which is focusing you, the 9 is saying go out for the sake of universality and the 1 is saying do it for yourself. So there’s a bit of the “do you go with the Panasonic vision or do you go with the microscopic vision?” You know a sort of pull, that often happens here. And then after 54 you have the 5 energy which is a rapid dynamic energy, change, evolution, which is pushing you through.

Now the simplest way to look at numbers (and I cannot give you the full interpretation here): 1,3,5,7,9, they go in one concourse along one pattern. 2,4,6,8 go in the other. And so if the number is in the same pattern – 1,3,5,7,9 - the influence is going to be synergistic. It is going to work together, not that it doesn’t modify it, but it’s going to work together. But say you had a 9, and instead I had a 4, a 2 and a 3 - now can you see the difference, what has happened? If you cannot, I’m sorry – it’s my fault! Earlier you had a 3, the 3 can go with the 9, but now you have a 4 and a 9 which are the square peg in the round hole – it’s just not fitting. So you have the 9 wants to go, and the 4 says: “pay attention to detail”, and the 9 says “expand!” and so you get “pay attention to detail”, “expand!” So what is happening is that here you have a dichotomy occurring, there is a block in the energy that occurs. And this is what we look out, when we try to understand. You may have the best birth path, and there’s no such thing as the best birth path as opposed to the worst one, the
most difficult – every birth path is good, because it’s a lesson to learn. So there’s nothing like “oh, I wish I was a 7, nice and spiritual” or “I wish I was a 1, I’d be a born leader”. You finally admit you’re a dictator if you’re not careful. And both go together, one has to be careful. So what happens is that this combination, though it is still 9, the first 2 cycles make it a bit difficult because they are in the opposite concourse. And that is where one looks at the combinations that come together with different people and that is why if you are a 9 birth path, another person may also be a 9 birth path, but depending on these minor cycles, and how they play their game you start to have these individual variants, individual influences that start to come down.

Now, in addition to that you have a few shorter cycles also going on – cycle within cycle within cycle. But these are the major ones, because this is an influence which is going to be with you 27 years – that’s a long time, okay? 27 years you are going to have this influence so it’s worth thinking about it, planning for it and becoming aware of it. So the most important number that you should take home from all of this is you should be able to calculate your birth path and if you can get these 3 minors which you will, you start to understand how the flow occurs. And I personally do not sit around doing yantric interpretations because maybe someday when I need a lot of money I will start doing that. But it’s not about playing around with numbers, it is about understanding yourself and say: “fine, this is what I have to deal with, let me deal with it!”

(Question about whether the 27 year period having come and gone, and he doesn’t want hang on to the past, it is “done and dusted”. But does it make a difference to the future?)

Dr. Ananda: Yes, it does make a difference. What we do is that you have this giant circle of life and if you understand these as the 3 minors that you go through – this is the birth path number, these are the 1st, 2nd and 3rd minors and within each of these you have a 9-year cycle. So now what Costin has been asking is that, this first part is already done – for most of us it is done! So what does that do now? We have set into motion certain things during that 27 that we will have to deal with in other parts of our life as a result of this wheel moving wheel. It’s easy to understand something you did when you were 18 influencing you when you are 54, it’s easy to understand. But what about what you do at 54 being able to influence what you did at 18? It works the other way also, and that is why it is important to know this, because if there are things - and you can actually go back and look at the cycles that were going on and what happened and you can, wherever you are now, can actually go back and change the past! And you’re saying “how?” It’s not about getting into a time machine and going back and putting right that one thing because if you go back to set right that one thing, you knock over a bottle of water when you’re doing that which starts off an avalanche which affects where you are now. One has to be very careful, it’s not so easy. And it’s not as easy as when Superman, in the first Superman movie, his girlfriend dies in an earthquake, and he’s so heart-broken that he goes into outer space and turns the Earth the reverse way, taking time back and saving her. But what you can do is this: what is the past? The past is basically a collection of memories. If the memories are just in your head, it’s quite easy to deal with the past. Now what if there’s another person involved? Now we have two people’s collection of memories that we have to deal with. The more people involved in an event, the more difficult it becomes because the collection of memories becomes bigger and bigger every day. Let me put it this way: there is something called the word S-O-R-R-Y; it’s called an apology. I’ve experienced this a lot in my own life and I have a student (who is not here), a dear friend of mine, and her life has been a very good example of this. It’s a very good story of how her attempt at going and setting the past right has in fact set the past right! Though initially it looked like it hadn’t. It was to do with her relationship with her sister, they had had crazy family
relations and she decided after meeting me and some of these talks to go back and meet her sister one day. And it wasn’t “oh, we’ll forget everything” right away; there was still a bit of icy chill in the air. But in fact that effort she made has today, nearly 9 years later, actually changed the past. The past is a collection of memories, and I’m just putting the idea to you that often the word “sorry”… An apology is a major issue because most people think an apology is “okay, you want me to apologize? I’m sorry”. That’s not how it happens. Or “sorry but…” hah! “Sorry, maybe I was wrong” – I’m not even saying I was wrong, maybe I was wrong. That’s the second part of it. And you know what the third part is which everybody forgets? “What can I do to set it right?” First part: I’m sorry; second part: maybe I was wrong, what can I do to set it right; and then you try to do that which can help set it right. Maybe I’m being simplistic about this, there are complicated situations in life, I do understand, but the effort you make will set into motion and please understand these cycles are not one-way cycles. None of these cycles are one way! To set right what nobody else on this planet cares about, you are carrying this around. They talk about carrying a cross, they talk about carrying memories, about carrying a grudge – everyone else has forgotten about it and we are remembering it! We are carrying it around – it’s quite funny actually and if you were to bring up the matter, the other people had actually forgotten about it. Maybe it wasn’t important to them or they have gone beyond it and it got washed out, but it is our perception, because we do not perceive things as they are, we perceive them as we are. And by your conscious effort wherever you are now, you can change your perception. Now I’m sorry if I sound simplistic, sorry if it seems too easy to be true. All I can say is I have applied it to my whole life and it’s very good. It’s very good. Because you don’t live in the past, why should you live in the past? You live right now, in the Now – and you have to clean it out. You know the jattis? It’s like that.

What do these birth path numbers mean? If the person is a 1 birth path, the lesson is individuality. This individuality lesson positively manifests as leadership qualities. One is a naturally born leader; what is the negative aspect you have to be careful of? Dictatorship. “Only my way, I know the way”. You’re the one? I am on my own. The positive aspect is great leadership quality, they can be beacon stars to others, they are in tune with the sun (the sun is the number 1 in the solar system), so they have that ability, the charisma of the sun, but then you have to be careful because the sun can burn, too. When so many westerners come to India they say “wow, sun!” and you know what they do? Noon time they go and lie down on the beach in the sun, and the next thing you know is sun-stroke and heat-exhaustion and they are hospitalized. It happened with a beautiful group from Berlin who should have known better – some of our students decided to stop before coming to the ashram at Mahabalipuram and have a day in the sun. They arrived at the ashram and all of them were virtually crawling on the floor, totally out of it! What happened? So one has to be careful.

What is 2 all about? 2 is about diplomacy; the lesson the 2 birth path is to learn is to be a diplomat, is to work in partnerships. You know 2 means the ability to work with another person, association, partnership, making the team work. These are team players, the 2 is a good team player. But you know what happens? The negativity of the 2 is that if things are not balanced – you remember I was giving an example of balance earlier - the 9 birth path and there’s a 4 minor, that is unbalanced, whereas the 9 with the 3, that is more balanced. The more unbalanced the numbers with relation to each other, the more the negativity will show through. The more the balance, the more the positivity will show through – that is actually what happens. The problem with the 2 is that they try to be diplomatic, and you cannot please everybody all the time, so that creates procrastination- they start to procrastinate, they start to put off things in their wish not to hurt anybody, so they say “okay, we
will talk about it tomorrow, I will do it tomorrow”. What happens then is if you put things off, if you are a 2, with the negative influences predominating. I’m not even going to talk about the influence of name on this, each name has its own influence, and your birth path with your name will again create all its manifestations.

3 is about creativity, power, passion, motivation, and the biggest negativity that we have to watch out for is intolerance. They do it so easily, they cannot understand why others cannot. I am a 3, my father was a 3, my mother is a 3, my son is also a 3, and we had dogs that were also 3s! So you ask me about 3 and I know how intolerant they can be at times. Well, you learn to deal with it. Thankfully my daughter is a 5 and not a 3 so I’m happy we have a bit of variation finally in the family. Devasena is an 8.

4 is the technocrat. This is the birth path that learns by paying attention to detail. You know, the engineers, the builders ... this type of birth path they learn by doing things as they should be done. You ask them to put something together, they will read the instruction manual properly and they will put things together, step A followed by step B, followed by step C and then step D, and it will be perfectly balanced. Amazing! You know, if you ask a 3 to put things together, they don’t even read the instruction manual! And the 2 is “should I do it today or tomorrow?”, and the 1 is “I’m going to do it my way”. You know? My way or no way. Just to give you a feel of how different people look at a block of Legos to be put together. The problem with 4 is that they are so busy paying attention to detail but they get so stuck in detail that they miss the bigger picture, and they don’t see the forest for the wood, the woods for the trees. They are so busy looking at the finger-tip, they forget there is a human being attached to it. One has to be a bit careful with the 4! Specially if the 4 is a Virgo. I have a colleague at the office, and the pen has to be in this place and the pencil has to be here, and if it were not there - well, world war 3! And it happened that when he was on vacation I had to work at that lab, and when he came back it was amazing. “Cannot you put things where they should be?” and I’m saying well what does it matter if it’s in the top drawer or the second drawer? It’s in one of the drawers. What does it really matter? 4s are very good at writing instruction manuals because they put in every small bit of information. And you want somebody to look into the fine print on contracts? 4s can do an excellent job. They will have everything down there. You ask a 3 and the 3 will say “Just sign here and agree to whatever they say”, or something like that. The 1 would not even ask you to sign; by signing you have bonded yourself to me forever or something like that.

The 5 is all about speed, it is all about change, dynamism - rapid change, that also! 5 is a very dynamic number, it is like a ball rolling around in a room that has no friction, just roll, roll, roll! There’s no stopping. It is motion personified, that is what the 5 is like. The problem with it is, because they do too many things, they are accident-prone. It’s a fact that others do ten things and they do too but they are going so fast, quite a lot of accidents happen. You know if you are driving around at 10 miles per hour, an accident’s not going to be a major issue, but if you’re driving at 150 miles per hour, and looking out the window at the beautiful landscape, it can change your landscape! It’s a matter of speed. So they are dynamic, and they are usually quite radical, they are attracted to radical movements because they are like the revolutionary type of person: “I want to change things; I want to go out and change the world”. That’s why I watch out for my daughter because that is what she’s going to do, but it’s good because the 5 gets things done. The 3 is too busy with the creativity that they often don’t get things done and the 5 has the amazing dynamism of doing it. The 1 can get things done for sure, even if it means they’ll kill you for it, but they will get it done. Each of these
people is attracted to those professions, those places in life, that give them the satisfaction of doing something that they love doing. Which for me is a very important aspect that we need to look at. Because if you have a 5 working at a job where you have to read instruction manuals, and go slowly and steady, and be with other people who can’t quite manage; a 5 is going to hate that job. They want to get out there and change the world, not sit there writing instruction manuals.

The 6 is about responsibility, especially with regard to family, in fact it is a very good number to take care of others, it’s a very good number that has the ability to go with both the odds and the evens. I was telling you earlier about the concourses, where the 1,3,5,7 and 9 go together, and the 2,4,6 and 8 go together, but the 6 can go with both concourses, this is one of the beautiful qualities of the 6, when you’re trying to balance names and cycles, you try to see if you can have a 6 someplace because 6 gives the person responsibility. And please understand, to find responsible human beings today on this planet is becoming very difficult. People who will take responsibility – responsibility is the ability to respond, not to react. The knee-jerk: you tap my knee - I kick you, you tap my biceps, I punch you. This is called reactivity, spinal cord behaviour as Swâmîji called them. That used to be the worst insult Swâmîji could give anyone, calling them a spinal cord mentality, which means basically nothing is functioning up here in the head, it is just spinal cord jerks. Responsibility implies that something has happened up here, you have used your consciousness, your mind, which makes you human. Even the word human has “man” in it – “man” is manas, man is mind. Humanas: the one who has the manas. The Sanskrit word for man is manushya, mânava, which implies that the one who has consciousness, who can consciously use the mind. Now animals also have mind, I do not deny it but it’s at a very different level. As a human being we are endowed with the power of choice, a choice that can go beyond our in-built instinct. We can choose not to eat, we can choose not to sleep, and that is what anâhâra is all about – to go on fasting is different than starvation, please understand, starvation implies you have no choice. Fasting implies you have chosen not to eat. Mauna implies not speaking out of choice, whereas being made to keep your mouth shut is very different. The reactions that happen are different and that is why science does not understand and they say when you fast there are going to be these ketones and other things. Ketones come up when you starve because of a turmoil. “Oh I am not getting food, when am I going to get food?” That sets your sympathetic nervous system, that creates the reactivity; they say “oh, if you don’t eat for three days you are going to get all this happen to you”. Yes, if you don’t eat and you don’t know whether you are going to get food and you are forced not to as opposed to choosing not to eat. Choosing not to eat, choosing not to speak, choosing not to sleep, choosing to sleep – you have the choice. Now that power is the power of mind, and the mind is basically something that starts with âjnâ, and that âjnâ is number 6, and that is why the moment somebody is conscious, the moment somebody works with responsibility, one is able to deal with different situations much better, and that is why the number 6 sort of goes across. 6 seems quite nice, right? But you know what? You take too much responsibility for everybody around you, you end up a nervous wreck. Extreme stress, if it is unbalanced, because you have taken on more than you can chew. You take responsibility for Tom, Dick and Harry, who don’t care about it, and you’ll just burn yourself out. Nervous exhaustion, stress, very anxiety – these are possible if the person doesn’t understand what they are doing.

Number 7: introspective number. It’s the number associated with Nature – both external and internal nature. It is a number that goes in, so the person has a tendency to go in; they could be an introvert, and this creates an opportunity to look at themselves. It is a number that could be called (I hesitate to use this term but..) it could be called spiritual. Because the person has that introspective
ability to look at themselves, but, too much looking at yourself becomes a big whirlpool, and jumping into this deep well of depression – it looks so bad in there! As I told you each birth path is both good and bad so it’s there in all the birth paths, because all are lessons. It’s not like: “oh if I could just be a 7 birth path, I could be oh so spiritual!” And then you look at yourself and you want to jump off the cliff. 7 is the cliff! In fact there’s a nice drawing in my “Yoga one to ten” of numbers and their artistic relationship that I drew as a bad student while Dr. Jonn Mumford was teaching the Yantra in the ashram. During the class I was doodling on the back of the notebook, a bad student! Well, it turned out nice, he likes it. I really owe Dr. Jonn Mumford, Swâmî Anandakapila in Sydney a great lot for relighting an interest in Yantra for me so many years ago, and seriously the study of Yantra has enabled me to see these connectivities in everything I do, be it music, dance, life, medicine. So 7 is an introspective number but one has to be careful of introspection because going in too much, one can start to do what we should not do, and that is to condemn oneself. Amma often quotes J. Krishnamurti, one of the greatest philosophers of modern times; she has paraphrased it as: “to look at yourself and your thoughts, etc., without identifying, without condemning, and without justifying” – 3 beautiful things to think about. To look at your thoughts and your life in general, to look at yourself without identifying, condemning or justifying – these are the 3 things we do and we can get into these traps, and once you get into these traps, you’re not going to get any further because you’ve already stopped it. “I am like this because” – never let Yantra become that. “I’m like this because I’m a 3” – it will stop your growth! No! It is just a tool, remember I started off Yantra is just a tool, it is a means, it’s not an end. And this is where one has to be very careful – the mind also is a tool, so one has to go beyond the mind at that point. And that is the difficult part, to use the mind and go beyond it, is like the ladder. You put up the ladder and then you have to climb it and leave that ladder, you are not going to remain sitting at the top of the ladder. This is a nice ladder, it’s my ladder, it’s the most beautiful ladder ever built in human history – fine, but the ladder should be used to get someplace and that’s the end of it, that’s the role of the ladder. If you’re sitting at the top of the ladder and having a ladder dance, it would get a couple of nice hits on YouTube, but nothing more than that.

8 is the opposite of 7 - it is the extraverted number. The 7 is the introverted number, introspective; the 8 is all about success, material success, it is about extraversion. It is a number of success in fact, the number associated with Goddess Lakshmi, the goddess of luck. It is also, on the other hand, associated with Saturn and so it is said that Saturn in Indian astrology is no-one who gives as much as Saturn and no-one who takes away as much as Saturn – both sides. And that is why the aspect of Lakshmi as opposed to Saturn, one has to balance them because if one gets totally into the extraverted material success, one loses the introspective ability of the spirit. And that is why yesterday I told you quantity, quality – one has to be careful. Too much of quantity quantity quantity quantity, you lose all qualitative aspects of your life’, and too much of quality quality quality you may not have enough quantity to keep you alive. A very beautiful statement from someone (but I heard it from Doctor Jonn), it says: when you are completely in your left brain, there’s nothing right about it, but if you’re completely in your right brain, there’s nothing left. Beautiful statement! You need that balance, and this is the thing, that the 7 has that tendency to go in and forget that you have to do something about it, and the 8 has the tendency to go out, and forget that you have to have the spirit also. And that is why you have that balance, and not to get stuck in the mundane materialistic world. You find some of these amazing people who make so much money, and at the end of the day, you find them wondering what to do with it. Because you know you cannot eat it. I always think of
Donald Duck and Uncle Scrooge in his vault, playing with all his money and coins, but you cannot eat it. And one coin goes missing and that’s the end! He is 10 days without food, trying to find where that one coin went.

Yoga is not about extremism in any form, it’s the middle path. So it’s not about “oh, you have to be totally introverted” or “you have to be totally extraverted” – a yogi is an ambivert. When necessary he will be introverted, and when necessary he can be extraverted. There are moments for both. If you are to sit and meditate, sorry! Contemplate. (I just said something I should not say! Because you don’t sit and meditate, you sit and contemplate and you attain meditation.) If you have to sit still, you are able to, and if you have to run around, you are able to. That is what we are looking at, the balanced personality, not really an ambivert because ambivert sort of has this thing that you are neither; I’m trying to find a word which will have both: intro-extravert, extra-introvert, but ambivert is the term used. Ambivert has a bit of ambivalence about it; neither, but it’s actually both, it’s not neither, it is this and that as and when required.

What is 9? 9 is about expansion, it is a number that is to do with expansion which is about service. Now, what is this service? Service is to be able to have the bigger picture in mind, to be able to expand. It is the number which is the individual for the sake of humanity. You know, we talk about the professions that deal with it, like helping others: the helping profession, the healing profession. We talk about philosophical guides, the sort of person who exists for the sake of the Self, or the individual for the sake of humanity. That is more the 9, when you are expanding yourself, but one has to be careful because while you are expanding, don’t make it so thin that it breaks. And then you lose yourself. In trying to expand the self for the sake of humanity you may lose the self. Now it’s nice in the spiritual context but in your day-to-day context, you lose yourself. You break yourself. And this is what we find in the healing and the service professions - we find people that suffer burn-out, wounded healer syndrome we talk about – in healing others, you burn yourself out because you have over-stretched yourself. And that is where one has to be careful.

So going from the number 1 to 9 you see how these different lessons, and each one of us goes through multiple lifetimes, through each one of these lessons, constantly. You just go through them, learning the lesson each time, and the more we learn the lesson, the more we are able to deal with it, and once you have learned all these lessons, it’s time to jump off – that is what kaivalya is about, what moksha is about. Instead of going again and again in the cycle, there’s a tangent and you’re out of it, it’s like the rockets going off from Earth’s gravity, you know. Now you have the birth path, the dharma marga, you have these minor cycles that influence you in the different parts of your life, creating these qualities that have both the positive and the negative in them; depending on how the circumstances come together, there will be more of a positive or a negative aspect coming in. And the more you start to understand it, the more you start to know the rules of the game; you can play the game a bit better. Because you know, you get out there in the game and everybody’s kicking the ball and you don’t know which side you have to kick and what you are supposed to do. Is it a game to be played with the feet or the hands or the head? You don’t know. Once you know the rules you can play it a bit better. For me, life’s a big game, in fact one of my articles was ‘Life is a video game’. Quite a funny article.

Now we have something else that comes in and I’ll just give you a small overview. Which is that, just as when we are born, we are born with a purpose and to fulfill a dharma, to fulfill a responsibility in
this lifetime to learn some lessons. The purpose of being born itself will create something called karma. What is karma? It is nothing but Newton’s Law, Newton understood it. I told you yesterday once that apple hit his head, he became his brain cells popped open and he started thinking. It’s astonishing that how many people in human history must have had apples fall on their head, but only when Newton had an apple fall on his head... There’s a nice joke somewhere about the 3 apples that changed human history: one was the apple of Adam and Eve, the second was Newton’s apple and the third is Apple the computer. I like the other one where there was Steve Jobs dying and he was up in heaven with God who introduced him to Moses, and Moses has these huge Commandments. And God introduced Steve saying “this is Steve and he’s going to upgrade your tablets”. Actually these are the best tributes to people because they stick in your head better than anything written, you can write pages and pages of stuff you know.

Well, Newton said every action has an equal and opposite reaction – full stop. That is what karma is all about. Now, we can understand things we do creating karma. We can even understand things we say causing karma, the things we think. That’s the dangerous part. Imagine that every thought you think creates karma! Ooh, I’ve got you scared! All it needs is one to be conscious of the things we think and say and do. And that is why Yoga, as conscious evolution, means every-moment consciousness. Not “I did my yoga for 45 minutes this morning and now the rest of the 23 hours of the day free, I can do what I want.” I’m sorry to say it, but once you’ve woken up, there’s no going back to sleep, okay? I’ve had students who were really mad at me: “why did you ever wake us up”? That’s my karma. And please understand you have to be careful with karma because you only look at the negative parts. But there is also positive karma. The more conscious you become, the more aware you become, the more you are able to analyse the pieces of the jigsaw puzzle, the more you start to understand how things relate together. What links to what? Everything is linked, and just remember this: everything in the universe is linked together. Everything! Now, the more you start to understand the linkage, the more you are going to be playing the game by its rules. They talk about letting the mad bull into the china shop – that’s how most people lead their lives. Ow! Crash! Bang! Wallop! Hospital, insurance, accidents - that’s how they live. Swâmîji used to call it the school of hard knocks; he said that’s how most people have to learn their lessons. Now you can choose not to! Choice, I told you, as a human being, choice, the power of choice is within us, a very very important power - we can choose our perspective, we can choose our attitude, we can choose what we are going to think, say and do. I am not talking about the 120 varieties of coffee we can choose from in the supermarket – that’s mad, that’s crazy! All the 220 channels you can see in India on television, none of them have anything worth watching; that’s not really choice.

Karma starts at the moment of conception. Now, this is a bit unfair. Your dharma starts when you are born but karma pre-dates you! Because how does your karma manifest in your lifetime, basically a lot of it is inherited. We talk about sabija karma, the seed karma, that karma which is coming from previous incarnations, and people say “what is this?” and I say it’s nothing but genetics. What genetics has given to you in this lifetime is what you have carried together from past incarnations from the time that you were up there flying around with your little wings, and you said “ah, that looks like a nice set of parents to be born to”, dived into them, and you’re there. We choose the family we are born into, even if we don’t like it, that is there. We make the choice, even then. What is it that chooses? What is it that makes us choose? All the past karma says “this is the family through which you are going to work it out the most, so here it is – have it!” Because nature wants you to work out your karma so that there’s zero balance and you can have kaivalya. Nature wants you to
have kaivalya, Nature wants you to work out your karma, and if you want to work out your karma you can’t start by saying “okay maybe next month I’ll pay the bills” – no, pay it right now and get done with it. That’s nature’s law. Why is the world economy the way it is? Because of what happened in places like America. I was surprised when I was there in 2008, you can buy something now and pay for it 7 years later! What are you doing to humans?! Will that thing be even working 7 years down the line? No wonder we have problems with karma; we haven’t even started to pay for it and are already neck deep in it. My take on the situation is, if human beings were a bit more responsible we would have a much better world. Karma starts at the moment of conception.

Now if you look at a yantric year, we basically have 9 months, not 12 months because those last 3 months are being broken down. October becomes 1, November becomes 2 and December becomes 3, so basically you are always going to have 9 months in 1 yantra year. And what is the normal duration of a pregnancy? It’s about 9 months. So 9 months of pregnancy is basically 1 yantra year, irrespective of when you are born, whether it is the same year you are conceived or another year. And that is why, when you want to know the karma cycle, there’s an entire cycle going on to 9. What you need to do is, you need to look at the month, you have to look at the day, you have to look at the year for which you want to know the karma cycle. So I want to know now in 2013 what is my karma cycle. So I put 2013 here – please understand it is not your birth year here, you can put your birth year and all it will tell you is – I’m going to tell you in a few seconds! So you have the month, the day and the year in question, whatever year it may be, and you have to add to it something I never forget, the 1 yantric year for being in your mother’s womb. This 1 is added to take care of the one yantric year, the 9 months of karma that is attributed from the moment of conception to the moment of birth so that 1 has to be added to the karma cycles, and this is called the karma yuga. A yuga is a cycle, so the karmic cycles, how does karma manifest? This is to be calculated by month, day, the year in which you want to know, so if in the example we want to know – it was December wasn’t it? – so we have December is a 3, and we had a 10, so a 1. So now I want to know, if the year is 2013, what is your karmic cycle? So I have 3 plus 1 is 4, 5,6,7,8,9,10,11, so I have a 2 karma cycle and I put it in a box. So actually you are in a 2 karma cycle, in addition to being a 9 birth path, blahblablah, a 2 cycle is now going on. If you were to go back to the year you were born in, you basically have your birth path plus 1. So born in a 9 birth path, you are born into a 1 karma cycle year. A 1 birth path is born into a 2 karma cycle year, a 4 into 5 – you are always born into the next cycle year because you are carrying that 9 months of your karma from the womb of your mother. But the idea is that you should be able to calculate this at any point so 2013, what is my cycle year, where the karma is manifesting?

Now karma goes to a number, again 1 to 9, this 1 to 9 is a constant thing going on. And what is that? These karma cycles can be equated to the concept of gardening. You sow the seed, you plant it, it starts to germinate, it starts to sprout, so the first three parts – 1, 2 and 3 – are the seeding part. Because in 1 you are planting or seeding, 2 is germination, and 3 is sprouting. So this is the seeding phase, where now you are planting something. So if you are in a 1 to 3 cycle, it is the period where there is the start of something that has just recently occurred – start is always 1. You start at 1, zero doesn’t exist in Yantra because zero is basically nothing, it’s like the 9, 9 and 0 are the same. So the 0 becomes the 9, the 9 becomes the 0 in calculation. If I add 1 and 0 it becomes 1, and if I add 1 and 9 it is also 1, because the cycle continues, there is no break. You have 9 and the next is 1, there is no break in the yantric cycle. Now after you have planted something, it has germinated and starts to sprout, just when you think everything looks good, you have the testing phase, and that is 4. This is
where you have the famine, you have the flood, you have the hailstones, and you have all the testing that occurs. Why does testing occur? The testing phase is a very essential phase because it determines whether you are for the aspirations you have: it tests nature’s law, survival of the fittest, or survival of the one that adapts the best. Now if you can get through this 4, the next part of the phase is going to be rapid growth. A gigantic spurt of energy, dynamism personified will occur in this cycle – there’s going to be amazing growth if you pass the test. If you don’t pass the test, well you have to wait and restart. It is where nature tests you because, please understand that nature is going to make sure you are worthy of your aspirations. So 5 is rapid growth and 6 is where you start to have the budding, this is the phase in which the buds start to appear. 7 is where the flowers appear, flowering; 8 is the fruit, fruition; and 9 is where you harvest, and get ready for the next cycle. So if you look at this, you can see that the first 3 are the seeding, the next 3 are the test and then the last 3 are the harvest. You can divide it into 3 3s, but each one has its own character. Now every idea we have, every plan we make goes through this also. You start off by thinking of a plan; you start to interact with others, so this is the start. This is where you interact with others and you have partnerships, this is where you discuss ideas with others and say let’s do something. And now it starts to manifest, your plan starts to manifest and then comes the test – you’ve got this moving and now the test comes: the officers come along to check whether you have all the licences and whatever you do. That’s the 4. Now if you get through that you have the rapid spurt of growth, dynamism personified as I said. The 6 is where you start to tie up the loose ends and you check your accounts, this is where you’re a bit responsible, you know the 6 is about responsibility. Be a bit responsible about what you’re doing because now you start to grow so much, so check up things a bit, am I on the right path? have I taken care of people I haven’t paid? - you know, settle things like that. 7 is where you have to sort of be ready for what I could call the spiritual harvest, because usually unless you’re in the flower business, flowers are more sort to enliven you, give you something nice to look at, enhance the quality, as opposed to fruit which you can eat (I’m being very general here but it’s just a comparison). The 7 is more about getting a benefit which is more like self-satisfaction, a fulfillment of the spirit, whereas the 8 is where you have the material harvest. This is a point where you start to get all the successful materialistic aspect of your project, and then comes the 9 where you sort of start to bring it all together – don’t jump the gun at this point, just wait for the next 1 where you can reinvest and you can start a new cycle. And these are going on; this is basically a 9-year cycle. This is that 9 year within a 27 year cycle - you have big circle with the smaller 3 circles, the 3 minors; within each 27 you have a 9-year, it’s basically that. So you have this going on within it. Now this will influence a similar cycle in the months, and that will influence a similar cycle in the days. Each day you go through, every 9 days you are going through a certain pattern also, and when you want to find good days to do a thing, you look at that. And when you want to find a good day to fast, a good day to start some of the cleansing practices, or some of the introspective journeys, the ekādasi, the pancha sahita, some of these practices, you look at some of these cycles. Is it a cycle that is in tune with your inner growth? and you tie it together. It’s about going with the flow, the flow of nature.

I will end with a small graphical illustration of this: the 1, 2 and 3 go up. At the end of the 3 you start to have a down-swing that goes into the 4 which is the test. So this is the 1, the 2, the 3, the 4, you then have the rapid growth of the 5 which goes all the way higher than where you were. Please understand that the 5 is going to take you well beyond where you were in the 3 if you can get through that 4. If you can hold yourself tight during the test you are going to be in a much better
position at the end of it – this is the 5. The 6 is sort of like that, balanced, the 7 goes down a bit and comes up; this is the nature of the 7. The 8 is going to be up depending on what is happening, so the 8 is a bit more up like that. So you can see how, in this representation, what you have is that there’s this growth 1, 2, 3; the 4 is the test, 5 is this rapid growth (please understand the amount of growth that has occurred from the bottom of the 4 right up to the top of the 5 is going to be tremendous); 6, 7 there’s a slight going down initially then it comes up where you get the harvest here, because there’s some introspection. Introspection is like putting the brakes on when you’re driving – you’re driving and you wonder if you’re on the right path, you brake so you slow down a bit. But you don’t stop, you’re just checking, that is why this happens. 8 is a manifestation of the success which has started and then 9 is represented by this saw-tooth, which is going to be a - you know, at the end of the year in December they usually have a TV programme “The Year in Focus” and they tell you all the important events of the year in a nutshell – this 9 is like that. You have all the previous 8 cycles; you have the ups and the downs, and depending on what the last 8 cycles have been, there’ll be more ups or more downs. And so the 9 can be a very emotional period that is suddenly up, suddenly down, suddenly up and it’s like “oh what’s happening, a rollercoaster!” And depending on the previous what you have sown - please understand, God cannot help you! What you sow you shall reap. We sow potatoes and want tomatoes. Sorry! That’s not how nature works. What you sow is going to come back and the 9 is going to tell you potatoes, tomatoes, potatoes, tomatoes, whatever is there. You say “I don’t like potatoes!” yes but you planted them. So 9 can be quite emotional. That’s why you have to hang on in the 9 and not say ‘oh, I’m going to start planting. I want tomatoes, I’ll plant potatoes”. Not in the 9 cycle, wait until it’s the 1 again. You just have to wait a bit, and then you start. I’m in a 9 cycle at present, and getting to experience the last 8 years’ connections; many good things, but then there are moments when I wonder what I was doing also.

This is going on one side – I told you how you can calculate the year, so for example we said a 2 year... maybe give me two more numbers. You don’t have to give me your own number if you don’t want to but just for a karmic cycle. We just want the month and day on which you were born. April? So that is 4; the tenth, so that’s a 1, and we are in 2013, so 2013 we’ll cut short there to make it easy, basically a 6, plus a 1, the 4, you have 11, so that reduces to 3. So basically you are now manifesting in this year (and remember the year starts at January, so it’s from January to December; this is how it is worked out thanks to Swâmîji and Swâmî Kanakananda, Swâmîji’s guru, an absolute genius at maths and at English, one of those polymaths, and then developed this amazing knowledge of Yoga which he collated during his period of losing his family - a big story, we’ll talk about it someday. A professor at Varanasi University comes home one day and finds his house on fire, he’s lost his wife and child, then he goes mad, runs out into the forest, well Swâmî Kanakananda had to go through that to be who he was. And in Swâmîji’s own words, he “was the only enlightened man” Swâmîji had ever known. And that’s a big statement! Swâmîji knew every Yogi you can think of, every one. Swâmî Kanakananda and Swâmîji, in their assembly of these teachings in the modern context, have made it so we can use it in the modern calculation rather than go into the old Indian-tradition calendar; they have adapted it so it can fit into the calendar in use.

So from January 2013 to December 31st, the year is a 3, which basically up to July you have an upswing, and after July it starts a downswing which carries it through to next year – so, hang on tight! Another example, the month is 9 and the day is 12, so 3; so we can cast out the 9, we have the 3 to add to the 6 of the year, so again it is 9, so basically this would be a 1 cycle year, so having completed whatever you were doing last year you started up something new and keep it going. Maybe it was for
you that this is happening today! So now this is a year where there is something pushing you to say “start, do something, start, start, start”, and just think about it and start it. Because the energy is there but make sure if you start something that you want to go for at least 9 years! If not 18, 27, 108 years.

The karmic numbers are about a flow that is going on 1 to 9, where you start something, take it through its natural flow – you have the growth, testing, the rapid growth, and then the reaping of the harvest, so this is a flow that is going through a period of 9 years, not according of the months and days but you have this going on over a period of 9 years. Whereas your birth path is going to stay with you throughout your life, and that influence is going to be there. And you’re going to have these minor influences of 27 years, the next 27, and next 27, which are going to also be there.

So in understanding yourself, who are you? That is the question: who am I? To find an answer to that, my birth path and those bits of information help me know where I am, maybe what my purpose is, what are the lessons I need to learn in this lifetime, so that I can start learning them and making the best of the positivities, reducing the negativities. If I’m a 1 I can watch out for this dictatorship, let me try and cultivate a bit of balance there. If I’m a 3 I can say okay I know that there can be intolerance, let me try to work on that and understand that other people come from their own place and may need to do things in a different way. It’s a bit difficult, especially with one of my colleagues at work, seriously! How not to be intolerant with such people – I just don’t know, who can just get a salary for 4 years and not done a single bit of work in 4 years – how can he even .... sorry about that! But you have these moments, so then you learn about it and say okay, fine, that’s where he is, and what I always think is that a donkey has its nature, it’s going to be a donkey, a cat has its nature as a cat, and you just have to let people be their nature at times. You try to help them but then... There’s a story in Indian tradition (this is Doctor Ananda’s story-telling class!). There’s a rishi, a sage, sitting in his hermitage and one day a bat, no a small mouse, let’s have a mouse, runs into his hut and says “oh, save me!” And the rishi says “poor thing” and he says, “I don’t have any family and maybe it would be nice” and he converts this mouse into a beautiful girl. She grows up into a lovely woman and the Swâmîji says “oh, now what do I do now, I will have to marry her to somebody”, it’s the Indian tradition to find a good bridegroom for your daughter. So he says “let’s go and meet so-and-so”, so they go and they meet the Sun, maybe she should marry the Sun. But she says “no, he is too hot, i don’t like that heat”, and then the Moon: “it’s too cold”, and the Wind: “he’s always running around; he won’t have time for me”. Each one has something, the clouds have something, and then finally they come to the mountain, who is just standing in one place. As they’re standing there a little mouse runs out of the mountain and she says “yes! I want to marry him”. So he converts her back into a mouse and they get married. It’s a beautiful story because you know people’s inherent nature is such that it is very difficult for you to bring change from outside. The mouse never wanted to be a girl, it just wanted to be a mouse. It was this guy’s idea that the mouse should be a girl. We want to change people but please understand the door to change is opened from inside. The key is with them. You can knock on it, fine, you don’t break it down, that’s no good. It’s like trying to help the chick hatch from the egg, but in helping it break the egg, you end up killing it. So one has to develop these qualities.

But coming back to this, we have those qualities and we try our best to be the best we can be within that. Understand ourself so that we can become a better human being, that is ultimately what it’s about and the karmic cycles help you to plan your life, plan what is happening, and analyse what is
happening – why is this happening to me? Okay, fine, today is a 4 day, a 4 day means pay attention to detail; I did not pay attention to detail and this has happened, okay, fine”. Now next time you have a 4 day, watch out! Make sure that you read your ticket and know that your destination is correct, what is the time the flight is leaving, check your visa, whether it is stamped or not, a single or double visit or multiple visit. I learned this lesson the hard way because I didn’t pay attention. One of my students told me that. He said “Sir, you have not been paying the attention you pay usually to these things and that is why it happened to you”. I’ve got students like that; they’re not scared to write to me and tell me! He said” Sir, you are a person who is profoundly interested in everything you do, and recently you haven’t been as interested in the things you do. If you had that interest you would have noticed that it was not a multiple entry, it was a single entry visa; because you had lost that capacity of being interested in each and every thing you were doing, you did not notice it and that’s why you brought it upon yourself.” Beautiful! That’s a student giving me a lesson. In Indian culture we talk Lord Muruga, the son of Shiva, teaching Shiva – he becomes the guru to Shiva. Beautiful! And this is good. When you get it you say fine, yes! Otherwise it’s “oh, poor me, poor me! Those Italians, they don’t let me in!” – that’s the first reaction, and then you realise, come on, next time I will notice if it is not a multiple visa, I know it! You learn from your lessons.

But you look at these cycles to help you. You are getting two weeks crammed into two hours here so don’t worry if you are confused – confusion precedes fusion! (Thanks to Dr. Jonn for that.)

Om