

Communication as Sādhanā

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This article deals with those aspects of human interpersonal communication and institutional communication strategies, which are based on the concept of love-filled integration of communication situations. At the same time, it provides a manual of ethic communication of a sādhanika and of a spiritual institution like an ashram. It presents *sādhanā* – spiritual aspiration and practice as a basis for being able to connect to the force needed for effective communication solutions in order to make spirituality an integral part of everyday life.

2 The Himalayan Spiritual Tradition

In 4th century BC, the Indian empire, at that time as large as the Roman Empire that came several centuries later, was ruled by the emperor Chandragupta, called Sandrogottos by the Greeks. Chandragupta's prime minister, named Chanakya lived in a small hermitage, following the tradition of the Brahmin philosophers. It was the emperor who would dis-

mount from the chariot several miles away and walk to his mentor and minister's hut to receive counsel and advice. The major work of this prime minister, titled the *Arthasāstra* (Science of Polity and Economy), is a classic in the science of polity. The first few sutras are as follows (Chanakya, verse 330):

The root of comfort and happiness is dharma (virtue).

The root (support) for virtue is polity and economy (artha).

The root of artha is rulership.

The root of (successful) rulership is conquest of senses.

The root of the conquest over senses is humility and discipline (vinaya).

The root of humility and discipline is service to the elders.

Through service to the elders one obtains experiential knowledge and wisdom (vi-jñāna).

Let one complete and fulfil oneself through experiential wisdom.

That one has cultivated and fulfilled the self, means that he has conquered the self.

One who has conquered the self finds all his purposes and goals being accomplished.

The word *artha* incorporates all the worldly affairs that provide the means for living, thus it includes polity and economy, which are considered inseparable in ancient Indian political science. However, we can see from the above maxims that the core of success is in conquest of senses, self-control, humility and discipline imbibed by serving the wise and the elders. Based on this teaching we can examine the modern-day approach to artha and determine where it fails in following these ancient ideals. One can write a very detailed thesis to discuss this approach to modern problems in the business and the political world. How much of self-control and conquest of senses, humility, discipline at the feet of elders and the wise is practiced to train ourselves for success? How much experiential wisdom serves to guide us in our business affairs? What exactly is meant by experiential wisdom? This word, *vi-jñāna*, often occurs coupled with *jñāna* (knowledge) in the texts like the *Bhagavad Gītā*. Shankaracharya translates *jñāna* as theoretical and textual knowledge, and *vi-jñāna* as "experiential wisdom". Here, however, "experiential" does not mean that which we gain from our daily life experiences. It means a spiritual experience, which opens up our intuitive faculty.

This is where yoga and meditation become relevant. It is not possible to learn to exercise self-control and to conquer one's senses without the practice of meditation.

It is also not possible to reduce one's ego, to practice humility, without meditation. It is through meditation that one learns that the elders who have gained intuitive wisdom may be honored. Then, through meditation one gains access to one's own inner gates of wisdom.

What does all this conquest of senses, humility, intuitive wisdom have to do with success in the business world where we always have to push, compete, assert, fight? The wisdom of the ages says that it is not necessary to take such aggressive stance in order to succeed. Here is the story of a Moghul emperor, Akbar, and his wise minister named Virbal. All the courtiers were jealous of Virbal because he was obviously the emperor's most favorite. They asked the emperor why? What is it that he has and we do not have? The emperor promised to answer the question on some other day.

One morning, as the courtiers arrived in the court, the emperor posed a question to them. He drew a line on a board and asked them to "make the line shorter". Well, such a sim-

using a different system, the teachers of the Himalayan dhyāna yoga tradition know how to include and incorporate that method into the larger set of practices. It is considered most important that a meditation guide should avoid creating conflict in a student's mind, and should reconcile into one what on the surface might appear to be two different methods.

What does all this have to do with the maxims of Chanakya quoted earlier?

The Himalayan dhyāna yoga tradition works on a personality in all its different components within the personality that is constituted of spirit-mind- prāṇa-body and their interactive mechanisms, and within the relationship between personalities that constitutes family, society, nation and all smaller and larger interactive social units and their functions like polity and economy.

The meditation changes the way the mind looks at the world and interacts with it. For example, in the basic beginners' exercise the awareness of breath replaces the arising of the random sentiments and negative emotions, the awareness of a word or sound flowing in the mind with the breath replaces the random thoughts.

The first of these, breath awareness, then helps one to interpret the world – whether in the form of one's spouse or a business colleague or a different country – with a more positive sentiment. This, then, brings a positive response from the other and the marital life or a business deal goes ever more smoothly. After a while, with constant self-observation, it makes a person irresistible to others who, then, think of him/her in friendlier, more favorable terms.

In the original ancient terminology, we may say that this will help an establishment develop its business and organizational policies based on the principles of:

- (a) *Ahiṃsā*, "non-violence", and
- (b) *Maitri* (Buddhist *mettā*), amity towards all beings, based on the principles of *karuṇā*, (compassion, seeing the difficulties of others as one's own and helping them out with that attitude), *muditā* (joyfulness at others' progress in virtue, such as developing positive sentiments that replace the negative ones), and *upekṣā* (indifference to the weaknesses or failures of others, so that one encourages them to discover their own stronger areas of character, capacity and genius).

The second, the use of a single verbal thought flowing with the breath, helps with concentration, not only on a specific task at a given moment but in the overall patterns of life.

The breath awareness practice, coupled with methodical relaxation exercises, changes the common beta brain wave pattern into an alpha wave one; and the focus on a certain sound leads one to the theta brain wave. The dominance of alpha wave invokes in one a non-violent response to a possibly violence-producing situation; whether such violence is verbal or physical, or worse still mental. Mental violence leads a human being to malicious and conspiratorial attitudes and efforts, which can destroy the harmony within a family as well as within a business establishment. Try to get even 5 % of the people meditating in a company and see the human resources invariably improve dramatically within three to six months.

The part of the practice leading to theta brain wave activity of the brain will help the members of an establishment to (a) concentrate deeply and clearly on a given task, and (b) improve imaginative, inventive creativity. Try to get even five per cent of the people meditating in a company and see the productivity of the entire establishment rise within three months. I call this *succeeding without really competing*. The improvements in the psychological profiles of the meditative members of an establishment will diminish the need for embittering, hurtful, frustrating, stress-producing over-assertiveness and negativity among negotiators and work partners.

It has been found that a twenty-minute siesta in the daytime helps with concentration and productivity of the workers. The Himalayan dhyāna yoga system teaches two other ways, which can be even more effective: (1) conscious sleep, which can be taken for three to ten minutes even while sitting on an office chair; (2) frequent two-minute breath awareness breaks, even less time consuming than the conscious sleep.

Many years back in USA, my receptionist called me in my chamber saying that someone wanted to speak to me. I picked up the phone. The caller turned out to be a meditation student whom I had not seen for several years. He said that he had called to thank me. "For what?" I asked. He explained: "As you know, I am president of the trade union of [...] industry throughout the state. We were on the verge of a strike. For the last one week, the atmosphere was very hard, confrontational and angry. I remembered your advice from the meditation classes. In the meeting rooms filled with cigarette smoke, as everybody was tense, I used the technique. Every time we came to a deadlock in the negotiations, I counted my breaths for two to five minutes. Every time, I came out with a fresh proposal. Finally, my proposals were accepted yesterday and we were able to avert the strike oth-

erwise all the people of the state would have been adversely affected. So, I have called you to thank you.”

It is thus that comfort and happiness are rooted in virtue, in a virtue like peacefulness of mind generated through meditation. This virtue is further enhanced when one sees that it generates not merely some other-worldly mystical state but shows its effect in the greater success in economy and polity, *artha*, which is rooted in good governance, *rājā*. All of this requires channeling the energies of our senses, which we can accomplish through self-control and discipline. In a meditative society, greater regard will be paid to the elders not only in the family, but also in the society and in a business establishment. The role of a wise mentor will be emphasized, and younger members of the staff will feel happy being compassionately and affectionately guided by the elder ones.

Here, let us give an example from one segment of the economic history of the world. Up to the end of the 17th century one of the most successful economies of the world was that of India. That is why, when the Ottoman Empire blocked Europe’s trade routes to India there was such a concentrated endeavor to find new routes to that part of the world (initially leading to the discovery of America). Cicero, the Roman senator, in one of his speeches, lamented the drain of twenty million (what was its value in that century?) Roman coins per year to India to dress the Roman ladies with Indian textiles. Nineteen centuries later, in the 17th century the prosperity continued and India was producing 24,5 % of all of the world’s goods. Its currency was the strongest in the world. India has no silver mines, but today’s India owns 25 % of the world’s silver – by earning it in the international trade for all those thousands of years.

This success was rooted in its meditative tradition, which imparted the qualities of personality that we have hinted at, above, and which, in addition, gave it the temperament that makes people amenable to seek to control the senses, to be humble and thereby seek the guidance of elders and the wise in any area. Today’s “guru phenomenon”, the idea of service to a spiritual guide, is only a small part of that tradition. This has led to the methods of training a business leader.

The family groups that had made India the millenniums-long success story in business still continue to train their business heirs in the same way as they did two thousand years ago, and three centuries ago, except that computers have been introduced and the MBA degrees are prized – but without losing the ancient time tested family traditions. These include not only the practice of daily meditative prayer but that the apprentice lives in the house of the business magnate as

a family member (in what is known as the *gurukula* system) and learns in humility, with self-restraint, the traditional art. Slowly he is given little responsibility, then some more, then supplied with capital and sent to run an existing establishment or to start a new one. Lifelong, the person maintains an attitude of humility towards his mentors. He may become more successful than them but in their presence, he retains an attitude of reverence. It is a part of the general sentiment that the success has come to him not merely from what he has learnt as a method, but by the blessings of the wise elders.

If, after only sixty-five years of independence India is on the verge of recovering her ancient economic strength, it is because of the personality traits that a meditative inclination generates, leading to positive attitudes, behavior patterns free of frustrations and interpersonal stress, rooted in right relationships. However, lately I notice a major loss of values in India in many public spheres but at the same time its continuity in other spheres.

Japan became an economic giant also by the same route of merging the tradition with modernity, and India is well on her way. That is the Asian miracle.

In other words, we need not limit ourselves to examining the scientific studies done in research laboratories to prove the efficacy of meditation. We better look at the economic history of the world in which the last two centuries of the West’s economic dominance are a tiny fragment. History shows the effectiveness and success of the societies in which meditation, but more so the meditative attitudes leading to certain relationships, have been the basis of civilization.

The rate at which the Asian societies have taken to the computer, the internet and so forth from the West without losing their traditional values proves that the Western business has stiff competition coming in the forthcoming decades and centuries. Just as Asia has taken up the West’s computer, better that the West takes up Asia’s meditation. Taking it merely as a twenty minutes a day technique would not suffice. It is the attitudes generated by meditation that create relationships within the society and within a business establishment. The acceptance of this will ensure the survival of the West in a world where Asia has taken the best of the West and retained the best of the East. Let the West retain the best of the West and take up the best of the East to ensure the continuity of its success. It will help to prove Hermann Kaiserling and Oswald Spengler wrong. To summarize:

- The root of comfort and happiness is virtue. The support of virtue is in economy and polity.
- The root of economy and polity is right governance.
- The root of right governance is channeling the energies of the senses in a contemplative and meditative way.
- The basis of relationships from which such a way emerges, and in turn supports the same, is control of ego in humility and discipline.
- It is the respect to mentors and elders that leads one to re-channel one's ego and inculcates discipline.
- It is thus that one gains experiential knowledge.
- It is knowledge that leads one to cultivate oneself as a person.

Cultivating oneself is synonymous with self-conquest, for, one who has not conquered and learnt to govern just one mind, his own, how would he govern a whole empire?

Such a governance of oneself leads one, naturally and effortlessly, to success in all one's undertakings and desired goals whether material or spiritual.

Meditation is the art and science of self-governance. The Himalayan tradition of dhyānā yoga does not merely provide the technique for meditation but teaches the methods whereby one's meditation practice may be applied to cultivate, enhance and beautify one's personality, leading to very practical benefits in personal, interpersonal and corporate life.

3 Management as Sādhanā

Here we use the term *management* in a very wide perspective of all social, economic, political relationships and interactions. Let us take the subject point by point, as follows. There is a fourfold definition of *puruṣārtha*, purpose of a human. The four aspects are: *dharma* (virtuous duty), *artha* (polity, economy, and social order), *kāma* (desire), *mokṣa* (final spiritual liberation).

Artha and kāma are sandwiched between dharma and mokṣa. The purpose of artha and kāma is thus to support dharma and mokṣa. Thus, too, (a) all economic relationships (pay scales, etc.) among various members of management order, (b) all social relationships such "hiring", "firing". "Management hierarchies and mutual expectations among them" are to be based on this scheme.

Based on this concept of *puruṣārtha*, now we come to general economic interactions. *Prakṛti*, all Matter, is a gift of God to the human to fulfil the *puruṣārtha*. It does not have a price.

What is the price of a glass of water if one is sitting in a boat in a clear lake of drinkable water? What is the price of water in a desert hundred miles from an oasis? Can you actually pay a suitable price for quenching your thirst?

Then there is the principle of *nish-kāma karma*, altruistic action, all action performed without seeking a benefit. As we shall see below, this is not an impossible principle to practice in daily life. It has to do with the mental value we place on our transactions, and not on the act itself. On these principles of *puruṣārtha* the following thoughts are presented. The principles have to be applied to all our transactions. How does *nish-kāma karma* work in our buying and selling potatoes in a market place? In our altruistic mental system of economic relationships, the potato seller is making us a loving gift of the product of his labor. This is priceless. He is giving us this gift because we need it. We are giving him some money altruistically because he needs it. So, at mental level, it is not an exchange of "this much" for "that much".

The same applies in an organization (especially spiritual ones). There are no paid employees. They are providing services that are needed. Their needs are fulfilled, in a limited way, in order to enable them to provide a particular set of services. Elsewhere they could be receiving more, or less. It is not an employer-employee relationship; it is an interpersonal love relationship. All family leaders need to cultivate that mental attitude. This is the path of spiritual purity in economic relationships.

Thus, in the relationships within the organizational family of *sādhakas* (a) authority does not proceed from above (except from the guru), (b) authority does not proceed from the title, position or designation one holds, (c) authority proceeds from below, (d) authority proceeds from one's selfless service, personal temperament of taking care of all, and one's spiritual stature. Others then honor one and create his/her authority over them.

Thus, in a spiritual organizational family no one hold "authority", "power" or "position" in itself. All of us only serve and teach and in doing so must practice humility at all times. "Authority" and "position" or "title" is only conveniences to facilitate the work in a legal world.

- When a person's position is thus changed, we always need to be very deeply and personally concerned about his/her further progress, especially the spiritual progress. No one should be let go without a discussion and advice on further spiritual progress. Once we are in a relationship, it is not terminate with termination of a "salary" and such; the personal spiritual connection within the family remains deep and eternal.
- One does not make decisions and impose them just because one has the authority to do so. The leader, head of a department or of the family is *primus inter pares*, first among equals. Thus she/he only informs, consults widely and lets the decision come from the consensus among the "others".
- A sādḥaka manager humbly consults the "juniors" and listens to them.
- A sādḥaka manager invites critique and considers and weighs deeply all points offered in the critique.
- A sādḥaka manager does not impose his opinion; she/he only presents his/her views and information and lets the decision come by consensus so that all think it was their decision.
- As in life, so in the organizational family and in the ashram, whatever will be forcibly taken away from you, renounce it beforehand from your own volition.
- Here are some more additional points for personal spiritual practice.
- In all matters, see what excites, what agitates, and avoid that. For example, red is not a good color for communication in writing.
- Avoid that which creates wrinkles in others' foreheads, and in your forehead. The moment one observes wrinkle developing, a negative shadow passing over someone's face as one communicated, remedial action should be taken by changing one's emotion and state of mind, and thereby the tone of one's voice, gesture, body-language till the wrinkles disappear.
- Remember that wrinkles on the forehead are signs of wrinkles in the mind, the lines of your forehead are the script in which the history of one's emotions is inscribed.
- It is needed to keep one's mind unwrinkled and thereby unwrinkled the minds of those who are in your presence. It is beneficial to do *saumyā mantra* (Gopālāchārlu 1934) often to pacify yourself and pacify others: "*Saumyaa saumya-taraacehSha-saumyebhyas tvati-sundaree paraaparaaNaam paramaa tvam eva parameshvaree.*"
- Swami Rama in his form as Madhusudan Saraswati (2000) has written in his commentary on *Bhagavad Gītā*: "*Vaktur evaayam doSho yad asyaabhipraayam shrotaa na budhyati*" – "*It is but the speaker's flaw that the listener has not understood his intent.*"
- One of the words for compassion and empathy is *anu-kampaa*. Trembling with, vibrating with (someone). As the musician on a string instrument like sitar plays on the main strings, the sympathetic strings vibrate and tremble. This is the secret of sympathetic and empathic listening and communicating.
- When you note something in someone that is disagreeable to you, even in management and administration, through *anu-kampa* place your mind and heart in the place in his/her mind where she/he is coming from. That person's society, culture, personal background, and how his/her psychology was/is formed. It is in this context that you first address his/her concerns and not condemn. Then explain your reasons, in a clam and loving voice, for the action you wish to take.
- A self-observant sādḥaka will notice that quite often in a conversation or discussion even very minor wrinkles in the mind, emotion, vice and tone, and on face and in body language of the other party are picked up by ourselves and we also develop the same wrinkles, similar tones and responses. This, in modern neurology is an act of "mirror neurons". What others do, we begin to do. When one laughs others laugh. When one yawns, others yawn.
- Results of the self-experimentations in this regard are confirmed scientifically (Chrysiou 2012). A question "is a bad mood contagious?" was answered by Gary W. Lewandowski (2014). We can paraphrase: Scientists call this phenomenon emotional contagion, a three-step process through which one person's feelings transfer to another person. The first stage involves nonconscious mimicry, during which individuals subtly copy one another's nonverbal cues, including posture, facial expressions and movements. In effect, seeing my frown makes you more likely to frown. People may then experience a feedback stage – because you frowned, you now feel sad. During the final contagion stage, individuals share their experiences until their emotions and behaviors become synchronized.
- In the described self-experiments, there is a great difference between mimicry and empathy. I choose my feeling and emotion independently, and not as an act of my mirror-neurons. Any good meditator can learn to do that. These facts of life have been taught by the ancients for thousands of years, and being forgotten in the last century or two of our false ideas of "development", "advancement" and "success". So, I quote modern science just to convince the

people who would not otherwise accept the ancient wisdom, the same reason that I maintain a research laboratory in our Ashram. We are seekers of *svaatantrya*. This word has no exact English equivalent. It may roughly be translated as free volition and conscience coming from the laws and voice of one's own *ātman*, the spiritual self (not psychological conditionings nor as reactions to and from other factors external to us). This is the true meaning of freedom. This is the true non-dependence, independence, not arising as a reaction to external surroundings, situations or others' reactions. We are not reactive but independently active. So, as soon as others' emotional states begin to reflect into us, we dive into our inner resources of relaxation and tranquility and thereby change the tone of the conversation and discussion. The opposite

party's 'mirror neurons' then reflect our state of mind and we both become peaceful and not confrontational. Thus, we arrive at harmonious consensus with others and spread peace.

- Solve the problem the other person has with you.
- In all disagreements, first argue in your mind in a direction opposite to your view and in favor of the opposite person's view. Present to your colleagues or participants in a meeting these two ends of the magnet: your justifications for the other person's view and your own view. Then reconcile the two points of view and create a harmonious conclusion including the best elements of both.
- Do not challenge or condemn a view, situation, act, decision without presenting

a well-constructed alternative that also incorporates the positive points of what you have disagreed with.

- Hold nothing in your mind against anyone. The moment one issue is completed (such as one interview or a session of "correcting" someone), let your mind go into "neutral" with a few breaths, remember the good qualities of that person, and then move on to the next positive step – about that person or about whatever needs to engage you.
- Remember that you are not running management or administration. You are practicing *sādhana* of self-pacification, self-purification, and finally self-perfection. The acts of "management" and "administration" are steps on that spiritual path; these are your self-tests.

One should take constant pains to explain to all in the spiritual family the principles by which the family is being run and the habitual thinking brought from the outside world must be slowly changed by communication and sharing of these and such principles.

These principles may not be possible to practice in the modern government structures or the habitual norms of the corporate world but they can be maintained as one's internal principles, and be implemented in an organizational family of *sādhakas* where every breath taken and every word spoken is part of *sādhana*. The principles that are habitual in the "outside" world, and experiences gained from them, do not apply in such a family.

4 Sainly CEO

There are three principles of communication – *hitam*, that is to speak only what is beneficial, and only in a manner that would be beneficial to the listener to the purpose and mission of the speaker; *mitam*, that is measurement in intensity of emotion, tone of voice, and choice of words; *priyam*, that is pleasant in the sense to create pleasant-mindedness in yourself and in the listener(s).

A new category of "sainly CEO", following the above-mentioned principles, is to be promoted in spiritually oriented organizations. Dissentions are generated not as often by differences on policies but more often by modes of communication and tones used. People act, communicate and write habitually by the mode that is common worldwide. They think that is "normal" because they have been presented with no other model. Not having been raised in the current civilization, it may be useful to present a different model, not from Mars, but from Venus.

5 Communication in Administration

The three principles of communication can be applied in administration as follows.

Be gentle in disagreements. Make the unpleasant pleasant first, and only then communicate. Round off the sharp corners, circle the word-squares, change tones to tunes. Sharpen love, blunt the sharpness's. Evoke a YES response.

Let others FEEL that they are leading and you are merely suggesting; that is the way you naturally and easefully receive the honor of being a leader. Lead without leading; command without commanding. Wield authority without authority, which nobody detects that authority was wielded.

In 42 years of the existence of our Meditation Centre no one was fired. People were only relocated after examining the best way they would progress spiritually and would serve our spiritual family better. The same principles are applied in the Rishikesh SRSR Ashram.

It is revealing to check how many paragraphs in our communications are beginning with the pronoun "I". Reduce the incidence of "I". Try to avoid ordering and commanding by a tone like, "do it this way". It is preferable to use, "let us do it this way", "what if we did it this way, what would be the difficulties from your point of view?"

It is also beneficial to avoid expressions like, "this is all wrong". Instead prefer "for such and such reason (give background story if it is not confidential) it would be better if we did it this way instead". Avoid generating the moods like, "why didn't you do it on time?". Prefer, "I am wondering what difficulties caused you not be able to finish this on time? You see, not getting it done could cause such and such harm and discomfort."

6 Notes on "Honest Communication"

In the entire history of the teachings of philosophy and psychology the philosophers have admonished fellow human beings to conquer base emotions and seek to develop a personal self to be as close to the divine attributes as possible. Certain contemporary dominant schools of psychology in the West, especially in USA, are an exception. They seek to justify human weaknesses, blocking human progress in refinement by teaching phrases like: this is the way I am; you have to accept me as

I am (that is, I am not going to refine myself and I feel no need to do so). Justifying anger, harsh words and encouraging confrontational – rather than consensual – behavior.

One of the buzzwords is "honest communication". Hurt others with the belief that it will save you from being hurt. Look somebody hard in the eye and say a loud NO. I, however, come from the school of YES-men (Taoist, Upanishadic) that says: the best defense is non-defense. In such cases, hardly anyone says NO to one who communicates in such style.

The philosophy of making a fast draw, sending in the marines – oops, that is old now – sending in the cruise missiles at everyone you have a disagreement with does not fit into any spiritual ideal. The ideal of sensitive communication is diametrically opposite to the above confrontational view. The sensitive communication, saving the other party's honor and yet having one's position understood is the common way of many cultures even today.

Here an example of a conversation in Asia is given. At a hotel, one speaks to the reception office manager who is from another Asian country: "I am coming back to the hotel in a few days; may I pay all my bills at the end of the second stay, or should I settle the bill for this stay now?"

Manager's reply: "Yes, you may choose to pay now or you may choose to pay when you come back. Well, for us it would be easier if we can keep the bill for the next visit separate."

Having been brought up in the culture of "sensitive communication" rather than so-called "honest communication", one can understand that she prefers one to pay now, and one can do so.

A very common form of communication in Asia and Africa (Hindu, Buddhist, and Muslim) goes like this: "You do not have any vegetables available today?"

Answer: "Yes, Sir."

Note that the answer is not "No, Sir".

OR: "May we hold a meeting at your home?"

Answer: "My wife is away but it would be a great pleasure for me to try to arrange the meeting at home."

The listener brought up in the culture of "sensitive communication" understands that the other person is asking to be relieved of the burden of organizing a meeting at his home in his wife's absence. Next day, you call him and tell him – so grateful for your kind offer to host us, you are always so generous. For this time, another member has asked to be given a chance. We hope it would be alright with you if we accept.

Everybody's honor is kept in this way. But it requires humility and the ability to hear the unspoken word. The Master yogis train their disciples into much subtler levels of "sensitive hearing". Such communication is possible only in societies that do believe in non-violence at least to the extent they are able to practice it. It requires a sensitivity of the soul and the heart to communicate in this way.

Speaking of many cultures, here are some examples. The Thai culture is lovable as "anger" is considered bad manners. In the Japanese culture, everyone apologizes repeatedly all the time.

There is enough confrontation among nations, religions, communities – all part of "honest communication", the main cause of the failures of diplomacy of many countries, because often there is failure in working with the people where "sensitive communication" is the norm. Those brought up in these aggressive and arrogant societies do not know how much they show what is perceived by others as disrespect, insensitivity and an attempt to dishonor, or to obtain results by "barking orders". But it is not just one country; we find the same phenomenon in many other lands and communities (to my great disappointment, more and more in India now). Some countries stand out because of their uncontrollable show-off of power.

We wish to oppose nuclear weapons but we pour into the collective mind of the planet the confrontational thoughts and words. We choose to consider the universe an adversary instead of ourselves as partners thereof.

Be not an adversary. One thing I have said often: If you have a problem with someone, solve the problem she/he has with you. Do not demand rights, do loving duties selflessly.

Many have the habit of seeing conflict where there is no conflict; seeing the possibility of a conflict when no such possibility exists. However, *samaadadhathi sajjanaah*, the noble ones create a "resolving".

When seeing a conflict among several parties, remain neutral and equally balanced. Do not become emotionally reactive in favor of one or the other. Then find even the least little common ground between/among them and start there. In talking each party let each one feel equal warmth, unconditional love and understanding from you.

"Sensitive communication" is a very fine art, rooted in deep spiritual philosophies. It cannot be learnt in a day. But please make start not by trying to write another chapter in the textbook of the theory of communication. This is not part of the theory of communication but of the principle of non-violence,

non-anger, non-hurtfulness, humility, rejoicing at every opportunity one has to make oneself small.

7 Signs of Spiritual Progress

One of the marks of spiritual progress is as follows: Less problems arise in daily life. If some problems do arise, they fail to create *viShaada*, "sadness", "depression", and *kShobha*, "anguish" in one's mind, as a result of which, in a clearer, undisturbed mind, solutions arise and show shortcuts to one's goals. If you are facing problems, figure out where your spiritual progress is lacking.

The other extremely important part in our *sāadhanā* is the reverence towards women. Our tradition is different from ritual Hinduism and from other religions' taboos in these matters.

According to the *Law Book of Manu* (Manu, verse 200), the first law-giver in the Indian tradition, all parts and aspects of a woman's body and being are pure and sacred at all times.

One of the rules of japa observances in the yogic tradition is: For those seeking liberation and for women there is no time restriction; they may do the practice at any time.

It is believed that prayers offered by women are heard more readily. Women are considered incarnations of Mother Kundalini Shakti. As we are followers of the right-hand Tantra path, reverence towards women is most important. One or twice a year on days sacred to Divine Mother I wash the feet of nine "under-age" forms of Maatri Shakti, nine *kanyaa devees*, and worship them. The tantric rule is that a man should appear in the presence of a woman, any woman, well-kempt, well-dressed, good-mannered. Also, that if a man is passing a group of women standing somewhere or casually chatting, he must pay them mental reverence as he is passing by.

In the *Ramayana* (Tulasidas 1650, Shastri 1962) it is written: Younger brother Lakshmana is sent by Rama to the cave of Sugreeva to arouse him from his slumber and do his promised duty. Lakshmana arrives at the entrance to the cave palace. The message is brought to Sugreeva that wrathful Lalkshmana is at the entrance. Sugreeva asks his wife to go forward and receive Lakshmana and when he calms down, Sugreeva will welcome him: *You go, Tara, because the noble ones do nothing harsh in the presence of women.*

8 If Faced with a Conflict of Choices Between Two Opposites, Have Both – You Will Become a Bi-Polar Magnet

Simply put, as in the Hindi proverb, “*have dono haathon me laddoo*” – “*sweet balls in both hands*”. The statement as the title of this writing has a sound philosophical basis and practical applications thereof. The truth of the matter is: there are no conflicting or contradictory forces in the universe. All is complementary.

When one would go to swami Rama with a question like: “Maharaji, should I do such and such this way or that other way?” He would look at one and reply in a deep voice coming from the heart, “Yeeess”. That was often his only answer. One had to contemplate deeply and resolve the apparent contradictions between the two choices and arrive at an answer in which the positive elements of both choices would be included. That is how you have it both ways.

Yoga Masters (Masters, not those who are declared to be masters by PR companies) often present the disciples with contradictory choices in daily and practical life and the disciple has to develop the spiritual skill to resolve the apparent contradictions, and reach *samādhāna*, a resolving, bringing together the apparent conflicting factors and parts, and thereby arrive at a holistic reality.

This means:

- to find the positive concealed in the negative;
- to free the mind of the habit of being in conflict, by learning to resolve the conflicts;
- to de-condition the mind of its conditioning, to lift it from habit patterns, to free it from running in set grooves, and thereby;
- to develop fresh insights of positive nature into relationships, communication and events as well as philosophical realities and truths;
- to liberate the mind and consciousness above what Vedānta calls *upādhis*, conditioning produced by our involvement in *māyā*.

This device is only a small part of age old systems of wise sages. The riddles in the Vedas, *ulat-baansiyaan* of Kabir, all such, are part of the same liberating systems. So also, is the vast repertoire of *kōans*, in Japanese pronunciation of Chinese *gong-an* (*pin-yin*) 公案 as taught in the Chinese *Ch’an* school, Japanese *Zen*, Korean *Son*, Vietnamese *Thien*, (derived from Pali *jhāna*, which is derived from Sanskrit *dhyāna*) schools of meditation, especially in the Soto and Rinzai Zen. A *kōan* forces one to come out of set grooves, mental habituations and dichotomous conditionings. For example, the well known *kōan*: “*What is the sound of one hand clapping?*”

The master forces the disciple not only to study the answers given by previous masters but to find his/her own answer in all-absorbing meditations.

The system is based, among others, on the principle that between two opposites there is a third option lurking, much like the way Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel’s thesis and antithesis produce a synthesis.

If you cannot decide in which of two companies you should invest your funds, take the best qualities of both and invest in a company that has those combined qualities. This is just a simplified answer. There are CEOs among the disciples of the author, who have followed such advice in making their business decisions and have succeeded.

9 How to Proceed?

How is one to succeed in practicing the principles suggested here?

1. Keep *daily meditation*. It will grant you insights and will verify the factualness of what is presented in these pages.
2. Keep your *forehead relaxed* in all situations, even when running from a fire or ire.
3. Every 2 or 3 hours, do 2 or 3 minutes of *breath-awareness with mantra* (even with eyes open when in a meeting where closing the eyes will be inappropriate) whether sitting, standing or wherever. Do keep doing it. It will change your temperament.
4. *Self-observation*. Observing, taking note, every time one has not quite managed to remain true to the principles (Was there a touch of unnecessary harshness in my tone of spoken/written word? Did I neglect the principle of non-anger, humility? Did I show off authority?)
5. *Sankalpa*. Resolve to do better next time. Not guilt, not self-condemnation, not “giving-up-on-oneself”. Just renewed sankalpa.
6. Select one principle you find the easiest to practice, and one principle you find most difficult to practice as totally against your habitual temperament. Start practicing.
7. Devise your own methods to apply these principles.
8. Note your successes in these practices mentally; let the moments of those successes be remembered and serve as inspiration for the future. These successes will show their benefits to you.
9. Do not let these successes become source of pride in you (how much I have advanced, or how humble I am). Let them only inspire you for the future continuity of their applications.
10. When you have changed your temperament, move on to other principles; those will now become much easier.

10 The Example of Two Festivals

Of the many religions indigenous to India, three stand out as the most ancient: Vedic-Hindu, Buddhism, and Jaina. Of these the Jaina religion in the epitome of *ahimsā*, “non-violence” at all levels. It is the most pious and most ascetic. Its monks are still today masters of ascetic life. The religion was established a succession of twenty-four founding Masters, *tirthankaras* (fjord-makers) dating back to lost periods of antiquity. The monks of all three of the above religions wander and then take a period of sojourn at one place during the four months of the monsoons; it is called *chaaturmaasya*, “four months”. This is a time for contemplation, meditation, deep study and other observances. This is also the time when they take new initiates.

For Jaina religion, the start of this period is celebrated with great devotion by the laity. It is called *paryuṣaṇa*, “fasting”. It is eight days of fasting, sacred readings, select recitations, listening to the monks and so forth. Ninth day is the day of seeking forgiveness. *Kshamaapana* or *kshamaavani* (these are other variations in various state languages of India). It occurs on 4th day of waxing moon in Bhadrapada month, approximately August/September. On this day, everyone grants forgiveness and asks for forgiveness. This includes renunciation of condemnation, judgment of others, irritation, anger. The word *kṣama* is derived from Sanskrit verb root *kṣam*. The verb root means to have capacity, to be capacious. This requires the ability to absorb and dissolve all assaults. The word *kṣama* is one of 21 names of earth in the Vedas. It means for one to be as forgiving, as all-absorbing, as the earth that withstands and forgives all out trampling and digging into.

Here one may quote an oft-quoted Sanskrit proverb: “*kShamaa veerasya bhooShanam*” – “*forgiveness is the adornment of the brave*”.

This concept is re-enforced in other human experiences such as:

- in India, Holi festival celebrated as the day of forgiving the year’s aggressions and transgressions;
- in Thailand’s culture every child is taught that anger is bad manners and the adults follow that in daily practical life and interpersonal relations;
- in Africa, in the training and initiation of spiritual guides in traditional African religions it is essential for the guide to conquer anger – as per my personal investigations;
- There are many such examples in world cultures that we all need to emulate.

The other festival to which should be paid attention is the Nyepi Day of Bali. It is celebrated as the last day of the year in a 210-day year according to the sacred and complex Balinese calendar known as *Isaawarsa* (Indian *Saka era* starting 78 AD). In 2012 it occurred on 23rd March. It is a day of silence, there is no traffic on the streets. The Ngurah Rai international airport of Den Pasar, the capital, is closed for the twenty-four hours. No fires may be lit and the lights must be kept dim. There is no self-entertainment, only contemplation and silence. Most people fast for the day. The *dharma-shanti*, peace of dharma, rituals are performed in the form of listening to scriptures in *kakawin* (classical Sanskrit-related ancient language of the religion) and other contemplative or ritual observances. Next day is celebrated as the first day of the year when people visit each other and grant and beg for forgiveness.

11 Emotions and Ethics – a Yoga Therapy

Historically, in all systems of the Sino-Euro-Indian traditions, as also in the theologies of the three Abrahamic religions, principles of human conduct are universally viewed as emanating from and rooted in metaphysics. From the Vedas to the recent Acharya's, the Buddhist and Jaina and other guides of India, K'ung-Fu-Tzu and Lao Tzu in China, all teachers and saints of the three Semitic faiths, European philosophers from Pythagoras and Thales to Immanuel Kant have all reiterated the same view and have examined the interdependence between the spiritual and the ethical, the way of devotion and the way of conduct. They have all taught the principles of altruism, selfless conduct, and cultivating sublime emotions.

Yoga teaching of *yamas* and *niyamas* falls within the same unified system of metaphysical ethics. In this, according to sage Vyasa's commentary on the Yoga-sutras, *ahimsā*, "nonviolence", is the primary *yama-niyama*. The other nine are rooted in it, arise from it and are practiced to support the same. Thus, the violent emotions are seen as part of the *kleśas*, "afflictions", to be purified and burnt. However, in common thinking emotions (*bhāvas*) and sentiments (*vi-bhāvas*) are not viewed as coming within the realm of ethics, the principles of conduct. Neither the essay on anger by the Roman Stoic philosopher Lucio Anneo Seneca, nor the 6th chapter of *Bodhicaryāvatāra* of Shantideva have much meaning in this view.

In European philosophy, the view of metaphysically based ethics remained as fundamental until about a century and

half ago. There were many factors that led to the change of views as we can see in the examples below:

- Survival of the fittest as part of the process of evolution (Charles Darwin).
- Sexuality as the primary guiding urge of human personality (Sigmund Freud).
- Utilitarianism to justify capitalism-imperialism (John Stuart Mill, Jeremy Bentham).
- Economics as the primary factor in the development of civilization (Karl Marx as well as the western philosophers of capitalism).

They all created a trend that rejected the philosophies of altruism, the purity of thought and the sanctity in emotions. Self-centeredness and individualism became the philosophy of life for the urban-industrial civilization worldwide. The principles of counselling underwent a change. The principles of *dharma* and *nish-kāma karma*, of *ariyo atthangiko maggo* ("the eightfold noble truth" of the Buddha) became irrelevant. In the practice of American psychology and counselling, "I am I", "you are you", and "permission to be angry" became common stock phrases. Instead of being counselled to undertake confession, *pashchaat-taapa*, "penitence", and *praayash-chitta*, "atonement", many patients have been taught to express hostility, instead of replacing it with self-calming internal devices of more ethical-transcendental nature.

Since there was no need to calm one's negative attitudes, to practice equanimity, to divert the power of anger towards creativity in love, the entire humanity involved in the urban-industrial civilization became prone to a tendency towards an inadvertent self-destruction, a slow suicide. The level of stress rose, the discharge of stress hormones into the neuro-physiological systems reduced the strength of the immune system, weakening the resistance to disease.

A calm mind induces the brain to produce endorphins to cope with challenges from "adversaries" without becoming overtly negative towards them. An angry and disturbed mind reduces the same sources of self-soothing. Infectious diseases, terminated through very welcome modern discoveries, thus gave way to more and more psychosomatic and autoimmune illnesses. Those investigating the cardiac problems now know that much of the cardiac illness is a product of wrong diet. But wrong diet itself is caused by the destructive emotions of greed, lack of a feeling of fulfilment and general inner satisfaction, an inner emptiness and loneliness that one tries to fill not by fulfilling the mind but by overfilling the stomach.

ancient *Charaka Saṃhitā*, show it to be the source of health and longevity. This, the core of yoga therapy, is in the practice of *chitta-pra-sadanam*, making the mind a clear and pleasant place through the observance of the *brahmavihārās* listed above. Not just *āsanas* and *prāṇāyāmas* but the *yama-niyamas* centred in *ahiṃsā* are the true therapy.

They produce endorphins to help reduce our levels of hostility, cultivate amity (meditations of loving kindness and compassion), which in turn generate the same endorphins, slow down our breaths (producing *dirgha-sukshma* state of breath without an effort) so that facilitate expending less number of breaths, and because our life-span (*ayur-daaya*) is measured in the number of breaths, grants us a longer life span, *ayuh*, the first wish of every living being.

This is the ethics of emotions as yoga therapy (Veda Bharati 2010). Perhaps there should be a conference simply on *bhaava-sam-shuddhi*, “purification of sentiments” (*Bhagavad Gītā* 17: 16) as the first principle of yoga therapy. May the present pursuits help and guide the seekers to that *saumanasyam* (beautiful-mindedness) and *saam-manasyam* (harmonious-mindedness), which is both the true source as well as the state of health.

12 The Means of Liberating Oneself and Others

It is important to constantly experiment with *Upāya Kaushala Pāramitā*, one of the ten perfections required of an aspiring-to-be Bodhisattva. The perfection in the means and methods for liberating oneself and others. Some of the conclusions are: There is no difference between teaching on one hand and running a family or organization or any relationships or communications even “business” communications on the other. The latter becomes a part of the teaching. This must always reflect the level of realizations one has arrived at with regard to the principles of *ahiṃsā*, *maitrī*, and so forth.

On the basis of that the author began the difficult task of de-conditioning oneself. This required sifting through all “formative impressions”, *saṃskāras*, gathered from the day I can remember myself. De-value and discard those that were not conducive only to the perennial goals, and to the principles like *ahiṃsā* and *maitrī* and so forth. Thus, in inter-relationships within the organizational family, fully aware of each participant’s shortcomings – as they (just like the author) have not yet reached perfection – one must use the best of each person’s qualities, as far as they have reached the desired steps on the path to perfection; not keep looking at

their shortcomings; continue to “make use” of their strengths and valuing and appreciating the services they CAN perform; not judging them negatively; waiting for them to perfect themselves in the areas that still need improvement, and patiently wait, wait, wait, even into many future incarnations as my Master has so patiently waited on my perfection (not yet achieved, alas) for so many incarnations; keeping on trying to design and redesign the organizational family to help achieve these goals, and one must (we also must) continue the self-experiments in *Upāya Kaushala Pāramitā*.

13 Sādhanā

The *sādhanā* suggested in the previous sections cannot be accomplished without deep inner peace and tranquility. For this tranquility to be maintained and further deepened, and made our permanent nature, continued meditations, contemplations and *japa* practices are essential. All this also requires *sankalpa-bala* or *sankalpa-shakti*, power and intensity of resolve.

Before going on further with this, a few necessary hints:

- Before meditation, take a shower (at least for one main meditation of the day) and wear clean and loose clothes.
- The surroundings of your meditation seat should be neatly and beautifully arranged.
- The asana that you sit on should be unrumpled, neatly folded, unwrinkled, clean.
- You may burn some incense if you prefer. Light a candle or a “deepak” if you prefer.

Surrender all your spiritual practices, and expectations therefrom, to the divine guru spirit and the guru(s) of the Lineage.

For developing and strengthening *sankalpa-bala*, one can suggest two levels of mantras, six mantras of *shiva-sankalpa* hymn. The results of the *japa* of this hymn are mind’s pacification, *samādhi* of the mind (*samprajñāta samādhi*), and highest *samādhi*.

It is advisable to memorize these six mantras, or at least the first one of the six. Study, understand, contemplate their inner meanings. If even one mantra is too long, just recite many times: “*tan me manah shiva-sankalpam astu*” – “*may that mind of mine be filled with shiva-sankalpa*”. This *japa* with contemplation is for developing general *sankalpa-shakti*.

In the Himalayan tradition, besides mantras, there are *mahāvākyas*, “Great Sentences”. These are short and succinct

