

Reducing Karma and the Sources of Negative Actions, Speech and Thoughts

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In loving service,

Swami Jnaneshvara

Karma

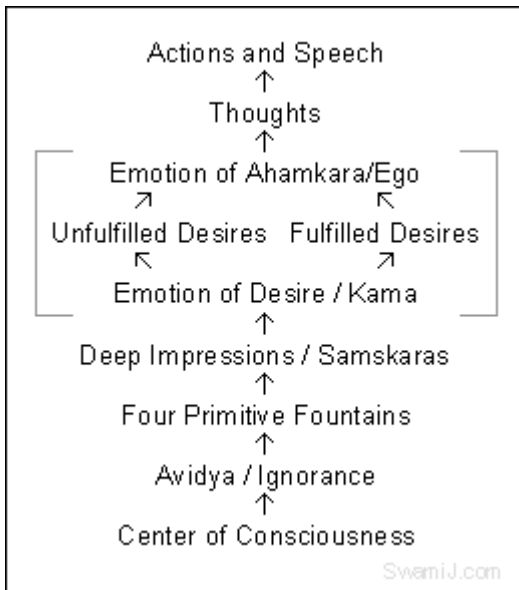
Reducing Karma and the Sources of Negative Actions, Speech, and Thoughts

by Swami Jnaneshvara Bharati

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Karma, actions, and conditionings: The word *Karma* literally means *action*. It may appear that Karma is happening *to* us, as if some outside force is causing *good* things or *bad* things to come to us. However, it is really our own *inner* conditionings and processes that are leading us to experience *outer* effects or consequences in relation to our own *actions*.



Outline of the process of Karma: The process of Karma is outlined in the chart at the left.

As you scroll down through this article, you will find detailed descriptions of each of the stages on the chart. The particular section being described is highlighted in **blue** in the accompanying chart.

It is also useful to read these pages about karma:

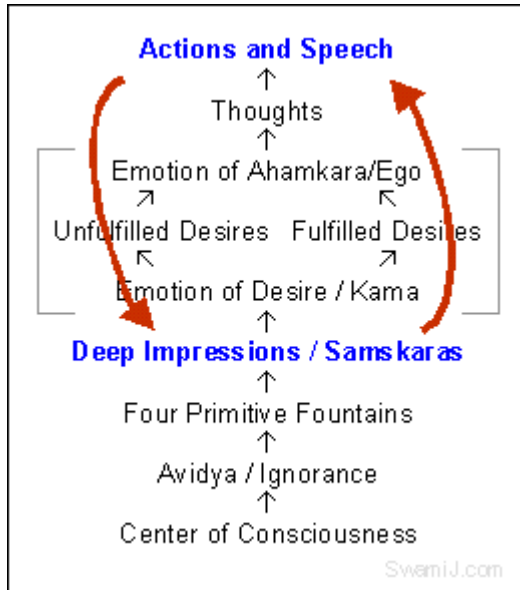
- [Three Types of Karma](#)
- [Reducing Karma - Yoga Sutras](#)
- [Karma and Non-Attachment](#)
- [Karma articles Index](#)

Law of Karma: The law of Karma is a universal process, whereby causes lead to effects. This is something that all of us are already familiar with, whether or not we use the word *Karma* to describe it. Newton's third law of motion, that every action leads to a reaction, is an application of the law of Karma. Whether we are talking about physics or daily life in the world, it is extremely useful to understand the law and process of Karma so that we may regulate or direct the process. We can soften the impact of the playing out of our past Karmas, and can *choose* our own future Karma if we are willing to put in the effort to learn how to do it.

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Remember the Bliss beyond Karma: When journeying through the process of Karma, it can start to feel a bit heavy with all the explanations and inner explorations. The best companion on this journey through Karma is to remember that we are trying to experience that Bliss, Joy, or Absolute Truth, which is beyond, behind, or underneath all of the Karma. By remembering that the goal is Joy, Bliss, or Absolute, we (and the mind) will have a focal point and a context for all of the efforts put into sadhana (spiritual practices). Above all else, seek that Joy or Bliss.

Two Essential Terms



Two essential terms: To understand the meaning of *Karma*, and to reduce its control through Yoga, one needs to understand another term, and that is *Samskara*. *Karma* literally means *actions*, and those actions come from the deep impressions of habit that are called *Samskaras*.

These two act together: Our actions and speech bring us experiences or consequences in the world. Those, in turn, lead to further creation of deep impressions (*Samskaras*) in the basement of the mind. Later, those latent impressions come to life and create still further experiences.

We must deal with both: If we want the higher insights and freedoms, we need to deal with both our actions and these habits.

Samskara is the most important principle: The most important principle to understand about *Karma* is the principle of the *Samskara*, those deep impressions. It is those deep impressions or seed habit patterns, which are at the root of **ALL** of our *Karmas*, whether we think of that *Karma* as *good* or *bad*. There are two general things we need to do in relation to those *Samskaras*:

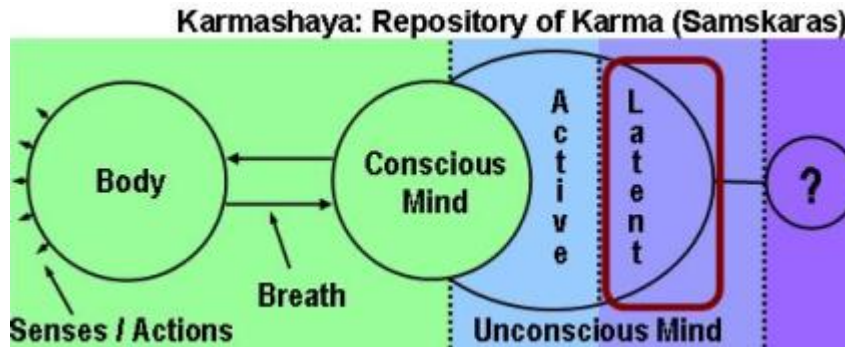
- **External:** Allow some *Samskaras* to wisely play out *externally* in our life, in ways that allow us to become free from them recycling into more and more loops of habitual actions. (See [Archery article](#))
- **Internal:** Let go of other *Samskaras* *internally* by attenuating the colorings of attractions, aversions, and fears through the processes meditation, contemplation, and prayer.

Karma Yoga: To purify or attenuate the *Samskaras* while one is doing actions in the world is the Yoga known as *Karma Yoga*. This involves being aware or mindful of our actions and speech, and seeing their sources in emotions and the subtler processes of the mind. *Karma Yoga* also involves doing our actions in ways, which are of benefit to others (service or *seva*), freeing ourselves from the cycles of feeding egotism.

Subtler freedom through Meditation: The subtler, finer colorings of *Samskaras* are systematically encountered, weakened, reduced, eliminated and transcended through the process of meditation. This is outlined in greater detail in the [Yoga Sutras](#), including the first

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25 Sutras of [Chapter 2](#).



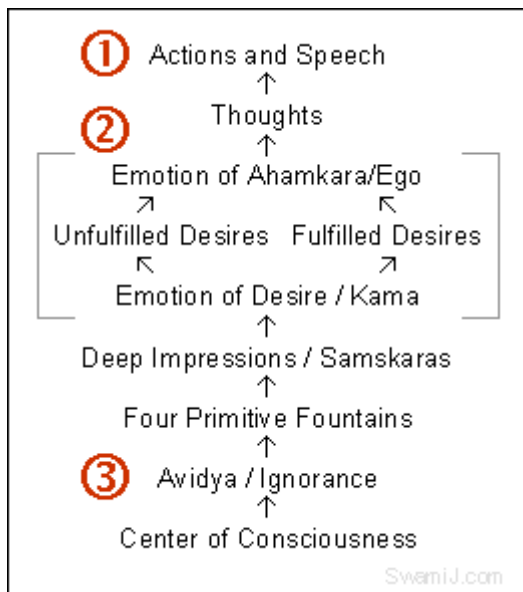
Cycling process of the inner instruments: To experience the Eternal Self beyond the many forms, one needs to experientially understand the cycling process of the inner instruments that drives *Karma* (actions). This cycling process between actions and the deep impressions also is affected by the inner thinking process, the emotions, primitive urges, and the ignorance called *Avidya*. All of these are infused with or operated by the pure consciousness, which is at the core of our being. (These are described in the article.)

Attenuating the deep impressions: By observing this process in one's own inner laboratory of Yoga Meditation, the effects of deep impressions (*Samskaras*) can be reduced, and thus, *Karma* regulated. This process of [attenuating Samskaras](#) and *Karma* increasingly allows attention to shift to the viewing point of [Witness](#) of it all.

The cycle of actions (*Karma*):

- ...arises from a mostly unconscious thought process,
- ...that is inspired by the inner passions of "I-am-ness"
- ...and specific desires ("I want..."),
- ...that is filtered through layers of deep impressions (*Samskaras*),
- ...that are inspired by primitive urges
- ...that first arise with the individuation of the wave from the ocean of Oneness.

Three Freedoms



Three freedoms come: There are three general stages of freedom that come from this process of dealing with Karma:

1. **Freedom from Actions:** Freedom from the bondage of *Karma* (actions), meaning that one does not necessarily have to act out of habit, but is free to make choice.
2. **Freedom from Thought:** Freedom from the bondage of *Thought*, meaning that one has the ability to regulate thoughts and emotions in positive ways, not being merely dragged around by the conditionings of the mind.
3. **Freedom from Ignorance:** Freedom from the bondage of *Ignorance*, meaning that one has become free from the primal forgetting of ones True nature, and of the temporary, painful nature of things.

Emerging freedoms: These three freedoms emerge in stages. The direct experience of the Center of Consciousness, the Self, leads towards all three of these freedoms.

Observe and Regulate your actions and speech: One of the first things to do in sadhana (spiritual practices) is to regulate actions and speech, promoting the positive and useful, while setting aside the negative and not useful. This is the first part of breaking the cycles of actions and reactions, or *Karma*. In Yoga, this includes practicing the *Yamas*, which are not harming, truthfulness, not stealing, remembering higher truth, and not being possessive ([Yoga Sutras 2.30-2.34](#)). Initially these practices might be done on the more surface level, like behavioral psychology, but later are done on a subtler level through meditation ([Yoga Sutras 2.10-2.11](#)). Then the *roots* of those negative or not useful actions and speech are dealt with through meditation at the level of Samskaras (See the Samskaras level on the chart).

Witness your Emotions and Thoughts: Observe your emotional reactions during the day and you will easily notice that most, if not all of them are one of two types. The emotions are either in getting what you want (or successfully avoiding what you don't want), or not getting what you want (or failing to avoid what you don't want). These emotional reactions will cluster around happiness or pride when we get our way, and frustration or jealousy when we do not get our way. These reactions might be intense or very mild. One of the most straightforward and useful practices in observing these emotional reactions is to ask ourselves, "What desire is being fulfilled here?" or "What desire is not being fulfilled here?" In either case, it is very useful to witness these emotional reactions, as they give us clues about the underlying Deep Impressions (Samskaras), and can help us see the way the Four Primitive Urges (see chart) set the stage for these. Then they can be systematically attenuated, eventually revealing the joy and Truth underneath.

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Remember and observe the basic forms of Ignorance: It is extremely useful to notice from time to time the many ways in which we *forget* the subtler realities in our busy daily lives. Avidya means *ignorance*, to *not see clearly*. Avidya literally means *without-knowledge*, as the *a-* means *without*, and *vidya* means knowledge (See [Yoga Sutra 2.5](#)). We may observe, for example, some frustration when something we own breaks, is lost, or is stolen. The root of the frustration comes because of forgetting the temporary nature of things. When somebody says something negative about us, we might feel hurt or become defensive because of the root forgetting of *who I am*, thinking that I *am* my personality. Remembering the reality of things can help lead to freedom, though we will also need to deal with these in subtler meditation. (See the Avidya/Ignorance level on the chart)

Yamas and Niyamas

What do we do when we find we are going in the wrong direction in our actions, speech, or thoughts?

We may intend to be going in this direction. 		But sometimes we may be going in this direction.
Yamas		
Ahimsa / Non-harming		Harming / Hurting
Satya / Truthfulness		Lying / Misrepresenting
Asteya / Non-stealing		Stealing / Taking
Brahmacharya / Remembering		Forgetting / Dropping
Aparigraha / Non-possessiveness		Immoderate / Excessive
Niyamas		
Saucha / Purity		Impurity / Unclean
Santosha / Contentment		Discontent / Anxiousness
Tapas / Sense Training		Unrestrained / Excessive
Svadyaya / Self-study		Ignoring / Blinding
Ishvara Pranidhana / Surrender		Clinging / Holding

Train your mind gently and lovingly, as you would train a small child who simply does not yet know how to behave properly. When mind is going in the wrong direction, train it by literally talking to it, training it in the truth that it is going in the wrong direction, and that this will only bring continued suffering.

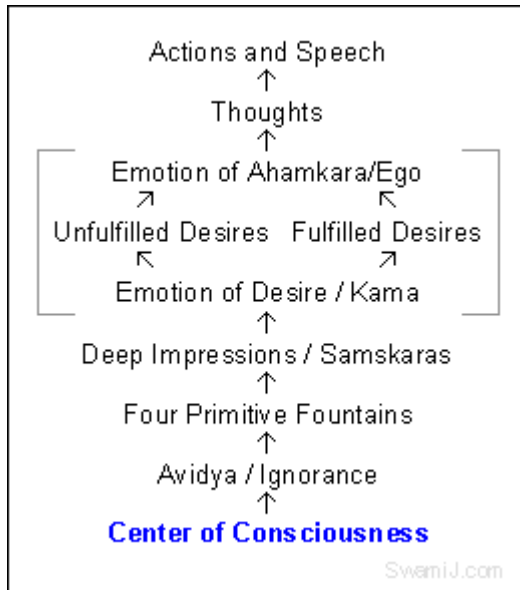
Say to your mind, "Mind, going in this direction is not useful. This will bring nothing but unending pain and greater ignorance of truth. Mind, you need to let go of this, and go in the other direction." (See Yoga Sutras 2.33-2.34)

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About the descriptions below...

Descriptions from inner to outer: The descriptions below explain the process of Karma by starting at the subtlest level and then progressively moving outward. One after the other, the process emerges through these levels until there is finally a playing out of actions (Karmas) in the external world. The particular section being described is highlighted in **blue** in the accompanying chart.

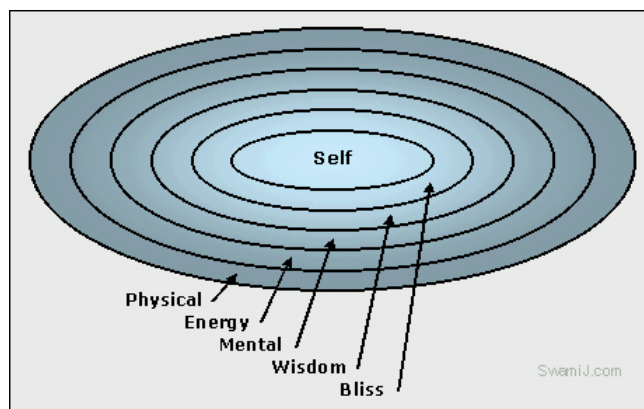
Center of Consciousness



Center: Underneath all of the levels and layers of inner process affecting Karma is the [Center of Consciousness](#) (or whatever name one chooses to call it). Understanding the process of Karma and its sources does not require one to use or believe in any particular term or concept for this ultimate level that we are here calling Center of Consciousness. The principles and processes of Karma apply to all people, regardless of how we might conceive this core of consciousness.

Conditioning: It is the *conditioning* of this otherwise pure consciousness that relates to Karma and the sources of actions, speech, and thoughts. The Center of Consciousness has been placed on this chart so that we can see the way in which this *conditioning* process happens.

Be ever mindful of your Center: Cultivate an attitude of constant awareness of the core of your being, or center of consciousness. It doesn't matter whether you use these terms, or refer to that center as Self, Soul, Atman, or some other name. It is *very* useful to be mindful of that center while doing your actions in the world. Attention may not be there continuously, but can *pop* into awareness from time to time. This allows you to see the way in which the center is, as the name says, the *center* from which all of the other deep habits, emotions, thoughts, actions and speech emerge.



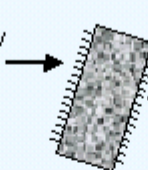
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Remembering often: To recall this center of consciousness is a frequent reminder that *who I am* is independent of these habits or Samskaras (though we are responsible for them), much as if we were to see ourselves as being electricity, independent of the machines or instruments we might operate. This practice is a real key to internalizing or remembering the whole of this process of Karma, and learning how to deal with it. This is often called Meditation in Action or Mindfulness.

Self-Realization and the Microchip

There are three basic "parts" in relation to a microchip:

② The program and memory that operates in the chip



① The stuff out of which the chip is made

③ The electricity that allows the chip to operate

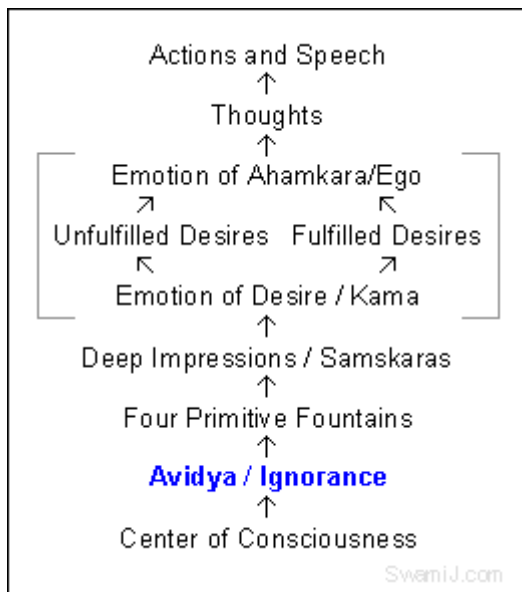
There are also three basic "parts" in relation to a human being:

- 1) **Stuff:** The basic "stuff" (prakriti) out of which all of the subsequent levels of our being are constructed or manifested
- 2) **Manifestations:** The outward manifestation of that basic "stuff," like the program and memory in the microchip, including individuality, intelligence, mind, senses, and the building blocks of earth, water, fire, air, and space, along with countless combinations and permutations of all of these
- 3) **Consciousness:** The pure, untainted, eternal consciousness (purusha), which flows through the entire matrix of activity of actions, speech and thought, like the unadulterated electricity that flows through the microchip

Experiencing the Self: Self-Realization is the state of knowing ourselves as "electricity," the pure consciousness that allows all of the surface levels of our being to operate. There is no "I" as a composite of personality, program or memory, which is itself attaining or gaining something new. Rather, it is the Realization of that core Self, which is beyond all of those countless false identities, as unique and beautiful as those may be.

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Avidya / Ignorance



Avidya/Ignorance: *Avidya* means *ignorance*, or *to not see clearly*. Ignorance does not mean stupid or lacking in intelligence, but refers to the root ability *to ignore*.

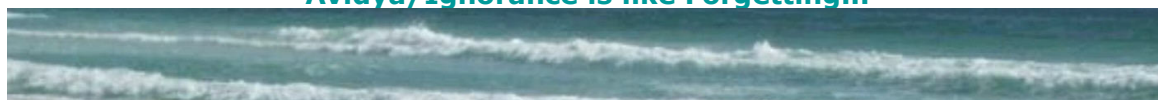
Wave forgets it is ocean: Imagine an ocean, which is an ocean of consciousness, and that the wave *forgets* that its essential nature is that of the ocean itself. That forgetting, or ignoring, allows the wave to think that it is an individual, independent of the ocean. We humans do this too; we forget we are part of the whole, and declare, "I am so-and-so." See also Yoga Sutras on Avidya or Ignorance:

- Sutras [2.3-2.4](#) on five colorings
- Sutra [2.5](#) on four kinds of Avidya

Kinds of Avidya: The aspect of Avidya that has to do with our fundamental forgetting that we are part of the whole is an extremely subtle part of our being. However, this process also manifests in more surface ways as well. For example, Avidya (ignorance) sets the stage for us to confuse pain for pleasure, impure thoughts for pure thoughts, temporary for long lasting, and our actions as being our identity. You might want to read through [Yoga Sutra 2.5](#) on types of Avidya.

Opens the door to Karma: This primal forgetting or ignorance of Avidya allows for the *possibility* of the chains of Karma, or cause and effect. Imagine for a moment that you were a totally enlightened sage, and that you never, ever, lost touch with your eternal Self. If you were in that state, you would be *free*, at all times, even when actions were playing out! However, those who are *not* free, who *do* have Karma, are influenced by this foundation of Ignorance or Avidya. In forgetting our True Nature and falsely identifying ourselves with the objects of the world that are stored in the mind, we are subject to the playing out of the seemingly endless cycles of desires and actions, cause and effect. The whole process of Karma begins with, or rests on the foundation of Avidya or Ignorance.

Avidya/Ignorance is like Forgetting...

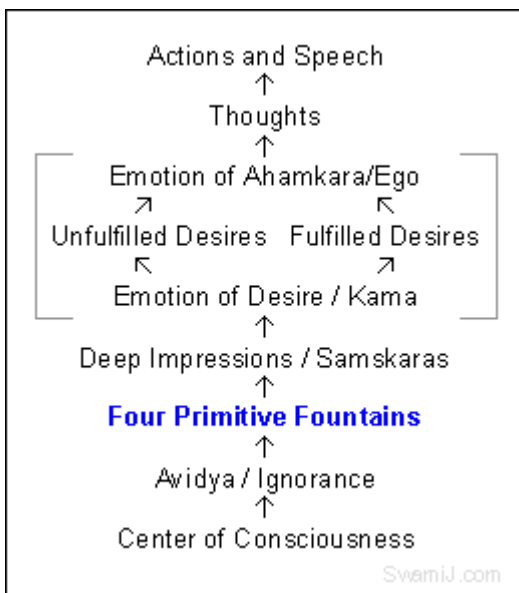


The wave forgets the truth that it is ocean, thinking itself to be the grand shape, which it has temporarily taken. For a while, it takes on the rupa (form) of wave. Finally, it remembers its true rupa (form) of ocean. The two coexist, though one is true, and the other, though beautiful, is only relatively true. So too, we humans forget our true nature, but, through Yoga, can remember.

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Avidya is an ability: This Avidya or Ignorance is actually an ability or skill, in addition to being the most subtle obstacle; it is not *all bad*. While it is true that Avidya masks our True Nature, it also allows us to function in the world. Imagine that you did *not* have the ability to *ignore* all of the thoughts going on in your unconscious mind at a given moment. This could be a state of what psychologists call *flooding* of unconscious material, which might be called psychosis. If we were masters of non-attachment (See [Yoga Sutras 1.15-1.16](#)), then we could be completely open, with no Avidya or Ignorance, and we would be unaffected by that flood of thoughts. That would be a state of complete freedom from the bondage of Karma, the bondage of thought, and the bondage of Avidya. However, in the meantime, it is good to see how Avidya sets the stage for the play of Karma, so we can do the practical work in our daily lives as spiritual aspirants.

Four Primitive Fountains



Four Primitive Fountains: All creatures share some common drives, which form the *root* of all other drives, wants, wishes, or motives, which might be more specific in nature. While you might see other nuances within these, there are four basic urges for food, sleep, sex, and self-preservation.

- Food
- Sleep
- Sex
- Self-preservation

Others come from these: These are called *fountains* because other drives spring from these four, combining and recombining in many complex combinations.

See also the articles:

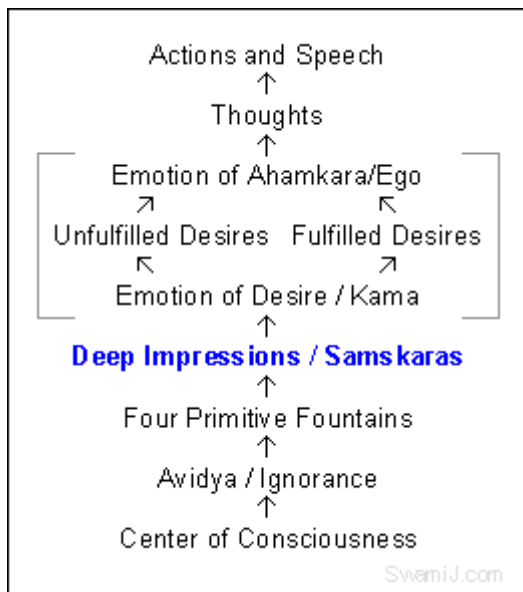
[Lifestyle and the Four Basic Urges](#)

[Four Primitive Fountains](#)

Generalized urges: These four primitive urges are very *generalized*, while the ensuing experiences of life lead to more *particularized* drives, habits, or conditionings. Thus, for example, all creatures have a drive toward sustenance, which we can broadly call *food*. However, humans have a narrower range of appropriate food compared to others. For example, the *food* of an algae growing in a pond might be different than what people eat. As our food drive becomes more particularized, we might develop a predisposition for healthy food or tasty food, for apples or chocolate.

Also open the door to Karma: As was mentioned above in relation to Avidya or Ignorance, these very broad Primitive Urges also allow for the next level of conditionings to occur, where we start to get a real feel for the nature of Karma and how we actually deal with it in our spiritual lives and meditation practices.

Deep Impressions / Samskaras



Deep impressions drive Karma: There are many layers and levels of *Samskaras*, the stored impressions resulting from actions and desires, asleep in the unconscious.

Latent, but with potential: In their latent form, these *Samskaras* have no immediate impelling force to action, but only the *potential* for such action. These are the driving force of our *Karma*. Sometimes the *Samskaras* become active, and then they motivate and control the mind and the emotions, which in turn leads to the possibility of actions (*Karma*).

Sleeping desires: Just as a person may sleep, these latent impressions are usually asleep, so to speak. It is only when they become active that they stir into active desires.



Two essential terms: To understand the meaning of *Karma*, and to reduce its control, one needs to understand another term, and that is *Samskara*. *Karma* literally means *actions*, and those actions come from the deep impressions of habit that are called *Samskaras*.

These two act together: Our actions and speech bring us experiences or consequences in the world. Those, in turn, lead to further creation of deep impressions (*Samskaras*) in the basement of the mind. Later, those latent impressions come to life and create still further experiences.

We must deal with both: If we want the higher spiritual freedoms and insights, it is necessary not only to deal with the *external* actions or behavior, but also with the deep, *internal* impressions or *Samskaras*. These must be systematically encountered, weakened, eliminated, and transcended.

Karma Yoga: To purify or attenuate the *Samskaras* while one is doing actions in the world is the Yoga known as *Karma Yoga*. This involves being aware or mindful of our actions and speech, and seeing their sources in emotions and the subtler processes of the mind. Karma Yoga also involves doing our actions in ways, which are of benefit to others, freeing ourselves from the cycles of feeding egotism.

Subtler freedom through Meditation: The subtler, finer colorings of *Samskaras* are systematically encountered, weakened, reduced, eliminated and transcended through the process of meditation (See [Yoga Sutras](#), including the first 25 Sutras of [Chapter 2](#)).

Cycling process of the inner instruments: To experience the Eternal Self beyond the many forms, one needs to experientially understand the cycling process of the inner instruments that drives *Karma* (actions). This cycling process between actions and the deep impressions also is affected by the inner thinking process, the emotions, primitive urges, and the ignorance called *Avidya* (See Yoga Sutra [2.5](#) for more info about Ignorance or *Avidya*). All of these are infused with or operated by the pure consciousness, which is at the

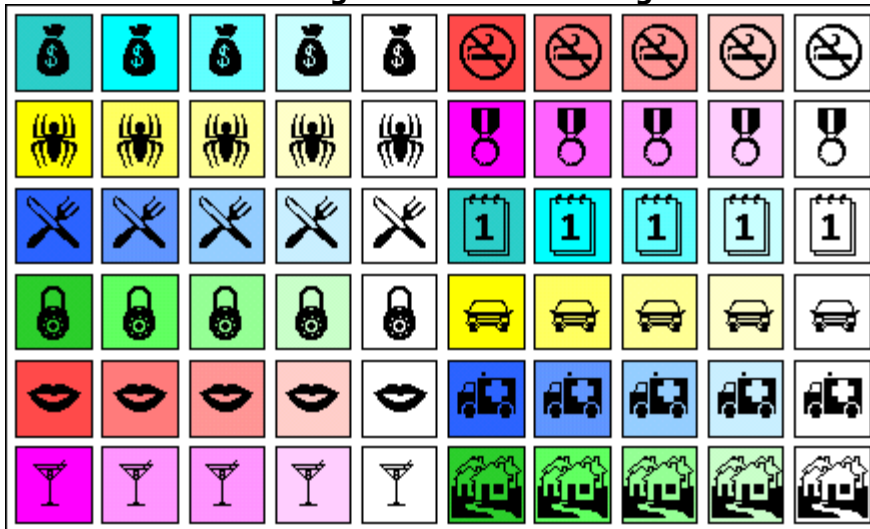
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core of our being.

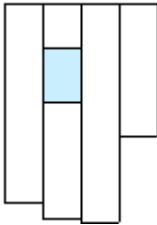
Attenuating the deep impressions: By observing this process in one's own inner laboratory of Yoga Meditation, the effects of deep impressions (*Samskaras*) can be reduced, and thus, *Karma* regulated. This process of [attenuating](#) *Samskaras* and *Karma* increasingly allows attention to shift to the viewing point of [Witness](#) of it all.

Samskaras must be examined and purified: To make progress in regulating *Karma*, the *Samskaras* need to be examined and purified, which means to gradually *attenuate* their intensity, until they can finally be completely purified in the inner fire of pure consciousness. This is an important part of the process of Yoga Meditation and [Yoga Nidra](#) as tools to deal with *Karma*.

Uncoloring Your Colored Thoughts



Yoga Sutras:
2.12-2.25



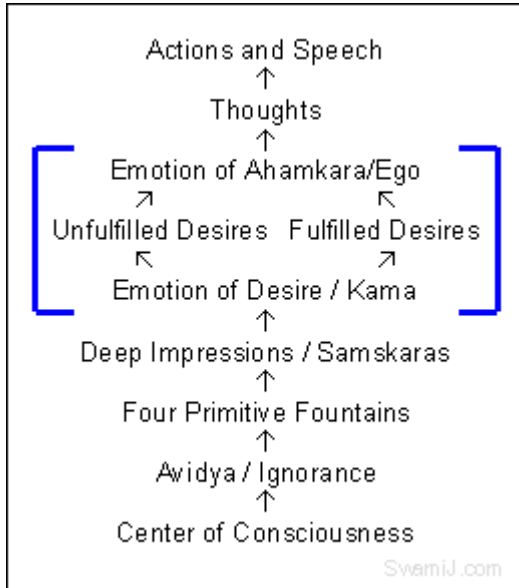
Breaking the alliance of Karma: The key to breaking the cycle of karma is that the connection between *seer* and that which is *seen* is set aside ([2.17](#)). This allows one to avoid even the [future karmas](#) that have not yet manifested ([2.16](#)). Ignorance, or *avidya* ([2.5](#)), is the cause of this alliance ([2.24](#)), and eliminating this ignorance is the means of ending the alliance ([2.25](#)). This, in turn, breaks the cycle of karma. (See Yoga Sutras [2.12-2.25](#) for deeper explanations on the process of breaking the alliance of Karma.)

See the beginning of this article: The relationship of *Samskaras* to the whole of the process of karma, and this relationship is also explained at the beginning of this article.

See also these articles:

- [Three Types of Karma](#)
- [Reducing Karma - Yoga Sutras](#)
- [Uncoloring your Colored Thoughts](#)
- [Four Functions of Mind](#) (particularly *chitta*, the storage of *Samskaras*)

Emotions



Emotions: These three lines in the chart relate to Emotions, and are further explained in their individual sections.

Which comes first? It is a very common to ask, "Which comes first, thoughts or emotions?" The answer is, "both!" By understanding the law and process of Karma, this is easy to see.

- When the Deep Impressions or Samskaras are triggered or awakened, they align with the primary Emotion of Desire itself.
- The emotional process then leads to a thought process that is typically only partially conscious.
- This leads to the surface mental awareness of the thoughts and the ensuing actions and speech.

Latent thoughts > Emotions > Active thoughts: Thus, we see that the *latent* thought impressions (stored from our countless experiences) lead to an *emotional* process, which then lead to an *active* thought process, which, in turn, leads to actions and speech. This Active thought process occurs through an aspect of mind called *manas* in Yoga science and *sensory-motor mind* in psychology.

(See *manas* in the article, [Four Functions of Mind](#))

Witness the Emotions often during daily life: It is extremely useful to become a witness to our own emotional processes during our actions in the world. Isn't it true that we *often*, and *easily* observe the gestures, body language, and emotional reactions of *others*? If we can so easily see it in others, we can also see it in *ourselves*. By clearly seeing our own positive and negative emotions (those are the culprits), we can promote or strengthen the positive, useful emotions like love, compassion, benevolence, and acceptance (See [Yoga Sutra 1.33](#) for meditation on these positive emotions). Witnessing our own body language, speech, actions, *and* our emotional reactions will give us a mirror reflection of our Deep Impressions or Samskaras. It also allows us to see the predictable ways in which the Four Primitive Fountains (food, sleep, sex, self-preservation) play out. Thus, we not only learn to regulate our emotions in positive ways, but also come to see the roots from which they arise. This self-witnessing in daily life is a major part of Karma Yoga, going along with doing our actions selflessly for others.

Practice and Non-Attachment

Abhyasa and **Vairagya** are two of the most important foundation principles of Yoga. Abhyasa means practice and Vairagya means non-attachment. Balancing these two companions is a key to spiritual life, allowing one to pursue the subtler meditation practices.

Abhyasa involves cultivating a strong conviction, a persistent effort to consistently choose practices with actions, speech, and thoughts that lead in the direction of a stable tranquility (sthitau).

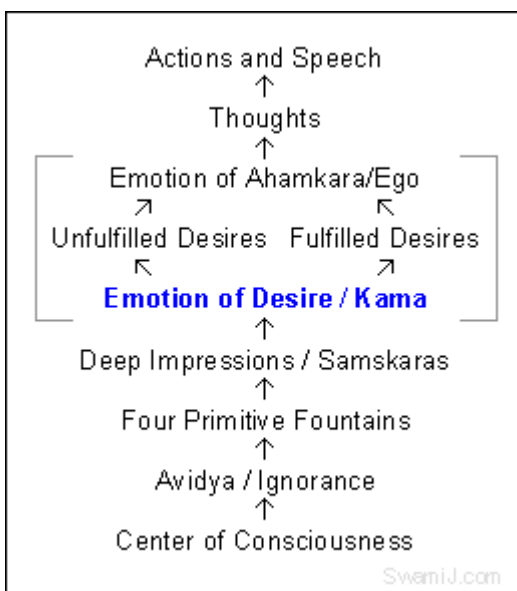
Vairagya involves learning to actively and systematically encounter, explore and let go of the many attachments, aversions, fears, and false identities that are clouding the true Self.

They work together: Practice leads you in the right direction, while non-attachment allows you to continue the inner journey without getting sidetracked into the pains and pleasures along the way.

(See Yoga Sutras 1.12-1.16)

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Emotion of Desire / Kama



Desire as it's own entity: *Kama* is desire itself (a different word than *Karma*, which means *actions* stemming from desire), and is one of the two primary emotions (along with *ahamkara*). *Kama* is the mother of all other desires. It gives rise to both the desire to satisfy the senses, and the beneficial desire to help others selflessly.

Desire is a single process: Regardless of the particular object being desired, the process of Desire itself is the same. The same wanting, wishing, or longing, etc., is there. Think of examples in your own life and you will see this clearly, that there is a fundamental wave of Desire, which then associates with particular objects.

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Kama, not Karma: Note the the word for *desire* is *kama* (without the letter "r"), and that the word for *actions* is *karma* (with the letter "r"), which are two different words and concepts.

Think of your favorite desires: Whether the desire is for your favorite food, the comfort of family life, success on your job, money in the bank, or a new car, the desire itself is the same. With some reflection, it becomes easy to see the way in which the prime desire allies itself with the particular objects. This is not *bad*, and is not to suggest that one should suddenly attempt to abandon all desires in the world. Rather, it means being aware of how the unconscious process of karma works so that those desires do not make you a slave to their intensity.

Kama is the prime desire: *Kama* is the *prime* desire, and from this impelling force arise all of the other, specific desires. It is this prime force of *kama* which motivates a person to do anything and everything. *Kama* is blind desire that has not yet been related with any particular objects or thoughts. It is the nature of *kama* that it has no sense of discrimination, judgment or understanding. *Kama* then associates itself with deep impressions (*Samskaras*), and that combination then motivates one to do something simply to fulfill that desire—solely because it exists.

Desire pulls one outward: All of these desires draw one outward, into the domains of mind and the physical world, so as to seek to fulfill the desires, either in Dreaming or Waking states. The fulfilling of these desires is *Karma*, stimulated by *kama*.

One desire stands alone: There is one desire that stands alone as different. That is, the desire for Truth, Reality, Self, or God, and this desire alone draws the attention inward, past all of the other desires, conditionings of *Samskaras*, *Karma*, and Primitive Fountains. (See the [paper on the koshas](#).)

Association of Desire and objects is key: By seeing the way this uniform process of Desire associates with numerous objects, we come to see a universal need to gain some degree of mastery over the process of Desire itself. If we can do that, even to a small degree, we can start to regulate our actions and speech, which alters our consequences in beneficial ways. This changes the Deep Impressions or *Samskaras* in the basement of the mind.

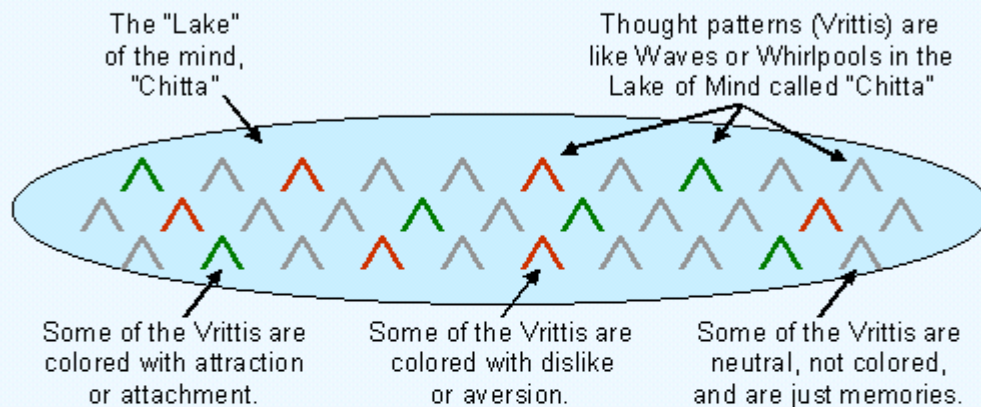
Change your Inner Dialogue from "I want" to "It wants"

When likes or dislikes arise from the lake of the mind, we may say or think words like, "I want this or that," or "I don't like this or that." However:

It is not the **"I"** who wants this or that.

It is the **"It"** that wants this or that.

It is the individual thought pattern **itself**, the deep impression or habit pattern in the mind field, which desires to fulfill its attraction or aversion.



Yoga explains that the reason for not experiencing the state of Self-realization is that pure consciousness identifies itself with the deep thought patterns (Vrittis) of the mind-field (Chitta; see Yoga Sutras 1.2-1.4):

The problem is that **"I"** identifies with all the Vrittis (thought patterns), and each of them is an **"It"** that is not really who **"I"** am.

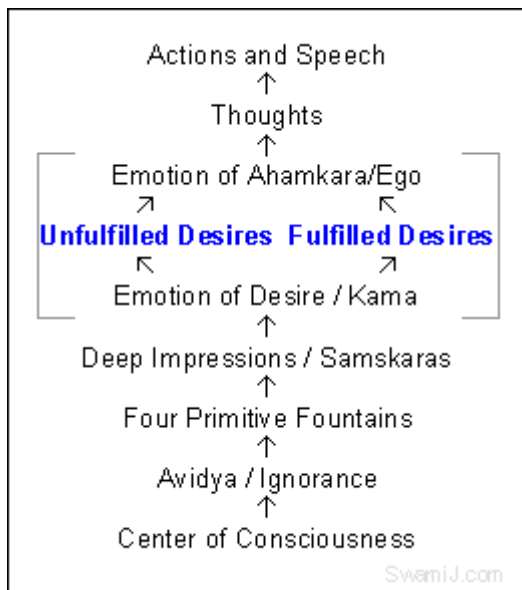
To see that it is the Vrittis (not "I") that are colored with attraction, aversion, and fear is a crucial step in the path of Self-realization. One of the easiest, most straightforward ways to begin to correct this misunderstanding is:

Stop saying, **"I"** want,
Start saying, **"It"** wants.

We are definitely responsible for those many individual thoughts, and their resulting speech and actions, but those thoughts are not "who I am." As meditation progresses, the colorings of attractions and aversions gradually weaken, as the real "I," the True Self more clearly shines through.

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Unfulfilled Desires / Fulfilled Desires



Desire combines with Samskaras: In the previous section on the Emotion of Desire itself (Kama), desire is seen to be its own motivating force. It is a coloring, so to speak, which then associates with the latent impressions (Samskaras) in the bed of the lake of the mind. There is *one* essence of desire and *many* objects to which it might associate. Thus, there may be countless possibilities of "desired objects," while there remains only *one* coloring of desire itself.

Desire works in 1 of 2 ways: Once there is a particular desire (or aversion, which is also a desire of sorts), there are only two possibilities:

1. You **do** get what you want.
2. You do **not** get what you want.

When desire is NOT fulfilled: If one's desire (kama) is *not* achieved or fulfilled, then there is the emotion of frustration or anger, which is called *krodha*. Anger results from unfulfilled desires that one has not learned how to arrange, to pacify, or to understand. It means that there is a desire that needs to be understood and resolved. Jealousy, *matsarya*, comes when one doesn't have something that he wants and someone else does.

There are many other words that describe the subtleties of emotional resistance when desires are *not* fulfilled. However, they all involve a sort of "pushing against," similar to that with anger.

When desire IS fulfilled: If one's desire (kama) *is* achieved or fulfilled, then there is the emotion of pride, or *muda*, having what others do not. When one attains what is longed for, then attachment comes; this attachment is called *moha*. *Moha* is the incorrect sense that, "This is mine!" When one is attached to something, one becomes greedy, which is called *lobha*. Once there is attachment to something, it is as if one can never have enough.

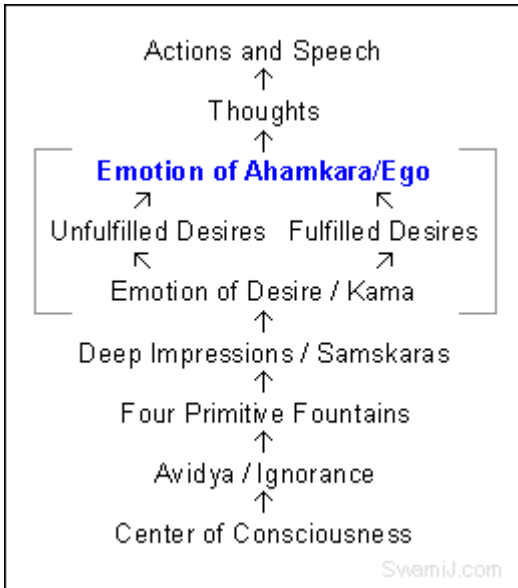
There are many other words that describe the subtleties of emotional attraction when desires *are* fulfilled. However, they all involve a "drawing towards," similar to that which comes with pride or greed.

Four Meditations on Positive Emotions: Yoga suggests meditation on four positive emotions as a means of stabilizing and clearing the mind. These four are meditations on love, compassion, benevolence, and acceptance (See [Yoga Sutra 1.33](#) for meditation on these positive emotions). Meditation on these positive emotions is done both by being mindful of them during the day, and also consciously, intentionally practicing them at your regular meditation time. Meditation on these attitudes brings a tremendous amount of freedom from difficult relationships with the people in our personal lives, and our fellow humans in general. To feel an ever increasing sense of love, compassion, benevolence, and acceptance is a beautiful experience.

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Preparing for advanced meditations: In relation to the whole of the process of dealing with Karma and enlightenment, these meditations on attitudes or emotions are preliminary, and set the stage for the more advanced meditations to come later. In the later meditations, the aspirant is seeking out the roots, which are beyond, or deeper than the emotions, however beautiful and alluring those might be. The seeker of enlightenment is seeking all of the levels of freedom (described above), so as to eventually experience the highest Bliss and Truth beyond.

Emotion of Ahamkara / Ego



Either way, Ego may increase: Whether desires are fulfilled or not fulfilled, Ego can increase.

If desires are fulfilled, Ego can increase because of the pride and other emotions associated with attaining ones goals. Ego even further takes on the identities related to those objects of desire.

If desires are not fulfilled, Ego can increase because of the frustration and other emotions associated with not attaining ones goals. Ego seeks to defend its stance, and thus increases.

Either way, one can end up facing the challenge of an increased sense of Ego.

Ego and desire are two primary emotions: Egoism, or *ahamkara*, is one of the two primary emotions (along with the prime desire, *kama*). Notice carefully how this works.

Two meanings of "Ego" It is extremely important to understand that the word Ego is used in two different ways. One is the psychological use of the word and the other is according to Yoga. Both are equally valid and the terms can properly be used in both ways. However, it is necessary to know the two concepts so that it is easy to discern which way the word is being used in a given sentence.

See the section on [Two Egos](#) in the Four Functions of Mind article.

Ego gives individuality and separation: Because of *ahamkara*, we are individuals, but then *ahamkara* also separates us from the whole. This "I" refers to ourselves as separate from others, and becomes the center of our lives.

Four functions of mind: To understand the origin of *ahamkara* (the "I"), it is very important to understand the Four Functions of Mind. We are like a wheel, which needs both spokes and a hub to rotate. The hub is the still Center of Consciousness and the four spokes are the four functions of mind, one of which is *ahamkara*. The [Four Functions of Mind](#) are:

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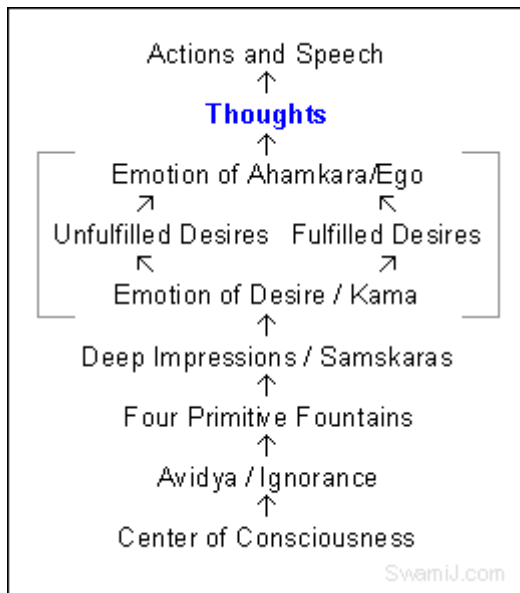


- *Ahamkara*, the ego or "I-maker"
- *Manas*, the sensory-motor mind that directs the [ten senses or indriyas](#)
- *Buddhi*, which knows, decides, judges, and discriminates
- *Chitta*, the storehouse of all of these, along with the countless deep impressions).

Emotion is stronger than intelligence: Intelligence has no power before *bhava*, the power of emotion. But intelligence, if properly handled, can channel emotional power so that we can use it positively. Learning to use *bhava* properly is essential to successful living and working with *Karma*. If one can use that emotional power, the highest state of ecstasy can be attained in a second's time.

Spiritual bliss is not an emotion: It is important to note that the emotions of personality that interact with mental process are at a different level of reality or consciousness than the bliss, or ananda that is deeper in our being. This is explained in an [article on the Koshas](#) (sheaths), paying particular attention to the descriptions of manamaya kosha and anandamaya kosha.

Thoughts

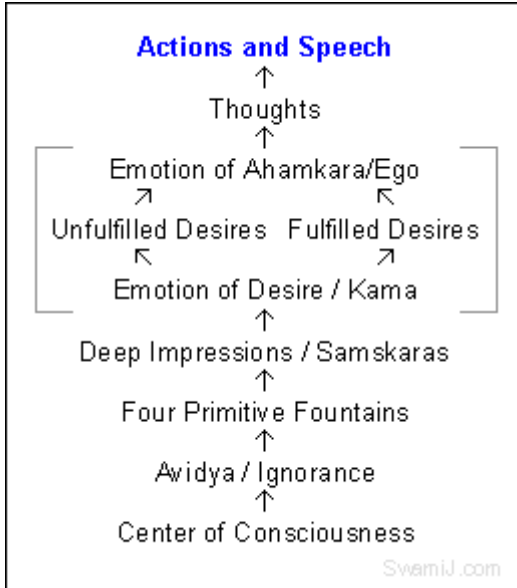


Actions come from thoughts: No action (*Karma*) can ever be performed unless we think of, or want it to happen at some level of mind.

Habit patterns define personality: Our personalities have been woven by our habit patterns (*Samskaras* and *Karma*), and our habit patterns are the result of our repetitive actions. If we look at ourselves closely, we will realize that our habits really *are* our personality. In a sense, we *become* our *Karma*, while at the same time the true Self resides there, underneath, all along.

Emotions control thoughts, which control actions: The real motivation for actions (*Karma*) is our thoughts. All of our actions are controlled by our thoughts, and all our thoughts are controlled by our emotions. Compared with our emotions, thought has little power.

Actions and Speech



Mind functions through ten senses: Actions and speech involve the use of the five active senses (*karmendriyas*) of eliminating, reproducing, moving, grasping, and speaking, and the five cognitive senses (*jnanendriyas*) of smelling, tasting, seeing, touching, and hearing. The mind functions *through* these ten senses (*indriyas*). (Each of these operates sequentially from the first five chakras.)

Conscious is controlled by unconscious: Whenever an event occurs that relates to an impression in the deep bed of the mind, then the deep impression or *Samskara* becomes active and starts the process of manifesting the *Karma*. The conscious mind is actually controlled by the unconscious, which is why we can have some difficulty making progress in our growth and spiritual life.

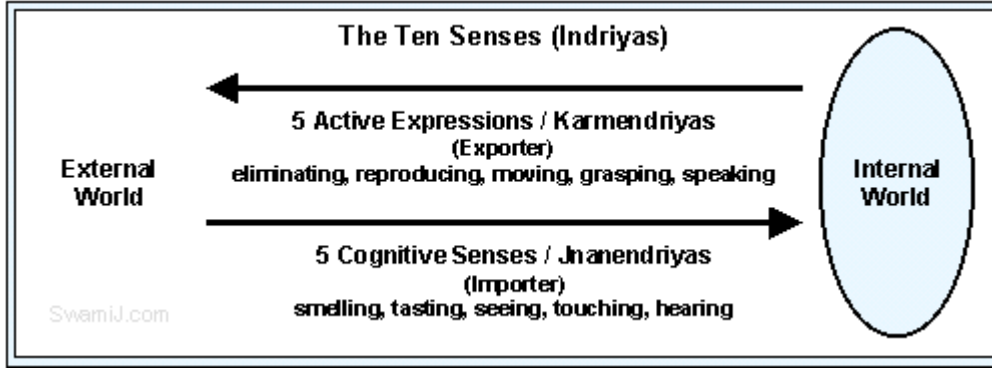
Consequences control our lives: All of our actions bring responses that leave an impression in the unconscious mind. These impressions become our *Samskaras* and then control our lives. Thus, a cycling process continues, day after day, life after life, and this process is known as *Karma*.

Chakra	Element	Mantra	Karmendriya	Jnanendriya
7	(consciousness)	Silence	(consciousness)	(consciousness)
6	(mind)	Om	(mind)	(mind)
5	space	Ham*	speaking	hearing
4	air	Yam*	grasping/holding	touching
3	fire	Ram*	moving	seeing
2	water	Vam*	procreating	tasting
1	earth	Lam*	eliminating	smelling

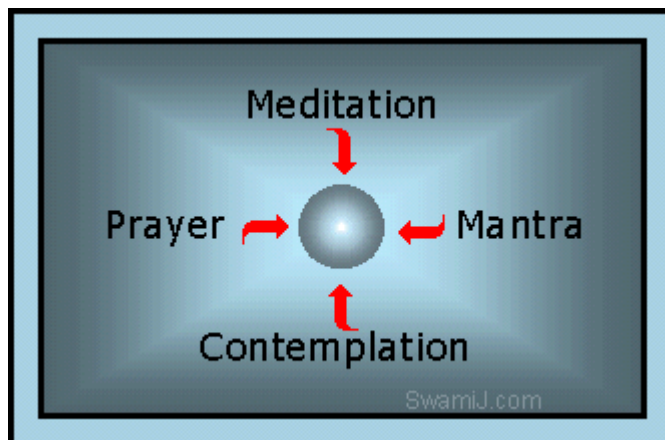
* Pronounced like "Tom," "Mom," or "CD-ROM"

Training the senses and actions: The training of our senses and actions (*indriyas*) is a most important part of breaking the cycles of *Karma*. See the article [Training the Ten Senses or Indriyas](#), which describes the following graphic:

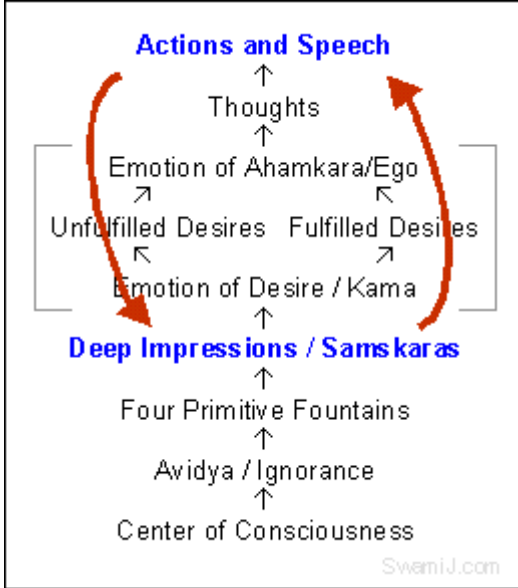
Reducing Karma and the Sources of Negative Actions, Speech and Thoughts



Training Speech with mantra or affirmations: It is common knowledge that the self-talk or chatter we do internally has an effect on our mind. Negative inner talk creates negative impressions in the basement of the mind (the level of Samskaras), which, in turn, play out through the levels described in this article, once again leading to actions and speech, and more karma. One of the finest tools for dealing with the chattering, negative self-talk is mantra. By repeating mantra over and over and over, the cycle can be weakened, if not broken (not meaning the suppression or repression of thoughts and emotions that need to be examined). One might use a single syllable *seed* mantra, a longer mantra, a short prayer, or a simple affirmation. Whichever is used, it becomes a constant companion, repeating itself, over and over, like a song that becomes a mental habit, thousands of times a day. This extremely useful practice can only be appreciated by experimenting with it for some time.



Actions/Speech & Samskaras



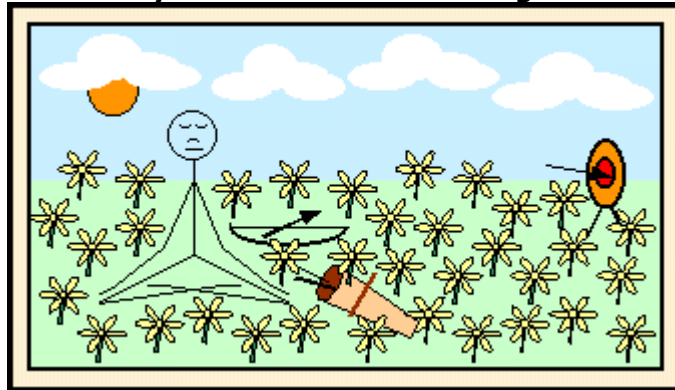
These two act together: Our actions and speech bring us experiences or consequences in the world. Those, in turn, lead to further creation of deep impressions (Samskaras) in the basement of the mind. Later, those latent impressions come to life and create still further experiences.

The Goal: The goal of meditation and contemplation is to know the pure Center of Consciousness. To do this we need to regulate our actions and speech and reduce the Deep Impressions or Samskaras. This process eventually allows the light of the True Self to come shining through.

Good decisions and practice: Two major keys in this process are to make good decisions about our daily life and spiritual activities and to then follow through on the actual practices. Together, these are like the left and right feet walking the journey of Self-Realization.



Archery and the Art of Reducing Karma



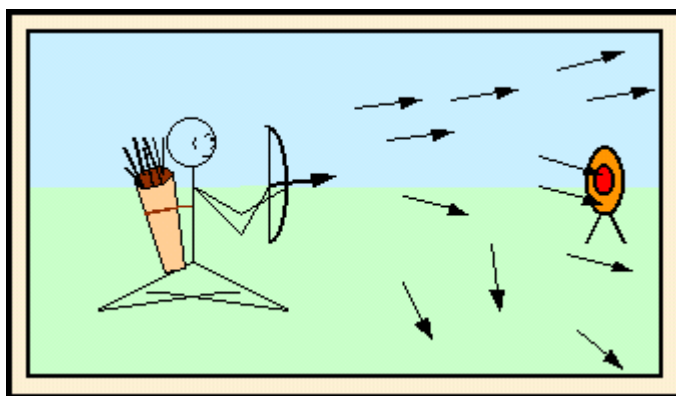
Archery and the Art of Reducing Karma through Yoga

by Swami Jnaneshvara Bharati

SwamiJ.com

*The law of karma,
A universal principle:
As you sow, so shall you reap.*

Reducing karma through archery: The ancient sages of Yoga and Vedanta use the metaphor of *Archery* as a teaching tool for how to work with and reduce karma through the process of Yoga meditation. In Yoga Meditation, Karma is of three kinds: Sanchita, Kriyamana, and Prarabhda, using the metaphor of three kinds of arrows in archery. Karma Yoga is the Yoga that emphasizes doing Yoga while also doing actions in the world, or Meditation in action.



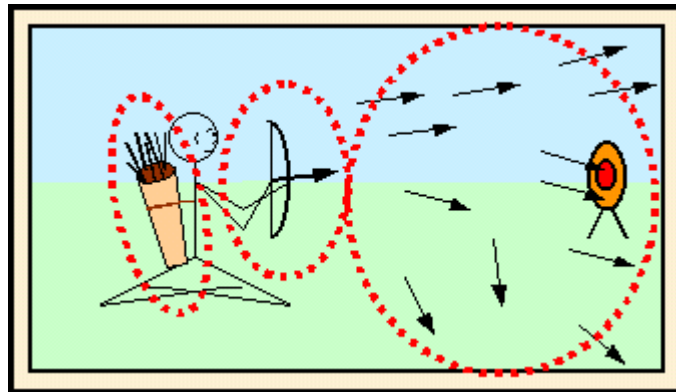
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[Arrows in Hand \(Kriyamana karma\)](#)
[Improving Your Aim](#)
[Letting the Stray Arrows Fall](#)
[Reducing the Arrows in the Quiver](#)
[Being a Peaceful Archer](#)
[Meditation in Archery](#)

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[Karma and the Sources of Actions, Speech and Thoughts](#)

Three Kinds of Arrows & Karma



Arrows and Karmas:

There are three kinds of Karma (further described below):

1. **Sanchita**, the vast storehouse of yet unseen impressions
2. **Kriyamana**, those currently in front of us to decide or act on
3. **Prarabhdha**, consequences already playing themselves out

Similarly, there are three kinds of arrows:

1. **Quiver**: Arrows in the Quiver (Sanchita karma)
2. **Hand**: Arrows in Hand (Kriyamana karma)
3. **Flight**: Arrows in Flight (Prarabhdha karma)

This is a very practical tool: The metaphor of the arrows is a practical tool for daily life. The mind easily recalls the visual imagery, which serves as a reminder to do a good job of "shooting the arrows" of actions and speech.

- **Decisions:** The quality of our decisions leads to the quality of our actions, which means the level of our archery ability.
- **Consequences:** The aim of the arrows also determines the quality of the consequences that come back from those actions.
- **Deep impressions:** Those consequences come to rest in the bed of our subconscious as deep impressions (Samskaras) which determine our Karma.
- **Recycling:** These Samskaras will at some point lead to further thoughts, speech, and actions, that again lead to more consequences.

Learn to have a good aim: Remembering to act as a skilled Archer is very useful for making decisions that will later have positive consequences on our mental, emotional, and spiritual lives. The key is becoming "a good shot" with the arrows in our hand, while accepting that some of our previously shot arrows are causing painful, unavoidable consequences that need to be dealt with wisely.

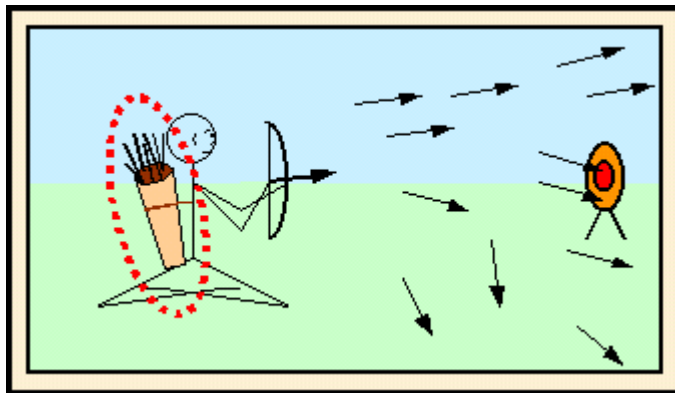
Karma means actions: "Karma" literally translates as "Actions," and is the playing out of the actions resulting from the latent habit patterns, or Samskaras, that are stored in the depth of the mind.

Reducing Karma and the Sources of Negative Actions, Speech and Thoughts

Stages of karma: There are three stages through which karma flows:

1. **Impressions from past consequences:** First, there are the deep impressions which come as a result of the storing of consequences from previous actions, and the natural feedback from the senses receiving input. (arrows in the quiver)
2. **These impressions come forward:** Second, these deep impressions come to the forefront of one's life at some point in time in the future, whether or not it comes with conscious awareness. (arrows in hand)
3. **Actions and speech spring forth:** Third, there are then actions and speech that spring forth, with or without the wisdom of conscious choice. (arrows in flight)

Arrows in the Quiver (Sanchita karma)



Accumulated impressions: The karmas in the quiver are the accumulated deep impressions (Samskaras) that have been collected over our entire history. Some arrows have been added to the quiver (new Karmas) and others have already been shot (old Karmas), and are no longer in the quiver.

The formula of karma: The total of the arrows (Samskaras) in our quiver today is the net of the new arrows added, minus the old ones that have been shot. These arrows and deep driving habits in the quiver are called "Sanchita Karma."

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Current karma} = & \\ & \text{Old samskaras} \\ & + \text{New samskaras added} \\ & - \text{Old samskaras that have played out} \end{aligned}$$

It takes time: Because of the process of playing out old Samskaras while new, more useful ones are added, it takes time for one's balance of karma to improve. In other words, it doesn't happen overnight (recognizing that God, grace, or guru might help).

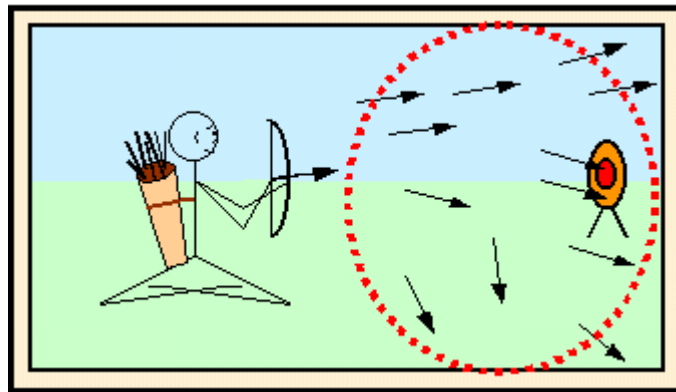
Predispositions are awaiting opportunity: Along with the playing out of our current Karmas in flight, we also know that there are many predispositions, habit patterns, or Samskaras that are awaiting an opportunity to come into action. Though we may not know exactly what these are, by observing our actions we can infer some of these predispositions.

Reducing Karma and the Sources of Negative Actions, Speech and Thoughts

Examining and attenuating karma: By a good job of preparation, balancing life, and learning to be a good Archer, one can eventually examine the Samskaras in the quiver during Yoga Meditation and Yoga Nidra (Yogic sleep). In this way, deeper habit patterns can be attenuated or eliminated through Meditation, provided one has become trained as a good Archer.

Colored and uncolored impressions: Yoga science speaks of colored (klishta) and uncolored (aklishta) thought patterns. When these deeply colored thought patterns are regulated, and their coloring has been reduced through good archery skills, then one may move on to experience Self-Realization.

Arrows in Flight (Prarabhdha karma)



Arrow already shot: The arrows in flight are the Karmas that have already started to play themselves out, either in our inner world or in the external world. These are the arrows that have already been shot. The arrows and our actions still in flight are called "Prarabhdha Karma."

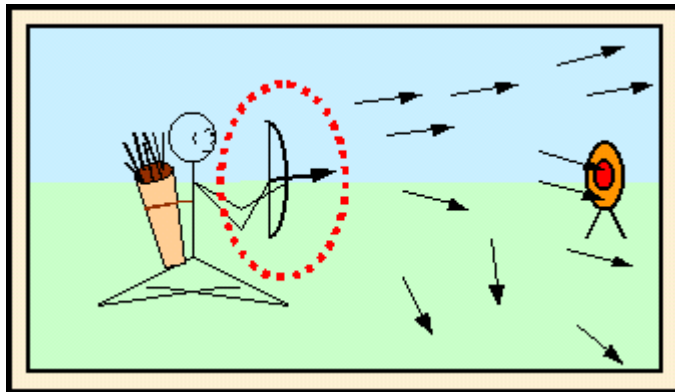
They have to run their course: An arrow in flight cannot be called back. It must complete its journey. Thoughts, speech, and actions that have been set in motion cannot be called back. They too will run their course, bringing consequences or fruits. (Some say that this Karma can be altered by grace.)

New decisions can help: New decisions can be made that balance out the effects of previously shot arrows. This is a good thing to do, as it improves the overall mixture of arrows in flight. However, the original arrows still move towards their fruition.

Learning to accept our consequences: The lesson for the seeker of Self-Realization is to accept that there are physical, mental, emotional, social, cultural, familial, financial, or material consequences of all of our previous actions (shot arrows). These simply need to be accepted as realities from which we now move forward in our spiritual quest.

The here and now: The arrows in flight need to be dealt with from the stance of the here-and-now, in the context of how we shoot today's arrows.

Arrows in Hand (Kriyamana karma)



The arrows in hand are the most important: The arrows that are in our hands today are the ones that we currently have a choice about where to aim and how to shoot. The arrows and choices in our hands today are called "Kriyamana Karma" (also called "Agami Karma" or "Vartamana Karma").

Becoming more aware: To be aware of the nature of wants, wishes, desires, attractions or aversions is very important. By being aware of our motivations, we can consciously shoot the arrows by choice, rather than unconscious habit.

Making good decisions: Through cultivating awareness and practicing conscious arrow shooting, we become better at aiming our arrows as well. We make good decisions about our thoughts, emotions, actions, and speech, rather than having these happen solely out of conditioned response.

Formula for archery: So, the formula, starting with Awareness, is:

- **Awareness of motivations:** Awareness of motivations allows us to learn to shoot arrows out of choice, rather than habit.
- **Conscious arrow shooting:** Through conscious arrow shooting, the aim gets better with practice.
- **Outcomes improve:** As the aim gets better, the outcomes are more favorable.
- **Net karma goes down:** If the outcomes are more favorable, net Karma goes down.

Primitive urges are the background motivation: Behind our actions are many thoughts, emotions, desires, samskaras, and primitive urges. By being aware of the process leading to actions, we can make wise choices about those actions.

(See "[Karma and the Sources of Actions, Speech, and Thoughts](#)")

Arrows in daily life: One may have either a few arrows, or many arrows in the quiver (little Karma or a lot of Karma), but what is important is how we deal with the Karma presenting to us in our lives today. This is the art of Archery and reducing Karma. The law of Karma is universal; as you sow, so shall you reap. The words and cultural contexts may differ, but the principle remains the same. Learning to be a Master Archer is the key to mastery over the bondage of Karma.

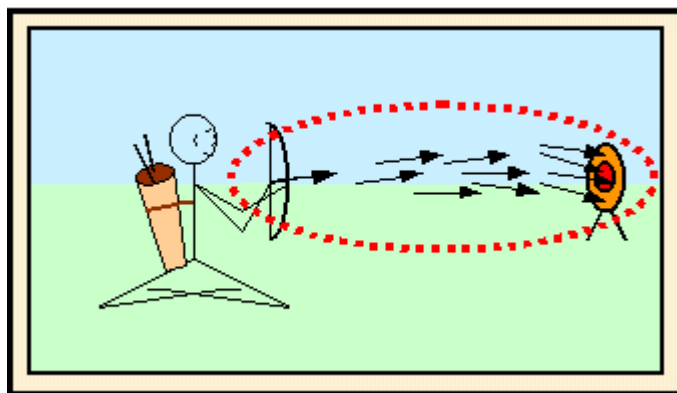
Reducing Karma and the Sources of Negative Actions, Speech and Thoughts

Deciding what is the target: Where to aim our arrows is a critically important question. If we don't know what the target is, then it is rather difficult to aim well. Our arrows are shot almost at random, at every want, wish, desire, attraction, or aversion that pops up into the mind.

Understanding the purpose of life: Deciding what is the target means to understand the purpose of life. If the Archer has a sense of the purpose of life, using whatever words best describe that personally, then there is a target that all of the arrows can be directed towards. It means that one's decisions are increasingly made in accordance with what brings one closer to the chosen target.

What actions will serve Self-realization?: For one who chooses Self-Realization as the target, then decisions are made on the basis of what brings one closer, or leads one further away from that Goal.

Improving Your Aim



Is it useful or not useful?: This is the most important aspect of the Archery metaphor. It means asking our deep Wisdom, "Is this useful or not useful?" about specific options in front of us. "Does this bring me closer or further away from the goal of Enlightenment?" "Should I do it, or not?" By consulting within in this way, answers will come.

Consulting Buddhi: In the [Four Functions of Mind](#), the part that knows, decides, judges, and discriminates is called *Buddhi*. It is through the cultivation of *Buddhi* that one becomes a better Archer, training *Manas* (the lower mind) to follow the wise instructions of *Buddhi*, rather than just following the old habit patterns in *Chitta* (the storehouse of Samskaras, or deep impressions and habits).

Determining actions by choice: It is a matter of actions being determined by the choice of *Buddhi* rather than by the unconscious impressions arising from the quiver. It works something like this:

- Once the target, or purpose is known,
- When Buddhi can make choices,
- And when Manas will listen,
- Then the arrows of action are shot in more accurate ways,
- And there are fewer negative consequences,
- As well as a greater number of useful consequences.

Reducing Karma and the Sources of Negative Actions, Speech and Thoughts

- These useful impressions are stored in the quiver.
- In turn, these arise to motivate further useful actions,
- And we experience an overall reduction in our Karma.

The aim improves by consulting Buddhi: Through this repeated cycle of utilizing *Buddhi* to determine the aim of the arrows of action, one becomes a better and better Archer. As we become a better Archer, the process of reducing Karma works better and better.

What to do with the fruits of actions: An important key to shooting our arrows well has to do with the question of who is to receive the fruits of the actions. There are three general choices of where to give the fruits of actions:

1. The fruits come to me.
2. The fruits are given to others.
3. The fruits are offered to God.

The question of what to do with the fruits of actions is an important part of Karma Yoga, the Yoga of Action, which prepares one to do the deeper practices leading to Self-Realization.

Selfless service: Consequences of actions breed more actions, and in turn, more consequences. This cycle happens because of one's attachment or aversions to the fruits of the actions. However, the more one practices selfless service, giving away the fruits of the actions to others, then the less those fruits turn into negative consequences that feed the cycle.

For example, if one is attached to the financial fruits of his or her job, then those financial fruits might be used to seek pleasure in the external world. When those external pleasures end up being inadequate, one might end up seeking even more fruits in an attempt to feel satisfied.

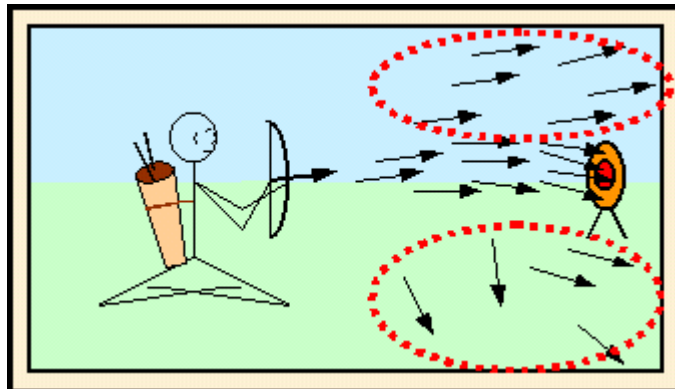
Other fruits might be, for example, the accolades, recognition, or the internal feelings of accomplishment coming from actions. These too can leave one in a painful cycle of seeking greater and greater fruits in an effort to feel whole and fulfilled.

A shift in attitude about fruits: However, if the same person has a shift in attitude, whereby the fruits of their labors are for others, such as family, friends, customers, clients, society, or humanity then one is free of the fruits. In other words, one learns to *give away the fruits* of the actions. Then the inner motive is to serve those other people, not merely to feed one's own sense of personal needs.

The paycheck, accolades or recognition will still come and be enjoyed, but it is without expectation that these fruits themselves are capable of bringing happiness. When the fruits are given up, then one is free. The feelings of wholeness and fulfillment can then come from within, regardless of the outcomes of the actions.

Refinement leads to freedom: It is an ongoing feedback loop of shooting arrow, refining one's aim, and shooting again that leads to being a good Archer, and to freedom from the bondage of Karma.

Letting the Stray Arrows Fall



Reducing the In-flight arrows: When we start improving our aim, and thus creating fewer attachments and aversions, we also have to deal with the arrows that are already in flight. Some of these in-flight arrows are painful, some are pleasurable. Whether bringing pain or pleasure, the consequences of these previously-shot arrows continues to come, until those arrows find their final destination and completion.

A simple process: There is a simple process to reducing the in-flight arrows:

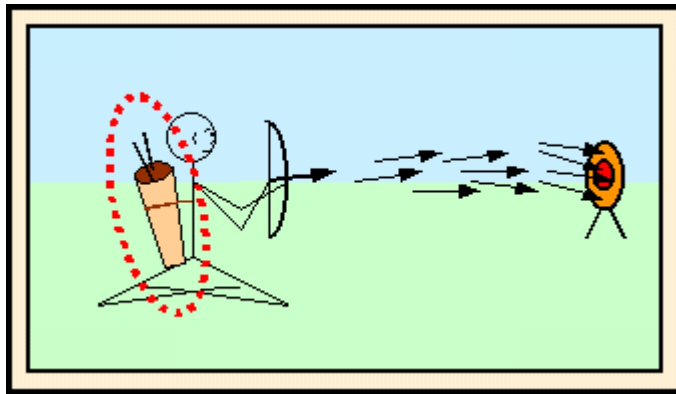
We allow the arrows to fall where they are headed, accepting that some of them were poorly aimed. Past decisions are bringing current consequences. We accept these consequences and their responsibilities, as we stay focused on the arrows in hand. We allow the old arrows to run their course in such a way that we don't add more negative consequences to come.

Not becoming diverted by the in-flight arrows: Because of these stray arrows, one may easily become diverted from the path of Self-realization. Those old arrows, shot long ago, continue to come and cause problems. Often what happens is that due to these old arrows, still in flight, we end up firing more arrows along the same off-course path. We can end up having just as many arrows in the air that are off-course, rather than seeing the number go down.

Being kind to ourselves: The solution is to be very kind with ourselves, as we cultivate persistence and patience. We may want spiritual energy, grace, or shakti to come to us, yet one of the first forms of that comes as determination. To have, cultivate, or pray for such determination is an essential practice on the journey to Self-Realization.

- Becoming a good Archer in making useful decisions, developing determination, and practicing patience, form a powerful combination.
- Then, the number and intensity of off-course arrows of Karma gradually goes down, as the number that are on-target increases.
- Gradually our karmic focus shifts, as we move more and more towards a greater integration of mind, and reduction of samskaras
- Then our meditations and contemplations can progress more smoothly and quickly on the Journey Within.

Reducing the Arrows in the Quiver (Prarabhda karma)



The past impressions: The entire collection of the deep impressions (samskaras) that forms our past karma is the Prarabhda karma. Mostly, it sits in latent form until such time as some of it is ready to come to life, first in the mind-field, and then in the external world through actions and speech.

They start a cycling process: As these impressions turn into action, their consequences often come back through the senses, get processed by the mind and make still more impressions in the deep unconscious. The cycle of impression-action-consequence-impulsion goes on and on.

Be more mindful of choices and actions: However, by being more mindful of the nature of our choices and actions, we can allow our karmas to play themselves out, while not replacing them with new binding consequences being added to the quiver. Then we can have a reduction in the total Karmas stored in those Samskaras.

Examining and attenuating the latent arrows: The combination of having fewer arrows in the quiver and fewer negative arrows in flight leads the aspirant to do an even better job of examining and attenuating those remaining Samskaras during Yoga Meditation.

It can seem to be getting worse: Paradoxically, the Karmic arrows in the quiver might come to the surface in big clusters. It can seem that problems in life are getting worse! The life, consequences and actions coming forth might appear to be very unspiritual. This is the reason that there are stories of saints doing outrageous behaviors, as some of the few remaining Karmas manifest.

Self-Realization does not require removing all the arrows: The experience of the Self does not depend on having 100% of the Samskaras removed, such that there is no more Karma. Self-Realization does not stop the flow of the Karmas playing out, nor necessarily remove the latent Karmas in the storehouse. Though some of the seeds of karma may become so weakened or "burned" in the fire of Consciousness that they can no longer bear fruit, others remain.

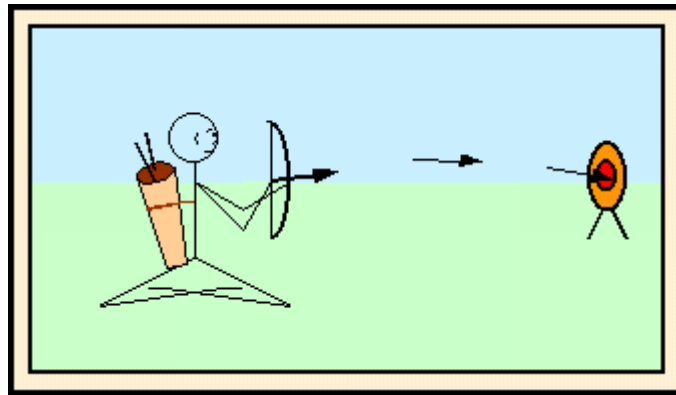
The potter's wheel continues to turn: The sages use the metaphor of the potter's wheel. After the pot is made, the potter's wheel continues to turn because of its previous impetus. So too, the Karmic impressions in the quiver continue to drive thoughts, actions, and speech. However, the aspirant becomes better and better at directing those forces when

Reducing Karma and the Sources of Negative Actions, Speech and Thoughts

they arise. Even Patanjali (codifier of the Yoga Sutra) gives instructions of how to handle breaks in enlightenment by continuing to purify the latent impressions.

Efficiently working with karma: At this phase of Archery training, one has become a Master Archer, and does an efficient job of working through the remaining Karmas while remaining in the world, but above the world.

Being a Peaceful Archer



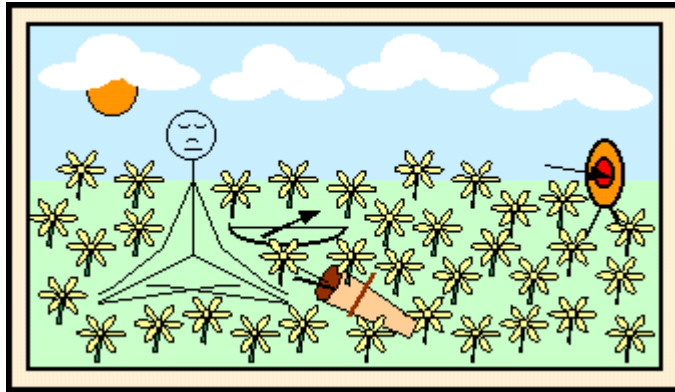
Archery in Yoga Meditation: Having a good aim in decisions and actions of daily life reduces Karma by having "the new" come into play, as "the old" works itself out. The same process is also done during Yoga Meditation.

Meditation in Action: In the external world, the Yogi allows the old Karmas (the arrows in flight) to play themselves out. In the internal world, the Yogi also allows the old Karmas to play themselves out, as the inner drama is observed from the vantage point of a Witness. For this reason, both "Meditation" and "Meditation in Action" are a part of Archery and the Art of Reducing Karma.

Seated meditation: In seated Meditation one allows the thought patterns come forward, learns to be undisturbed, unaffected, and uninvolved in them. They come, and they go. In this way, the intensity of the coloring of the deep impressions gradually attenuates. This is a process whereby the colored Samskaras (klishhta) gradually have their coloring dissipated, as the thought patterns move towards being completely uncolored (aklishta).

Meditation and Meditation in Action: When the Samskaras weaken through Yoga Meditation, they can be more easily played out in daily life. When the Samskaras weaken through the actions of daily life, then they can more easily be played out in Meditation. The two practices of Meditation and Meditation in Action go hand in hand.

Meditation in Archery



Good Archery removes the veil over the Self: Being a good Archer does not in itself bring Self-Realization. Rather, it is a means of reducing and removing obstacles. Learning the art of Archery reduces Karma so that one can rest in the stillness and silence.

Then, through the practices of Meditation, Contemplation, Prayer, and remembering Word or Mantra, the Self that has been there all along can be Realized.