

# **Bhakti & Karma Yoga**

**The Science of Devotion  
and  
Liberation Through Action**

**Yogani**

**From The AYP Enlightenment Series**

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“I have lived on the lip of insanity, wanting  
to know reasons, knocking on a door.

It opens.

I have been knocking from the inside!”

*Jelaluddin Rumi – 13th Century Sufi Mystic*



## Introduction

Desire is the root of all action, and action is what produces change in human life, for good or ill. Therefore, informing our desires with a chosen high ideal and implementing our intentions accordingly in spiritual practices and daily activity will have a profound influence on many outcomes in our life.

*Bhakti and Karma Yoga* covers the systematic application of the essential principles of desire and devotion to aid us in achieving our goals and spiritual aspirations. Through inspired action we can transform our life experience to one of ecstatic bliss. In combination with an effective daily routine of yoga practices, the principles of bhakti and karma yoga elevate the relationship of our desires and actions to divine expression, greatly hastening our progress toward enlightenment.

*The AYP Enlightenment Series* is an endeavor to present the most effective methods of spiritual practice in a series of easy-to-read books that anyone can use to gain practical results immediately and over the long term. Since its beginnings in 2003, *Advanced Yoga Practices (AYP)* has been an experiment to see just how much can be conveyed in writing, with

much more detail provided on practices than in the spiritual writings of the past.

Can books provide us the specific means necessary to tread the path to enlightenment, or do we have to surrender at the feet of a *guru* to find our salvation? Well, clearly we must surrender to something, even if it is to our own innate potential to live a freer and happier life. If we are able to do that, and maintain regular practice, then books like this one can come alive and instruct us in the ways of human spiritual transformation. If the reader is ready and the book is worthy, amazing things can happen.

While one person's name is given as the author of this book, it is actually a distillation of the efforts of thousands of practitioners over thousands of years. This is one person's attempt to simplify and make practical the spiritual methods that many have demonstrated throughout history. All who have gone before have my deepest gratitude, as do the many I am privileged to be in touch with in the present who continue to practice with dedication and good results.

I hope you will find this book to be a useful resource as you travel along your chosen path.

Practice wisely, and enjoy!

# Table of Contents

<b>Chapter 1 – Desire and Action</b> .....	1
<b>Chapter 2 – Bhakti Yoga</b> .....	13
Bhakti – Up Close and Personal .....	16
Ishta – The Chosen Ideal.....	19
The Systematic Transformation of Emotion.....	27
Bhakti and the Limbs of Yoga .....	44
<b>Chapter 3 – Karma Yoga</b> .....	53
Action and its Consequences .....	55
The Spiritual Evolution of Action.....	65
The Role of Service .....	75
<b>Chapter 4 – Passionate Living</b> .....	87
A Journey from Here to Here.....	88
The Dance of Unity.....	94
<b>Further Reading and Support</b> .....	103





## **Chapter 1 – Desire and Action**

Desire is fundamental to our existence. But desire does not stand alone. For what is a desire if it is not acted upon? Nothing but an unresolved hankering. Indeed, desire without action is like a driver without a vehicle. And action without a clear desire to guide it is like a machine running hither and yon without rhyme or reason.

There has sometimes been criticism of the presence of desire on the spiritual path, even to the point of calling for the end of desire. This is because desire does not always lead to results that may be considered positive. Negative desires can lead to negative results when acted upon, while positive desires will most often lead to positive results. The laws we have in society, while they may seem to be about limiting harmful actions, are really about limiting the effects of negative desires.

Because the precautions of the law are necessary in society, does this mean that all desires are bad? Obviously not. If we have a positive intent to limit the effect of negative desires, then the final outcome will inevitably be positive. This is the classic struggle

of “good over evil.” It revolves around our desires, and the actions they inspire.

To say that all desires are bad is to say that all human endeavor is bad, and that we should not do anything. It is a foolish proposition. Much better to face things as they are and see how we can make something good out of it, something useful. The dynamics of desire and action offer endless possibilities for good, including our ultimate enlightenment. It is a journey of divine attraction and love for our own highest ideal, culminating in the transformation of experience in all aspects of our everyday living. This has profound implications for us, and for everyone around us. By changing ourselves, we can change the world!

But before we talk about enlightenment and how desire and action can open our life up to it, let’s examine how the basic principles of desire and action relate to our everyday life. Then we will look deeper and see how these same principles can take us far beyond the ordinary to the extraordinary, even as we continue to live a normal life much as we did before.

Everyone wants something. We are each born with inclinations – the seeds that germinate within us

to become our desires in life, influenced by the environment we grow up in.

There is another influence on the shape and direction our desires may take, and that is the cycle of our desire and resulting action, leading to more desire and action, in kind. It is the natural cycle of desires and actions leading to more and more. Once we are in this cycle, action leads to desire just as desire leads to action. Round and round it goes, and we may lose track of which came first, the desire or the action. It is the proverbial question: “Which came first, the chicken or the egg?”

As we all know, this endless cycle of desires and actions can lead to what seems to be a treadmill in life. Or it can lead to remarkable achievements if we have an underlying vision, or central theme, guiding our desires and actions. With a clear vision in place, the endless cycle of desire and action can be used with great effectiveness. This is the key to all achievements by successful people, whether it be the local shopkeeper, or one who is able to enhance the quality of life for all of humanity. It is a clear vision of possibilities that can lift desire and action to a

higher purpose, and there is no limit in this. It is limited only by our imagination.

The relationship between a vision and the mechanics of desire and action is well known by those who strive to great achievements, and we can see it in action everywhere around us. It can be seen as *cause and effect*, which puts it into the realm of science, whereby the application of known principles will produce predictable results:

Vision + Desire + Action = Achievement

...with *persistence and consistency* being underlying qualities found in all of the elements on the left side of the equation.

All that we accomplish in life has a vision behind it, though we may not recognize a vision because it has become automatic – programmed within our subconscious mind. The small things we accomplish have small visions behind them, like getting up in the morning, getting dressed and going out. The larger things we accomplish have larger visions behind them, like caring for our family and pursuing our career. The greater our vision, the greater the possibilities for what we can accomplish in this life.

Visions may be ingrained in us and may seem to be fixed, sometimes to our disadvantage. But visions can be changed, and new and greater ones can be created if we are willing to put in the time and effort to reprogram our inner habits. Desire is always seeking more, and that more is found in the form of an expanded vision, which will focus desire like a laser beam, yielding miraculous results. There are powerful tools available to aid in this, which we will be discussing in this book.

If we have a clear vision of what we want, and are willing to act on it every day for as long as it takes to see our vision fulfilled, then there is no limit to what we can accomplish. When desire has been raised to this level of constancy in a particular vision, then it is called *devotion*. In the language of Yoga, this is called *Bhakti*. Those who live their life in constant devotion to their vision find support coming from all sides, and are able to overcome seemingly insurmountable obstacles.

Handicaps are not able to hold back a person who persistently acts on desires that are rooted in a clear vision. In fact, handicaps can provide an advantage to the person persistently acting on their vision, because

handicaps are clear obstructions which must be overcome on the way to fulfillment. Handicaps provide constant reminders that there is more to be done.

Just so, a poor man with a strong desire to become rich has an advantage over a rich man who does not have a vision for his life. The obstacles the poor man must overcome are milestones on the way to fulfillment of his vision. Likewise, if a rich man wishes to grow, he too must overcome obstacles on the way to a truth of greater significance than his current bank account. Is that greater truth a bigger bank account? It might be. It all depends on the vision that is chosen.

In the long run, the visionary choices we make that inform our unending cycles of desire-action-desire-action will determine the degree of happiness and fulfillment we find in life. Our vision, our desire and our actions will have consequences. In spiritual language, the actions we undertake and their consequences are summed up in the phrase, “As you sow, so shall you reap.” This is what we mean by *Karma*. As we become increasingly sensitive to the

results of our actions, our vision of life, our desires, and our actions will be affected accordingly.

The principles of vision, desire and action operate the same in spiritual life as they do in material life. In fact, these are at the core of spiritual life, just as they are at the core of anything we may undertake in this world. If we are looking for fulfillment that reaches beyond the limitations of our material world, even while we are still living fully in it, then sooner or later we will come to consider the spiritual dimension. It is a natural thing, because everyone is wired inside for a greater destiny than may meet the eye, much greater than we may have imagined so far.

It is not a coincidence that desire for and devotion to a higher vision of truth is at the core of every religion in the world. It is the inherent longing for this in human beings that has created the religions, and not the other way around. In fact, the realization of our innate human spiritual potential can occur entirely without the trappings of religion, and often does. Religion is there to remind us of what we already are in seed form. Once we have sensed our potential, it is up to us to make the necessary choices to move forward according to our own vision, rather



than anyone else's. The institutions will call us to their fold, but the real fold is in us. It is an inner opening into a fullness that is beyond worldly considerations, even though worldly considerations will go on, illuminated from within. We are fortunate to be living in a time when this kind of inner renaissance is happening at an ever-increasing rate. It is through the rise of individual enlightenment on a mass scale that our society is gradually being transformed. It is a choice that we are in a much better position to make than in centuries past, because of both inner and outer events. We are all interconnected in that. The rise of spiritual desire goes far beyond the individual. It is a global phenomenon that we all have a stake in.

On the inside, the obstructions to the natural divine flow in the human neurobiology are becoming less, and the possibilities are thus becoming clearer to everyone. Spiritual experiences that seemed impossible not long ago are becoming common among many. What before may have been a faint inspiration of our divine possibilities is now becoming a loud inner trumpet that can be easily heard. It is inspiration that leads to realization. A core

component of this inner awakening is ever-increasing spiritual desire. The energy rising in us now is so great that it cries out to be acted upon. It is vision, desire and a call to action, all in one. We are each experiencing it in our own way.

On the outside, the availability of spiritual knowledge is increasing, and the vehicles for its delivery are becoming more efficient and readily accessible, thanks to modern communications and more practical scientific approaches. We are in the midst of a spiritual knowledge revolution. While there can be some confusion in this, there is also the opportunity for systematic integrations and applications of knowledge in ways that were not possible in the past. This is particularly true of powerful spiritual practices that have long been held in secret in fragments around the world. Now, for the first time, the secrets are dissolving and the fragments are being joined and applied in ways that serve the need of our time. Causes and effects in spiritual practice are being examined systematically much more so than in the past, and adjustments are occurring to optimize results, lifting the field of spiritual practice to the level of real science. So it is a

new era of spiritual knowledge, practice and experience. This is having a profound effect on spiritual seekers everywhere, and on their actions flowing from the accelerating surge of spiritual desire coming from within.

Together, increasing internal spiritual desire and increasing external resources for spiritual knowledge, are producing a dynamic that has not been seen in human history. Never before has it been so easy to fulfill the promise of salvation found in the ancient scriptures, summed up in the Christian maxim:

“Seek and you will find. Knock and the door will open.”

Many are eagerly knocking, and many doors are opening ... being opened from the inside!

This remarkable phenomenon is not limited by culture or religion, and is, in fact, occurring in millions of people living in all of the world's cultures and religions. Change is in the air...

Now let's look at the specifics of how the underlying principles of vision, desire and action

## Further Reading and Support

Yogani is an American spiritual scientist who, for forty years, has been integrating ancient techniques from around the world which cultivate human spiritual transformation. The approach is non-sectarian, and open to all. His books include:

### *Advanced Yoga Practices – Easy Lessons for Ecstatic Living (Two Volumes)*

Two large user-friendly textbooks providing over 400 detailed lessons on the AYP integrated system of practices.

### *The Secrets of Wilder – A Novel*

The story of young Americans discovering and utilizing actual secret practices leading to human spiritual transformation.

### *The AYP Enlightenment Series*

Easy-to-read instruction books on yoga practices, including:

- *Deep Meditation – Pathway to Personal Freedom*
- *Spinal Breathing Pranayama – Journey to Inner Space*
- *Tantra – Discovering the Power of Pre-Orgasmic Sex*
- *Asanas, Mudras and Bandhas – Awakening Ecstatic Kundalini*
- *Samyama – Cultivating Stillness in Action, Siddhis and Miracles*
- *Diet, Shatkarmas and Amaroli – Yogic Nutrition and Cleansing for Health and Spirit*
- *Self-Inquiry – Dawn of the Witness and the End of Suffering*
- *Bhakti and Karma Yoga – The Science of Devotion and Liberation Through Action*
- *Eight Limbs of Yoga – The Structure and Pacing of Self-Directed Spiritual Practice*
- *Retreats – Fast Track to Freedom – A Guide for Leaders and Practitioners*
- *Liberation – The Fruition of Yoga*

For up-to-date information on the writings of Yogani, and for the free *AYP Support Forums*, please visit:

[www.advancedyogapractices.com](http://www.advancedyogapractices.com)