

THE ORIGINS OF KNOWLEDGE: **YOGA**

and

SANAATANA DHARMA

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“Save Knowledge and Knowledge will save us!”
this is the motto that, over these last years, has become the centerpiece of the teaching that I offer to my students both in Yoga teacher training courses and in ordinary Yoga courses.

Yoga, in these times, is a very important discipline, perhaps more than it has ever been before.

And the reason is a need to recover one's center, one's own contact with reality. In a world that considers only appearance, people feel the need of Being.

And yoga is the most efficacious way to get in touch with one's own and real essence.

We should not think about Yoga as a religion because it would be a misconception. Yoga is a path to personal realization, which can be covered equally by believers and non-believers, followers of all creeds, without coming into conflict with one's beliefs and ideas.

Yoga is knowledge that opens minds.

And it is a huge help to overcome the sufferings of these years of intolerance, of closing-minded attitude that many people show in their refusal to accept other ways of thinking and beliefs.

Someone for fear of excommunications and some others for fear of anathemas, or for other reasons, real or invented ...

So, all those who are inside dogmas have difficulties to be open to other points of view. **Dogmas** close the mind. An open mind, not conditioned by any line of thought, it's like a **white light** which contains all colors and enlightens, restoring and enhancing anything.

A **colored light** only knows its color and, flattening in a monochromatic way all things, will not have the opportunity to know, understand and appreciate the beauty of all the other colors.

The same goes for the various religious lines. Knowing other faiths, it is truly amazing to see how **they all have a common matrix**, or, even if there is no relationship between them, however, they have something similar in common: **the substance**.

BEING HUMAN BEINGS, WE CAN'T THINK DIFFERENTLY FROM 'HUMAN BEINGS'.

It looks like a play on words, but the sense is that, if we are ants, we can't think differently from ants.

So what we have in common is the no-frills part without dogmatic constructions dictated by power, misuse of power, or fears. Maybe even a fear different from those mentioned above, but equally frightful: the fear of losing the appearance, status or social position...

In practice, if we get rid of all these superstructures moodiness, we can recognize an identical substrate. For example let's take into consideration the Sanaatana Dharma, Indian spirituality, and I precise spirituality and not religion (religion comes from the Latin word **religare** which means **to constrain, to tie ...**). That's why I prefer to talk about spirituality and not religion.

Spirituality is not subject to power and social conventions of any place of belonging. It is that basic aspect of the human being's thought that, with current knowledge, is indisputable and unalterable ... in short, is the closest part to the idea that everyone has of the **Divine-without-form of Sanaatana Dharma**.

Well, if we take this basic knowledge of the ancient poets and sages in the **Veda** and recovered with greater expansion, refinement and modernity, in the various **Upanishads**, we notice that is not very different from Christian or Sufi thought, does not differ from animistic spirituality of central Africa or from the thinking of Native Americans - see the stories of the legendary Sitting Bull, Red Cloud, Black Elk and others - and neither from the teachings of the Buddha, Christ, Mohammed, etc..

And I'm not talking about Catholicism, Christianity, Hinduism, Judaism, Islam, Buddhism, Animism, Shamanism, and various other -isms that over the centuries have unfortunately disregarded the very thought of **their Founders and Guides**, building extra-structures that have snuffed out/suffocated the pure initial Idea, up to make it appear completely denatured or, in most cases, even contradictory.

I'm referring just to basic Spirituality, that is the one, and the only one, which I always take into consideration, and that I, personally, identify with the **Sanaatana Dharma**.

Well, with this preliminary remark it's obvious that, if we go to know very deeply a different creed, we realize that we're not committing a sin, the sin is in the heart of those who launch/hurl anathemas and excommunications etc.. dictated by the fear of losing a status, a throne, a favorable social position. These reactions always reveal a very much expanded **Ego**.

Indeed, let's be aware that, if we open our minds to other lines, we honor our organs gifted by the divine (of any line) which, sometimes, now we make little use: the brain, heart, and ... the **Discernment**, which unfortunately in these days has changed connotation becoming **Apartheid**.

Instead of a clarity of purpose we find ourselves sunk in more and more **blocking chains**... the classical **CAGES** that human being is so good at building.

Meeting other faiths, creeds, beliefs is not a abjuration of one's **own**, but that means reinvigorating, fortifying, strengthening it, because in this way we understand that others have our **same thought**.

Rather than being afraid of them, it is better to include what they perhaps have more, that is maybe closer to the **Reality of Life**. Something they can do in a better way. Perhaps, they could possess the appropriate techniques to more easily reach the understanding of that Divine, Origin, Principle, Energy, Initial Boost/Force/Cause, or whatever you want to call IT, that is **One**, and being **One** does not have another **One** to fight against.

One “**Oneness**” that is powerful enough not to need the "ant-man", claiming to defend Him with bombs or extremism.

And maybe even share the good things that would be useful to both parties. A mutual help of which we have lost the value.

That could also clarify the various meanings that are losing their sense. As the **Monotheism**. Monotheism = **one God**. It's really funny to see that all the so-called monotheistic lines are always presented with two polarities: **good and evil**.

So, if we have one **God** or **Principle** (the good) which should be Omnipotent (Almighty), Omniscient (All-Knowing), Pervasive (All-Pervading) ... how could **Another Principle** (the bad), exist? That indeed, as far as can be seen from current behavior of humanity, would seem **even more powerful?**

It is not more realistic to think, in a **monistic way**, to **A Single Principle** that contains everything? a **“Whole”** which contains everything, including the good and the bad?

And, knowing that every line of thought and creed has a common basis, why not staying in his **Own**, in harmony with the **Others** and **respecting them?**

One's own line of thought, perhaps more enriched and expanded, but that is always and in any manner socially closer to one's understanding and one's way of thinking and social living. So let's open up without fear to **Knowledge** ... and let ourselves flow ... nothing bad comes from knowledge.

It is better to fear the ignorance, stupidity, presumption, arrogance which are supporters of intolerance, discrimination and ... **WARS... Knowledge is a great value not a demerit.**

Yoga belongs to a **Knowledge** that transcends all religious lines and is based on **Sanaatana Dharma**.

Sanaatana Dharma is what has been called **Hinduism** by the **British** because of the impossibility for them to identify something that didn't belong to the conventional religions.

The common meaning of the word **Sanaatana Dharma** is **Primordial Law, Truth, Rule or Eternal Law**, etc...

It is complex to describe the meaning of Sanaatana Dharma because an exact equivalent doesn't exist in the English language and it seems quite arduous to find a term that gives it a comprehensive meaning, also because there's the risk of transmitting an inadequate idea of it. **ETERNAL RULE**, that which we usually translate as "Sanaatana Dharma", is a very limiting concept. Let's analyze the word Sanaatana ... which can correspond to eternal, perpetual, perennial... even if "eternal" or "perennial" implies something static, stationary, immobile, frozen, plastered ... and in a Universe where everything is deciduous, in which everything has a beginning and an end, the concept of eternal, perennial or imperishable, is too difficult for us to imagine, to realize..

Easier to understand is the term “perpetuity” ...

PERPETUITY gives exactly the right meaning of continuity that is peculiar to Sanaatana. **A flowing continuity without beginning or end.**

Dharma on the other hand is normally translated as Law, Cosmic Law, Natural Law ... if we analyze the root "**dhri**", we observe that it means to support, sustain, maintain ... in short, it may mean preservation and stability ... Let's see "**dhru**", from which derives the word *Dhruva*, that means Pole or Earth's axis... or Universe's axis as well.... and here we find the important meaning of pivot, stable and unchanged, the center, around where everything revolves. Dharma is the very essence of the Universe, as the heat is the essence, the Dharma, of the fire. With the decline of the FIRE'S dharma, the essence of fire itself becomes lost: its heat. So we can attribute to Sanaatana Dharma the fascinating idea of a Perpetuity firmly resting on permanently solid foundations.

A concept that can appear difficult for its unusual point of view, but it is important to understand that - given the limited nature of the human mind, it is not able to conceive (if not through a thin intuition) the consciousness of permanence or infinity, and of an **“empty whole” that, in fact, is full** - it is difficult to get an exact idea of what might be called the Principle or Essence, or called with the abused term of God. Here is a verse from the Brhadaranyaka Upanishad to clarify the meaning of this our limitation: **“You cannot really know ‘WHO’ makes possible the Knowledge itself ”**. It means: our possibility of Knowledge is limited by our being humans, so it is difficult to understand the **No Limits**.

This is one of the limits of the concrete human mind (physical mind) that is not able to conceive what it cannot concretely experience. And so we could say ... but how can we know the Principle? The Divine?

Well, through **Dhyana**, and **Samadhi** (and, obviously, a clean purpose) we can establish that silence in which intuition brings us, through the void, to conceive the full, or at least, to conceive WHO or WHAT fills the void. Or by searching in logical dissertations (**Niyaya**) of the exclusion of “not that and not this” (*neti neti*), having a perception of **WHAT** you cannot exclude Of **WHAT** remains not excludible, of **WHAT** is solid, eternal, everlasting. The paths are different as different are the characteristics of each human being. As the ways to recognize the **ORIGIN** are so many, as human beings **ARE**, so, the various forms (***Brahman Saguna***) of the **FORMELESS** (the ***Brahman Nirguna***), are multiple. The **Brahman Nirguna** is the Principle without qualities, the **Guna**. The **Guna** are aspects of Nature (**Prakriti**) and of everything that has been created. Nature in a global and universal meaning. These are the three aspects: **Sattva**, **Rajas**, **Tamas**. **Sattva** is consciousness, **Tamas** stability and concreteness, and **Rajas**, that interrelates between the two, is the energy.

And everything, animate and inanimate, living beings, plants, minerals, air, fire, water etc... is composed by these three principles. So the forms are defined **the Brahman Saguna**, that means they have their own specific quality, and they are part of the Manifestation.

Instead, the **Principle**, known as Brahman Nirguna (nir = negation Guna = quality), Principle without qualities, is the **FormLess**, or that has no concrete form.

These forms, which have contributed to transmit the erroneous message attributed to Sanaatana Dharma of a **polytheistic religion**, are thus aspects of Nature, states of mind, qualities that anyway must be transcended, however, to see, beyond the Form, the Principle without form. But mind, devotion, and limited vision, need to lean and hold onto the form which is used as a lever to raise their own awareness to the concept of the Principle without form. **A kind of point of detachment (of elevation) that allows an athlete to jump and take the leap forward or upward.**

And from this interpretation of the Guna, it becomes clear that man and others various forms of the Universe, be they plants, animals, or minerals, are part of **One** Single, Unique Being...

One **Unique Breath**, which through the **Sanaatana Dharma**, THE PERPETUITY, or continuing eternity, is seen, known and ... that, at the end, will allow the various forms to dissolve themselves in **IT**.

And this is the monistic peculiarity of Sanaatana Dharma. The Sanaatana Dharma includes all ideologies, religions, spiritualities, in respect of all points of view and paths, necessary to reach the Center, the Essence. So the Sanaatana Dharma can be considered the very **Essence of the human race**, a common platform, as the foundations of a house has in common with whatever other building, where every thought, every line, every faith may find its foundation. And on this platform everyone can build their own home ora hovel, or a supermarket or a luxury palace or A **TEMPLE or CATHEDRAL**.



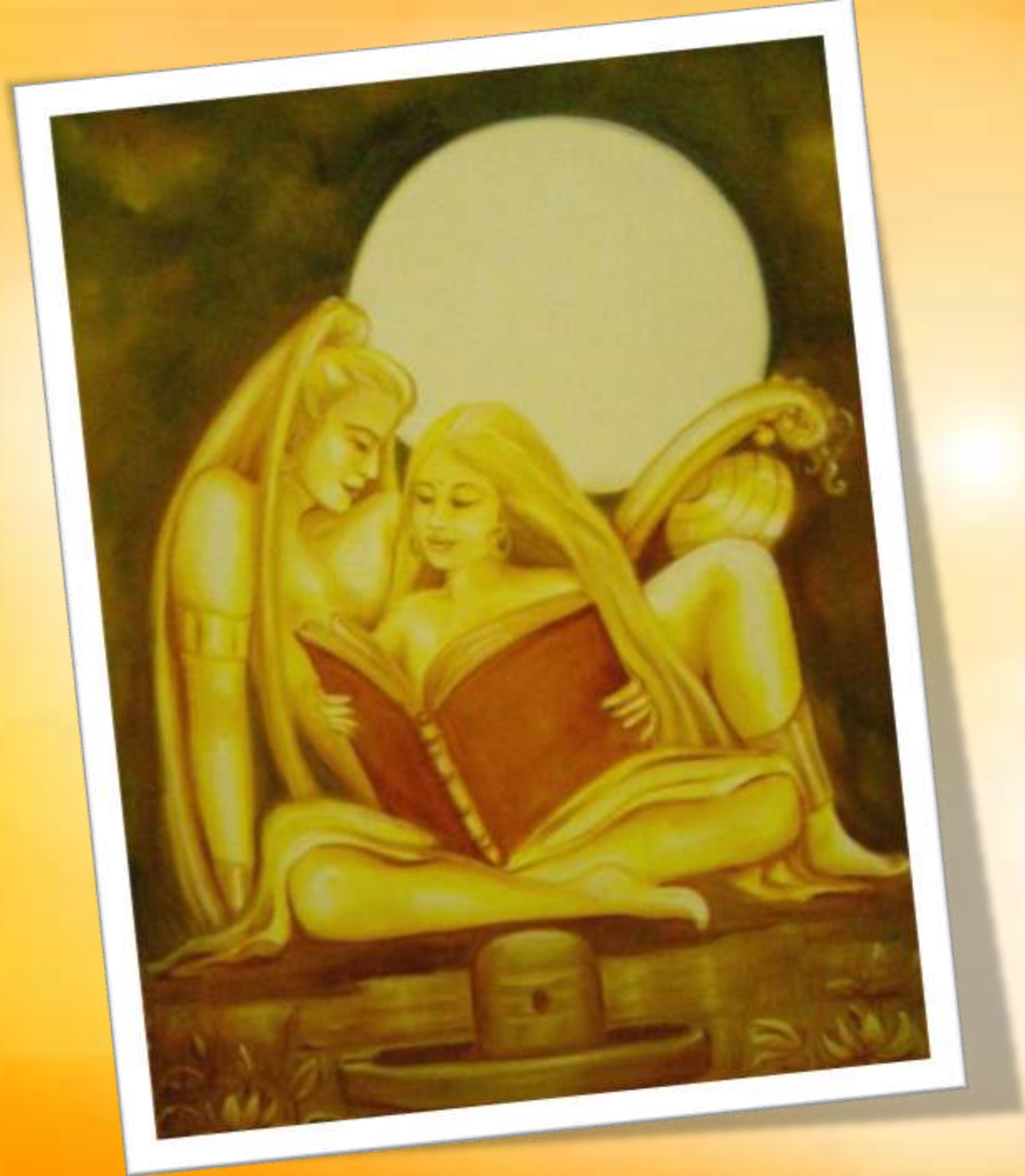
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भूर्भुवः स्वः
तत्सवितुर्वरिण्यं
भर्गो देवस्य धीमहि
धियो यो नः प्रचोदयात् ॥

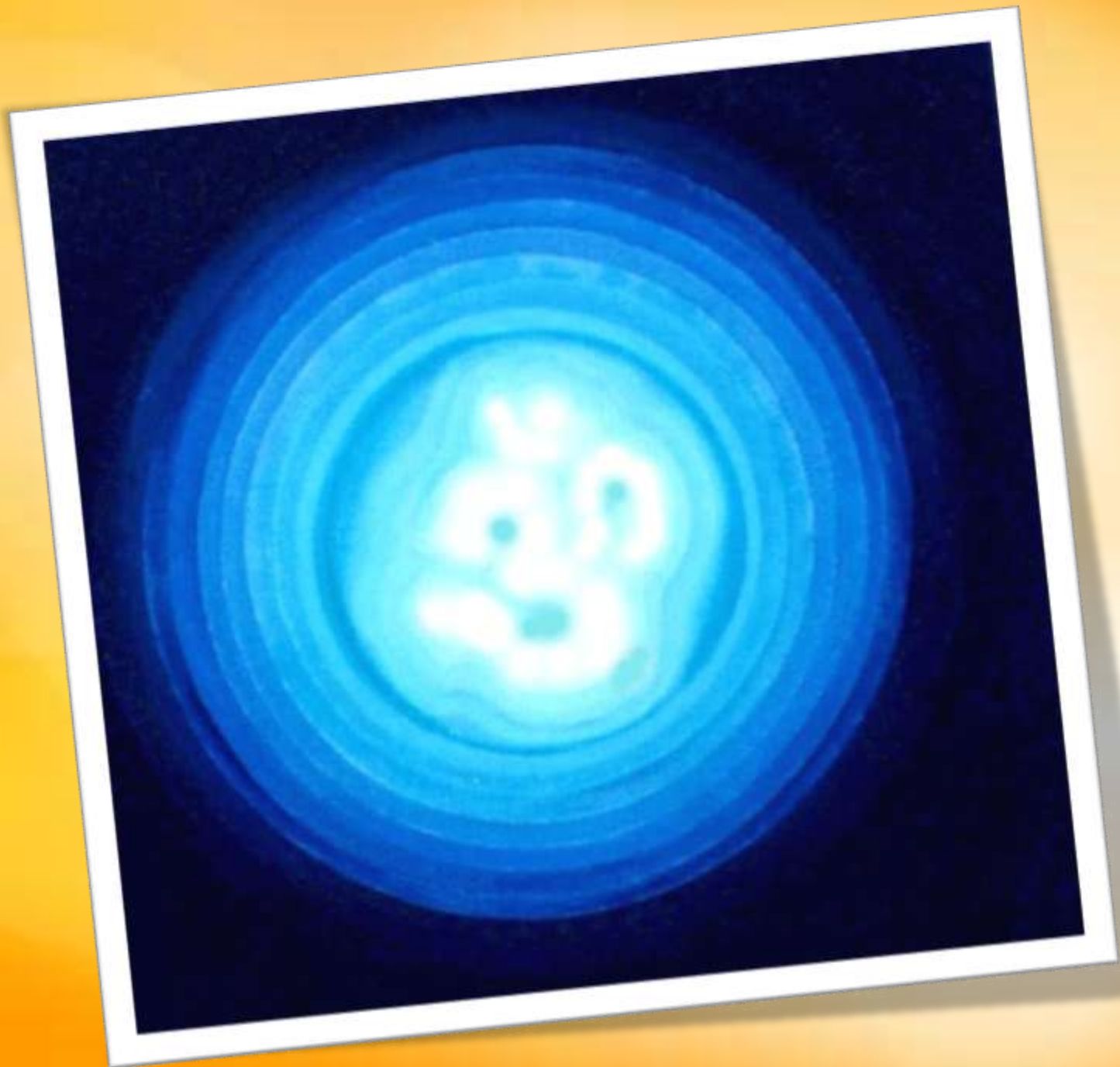
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