The Self and its transformation

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A note by Raghu Ananthanarayanan

The most satisfying event for me in 2020 was the offering that I conducted with the Krishnamacharya Yoga Mandiram called “Self And Its Transformation- According To The Yoga Sutra-s”. This was not only a dream realised, it was also a long pending debt that I owed Shri Desikachar, my guru.

In the mid 80’s I had started a project with Shri Desikachar and Prof Pulin Garg that was lying incomplete all these years. Prof Garg was fascinated with the concepts that I shared with him from the Yoga Sutra-s that resonated deeply with the way that he was looking at psychological transformation. So Prof Garg came down to Chennai (from Ahmedbad) and stayed with me for a couple of months and we started a dialogue with Shri Desikachar. The outcome of this dialogue was an ongoing project. In the dialogues it became evident that a 70 sutra-s that Shri Desikachar referred to as the core of the *antaraṅga yoga sādhana* and the theory that Prof Garg was building converged. We set out to explicate this convergence. However Prof Garg fell ill and we were not able to complete the book that we had set out to write.

This work however, has been the foundation for all my work in Yoga as well as in Leadership Development and Process Work. Almost 25 years later, when Mr. Madhavan Nambiar invited me to do some collaborative work with KYM, I proposed that we could complete the project. We formed a core group comprising of Dr Latha, Dr Jayaraman, Mr Sridharan, Anita and myself and reviewed the old manuscripts. We discussed each of the concepts in detail and brought in our current understanding as well as what we had learnt from Shri Desikachar and Yogacharya Krishnamacharya over the years. The document was then shared with a few researchers and academics in the field. Their feedback was incorporated and the first cut manuscript has been prepared. We then designed a Learning Dialogue where we shared the process of self-transformation as delineated in the Yoga Sutra-s with a few Yoga Teachers and teachers of Psychology. This dialogue was very well received. We are now in the process of finalizing the book and designing an offering based on this study.

One is supposed to work through three *ṛṇa* (debts) in one's life. The first is towards one parents called *pitṛ ṛṇa*. This is repaid by serving them and raising one's own family. I think I paid my dues here which, by the way, came with considerable financial burdens also!! The second is *ācārya*/ rshi *ṛṇa*, the debt one owes to one's teachers. This is repaid by not only learning all that one can from the teacher, but also by living true to the teaching and passing it on to the next generation. With the completion of this project I feel that I have done my best here. My further teaching is a bonus! Then there is the *deva ṛṇa*– the debt one owes to all the forces of life that nurture us. I guess one will keep offering what one can to foster Nature even as one keeps taking from Her.