



KARMA

THE MECHANISM

Create
Your Own Fate

Hermann Kuhn

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Create Your Own Fate

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This book is dedicated to
SRI ARYANANDI MUNI MAHARAJ
in deep gratitude.

परस्परोपग्रहो जीवानाम्

'The purpose of souls is to assist each other.'

TATTVARTHASUTRA - Chapter 5, Sutra 21

If you mainly want to know -

How to remove karmic bonds - turn directly to

'HOW TO DISSOLVE KARMA' 133

How to develop your consciousness - turn first to

'14 STAGES OF DEVELOPMENT' 186

'FIVE FREEDOMS' 220

'WHAT TO DO' 232

then read the 'SUTRAS' (the main part of the book)

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THE MYSTERY

For a long time the West had no karma. Though the concept was introduced to Europe and America as early as the end of the 19th century, it was barely known for another 60 years. Only in the sixties, when a wave of interest in Eastern philosophies took hold, the idea of karma began to capture the people's imagination on a broad scale.

Yet though karma rapidly became a household word, it never assumed a clear-cut or well defined meaning. It was associated with a bizarre potpourri of unrelated themes: - revel in the bad luck of others, excuse for inadequate planning, influences beyond our control and the idea that any positive but unrecognized act of ours would hopefully find reward later. Karma was eagerly used to suggest that any action, - especially those of others that irritated us but couldn't be retaliated - should hit its originators with at least the same negative intensity.

But over and above all it created a vague notion that anything 'negative' we ever did - no matter how successfully we hid it from others - would 'surely reach and punish us later - even 'in another lifetime'. It conveyed the feeling that all 'negative' deeds we supposedly accumulated in this and 'previous' lives might be 'stored' in some impartial data-system to confront us again in a - hopefully - far distant future.

And since all this sounds utterly absurd to our proud, enlightened Western scientific minds, we generally use the term only with an ironic undertone when talking to others - and always with the diligent implication of mockery that would surely distance us from this pariah word.

Yet though we certainly do not 'believe' in karma, it nevertheless affects our consciousness. Sure, - nobody would ever admit to it - but isn't there a lingering and very private apprehension that some part of this concept might just be horribly true? Some vague idea that all our 'negative' action would surely confront us again? And the uncomfortable suspicion that with much of our - egoistically motivated and self-centered - actions we might be skating on very thin ice for our future fate and comfort?

Our precious modern-day science does not do much to appease our mind in this regard. It even promotes the idea that nothing, - no energy - will ever be lost, only transformed, and that every cause would certainly have its effect. If this also applied to our individual intentions and actions, wouldn't we be heading for some highly embarrassing discomfort at a day of final reckoning - whenever or whatever that may be?

Fortunately none of these vague notions about karma hold up to thorough scrutiny.

Let's just for a moment playfully assume we really experienced a number of lives in our past. If these lives were in any way similar to our present one and with the many bad things we imagine we would have done in them, have we never wondered why we are not incarnated as a worm? - Or maybe a bacteria? - Or maybe, if we were really good - as mouse, certainly not bigger than a mouse?

If our present picture of karma were true, wouldn't we have accumulated such a huge mountain of bad deeds we'd never be able to dissolve? And how should we do this in the first place - as worms? - Eating it all up, physically? - And then these naughty worms can behave quite badly too, - what about their karma? - See, - this picture is

going downhill all the way, no hope whatsoever for any kind of higher development.

But - as ridiculous as this may sound, this concept subtly drives us into a frame of mind that already ruined the life of billions.

Isn't karma-theory supposed to lead to freedom from all karma, - to liberate us from limiting influences? Doesn't karma-theory claim to identify the 'good' actions that would lighten our karmic load and the 'bad' ones that would make it heavier?

But if it were such a good theory, why aren't there reports of millions of people reaching enlightenment - ecstasy, freedom from restricting karma - through it? - There is a bizarre answer to this question: - Karma-theory - as it was understood for millennia in the East and as it is now widely accepted in the West - is not the cherished key to higher states of development, it is the origin of a huge disaster!

Let's just look at the vast number of people who - all over Asia - gave in to fatalism, - to the very belief that such immense mountain of bad deeds was looming above their heads that nothing they did could ever reduce. For millennia this erroneous conviction blocked them from any progress, blocked them from even conceiving that there may be a way out of their predicament. They believed they were not masters of their lives. - And with this, unfortunately, they were right! - Once we believe we can't control, we ARE unable to control. With this kind of belief we block ourselves completely, - kismet, - nothing moves, - we resign to any outside influence that blows our way.

Karma-theory was the origin of this huge catastrophe. It was and still is the highly successful propagation of total disability.

Why are we so attracted towards repeating this blunder, this misconception of such huge proportion? Why are we so eager to accept a theory at face value that already proved disastrous effects, that spoiled the lives of billions? Why do we naïvely use such theory as fashionable make-up to impress friends at parties - 'Do you believe in karma?' - without really understanding any of its mechanisms, with-

out distanced analysis, without paying attention where it leads us in a highly sublime way?

We are playing a dangerous game! We have no real resistance, no valid alternative concept. And even if we think we only play with the idea, that we wouldn't be serious about it, this concept sneaks into our mind, into our sub-conscience and influences us.

What is it that attracts us to karma? What makes us playfully embrace a concept we officially ridicule and doggedly refuse to examine seriously? - Could it be our yearning for meaning? Could it be our craving that life should amount to something, that all our efforts, all our suffering, all our achievements should be more than just an irrelevant quiver of chemical elements as modern science wants us to believe? Is it not our discomfort with a faceless evolution theory that depicts life as mere accidental combinations of matter that will inevitably dissolve without much of a trace?

For thousands of years religion provided pre-fabricated, well-cushioned descriptions what life was all about. It defined what was 'good' and 'bad', it created criteria against which to measure the world we were confronted with, it offered the goals towards which life was supposed to move. The image of a benevolent and stern though often unfathomable God opened an umbrella of security many found shelter beneath.

Then the advent of science dismantled much of this comfortable cushion of faith on which to rest our deeper questions. 'Meaning' couldn't be proven physically or chemically and was degraded to an individual irrelevancy, to a petty psychological weakness of our biological frame.

Yet science never really replaced meaning as religion had defined it. It only labeled the question as unnecessary, it never really answered it. After proclaiming the universe as fundamentally indifferent to humans - and to anything else for that matter, - science left it to the individual to find his or her own meaning without providing any orientation where to search for.

We now are one of the first generations who needs to find our very own meaning, our very individual purpose of life. Since our survival (food, shelter, clothing, security, comfort) is basically assured, we now need to find our very own reason why we are here and why we need to go on living in the first place.

This longing for orientation, this desire for meaning beyond all our material comforts is one of the main reasons why the idea of karma attracts us.

Karma - however vague it might appear - delivers. It offers us the conviction that our life is not meaningless. It presents us with a range of goals: our liberation from life's restricting influences, the promise of higher - ecstatic - states of consciousness, a self-determined way to improve our conditions if we only choose a 'positive' path, and finally the idea that all our action is relevant, is even noted down, recognized, though we couldn't exactly pinpoint where and how and why. And last not least, karma comes from the mysterious East, - it maintains a healthy distance to the established Western religions which many feel have failed to 'prove' their claims.

All this appeals to us so much, all this provides answers in such a vacuum of meaning, that we eagerly accept its shortcomings, - like the looming mountain of past deeds that is growing rather than diminishing, - like the indistinct, disabling feeling that we accumulate more bad than good deeds, - like an almost endless succession of incarnations before us (which on the other hand also soothes our subconscious yearning that life might not be over after death, that we would get another chance), - like the idea - but also the hope - that it might take almost a miracle to resolve all this complex, entangled load.

Yet interestingly enough - none of our vague notions what karma is all about corresponds to reality. All our ideas about karma are so heavily flawed that we might well discard them altogether.

The fact that this word has been misunderstood and misused in the West - and in the East - takes nothing away from the validity,

clarity and impact of the original concept of karma as the ancient Indian scripture of the Tattvarthasutra describes it.

This ancient Indian concept has no intention whatsoever to chain us to events of former incarnations as our vague Western understanding falsely assumes. And - in refreshing contrast to the 'enigmatic and rather inaccessible sub-consciousness of psychology' - none of the karmic mechanisms contain any mystery or secrets.

The best key to the original concept of karma provides the word itself. 'Karma' means 'action' - and nothing other than 'action happening in the present'.

Yet by action - karma - the Tattvarthasutra means not only the movement of living beings or matter, but also some kind of 'interactive field' that all action creates inside and around living beings. This 'interactive field' is shaped by our intentions, motives, desires and the emotional content and 'drive' with which we conduct our individual actions.

The Tattvarthasutra explains how our activities influence this peculiar field and how in return this field influences us. It offers mechanisms how to control it and how to use it for our benefit.

The focus of karma on the actual present emphasizes that any 'karmic' effect our actions produce will not manifest in some fictitious, far-away future. The focus on the present means that each of our actions instantly and automatically 'updates' our individual karmic field so that we experience the karmic effects right in the immediate present and right along with our activities. This process can e.g. be felt as the opening or closing of potential paths. It offers or blocks alternatives we either perceive physically or sense intuitively on a subtle, yet recognizable level.

The Tattvarthasutra clarifies that our present interactive 'karmic field' always holds the entire actualized status of all our 'karma'. And it also states that the character and inclination of all our karma can be changed at any given moment and entirely at our own discretion.

There just doesn't exist a shadowy 'mountain of karma' which supposedly stores all our past actions.

True, the contents of our interactive karmic field were shaped by (previous) activities - as all our life is, - but this does not mean that it contains memories of all the details of (previous) actions. The field only holds the directions in which we actively move (our desires and motives) and the intensity and the emotional thrust with which we endow our actions to reach objectives.

Karma is everything BUT a negative load on our life. The striving for fulfillment (manifestation, realization) of values and ideas originating deep within us is one of the fundamental characteristics of our existence. We want our actions to bear fruits, we want to experience these fruits and we usually have quite real ideas what these fruits should look like. The emotional power with which we pursue our ideas and desires acts like a magnet that attracts all components necessary for the fulfillment of these ideas. Karma is nothing other than the mechanism that makes us thoroughly experience the themes of our life until we gained optimal knowledge from them and until our emotional attachment to these themes falls off.

It is entirely unnecessary to interpret this mechanism - the continued presentation of our life's uncompleted themes - in a negative way. What we experience is basically a neutral growth-process. The better we understand how this process works, the less we feel victimized by it. The more we control its mechanisms and the faster we achieve desired results, the less we will interpret it as obstructive.

The Tattvarthasutra gives us the actual key to this mechanism.

But this is only the very first part of the story. As the ancient manuscript continues, it describes fourteen dimensions of consciousness dormant within us that offer far more fascinating and effective ways to realize our ideals and dreams than the rather limited dimension we experience at present. Though we mostly seem unaware of these higher dimensions, we often experience them as flashes of insights during everyday life. We usually discard these

sudden sensations as irrelevant quirks of our perception because we lack any idea what to make of them.

The ancient manuscript values these sudden insights far higher. It informs us that they give us a taste how higher dimensions feel like. It supplies precise descriptions of their characteristics and features. And it reveals a practical way how to stabilize our access to them, - access to unimaginably greater comprehension, intensity and immediacy of life; - and to supreme fulfillment that surpasses anything we ever felt before.

However brief these flashes of insight may appear to us initially - they prove vividly that we are capable of experiencing these higher dimensions.

Exploring uncharted dimensions hidden deep within an unknown part of our consciousness is the most fascinating venture of our life. To those adventurous enough to take this challenge they open a entirely new range of exceptional activities, expanding comprehension and a radically broader bandwidth of life.

The Ancient Wisdom How to Unfold Life

KARMA - THE MECHANISM presents three chapters of an ancient Indian manuscript - the Tattvarthasutra - whose origins reach back in time before recorded history. The Tattvarthasutra describes in concentrated form one of the oldest, if not the oldest philosophy of the world.

The work introduces an refreshingly new, unconventional view of purpose and functioning of our consciousness that far surpasses all Western, matter-oriented concepts. It identifies the mechanisms that make us really EXPERIENCE this world. It alerts us to channels through which to perceive and access it we are unaware of. It hands us a radically alternative model - a second opinion - of our universe that does not see us as separate from it, but as its very center, - just as we experience it in everyday life. It allows us to see life not as an infinite mass of disjointed events we feel unconnected to, but empow-

ers us to steer every event that concerns us in an innovative, highly effective way.

Far from being a theoretical treatise, the work accompanies its advice with easily applicable, practical methods how to systematically access higher dimensions of our life.

The knowledge is part of the Jaina Canon that is customarily counted as one of the major religions of the world. Yet in essence this label is wrong. In contrast to many other philosophies, religions and ideologies the Tattvarthasutra has no intention to teach mankind respect before real or imaginary (one or many) gods, nor to pray in any form for divine blessing. It also does not want to convert all and everyone into blind-believing devotees to let their lives revolve around some luminous spiritual magnet.

The Tattvarthasutra describes nothing other than a method, an instrument how to unfold hidden abilities of exceptional magnitude we all carry within. These abilities open up such breathtaking depth and broadness of knowledge, love, energy and the experience of happiness Western culture has no concept to match.

The Tattvarthasutra contains a practical key that systematically expands our understanding and triggers experiences of superior states of consciousness. This key is not shrouded in obscure language nor does it demand the application of mystic techniques, *it simply interprets life from a new angle*. Yet this new angle enables us to arrange the components of our daily life in such a way that our consciousness automatically shifts into new modes of operation.

This method leads to total independence. It unfolds abilities generally attributed only to supernatural beings. We achieve this not by fickle divine sanction or by surrendering to a guru. The method of the Tattvarthasutra causes - only in step with our own efforts - the gradual dissolution of obstructions that limit our consciousness. In growing self-determination we then recognize our own personal path with ever increasing clarity. The Tattvarthasutra describes exactly how this is achieved.

The Tattvarthasutra

The Tattvarthasutra is about 1800 years old. Its title translates '*The Text Describing the Purpose of Reality*'.

It was written in the second or third century AD by the Indian sage Umaswami, who condensed the vast contemporary knowledge of this path in this one work.

Yet the knowledge of the Tattvarthasutra is based on still older wisdom. Its origins reach far beyond recorded history. There exists evidence of 24 enlightened teachers who taught identical knowledge at much earlier times. Corresponding artifacts have been found in the Indus Valley Culture, the oldest Asian civilization (approx. 3000 BC and before) and the records mentioned in other manuscripts reach even further back. The Tattvarthasutra is regarded as the main work on this path.

'Sutras' (short statements) and their interpretation through commentaries originated in times when paper and other means of material recording did not exist. Knowledge was learned by heart and handed down orally from generation to generation. Sutras therefore were kept as brief as possible. They were governed by precise rules which for example defined the weight of a word by its position alone. To keep knowledge pure, even the commentators followed exact rules. This method worked with such precision that highly complex information conceived thousands of years ago reached our present times with hardly any distortion.

To someone raised in a Western cultural environment, the transfer of knowledge by brief sutras may appear strange at first. Complex rules and formal style can easily block access to these works, - especially when translated in dry scholarly fashion that does not convey the inspiration and power of the original sutras.¹

¹ Unfortunately most scholars who attempt an interpretation lack the direct personal experience that is essential if one wants to bring the spirit of this ancient work to life. Familiarity with Sanskrit grammar alone just does not automatically produce understanding of the fasci-

Yet though the outer form of this millennia-old work looks unusual, it has not lost any of its original fascination, impact and practicality. A growing number of people searching for purpose beyond material saturation recognize it as their main key to unknown dimensions of their existence. - The new frontier of human experience lies within us. - The Tattvarthasutra outlines exactly how to explore these uncharted dimensions.

The Tattvarthasutra covers three major themes:

Part 1 - chapter 1 - introduces the sheer magnitude of our potential. It explains how this universe supports the physical expression of all the ideals, desires, ideas and aspirations deep within us. It describes channels through which to access knowledge of higher order and how to intuitively discriminate between truth and error. It reveals how to experience higher dimensions of our consciousness.

Part 2 - chapter 2 to 5 - outlines the levels of existence on which life manifests. This part also deals with the purpose and functions of time, space, matter and other basic elements of this universe.

Part 3 - chapter 6 to 9 - alerts us to the factors that limit our present state of life and explains how to remove their causes. Chapter 10 describes our shift into a state free from all limitations, where we gain access to the entire breadth and richness of our potential.

The first part of the ancient manuscript (chapter 1) is published as 'THE KEY TO THE CENTER OF THE UNIVERSE' by Hermann Kuhn (also at Crosswind Publishing).

KARMA - THE MECHANISM presents the third part of the Tattvarthasutra (chapter 6, 8, and part of chapter 9). It alerts us to deep-rooted, hidden mechanisms that govern all our actions and tells us how to control them. The work contains all parts of the Tattvarthasutra that explain the karmic mechanisms relevant to our present times (chapter

nating higher dimensions of consciousness the sutras describe. It also does not automatically bestow the ability to translate this work into a language easily understood by those in search of this information.

6, 8, and part of chapter 9). Special efforts have been made to present the practical aspect of the Tattvarthasutra - the mechanisms of action and the development of hidden abilities - in an easily applicable way.

A modern commentary accompanies the ancient text. For easier reading all accents in the transliteration of Sanskrit words have been eliminated. The Sanskrit terms are for reference only. They help to identify the exact meaning.

How to Use This Book

It is recommended to read the book twice and to postpone all questions that might arise during the first reading. The text often introduces themes only briefly to return to them extensively later. A second reading then produces far deeper insight.

It is further recommended to try to locate the described mechanisms in our own life rather than to ponder how they might effect others, what others may think about them, or how much they would be able to understand. As long as we remain on this level of 'mere theoretical' understanding and avoid actively testing the mechanisms in our own life, the ancient manuscript will not reveal its hidden power.

'TEXT OF THE SUTRAS' lists the text of the ancient manuscript without accompanying commentary.

'APPLICATION' - the second part of the book - offers further information how to make practical use of this knowledge. This information is derived from other parts of the Tattvarthasutra, further ancient scriptures and practical experience.

SUTRAS

ATTRACTION TO KARMA

Chapter 6 of the
- Tattvarthasutra -

Most people experience life as constant alternation between action and reaction. We initiate action and the rest of the universe (including our own body and our own consciousness) reacts to this stimulus. Often the outside world introduces facts and problems and thereby triggers our responses.

This concept of action and reaction appears sensible. It gives us an idea how to manage - more or less successfully - the challenges of daily life. The more we experience - i.e. the more we know how the universe reacts to our action - the better, wiser and the more effective we should be able to conduct our life.

Yet there's a catch: Almost all our action seems to contain incalculable factors which at any time may influence, change or imperil its course. Especially long term projects have the annoying tendency to become unpredictable and even the most meticulous planning or the availability of unlimited funds and resources will not ensure success. In the end many things look entirely different from our original intent or expectation. That things turn out as planned and give us the desired satisfaction often appears more the exception than the rule.

Something seems to escape all our planning, all our calculation, - something that definitely influences everything we do and that affects all the results of our actions.

Strangely this - 'something' - which exerts central power on our life - never attracted much systematic attention of the Western sciences. So far only psychology tried to locate our actions' basic mechanisms and its propelling forces in more subtle fields than the purely material. Yet the almost 100 years of research in this direction have not produced much of a new, systematic approach to more effective conduct. Though psychology's theories may sound logical in parts, most people intuitively reject the idea of being governed by an inaccessible sub-conscience - whose hidden features may have entered there only in a dark and highly obscure way.

Yet there exists - in the Eastern part of our world - an ancient concept that not only explains the fundamental inner mechanisms of action, but gives us tangible information how to unfold a vast, unused

potential inherent within us. It further describes extraordinary dimensions which human endeavor hardly ever attempted to venture into. This concept is called 'Karma'.

Now, - apart from the obvious misconceptions about this term that have been dealt with in THE MYSTERY, - most people picture karma as a rather abstract function of their life. We tend to regard karma as something foreign, as some separate and alien component we feel only a distant and rather fuzzy link to.

Yet there is nothing abstract, foreign or vague about karma. We find its expressions and effects right in our everyday existence. Karma is nothing other than our very emotional attachment to the 'themes' or features of our life we feel - positively or negatively - attracted to. Karma is essentially the material carrier of our desire to physically experience this world.

There is a fundamental difference between our consciousness and karma. Consciousness - that what is alive within us - is independent of any physical carrier. Karma on the other hand is a kind of subtle matter that surrounds our consciousness in a similar way as our body surrounds it with physical matter. When these two components - consciousness and karma - mix together, we experience life as we know it at present. Yet as long as we remain unaware of the mechanisms that govern the interactions of these two components, we will experience that our actions often produce unexpected or undesired results.

We do have the ability and power to control all interaction between karma and consciousness. Once we become aware of their mechanisms, we can easily stop the erratic results the random mixing of these two components often generates. We then gain access to far more efficient ways of using our awareness, far greater freedom of action and growing insight into the real functioning of our life.

Sutra 1 to 9 explain how we attract karmic matter to our consciousness. Sutra 10 to 27 illustrates with a number of concise examples how our consciousness and karmic matter interact with each other.

S U T R A 1

कायवाङ्मनःकर्म योगः ॥ १ ॥

Kayavanmanah karma yogah (1)

With the activities of our body, speech and mind we attract karma to our consciousness. (1)

All activities of our body, speech and mind establish a connection between our consciousness and karma.¹

S U T R A 2

स आस्रवः ॥ २ ॥

Sa asravah (2)

This attraction causes our consciousness and karma to interact (*as-rava*). (2)

Our own activities are the very origin of the interaction between our consciousness² and non-living karmic matter.

Karma is an essential part of our life in the state of embodiment. It connects our consciousness to the physical world. It is the very factor that allows us to experience these embodiments in all their permutations and variations. On our path to a more enlightened and liber-

¹ The Tattvarthasutra calls this connecting process 'yoga'. This is not identical with the system of gentle Indian exercises, the West usually associates with 'Yoga'. The chapter 'yoga IN THE TATTVARTHASUTRA' describes the main differences between the two meanings.

² The Tattvarthasutra calls the essence of consciousness *jiva* and defines it as 'that what lives in a living being' - irrespective of the body it presently inhabits.

ated state (*moksa*) it presents us with challenges³ that train and test our responsibility for our own actions.

Karma is a kind of subtle matter⁴ that constitutes the interactive karmic field which surrounds every⁵ living being - our 'karmic body'. Much of the karmic matter we attract to this field is discarded immediately. Yet particular types of actions and emotions cause a more intense, long-lasting attachment of this subtle matter to our consciousness. These types of actions and emotions are described from sutra 10 onwards.

A large part of the karmic matter stored in our interactive karmic field is inactive (latent)⁶. How long karma remains inactive and at what point in time it becomes active, is determined by what area of life it influences - i.e. by its character or type.

³ How much time we allocate each individual challenge and how intensely we experience them is entirely up to us. Knowledge how karmic mechanisms operate, a readiness to meet challenges, becoming aware of our emotions and consciously directing our actions considerably shortens the time we need for mastering our individual tasks. In this (learning) process karmic mechanisms offer an indicator of progress and proficiency that couldn't be more precise.

⁴ The idea that 'karmic molecules' exist might cause ironic smiles in some. Yet we only need to recall that science found proof of the existence of molecules only in 1906 and that it took till 1920 to develop concepts for understanding atoms - all the while ancient Asian and even Western manuscripts described their existence and mechanics millennia before. And anyone who - only a hundred years ago - would have suggested that these particles presumed 'indivisible' were made up of even subtler units like quarks and leptons, would certainly have been subjected to ridicule as well.

Sure - our sacred science is currently far too proud to research karmic molecules - but give it another 50 years and the situation might be completely different. Already now ideas that mind fundamentally affects matter keep popping up persistently in scientific circles. That science has not discovered karmic matter yet does not state anything against its existence.

⁵ every being that has not yet reached freedom from karmic mechanisms - *moksa*

⁶ Sutra 17 describes the nature and purpose of latent karma.

For how long and how intensely we experience karma when it activates is determined by the depth of our emotional engagement in the action with which we originally caused the attachment of a particular karma to our interactive karmic field.

The activation (manifestation) of latent karma dissolves our bond with the activated karma. Dissolved karmic bonds do not affect us any more.

We usually interpret the manifestation of karma as positive or negative influences in our life, - e.g. as success or failure of our actions, our words (our ability to communicate and to convince) and as the power and clarity of our thoughts.

Yet there is no reason to see karma solely as burden that needs to be worked off diligently or suffered through stoically only to produce a feeling of relief at its final dissolution. Karma is nothing other than the mechanism that makes us thoroughly experience the themes of our life until we gained optimal knowledge from them and until our emotional attachment to these themes falls off.

What karma makes us experience is basically a neutral growth-process we need not interpret in a negative way. The better we understand how this process works, the less we feel victimized by it. The more we control its mechanisms and the faster we reach results we desire, the more we will interpret it as supportive.

Activities triggered by the manifestation of karma do not automatically bind further karma. Yet if we react to a karmic manifestation with strong - positive or negative - emotions, we attract new karma, i.e. we attach new karmic matter to our karmic field that will influence us. This renewed attraction can easily create a cycle of accumulating and discarding the same type of karma. In this case we usually get the feeling that the same theme of life is recurring again and again. This cycle of attracting and discarding the same type of karma appears to us as if there exists a strong (karmic) bond between our consciousness and one particular theme of life.

The mechanisms and conditions causing this apparent bond between karma and our consciousness are described in the next chapter. The present chapter explains

- how actions, emotions and thoughts attract karma to our consciousness
- how we - by our emotions and actions - determine strength, theme and duration of this (temporary) attachment and
- what types of actions and attitudes will cause renewed attachment between karma and our consciousness.

S U T R A 3

शुभः पुण्यस्याशुभः पापस्य ॥ ३ ॥

Shubhah punyasyashubhah papasya (3)

We experience two modes of karma:

- positive karma (*punya*) - manifests as a subjectively agreeable feeling of life (positive experiences) and ideally will further our inner growth. It is caused by activities we generally regard as positive ('good', 'virtuous').
- negative karma (*paapa*) - manifests as a subjectively disagreeable feeling of life (negative experiences) and obstructs our inner growth. It is caused by activities we generally regard as negative ('bad', 'evil'). (3)

In our present time we tend to question whether fundamental qualities like 'good' or 'bad' exist in the first place.

Though we generally regard violence, stealing, deceit, cruel words and envious, harmful thoughts etc. as fundamentally negative, our modern society is equally inclined to interpret actions based on positive intentions as 'good' and actions based on negative intentions as 'bad'.

Yet while it is basically true that our *intentions* determine whether an action, thought or word produces positive (*punya*) or negative (*paapa*) karma for us, this would ultimately mean that any positive intention - no matter where it is aimed - would justify killing, stealing, deception etc. as well.

But there exists one criterion that takes the relativity out of the concepts of 'good' and 'bad': - That what supports our inner growth, what removes obstacles, error etc. from our path to freedom from karmic restrictions and helps us to perceive our original radiant nature, is positive, 'good' (*punya*). It generally produces an agreeable, happy feeling.

That what hinders us to experience this positive feeling, what blocks our growth and obstructs the perception of our original, radiant nature, is negative, 'bad' (*paapa*). It generally produces a feeling of unhappiness.

In this understanding there do exist actions that - irrespective of the intention they are based on - have such negative character that they will always obstruct our inner development. These are all actions based on rage (anger), arrogance (pride), the intention to deceive others (manipulation) and greed (addiction) - the four basic negative emotions⁷ - and further obsession, laziness, negligence, fanaticism etc.

Similarly there are positive activities that will always support our inner growth: - all actions inspired by compassion, by our orientation towards growth etc.

Ideals or intentions, as high as they might be, *never* justify means used for their achievement that fall short of the original goal. Each single step towards an ideal always needs to do full justice to its very core. Every action that does *not* correspond with our original aspiration reduces our ideal and fundamentally changes its direction, validity and impact.

⁷ Sutra 9 in the chapter 'THE NATURE OF KARMIC BONDS' describes how these emotions obstruct inner growth.

The world as it appears to us in our present times, easily gives the impression that people undertaking actions defined as 'bad' are having far greater fun than those obediently restricting themselves to 'good' behavior.

Actions generally perceived as 'good' often seem boring, fettered by duty, governed by rigid rules and prompted by intellectual accord rather than gut-feeling. And further these types of action more often than not remain unrecognized - except by a certain kind of dull and uncreative people who define the adherence to firm rules as major purpose in their life - and try to motivate or force others to conform to this belief as well.

In stark contrast to this many actions we regard as 'bad' carry the thrill of the forbidden and are inspired by excitement, daring and creativity. When we engage in 'bad', 'forbidden' action, we often experience heightened intensity of life, substantially more energy, and in the end are rewarded with a high degree of satisfaction - irrespective if we were successful or not.

And this gut-feeling is basically right. Excitement and the exploration of unknown (forbidden) areas of life are generally far more intense and satisfying than the performance of any socially accepted, formal duty could ever be.

But the conclusion is not that we should choose 'bad' actions because they just seem more rewarding, - the conclusion is to take the boredom out of 'good' action.

As long as we perform 'good' actions only because we follow purely formal, religious or social motives, or because we want to please someone propagating the boring variation of 'good' action, we will always envy those having 'fun' with their 'bad' actions - even though we might outwardly condemn their activities - and even though we may take high pride in the amount of 'good' karma we supposedly accumulate by our own boring activities.

Yet this purely formal pursuit of 'the good' without real inner understanding, without real inner engagement and conviction does not

at all accumulate 'good' karma. It only attaches us to more boredom, rigidity and negative emotions (resentment) against the 'bad' guys who seem to have all the fun.

We need to fundamentally understand why we are performing 'good' actions. We need to realize that exploring higher dimensions of consciousness is infinitely more exciting, vibrant and rewarding than any 'bad' - i.e. selfishly motivated - action governed by greed, anger, deception, pride, carelessness, obsession or laziness could ever be. Only with this inspiration deeply rooted in our emotions will our 'positive' activities produce the freedom from karmic attachments we yearn for - i.e. the freedom from persistently recurring uncomfortable, dissatisfying and frustrating situations and emotions.

We need to discard the misleading idea that 'good' actions necessarily have to be in harmony with commonly accepted views of society. Mahatma Gandhi's life is an excellent example that positive action can be highly creative, adventurous, exciting, powerful, daring and much more, yet he certainly upset all established opinions and disrupted much of the prevalent social consensus of his time. To seriously go for higher dimensions of our life takes far more courage, steadfastness and strength than the pursuit of the accepted, egoistic goals of a society which essentially are only geared towards preserving its current stagnant status-quo.

Since every action inevitably attracts karma that may possibly bind us, the question comes to mind whether we might not be better off to refrain from any activity - no matter if positive or negative.

From the perspective of the all-comprehensive underlying reality - *nischaya-naya* - this certainly is true. All activity attracts karma, may cause karmic bonds and thus obscure the radiant inner nature of our consciousness.

Yet from the practical perspective of daily life - *vyavahara naya* - the classification of action in positive ('good') and negative ('bad') proves of great help for our inner growth. The classification offers an orien-

tation that simplifies decisions and judges complex actions on the basis: 'Does this expand my consciousness or not?'. The immediate effect that positive activities (*punya*) lead to agreeable subjective experiences and negative activities (*paapa*) to disagreeable feelings, creates a measuring tool that could not be simpler.

Life without action is no valid alternative for anyone still subject to karma. In that case we would be unable to release our existing karmic matter - i.e. our emotional attachment to limited themes of life - through action. Life without action would cement our present karmic state and also our current stage of development (see '14 STAGES OF DEVELOPMENT') into eternal permanence.

S U T R A 4

सकषायाकषाययोः साम्परायिकेर्यापथयोः ॥ ४ ॥

Sakasayakasayayoh samparayikeryapathayoh (4)

Karma affects us in two intensities:

- actions caused or influenced by negative passionate emotions (*samparayika*) prolong the cycle of our incarnations
- actions not influenced by these negative emotions (*iryapatha*) have only transient, short-lived karmic effects. (4)

The intensity with which karma affects us is determined by the emotions we feel while we perform the action that attaches karma to our consciousness.

The more we are motivated or influenced by anger (rage), arrogance (pride), the intention to deceive others (manipulation) and greed (addiction) - the four major negative emotions, - the more intensely this karma will manifest.

In the first ten stages of development (*gunasthanas*) we experience both - long lasting as well as transient - karmic effects. During the

11th, 12th and 13th stage only the transient, short-living intensity is felt. In the 14th stage of development we cease to take in karma.

This does not mean that in the first ten stages we only accumulate karma that draws us ever deeper into the cycle of incarnations. While experiencing these stages we always have the option to stop attracting and binding new karma (i.e. to check our desires for themes of life that limit us), to dissolve our existing karma or to acquire special karma that furthers our freedom from karmic limitations and enables us to perceive the original, radiant nature of our consciousness. 'HOW TO DISSOLVE KARMA' explains these mechanisms.

S U T R A 5

इन्द्रियकषायाव्रताक्रियाः पञ्चचतुःपञ्चपञ्चविंशतिसंख्याः पूर्वस्य भेदाः ॥ ५ ॥

Indriya kasaya vrata kriyah pancha-chatuh-pancha-pancha vimshatisankhyah purvasya bhedah (5)

With our five senses, four negative passionate emotions, indifference to the Five Freedoms and by 25 types of activities we attract karma that prolongs our cycle of incarnations (*samparayika*). (5)

The five senses - Our tendency to experience our physical environment by touching, tasting, smelling, seeing and hearing it runs on such fundamental level that we tend to regard it as an unquestionable, absolute property of life.

Yet this preference to perceive our world e.g. as three-dimensional, as subject to gravity (as our feet resting on the ground), as matter being relatively stable, as nature being green in its phase of growth etc.

is only a deep-rooted karmic bond⁸ that characterizes the lower stages of development. We reinforce this inclination each time we use our senses.

Four negative passionate emotions - Anger (rage), arrogance (pride), the intention to deceive others (manipulation) and greed (addiction) attach us firmly to the objects or events on which we focus this type of emotional energy. They manifest and strengthen our deep-seated desire for further experiences of this kind. The four negative passionate emotions retain our consciousness on the lower stages of development since these are the only levels we can experience them in.

Indifference to the Five Freedoms⁹ - Not to care whether we cause injury to others or deceive them, whether we take what is not given freely, are unwilling to grow or cling to our possessions, firmly bonds our consciousness to the first four stages of development.

25 activities that prolong our cycle of incarnations are:

- 1 - orienting towards growth¹⁰
- 2 - activities that intensify or propagate delusion and error
- 3 - all activities we cause with our body, speech and mind
- 4 - the tendency to neglect the Five Freedoms
- 5 - moving without care so that small beings on the ground may get killed or injured
- 6 - the tendency to accuse others in anger

⁸ Once we begin to dissolve this bond - from the sixth stage of development onwards - we become aware that our present environment is *not* a primary feature of the universe but *only one* result of our emotional (karmic) attachment to a limited range of interactions between matter, time, space, movement and rest. We then also realize that other, far broader and more fascinating features exist *outside* the limits of our five senses.

⁹ see 'FIVE FREEDOMS' for details

¹⁰ this applies only to the inhabitants of higher, 'celestial' regions. For a detailed explanation see sutra 20 and 21.

- 7 - the malicious tendency to hurt others
- 8 - the possession of weapons
- 9 - all actions that inflict physical and mental pain on ourselves and others
- 10 - all actions that restrict other beings in the full unfoldment of their life, their sense-organs, vitality and breathing
- 11 - the desire to see pleasant forms - (this limits our consciousness to our material environment)
- 12 - the desire to touch pleasant forms
- 13 - the desire to imagine and invent new stimulation of the senses (this restricts the scope of our consciousness to the range of the senses)
- 14 - depositing waste in the life-space of other beings
- 15 - setting down objects without care so that small beings on the ground may get killed or injured
- 16 - doing ourselves what could be done by others (thereby manifesting our attachment to these actions)
- 17 - admiring hurtful and evil activities and their effects
- 18 - propagating the mistakes of others
- 19 - misinterpreting those parts of the scriptures we do not want to follow
- 20 - disrespect for external knowledge (teachers and scriptures) because of malice or laziness
- 21 - engaging in harmful activities or expressing delight at the harmful activities of others
- 22 - the tendency to prolong or intensify our attachment to material objects and activities
- 23 - any attempt to disturb the spiritual efforts of others and to upset or destroy their orientation towards growth and their true knowledge
- 24 - propagating actions, ideas or concepts based on error and delusion

25 - the attachment to objects and actions whose worthlessness we already understood.

This sutra lists the mechanisms that perpetuate our chain of incarnations. If we want to experience more fascinating (new) layers of our existence, we need to stop their effects. We need to identify which activities lock our attention and focus on our current limited level of life. The activities listed above attach karmic matter to our interactive karmic field. They block us from becoming aware of higher stages of our existence.

The list does not instruct us how to live life. It only alerts us of the factors that obstruct our growth. Any consequences we want to deduct from this depend entirely on our own intentions, energy and the situations we still want to experience during this incarnation.

S U T R A 6

तीव्रमन्दज्ञाताज्ञातभावाधिकरणवीर्यविशेषेभ्यस्तद्विशेषः ॥ ६ ॥

Tivramandajnatajnatabhavadhikaranaviryavishesebhyastadvisheshah (6)

Two persons may perform the same physical action, but experience different karmic effects.

These differences are caused

- by the intensity with which each of them desired or planned the act
- whether they performed the action with or without intention (e. g. through negligence etc.)
- if they initiated the action or were prompted to act by outside influences - (the origin - *adhikarana*)
- by the amount of energy and ability each of them committed to the act. (6)

The next three sutras describe what factors influence the intensity, duration, character (the type) and time of karmic manifestations.

S U T R A 7

अधिकरणं जीवाऽजीवाः ॥ ७ ॥

Adhikaranam jivajivah (7)

How karma manifests depends on whether the impulse for that activity

- originated within our consciousness (*jiva*) or
- was presented to us by our environment (by the *ajiva*-elements outside our consciousness). (7)

All action that originates in our consciousness, in our emotions and in our psyche confronts us with entirely different karmic effects than activities that are induced by our (material) environment (the *ajiva*-elements¹¹). The next two sutras describe these differences.

S U T R A 8

आद्यं संरम्भसमारम्भारम्भयोगकृतकारितानुमतकषायविशेषैस्त्रिस्त्रिश्च
तुश्चैकशः ॥ ८ ॥

Adyam samrambha samarambharambha yoga krita karita numata kasaya vishesais tristrish chatush chaikashah (8)

¹¹ The term *ajiva* denotes the five basic elements of this universe that do not possess consciousness: - matter (*pudgala*), space (*akasha*), time (*kala*) and the elements supporting movement (*dharmā*) and rest (*adharma*). Chapter five of the Tattvarthasutra describes the *ajiva*-elements in detail.

The karmic effects of actions originating within our consciousness are shaped by the following factors:

Whether we

- only decide to act
- actually prepare for the action (e.g. by collecting materials etc.)
or
- physically begin with the action.

Whether

- we ourselves carry out the act
- others carry out the act as a result of our instigation or
- we only silently assent to the act (without taking any further part in it).

The instrument of activity through which we act (body, speech or mind) and whether we are motivated by anger (rage), arrogance (pride), the intention to deceive others (manipulation) or greed (addiction) - the four negative passionate emotions - further affect the karmic consequences. (8)

We attract and bind karma not only when we physically perform an action, but also when we provoke an action, when we indirectly participate in it, prepare for it and also when we only give our silent assent.

The deeper and more directly we immerse ourselves in an action, the more intense and long-lasting will be the character of the karma we bind. The less we engage in an action, the milder and shorter will be its karmic effects.

Yet this does not mean that karma will manifest with less intensity, the further away we are from the physical execution of an action. The passionate instigation (ordering, prompting, causing, sanctioning etc.) of an action or any gloating assent may lead to far more intense karmic effects than the comparatively uninvolved physical execution by a subordinate. The intensity of the karma we bind cor-

responds directly to the intensity of our own inner engagement, irrespective if our involvement is direct, indirect or only silently assenting.

Whether we use our body, speech or mind for an action determines the area of life the newly acquired karma will influence. An unchecked tendency for quarreling e.g. attracts a type of karma¹² that shapes the physiognomy of the acting person according to his or her brawling disposition. This effect is quite evident in the face and bearing of many persons with this kind of temper right in their present life. Positive examples of this karmic effect are persons who radiate equanimity and inner peace and whose mere presence is often sufficient to quieten quarrels. Their solid peaceful attitude usually shows clearly in face and bearing.¹³

We intensify karmic effects not only when we are motivated by the four main negative emotions, but also by the power we put behind our anger, arrogance, deceitfulness and greed. We manifest these emotions in four intensities:

- The highest intensity manifests as bouts of blind rage, aloof arrogance, insatiable greed and malicious deceit. As long as we permit our life to be governed by emotions of this intensity at one time or the other, we never leave the first stage of development (*gunasthana*) - the state of illusion, error and flawed understanding of the mechanisms of this world. As long as we don't actively search out and pursue opportunities for further development, our

¹² the type of karma (*nama*) that determines the outer appearance, radiance, energy and features of the body - see sutra 22 and 23

¹³ Our bodily form, energy, radiance, ability, knowledge and potential are the outward expressions of all our desires, attitudes and the intensity with which we pursue the fulfillment of our dreams. If we are not happy with our present appearance, we can at any time change our desires, attitudes and the energy we use for realizing our ideals. The point in time when this will show results, depends mainly on the depth of our previous emotional set-up and how fast we dissolve it. The strength with which we desire change influences this process significantly.

stay in this stage will be endless. The Tattvarthasutra compares the karmic effects of this intensity of negative emotions with the permanence of a line carved in rock.

- The second intensity is felt as strong negative emotions that do not totally overshadow us any more. Yet passionate emotions of this strength waste our vigor and attention on narrow topics that restrict the scope of our life. We thus lack the energy needed for reaching the fifth stage of development. This second intensity also prevents us from recognizing that the power of the Five Freedoms accelerates our development. Its effect is compared to a line drawn in earth.
- The third, moderate intensity is mild in comparison to the two previous forms, yet it nevertheless keeps our awareness fixed on egoistic, limiting themes of life. It prevents us from entering the sixth stage of development. This bars us from experiencing the emotional sovereignty, serenity and the vividness of the present that characterizes stage six. The third intensity also blocks us from feeling the full power of the Five Freedoms. Yet its effect is as fleeting as a line drawn in dust.
- The fourth and mildest intensity prevents access to the tenth stage of development. The effect of this intensity leaves as little impression as a line in water.

Karmas caused by the three milder intensities may become active in higher stages of development only. These mechanisms are described in '14 STAGES OF DEVELOPMENT'.

All karmic patterns mentioned in this sutra arise in our consciousness. By changing the way we use our consciousness, we automatically influence these karmic patterns as well.

S U T R A 9

निर्वर्तनानिक्षेपसंयोगनिसर्गा द्विचतुर्द्वित्रिभेदाः परम् ॥ ९ ॥

Nirvartana nikshepa samyoga nisarga dvichaturdvi tribhedah param (9)

When our environment (the *ajiva*-elements) prompts us to act, we shape these karmic effects by

- the way we create actions, objects, thoughts etc.
- the way we place objects
- the way we combine objects and
- the means we choose for carrying out an action. (9)

The way we create actions, objects, thoughts etc.

The creation of non-material actions (ideas, thoughts, sounds etc.) produces different karmic effects than the creation of primarily material objects (pictures, utensils, buildings etc.).

The way we place objects

- Placing objects carelessly without paying attention where we set them down
- placing objects without first clearing the space where we want to put them (this may injure or kill small animals)
- placing an object in haste
- placing an object in a spot where it does not belong though we have enough time to put it in its proper place

intensifies karmic effects.

The way we combine objects

Mixing two or more substances to form a new substance (e.g. food or drink) produces different karmic effects than when we arrange activities to cause an action or for creating an effect.

The means we use for carrying out an action

The physical medium - body, speech or mind - we use for carrying out an action also influences its karmic effects.

* * *

These first nine sutras describe the general mechanisms that attach karmic matter to our interactive karmic field. Knowing these mechanisms enables us to identify what types of action attract karma and how our moods and emotions intensify karmic effects. Where before we saw ourselves as victims of a seemingly erratic and uncontrollable 'fate', we now can actively check negative effects and consciously apply these mechanisms for our growth.

The chapter continues to describe types of actions and attitudes that cause more intense and long lasting attachment between karma and our consciousness.

S U T R A 10

तत्प्रदोषनिन्हवमात्सर्यान्तरायासादनोपघाताज्ञानदर्शनावरणयोः

॥ १० ॥

Tatpradosa ninhava matsaryan taraya sadanopaghata jnanadarshana varanayoh (10)

- Rejecting, consciously ignoring or a negative attitude towards knowledge¹⁴
- withholding knowledge
- refusing to impart knowledge out of envy or jealousy

¹⁴ Knowledge here primarily means 'the know-how that helps us to reach more advanced stages of development'. But we produce similar karmic results, if we direct the actions and attitudes mentioned in the sutra towards any kind of knowledge.

- obstructing the process of gaining knowledge
- denying truth proclaimed by others although we recognize it as truth and
- discrediting truth although we recognize it as such

attracts karma that prevents our intuition from orienting towards growth (*samyag darshana*). It also obstructs access to knowledge that advances our development (*samyag jnana*). (10)

Communicating and explaining true knowledge helps others to become aware of the magnitude of their inner potential. It opens mind and heart to the fact that everyone is capable of freeing himself from restricting influences. And it informs our fellow people of the methods how to reach this goal.

If we spurn this process, maintain a negative attitude towards it or obstruct it intentionally, we mainly block our own access to knowledge - and with this our access to freedom from all karmic limitations.

It is fundamentally impossible to prevent others from gaining knowledge.

The process of gaining knowledge is triggered by the dissolution of karmic blocks inside us. Once these blocks are removed, we gain access to further regions of the complete and perfect knowledge always present within us. After becoming aware of this opening, we begin to explore our - newly available - range of insight intuitively and intellectually. This exploration integrates the (new) knowledge into our consciousness and makes it accessible for practical use.

How and at what time we realize that our consciousness gained access to (new) knowledge depends on inner and outer circumstances. This realization can be triggered by sudden intuitive insight (*darshana*), by verbal instruction, by reading descriptions of it and other

factors. In general it happens when - after the inner opening - conducive conditions are present.¹⁵

It is entirely impossible to block the initial inner opening. And even the secondary process - our conscious exploration of this opening - may at the utmost be slowed down, but can never be totally barred.

Knowledge never comes from the outside. Every one of us always and permanently carries the source of all knowledge within. Knowledge and our ability to cognize it is one and the same inalienable and basic feature of our consciousness. The fact that we do not perceive this to its fullest at present is caused by our own prejudices, errors, misconceptions and erroneous beliefs what knowledge is all about, how it may be gained and that we already know everything. It is our very own emotional (karmic) attachment to these prejudices that block our access to higher knowledge. Once we remove these blocks, our awareness begins to reach into regions previously inaccessible. Any event at any location may then make us aware of the new range of knowledge available to us.

Imparting and explaining knowledge therefore never 'gives' knowledge to the student. It only makes him aware how much his awareness has opened up to his own inner source. And it may also guide him how to explore this opening and how to dissolve further karmic blocks - the prime cause for his progress.

Any negative attitude - whatever its origin - towards this process creates within us exactly the same type of obstruction we intend to cause in others.

¹⁵ We all experienced this: We work on a certain problem or try to remove some block in our understanding. We put in effort after effort and nothing seems to happen. Doubt starts if what we are doing will achieve anything at all. We begin to get annoyed.

And then - suddenly - our breakthrough comes. The block is removed, we reach a more comprehensive level of understanding, everything becomes clear and we think: 'How stupid, I didn't see it before'. - Whoever experienced such a breakthrough knows it comes suddenly, with lightening speed, with excitement shooting through us and motivating energy gushing through all our mind and body.

The following types of actions attract karma that blocks our own access to knowledge:

- **Rejecting, consciously ignoring or a negative attitude towards knowledge** - either felt inwardly or communicated to others.
- **Withholding knowledge** - means to pretend ignorance as well as intentionally concealing knowledge from someone who is eager to learn.

Concealment of knowledge is often found in hierarchical organizations structured around a central focus (gurus, preachers etc.). Here frequently the argument is heard that artificial barriers in the process of gaining knowledge are necessary because a disciple is deemed 'not ready' for so-called 'higher' knowledge. Yet this reasoning is invalid, arbitrary and keeps the student in intentional subjugation.

The amount and type of knowledge we have access to depends only on how much we open ourselves to our impeccable source of knowledge within. We gain access to this source in the same degree as we remove our deep-seated prejudices, misconceptions and erroneous beliefs - i.e. our karmic obstructions.

We cannot comprehend knowledge that is still blocked by karma. Though present in our consciousness in latent form, it will stay beyond our grasp for as long as we permit our prejudice, pride etc to block access to it. Even though we may formally learn it, we remain incapable of understanding it.

Since the 'maturity' for more ('higher') knowledge depends always and only on the removal of karmic obstructions within the student, it can never be controlled by giving or withholding formal information. And it is always our own decision how intensely we work on removing our prejudices, misconceptions and erroneous beliefs (karma) that stand between knowledge and our

comprehension. This process should not be slowed down by the erection of artificial barriers.¹⁶

- **Refusing to impart knowledge** out of envy or jealousy - e.g. someone is eager to receive knowledge, but his 'teacher' - i.e. someone in possession of this information - refuses to teach because he fears his disciple might progress faster than he himself.
- **Obstructing the process of gaining knowledge** (see commentary on withholding).
- **Denying truth proclaimed by others** although we recognize it as such. This means refuting, slandering, ridiculing and discussing with the intent to destroy the impact and power of knowledge.

Often this type of action is caused by envy that other teachers attract more followers, command deeper insight or have a greater gift of words.

- **The attempt to destroy knowledge** we recognize as true.

These attitudes and actions affect two areas of life:

- karma that blocks knowledge (*jnana*) frustrates our conscious perception, reflection, understanding and integration of knowledge.

¹⁶ Hierarchical organizations of this kind usually carry an additional basic flaw: - the mechanism of withholding knowledge obstructs the organization's *own* access to higher knowledge. Its karmic consequences affect all members who enforce the obstruction of the flow of information towards others. This often manifests in form of intense pride of the (higher) members in their presumed 'more' of knowledge.

- If this mechanism *is known* and is kept secret, then it is obvious that knowledge-obstructing karmas operate within the hierarchy.
- If its members *are unaware* how much of an obstruction they create, the real mechanism of gaining knowledge is not known and thus anything taught can at best be partial.

The very structure of such organizations often prevents their followers from gaining access to their own inner source of complete knowledge - an essential prerequisite for reaching ultimate freedom.

- karma that hinder us to actively orient towards growth, blocks our *intuitive insight* (*samyag darshana*) how to choose the optimal path to freedom from karmic limitations

These two types of karma further interfere with our ability to intuitively discriminate between truth and error.

They also block the use of 'Total Perception' - *pramana*¹⁷ - for our inner growth. Total Perception is the key to more advanced levels of awareness. It enables us to evaluate the multitude of new impressions we perceive during an expansion of consciousness. It gives us the dreamlike certainty to amplify only those impulses that lead to further expansion.

S U T R A 11

दुःखशोकतापाक्रन्दनवधपरिदेवनान्यात्मपरोभयस्थान्यसद्वेद्यस्य
॥ ११ ॥

Duhkha shoka tapakrandana vadha paridevananyatma parobhaya-s-thany asadvedyasya (11)

- Enjoying and prolonging pain, painful emotions or suffering
- enjoying and prolonging feelings of grief, sadness, remorse, shame and commiseration
- intentionally depriving others of their vitality and
- lamenting openly to attract sympathy

attracts karma that produces a negative (painful) feeling of life - irrespective if we induce this in ourselves or in others. (11)

Pain means bodily pain as well as painful emotions.

¹⁷ see 'THE KEY TO THE CENTER OF THE UNIVERSE', sutra 6 and 10

Sadness and grief is the separation from a being to whom we feel attached, or to an object we regard as useful, desirable, or whose presence we deem essential.

Shame (remorse) is the experience of rejection, degradation, repentance and the feeling of guilt.

Commiseration is a feeling of attractive sadness we direct towards ourselves or others. It wants to partake in a real or imagined misfortune of ourselves or others through an additional negative feeling - commiseration.

Intentionally depriving others of their vitality means all activities that prevent other beings from fully unfolding their life, their sense-organs, vitality and respiration.

Lamenting is piteous public moaning with the intention to arouse the compassion of others to secure their help and sympathy (i.e. their energy).

The theme of this sutra is pain and painful feelings. The examples mentioned in the sutra only illustrate the subject, a complete listing is not intended.

As long as we still possess karma of this character, we cannot prevent pain and painful feelings to occur. Yet all actual experience of pain only indicates that this particular part of our 'pain'-karma is now in the process of being removed. The activation dissolves it. It ceases to bind us and will never bother us again. An attitude of equanimity ensures that the actual manifestation of negative karma will not bind further (pain-) karma of the same kind.

If we want to control this process, it helps to distantly observe and impartially examine the real cause behind a particular painful feeling. Very often we arbitrarily project the 'cause' for painful feelings onto an object or being that is only accidentally present in our environment and not in any way connected to the dissolving karma.

If we e.g. stumble over a brick in our path and get hurt, we usually impulsively blame the brick, the person or the circumstances that put the obstacle there. Yet it is basically our own inattention that made us experience pain. As long as we continue to blame outside factors, we will not realize that we need to be more careful next time. As long as we take our painful fall not as a warning to become more aware of our environment, we inevitably lay the ground for further negative experiences.

In this situation it helps to contemplate whether we need to react in the first place. Often it is only our fellow people who expect us to act in a particular way. If instead we decide to follow alternative (positive) lines of thoughts or action we cut painful processes to their shortest possible time.

Once we understand how karma activates, we should have no need to prolong the cycle of (negative) emotions by indulging in further, similarly (negative) emotions that will only attract new karma of the same kind.

Yet if we enjoy (negative) experiences and prolong or amplify them by emotions like rage (anger), arrogance (pride), the intention to deceive others or addiction (greed), our very own reaction will bind us anew to the theme the activated karma stimulated.

We should not underestimate how attractive painful feelings can be - though most of us would vehemently deny this when asked directly. Yet how often do we dwell on feelings of hurt like *'They are going to see how little they will accomplish without me!'*, or take pleasure in heroic sadness like *'They don't ever notice how much I am doing for them!'*. How often do we enjoy telling others of our sicknesses and hardships or show great interest in their misfortunes and troubles. Pain is a stimulant. If positive experiences are lacking, pain might just infuse our life with the very excitement and drama we crave.

It certainly is a very personal decision for how long and to what extent we want to experience feelings of hurt. But dwelling on them neither removes their original cause, nor does it help us to find our way out of our predicament.

Rage (anger), arrogance (pride), the intention to deceive others and greed (addiction) can also trigger intense painful emotions. As long as we are unaware that these emotions also attract pain, we are in danger of unwittingly attaching pain-producing karma to our consciousness.

S U T R A 12

भूतव्रत्यनुकम्पादानसरगसंयमादियोगः क्षान्तिः शौचमिति सद्देवस्य ॥
१२ ॥

*Bhutavratyanukampa dana saragasamyamadiyogah kshantih
shauchamiti sadvedyasya (12)*

- Compassion for all living beings
- compassion for all who actively realize the Five Freedoms
- charity based on compassion
- self-control, even if it is not yet perfect
- equanimity at the activation of positive and negative karmas
- spiritual efforts, even if based on ineffective knowledge
- meditation and intelligent behavior while we strive for freedom from all karmic limits
- forgiving (our own and others' mistakes)
- equanimity and
- freedom from greed (freedom from the compulsion to accumulate more and more possessions)

attracts karma that produces a positive (happy) feeling of life. (12)

How do we achieve equanimity, compassion, self-control, forgiveness, freedom from greed etc. in a world that often propagates the exact opposite?

Only desiring peace of mind does not produce equanimity. How often in our past did we sincerely wish for more self-control, but did not have it when we needed it most. If we only remember how we feel after an outburst of anger, when the energy of our initial flare-up is spent and we begin to see how deeply we hurt others. Then we utterly regret that we succumbed to this strong negative emotion and promise ourselves that next time we will react less violently - only to fall into the same trap when similar conditions trigger our rage again. This very common experience shows that merely 'desiring' equanimity etc. is unable to bring it about.

Certainly, - the sincere wish for a new orientation of life is vital, but to firmly establish a new behavior-pattern we need a second component beyond mere yearning. This second component is our behavior at the particular time when we feel the impulse for any of the actions mentioned in the sutra. When we follow this impulse once it arises, we bring about genuine change within us.

Karma fluctuates in the intensity of its manifestations. We periodically encounter periods when less karma is active and when we consequently are less mesmerized by our activities and our material environment. These periods are experienced as times of peace, calmness, serenity and reflection and are in stark contrast to the more active cycles.

Active periods normally absorb all our attention and energy. Their intensity overshadows our consciousness. They limit our ability to fully control the flow of action and usually also prevent all unattached, distant reflection. The shift from one of these - distinctly differing - periods to the other is one of the basic experiences of human life.

Impulses for compassion, charity, forgiveness, spiritual efforts etc. usually occur in periods of less intense karmic manifestations. Each time we feel e.g. an impulse for compassion - an urge to help others - we are offered a way out of the almost impenetrable, hypnotic veil our emotions and activities weave around us. At this point in time

all karma that previously prevented us from acting on the impulse is temporarily inactive. It is now our responsibility to catch this opportunity.

Many impulses of this kind last only seconds. If we decide to follow an impulse later or postpone this decision, this almost always prevents the inspired action. Most karmic gateways to new activities close fast. Remembering afterwards how we missed the impulse usually leaves a sense of deep regret. Yet when we act spontaneous on the impulse, this always regales us with deeply satisfying feelings of elation, harmony and happiness.

The sutra alerts us to ten action-patterns - ten areas of life where impulses for new behavior can occur. Following these impulses always produces a positive feeling and offers us the opportunity for growth.¹⁸ Once we become aware of the areas where these special action-patterns occur, we can systematically employ this mechanism to steer our life into a new direction.

The ten action-patterns focus our energy and attention on three main mechanisms of expansion:

¹⁸ We all know the situation: We are driving at rush-hour, the traffic is moving slow, so slow that we get irritated. And then one car off a small side-lane wants to move in in front of us. He's been waiting there for as long as we could see him, no one admitted him. Now the impulse pops up: 'Just let him in, I might be late, these ten more seconds won't make that much of a difference'.

How do we react? -

Are we allowing our anger to get the upper hand? Close up the space so he can't possibly squeeze in, decide for selfishness, against compassion? If we could only see our face now. Already full of anger, impatience, irritation, we just added disappointment at ourselves, regret for the opportunity lost and remorse however hidden. We feel ugly, and that annoys us too.

Or do we stop, one friendly gesture with our hand and he moves in, relieved that someone took pity? - Just look at the reward. We feel good. Our anger, our impatience, our irritation is somehow diminished and some new, positive energy mysteriously reached our heart and mind. It seems unexplainable, but it's there.

- 1 - Basic orientation - Self-control and equanimity distance us from the hectic of today's world. They enable us to recognize our way to freedom from karmic limitations without being distracted by the thousand irrelevancies of daily life.
- 2 - Dynamic growth - Active efforts to change our attitude or direction of life, investigating the mechanisms that unfold consciousness, meditation etc. stimulate growth. Our intelligent and engaged performance of these actions attracts the desired positive karma.

Yet this excludes e.g. the mere mechanical repetition of prayers or mantras, the formal performance of religious ceremonies without inner engagement, and visiting churches, temples or congregations for purely social or financial reasons.¹⁹

- 3 - Expansion - Inspiring others with our drive towards inner expansion accelerates our growth. This stimulates the 'rest of our world' with growth-impulses that will come back in an amplified form to support us. We bind the respective positive karma
 - by practicing compassion to all living beings

At first sight it seems impossible to feel kindness towards all people. In our daily life there always seems to be some person we thoroughly dislike. To offer him or her genuine affection appears entirely beyond our power.

Yet let's try a more extensive perspective: We naturally feel compassion towards our fellow companions who strive for ultimate freedom as well. Whatever the differences in opinions, bearing, attitude and appearance, they all fade in face of the common expansive quest.

If we use this same angle to consider all those without orientation, all those who still see themselves as victims of a seem-

¹⁹ This should not imply that the excluded actions may have no valid purpose - it just means that these actions will not attract the kind of positive karma that advances our progress towards ultimate freedom.

ingly unfathomable fate, we can only also feel only profound compassion for their predicament.

From this widened perspective compassion towards all beings becomes natural. We express this by fundamentally respecting the life of all other beings, by helping them to unfold their vitality and abilities, by protecting them etc.

- by charity that originates in our heart. This excludes e.g. donations given for social or financial reasons.¹⁹
- by controlling our desire for acquiring more and more possessions
- by forgiving mistakes to ourselves and others
- by feeling compassion for all those who actively realize the Five Freedoms. This mechanism of expansion is mentioned separately to emphasize its potential for accelerating our own progress.

Those striving to dissolve all their karma sometimes cannot avoid being at odds with social norms. The surrounding society tends to regard their goals and way of life as threatening, ridiculous or asocial and easily reacts negatively and with rejection. The more we understand the paths and goals of those actively expanding their scope of life and the more we become able express our affection, compassion and desire for protecting them, the more we can take this an indication that we ourselves already are well advanced on our own path to the ultimate freedom.

These actions, intentions and feelings still attract (positive) karma. Yet once this (positive) karma manifests, it gives us the sure insight how to arrange our life in such a way that we attach no further karmic matter. At what time this happens and how deep this insight will be depends exclusively on how much energy and sincerity we invest into these lines of action (see sutra 2).

S U T R A 13

केवलिश्रुतसङ्घधर्मदेवावर्णवादो दर्शनमोहस्य ॥ १३ ॥

Kevali shruta sangha dharma deva varnavado darshanamohasya (13)

Doubt in (or a negative attitude towards)

- the omniscient (*kevali*)
- the knowledge contained in the scriptures (*shruti*)
- the fellowship of seekers for the ultimate freedom (*sangha*)
- the path to freedom from all karmic limitations (*dharma*) and
- the inhabitants of higher (celestial) regions (*devas*)

attracts karma that obstructs insight in and understanding of reality. (13)

In the Western hemisphere we generally have the idea that knowledge needs to be laboriously discovered by either experience, research, reflection or ingenious intuition. Yet knowledge how to reach freedom from karmic limitations - as described in the Tattvartha-sutra - comes from an entirely different source. It originates in the omniscient, who laid it down on the basis of their own experience.

The omniscient - also called 'pathmakers' (*tirthankaras*) - are human beings who reached the state of omniscience²⁰ - the 13th stage of de-

²⁰ Though omniscience appears to be far from our present reality, we often receive a taste of this ability. These are the moments between dream and waking when we have not left one world completely yet while beginning to become conscious of the other one. Here we often experience seconds or minutes where we are in command of immensely complex knowledge that would solve all the riddles of the world if we could only take it with us.

Even if after waking up completely we shake our head with incredulity and discard the experience because we cannot explain it, that whiff of omniscience nevertheless was reality while it lasted. We definitely felt it, however fleeting it may have been.

velopment - but refrained from achieving freedom from all karma to impart their know-how to others. They acquired special karma that enables them to teach from omniscience. The omniscient are not yet liberated, but their ultimate freedom is ensured once their special teaching karma is dissolved.

According to the Jains only very few achieve this status because an extraordinary stability of body and mind is necessary to retain the bodily form after reaching omniscience.²¹

The twenty-fourth and last *tirthankara* - Mahavira - was born 599 BC in Vaishali (India). He entered the path to ultimate freedom at the age of 30 and reached omniscience about 12 years later. He communicated his knowledge and experience for 30 years before he left his body at the age of 72. Mahavira's teaching vitalized the knowledge how to reach freedom from all karmic limitations and had profound influence up to the very present. During his presence as *tirthankara* he taught approximately half a million people and it is said that many of them reached ultimate freedom even during his lifetime.

The original knowledge of the omniscient was recorded by their immediate disciples. It penetrates all its consecutive manifestations (scriptures etc.) like a guiding light.

Doubt in the integrity of the origin and the manifestation of this knowledge blocks the dynamism and energy with which we progress on our path - as every doubt in the purpose of an action will make its success improbable.

Now - in the last three centuries the West cultivated a general attitude of skepticism towards any kind of information. And this certainly raises the basic question how the knowledge of the omniscient

We should take this taste of omniscience as an indication how natural, comfortably and without awe we handle this ability - even if only for a short time and not completely in the waking state. Our experience tells us that omniscience is much less alien to us and far more accessible than we ever thought possible.

²¹ all other beings proceed directly to the liberated state

could possibly have been taught correctly by the many subsequent generations of disciples. Since only the omniscient had perfect understanding - would it not be probable that the imperfections of human nature prevented the flawless transmission of this wisdom throughout the ages? Would it not be perfectly appropriate and even necessary to doubt incorrect knowledge and those who teach it?

The answer is easy: All those who seriously apply this knowledge confirm that the path as it was charted by the omniscient is valid. They testify that their perceptions and results match what is described in the ancient scriptures.

There exists one mechanism that preserves the original purity of this knowledge: While progressing towards freedom from all karmic limitations we intuitively compare all information we receive with the latent, perfect knowledge within ourselves. This automatically eliminates and corrects all flawed information.²² The farther we progress, the more transparent this process becomes. We experience this as sudden, clear and intuitive understanding where our mind and feeling intuitively reach new levels of insight. This type of deeper understanding - *pramana* - does not require outside proof.

This mechanism of comparing all information with the inner perfect knowledge is one of the main reasons why the teachings of the omniscient remained unchanged for thousands of years: they correspond to the experiences of those who pursue this path - corrections were never necessary.

Furthermore the omniscient, their knowledge and its communication are pure by definition alone. Everything that deviates from correct knowledge simply fails to agree with this classification.

It is safe to assume that the original knowledge and its channels of propagation have lost nothing of their immediacy and purity. The cause for doubt and uncertainty may rather be found in our own imperfect understanding than in the omniscient, their teaching or their

²² How clearly we perceive this depends on the degree up to which we dissolved our karmas that obscure insight and understanding.

channels of communication. Basic doubt that manifests in form of a negative attitude towards the integrity of the omniscient, their knowledge etc., blocks our access to deeper levels of understanding, where all our questions are answered intuitively and comprehensively. Our own negative attitude obstructs the very mechanism of gaining this flawless intuitive insight.²³

Skepticism towards flawed or incorrectly communicated knowledge certainly will always be necessary. Yet this has nothing to do with the manifestation of distrust in the omniscient and their teachings etc. mentioned in the sutra.

There should also be no doubt that serious questions regarding this knowledge need to be explored and answered. We will reach ultimate freedom only when all doubts and uncertainties are successfully removed. Belief in any kind of dogma is neither precondition, nor desired, nor even supportive. Yet if our questions and doubts surface with a negative emotional attitude towards knowledge etc., then this negativity will fall back on us by blocking our very own mechanisms of understanding. The karma we attract this way only expresses our inner rejection of this knowledge.

²³ We should be cautious to conclude from our first emotional reaction to unfamiliar and possibly uncomfortable information that the error is caused by the knowledge and not by our own limited readiness to understand. The trait of Western science to constantly invalidate discoveries deemed unshakable, has caused a widespread readiness to distrust and question everything new. While this attitude might be quite useful towards the fleeting nature of Western knowledge, it rather obstructs our attempt to understand the initially complex and unfamiliar mechanisms of the path to freedom from karmic limits.

True - i.e. integrated, intuitively applicable - knowledge always originates in the context of dynamic insight, where our mind suddenly reaches new levels of understanding. Constant questioning of the insights gained this way interrupts this process or slows it down. A positive or neutral attitude towards this mechanism supports the unfolding of more comprehensive understanding within us. We need this increasing comprehension to find our way to ultimate freedom in the clutter of activities of daily life.

S U T R A 14

कषायोदयात्तिव्रपरिणामश्चारित्रमोहस्य ॥ १४ ॥

Kasayodayat tivra parinamash charitramohasya (14)

Intense negative emotions - rage (anger), arrogance (pride), the intention to deceive others and greed - prevent us to pursue activities that further inner growth. (14)

As long as we allow rage (anger), arrogance (pride), the intention to deceive others and addiction (greed) to control the direction in which our life moves, we attract two types of karma:

- karma that clouds our orientation of what is right or wrong and
- karma that prevents us to pursue activities we recognize as effective.

Effective action is all action that supports inner growth. The opposite of effective action deepens our immersion in the chain of incarnations. We experience karma that prevents effective action as

- an inability to identify in the hustle-bustle of daily life the lines of action that lead towards the ultimate freedom
- an only vague perception which activity will produce ultimate freedom
- an inability to perform or complete actions we recognize as effective and
- the illusion that certain actions would be necessary, harmless or even supportive for our growth.

We attract this type of karma when we enjoy or stimulate rage (anger), arrogance (pride), deception, or addiction (greed) in us and in others, or when we feel satisfaction and joy when others are overwhelmed by these negative emotions.

The power with which we endow these four negative emotions and the ensuing actions determines to a great degree what stages of development we can access. The intensity of negative emotions attracts four types of karma:

- 1 - The most intense form overshadows our consciousness so totally that we lose control over our actions while under the spell of these powerful energies. This intensity attaches us to error and erroneous intuition and blocks our orientation towards growth. The karmas we attract intensify our immersion in the first stage of development (*mithyaktva*) - the state of illusion, error and misconception of the mechanisms of this world. Since this is the only stage where karmas of this intensity can manifest, we cause an endless repetition of incarnations on this level if we don't check them.
- 2 - The second intensity does not overshadow us any more. Yet though its power is less intense, it still is strong enough to render us incapable of correcting our action while under its influence, or acting in a more positive way. These karmas keep us in the fourth stage of development (*avirata-samyaktva*). They fully block our recognition of the Five Freedoms. Though in this stage we possess clear and flawless intuitive insight into the real mechanisms of this world, we are unable to transfer this insight sufficiently into action to progress further. If we don't put energy into changing our attitudes, our stay in the fourth stage may last infinitely long.
- 3 - The third, moderate intensity allows only *partial* realization of the Five Freedoms. It prevents our entry into the sixth stage of development (*pramatta virata*).
- 4 - The fourth, mildest intensity blocks the *perfect* realization of the Five Freedoms. Though only weak tendencies towards the four negative emotions remains, this nevertheless prevents us from reaching the tenth stage of development (*sukhma samparaya*).

The 14 stages of development and the Five Freedoms are described in the 'APPLICATION' part of the book in more detail.

When our emotions engage intensely in objects or events, this always signals that we want to experience the entire scope of insight these factors can offer us. And this always includes 'the other side of the coin' as well. When we e.g. direct violent emotion towards someone, we program this very moment that we also want to experience how the 'receiving' end of our emotions feels like. Once respective conducive conditions arise in our life, this karma is triggered, - usually at a time when we are as vulnerable as the person towards whom we directed our original negative emotions. This makes us experience how 'someone else' focuses his violent emotions on us and thus gives us the opportunity to go through the full scope of the event.

Unfortunately it often takes long time till - in the normal course of events - the respective conducive conditions arise. We thus may not clearly recall that we ourselves caused an experience of this kind. If we then react again with negative feelings, we catch ourselves in an endless circle of - actively and passively - manifesting the same intense emotions. If we want to break this vicious circle, it helps to become aware of this mechanism and then to consciously forego emotions like triumph or revenge, disdain or timidity, insatiability or loss at the very moment they arise.

The following examples demonstrate this karmic effect:

- Feeling fear, causing fear or enjoying the fear of others attracts karma that causes fear within us.
- Laughing at the misfortune of others, participating in cruel sports or cruel entertainment, playing practical jokes, teasing others, ridiculing the path to ultimate freedom etc. attracts karma that makes us victim of these types of activities.
- Desire for strange sense-enjoyments, shunning self-control etc. hardens our emotional (karmic) attachment to these types of ac-

tivities. This attachment will remain active until the corresponding karma is dissolved, even if we do not enjoy the respective sense-pleasures any more.

- Feeling bored or discontented, intensifying and prolonging the discontent of others, intentionally ruining the happiness of others, associating with evil company etc. attracts karma that causes boredom and discontent within us.
- Aversion against positive behavior, spreading mistakes of others etc. attracts karma that causes disgust and repulsion. When this karma activates, it causes feelings of disgust even for those beings, things and actions we want to see in a positive light.

The next seven sutras list activities and attitudes that determine place and duration of our future incarnations.

S U T R A 15

बह्वारम्भपरिग्रहत्वं नारकस्यायुषः ॥ १५ ॥

Bahvarambha parigrahatvam narakasyayusah (15)

Excessive infliction of pain and excessive attachment to this world attracts karma that leads to incarnations in 'infernal' regions. (15)

Excessive infliction of pain means all unnecessary pain and suffering caused to living beings. It also includes cruel action and killing.

Excessive attachment to this world is possessive clinging to property (objects, beings, status etc.). It includes unrestrained longing for the belongings of others, the acquisition and accumulation of goods that far exceeds our needs. Excessive attachment manifests thoughts like "all this is mine" and a deep feeling of resentment and loss if only a small part of what we regard as our own needs to be parted with.

These excessive actions and attitudes and also revengeful, cruel thoughts and emotions at the time of death²⁴ lead to birth(s) in the nether, 'infernal' regions. This manifests the deep desire of the respective person for further attachment to matter and for the experience of cruel, revengeful behavior. Since the nether, 'infernal' regions are inhabited by beings with similar attitudes, this desire can be satisfied without disturbing other beings who have different objectives of life.²⁵

²⁴ Most people hold fast onto the belief that their time of death is far away. We abhor to think that we will confront death with inevitable certainty.

We further tend to regard thoughts and emotions as of little consequence since we experience them in such abundance.

Anything we may feel or think in that 'far away' and supposedly 'brief' moment when we ultimately leave our body, we therefore regard of minor importance for our current life.

Yet the fact that we evaluate this 'moment' as unimportant does not in the least diminish its profound impact on our future conditions of life. The point of our death is an extremely intense experience. Here we condense all unfulfilled desires and all our ideas of what we still would like to experience into one intense feeling, into one intense longing. And this deep longing draws us into exactly that (new) environment that enables us to experience the physically manifestation of these desires in the best possible way.

At the point of our physical death all we only pretended to be, all we only made up before ourselves and others, falls off like a discarded shell. What remains is raw and real yearning deep within us that dynamically attracts exactly those components we still want to experience. This tendency to new or 'renewed' experiences we only shape ourselves through the way we conduct all our current life.

It certainly is everyone's own decision to regard his or her moment of death as irrelevant or to envisage it so far in the future as if it would never occur. Yet death is inevitable. And once we experience this event in all its intensity, there is no opportunity left to alter the tendencies that then propel us into our new environment.

²⁵ The Tattvarthasutra distinguishes four classes of beings:

1 - *devas* - beings residing in celestial areas

2 - *narakas* - beings residing in infernal areas

As soon as this attitude weakens (i.e. when we dissolved the corresponding karma and do not manifest further emotional attachment to this region), opportunities will arise that enable the departure from these areas.

It is important to understand that this denotes no (religious) concept of 'hell' in the sense of 'punishment' or 'eternal damnation', but a mechanism that positions us in exactly those conditions of life that are ideally suited for our desires and the abilities we want to manifest. It is an optional path that everyone defines by his own behavior in the present.

3 - human beings

4 - animals and plants.

For someone raised in the Western cultural environment this division - and specially the first two classes - may promptly be relegated to the area of religious fable or to a rather simpleminded higher instance of merit and punishment.

Yet this type of mystical context is not meant by the Tattvarthasutra. The statement refers to the comprehensive classification of life-forms that is described in great detail in the second, third and fourth chapter of the Tattvarthasutra.

Western science - which presently influences most of our concepts of life - is not interested in these areas, does not examine them and therefore cannot seriously state anything about them.

S U T R A 16

माया तैर्यग्योनस्यः ॥ १६ ॥

Maya tairyagyonasya (16)

Deceiving and misleading others attracts karma that leads to birth(s) in the world of animals and plants. (16)

- Misleading others about our real motives, imparting false information (deceit) and the desire for cheating
- teaching religious beliefs we are not convinced of (any more)
- altering religious teachings to suit egoistic motives and propagating these altered teachings
- the lack of honest behavior and decency
- a regretful attitude at our time of death

attracts karma that leads to birth(s) in bodies without the faculty of mind - i.e. in bodies of animals and plants.

The purpose of the mind (*manas*) is to understand and communicate how to reach freedom from karmic limitations. The intentional misuse of the mind to deceive others causes a basic malfunctioning of the mechanisms governing this sense-organ.

Since any physical organ 'withers' if we do not exercise its proper purpose, so also the mind 'withers' if we do not use its originally intended function. Yet if we do not activate our mind's intended function, we become incapable of binding the (positive) karma that will support the development of a mind in our next body. Therefore - once we leave our present body - because of the missing 'mind-building' karma - only a birth in bodies without mind²⁶ becomes possible.

²⁶ Every being that exists on a non-human level (e.g. in form of an animal), but strives to be born in a human body, needs to acquire a type of 'quasi-karma' for this purpose. Although the path to karmic freedom is generally characterized by the dissolution and not by the bind-

S U T R A 17

अल्परम्भपारिग्रहत्वं मानुषस्य ॥ १७ ॥

Alparambhaparigrahatvam manusasya (17)

Activities with mild attachment and moderate possessions attract karma that leads to incarnation(s) in human form. (17)

Acquiring a human body is an essential prerequisite for reaching freedom from all karmic limitations.

In our last incarnation before reaching ultimate freedom we need to dissolve all our remaining karma. We cannot use the bodies of the nether and the celestial regions (*devas* and *narakas*) for this purpose. They are instruments that manifest only either the negative or the positive variation of karma (see sutra 20 and 21). Because they do not allow the simultaneous activation of both karmic effects, the parallel dissolution of positive and negative karma cannot take place.

The human body is the only form capable of activating positive and negative karma simultaneously and in a balanced way. The following activities and attitudes manifest a human form:

- understanding and compassion for other beings
- friendly, helpful, exemplary behavior
- gentle disposition
- mild forms of negative emotions and attachments and
- an attitude at the time of death free of negative emotions and attachments.

In general this means a balanced, mild character.

Now - it is quite obvious that our world is definitely not populated by only balanced people with mild disposition. Since we easily observe great numbers of passion-driven people committing the most

ing of karma, in this case the intake of 'quasi-karma' (i.e. the desire for human incarnation) is an essential precondition for acquiring a human body and its potential for reaching ultimate freedom.

outrageous actions, their incarnations in human form must have a different cause than the one mentioned above.

When a bodily form manifests, its character is determined by the amount of active karmic matter only, never by its inactive, latent karma. Therefore incarnations in human form also become possible when only a small part of the existing karma is activated while the main mass of positive and negative karma stays in its dormant, latent state.²⁷

Latent karma encompasses all desires, aspirations and attachments we could not yet fully experience or manifest during this or previous bodily existences. These desires originate in our drive to realize the ideals and abilities we sense deeply within us.

Latent karma does not 'store' 'detailed actions of our past lives' as the vague Western karma-concept incorrectly presumes. It only reflects that part of our potential for which an opportunity for manifestation has not arisen yet, or for which the right circumstances were not yet present.

During the course of human embodiment some part of this dormant karma may get triggered by outside experiences or inner motivation. When it activates, it then may generate impulses for the highly negative actions we observe in our present world.

When we actively strive for freedom from all karmic limitations, these negative actions of others affect us only if they trigger latent karma within us as well. If we have no karma (no emotional tendencies) left that could cause involvement in e.g. negative global events, our path will not be touched by outside circumstances.

²⁷ We acquire a human form under either of two conditions:

- 1 - By equanimity and mild disposition in former incarnations we acquired the karma necessary for human embodiment. This karma is activated now.
- 2 - All excessive positive and negative karma that may prevent human embodiment recedes into an inactive, latent state. Yet in this case the mere existence of latent karma prevents us from reaching ultimate freedom.

S U T R A 18

स्वभावमार्दवं च ॥ १८ ॥

Svabhava mardavam cha (18)

An attitude of natural mildness and modesty also leads to birth(s) in human form. (18)

Natural mildness arises innocently from within us without any conscious effort or training. It is mentioned separately because it also attracts karma that leads to birth(s) in 'heavenly' regions.

S U T R A 19

निःशीलव्रतत्वं च सर्वेषाम् ॥ १९ ॥

Nihshila vratatvam cha sarvesam (19)

Life that focuses exclusively on pleasures and enjoyment may cause incarnation(s) in any of the four forms²⁸. (19)

S U T R A 20

सरगसंयमसंयमासंयमाकामनिर्जराबालतपांसि दैवस्य ॥ २० ॥

Saragasamyama samyamasamyama kamanirjara balatapamsi daivasya (20)

- Self-control with slight attachment
- partial realization of the Five Freedoms

²⁸ celestial, human, animal or plant and infernal

- equanimity at the spontaneous manifestation of karma
- spiritual efforts, even if not based on correct understanding attracts karma that leads to birth(s) in 'heavenly' regions. (20)

The inhabitants of regions with 'heavenly' character (*devas*) are people like you and me, who by their desires, attitudes and actions acquired a type of karma that leads to birth in these areas. The bodies and life-circumstances of *devas* support their deep longing for happiness, unrestricted movement, health, supernatural abilities, amicable communication, freedom from sorrow, fear etc. Since the regions with 'heavenly' character are inhabited by beings of similar disposition, this longing can be satisfied without being disturbed by beings with different objectives in life.

Here again this concept denotes no (religious) ideas of 'heaven' in the sense of 'reward' or 'eternal salvation', but a mechanism that positions us in exactly those conditions of life that are ideally suited for our current desires and abilities. It is an optional path everyone defines by his own behavior in the present.

S U T R A 21

सम्यक्त्वं च ॥ २१ ॥

Samyaktvam cha (21)

(In the inhabitants of 'heavenly' regions) orientation towards growth (*samyag darshana*) also attracts karma. (21)

In spite of all their - from the human point of view - extraordinary abilities, the inhabitants of 'heavenly' regions (*devas*) are not free from karma. Any negative karma that might oppose the life-circumstances of *devas* has only receded into an inactive, latent state

and will reactivate after the karmas (the emotional tendencies) that caused the celestial birth(s) are dissolved.

According to the Tattvarthasutra an embodiment in 'heavenly' regions is not the first step towards enlightenment, but only indicates the deep desire for a certain range of positive experiences. Any *deva*, who - after the dissolution of this (positive) karma - wants to dissolve all his karma needs to incarnate in 'our' world, since this is the only place within the context of this universe, where positive and negative karma can manifest simultaneously.

Therefore any *deva* who wants to reach freedom from all karmic limitations needs to bind karma that will enable his incarnation in our world - i.e. he needs to desire a human form. He generates this special karma by orienting towards growth. Once he follows this red line that leads from his present position to ultimate freedom, he will automatically acquire a human body that provides access to our world.

Yet only *devas* need to bind this type of karma; in our world the orientation towards growth causes no new karmic bonds.

S U T R A 22

योगवक्रता विसंवादं चाशुभस्य नाम्नः ॥ २२ ॥

Yogavakrata visamvadanam chashubhasya namnah (22)

Crooked and deceitful thoughts, words and actions attract karma that manifests an ugly body with unattractive radiation. (22)

See commentary for 'sutra 23.

S U T R A 23

तद्विपरीतं शुभस्य ॥ २३ ॥

Tadviparitam shubhasya (23)

The opposite (i.e. straightforward, honest thoughts, words and actions) attracts karma that manifests an appealing body with pleasant radiation. (23)

Our physical body - and its inner characteristics, energy, abilities and potential - represent the visual and tactile result of all our desires, attitudes and the energy with which we project them into action.

The appearance of our body is mainly determined by our behavior in the present - i.e. by our very current thoughts, words and actions. Many body-forming karmas do not manifest in some nebulous, far away future incarnation, but - often with shocking intensity - in this very life.

Examples of the effects of body-forming karma are easy to find: People who looked fresh, sheen and attractive in their youth, often show early traits of decadence in their faces if their life revolves mainly around pleasures and indulgences. The longer they maintain this lifestyle, the more their appearance deteriorates. - Others who strive for inner growth and equanimity often radiate inner beauty, harmony and growing attraction though their outer appearance would never comply with any beauty concept.

Body-forming karmas tell us instantly how the inner attitudes we express in our thinking, words and action affect us. This is their main function.

The bodily forms and features of others inform us in a subtle way about their inner attitudes. We intuitively perceive facial and bodily appearance as agreeable or disagreeable and react with attraction or rejection. We thus may e.g. intuitively shun the attitudes an ugly body signifies and thereby save us from acquiring similar negative

karma (attitudes). The beauty of an attractive form may inspire us to strive for the underlying grace this form symbolizes and thereby attain the respective positive karma. We will feel untouched if we already completed the lesson a particular form represents.²⁹

If our own body is subject to attachment or rejection, we receive even more immediate information.

As long as we do not consciously recognize this educational function of karma, our progress in learning will be dominated by this effective, yet slow and cumbersome process. It is the purpose of scriptures (*Tattvarthasutra*, *Dravya Sangraha* etc.) and their teachers to explain the corresponding processes so that we may take conscious control of our karma and prevent its acquisition - if this is our intention. Any conscious understanding of the karmic mechanisms we are involved in accelerates our progress towards ultimate freedom considerably.

We may at any time influence our bodily form by simply changing our desires, attitudes and actions. The point in time this change becomes visible certainly depends on the intensity of our presently active karma. Yet this needs not necessarily take long. Any fundamental departure from e.g. a general negative attitude will almost immediately be recognized and appreciated by our social environment. How much time we need for stabilizing new (positive) attitudes and how many difficulties we have to overcome in this process, depends how deeply we were emotionally attached to our previous undesired attitude and how much energy we invest into dissolving it. The

²⁹ If a particular form prompts an emotional reaction like attraction or rejection, this always indicates the presence of karma within us. Attraction and rejection can only happen when the respective form - and the attitudes associated with it - cause the corresponding karma to resonate within us. The less karma we have, the fewer forms will cause positive or negative reactions. A state of natural equanimity (brought about by the lack of any karma) is free from likes or dislikes, but accepts all forms - positive or negative ones - as part of the comprehensive tapestry of our life.

more intense our desire for change, the faster the change will manifest.

S U T R A 24

दर्शनविशुद्धिर्विनयसम्पन्नता शीलव्रतेष्वनतीचारोऽभिक्षणज्ञानोप-
योगसंवेगौ शक्तितस्त्यागतपसी साधुसमाधिर्वैयावृत्यकरणमर्हदाचार्यबहु
श्रुतप्रवचनभक्तिरावश्याकापरिहाणिर्मार्गप्रभावनाप्रवचनवत्सलत्वमिति
तीर्थकरत्वस्य ॥ २४ ॥

*Darshanavishuddhir vinayasampannata shilavratesva-
naticharo(a)bhikshna jnanopayogasamvegau shaktitas tyagatapasi
sadhu samadhi vaiyavrityakaranam arrhad acharya bahushruta
pravachanabhaktir avashyakaparihanir margaprabhavana prava-
chanavatsalatvam iti tirthakaratvasya (24)*

Sixteen types of actions and attitudes attract karma that manifests the body of a *tirthankara* (a perfect teacher who teaches from the state of omniscience):

- 1 - actively orienting towards growth (*samyag darshana*)
- 2 - appreciation for the factors that lead to freedom from all karmic limitations and for all who strive towards this goal
- 3 - consciously realizing the Five Freedoms
- 4 - ceaseless pursuit of all knowledge that leads to freedom from all karmic limitations
- 5 - constant awareness of the temporary and limiting nature of the material form our consciousness is subjected to during its incarnation(s)
- 6 - charity (dissolving the fear of others and supporting those striving for ultimate freedom by supplying knowledge and food)

- 7 - overcoming the hardships we may confront while striving for freedom from all karmic limitations
- 8 - protecting others and removing obstacles on their path to ultimate freedom
- 9 - supporting others on their path to ultimate freedom by paying attention to their special needs (e.g. by preparing especially pure food etc.)
- 10 - respect and reverence for the omniscient
- 11 - respect and reverence for those who publicly represent and propagate freedom from all karmic limitations
- 12 - respect and reverence for those who teach how to reach freedom from all karmic limitations
- 13 - respect for the knowledge conveyed by the scriptures
- 14 - teaching others how to gain freedom from all karmic limitations
- 15 - carrying out six simple daily practices³⁰
- 16 - deep compassion and understanding for all who strive for the ultimate freedom. (24)

-
- 30 1 - purification - making amends for thoughts, words and actions we recognize as wrong
- 2 - appreciation - to realize how seldom we gain access to effective methods that free us from karmic limitations
- 3 - support - helping those striving for liberation
- 4 - study - receiving inspiration and guidance from descriptions how to reach freedom from karmic limitations
- 5 - freedom - visualizing how free we would be once we would not need to protect, maintain, repair, clean or present objects we regard as our own
- 6 - meditation - visualizing our feelings when we are free from all karmic restrictions, visualizing our self as liberated, realizing the transitory nature of the material world and how briefly we only stay here etc.

tirthankaras are human beings who reached the 13th stage of development - the state of omniscience - but refrain from achieving the ultimate freedom for a while to impart their know-how to others. All descriptions how to reach freedom from karmic limitations originate in the direct experiences of the *tirthankaras*.

An extraordinary stability of body and mind is necessary to retain the bodily form after reaching omniscience. Since the attractiveness of ultimate freedom is immense in this stage, all other beings proceed straight onto liberation.

The types of actions mentioned in the sutra acquire a special kind of karma that enables to teach from omniscience (i.e. to communicate knowledge to people who are still deeply immersed in highly limiting karmic mechanisms). Though *tirthankaras* have not achieved ultimate freedom, they will reach this state once their teaching karma is dissolved. After reaching ultimate freedom *tirthankaras* take no special position amongst the free beings (*siddhas*).

S U T R A 25

परात्मनिन्दाप्रशंसे सदसद्गुणोच्छादनोद्भावने च
निचैर्गोत्रस्य ॥ २५ ॥

*Paratmaninda prashamse sadasadgunochchadanodbhavane cha
nichairgotrasya (25)*

- Speaking ill of others
- praising ourselves
- concealing good qualities and achievements of others
- praising qualities we do not possess

attracts karma that leads to a low, inferior status in life. (25)

S U T R A 26

तद्विपर्ययो नीचैर्वृत्यनुत्सेकौ चोत्तरस्य ॥ २६ ॥

Tadviparyayo nichairvrityanutsekau chottarasya (26)

Its opposite (i.e.

- praising others
- modesty
- proclaiming the good qualities and achievements of others
- refraining from praising our own qualities and achievements
- respect for those further advanced towards freedom from all karmic limitations
- freedom from pride in our own achievements

attracts karma that leads to a high, honored status in life. (26)

While striving for freedom from all karmic limitations high or low status holds little or no meaning for us. We know that high or low status only reflects a passing emotional attachment to limited themes of life, which we now observe with equanimity. The speed and intensity of our progress towards ultimate freedom is our main attraction. Our idea of the highest possible status is that of *siddha* - our free consciousness, - far removed from all temporary material criteria.

As long as the experience of bodily forms keeps deeply attracting us, attaining ever higher status may be the main motivation in our life. Unfortunately this striving will cause us to stay bound. Yet there exists a highly effective karmic mechanism that intends to free us from our fascination with status:

The main factor of any kind of status is the recognition our fellow people give us. We tend to regard positive recognition - high or growing status - as confirmation that our way of life is right, while low status or lack of recognition often triggers enormous efforts to correct this situation.

Yet any direct attempt to reach a high and recognized position will surely fail, because true recognition, true love and true affection can never be forced and will never be attained by action exclusively directed towards this very purpose. True recognition will always and only be given for free.

Any attempt to achieve honor by artificial applause, deception, pressure or bribing does never bring true recognition and the respective status. Any effort of this kind - self-praise, defaming others, boasting (see sutra 25) - only binds karma that tells us that desire for this type of 'hollow' recognition produces the exact opposite effect.

This type of 'boasting' karma is not experienced in distant, future incarnations but most likely right after the act. It is fascinating to observe how quickly our fellow people identify efforts exclusively directed towards gaining status and how fast they react with disregard, mockery and insincere applause.

This mechanism demonstrates that we will never reach true, recognized status by aiming actions or energy directly toward this goal.

Positive counterpart to the above karmic mechanism is the conscious abandon of all boasting, self-praise etc. (see sutra 26). Modesty, recognizing others, curbing pride etc. generates exactly the effect that self-centered boasting etc. never produces: - true, recognized and high status. This (positive) status-karma is also mostly felt during this current life.

Yet these two varieties (i.e. low status and the denouncement of all 'hollow' recognition - and high status that accentuates modest attitudes) do not reveal the entire scope this karmic mechanism holds.

The real purpose of status-karma - positive as well as negative - is to teach us to free our life's motivation from all outside influence. It wants us to be above any kind of acceptance or rejection by others. Only when we fully recognize our own inherent powers and abilities, our own basic freedom and self-sufficiency will we achieve the entirely independent state of a being free from all karma - *siddha*. As

long as the reactions of others to our actions carry clout, we still have karmas that prevent us from reaching this ultimate freedom.

S U T R A 27

विघ्नकरणमन्तरायस्य ॥ २७ ॥

Vighnakaranamantarayasya (27)

Obstructing and disturbing others

- in their exercise of charity
- in earning their livelihood
- in their pleasures in consuming food etc.
- in their enjoyment of comfort
- in the use of their vitality and power

attracts karma that leads to obstructions in our life. (27)

These activities and attitudes do not only cause obstruction, they also influence the intensities with which all other types of karma manifest.

THE NATURE OF KARMIC BONDS

Chapter 8 of the
- Tattvarthasutra -

Once we attract karma to our consciousness, we often become deeply involved in the events we create or react to. Our entanglement in activities and emotions may be so intense that it captures all our attention and diverts us totally from any path we initially wanted to pursue.

We experience this e.g. when we start our day with a clear idea of what to achieve, but then get so thoroughly distracted (by phone-calls, colleagues and others) that by the end of the day we wonder, where on earth our time has gone.

But as widespread as this experience is, as easy it is to prevent these kind of distractions. We only need to become aware of the mechanisms giving rise to our almost hypnotic involvement with events. Once we know what subtle karmic side-effects all our actions produce and how to handle them, we become able to direct our thinking, emotions and activities far more efficiently and consciously and thus prevent the erratic results that so often frustrate us.

The distracting karmic side-effects are nothing mystic. They are familiar, basic elements of our every-day existence that appear in form of emotional attraction or rejection of certain themes of life. There is also nothing mystic in the way to handle and to eliminate these karmic distractions. Yet if we want this to be efficient, we first we need to become conscious of how they effect us.

This chapter explains

- why karmic mechanisms attach to our consciousness - sutra 1 and 2 and
- how this attachment makes us experience certain themes of life (types of karma) again and again - sutra 3 to 26.

How we can eliminate karmic distractions and to proceed to more efficient and satisfying levels of existence is dealt with in the third chapter.

S U T R A 1

मिथ्यादर्शनाविरतिप्रमादकषाययोगा बन्धहेतवः ॥ १ ॥

Mithyadarshanaviratipramadakasayayoga bandhahetavah (1)

Five factors attach karmic mechanisms to our consciousness:

- misunderstanding how this world really functions (*mithya-darsana*)
- our tendency to remain in this state of delusion, error and flawed concepts (though we are offered opportunities to end this state) (*avirati*)
- carelessness in our thinking, speech and action (*pramada*)
- unchecked negative emotions (*ksaya*)
- the activities of our body, speech and mind (*yoga*). (1)

Misunderstanding how this world really functions is caused by five factors:

- 1 - One-sided perspective - We see the world (beings, things, situations, events, concepts etc.) from one particular angle only and ignore its abundance and many-faceted diversity.

When our mind or heart is captured by a one-sided perspective, we project one particular model onto everything we experience. This one model usually excludes all other viewpoints or prevents us from recognizing their validity. Though events may happen right before our eyes that totally conflict with our cherished model, we are incapable of learning from them.¹

¹ One example: Intuitive phenomena like intuition, communication without words, premonitions and sudden, more comprehensive understanding are quite common. We usually handle these phenomena effortlessly and without much thinking.

Yet since these experiences do not fit into the one-sided materialistic-mechanical model of science, it interprets them as strange, unnatu-

One-sided perspectives lock our understanding into narrow boundaries. They prevent the many-faceted and colorful abundance of this world from reaching and expanding our awareness.

- 2 - Wrong concepts - We project concepts and models onto this world that do not correspond with reality.

Concepts based on flawed assumptions often appear surprisingly logical. We arbitrarily use the logic particular to a flawed model to justify our emotional preference for one specific limiting concept before other, more comprehensive ones.

As long as our thinking remains trapped in such logic, it is impossible to discover the flaws in its construction. Without questioning the model from an outside point of view, we limit our awareness to the limits of the erroneous concept.

As long as we firmly hold on to flawed ideas, we are subject to the psychological effect that we - consciously or subconsciously - check all experiences and events whether they fit into our cherished model. All facts that do not agree with the model are ignored, interpreted as unimportant, forgotten or not even perceived. Unfortunately this perpetuates our attachment to erroneous ideas.²

ral and suspect behavior. Whoever perceives something that science believes cannot exist, is labeled a social outsider.

This erects a high barrier before the exploration and understanding of intuitive phenomena. When we choose to see our world from a science-oriented, one-sided, materialistic point of view, we block all access to our rich inner dimensions.

- ² One example: The idea that life was generated by the mixing of material substances in the surf of the oceans is hardly one hundred years old. Though entirely unproven, this model is remarkably widely believed in. It sees life as a rather unimportant side-effect of chaotically whirling matter and presumes that the continuation of the species may be the only possible value of life. If this were true, any individual existence would basically be meaningless.

For those who believe in this odd, speculative idea, all search for a purpose of life beyond this unproven model is blocked.

3 - Doubt, skepticism, hesitation - Even though we obtain a certain degree of (temporary) insight into the real mechanisms of this world, we allow this impulse to pass. We give it no chance to influence our life.

- Doubt and skepticism reject a (temporary) insight how to re-orient our ideas and actions before it may even stimulate us. Doubt and skepticism are either acquired (learned) or caused by social opportunism (by our tendency not to violate accepted social boundaries).

- Hesitation at the moment of insight makes the insight pass without having any effect on us.

Both mechanisms prevent the expansion of our known circle of life.

4 - Pointless generalization - We carelessly or foolishly project ideas and concepts onto areas for which they are not valid.

Pointless generalization disregards the individual components of life. It always is a sign of a indifference and disinterest in our own life as well. This factor blocks a differentiated perception of events and thereby hinder us to access more detailed and comprehensive cognition.

5 - Ignorance - is an inability to recognize the path that leads towards inner growth and the expansion of our understanding. Ignorance is caused by two factors:

- a - Natural ignorance originates in the fact that we - in our chain of incarnations - have not yet become aware of all the knowledge dormant within us.

- b - Acquired ignorance is created when we accept and believe flawed teachings of others. There are four general categories of flawed teachings:

- the belief that the interaction of time, space and matter causes everything in this world

- the belief that this world cannot be influenced by activity in time, space, matter etc.
- the belief that higher dimensions of life can neither be proven nor be totally ruled out
- the belief that a moral and disciplined way of life and selfless service to society constitutes the entire spiritual dimension of life (e.g. much of modern day Christianity).

Our tendency to remain in this state of delusion, error and flawed concepts (even though we are offered opportunities to end this state).

This usually manifests in form of apathy or laziness. Though we have some (temporary) insight into the true functioning of this world and also feel an impulse to examine our habitual behavior or to try out new types of action, we are too lazy, complacent and set in our accustomed ways to follow this impulse. This tendency also manifests as

- a general indifference whether our actions hurt other beings or restrict their joy of life, or
- an unchecked attachment to sense pleasures.

Carelessness in action, speech and thinking - expresses basic indifference towards the mechanisms that prolong our chain of incarnations (see 'ATTRACTION TO KARMA', sutra 5). It obstructs inner growth because we regard any improvement of our present state of existence as unimportant.

Inner growth, insight and more advanced stages of development become only accessible when we commit the best of our attention, energy and abilities towards this goal.

Carelessness towards other beings or objects always also indicates a lack of respect towards our own life.

Unchecked negative emotions - senselessly waste our life's energy on rage (anger), arrogance (pride), deception or greed.

These four main negative emotions selfishly focus all our strength on our personal field of experience only. They confine us to the limits of our present situation and thus prevent us from expanding our scope of life. As long as we are unwilling to stop these tendencies, we block all inner growth.

The activities of our body, speech and mind and their effect on karma are described in the initial sutras of 'ATTRACTION TO KARMA'.

All our actions confront us with karmic mechanisms. Karma is actually the factor that enables us to act within the context of the material world in the first place. Whether this confrontation is only short-lived or will cause deeper and longer-lasting attachments to particular themes of life, depends entirely on our behavior, intention and emotional attitude at the time of action:

- all action caused or influenced by intense negative emotions like rage (anger), arrogance (pride), the intention to deceive others or greed deepen our immersion into the chain of incarnations
- all actions not influenced by intense emotions have only transient, short-lived effects on us.

These five factors bind karma to our consciousness. Each factor can cause this attachment by itself. The strength of the bond, its duration, its dissolution, and how karma will manifest when it activates, is the theme of this chapter.

As long as we remain in the first stage of development (*guna-sthana*) all five factors are active.

In stage 2 and 3 our misunderstanding how this world functions becomes inactive for a short time.

In stage 4 all misunderstanding how the world functions is dissolved. Only the other four factors remain active.

In stage 5 and 6 our tendency to remain in a state of delusion is removed. Still active are carelessness, mild forms of negative emotions and the three types of activities of body, speech and mind.

In stage 7, 8, 9 and 10 carelessness is removed. Still active are subtle forms of negative emotions and the three types of activities.

In stage 11, 12 and 13 only the three types of activities are active.

In the fourteenth stage of development karma ceases to bind us.

S U T R A 2

सकषायत्वाज्जीवःकर्मणयोग्यान्पुद्गलानादत्ते स बन्धः ॥ २ ॥

Sakasayatajjivah karmano yogyanpudgalanadatte sa bandah (2)

When we give in to strong negative emotions like anger, pride, the intention to deceive others or greed, we attract subtle matter that attaches karmic mechanisms to our consciousness. This process causes 'karmic bonds' (*bandha*). (2)

Karma is subtle matter. This sutra rejects all suggestions that karma may be an inaccessible, mystic force that in an inexplicable way controls the fate of living beings. Karma is nothing more than subtle matter (*ajiva*). Though it may influence our life - as do all other forms of matter as well - it is fundamentally different from our basic nature - consciousness (*jiva*).

Our very own activities and our emotional attachments to these activities attract this subtle matter that exists everywhere throughout this cosmos to our consciousness. Karmic matter is actually the agent that enables us (our consciousness) to act within the material context of this universe in the first place.

- Activity attracts karmic matter to our consciousness.
- Ignorance, error, skepticism, negative emotions, laziness, complacency etc. produce bonds between our consciousness and karmic matter.

- The depth of our emotional engagement (the drive, the passion) with which we pursue our desires and ideas determines what strength these bonds will have and for how long we will be subject to their influence.

Once we understand this mechanism, we can separate the accumulated karmic matter from our consciousness (i.e. dissolve our emotional attachment to the themes of life we are - negatively or positively - attracted to). In this process we gain progressively more access to the immense abilities hidden within us.

Although our five senses cannot directly perceive the attachment of karma to our interactive karmic field, many events in daily life demonstrate this mechanism. One example: When we become strongly interested in a particular type of information, we create a subtle attraction for knowledge of this kind. Our strong interest acts like a magnet that draws the desired material towards us. Often friends, co-workers and even total strangers begin to collect information for us though we never explicitly requested it. - An invisible process attracts exactly what we desire.

When we direct this invisible process towards harmful emotions like anger, pride, the intention to deceive others and greed we attach ourselves emotionally to the very situations, persons or objects on which we focus these negative passions. Passionate emotions are the cement that bonds our consciousness to the subtle matter that causes karmic processes. Yet karmic matter is foreign to our innermost nature (consciousness). Any prolonged association with it limits our abilities severely.

As long as we are unaware of this mechanism, we will be at its mercy. As long as we make no attempt to control it, we will be unable to prevent negative situations to occur again and again. Yet the mechanism itself is easy to identify, to understand and to control:

When an event triggers highly charged, negative emotions within us, we usually try to end the situation by rejecting, rationalizing, ignoring or avoiding the event. Yet this solely mental or emotional rejec-

tion does not remove the real karmic mechanism we confront at that moment, nor is it even aimed in the right direction.

We need to separate our automatic emotional reaction from the event. We need to realize that it is our continued passionate engagement that attaches negative feelings to an event. The event itself may be entirely neutral and not connected to our emotions in any way.

If - for example - we left too late for an appointment we need to reach in time, we easily feel rising pressure while driving there. The nearer we get to our destination and the less time remains, the more impatient we may react to slow drivers who restrict our speed. Yet the irritation and aggression we now direct towards others has nothing to do with their 'stupidity' or 'inadequate' driving skills. Other drivers usually have no intention whatsoever to slow us down. The real cause for our irritation is our own tardiness and nothing else.

In this situation no amount of rationalizing or ignoring will ease our tension. Only if we fundamentally realize that our own emotional engagement is the real cause for our tension, can we initiate action³ that will dissolve this tendency once and for all.

If we do not want a particular situation to occur again - i.e. if we do not want to bind new karma of the same type - we need to separate our automatic emotional reactions from the event.

If we respond to a manifestation of karma with a renewed emotional reaction, this will again chain us to exactly those events, persons or objects we do not want to confront any more. It is our own renewed passionate engagement that attracts new karmic matter of the same type.

Our (emotional) attachment to certain limiting themes of life is the only bond between our consciousness and karmic matter. The sutra states explicitly that no other types of karmic bonds exist.

³ see 'HOW TO DISSOLVE KARMA'

S U T R A 3

प्रकृतिस्थित्यनुभवप्रदेशास्तद्विधयः ॥ ३ ॥

Prakriti sthityanubhava pradeshastadvidhayah (3)

How we experience karmic matter is determined by

- the area of life karma influences when it activates (also called the 'nature' or 'type' of karma)
- for how long karmic molecules stay bound to our interactive karmic field (the duration)
- the intensity with which karma manifests when it activates and
- how many karmic molecules are stored in our interactive karmic field. (3)

The nature (the type) of karma determines what area of life karma influences when it activates. The next eight sutras describe the eight main areas karma can affect.

The time (duration) - Karmic molecules remain bound to our consciousness from the moment we attach karma until it activates (which dissolves the bond).

Up to its activation karma remains inactive (latent). Though latent karma does not affect us directly, its existence alone limits the stages of development accessible to us (see '14 STAGES OF DEVELOPMENT').

The intensity of karma determines the power with which karma manifests upon its activation. How intensely we experience karma is determined by the amount of karmic molecules that activate simultaneously.

The number of karmic molecules stored in our interactive karmic field influences the mechanism and the intensity with which karma decreases at its activation.⁴

The emotional intensity with which we instigate, plan, perform or assent to an action determines for how long and in what intensity karma will manifest in our life when a particular block of karmic molecules activates.

Sutra 4 to 13 describe the eight areas of life where karma manifests (the types of karma)

Sutra 14 to 20 define for how long each of the eight main types of karma can remain attached to us

Sutra 21 to 23 explain what triggers the activation of karma and what determines the intensity of karmic manifestations

Sutra 24 describes the characteristics of karmic molecules.

⁴ Karma does not manifest with always the same intensity. Several types of karma can significantly decrease in intensity from the beginning of the activation to their complete dissolution.

We experience this e.g. at the confrontation with an overwhelming problem that seems huge at its first appearance, but then rapidly diminishes in intensity. We feel this in the process of falling in love, when after the first emotional high a more permanent connection is not supported. We sense this at the end of a major phase of life, when our emotional attachment to a certain activity (e.g. a job) dissolves long before it is formally concluded.

This change in intensity is brought about by the decrease in number of karmic molecules that are active during a karmic manifestation. How many molecules are activated at a given time can be calculated. The *Gommatasara - Karma Kanda* contains the corresponding formula.

S U T R A 4

आद्यो ज्ञानदर्शनावरणवेदनीयमोहनीयायुर्नामगोत्रान्तरायाः ॥ ४ ॥

Adyo jnanadarshanavarana vedaniyamohaniyayurnamagotranta-rayah (4)

Karma affects eight areas of life. It therefore is classified into eight main groups:

- 1 - karma that obstructs access to the five channels of knowledge (*jnana-varana*)**
- 2 - karma that prevents insight and understanding (*darshana-varana*)**
- 3 - karma that determines our feeling of life (*vedaniya*)**
- 4 - karma that causes delusion (*mohaniya*)**
- 5 - karma that determines the duration and place of future embodiment(s) (*ayu*)**
- 6 - karma that determines form and features of our body (*nama*)**
- 7 - karma that determines our status in our social environment (*gotra*)**
- 8 - karma that causes obstruction in life (*antaraya*). (4)**

S U T R A 5

पञ्चनवद्व्यष्टाविंशतिचतुर्द्विचत्वारिंशद्द्विपञ्चभेदा यथाक्रमम् ॥ ५ ॥

*Pancha nava dvyasta vinshati chatur dvichatvarinimshaddvi
panchabheda yatha karmam (5)*

Each of the eight main groups of karma is subdivided into more differentiated types:

- 1 - karma that obstructs access to the five channels of knowledge (*jnana-varana*) subdivides into 5 types
- 2 - karma that prevents insight and understanding (*darshana-varana*) subdivides into 9 types
- 3 - karma that determines our feeling of life (*vedaniya*) subdivides into 2 types
- 4 - karma that causes delusion (*mohaniya*) subdivides into 28 types
- 5 - karma that determines the duration and place of future embodiment(s) (*ayu*) subdivides into 4 types
- 6 - karma that determines form and features of our body (*nama*) subdivides into 42 types
- 7 - karma that determines our status in our social environment (*gotra*) subdivides into 2 types
- 8 - karma that causes obstruction in life (*antaraya*) subdivides into 5 types. (5)

An alternative - more detailed - specification subdivides karma that determines form and features of our body (*nama-karma*) into 93 types. Adding this to the 55 subtypes of karma of the other seven groups, the Tattvarthasutra generally speaks of altogether 148 types of karma.

The next eight sutras describe the main groups of karma and their subdivisions in detail.

S U T R A 6

मतिश्रुतावधिमनः पर्ययकेवलानाम् ॥ ६ ॥

Matishrutavadhimanaḥ paryaya kevalanam (6)

Karma that obstructs access to the five channels of knowledge (*jnana-varana*) impedes

- our sensory perception (*mati*)
- our ability to gain knowledge from external sources (*shruti*)
- our extra-sensory perception (clairvoyance, telepathy) (*avadhi*)
- our direct perception of the consciousness of others (*manah paryaya*)
- omniscience (*kevali jnana*). (6)

Five channels give us access to knowledge. Each channel offers us knowledge of a different scope and character.

- **Sensory knowledge** (*mati*) - arises when we perceive objects and events through our five senses and the mind. Sense-perception also includes the *processing* of the perceived information e.g. recognition, recollection, deduction etc.

Karma that obstructs the functioning of this channel influences the clarity with which our senses and our mind perceive and understand objects and events. It also interferes with our ability to recognize objects and events, with the precision of our memory and with our capacity to learn from what we perceive.

- **Knowledge from external sources** (*sruti*) - offers far broader and deeper insights than sense-perception (*mati*). It alerts us to experiences we otherwise would ignore; - it establishes a connection between new experiences and our existing concepts of life; - it offers us ways to select from the multitude of potential avenues the one optimal path that brings us nearer to the realization of the values and ideals we carry deep within us.

We gain knowledge from external sources through verbal instruction and by studying books. Yet insights from these sources do not automatically arise when our senses perceive written or spoken words. We obtain access only when we make a conscious effort to understand and integrate what we have read or heard.

Karma that obstructs this channel hinders us to raise sufficient energy to comprehend meaning that exists outside the range of our sense-perception - and also beyond our prejudices and conditioning that prevent us from understanding. It may also block physical access to this channel (e.g. lack of time, no contact to suitable teachers, unavailability of the corresponding books, mere superficial or insincere interest in the subject etc.).

- **Extra-sensory perception (clairvoyance and telepathy)** (*avadhi*) - provides insights into regions of our life that are inaccessible to sense-perception or through the channel of external knowledge.

Telepathy and clairvoyance are not the transfer of single words or symbols, but an extremely fast communication of complex contents that happens on the level of feeling and intuition. The main carrier of this communication are our emotions, not our thoughts.

We experience telepathy e.g. when we steer a car and our passenger says 'go right', but means 'left', and we correctly turn left; - it is the wordless understanding between two persons; - it is the sure knowledge who is on the other side of the line when our phone rings etc.

We experience clairvoyance when we e.g. meet someone for the first time, but get the strong feeling to have known him or her all our life, - or realize instantly and intuitively that this person will be the source of trouble in the future. Further examples of this ability are premonitions, experiences of 'Déjà vu' and the certain, unquestionable knowledge that a particular path of action will or will not bring the desired results.

Karma that obstructs the functioning of this channel influences the clarity with which we perceive these insights. In its most in-

tense form this karma prevents us from giving any credibility to our insights, - it blocks us to seriously and systematically explore and expand this ability.

- **Direct perception of the consciousness of others** (*manah-paryaya*) - is a state of consciousness where we sense the mental activity of another person immediately in our own mind. This channel is far more precise and reaches into far subtler regions than telepathy and clairvoyance (*avadhi*) have access to. It operates in a dimension of our consciousness where our senses and our mind play only indirect roles.

Karmas that obstruct the functioning of this channel mainly prevent the very rising of this type of insight. Direct mental perception becomes possible when all karmas that blocked this channel are either dissolved or have become inactive (latent). Once this channel is active, these karmas influence the scope and depth of what we perceive through it.

- **Omniscience** (*kevala jnana*) - While the previous four channels of knowledge register only a limited part of reality, omniscience perceives all elements and all their manifestations in the present, past and future simultaneously.

Omniscience is not caused by any external means; - it is the complete unfoldment of our consciousness by itself. It arises automatically when our consciousness is not restrained by karmic delusions any more.

We do not experience omniscience with our mind, since the mind is only a partial aspect of our consciousness and cannot direct its attention to this multitude of simultaneous events and objects.

Karmas that block this type of comprehension need to be fully dissolved to enable omniscience to rise.

The scope and precision of the advanced channels of perception far exceed the range of the senses and the mind. Yet although our Western society presently regards everything that functions without

the help of the senses as suspiciously strange, this does not change the fact that the advanced channels are as available to us as the 'normal' ones. Once we dissolve the karmas that block their operation, we will use the more subtle channels in the same natural way as we employ our five senses.

S U T R A 7

चक्षुरचक्षुरवधिकेवलानां निद्रानिद्रानिद्राप्रचलाप्रचलाप्रचलास्त्यान-
गृद्धयश्च ॥ ७ ॥

Chakshur achakshur avadhi kevalanam nidra nidranidra prachala prachalaprachala styana griddhayashcha (7)

Karma that prevents insight and understanding (*darshana-varana*) obstructs

- cognition through visual perception (*chaksu*)
- cognition through the other sense-organs (*achaksu*)
- cognition through clairvoyance and telepathy (*avadhi*)
- cognition through omniscience (*kevali jnana*).

It further manifests

- sleep (*nidra*)
- deep sleep (*nidranidra*)
- tiredness (*prachala*)
- heavy fatigue (sleeping while sitting) (*prachalaprachala*)
- somnambulism (*styangriddhi*). (7)

There is a basic difference between karma that obstructs access to the five channels of knowledge (sutra 6) and karma that prevents insight and understanding (sutra 7).

While the previous sutra (6) describes what blocks access to knowledge (*jnana*), the present sutra explains what prevents us from gaining insight (*darshana*) and comprehending knowledge we will have access to. These two types of karma operate on entirely different levels.

The way we gain insight, cognition, understanding - '*darshana*' - is a highly delicate experience that happens before the actual perception-process (*avagraha*) even starts.

Perception (*avagraha*) is the first conscious recognition of an object after it came in contact with our sense-organs. Yet perception is not our very first connection with the perceived object. It is preceded by an experience - *darshana* - that arises at that moment when our senses come in contact with an object for the first time, but do not react to this sensation yet.

At that point in time *darshana* decides whether a 'tendency towards an object' will arise in the first place. Here a selection-process happens that allows only a few of the billions of stimuli that are constantly presented to our senses and mind to get through to our consciousness. Here - on this deeply fundamental level - it is determined whether a stimulus will develop into perception and possibly become an insight later.

darshana is influenced by all the concepts, patterns and conditions we installed between reality and our consciousness. This filter permits contact with only those events and objects that resonate in our consciousness. Everything else might well exist and might even meet our senses, but because of this filter will never reach our perception and is thereby closed out to our consciousness.⁵

Karma that obstructs cognition - *darshana* - therefore does not block perception, but prevents on a far more fundamental level that THE VERY BASIS for perception can be formed in the first place.

⁵ 'THE KEY TO THE CENTER OF THE UNIVERSE' (Chapter 1 of the Tattvarthasutra) deals extensively with the mechanism of *darshana* (the gaining of insight).

This obstruction of cognition does not manifest e.g. in form of a physical defect of our eyes or the corresponding nerves⁶. Karma that obstructs cognition prevents that a 'tendency towards an object' arises in our consciousness.

One example: We all experienced that while reading a book we needed to go over one particular paragraph again and again because our attention kept drifting to some other subject. We wanted to read, but something obstructed our cognition and diverted our attention towards entirely different subjects. Though the words reached our eyes, they did not get through to our awareness. Something was closing the book to our attention, even though we didn't want to.

Cognition is nothing other than us becoming aware of unknown areas of our own consciousness. As long as we have no 'tendency towards these unknown regions' and no 'notion that something might exist there', we will feel no inclination to explore them. We simply are unaware that they exist in the first place.

The type of karma described in this sutra prevents us from perceiving entire parts of reality because it fundamentally blocks our cognition of it. The things and experiences we miss definitely exist, but never reach our consciousness.⁷

This also explains why we will never gain complete understanding of this world by exploring only our material environment (as western science attempts to do).

Certainly - if we examine the partial environment that reaches our conscious perception, we may detect a wealth of details of this particular part, but cannot reach the abundant dimensions beyond the karmic frame of what we are able to cognize.

⁶ A defect of this kind would rather be triggered by the type of karma that defines form and features of our body (*nama karma*).

⁷ see 'THE KEY TO THE CENTER OF THE UNIVERSE' sutra 5 - *the plane of selection* - how we form the perception-patterns of our individual reality.

If we try to infer what the missing parts may look like by using only our partial - mostly materially oriented - knowledge, we get misleading results because the world *beyond* our known framework differs significantly from the part we perceive. A famous example is the erroneous concept of a limited flat earth that prevented the discovery of new continents (e.g. America) for a long time. The narrow circle drawn around the known continents forestalled all thoughts that other bodies of land might even exist.

Presently our Western science is in a similar limiting situation. It explores a closed range of reality that it cannot transcend. Since the perception of the main leaders of science is blocked by karma, they cannot even imagine that something might exist beyond the range of their concepts. Therefore they deny the validity of events and ideas that go significantly beyond accepted scientific reality and methods. Since these leaders generally determine what type of research or concepts are admissible, the scope of present science is limited.

Yet it makes little sense to deny mankind potential abilities and (subtle) features of this world only because certain individuals think that these perceptions and mechanisms should not be possible. Since there are proven and easy ways to gain insight into these mechanisms and to develop our potential abilities⁸, we are free to discontinue the belief in limiting concepts at any time we choose. Once we start to remove our individual karmic obstructions, our perception and understanding reach automatically into unknown dimensions of our consciousness and radically expand the range accessible to us.⁹

⁸ see 'HOW TO DISSOLVE KARMA'

⁹ Science certainly has value and purpose in its traditional sphere. Yet the limiting nature of its basic assumptions make it unsuited for any unrestricted development of the human potential as the Tattvarthasutra describes it.

Science is often idealized as an incontestable and incorruptible logic method that searches for an objective truth. Unfortunately this idealized image does not hold true in reality. Science splits the partial reality it perceives into a multitude of fields. It then selects a (small) aspect of one of these fields, defines conditions under which it will examine

Areas that are presently closed to our perception because of karmic mechanisms will only become accessible when we remove the corresponding karmic blocks. We will never get access to them by a more extensive exploration of the reality already known.

The first four mechanisms mentioned in this sutra describe the obstruction or total blockage of potential abilities.

The other five mechanisms are the result of exhaustion, fatigue or the aftereffects of the intake of intoxicating substances. They originate generally in the pursuit of erroneous concepts, errors etc. In this context somnambulism is defined as action beyond any conscious control.

These five mechanisms of exhaustion fall off as we reach more advanced stages of development. Shortly before entering the thirteenth stage all variations of sleep and exhaustion cease to influence us. From the end of the twelfth stage of development onwards our ac-

this aspect and eventually gets statements on how the aspect behaves under certain predefined conditions. All results that do not fit into the framework of this predefined setting are either ignored or suppressed.

Which aspects are researched under what conditions is determined by the main leaders of the fields. Science therefore examines always only that part of reality which is available to its leaders.

Certainly, there are attempts to re-combine all the disconnected slivers into which science split up reality to one holistic master concept. Yet these attempts are hampered by the inadequate (building) material that is the result of biased and often one-sided research (see above). All findings that go beyond the officially accepted framework of concepts cannot be used under the rules of science. Even if someone would succeed in developing a holistic model that condensed all officially accepted research into one unified whole, this 'whole' could always and only reflect the officially accepted partial 'truth', never the entirety of reality.

No doubt, science helped to make the physical conditions of life more comfortable and this also explains the popularity of this particular trend of thought. Yet when science applies its methods and concepts to areas it cannot perceive and for which they are not valid, it obstructs the exploration of these fields. Therefore the scientific methods as they are practiced today are not suited for any unrestricted development of the full human potential.

tivities are so perfectly in harmony with the main thrust of the universe that more energy is generated than is needed for the action itself.

We get a notion of this mechanism when we work on projects that inspire us intensely. Though the work might be mentally and physically exhausting, our inspiration fuels us far beyond our usual limits. - How much more energetic will we feel when we get close to freedom from all karmic limitations.

Even in less advanced stages of development it can happen that sleep and deep sleep will cease temporarily and we experience insight how higher levels of reality feel like. This type of 'waking sleep' usually happens while we rest at night. It is typically felt as vibrant wakefulness of the mind while the body stays in a state of deep rest. The experience is agreeable. In the beginning we might mistake it for sleeplessness since we do not feel the accustomed oblivion of dream or deep sleep and our consciousness does not blank out of our body. Yet in the morning we feel totally rested though we were aware all during the time this state lasted.

Because of these characteristics we can easily distinguish 'waking sleep' from sleeplessness. Sleeplessness originates in a continued overtaking of the psychic and physical senses caused by the pursuit of erroneous concepts, error etc.

S U T R A 8

सदसद्वेद्ये ॥ ८ ॥

Sadasadvēdye (8)

Karma that determines our feeling of life (*vedaniya*) manifests pleasant and unpleasant feelings. (8)

Pleasant or unpleasant emotions have no direct connection to the physical events we usually take as their very cause.

The origin of pleasant and unpleasant feelings is the manifestation of two types of 'feeling' karmas. Once these karmas activate, they influence our current emotional state in a positive or negative way. Though we usually attribute the rising of these feelings to an external event, this is a mere arbitrary association. If none of our 'feeling' karmas are active, even events that excited us on previous occasions will have no emotional effect on us.

This explains, why certain actions or events we usually experience as positive, will sometimes be marred by negative or neutral feelings for no apparent reason. In this case a different block of 'feeling' karma has been activated than the one we were accustomed to. Any attempt of ours to influence the event or the assumed cause to reinstate the previous pleasantness is useless. Only by dissolving our corresponding 'feeling' karma (by recognizing that we expect certain events to 'produce' certain emotions and by separating us from these expectations) can we fundamentally prevent the reoccurrence of unwanted feelings.

S U T R A 9

दर्शनचारित्रमोहनीयाकषायकषायवेदनीयाख्यास्त्रिद्विनवषोडशभेदाः
सम्यक्त्वमिथ्यात्वतदुभयान्यकषायकषायौ हास्यरत्य-
रतिशोकभयजुगुप्सास्त्रिपुन्नपुंसकवेदा अनन्तानुबन्ध्यप्रत्याख्यान-
प्रत्याख्यानसंज्वलनविकल्पाक्षैकशःक्रोधमानमायालोभाः ॥ ९ ॥

*Darshana charitra mohaniya kasaya kasayavedaniyakhyastridvi-
navasodashabhedah samyaktva mithyatvatavatadubhayanya ka-
sayakasayau hasyaratyaratishokabhayajugupsastripunnapumsa-
kaveda anantanubandhyapratyakkhyan apratyakhyanasam-
jvalanavikalpashchai krodhamanamayalobhah (9)*

Karma that causes delusion (mohaniya) obstructs

- 1 - our orientation towards growth (*samyag darshana*) by manifesting
 - confusion, error and misunderstanding
 - mixed misunderstanding and true comprehension of the world's mechanisms
 - (slight) clouding of true comprehension by wrong interpretation and error
- 2 - our focus on action that leads towards ultimate freedom (*samyag charitra*) by manifesting
 - passionate negative emotions like anger, pride, the intention to deceive others or greed, which appear in four intensities and
 - nine impeding tendencies:
 - excessive laughter
 - overindulgence
 - boredom, dissatisfaction, exhaustion
 - worry
 - fear and insecurity

- disgust, indignation, aversion
- compulsion to search for (new) female sexual partners
- compulsion to search for (new) male sexual partners
- compulsion to search for (new) sexual partners of both genders. (9)

Intuitive orientation towards growth (*samyag darshana*)

Intuitive insight - *darshana*¹⁰ - is the intuitive weight we assign to experiences and information.

Intuitive orientation is a fundamental experience of our life. On the basis of intuitive understanding we select from the multitude of potential actions the one path that appeals to us as the most attractive. Our intellect plays hardly any role in this process. In the fast pace of daily life it is far too slow to consider all the complex consequences of our actions in advance.

Yet we also experience that our intuition may lead us astray at times, - we do not always get desirable results when we follow our intuition.

To exclude this uncertainty the Tattvarthasutra describes a variation of this mechanism: - a special type of intuition that is grounded in the orientation towards growth (*samyag darshana*).

When we orient towards inner growth, we neither experience doubt nor hesitancy that often accompany our usual premonitions or intuition. On the contrary, - we experience sudden understanding, a crystal-like recognition that the blockages are gone that only a second ago obscured our consciousness. It feels as if we finally step into the light, are finally able to see clearly. An immense freedom floods our heart, - an elation always accompanied by enlightening insights into a level of understanding that eluded us before.

¹⁰ The mechanics of gaining insight - *darshana* - as it is described in sutra 7 are only a *partial* aspect of the process explained here. 'THE KEY TO THE CENTER OF THE UNIVERSE' (Chapter 1 of the Tattvarthasutra) deals extensively with the complete mechanism of *darshana*.

Any problem that previously overwhelmed our emotions and our consciousness disappears. It became irrelevant once the higher level of comprehension opened within us. This new understanding separates us from the one-sided perspective that previously made the problem appear insurmountable. Though none of the physical circumstances have changed, our disposition is fundamentally altered. We now perceive a path to a solution; the emotional load falls off our heart and we feel the elation mentioned above.

It is not easy to find general examples for these breakthroughs since they are of intrinsically private, individual nature. Yet we probably all know the following situation: Out of the blue an old friend suddenly treats us with inexplicable, cold behavior. We feel mistreated, emotionally hurt, and wonder what we have possibly said or done to cause such intense rejection. We have no idea how to correct the situation. Somehow our joy of life is dimmed. - Then we come to know that several tough misfortunes have befallen him. We realize that we only interpreted his preoccupation with his problems in a negative way. We understand that he even had the intention not to burden us with his worries. A load lifts from our heart.

This insight in the inner motivation of another person, this extending our scope of life to another (individual) reality usually produces a feeling of elation that illustrates the character of the breakthroughs described above. Nothing has changed in the material circumstances, but our sovereign new understanding now enables us to pursue a different course of action than before. Instead of causing a breakdown of communication and thereby losing a friend - as it often happens in these situations - we now are able to offer loving support that may really help.

When we orient towards inner growth, we gain clear insight how to intuitively select from all the potential paths of daily life the one optimal action that brings us closer to freedom from karmic restrictions.

Once we actively orient towards growth, we become able to intuitively recognize error. We now automatically identify flaws, inaccuracies and misunderstandings introduced by our senses, teachers, during our study of external knowledge or in clairvoyant perceptions and can bar their influence on us.

Intuitive orientation towards growth is a natural feature of our consciousness. It can manifest in all living beings who possess a mind and are able to reach enlightenment. It arises automatically when karma that obstructs this ability dissolves or becomes inactive - this is the inner cause. Externally it manifests (after the respective karmas are gone) either spontaneously¹¹ without outside help, or when triggered by external factors (e.g. the help of a teacher or by reading about the expansion of consciousness).

Karma that hinders or stops us to direct our life towards expansion, manifests e.g. as indifference towards the true mechanisms of this world, as disinterest in the development of our potential abilities and in the inability to distinguish which of our actions produce positive or negative effects.

Directing our action towards freedom from all karmic restrictions

Karma that hinders us to focus activities on freeing our life from karmic restrictions, manifests in form of anger, pride, as the intention to deceive others and greed. These four negative passionate emotions cause powerful egoistic tendencies that strongly reject every expanding point of view.

- **Anger** projects our own point of view so energetically into our environment that we become incapable of receiving new information or even of accepting our own critical inner voice. Each

¹¹ This can be triggered e.g. by the presence of those closer to freedom from all karmic limitations; by sudden intense recollection of earlier lives; through the experience of great pain or intense love and by the attempt to comprehend the world from the perspective of the *tirthankaras* - the universal teachers who teach from the state of omniscience.

time this type of karma activates, all our thoughts and feelings appear extremely logical to us, though when we dispassionately analyze them afterwards, we always recognize that they gave a distorted picture of reality. Once this occurs, it is irrelevant whether we project our anger onto others or keep it silently inside. In both cases all channels through which we could gain new insights - and that may dissolve our anger - are blocked.

- **Pride** gives our own point of view such exalted importance that all other types of action, judgements or viewpoints are discarded as less significant.
- **The intention to deceive others** creates an aura of deception around us that prevents us from recognizing truth, even if it is presented to us.
- **Greed** (addiction) is an egoistic compulsion to amass material or non-material components that far exceed our needs. It also manifests in form of avarice, impatience and the desire to re-enact or to re-live situations or emotions we already experienced many times before.

Anyone subject to this type of affliction is usually so intensely fascinated by the mere act of accumulating (material objects, status, security etc.), or by the attempt to bring back bygone experiences (power, recognition, the affection of others, the experience of falling in love, physical highs etc.) that he has neither time nor energy to attend to his inner growth.

Greed always originates in a disoriented mind. It causes us to assign such immense value to a small part of our environment that it prevents us from recognizing the entire world as 'our own'. Of the four basic negative emotions greed operates the longest. Its subtlest form affects us far up to the tenth stage of development.

As long as we succumb to these harmful tempers, we block all impulses that may lead us out of the cloud of our own negative emo-

tions. They separate us from all mechanisms that can expand the narrow vision of life we are trapped in.

These negative emotions manifest in four intensities that are counted as separate types of karma. The four intensities are described in 'ATTRACTION TO KARMA' - sutra 8.

Nine impeding tendencies

The nine impeding tendencies are moods that obstruct our progress. Though less powerful than the four negative passionate emotions, they severely hamper our growth by diverting our energy to meaningless themes. The nine impeding tendencies are not graded in different intensities. As we progress to the eleventh stage of development they gradually fall off. From the twelfth stage onwards they cease to influence us.

S U T R A 10

नारकतैर्यग्योनमानुषदैवानि ॥ १० ॥

Narakatairyagyonamanusadaivani (10)

Karma that determines the duration and place of future embodiment(s) (*ayu*) causes us to manifest in four spheres of existence:

- as *naraka* - as a being residing in regions of infernal character
- as *deva* - as a being residing in regions of celestial character
- as human being and
- as animal or plant. (10)

Living beings - whose fundamental nature is consciousness - can manifest in a multitude of bodily forms in the entire area of the universe. The purpose of these incarnations is to gain all the experiences we intuitively and emotionally feel attracted to and that appear important to us on an individual basis.

An obvious question comes to mind here: Why would any being not prefer the permanent embodiment in celestial areas over all other regions? - Yet the answer is easy: An existence in heavenly regions obviously offers - in contrast to all the idealized pictures religions like to propagate - not the entire range of experiences and knowledge a being may want to go through on his self-determined way to ultimate freedom (*moksa*).

The strong desire e.g. for revengeful or cruel thoughts and action causes an incarnation in regions inhabited by beings with similar disposition. Here this desire can be satisfied without disturbing other beings with different objectives in life.

Although on our present level of manifestation an existence in 'hellish' regions may appear extremely negative, this opinion is only relative. How 'hellish' might our rather chaotic and often violent world appear to an inhabitant of heaven who is accustomed to only harmony and peace?

It is important to understand that each of those four spheres of existence are open in all directions. Our own ideas, values and emotional drive attract us to those regions where the manifestation of our goals and values are supported best.

Once we gained the desired knowledge and our emotional attachment to a particular region of incarnation weakens, - i.e. once our particular time-karma (*ayu*) is dissolved, - we inevitably will obtain opportunities to leave the respective region and go on to different types of encounters. All of us have experienced this process many times, even though our Western concepts presently do not permit any recollection of this process.

It is further important that this denotes no (religious) concept of heaven and hell in the sense of 'punishment' and 'eternal damnation' or 'reward' and 'eternal bliss', but a mechanism that positions us in exactly those conditions of life that are ideally suited for our desires and our present abilities. It is an optional path that everyone defines by his behavior in the present.

S U T R A 11

गतिजातिशरिराङ्गोपाङ्गनिर्माणबन्धनसङ्घातसंस्थानसंहननस्पर्शरसगन्धवर्णानुपूर्यगुरुलघपघातपरघाततपोद्योतोच्छ्वासविहायोगतयः प्रत्येकशरीरत्रससुभगसुस्वरशुभसूक्ष्मपर्याप्तिस्थिरादेययशःकीर्तिसेतराणि तीर्थकरत्वं च ॥ ११ ॥

Gatijatisharirangopanga nirmanabandhana sanghata samsthana samhanana sparsha rasagandha varnanupuruya guru laghupaghata paraghata tapo dyoto chchhvasa vihaayo gatayah pratyeka sharira trasa subhanga susvara shubha suksma paryaptisthira yashah kirti setarani tirthakaravam cha (11)

Karma that determines the form and features of our body (*nama*), manifests the following characteristics:

- the condition of our existence (*gati*)
- the class (the number of senses of our body) (*jati*)
- the levels of functions of our body (*sharira*)
- the development and the abilities of the limbs of our respective bodies (*angopanga*)
- the degree of coordination between our different levels of functions (*bandhana*)
- the degree of coordination between consciousness and our respective bodies (*sanghata*)
- the shape of our body (*samsthana*)
- the construction and agility of our joints (*samhanana*)
- the sensation when touching our body (*sparsha*)
- the taste of our body (*rasa*)
- the smell of our body (*gandha*)
- the color of our body (*varna*)
- the ability to retain our bodily form from one incarnation to the next (*anupurvi*)

- the maneuverability (the heaviness) of our body in relation to its environment (*agurulaghu*)
- the cause of death by internal factors (*upagatha*)
- the cause of death by external factors (*paragatha*)
- the heat our body radiates (*atapa*)
- the light our body radiates (*udyota*)
- our ability to breathe (*uchchhvasa*)
- the way our body moves through space (*vihayogati*)
- the number of inhabitants in our body (*pratyekasharira*)
- our bodily mobility (*trasa*)
- our attractiveness to other beings (*subhaga*)
- the attractiveness of our voice (*susvara*)
- the beauty of our body (*shubha*)
- the grace of our body (*shuksma*)
- the potential to fully develop all features of our body (*paryapti*)
- the degree of circulation (the exchange of the material elements of our body) (*sthira*)
- the radiation of our personality (*adeya*)
- our potential to achieve fame (and the type of fame) (*yashakirti*)
- the status of a *tirthankara* (i.e. a teacher who teaches from the state of omniscience). (11)

This sutra describes the parameters that influence form and functions of our body in its present (and future) incarnation(s). All parameters are shaped entirely by ourselves through our action, speech and thoughts. The sutra lists the karmic components for all forms possible within the context of this universe. Some of these variations apply to levels of existence we might not feel familiar with at present.

S U T R A 12

उच्चैर्नीचैश्च ॥ १२ ॥

Uchchairnichaishcha (12)

Karma that determines the status we carry in our social environment (*gotra*) manifests

- our birth in a (family-) environment with high status
- our birth in a (family-) environment with low status. (12)

See 'ATTRACTION TO KARMA', commentary on sutra 26.

S U T R A 13

दानलाभभोगोपभोगविर्याणाम् ॥ १३ ॥

Danalabhabhogopabhogaviryanam (13)

Karma that causes obstruction in life (*antaraya*), interferes with our ability

- to give or receive recognition and gifts (*dana*)
- to acquire earnings, gains and profit (*labh*)
- to enjoy consumable things (*bhoga*)
- to enjoy things that bring happiness but are not consumed (*upabhoga*)
- to unfold and realize our capacities, power and vitality. (13)

This type of karma hinders us to reach our goals and to realize our wishes. It further prevents us from feeling fulfilled after we achieved an objective. It makes us feel dissatisfied even though we were highly motivated and attained the material success we desired.

The cause for this deficiency is not our lack of intention or effort. The root cause is the manifestation of karma that we acquired because we do (or did) not allow others to reach the satisfaction they desired, or obstruct their endeavors for their goals.

It is our very own - however subtle - attitude of obstruction towards others that attaches this type of karma to our interactive karmic field. Once this type of karma manifests in our life, it is futile to increase our efforts or to try to influence events, desires and intentions. Only by giving up our own obstructive attitudes and by allowing others to unfold their vitality and capabilities in their very own fashion will we cease to bind this type of karma.

After we changed this basic attitude of ours, it takes time to dissolve the existing karma of this type. This explains why we might not feel an immediate effect. We experience this as reluctance to let go our control of others' lives. Yet we will know that the dissolution is complete when our actions start to bring us the desired satisfaction.

* * *

Our present life happens within the parameters the manifestation of karma (our very desires) puts into place. Yet many of these parameters are far more flexible than we assume. With all our action, thinking, speech and emotions we continuously influence and change these limits. And many alterations manifest right in this very life. When we e.g. give up a basic (negative) attitude, we often feel the effect only a short time later. When we e.g. cease to obstruct others in their process of gaining knowledge, our own horizon will soon open up to far more comprehensive insights.

The immediacy of this mechanism gives us sufficient vital feedback to restructure the parameters of our life. Once we experience how fast this process works, we are free to shape our life to our very own ideas. Though some changes take time until effects are felt, we do have the power to alter all our karmic parameters now. We always have the ability to remove any undesired component from our

life or to transform it into its positive counterpart. We only need to examine and reshape our inner attitudes and express this new orientation in our action, speech and thinking.

* * *

Here ends the description of the eight areas of life in which karma will manifest (the types of karma). The next seven sutras define the time-spans during which karma will show effects, i.e. how long the various types of karma will stay attached to our consciousness.

S U T R A 14

आदितस्त्रिंशत्सगरोपमकोटिकोट्यः
परास्थितिः ॥ १४ ॥

Aditastisrinamantarayasya cha trinshatsagropamakotikotyah para sthiti (14)

The first three types of karma, i.e.

- karma that obstructs access to the five channels of knowledge (*jnana-varana*)
- karma that prevents insight and understanding (*darshana-varana*) and
- karma that determines our feeling of life (*vedaniya*)

can remain bound to us for a maximum of ca. 3000 years (30 *sagaropamas*). (14)

The exact length of the time-unit *sagaropama* has been lost. Some scholars evaluate it to be 100 years, but unfortunately the ancient method to calculate it is so vague that this can only be taken as an assumption. For the lack of any other method this assumption is adopted here, - 30 *sagaropamas* would then last 3000 years.

What can be said however is that the binding force of karmic molecules is limited in time. Its power might influence several of our incarnations, but ceases to bind our consciousness after a limited number of years has passed. Though it is not known how exactly the bond weakens, karmic molecules appear to be subject to a similar deterioration as can be observed in atoms.

Furthermore - the strength of the bond varies significantly between the eight main types of karma. Karmas that determine status and the form and features of our body carry the shortest duration, while delusion lasts longest.

S U T R A 15

सप्ततिर्मोहनीयस्य ॥ १५ ॥

Saptatirmonaniyasya (15)

Karma that causes delusion (*mohaniya*) can remain bound to us for a maximum of 7000 years (70 *sagaropamas*). (15)

S U T R A 16

विंशतिर्नामगोत्रयोः ॥ १६ ॥

Vinshatirnamagotrayoh (16)

- Karma that determines form and features of our body (*nama*) and
- Karma that determines the status we carry in our social environment (*gotra*)

can remain bound to us for a maximum of 2000 years (20 *sagaropamas*). (16)

S U T R A 17

त्रयस्त्रिंशत्सागरोपमाण्यायुषः ॥ १७ ॥

Trayastrinshatsagaropamanyayusah (17)

Karma that determines the duration and place of our future embodiment(s) (*ayu*) can remain bound to us for a maximum of 3300 years (33 *sagaropamas*). (17)

The next three sutras define the shortest possible time karma will remain bound to our interactive karmic field.

S U T R A 18

अपरा द्वादशमुहूर्ता वेदनीयस्य ॥ १८ ॥

Aparadvadashamuhurta vedaniyasya (18)

Karma that determines our feeling of life (*vedaniya*) will remain bound to us for a minimum of 9 hours and 36 minutes (12 *muhurtas*). (18)

One *muhurta* lasts about 48 minutes. 12 *muhurtas* are 12x48 minutes or 9 hours 36 minutes.

Karma that determines our feeling of life (*vedaniya*) can dissolve earliest 9 hours and 36 minutes after we bound it.

As academic as this may sound, as vital and practical it is for our daily life. One example: We experience a strong negative emotion whose origin we attribute (arbitrarily) to a person in our close environment. Instead of reacting immediately and impulsively on the basis of our negative emotional sensation - and thereby possibly hurting someone innocent, - we would be well advised to wait a minimum of ten hours (to sleep over it) before we act. This would

give our negative emotion the opportunity to dissipate - our karma a chance to dissolve - and prevent possible repercussions any premature, impulsive action of ours may have.

Knowing that karma will affect us for at least a minimum time before its influence ceases, gives us vital information about its mechanism of dissolution.

If in the above example we would act spontaneously on our negative impulse and hurt the other person, we would attach ourselves to more karma of the same kind. Thus the very basis for our negative emotions would be reinforced and the reoccurrence of our uncomfortable feelings inevitably programmed for the future.

Yet if we know that any negative emotion is nothing other than the activation of our own karma and that this karma will affect us only for limited time, we can easily wait patiently until this time is over. When - after the respective period has passed (in this case 10 hours) - we notice that our negative emotions are gone, we then have confirmation that the tinge of our feelings is our very own responsibility and that it is useless to attribute the cause of our negative emotions to someone else.

Karma may not necessarily be active during the entire minimum period it is bound to our interactive karmic field.

S U T R A 19

नामगोत्रयोरस्तौ ॥ १९ ॥

Namogotrayorastau (19)

- Karma that determines form and features of our body (*nama*) and
- Karma that determines the status we carry in our social environment (*gotra*)

will remain bound to us for a minimum of 6 hours and 48 minutes (8 *muhurtas*). (19)

S U T R A 2 0

शेषाणामन्तर्मुहूर्ता ॥ २० ॥

Shesanamantarmuhurta (20)

All other types of karma, i.e.

- karma that obstructs access to the five channels of knowledge (*jnana-varana*)
- karma that prevents insight and understanding (*darshana-varana*)
- karma that causes delusion (*mohaniya*)
- karma that determines the duration and place of our future embodiment(s) (*ayu*) and
- karma that causes obstruction in life (*antaraya*)

will remain bound to us for a minimum of ca. 1 second (one *avali*) to ca. 48 minutes (one *muhurta*). (20)

The time for which karma is bound to us is considerably influenced by the stage of development (*gunasthana*) we currently experience.

In the ninth stage of development (*anivrita karana*) we gain the ability to actively dissolve deluding karma in the shortest possible time.

In the tenth stage of development (*suksma samparaya*) we become able to actively dissolve karma that prevents insight, obstructs access to the five channels of knowledge and causes obstructions, in the shortest possible time.

S U T R A 2 1

विपाकोऽनुभवः ॥ २१ ॥

Vipako(a)nubhavaḥ (21)

Karma becomes active when supportive conditions arise. (21)

All activity and all passionate negative emotions - anger, pride, the intention to deceive others and greed (and also error, confusion, negligence etc.) - attract karma to our interactive karmic field.

A great part of this karma is discarded immediately. Thus all actions not influenced by anger, pride, the intention to deceive others, greed etc. have only short-lived, fleeting effects. This 'fleeting' karma usually manifests right after we acquired it.

Yet all action we plan, perform, instigate or silently consent to while maintaining strong negative emotions, often takes on a latent, inactive state and shows its effect at a later time only. Since strong negative emotions cause an equally strong karmic attachment to the particular sphere of life we manifest the action in, this often cannot manifest in adequate strength immediately after we acquired. It activates only when conditions arise that are conducive for its manifestation.

Latent karma is the mechanism that directs our attention to unresolved themes of life as soon as the conditions for a renewed manifestation of the respective themes arise again.

We can easily observe the presence of latent karma and the way it activates in someone who just quit smoking. Though he is abstinent, his longing for a drag gets triggered each time someone in his vicinity lights up. He has a latent readiness to react to this stimulus that often manifests in form of intense aggression towards the one who dares to smoke. The emotional attachment (latent karma) still present in the new 'non-smoker' breaks out as soon as supportive conditions arise.

In contrast to this a 'real' non-smoker may feel annoyed at the infringement on his quality of breathing, but the smell of a lit cigarette would not stimulate him to light up as well. He has no latent karma of this kind and thus the stimulus passes without initiating action.

If supportive conditions do not arise, the respective karma will manifest at the end of the maximum period for which it can remain bound to our consciousness (see sutra 14 to 17).

We experience the activation of (latent) karma as the rise of strong or mild emotions, as motivation and drive for unresolved activities, as confrontation with situations and persons we learn from etc.

How intensely karma manifests depends solely on how passionately we originally desired the respective action or situation. All other circumstances of an activation of karma are determined by the stage of development we presently experience, our actual relation to time, space and surroundings and our current conditioning.

S U T R A 2 2

स यथानाम ॥ २२ ॥

Sa yathanama (22)

The character and intensity of a karmic manifestation always mirrors the type of activity that caused its binding. (22)

When karma activates, it always manifests the character of one of the eight main groups of karma, - it always stimulates activity in the area of life in which it was caused.

For example: Karma that obstructs access to the five channels of knowledge manifests an inability to come in contact with knowledge. How this inability presents itself - e.g. as missing information, the absence of a suitable teacher, the lack of time for studying, disinclination to learn etc. - depends on the subtype of the respective main

group of karma. Karma whose character it is to obstruct access to knowledge, can e.g. never determine the duration and place of an incarnation.

The intensity in which karma manifests, reflects the 'drive' and force with which we pursued the activity that originally caused the binding of this particular karma. In this process the number of karmic molecules that activate simultaneously determines the degree of intensity with which karma manifests.

The subtypes of karma that determines the duration and place of future embodiment(s) (*ayu*) and karma that prevents insight and understanding (*darshana-varana*) always manifest the exact theme that was originally bound.

The subtypes of the other main types of karma, i.e.:

- karma that causes delusion (*mohaniya*)
- karma that obstructs access to the five channels of knowledge (*jnana*)
- karma that determines our feeling of life (*vedaniya*)
- karma that determines form and features of our body (*nama*)
- karma that determines the status we carry in our social environment (*gotra*) and
- karma that causes obstruction in life (*antaraya*)

can manifest in a different subtype than the one originally bound. Yet they always manifest the theme of the respective main group.

S U T R A 23

ततश्च निर्जरा ॥ २३ ॥

Tatashcha nirjara (23)

After its activation our bond to the activated karma is dissolved (*nirjara*). (23)

The activation of karma converts its latent energy into a form we can experience. The activation dissolves the bond between our consciousness and the respective karmic molecules. After its activation karma ceases to influence our life.

The bond is dissolved

- 1 - in the natural course of events (*savipaka*) as soon as the conditions for an activation occur, or at the end of the maximum period for which a particular type of karma can be bound to us. In this natural sequence of events a long time may pass between the original binding of karma and its final dissolution.
- 2 - when its activation is forced (*avipaka*), i.e. when we intentionally create the conditions that stimulate an activation. This mechanism reduces the amount of our karma (i.e. the amount of our unresolved themes of life) significantly faster - if it is handled in a correct way. The next chapter - 'HOW TO DISSOLVE KARMA' - explains this mechanism.

The Tattvarthasutra discriminates between two kinds of beings: Those who will reach ultimate freedom from all restricting karma (*bhavya*) and those who will not achieve this state (*abhavya*).

Those who seriously aspire freedom from all karmic limitations know intuitively what knowledge and what lines of action bring them closer to their goal. They do not restrict any part of their life, but rather arrange it in such a way that it makes their consciousness shift to higher dimensions.

All those not aspiring freedom from karmic limitations concentrate mainly on the material range of reality (sometimes on its more subtle aspects like art etc.). But as intelligent, clear and comprehensive the knowledge and perception of materially oriented persons may appear, their insights are and will remain temporary and do not contribute to inner growth. Everything they regard as 'progress' is accidental and will not last.

Whether we are able to reach this freedom or not does not depend upon the existence or lack of any special talent, exceptional ability or esoteric knowledge. The potential for reaching ultimate freedom exists in all living beings. There is no outside agency that determines who is developable and who is not.

We ourselves decide to which class of beings we belong. We either develop our potential abilities and become aware of the complete knowledge available to all beings, or we don't. When we follow our intuition towards growth and actively strive to unfold the innate abilities of our consciousness, then we are *bhavya*, then we will inevitably free ourselves from all karmic obstructions. If we do not follow these intuitive insights, we consequently will not reach this freedom.

It is however not a 'one-time' decision to become *bhavya*. We cannot lay back and say 'Well, I decided to become *bhavya*, now my enlightenment is guaranteed - nothing else to do today, let's go to the beach.' Unfortunately it doesn't work that way. We have to choose anew all the time. And this costs energy at first. And then more energy as we realize in what restricted state our consciousness is in. And we invest effort after effort and it doesn't seem to get brighter and we want to give up ten thousand times. And then one day it's done, then it dawns. Then we see through the mechanics that limit us, then we know how to really remove the obstacles to our higher dimensions and how to make enlightenment reality for us.

S U T R A 24

नामप्रत्ययाः सर्वतो योगविशेषात्सूक्ष्मैकक्षेत्रावगाहस्थिताः
सर्वात्मप्रदेशेष्वनन्तानन्तप्रदेशाः ॥ २४ ॥

Namapratyayah sarvato yogavishesatsukshmaikakshetravagahasthitah sarvatmapradeshesvanantanantapradeshah (24)

At all times an infinite number of karmic molecules coexists with our body.

When we act, a number of these karmic molecules attaches to our interactive karmic field. The nature and intensity of our activity determines how many karmic molecules will attach. This process cannot be perceived directly by our senses. (24)

How big is a karmic molecule?

The Tattvarthasutra uses the unit *pradesha* as the point of reference to describe minute dimensions of space. *pradesha* is usually translated as 'spacepoint' and denotes 'the smallest possible extent of space'¹². Spacepoints are comparatively large, the particles of other elements (e.g. matter) can be far smaller than one spacepoint.

Karmic molecules are far subtler than spacepoints. One spacepoint can contain an infinite number of them.

The sutra states that our body coexists with as many karmic molecules as 'infinite times infinite'¹³ spacepoints can hold.

¹² *pradesha* is the amount of space filled by a particle of the element space that cannot be divided into smaller parts. According to their definition these elementary particles are far smaller than atoms.

¹³ The term 'infinite times infinite' used in the sutra is no vague expression. It is a mathematical method to describe the magnitude of a number by defining the limits of this number. Yet the description of the mathematics at the basis of these expressions would far exceeds the scope of this book. A number of other works deal extensively with the size and mechanisms of karmic molecules and the highly developed mathematics of the ancient Indians.

If - by our inclinations and intentions - we (i.e. our consciousness - *jiva*) stimulate a limited number¹⁴ of these karmic molecules, they either cause immediate activity or attach to our interactive karmic field in a latent form to manifest activity at a later time. Without this stimulation by intention and activity which connects our consciousness (*jiva*) to karmic matter (*ajiva*), karmic molecules have no effect, even if they take up the same space as our body.

Those karmic molecules attached to our interactive karmic field remain only within the limits of the bodies we inhabit during incarnations. Apart from manifesting activity they have no further function. Individual karma is not stored outside our bodily form.¹⁵

The activation of karmic molecules brings their latent energy into a form we can experience. Activation totally dissolves the bond between our consciousness and the manifested karmic molecules. After they manifested activity, the respective karmic molecules cease to influence our life.

S U T R A 25

सद्वेद्यशुभायुर्नामगोत्राणि पुण्यम् ॥ २५ ॥

Sadvedyashubhayurnamagotrani punyam (25)

The agreeable variations of karma that determine

- our feeling of life (*vedaniya*)
- the duration and place of our (future) embodiment(s) (*ayur*)

¹⁴ The type and intensity of our intentions and our drive to experience something determines how many molecules get stimulated.

¹⁵ This states clearly that the image of 'a mountain of karma lurking somewhere in the subtle' has no substance to it. All karmic molecules bound to our consciousness are contained within our present body. There exists no mechanism that would store individual karma anywhere outside our personal interactive karmic field.

- the form and features of our body (*nama*)
 - what status we carry in our social environment (*gotra*)
 are called positive karma (*punya*). (25)

Positive karma brings about an agreeable subjective feeling of life and ideally leads to spiritual growth.

Positive karma (*punya*) is always the result of our own actions and attitudes. Comfortable circumstances of life, high status, friends etc. indicate that now or at an earlier time we created the basis for this agreeable environment. Since this (our very own) karma will manifest in any case, there is no reason why we should not enjoy these circumstances.

However - one aspect of this situation is somewhat problematic: All manifestation of positive as well as negative karma is limited in time - sooner or later every positive (and negative) experience will end.

In these circumstances we are basically facing two alternatives:

- either we enjoy the agreeable situation till it ends - and then try to re-establish the positive conditions we became accustomed to
- or we accumulate new positive karma while still enjoying the positive state. At the manifestation of the newly acquired positive karma our agreeable conditions of life will then continue.

In both cases we experience the world - more or less consciously - as the result of a karmic process. But we also remain on a level of existence that only appears attractive to us because we are unaware of more advanced levels.

Yet there is a third alternative. If we gain direct access to the immense dimensions (of knowledge, love, power, abilities and happiness) within us, we will experience these qualities directly - without karmic limitations.

On this path we gradually dissolve all karmic bonds to reach superior and far more interesting stages. Initially we may be unable to

picture what these more advanced stages will feel like, but after our first few serious steps in this direction new understanding, perception and action arises automatically. Once we start to experience the world more consciously than ever before, immense encouragement supports our exploration of entirely new dimensions of life.

Unfortunately this path is not always open to us. Though every living being has an inherent potential for this development, our access is often blocked by karmic processes we caused by our own actions and attitudes.

Yet the strength of these blocks varies in the course of time. There always are phases when we recognize our potential for development more clearly. During these phases our access to this third path is open.¹⁶ It is entirely our own decision how we use this opening.

The incarnation in an agreeable and safe environment clearly states that this third alternative is open to us, since it usually provides the means and time for spiritual expansion. If we take positive life-circumstances as the basis for our journey into advanced, new and fascinating dimensions, we not only unfold our very own inherent potential, but will also¹⁷ generate sufficient positive karma to guarantee that these valuable circumstances will support all future development as well.

The positive types of karma listed in this sutra are mentioned to make us aware of the broad basis that already supports our spiritual growth. If and with how much engagement we take up this rare opening is our very own decision.

¹⁶ Genuine interest in the theme of this book indicates that this is the case at exactly this point in time.

¹⁷ see 'ATTRACTION TO KARMA', sutra 17, 18, 20, 24

S U T R A 2 6

अतोऽन्यत्पापम् ॥ २६ ॥

Ato(a)myatpapam (26)

All other types of karma are negative karma (*paapa*). (26)

Negative karma brings about a disagreeable subjective feeling of life and often blocks or obstructs inner growth.

Negative karma (*paapa*) is also always and exclusively the result of our very own actions and attitudes. Uncomfortable circumstances of life, problems, lack of recognition etc. demonstrate vividly that we now or at an earlier time created the basis for this problematic environment or negative emotional state all by ourselves through our own emotional attachment to limiting themes of life. Since this (personal) karma will manifest in any case, we should not try to ignore it.

Though the manifestation of negative (as well as positive) karma is limited in time, negative karma has the unpleasant characteristic to easily produce new karma of the same type upon its manifestation. This is caused by a renewed (intense) emotional reaction when we experience the results of the (previously bound) negative karma. To break out of this vicious circle of constantly repeating experiences we need to become aware of this automatic mechanism.

As long as we do not dissolve our emotional attachment to limiting themes of life - i.e. as long as our interactive karmic field still contains the respective karmic molecules - we cannot prevent the manifestation of negative karmas. Yet all manifestation of negative karma is always and only an indication that at this very moment the bond between us and the respective amount of karmic molecules is in the process of being dissolved.

Any attempt to locate the cause for negative situations outside of us - as is customary in the (flawed) Western understanding of the world's mechanisms - will never give us access to the real cause of

negative circumstances. In this case we will remain unable to prevent the renewed occurrence of unpleasant experiences.

The mechanism is very simple: Whoever sustains the idea that he cannot influence the occurrence of negative events, will easily react with animosity, anger, disappointment etc. at any restriction of his positive feeling of life. Yet this very (passionate) reaction is the root cause for a renewed bond to the same type of (negative) karma.

Any (renewed) passionate reaction only confirms that a certain theme of life has not yet been concluded. It is an indication that we - consciously or subconsciously - want further confrontation with this particular theme. It is not conducive to the solution of this situation if we interpret this mechanism negatively.

When we intentionally promote, enjoy or prolong negative emotions, we also cause new attachment to the same type of karma.

Attempts to *ignore* disagreeable experiences do not remove the irritation. They may only shift our inevitable confrontation with a particular theme into the future.

If we desire the fundamental conclusion of a theme of life, it helps to react to negative emotions

- by examining in a distanced way whether we only project these emotions onto events, persons or objects that have no direct connection with the dissolution of karma we currently experience
- by reflecting what the real source for these emotions may be, why they are happening, and what would happen if we allow them free reign
- by asking ourselves whether we need to react at all and
- by consciously deciding to follow a different - positive - line of thought or action.

As a rule of thumb any poised, neutral attitude at the occurrence of negative emotions and experiences assures that we bind no further karma of the same type.

That the manifestation of negative karma brings about unpleasant experiences is a fact of our present life. It makes no sense to intensify this process by adding further negative emotions to it. True - some variations of karma do obstruct inner growth, - but everyone seriously interested in the theme of this book already is the living proof that his or her expansion of consciousness is - temporarily - not blocked any more.

We take it as a self-evident natural fact that disagreeable experiences are limited in time. Yet a similar limitation of positive circumstances we definitely would not want to consider. We regard it as our inalienable and basic right that agreeable circumstances of life should continue forever.

And with this we have exactly the right notion. We sense - consciously or unconsciously - a state of existence where no karma obstructs any of the immense abilities we so deeply feel within us.

It may not always be easy to recognize the path to this stage of development. Though scriptures like the Tattvarthasutra describe this mechanism in great detail, it initially takes effort to eliminate inner obstacles, interference and prejudice. Whoever decides for this path should be aware that it takes considerably more energy and dedication to develop a new understanding that departs substantially from our prevalent Western thinking, than to continue one's life in a well-established and changeless pattern.

Yet all blocks, restrictions and efforts on this path are an integral part of the existence we caused for ourselves. Once we stop regarding these obstacles as insurmountable barriers and begin to interpret them as challenges that make us grow and exercise our inherent abilities, we are well on our way to a more dynamic and far broader scope of life.

HOW TO DISSOLVE KARMA

Chapter 9 of the
- Tattvarthasutra -

This part of the ancient manuscript introduces the key to far more fascinating dimensions of life than we experience at present. It tells us how to overcome the inner and outer barriers that prevent us from perceiving and exploring these dimensions. It tells us how to dissolve 'karmic' clutter, - i.e. how to get rid of our emotional attachment to narrow, restrictive themes of life. Karmic attachment is the only factor that confines our consciousness to our current limits of existence. Once we remove this 'clutter', new insights and a far greater scope of life open up automatically and with inevitable certainty.

Yet to progress on this path is not as casual and comfortable as most new age gurus and books would like us to believe.

It has become chic nowadays to be 'spiritually' active, to do the 'fun mystic thing'. Without paranormal encounters, channeling, UFO invasions and magic rituals we'd hardly know what thrilling themes to talk about at parties. The 'search for our Self' - a kind of casual development into a higher being - grew into a 'must' of modern society, - into a 'recreational spiritual path' that has become high fashion.

These are the people in esoteric workshops and seminars, talking about 'the flow of cosmic energy' and 'descended masters', going to Sedona, Mount Shasta, Stonehenge or Rishikesh, sitting on vortices and sacred spots - my is the scenery beautiful - and wait for some handsome enlightenment - but please, not too fast and not too unsettling.

They are the ones running from guru to guru, from astrologer to astrologer, always looking for some mystic person to tell them time and again what fantastically advanced spiritual beings they are. And because they are so highly evolved, they needn't work up real sweat about their inner growth. - Why should they? - They're privileged, aren't they? Once their time has come, some higher being - probably with noble face, long, flowing garments - will single them out, touch their forehead - that famous 'third eye' - and the light will flow through them and then enlightenment has come. So they think. So

they hope. That's how they picture spiritual progress. Nice, comfortable, easy, safe.

And so they never get going themselves. Whatever they do, wherever they go, they are just passing time, expecting an experience that will never arrive. They wait to be lifted from that big mass of people around them that certainly is not on their level. They smile at you and think: 'Why can't he see, how far advanced I am?'

What these poor people don't realize is that their pride, their lack of commitment, their very idea of that 'recreational spiritual path' bars them from any progress. They don't know that all they expect, all they project is exactly what they are getting: A casual 'spiritual' stroll through nice, natural scenery - maybe accompanied by some similarly attuned souls, basking in all kinds of good vibrations, - but - nothing more.

The Tattvarthasutra offers an entirely different path. It alerts us to highly private, obstructive emotions we usually sweep under the carpet, - it makes us aware of attachments and prejudices that stop us from becoming the magnificent being we feel so deeply within us. And it advises us how to dissolve these obstacles, - how to arrange the familiar components of our life so shrewdly that they will make us expand into a far vaster, exciting, compassionate, blissful and wide-open universe. And - as we progress in this direction and more and more understanding opens up, we'd never even think of using our insights for empty party talk.

The attachment of new karmic matter to our interactive karmic field is the main factor that keeps our consciousness within the narrow limits karma weaves around it. This new attachment often takes place against all our will and intentions. It happens, even if we have an ardent desire for a new orientation of life.

Certainly, sincere desire to end karmic restrictions is essential for reaching this freedom, but we also know that our intention alone will never start this process. Real progress only happens when we also

initiate action that distinctly¹ reduces the amount of karmic molecules in our interactive karmic field.

Yet any such action will only produce permanent results if we - intellectually or intuitively - understand the karmic mechanisms we want to get rid of. The formal repetition of mantras, mindlessly performing religious rituals, the handling of magic symbols etc. - i.e. the use of techniques whose mechanisms are not entirely clear to us, - can never effectively reduce our attachment to the themes of life (karma) that limit our consciousness.²

¹ This means to actually experience how inner and outer barriers dissolve, how our awareness suddenly shifts to levels of superior understanding, how our actions get more powerful and bring more of what we really desire, how our life becomes more fascinating, how inner freedom opens up and last not least - how we begin to sense more advanced dimensions of our consciousness.

Only this perceptible, direct feedback tells us that we really dissolved karmic attachments.

² This does not mean that these techniques serve no purpose. They usually are first probing attempts to explore the world beyond material limits. Yet these first inquisitive endeavors need to be followed by more aware and intelligent steps to bring lasting results.

The widespread belief in the effectiveness of 'spiritual techniques' is quite misleading. All such techniques are essentially mere quantitative repetitions - mantras, prayers, yoga postures, rituals, cleansings etc. - all are to be repeated a specific number of times, for a fixed period or at recurring intervals. And many have the idea that the more regular and thorough they perform their technique, the faster their progress.

We tend to look upon our technique like a vending machine. We insert our mantra or prayer or yoga-posture in the money-slot and pull enlightenment out of the drawer at the bottom. After we finished the technique, we usually are through with our 'spiritual action' for the day and continue our life in much the old fashion. Yet the belief that this might be effective is a naïve delusion born out of our current fascination with technology.

Real inner development does not work that way. Real inner growth is always and only an increase in quality. It is a sweeping breakthrough to higher stages, a boost of our capacities based on more insight, superior understanding, more intelligent behavior and greater command of life. It is never produced by any however well-intentioned, but mind-

The sole accumulation of metal parts, rubber, plastic and gasoline or the combining of all these components without real technical understanding will never produce a functioning engine. Similarly the mere presence of spiritual or religious components without real comprehension how they work and how effective they are, will never bring about real freedom from karmic limitations.

Even the meticulous but perfunctory observance of instructions received from spiritual or religious leaders can never replace the thorough comprehension of karmic mechanisms and their conscious transfer into action - irrespective of the sincerity and devotion with which the leader's teachings may be followed.

The path to freedom from all karmic limitations is an entirely individual process. It is neither possible to 'bear' another person's karma, nor to force anyone to bind karmic matter to his personal interactive karmic field without his inner willingness. The attachment of karmic mechanisms to our consciousness can only be removed on the very level we caused it: in our very own psyche.

S U T R A 1

अस्रवनिरोधः संवरः ॥ १ ॥

Asravanirodhah samvarah (1)

By blocking our initial attraction to karma, we prevent new karmic matter from attaching to our consciousness. (1)

less quantitative repetition and it will also not unfold if we forego all orientation towards growth for the remainder of the day.

Sure, many of the techniques make us 'feel good', more relaxed and calmer, but 'feeling good, relaxed and calm' by itself is no indication of inner growth. The many people in search for ever better techniques, more powerful mantras or for the ultimate yoga exercise etc. will never leave their current stage of development unless they question this naïve belief, realistically assert how much they really progressed through it, and move on to more effective action.

New karma acts like 'fuel'. It renews the energy that forces our 'karmic engine' on and on.

Once we stop the intake of new karma, the karmic process loses the main source of energy that keeps it in motion. Though our 'karmic engine' may continue to run for a while longer since its remaining energy still needs to manifest till it is fully dissolved, we already initiated the ultimate end of the 'journey'.

The beginning of this process will be noticed clearly. While riding in an automobile, we sense immediately when the accelerator is not pressed down any more, even though the car continues to roll. With similar clarity we sense our life take a new course as soon as we stop fuelling the karmic mechanisms that limit us.

We can easily identify the effects of this process: - Actions that previously cast an almost hypnotic spell on us, suddenly cease to overshadow our awareness. Equanimity, distance and inner balance increase.³

More and more we observe our life simultaneously from two different levels. On one level we still experience the confining narrow-

³ This equanimity and distance may temporarily become so strong that our life appears less vivid and interesting. This may even be accompanied by a dark feeling that life and all its appearances are now without purpose. Yet this experience occurs only 4-5 times in all and usually lasts less than a week. It is typical for the development in progress and should be interpreted positively.

The feeling of emptiness is caused by our attachment to a level of life we already left. Events on that level now appear less intense because we already know their course and outcome and subconsciously recognize them as redundant repetitions. As long as we do not perceive new and more interesting levels yet, we tend to nostalgically reminisce how much more attractive some past events were. But since we have outgrown these events, they fail to mesmerize our consciousness with their familiar hypnotic fascination. In consequence we might feel world-weary and regretful.

Yet these emotions will only last for as long as we dwell on the past. Once we begin to trust that new experiences will always open up after we discarded old levels, our feeling shifts from regret to anticipation and eagerness.

ness of our old state. Yet at the same time we are watching this confinement from another (higher) level that is characterized by a growing awareness of more expansive dimensions. As this perception deepens, we become able to steer our life more consciously towards further expansion.

The most important - and the simplest - move into this direction is to prevent the acquisition of new karma (*samvara*). Though this strategy seems far from dissolving our previously bound karma, it is far easier to practice and also generates much faster results.⁴ This process takes two steps:

- Step one is our decision to stop all activities that will bind new karma - it is our resolve to end prejudice, intolerance, laziness, skepticism, lack of knowledge, intense negative emotions etc.
- Step two is actually preventing the acquisition of new karmic matter. This happens automatically when we put the decision taken in step one into action.

Splitting this strategy into two steps seems like superfluous exactitude. Yet we only need to realize how often in our life we make highly concrete decisions - and then fail miserably to carry through our resolve. When we - for once - discard the thousand excuses we normally justify these failures with, then we know with dead certainty that a huge gap exists between our decisions and us actually doing what we intended. We only need to remember how often we decided to exercise our body regularly - starting 'tomorrow' - and then tomorrow never came. We only need to recall how many times we were determined to slim down, to stop smoking, to drink less, to

⁴ Dissolving previously bound karmic attachments is far harder. To consciously force karmic processes (see sutra 3 - *tapas*) requires considerable awareness of our actions. To succeed we need solid grounding in the clarity of the fourth stage of development (*samyaktvi*). When we employ the process of *tapas* prematurely and in flawed understanding, we may easily acquire intense new karmic attachments. It is therefore recommended to start this only after we have reached the second phase of *gunasthana* 4.

learn a new language, to tidy the attic etc. without us ever carrying through with it, to know that it takes far more than just a decision to achieve concrete results.

Only when we realize the immense power our own inertia and laziness hold over us can we assess realistically the enormous energy we need to raise to break this discrepancy between our decisions and action. Fortunately the same mechanism that usually deepens our inertia can also work in our favor: If we get into the habit of always acting on our decisions, it feels natural after a while to raise the additional energy necessary for carrying out our resolves. This also causes our character and willpower to become stronger, more self-assured and reliable.

Apart from recognizing and eliminating the gap between our decision and action, it helps immensely to become aware of the mechanism that creates new karmic attachments.

If we want to prevent new bonds, we need to direct our attention to our very initial attraction to karma (*asrava*). This is a highly sensitive point: - All initial attraction to karma stimulates us with (new) activity. As long as we feel no emotional reaction to an event, no new karma is bound. At this particular point in time we often can freely decide how to respond to this stimulation. If at this very moment we recall our decision to stop the (beginning of a new) karmic process, and act accordingly, e.g. by consciously following a different (positive) line of thought or to refrain from reinforcing a negative emotional reaction, we attract no new karmic matter. At exactly this time when everything is still open, we have the power to end unwanted karmic processes.⁵

⁵ A good illustration of this mechanism is the irritation we always feel in the presence of a particular person. Yet however strong our reaction may be, whenever we meet this person, there often is a brief initial period during which we are not yet irritated. If we take this brief neutral period as an opportunity not to re-enforce our sensitivity, but decide instead to maintain distance, equanimity and peace of mind, the chances are great that our irritation will either not rise during this

This process is mainly controlled by our emotions. It is therefore highly recommended to direct our attention towards our own emotional reaction to an action instead of only concentrating on the physical event. Many events we confront have no connection to the emotions that shoot through us while we experience them. The events merely trigger our dormant feelings. The more we separate the two components - the physical events and our emotional reactions to it - the more consciously we can control the karmic mechanisms we are involved in.

Since we continuously manifest part of our existing karma - thereby dissolving its attachment to our consciousness - the total amount of karmic molecules in our interactive karmic field inevitably become less once we systematically stop binding new karma.

When we follow this strategy, it usually takes only a short time till we experience first results. Our increasing freedom from events we considered unavoidable before, an independence from persons who held unwelcome power over us etc. are our best motivation to progress further towards full self-determination.

This process works far more efficiently if we observe six simple mechanisms:

meeting or at least be less intense. For future encounters we then have established a pattern of behavior that will eventually free us from our previous involuntary reaction.

Certainly, it takes energy to take this path, - more energy than just letting us fall into the familiar irritation, - but this is only a small price to pay for freeing our consciousness from an automatic reaction that in the long run will cost us far more energy.

S U T R A 2

स गुप्तिसमितिधर्मानुप्रेक्षापरीषहजयचारित्रैः ॥ २ ॥

Sa guptisamitidharmanuprekshaparisahajayacharitraih (2)

By

- conducting our activities consciously (*gupti*)
- being aware of our personal behavior (*samiti*)
- considering the needs of others (*dharma*)
- rethinking our own situation (*anupreksha*)
- persevering at the confrontation with obstacles (*parisah-jaya*)
- directing our actions towards reaching freedom from all karmic influences (*charitra*)

we stop the attachment of (new) karma. (2)

These six mechanisms are explained from sutra 4 onwards.

S U T R A 3

तपसा निर्जरा च ॥ ३ ॥

Tapasa nirjara cha (3)

The intentional confrontation (*tapas* - the burning) of karma dissolves existing karma and prevents the binding of new karma. (3)

The first two sutras describe how to prevent the acquisition of new karma. This is the first and most important step towards dissolving all karma. Yet this process leaves the dissolution of all our existing karma to its natural course. 'Natural course' means that our existing karma will dispel only at its time of natural manifestation - i.e. when the conditions for its activation arise on their own. Unfortunately much time may pass till this occurs. This process is characterized by

reaction and passive observation rather than dynamic action. Though it may also involve activity, we do not actively search out this manifestation, but passively wait for it to happen.

Yet we can accelerate this process. Consciously confronting karma means to actively create conditions that stimulate karma to manifest immediately. It is the intentional initiation of (agreeable as well as uncomfortable) situations that are emotionally charged. It is actively seeking the confrontation with conditions - persons and situations - that deeply influence our feeling of life. It is consciously creating conditions in which our long standing, yet unmanifested desires, dreams and ideas can become real.

All aspirations, desires and hopes dormant within us - which we forever keep postponing, and for whose realization we never mustered sufficient courage, - indicate that we carry an attachment (karma) within us that binds us to exactly these ideas. As long as we avoid creating a reality in which these dreams and desires can manifest, we will always feel an urge to express these - our very own - concepts of greatness and capability deep within us. Even if the urge appears small or seems to dissipate during the course of our life, this does not dissolve the original karmic bond. Unfulfilled emotional attachment is the main and foremost cause for further incarnations. We will always be drawn to further embodiments as long as unfulfilled aspirations still exist within us.

There is no reason why the conscious confrontation with karma should be negative or produce negative effects. We certainly can decide for ourselves whether we want to approach a situation with a negative or positive disposition. One example: We usually feel like under a heavy burden when we head for a clash with someone whose power we fear. But we may also and as easily interpret this confrontation as a decisive step towards our freedom and away from the dreaded influence. This positive attitude will even reinforce us with additional verve and energy.

There is no compulsion to focus only on the tensions that might accompany the confrontation. Any anxiety we may experience dur-

ing the dispute will only last for a short time while the outcome can easily open a new sovereign and more independent life for us.

And - no matter what the result of this conscious confrontation may be - we always profit from it. We will in any case experience new freedom because we now know how courageous we can be. We further realize that we are quite capable of carrying out what we set ourselves to do. The confrontation removed karma that previously blocked our expansion into new fields of life. And last not least we released the pressures that often accompany such unresolved issues.

The conscious confrontation with situations whose outcome is uncertain and unforeseeable often causes initial fear or apprehension. Yet this fear and disquiet is nothing other than one form of the very karma we consciously intend to dissolve. Overcoming these effects 'burns' karma (*tapas* literally: 'heating by fire'). It is an active process that requires courage, but is highly effective.

It makes no sense to be afraid of this 'initial fear' itself because this again binds exactly the same type of 'fear-' karma. As long as fear is a theme of our life - i.e. as long as this type of karma exists within us - we cannot escape it by trying to avoid fear. By avoiding situations that we believe will produce fear, we merely direct this negative emotion towards other situations, persons or objects. Only by consciously confronting fear - by realizing how irrelevant it is for our progress - will we remove its original cause.⁶

⁶ Once we consciously enter a situation of unknown outcome, our fear usually disappears without a trace: - we now are far too busy for feeling fear because our attention is fully occupied by handling the challenges of the new situation.

We experience this e.g. when we intend to speak publicly. The nearer the moment comes, the more we feel apprehensive and nervous (stage fright) - our heart is racing, our throat is choked etc. But once we are on stage, all this falls away and we speak with a self-assuredness that may surprise us. - By going on stage we removed the original cause of our apprehension: - our fear of the unknown. We confronted it and passed through it. Now the situation (us being on stage) is known, the cause for our fear exists no more and in consequence all apprehension disappears.

S U T R A 4

सम्यग्योगनिग्रहो गुप्तिः ॥ ४ ॥

Samyagyoganigraho gupti (4)

Consciously conducting our activities (*gupti*) means to intelligently direct our thoughts, speech and action. (4)

Intelligently directing thought, speech and action means to free our thinking, our communication and our action from strong negative emotions. When we act without anger, pride, the tendency to deceive others and greed, we absorb no further attachment (karma) of this kind into our interactive karmic field.

'Intelligent' means to understand why negative attitudes, emotions and activities will bind new karma.

To consciously direct our activities does not mean to perform purely repetitive activities as spiritual leaders often request (the repetition of mantras, 'routine' prayers or 'ritual' performances whose purpose and mechanism we do not understand etc). To progress towards the ultimate freedom always and only means to consciously advance to ever superior levels of understanding and experience. Mechanical and thoughtlessly performed actions may have a calming effect on our psyche because they bestow the feeling that we are 'doing something' for our spiritual advancement, but these types of actions will never cause real inner growth.

The habitual repetition of such mechanical activities merely indicates that we have not yet understood that freedom from all karmic processes will only happen when we direct the best of our ability and energy intelligently towards this goal. Without this fundamental insight, the performance of such repetitive actions will produce only arbitrary effects that are unable to sustain any permanent and stable progress towards freedom from all karmic influences.

S U T R A 5

ईर्याभाषैषणादाननिक्षेपोत्सर्गाः समितयः ॥ ५ ॥

Iryabhasaisanadananikshepotsargah samitayah (5)

To be aware of our personal behavior (*samiti*) means to perform the events of daily life - walking, speaking, eating, handling objects and depositing waste - in a conscious way. (5)

While the previous sutra encompasses all our activities, this sutra directs our focus specifically to the objects and events of our daily life.

We usually consider many everyday 'routine' events as trivial and perform them rather mechanically and perfunctory without paying much attention. Yet we also know that this 'routine-work' takes up a significant part of our time. If we rank this time as 'second-rate', we unnecessarily degrade a significant part of our life.

Every thoughtless action carries the danger of binding karma, even though we might not be aware of it. Here an example: We usually want to finish routine chores in the shortest possible time. Everything that gets in our way may easily anger or irritate us: A delay on our way to work, an imprecise answer (possibly triggered by an equally vague question of ours), a breakfast that falls short of our expectations, articles of daily use we cannot find at their correct places, an occupied toilet etc. - every one of these components of daily life may easily cause us to bind (new) negative karma if we react with negative emotions.

The main danger is the carelessness or inattention with which we handle this 'second-class' time. Since we regard recurring routine-work as unimportant, we usually also think that our reactions during this time will be similarly irrelevant and not be of much consequence. Yet whatever karma we bind during such 'irrelevant' periods - e.g. because of an angry, careless response - has exactly the same effect as karma bound in 'first-class' time. Our misconception that

'routine-time' should count less than 'first-class' time does not influence the karmic processes in the least - none of their karmic effects will be milder because of this attitude.

If we perform routine actions with the same precision and attention we usually devote to 'more important' events, we reduce the binding of new karmic matter significantly. Even if this additional alertness initially feels uncomfortable or even ridiculous, it will - after only a short time - produce an increased liveliness in all areas of life. Once we experience this, any previous distinction between first-class and second-class time becomes entirely irrelevant.

S U T R A 6

उत्तमक्षमामार्दवारजवशौचसत्यसंयमतपस्त्यागाकिञ्चन्य
ब्रह्मचर्याणि धर्मः ॥ ६ ॥

Uttamakshamamardavarjavashau chasatyasamyamatayapastyagakinchanya brahmacharyanidharmah (6)

Considering the needs of other beings (*dharma*) is

- forgiving (ourselves and others)
- giving up pride, disdain and arrogance
- being direct and clear in our communication
- being pure in our intentions
- being honest
- being alert (so we prevent injury to other beings)
- resolving problematic situations
- giving up activities (that others can perform better)
- keeping distance and
- to have the intention to grow. (6)

The purpose of our existence is to assist and help others (see Tattvarthasutra, chapter 5, sutra 21).⁷

Interaction with other beings is a fundamental characteristic of our life. Shaping this contact so that no new karma is bound is highly important for our progress towards the ultimate freedom. This sutra describes how to interact with other humans without attaching new karma to our interactive karmic field:

- **Forgiving (others and ourselves) any real or imagined injustices** or mistakes releases our attachment to past events that cannot be changed anyway. Forgiveness also stops emotions like revenge, jealousy etc. from binding new karma of the same type.
- **Giving up pride, disdain and arrogance** removes barriers between ourselves and others.

The viewpoints and opinions of others offer insight into wisdom and skills we could not (yet) gain ourselves.

Pride, disdain and arrogance reject the knowledge of others. Pride, disdain and arrogance are always caused by the fear that the viewpoints of others may endanger or violate the validity of our own position. Yet this kind of rejection is not based on better arguments, but solely on the projection of negative energy (aggression, unwillingness etc.). Pride, disdain and arrogance are always and only expressions of insecurity.

It is almost impossible to soften or change a position that is defended by pride and arrogance. Our basic unwillingness to consider other points of view removes us from the cooperation with other beings and thereby blocks all our further development. Giving up pride etc. prevents and removes this block.

⁷ The Sanskrit word *dharma* in the sutra indicates a far more comprehensive meaning than its common understanding. *dharma* is generally interpreted as 'duty', 'virtue' or 'moral law'. Yet these interpretations are far too narrow for the content of this sutra.

- **The directness and clarity** with which we communicate enables us to perceive the statements of others with the same clarity we send out. If we state our intentions clearly and without reservation, we prevent the acquisition of karma that obscures meaning and understanding. This enables us to recognize the essence of the statements of others, even if they are expressed in an unclear or deceptive manner.
- **The purity of our intentions** protects us from binding deluding karma. As long as we hide our intentions or act with secrecy, others will meet us with a similar attitude. Deluding karma blocks our clear perception of reality.
- **Honesty** - If practiced persistently honesty produces a power of character that motivates others to be truthful with us as well. Since honesty removes karma that causes delusion and misunderstanding, it automatically gives us access to true knowledge.
- **Alertness not to injure other beings** has the effect that the activities of others do not infringe upon our expressions of life. Awareness of the needs of other beings (human beings, animals and plants) and integrating these needs into our planning and action expands the scope of our own vision of this world.
- **Resolving problematic situations** - While sharing this world with other people, it is almost impossible to avoid differences in expression and needs. These differences may easily grow into unwieldy problems if they are not communicated in time. Not communicating in time causes unnecessary tensions that increase the longer we shy away from such confrontations.

Compensating for these tensions takes energy away from the realization of our own goals.

These tensions further significantly reduce our willingness to consider the viewpoints and motivations of others.

When we consciously confront such situations to dissolve tension we automatically free considerable energy for more produc-

tive use. We also prevent the binding of new karma that unresolved tensions might easily cause.

- **Giving up activities** that others can perform better or derive more joy from means to give up objects, power, influence etc.

Positions and objects we have outgrown easily become obstacles to our progress. Letting go of such (limiting) components opens our awareness for bigger tasks and widens our view for more advanced, more progressive experiences. It also gives others the opportunity to prove themselves at tasks we already completed.

- **Keeping distance** to the activities of others protects us from being drawn into situations and events that may make us stray from our own path.

This does not mean to keep away from all and any involvement with others. It means to keep our own sovereignty in the face of the activities of others.

- **The intention to grow** means to direct our life towards dynamic expansion. The momentum with which we pursue this objective motivates others to expand their own range of consciousness and experience as well.

S U T R A 7

अनित्याशरणसंसारैकत्वान्यत्वाशुच्यास्रवसंवरनिर्जरालोक
बोधिदुर्लभधर्मस्वाख्यातत्त्वानुचिन्तनमनुप्रेक्षाः ॥ ७ ॥

*Anityasharanasamsaraikatvanyatvashuchyasravasamvaranirjara
lokabodhidurlabhadharmasvakhyatattvanuchintanamanuprekshah
(7)*

Reflecting on the following perspectives (*anupreksa*) creates an alternative (new) outlook on our life:

- Everything we confront in this world is transitory and subject to change.
- As long as we focus on limiting themes of life, we attract restrictions (karma) and experience them.
- The sequence of bodily existences we presently experience significantly restricts our potential abilities.
- Only we cause all the situations and actions we experience.
- Our consciousness is fundamentally different than the non-living elements (matter, time, space etc.) that enable us to experience activity (karma) within this universe.
- Our present state of incarnation inhibits the perception of our real, majestic self.
- Our longing for limiting activities (karma) is the main cause for our bodily existence.
- We can stop this longing (for new karma).
- We can dissolve our prejudices, strong negative emotions, laziness, intolerance etc. (our existing karma).
- What do we expect of this universe?
- What is the purpose of reality - and do we live up to our part in it?
- How often do we gain access to effective methods that free us from all karmic restrictions? (7)

Fundamentally rethinking our own situation has become almost unfashionable in our times. The modern media highly effectively direct our attention towards the accumulation of material objects and the experience of fun. In consequence we are unaccustomed to reflect themes beyond the physical level or to ask why we act like this. Once

our fascination with material objects lessens and we look for a different orientation, we often do not know where to start searching.

The Tattvarthasutra proposes twelve themes. Rethinking our life along these perspectives brings clarity about our own position, our goals in life and the roads leading there.

S U T R A 8

मार्गाच्यवननिर्जरार्थं परिषोढव्याः परिषहाः ॥ ८ ॥

Margachyavananirjarartham parisodhavyah parisahah (8)

While practicing the activities and attitudes mentioned in the preceding sutras, obstacles may arise that impede our consequent pursuit of this path. These obstacles can be neutralized by patience and perseverance (*parisah-jaya*). (8)

The next sutra lists the obstacles in detail.

S U T R A 9

क्षुत्पिपासाशीतोष्णदंशमशकनागन्यारति स्त्रीचर्यानिषद्याशय्या-क्रोशवधया
चना ऽलाभरोगतृणस्पृशमलसत्कारपुरस्कारप्रज्ञा ज्ञानाऽदर्शनानि ॥ ९ ॥

*Kshutpipasashitosnadamshamashakanagnyaratistricharyanisadya
shayyakroshavadhayachana(a)labharogatrnasparshamala-
satkarapuraskaraprajna jnanadarshanani (9)*

22 obstacles may arise while we strive for freedom from all karmic limitations:

- hunger
- thirst
- coldness

- heat
- annoyance by insects
- defenselessness
- ennui, boredom, discontent, lethargy, laziness, indifference
- distraction
- 'homelessness' (the craving for - material and emotional - stability)
- 'sitting' (on the intention to get going without ever beginning to move)
- 'sleeping' (the fading of our intention to grow)
- insults, slander, abuse
- obstruction (of our progress by external factors)
- unwillingness to accept necessary help from others or to ask for support (overcoming our pride)
- failure in the attempt to obtain help
- illness
- pain
- lack of sincerity (the spoiling of our intentions)
- praise (by someone whose admiration we disprove) or irreverence (by someone whose opinion we value)
- vanity (because of our great learning)
- lack of knowledge, ignorance, (the feeling that we never have sufficient knowledge to successfully pursue freedom from all karmic limitations)
- disappointment in the effectiveness of our knowledge (because we fail to gain supernatural powers). (9)

These obstacles may arise once we direct our life towards controlling and dissolving karmic processes. Yet they do not need to occur; they are listed here only to alert us so they may not divert us from our path.

We can overcome all these obstacles by patience and perseverance. They fall off automatically as soon as the karmas that caused them are dissolved. Since none of the attitudes and activities mentioned in this chapter bind new karma, the end of the listed difficulties is pre-ordained. Patience at the occurrence of obstacles means to wait for their foreseeable dispersal if they can't be dissolved actively (e.g. by a change of attitude etc.).

Overcoming the obstacles by itself does not generate progress on the path to freedom from all karmic limitations. Though this may often be accomplished by commendable efforts, all progress on the path to ultimate freedom is only characterized by the experience of superior levels of consciousness and not by an ability to endure bodily and emotional troubles. It is only important to overcome obstacles once they arise, so that our expansion-process can accelerate further.

Willingly creating these obstacles does not bring about any progress towards the ultimate freedom. It only indicates a flawed understanding of *tapas* - the conscious confrontation of karma (see sutra 3).

S U T R A 10

सूक्ष्मसाम्परायच्छद्मस्थवीतरागयोश्चतुर्दश ॥ १० ॥

Sukshmasamparayachchhadmasthavitaragayoshchaturdasha (10)

In the tenth stage of development (*suksma sampararaya*) only 14 obstacles may occur. (10)

This is hunger, thirst, coldness, heat, annoyance by insects, the craving for stability (homelessness), the fading of our intention to grow, disappointment in the effectiveness of our knowledge, obstruction of the path by external factors, failure in the attempt to obtain help, illness, pain, lack of sincerity and ignorance. All obstacles produced by deluding karmas fall away at this stage.

S U T R A 11

एकादश जिने ॥ ११ ॥

Ekadasha jine (11)

In the thirteenth stage of development (*sayogakevali*) 11 obstacles may occur. (11)

In the thirteenth stage of development only karmas that determine our feeling of life may occur. This is: hunger, thirst, coldness, heat, annoyance by insects, the craving for stability (homelessness), the fading of our intention to grow, obstruction of the path by external factors, illness, pain and lack of sincerity.

S U T R A 12

बादरसाम्पराये सर्वे ॥ १२ ॥

Badarasamparaye sarve (12)

As long as we experience the more intense forms of anger, pride, deceit and greed, all obstacles may occur. (12)

The obstacles mentioned above are no special barriers that were erected for mystic purposes. They do not occur to test our sincerity or to purify us. Obstacles are nothing other than the manifestation of karmas, i.e. our own emotional - positive or negative - attachment to limiting themes of life. They are activated on our path to freedom from all karmic limitations in the same manner as in a life not directed towards this goal. It is therefore entirely beside the point to attribute them with a special esoteric meaning.

The next four sutras describe what causes these obstacles.

S U T R A 13

ज्ञानावरणे प्रज्ञाज्ञाने ॥ १३ ॥

Jnanavarane prajnajnane (13)

- Vanity because of our own great learning as well as
- ignorance

are both manifestations of karma that blocks or restricts our access to knowledge. (13)

Learning too many details without integrating them into one living experience is as much a manifestation of ignorance as sheer lack of knowledge: Both types of ignorance are variations of karma that blocks or restricts our access to knowledge.

The acquisition of formal knowledge to impress others with our high degree of learning is useless.

When we actively use knowledge to expand our range of experience, it automatically becomes a natural part of our life. As we employ it to evaluate and change our attitudes and activities, knowledge transforms into insight that soon ceases to be new or special and usually also does not give cause for vanity or arrogance.

Without this natural integration knowledge remains a foreign and separate component to us. Persons thirsting for high social status tend to display this formal, dead knowledge with vanity and in arrogant disdain for the 'less learned'. Convinced of their 'superiority' they like to define 'knowledge' as the stiff data they accumulated. Their fellow people easily recognize the vanity for what it is - a flaw of personality, - but unfortunately they also tend to equate 'knowledge' with the stagnancy and boredom these people emanate. And this often kills their natural enthusiasm and thirst for growth.

Any use of 'learning' as a tool of power and attitudes of vanity or pride in it only document a total misunderstanding of the real function of knowledge.

Ignorance also originates in flawed understanding. It manifests as the feeling that we may never have sufficient knowledge to successfully pursue freedom from all karmic limitations.

Yet this feeling of inadequacy is only a manifestation of karma which obscures our insight that we always carry the totality of all knowledge within us - irrespective of who and where we are. That we do not perceive it in its entirety is due to the karmas (preconceptions) that block parts of this knowledge. Once these karmas are removed, the blocked part becomes accessible and any event at any location can make us aware of the additional knowledge.

At any time and at any place we are surrounded by an abundance of material and psychic components that stimulate us to become more conscious of the complete knowledge dormant within us.

One example: Gravity did exist at all times, but the falling of an apple - an entirely trivial event - triggered Issac Newton's sudden understanding of its underlying force. In exactly the same way the most trivial events of our life offer us an abundance of opportunities to extend our understanding to deeper, more comprehensive levels.

We do not have to visit special locations or persons to 'receive' knowledge or to wait till we possess 'better' insight. The path to freedom from all karmic limitations is wide open for everyone at any place and at all times. Precise knowledge about the path is acquired by progressing on the path itself and not by any kind of preliminary training that only moves our start further and further into the future and carries the danger of losing ourselves in an endless and entirely superfluous preparation.

S U T R A 14

दर्शनमोहान्तराययोरदर्शनालाभौ ॥ १४ ॥

Darshanamohantarayayoradarshanalabhau (14)

Disappointment in the effectiveness of our knowledge and lack of support are manifestations of karmas that prevent insight and understanding and cause obstruction in life. (14)

S U T R A 15

चारित्रमोहे नाग्न्यारतिस्त्रीनिषद्याक्रोशयाचनासत्कारपुरस्काराः
॥ १५ ॥

Charitramohe nagnyaratistrinisadyakroshayachanasatkarapuraskarah (15)

Defenselessness, ennui, distraction, 'sitting' on the intention to grow, insult, the unwillingness to accept help and vanity because of great learning are manifestations of karma that obstructs right action. (15)

S U T R A 16

वेदनीये शेषाः ॥ १६ ॥

Vedaniye shesah (16)

All other obstacles are manifestations of karma that determines our feeling of life. (16)

This is hunger, thirst, coldness, heat, annoyance by insects, the craving for stability, the fading of our intention to grow, illness, pain and lack of sincerity.

S U T R A 17

एकादयो भाज्या युगपदेकस्मिन्नेकोनविंशतिः ॥ १७ ॥

Ekadayo bhajya yugapadekasminnekonavimshatih (17)

A maximum of 19 obstacles can occur simultaneously. (17)

Below the tenth stage of development only a total of 19 obstacles may occur simultaneously because some obstacles exclude the appearance of others, - i.e. heat and coldness, the craving for stability (homelessness) and the fading of our intention to grow, vanity because of our great learning and ignorance.

S U T R A 18

सामायिकच्छेदोपस्थापनापरिहारविशुद्धिसूक्ष्म साम्पराय-
यथाख्यातमिति चारित्रम् ॥ १८ ॥

*Samayikachchhedopasthapanapariharavishuddhisukshma sam-
parayayathakhyatamiti charitram (18)*

Directing our activities (*charitra*) towards freedom from all karmic limitations means:

- equanimity
 - restoring equanimity after we lost it
 - completing all unfinished activities
 - actively orienting our life towards expansion
 - implementing the activities and attitudes listed in this chapter.
- (18)

Equanimity means not to become unbalanced at the occurrence of either negative or positive events.

Our own emotional attachment to particular themes of life is the prime cause for the manifestation of inner and outer events. Once we begin to really understand this, we acquire a sovereign attitude that prevents emotional reactions - which these events occasionally trigger within us - from fundamentally disturbing our inner balance.

Once we understand the foolishness of making unpleasant situations more uncomfortable by creating further negative emotions, we have progressed considerably towards controlling our karmic environment.

Restoring equanimity after we lost it - As long as we are subject to karmic mechanisms, all kinds of external or internal events may trigger strong passionate reactions within us. These intense emotions can easily overshadow our awareness so completely that we lose our ability to discriminate and decide reasonably.

An effort to restore our equanimity becomes only possible when our awareness is not totally dominated by the karmic manifestation any more. At this point in time we usually see the absurdity of our reaction, but are still under the sway of strong (negative) emotions (e.g. jealousy) that impede part of our consciousness. If at this time we make a conscious effort to regain our equanimity - even though it may hurt our pride etc. - we build up a dynamic momentum that will eventually enable us to control any karmic manifestation.

Striving for equanimity and its restoration does not mean to constantly observe and discipline all our life and emotions. Apart from the fact that this is impossible - especially during the onset of strong karmic domination - it would diminish our creativity and spontaneity so thoroughly that all new experiences and any expansion of consciousness would be blocked.

Regaining equanimity means to overcome our own pride, anger, irritation etc. at the manifestation of karma. It means to consciously decide not to prolong negative emotions. It means to consciously de-

cide for a positive path that leads towards more understanding. This process can be trained and will grow with practice.

Completing all unfinished activities frees our mind and emotion from open issues that 'are a load on our soul'.

Few people are aware how much energy they waste to control their sheer mountain of unfinished business. The very objects of daily life constantly direct our attention towards these matters: the telephone reminds us of things we should have talked over with someone long ago; our untidy desk tells us that important papers are about to drown in a heap of junk mail; the burned-out light-bulb warns us that access to the cellar has become a hazardous undertaking; - the list could easily continue.

Compensating for all this unfinished business takes far more energy than its completion would require. Concluding these issues often feels like a considerable liberation. When mind, memory and emotions are free from these matters, they become open for far more significant issues.

Actively orienting our life towards expansion means to direct attention and action towards transcending our limits and boundaries.

The manifestation of karma often tires us bodily and emotionally. This may cause a profound longing for inner peace and equanimity. When - at times of less intense karmic activity - a (temporary) emotional equanimity arises, we usually try to hold onto this state⁸. Unfortunately this easily leads to a type of stagnancy where life becomes reduced to habit and anything new that may imperil this momentary stability is rejected.

⁸ Periods of rest and recuperation will happen automatically and without our prompting since they are necessary for reflecting and condensing our experiences. As we sleep and dream periodically to regenerate our mind and body, so we also experience regular times where our karmic manifestations are less intense. But as with sleep and dream it is impossible to willingly prolong these times of recuperation.

Yet temporary equanimity does not remove the real reason for exhaustion and depression. They only disappear completely when the respective karmas are dissolved. Therefore any attempt to hold onto this state is doomed from the beginning.

If we orient our life towards the expansion of our limits, we automatically prevent this type of stagnation. But this means to intentionally break up all situations that present us with always the same, familiar events which long ceased to give us new insights and understanding. It means to break out of stagnant circumstances we only sustain because of our desire for comfort. It means to transform new insights into action and to explore paths whose course and final destination is open.

Certainly - this path takes effort, but this is only a small price to pay for the freedom from karmic restraints and the unfolding of new stages of life that bring us closer to realize the immense potential deep within us.

Implementing the activities and attitudes listed in this chapter means:

- to prevent the binding of new karma
- to actively dissolve karmic bonds that already exist
- to conduct our activities consciously
- to be aware of our personal behavior
- to heed the needs of other beings
- to rethink our own situation
- to persevere at the confrontation with obstacles
- to direct our actions towards freedom from all karmic limitations (*charitra*).

* * *

The mechanisms and recommendations mentioned in this book are no mystic techniques. They are simple and easily applied in daily life.

Yet they lead to spiritual experiences and into dimensions of consciousness that goes far beyond anything we ever experience or even imagine while in the first stage of development (*mithyaktva gunasthana*). This expansion arises as soon as we remove the obstructions that hold it back. Once the obstacles are gone, the surging awareness, the bold expansion and the brilliant clarity that characterize all higher stages of development will unfold automatically. It is a path that is open to everyone at all times.

TEXT OF THE SUTRAS

ATTRACTION TO KARMA

(Chapter 6 of the Tattvarthasutra)

- (1) With the activities of our body, speech and mind we attract karma to our consciousness.
- (2) This attraction causes our consciousness and karma to interact (*asrava*).
- (3) We experience two modes of karma:
 - positive karma (*punya*) - manifests as a subjectively agreeable feeling of life (positive experiences) and ideally will further our inner growth. It is caused by activities we generally regard as positive ('good', 'virtuous').
 - negative karma (*paapa*) - manifests as a subjectively disagreeable feeling of life (negative experiences) and obstructs our inner growth. It is caused by activities we generally regard as negative ('bad', 'evil').
- (4) Karma affects us in two intensities:
 - actions caused or influenced by negative passionate emotions (*samparayika*) prolong the cycle of our incarnations
 - actions not influenced by these negative emotions (*iryapatha*) have only transient, short-lived karmic effects.

- (5) With our five senses, four negative passionate emotions, indifference to the Five Freedoms and by 25 types of activities we attract karma that prolongs our cycle of incarnations (*samparayika*).
- (6) Two persons may perform the same physical action, but experience different karmic effects.

These differences are caused

- by the intensity with which each of them desired or planned the act
 - whether they performed the action with or without intention (e. g. through negligence etc.)
 - whether they initiated the action or were prompted to act by outside influences (the origin - *adhikarana*)
 - by the amount of energy and the ability each of them committed to the act.
- (7) How karma manifests depends on whether the impulse for that activity
- originated within our consciousness (*jiva*) or
 - was presented by our environment (by the *ajiva*-elements outside our consciousness).
- (8) The karmic effects of actions originating within our consciousness are shaped by the following factors:

Whether we

- only decide to act
- actually prepare for the action (e.g. by collecting materials etc.)
or
- physically begin with the action.

Whether

- we ourselves carry out the act
- others carry out the act as a result of our instigation or

- we only silently assent to the act (without taking any further part in it).

The instrument of activity through which we act (body, speech or mind) and whether we are motivated by anger, pride, the intention to deceive others or greed (the four negative passionate emotions) further affect the karmic consequences.

- (9) When our environment (the *ajiva*-elements) prompts us to act, we shape these karmic effects by
- the way we create actions, objects, thoughts etc.
 - the way we place objects
 - the way we combine objects and
 - the means we choose for carrying out an action.
- (10) - Rejecting, consciously ignoring or a negative attitude towards knowledge
- withholding knowledge
 - refusing to impart knowledge out of envy or jealousy
 - obstructing the process of gaining knowledge
 - denying truth proclaimed by others although we recognize it as truth and
 - discrediting truth although we recognize it as such
- attracts karma that prevents our intuition from orienting towards growth (*samyag darshana*). It also obstructs access to knowledge that advances our development (*samyag jnana*).
- (11) - Enjoying and prolonging pain, painful emotions or suffering
- enjoying and prolonging feelings of grief, sadness, remorse, shame and commiseration
 - intentionally depriving others of their vitality and
 - lamenting openly to attract compassion and attention
- attracts karma that produces a negative (painful) feeling of life - irrespective if we induce this in ourselves or in others.

- (12) - Compassion for all living beings
- compassion for all who actively realize the Five Freedoms
 - charity based on compassion
 - self-control, even if it is not yet perfect
 - equanimity at the manifestation of positive and negative karmas
 - spiritual efforts, even if based on ineffective knowledge
 - meditation and intelligent behavior while we strive for freedom from all karmic limitations
 - forgiveness (our own and others' mistakes)
 - equanimity and
 - freedom from greed (freedom from the compulsion to accumulate more and more possessions)

attracts karma that produces a positive (happy) feeling of life.

- (13) Doubt in (or a negative attitude towards)
- the omniscient (*kevali*)
 - the knowledge contained in the scriptures (*shruti*)
 - the fellowship of seekers for the ultimate freedom (*sangha*)
 - the path to freedom from all karmic limitations (*dharma*) and
 - the inhabitants of higher (celestial) regions (*devas*)

attracts karma that obstructs insight in and understanding of reality.

- (14) Intense negative emotions - anger, pride, the intention to deceive others and greed - prevent us to pursue activities that further inner growth.

- (15) Excessive infliction of pain and excessive attachment to this world attracts karma that leads to incarnations in 'infernal' regions.

- (16) Deceiving and misleading others attracts karma that leads to birth(s) in the world of animals and plants.
- (17) Activities with mild attachment and moderate possessions attract karma that leads to incarnation(s) in human form.
- (18) An attitude of natural mildness and modesty also leads to birth(s) in human form.
- (19) Life that focuses exclusively on pleasures and enjoyment may cause incarnation(s) in any of the four forms.
- (20) - Self-control with slight attachment
- partial realization of the Five Freedoms
- equanimity at the spontaneous manifestation of karma
- spiritual efforts, even if not based on correct understanding
attracts karma that leads to birth(s) in 'heavenly' regions.
- (21) (In the inhabitants of 'heavenly' regions) orientation towards growth (*samyag darshana*) also attracts karma.
- (22) Crooked and deceitful thoughts, words and actions attract karma that leads to the manifestation of an ugly, disagreeable body.
- (23) The opposite (i.e. straightforward, honest thoughts, words and actions) attracts karma that leads to the manifestation of a pleasant, agreeable body.

(24) Sixteen types of actions and attitudes attract karma that manifests the body of a *tirthankara* (a perfect teacher who teaches from the state of omniscience):

- 1 - actively orienting towards growth (*samyag darshana*)
- 2 - appreciation for the means by which we reach freedom from all karmic limitations and all who strive towards this goal
- 3 - perfect realization of the Five Freedoms
- 4 - ceaseless pursuit of all knowledge that leads to freedom from all karmic limitations
- 5 - constant awareness of the temporary and limiting nature of the material form our consciousness is subjected to during its incarnations
- 6 - charity (dissolving the fear of others and supporting those striving for the ultimate freedom by supplying knowledge and food)
- 7 - overcoming the hardships we may confront while striving for freedom from all karmic limitations
- 8 - protecting others and removing obstacles on their path to freedom from all karmic limitations
- 9 - supporting others on their path to ultimate freedom by paying attention to their special needs (e.g. by preparing especially pure food etc.)
- 10 - respect and reverence for the omniscient
- 11 - respect and reverence for those who publicly represent and propagate freedom from all karmic limitations
- 12 - respect and reverence for those who teach freedom from all karmic limitations
- 13 - respect for the knowledge contained in the scriptures
- 14 - teaching others how to gain freedom from all karmic limitations

15 - performing six daily practices

16 - deep compassion and understanding for all who strive for the ultimate freedom.

(25) - Speaking ill of others

- praising ourselves
- concealing good qualities and achievements of others
- praising qualities we do not possess

attracts karma that leads to a low, inferior status in life.

(26) Its opposite (i.e.

- praising others
- modesty
- proclaiming the good qualities and achievements of others
- refraining from praising our own qualities and achievements
- respect for those further advanced towards freedom from all karmic limitations
- freedom from pride in our own achievements

attracts karma that leads to a high, honored status in life.

(27) Obstructing and disturbing others

- in their exercise of charity
- in earning their livelihood
- in their pleasures in consuming food etc.
- in their enjoyment of comfort
- in the use of their vitality and power

attracts karma that leads to obstructions in our life.

THE NATURE OF KARMIC BONDS

(Chapter 8 of the Tattvarthasutra)

- (1) Five factors attach karmic mechanisms to our consciousness:
 - misunderstanding how this world really functions (*mithyadarsana*)
 - our tendency to remain in this state of delusion, error and flawed concepts (though opportunities arise to end this state) (*avirati*)
 - carelessness in our thinking, speech and action (*pramada*)
 - unchecked negative emotions (*ksaya*)
 - the activities of our body, speech and mind (*yoga*).
- (2) When we give in to negative emotions like anger, pride, the intention to deceive others and greed, we attract subtle matter that attaches karmic mechanisms to our consciousness. This process causes 'karmic bonds' (*bandha*).
- (3) How we experience karmic matter is determined by
 - the area of life karma influences when it activates (also called the 'nature' or 'type' of karma)

- for how long karmic molecules stay bound to our interactive karmic field (the duration)
- the intensity with which karma manifests when it activates and
- how many karmic molecules are stored in our interactive karmic field.

(4) Karma affects eight areas of life. It therefore is classified into eight main groups:

- 1 - karma that obstructs access to the five channels of knowledge (*jnana-varana*)
- 2 - karma that prevents insight and understanding (*darshana-varana*)
- 3 - karma that determines our feeling of life (*vedaniya*)
- 4 - karma that causes delusion (*mohaniya*)
- 5 - karma that determines the duration and place of future embodiment(s) (*ayu*)
- 6 - karma that determines form and features of our body (*nama*)
- 7 - karma that determines our status in our social environment (*gotra*)
- 8 - karma that causes obstruction in life (*antaraya*).

(5) Each of the eight main groups of karma is subdivided into more differentiated types:

- 1 - karma that obstructs access to the five channels of knowledge (*jnana-varana*) subdivides into 5 types
- 2 - karma that prevents insight and understanding (*darshana-varana*) subdivides into 9 types
- 3 - karma that determines our feeling of life (*vedaniya*) subdivides into 2 types

- 4 - karma that causes delusion (*mohaniya*) subdivides into 28 types
 - 5 - karma that determines the duration and place of future embodiment(s) (*ayu*) subdivides into 4 types
 - 6 - karma that determines form and features of our body (*nama*) subdivides into 42 types
 - 7 - karma that determines our status in our social environment (*gotra*) subdivides into 2 types
 - 8 - karma that causes obstruction in life (*antaraya*) subdivides into 5 types.
- (6) Karma that obstructs access to the five channels of knowledge (*jnana-varana*) impedes
- our sensory perception (*mati*)
 - our ability to gain knowledge from external sources (*shruti*)
 - our extra-sensory perception (clairvoyance, telepathy) (*avadhi*)
 - our direct perception of the consciousness of others (*manah paryaya*)
 - omniscience (*kevali jnana*).
- (7) Karma that prevents insight and understanding (*darshana-varana*) obstructs
- cognition through visual perception (*chaksu*)
 - cognition through the other sense-organs (*achaksu*)
 - cognition through clairvoyance and telepathy (*avadhi*)
 - cognition through omniscience (*kevali jnana*).
- It further manifests
- sleep (*nidra*)
 - deep sleep (*nidranidra*)
 - tiredness (*prachala*)

- heavy fatigue (sleeping while sitting) (*prachalaprachala*)
 - somnambulism (*styangriddhi*).
- (8) Karma that determines our feeling of life (*vedaniya*) manifests pleasant and unpleasant feelings.
- (9) Karma that causes delusion (*mohaniya*) obstructs
- 1 - our intuitive orientation towards growth (*samyag darshana*) by manifesting
 - confusion, error and misunderstanding
 - mixed misunderstanding and true comprehension of the world's mechanisms
 - (slight) clouding of true comprehension by wrong interpretation and error
 - 2 - our focus on action that leads towards ultimate freedom (*moksa*) by manifesting
 - passionate negative emotions like anger, pride, the intention to deceive others and greed, which appear in four intensities and
 - nine impeding tendencies:
 - excessive laughter
 - overindulgence
 - boredom, dissatisfaction, exhaustion
 - worry
 - fear and insecurity
 - disgust, indignation, aversion
 - compulsion to search for (new) female sexual partners
 - compulsion to search for (new) male sexual partners
 - compulsion to search for (new) sexual partners of both genders.

- (10) Karma that determines the duration and place of future embodiment(s) (*ayu*) causes us to manifest in four spheres of existence:
- as *naraka* - as a being residing in regions of infernal character
 - as *deva* - as a being residing in regions of celestial character
 - as *human being* and
 - as animal or plant.
- (11) Karma that determines the form and features of our body (*nama*), manifests the following characteristics:
- the condition of our existence (*gati*)
 - the class (the number of senses of our body) (*jati*)
 - the levels of functions of our body (*sharira*)
 - the development and the abilities of the limbs of our respective bodies (*angopanga*)
 - the degree of coordination between our different levels of functions (*bandhana*)
 - the degree of co-ordination between consciousness and our respective bodies (*sanghata*)
 - the shape of our body (*samsthana*)
 - the construction and agility of our joints (*samhanana*)
 - the sensation when touching our body (*sparsha*)
 - the taste of our body (*rasa*)
 - the smell of our body (*gandha*)
 - the color of our body (*varna*)
 - the ability to retain our bodily form from one incarnation to the next (*anupurvi*)
 - the maneuverability (the heaviness) of our body in relation to its environment (*agurulaghu*)
 - the cause of death by internal factors (*upagatha*)
 - the cause of death by external factors (*paragatha*)

- the heat our body radiates (*atapa*)
- the light our body radiates (*udyota*)
- our ability to breathe (*uchchhvaṣa*)
- the way our body moves through space (*viḥayogati*)
- the number of inhabitants in our body (*pratyekasharira*)
- our bodily mobility (*trasa*)
- our attractiveness to other beings (*subhaga*)
- the attractiveness of our voice (*susvara*)
- the beauty of our body (*shubha*)
- the grace of our body (*shuksma*)
- the potential to fully develop all features of our body (*paryapti*)
- the degree of circulation (the exchange of the material elements of our body) (*sthira*)
- the radiation of our personality (*adeya*)
- our potential to achieve fame (and the type of fame) (*ya-shakirti*)
- the status of a *tirthankara* (i.e. a teacher who teaches from the state of omniscience).

(12) Karma that determines the status we carry in our social environment (*gotra*) manifests

- our birth in a (family-) environment with high status
- our birth in a (family-) environment with low status.

(13) Karma that causes obstruction in life (*antaraya*), interferes with our ability

- to give recognition and gifts (*dana*)
- to acquire earnings, gains and profit (*labh*)
- to enjoy consumable things (*bhoga*)

- to enjoy things that bring happiness but are not consumed (*upabhoga*)
- to unfold and realize our capacities, power and vitality.

(14) The first three types of karma, i.e.

- karma that obstructs access to the five channels of knowledge (*jnana-varana*)
- karma that prevents insight and understanding (*darshana-varana*) and
- karma that determines our feeling of life (*vedaniya*)

may remain bound to us for a maximum of ca. 3000 years (30 *sagaropamas*).

(15) Karma that causes delusion (*mohaniya*) can remain bound to us for a maximum of ca. 7000 years (70 *sagaropamas*).

(16) - Karma that determines form and features of our body (*nama*) and

- Karma that determines the status we carry in our social environment (*gotra*)

can remain bound to us for a maximum of ca. 2000 years (20 *sagaropamas*).

(17) Karma that determines the duration and place of our future embodiment(s) (*ayu*) can remain bound to us for a maximum of ca. 3300 years (33 *sagaropamas*).

(18) Karma that determines our feeling of life (*vedaniya*) will remain bound to us for a minimum of 9 hours and 36 minutes (12 *muhurtas*).

- (19) - Karma that determines form and features of our body (*nama*) and
 - Karma that determines the status we carry in our social environment (*gotra*)
 will remain bound to us for a minimum of 6 hours and 48 minutes (8 *muhurtas*).

- (20) All other types of karma, i.e.
 - karma that obstructs access to the five channels of knowledge (*jnana-varana*)
 - karma that prevents insight and understanding (*darshana-varana*)
 - karma that causes delusion (*mohaniya*)
 - karma that determines the duration and place of our future embodiment(s) (*ayu*) and
 - karma that causes obstruction in life (*antaraya*)
 will remain bound to us from a minimum of ca. 1 second (one *avali*) to ca. 48 minutes (one *muhurta*).

- (21) Karma becomes active when supportive conditions arise.
 (22) The character and intensity of a karmic manifestation always mirrors the type of activity that caused its binding.
 (23) After its activation our bond to the activated karma is dissolved (*nirjara*).
 (24) At all times an infinite number of karmic molecules co-exists with our body.

When we act, a number of these karmic molecules attaches to our interactive karmic field. The nature and intensity of our activity determines how many karmic molecules will attach. This process cannot be perceived directly by our senses.

- (25) The agreeable variations of karma that determine
- our feeling of life (*vedaniya*)
 - the duration and place of our (future) embodiment(s) (*ayu*)
 - the form and features of our body (*nama*)
 - what status we carry in our social environment (*gotra*)
- are called positive karma (*punya*).
- (26) All other types of karma are negative karma (*paapa*).

HOW TO DISSOLVE KARMA

(Chapter 9 of the Tattvarthasutra)

- (1) By blocking our initial attraction to karma, we prevent new karmic matter from attaching to our consciousness.
- (2) By
 - conducting our activities consciously (*gupti*)
 - being aware of our personal behavior (*samiti*)
 - considering the needs of others (*dharma*)
 - rethinking our own situation (*anupreksha*)
 - persevering at the confrontation with obstacles (*parisah-jaya*)
 - directing our actions towards reaching freedom from all karmic limitations (*charitra*)
 we stop the attachment of (new) karma.
- (3) The intentional confrontation (*tapas* - the burning) of karma dissolves existing karma and prevents the binding of new karma.
- (4) Consciously conducting our activities (*gupti*) means to intelligently direct our thoughts, speech and action.

- (5) To be aware of our personal behavior (*samiti*) means to perform the events of daily life - walking, speaking, eating, handling objects and depositing waste - in a conscious way.
- (6) Considering the needs of other beings (*dharma*) is
- forgiving (ourselves and others)
 - giving up pride, disdain and arrogance
 - being direct and clear in our communication
 - being pure in our intentions
 - being honest
 - being alert (so we prevent injury to other beings)
 - resolving problematic situations
 - giving up activities (that others can perform better)
 - keeping distance and
 - to have the intention to grow.
- (7) Reflecting on the following perspectives (*anupreksa*) creates an alternative (new) outlook on our life:
- Everything we confront in this world is transitory and subject to change.
 - As long as we focus on limiting themes of life, we attract restrictions (karma) and experience them.
 - The sequence of bodily existences we presently experience significantly restricts our potential abilities.
 - Only we cause all the situations and actions we experience.
 - Our consciousness is fundamentally different than the non-living elements (matter, time, space etc.) that enable us to experience activity (karma) within this universe.
 - Our present state of incarnation inhibits the perception of our real, majestic self.
 - Our longing for limiting activities (karma) is the main cause for our bodily existence.

- We can stop this longing (for new karma).
- We can dissolve our prejudices, strong negative emotions, laziness, intolerance etc. (our existing karma).
- What do we expect of this universe?
- What is the purpose of reality - and do we live up to our part in it?
- How often do we gain access to effective methods that free us from all karmic restrictions?

(8) While practicing the activities and attitudes mentioned in the preceding sutras, obstacles may arise that impede our consequent pursuit of this path. These obstacles can be neutralized by patience and perseverance (*parisah-jaya*).

(9) 22 obstacles may arise while we strive for freedom from all karmic limitations:

- hunger
- thirst
- coldness
- heat
- annoyance by insects
- defenselessness
- ennui, boredom, discontent, lethargy, laziness, indifference
- distraction
- 'homelessness' (the craving for - material and emotional - stability)
- 'sitting' (on the intention to get going without ever beginning to move)
- 'sleeping' (the fading of our intention to grow)
- insults, slander, abuse
- obstruction (of our progress by external factors)

- unwillingness to accept necessary help from others or to ask for support (overcoming our pride)
- failure in the attempt to obtain help
- illness
- pain
- lack of sincerity (the spoiling of our intentions)
- praise (by someone whose admiration we disprove) or irreverence (by someone whose opinion we value)
- vanity (because of our great learning)
- lack of knowledge, ignorance (the feeling that we never have sufficient knowledge for a successful pursuit of our path to liberation)
- disappointment at the effectiveness of our knowledge (because we fail to gain supernatural powers).

- (10) In the tenth stage of development (*sukṣma sampararaya*) only 14 obstacles may occur.
- (11) In the thirteenth stage of development (*sayogakevali*) 11 obstacles may occur.
- (12) As long as we experience the more intense forms of anger, pride, deceit and greed, all obstacles may occur.
- (13) - Vanity because of our own great learning as well as
- ignorance
are both manifestations of karma that blocks or restricts our access to knowledge.
- (14) Disappointment at the effectiveness of our knowledge and lack of support are manifestations of karmas that prevent insight and understanding and cause obstruction in life.

- (15) Defenselessness, ennui, distraction, 'sitting' on the intention to grow, insult, the unwillingness to accept help and vanity because of great learning are manifestations of karma that obstructs right action.
- (16) All other obstacles are manifestations of karma that determines our feeling of life.
- (17) A maximum of 19 obstacles can occur simultaneously.
- (18) Directing our activities (*charitra*) towards liberation means:
- equanimity
 - restoring equanimity after we lost it
 - completing all unfinished activities
 - actively orienting our life towards expansion
 - implementing the activities and attitudes listed in this chapter.

APPLICATION

14 STAGES OF DEVELOPMENT

The Tattvarthasutra describes 14 stages (*gunasthanas*) human beings experience while striving for freedom from all karmic limitations. Each stage is characterized by the type of karma manifesting therein (what kind of emotions we feel, how intense they are and what types of action we experience as a result), the time we stay in one particular stage, the direction in which we pass through and how much our personal development is stimulated. Because of these differing factors each stage has a unique feeling and significance.

Our consciousness can be likened to a multi-story palace. The higher the floor, the more we see of the surrounding scenery. On the roof we have full view of the entire panorama and also unobstructed access to the sky. In the present situation of the world almost all people live in the basement that has no windows to the outside. Yet everyone is fully capable of living on any of the higher floors as well. The main reason for this restriction is that we don't know that higher levels exist.

This classification therefore enables us to identify our own present stage of development. Once we know its features and mechanisms, we are able to close all themes of life - dissolve all types of karma - that restrict us to our current level. We thus prevent wasting time and energy on efforts that would succeed only on higher levels.

Yet far more interesting is the fact that we often experience brief insights into 'higher' stages - irrespective of the level we presently reside in. Though the duration of these insights may be very short, they offer us a taste how higher levels feel like. These insights - however brief they may appear - prove vividly that we are capable of experiencing the higher stages. They tell us that it is well within our ability to reach entirely different layers of our consciousness and that we - only by re-directing our attention and energy - are capable of developing them into a permanent foundation of our life now.

Knowing the characteristics and mechanisms of the different *gunasthanas* enables us to identify what level opened up when we have insights into higher stages.

In contrast to other systems of development the 14 *gunasthanas* are not 'climbed' sequentially one after the other. We do not have to 'complete' one level first before we can progress to a higher one. The Tattvarthasutra describes an interconnected, complex structure that makes dynamic moves between distant stages an essential part of our development. The insights we obtain this way give us an immense incentive to wind up the themes of the lower levels so we can turn our attention towards exploring the far more fascinating higher stages.

We nevertheless should not judge higher stages as fundamentally 'better' than lower ones. In the end it is the experience of all stages that makes up the fabric of our character we are building during bodily manifestations. While on a higher stage we might well decide that the - temporary - experience of a lower stage would be essential for our development and then consciously immerse ourselves into the greater emotional density and lesser comprehension of the lower stage for that very purpose.

Once we fundamentally understand how our consciousness unfolds, we never discount anyone who presently experiences a denser stage. We only feel profound compassion and appreciation for his or her particular path.

Only two *gunasthanas* (no. 1 and 4) permit an indefinite duration of stay. All other stages last for only a limited time. This structure gives the *gunasthanas* an intrinsic dynamism that coaxes us to gain freedom from all obstructions that restrict the full unfoldment of our consciousness.

1 - We experience the first stage of development (*mithyaktva*) as a state in which we are deeply absorbed by our convictions, emotions, our activities and by the events the world confronts us with.

Though we might think we fully control our life, any closer and deeper look reveals a drastically different picture:

- How often do we feel victimized by events we are hardly able to bear, let alone control?
- How often do we experience that any stability we worked so hard to achieve either breaks down in the end, - or solidifies our life so thoroughly that nothing is capable of moving us any more?
- How often are we really satisfied by the situation we are in or by the things we do and feel - and for how long does our satisfaction usually last?
- How often do our emotions tumble us from highest happiness to deepest misery (and vice versa) in one single second without us having much influence on this process?
- How often is our attention either arbitrarily drifting from object to object like a butterfly in the wind?
- How often are we so deeply absorbed by one particular concept, emotion or event that we hardly notice the world outside this dense envelope.

We might feel perfectly normal and clear in this environment, but this is only due to the fact that we know no alternate state that may introduce us to a different and more satisfying pattern

of life. We live in a dense emotional cocoon we are hardly ever aware of. Though friends sometimes alert us to this condition, we have no idea how to get out of this almost hypnotic state. None of the goals we pursue on this level leads systematically to the experience of higher stages.

It is a state of delusion and flawed ideas how the world functions. All convictions, belief systems, viewpoints and opinions we found our life on retain us on this level - irrespective if we acquired them by our own efforts or accepted them from others. Even when presented with truth, we either are incapable of recognizing it or take it for false.

We certainly can find our way out of this stage. Yet for this we need to introduce new components into our life that open opportunities¹ for growth. Otherwise it lasts eternally.

When we leave this stage (even if only for brief moments of insights), we proceed directly to the fourth stage (*avirata-samyaktoa*) without experiencing *gunasthana* two and three.

2 - The second *gunasthana* (*sasadana*) is an interim level we transit while falling from the third to the first stage. In this second stage delusion and error begin to take hold on us. The clear understanding we still could have regained in the third stage is already lost with only a vague memory remaining. The time spent on this level lasts only seconds.

3 - In the third stage (*misra*) clear understanding and delusion exist simultaneously in mixed form. We experience this as an ambivalent state. We neither want to separate us from delusion and er-

¹ All components necessary for this process already exist within us and in our immediate environment. We only need to recognize them, direct our attention towards them and then activate them for our growth.

'ATTRACTION TO KARMA', commentary to Sutra 12 describes what conditions enable the spontaneous experience of more advanced stages of development.

ror to regain the clear understanding of the fourth stage, nor do we let go of our clear understanding to move back into the familiar hypnotic environment of level one. As soon as this equilibrium is disturbed and a tendency towards clear understanding or delusion is started, we leave this stage either in the direction of the fourth *gunasthana* (*avirata-samyaktva*) or towards the second (*sasadana*).

The third level can only be reached from the fourth level. Its maximum duration is limited to 48 minutes.

The third stage has enormous significance for our development. Here an important process takes place that stabilizes our access to the clear understanding of the fourth stage.

Many who dwell mainly in the first stage experience flashes of insights into the fourth stage. This is usually a fleeting sensation that feels like a brief, but intense awakening from some long and almost hypnotic 'waking dream'. The sensation is generally regarded as highly agreeable and almost always accompanied by flash-backs to similarly fleeting states we experienced before. Many perceive these brief insights in regular intervals (every 3 to 6 weeks). Most often they occur in times of relative quietness.²

Once we understand the nature of these insights, accept them as real and direct our attention towards them, they become livelier and more intense. We remember them more clearly and the ambivalence of the third stage - the simultaneous perception of clear understanding and delusion - occurs.

If at the time this happens we make a conscious effort to regain the clear understanding of the fourth stage, a momentum is created that eventually, but unfailingly causes the transfer of our

² Since the West offers no explanation for these perceptions, and since they seem so fleeting, we - after some brief irritation - usually store them in the same place as all the other unexplained experiences which accompany our life and which we choose to ignore as well.

awareness from the first stage to the fourth - irrespective whether each single effort is successful or not.

The fact that we stay only briefly in this stage should not cause disregard for its importance. The third *gunasthana* (*misra*) is a vital instrument for gaining access to higher stages of existence.

4 - In the fourth stage (*avirata-samyaktva*) we reach a clear, intuitive and true understanding of the mechanisms of this world. We are no longer subjected to the strongest form of negative passionate emotions that previously overshadowed us completely, yet our life can still be impeded considerably by the three lesser intense degrees. We make some efforts to gain freedom from karmic limitations, but do not raise sufficient energy for reaching the fifth *gunasthana* (*desavirata*).

In this stage we still are subject to doubt and to the attachment or rejection of material objects. In the first two phases of this stage we can lose our clear understanding (our intuitive orientation towards growth) again. In this case we fall to the third stage (*misra* - mixed truth and delusion), from where we may rise again to the fourth level or - passing through the second level - fall down to the first stage of total delusion.

The fourth *gunasthana* is reached directly from the first stage - without any intermediary steps.

We experience this stage in three phases which differ significantly in their clarity of understanding. The differing character of these phases is caused by the length of time we stay in them.

- The first phase is characterized by fleetingness.

At the first occurrence of this phase all karma (all our emotional attachments to the restrictive mechanisms of level 1) that previously prevented the shift of our awareness to level four becomes inactive (latent) for a short time.

We experience this as brief periods during which all our desires, preoccupations, prejudices and attachments that

bonded us to the dense hypnotic envelope of level one cease to engage our attention. It feels as if we all of a sudden wake up from a deep day-dream that the hustle-bustle of daily life constantly weaves around our consciousness.

Yet though we experience this awakening with extraordinary clarity, our desire for the emotional density on level one is so intense that after a brief time (initially after only fractions of seconds, at most after 48 minutes) we fall down to level three, two or one. As long as we do not direct our attention towards these moments of awakening, they continue to be so evanescent that only fleeting impressions remain.

Once we direct attention towards these insights, they lose their fleeting character. In consequence the initial stark contrast to the hypnotic envelope of level one diminishes. We begin to notice that we lose ourselves less and less in the actions we are involved in. The clarity in our life increases and we become able to steer it more consciously. Eventually we exceed the maximum time we can stay in this phase and thereby automatically advance to phase two.

- During the second phase some part of the karma that had only become inactive (latent) in the first phase, dissolves completely. We begin to understand the limiting character of some of our attachments, desires and beliefs that trapped us on level one. We stop refueling these bonds with new energy and attention and in consequence they cease to influence us a short while later. This automatically lengthens the periods during which we are free from the hypnotic envelope that overshadowed our consciousness on level one.

Yet since not all blocking karma has been dissolved, we still lose this state of clarity from time to time. The emotions that then draw us to the lowest level can be so overpowering that we again become fully entangled in the hypnotic cocoon of level 1. In this case we may easily forget the clarity of stage 4

or think it irrelevant and will certainly not attempt to regain the higher state.

When - at the end of this phase - all obstructing karma (i.e. all preoccupations that attached our consciousness to the hypnotic envelope of level one) dissolves, we enter phase three.

- In the third and stable phase of stage four no karmic bonds are able to totally impede the clarity of our understanding any more. To what extent we can put our new insights into action depends on the amount of energy we invest in our further growth. To raise sufficient energy for reaching the next *gunasthana* is the basic challenge we face in this third phase.

The transition from phase two to three is so gradual that we become hardly aware of it. Since in phase two we already experienced long stretches of inner clarity, we barely notice that we do not fall back to level one any more. No special experience marks this particular transition other than that the silver lining of awareness of ourselves never disappears again. We might e.g. still feel intense anger, but in contrast to level one now a detached observer in our head always judges our actions and emotions with impartiality, distance and clarity. We now know without fail when we do something detrimental to our growth (and still keep on doing it). But we also recognize clearly the activities and attitudes that enhance our growth. The more we listen to this impartial part of us that became aware of itself on this level, and the more we dare to transform our insights into action, the faster higher stages open up.

Though at this point we may feel unsure which activities will further our growth, this insight comes to us the faster the more we desire further progress.

Once we reach this stable phase of stage four, we never fall down to any of the lower *gunasthanas* any more. The far more

comprehensive understanding of stage four automatically dissolves all our emotional attachment to the themes (karmas) of stage one to three, which then dissipate without manifesting much of an effect.

It is possible to reach this stable phase within one year. It only depends on the sincerity of our interest and the amount of energy we invest in this venture.

Yet this stable phase of stage four has a highly static character. We now can easily get trapped in a complacency that prevents our ascent to higher levels as intensely as the dense emotional cocoon that trapped us on stage one.³ We now know what feelings and activities we need to change, but decline to transfer this insight into action. Yet if we do not raise the additional energy required for further progress, our stay in the fourth stage will last eternally.

The rise to the fifth stage (*desavirata*) only becomes possible when a strong and dynamic desire for further development exists that is also transformed into action. ACTIVITY is the main key that will tilt our life towards the higher stages. Only when we concentrate considerable energy on transferring our insights into decisions and concrete action do we become able to break the karmic stagnation of level four.

³ This often manifests as the conviction that we are progressing well on our path to liberation, - as a smug, self-satisfied contentment with the stability with which we seem to grow, - as a tendency to observe rather than to actively shape our life, - as a preference for techniques or ritual and symbolic action instead of facing the (possibly uncomfortable) challenges necessary for gaining real understanding, - as an adherence to well-know, established paths instead of actively and intelligently confronting inner and outer conflicts, - and as a reluctance to define higher goals for us.

Yet in reality this is stagnancy. What is lacking are the sweeping breakthroughs, the dynamic unfoldment of higher stages, the pronounced transition into far superior levels of our being. Though we might well gain insights in this static phase, we basically are unwilling to raise the energy necessary for any breakthrough to higher stages.

Any attempt to orient our life along the Five Freedoms⁴ helps to set further development in motion. Yet in contrast to a widespread interpretation taking a purely formal vow to practice the Five Freedoms is not sufficient to cause the transfer of our awareness to level five.

5 - The rise to the fifth stage (*desavirata*) accelerates our progress towards freedom from all karmic limitations significantly in comparison to any of the preceding stages. While on the fourth level we reached clear mental insight into the functioning of the world, on this fifth level we use this clarity to consciously direct our action towards the ultimate freedom. We are carried by an energy previously unknown that amplifies all our efforts.⁵ We feel the profound inner urge to explore more advanced levels of understanding and recognize with increasing clarity which of the many possible lines of action in our daily life point towards real freedom.

On this level we recognize the Five Freedoms as the main lines of action that lead in this direction. Although we succeed only partially and imperfectly to put them into practice, we fully comprehend the potential and scope the Freedoms open up for us: We experience more intense levels of compassion and an increasing grasp on truth. We become aware how our entire environment supports our path. We sense the unfoldment of inner growth. The more we detach our emotions from material objects and worries, the more we experience a freedom never tasted before.

The fifth *gunasthana* is mainly characterized by the following theme: Though we fully recognize the potential the Five Free-

⁴ see 'FIVE FREEDOMS'

⁵ We get a notion of this mechanism when we work on projects that inspire us intensely. Though the work might be mentally and physically exhausting, our inspiration fuels us far beyond our usual limits of energy and ability.

doms offer us, we consciously reject to transfer all this insight into action. We know exactly what activities and emotions we need to change, but don't act accordingly.

This is caused by the manifestation of a particular type of karma (*pratyakhyānavarāṇa kashaya*) that is the main issue of the fifth level. The more we realize that only we shape our development and the better we transfer this insight into action, the faster we will recognize more fascinating dimensions of our life. The more we understand that our progress depends exclusively on how much energy we invest into the realization of the Five Freedoms, the more our thrust in this direction is amplified by our surroundings.

The transfer from stage 4 to stage 5 can be compared to the beginning of a new 'Jogging'-program. Initially we know that we need to do something for our body. Yet though we intend to start the program, we always put it off until the 'next' day. Finally we really start jogging, but for some days experience only the effort without really enjoying it. We need to raise considerable energy to carry through with it. - Up to this point our experience corresponds to the characteristics of stage 4, - we do something, but are not successful enough to gain more energy than we invest in it.

Then - after 10 to 12 days - we notice changes within us. We are more energetic, more dynamic and feel a distinctly different bodily presence. Our jogging runs more automatic now and we begin to enjoy it. - In a similar way we experience the transition from stage 4 to stage 5. Our new course of action that felt unfamiliar and strenuous initially, now yields first positive results. We feel encouraged and notice that we now steer our life far more efficiently than ever before.

Temporarily our consciousness can still be overpowered by intense manifestations of karma which for a while may dominate all our actions and moods. Unable to fully control our behavior

during these outbreaks, the constant and perfect pursuit of the Five Freedoms is not yet possible.

6 - The sixth level (*pramatta virata*) is our long desired breakthrough into tangible superior understanding. At the first unfolding of this stage we feel immersed in an intense vividness of the present never before experienced. Immense relief sweeps through our consciousness, dissolving all our worries and fears. We reach unknown heights of serenity, sovereignty and elation. It is as if an inner light has been switched on. - This breakthrough gives us the ultimate and solid confirmation that our path really leads to dimensions of consciousness entirely unimaginable on lower stages.

With liberating clarity we recognize how severely the thought- and emotional patterns of our past and the expectations (and dreads) we project onto the future limit our perception of the present. The immediacy with which we recognize these deep-rooted patterns enables us to consciously break free from their overshadowing influence.

One by one all concepts, emotions, preconceptions and prejudices that up to this moment locked our consciousness into narrow limits, fall off like superfluous crusts. The tight band of events we previously felt and thought was our only conceivable path, now appears like a confining tube in which our life ran from a restrictive past into an equally restricted future.⁶ Our awareness begins to perceive the world outside this tube.

⁶ It is easy to demonstrate how past emotions and their projection onto our future restrict the intensity of our present. - We all know the anxiety in the waiting room of a dentist when we expect a highly uncomfortable treatment. *We anticipate the pain the doctor might possibly inflict*, all our previous painful experiences in a dentist's chair frighteningly vivid before our mind.

This exclusive selective memory of painful moments of the past influences our anticipation of what the next hour might bring us so intensely that we hardly perceive the present. Distractedly we leaf through a magazine. Yet though our eyes are reading the words, we

We recognize that the sum total of actions possible within the context of the material world is limited. We now see the entirety of our material world from an outside perspective. For the first time we become aware that our real personality is far greater than the small part we perceive of it within the frame of our incarnations.

We now are free to choose entirely new lines of thoughts and actions independent of any previous mental and emotional patterns. A feeling of universal love rises within us that is not constrained by personal expectations and demands any more. In the beginning we feel like intoxicated by the potential that now opens up for our life.

Our attention shifts from the fleeting aspect of the present to its comprehensive character. More and more we now become aware of all the associations, expectations, contents and concepts that subconsciously also resonate within us when we observe events.

We sense significances and meanings that exist beyond our senses.

In each event we confront, we recognize how much we can learn from it if we engage in it through our action, - and how much energy we need to invest to gain these insights.

Yet our experience of this superior understanding is not stable. We drift in and out of this state. One moment we are deeply immersed and shaken by the worries and fears that challenge us

barely understand them, our present so totally overshadowed by dire memories and dread of the future.

And then we sit in the chair. The dentist examines us briefly and states that he would not operate on us today. - All our expectations and dreads amounted to nothing. All our projections of the future needlessly obscured our very present.

In the sixth stage of development we dissolve most of this restriction of the present that previously seemed inescapable. - And the relief we feel when we get out of the chair is only a small foretaste of the excitement we will experience, when we free all our present from the restrictive memories of our past and the narrow expectations and dreads we habitually project onto our future.

on lower levels, - and in the next our awareness propels us high above these narrow bounds and enables us to imperviously observe them from a distant and uninvolved perspective.

The key to stabilizing the sixth stage of development is our decision to expand beyond our emotional attachment to limiting themes of life. The initial euphoric feeling when we entered this level marks the spot (the emotion) where to direct our attention to further disentangle our consciousness from the confining material experiences it is surrounded by.

If we experience just once how the sixth stage feels like - even if only for a short time - we become able to reach it deliberately. Whenever we confront limiting emotional attachments to the lower levels, we now can consciously decide whether to keep on experiencing the familiar, cherished painful feelings or to rise to stage six.

This is not renunciation, but rather the conscious decision to remain on a higher level of understanding. We do not give up our material conditions. We do not try to remove the factors that 'produced' our attachment to lower levels, we only extract our awareness from these confining bounds. We simply choose to orient towards far more attractive, sovereign and serene dimensions within us. We let go of our emotional attachment to some parts of the material world because we recognize how much they constrain our consciousness.

The restricting conditions might well continue to exist, - but only on a lower level that now hardly holds our attention. Since we invest no further energy in them, they completely cease to engage our attention after some time.⁷

⁷ One example: Most of us probably know the hurt we feel when a person we are in love with does not return our affections. When this hurt is triggered, it often overshadows all our emotions and severely distracts our mind. Once we rise to the sixth level, we see this hurt as a minor cloud that overshadows only a small area of our consciousness - which we now perceive as far larger than on level five.

Any activity we recognize as necessary, we now perform far more efficiently since we don't allow our energy to be diverted from our objective by petty egoistic motivation any more.

We realize that all our action furthers our progress.

The greater the courage with which we let go of deepest egoistic motivations, the faster our consciousness expands.

We recognize that we waste valuable energy when we allow our attention to be distracted by irrelevant themes - often manifesting in form of pointless gossip or as the 'endless running commentary' with which our mind incessantly accompanies the banalities of daily life. We observe how this detains other people (and us) on lower levels.⁸ We perceive how the contents of such chatter surround us like a cocoon that obstructs any further unfoldment of our consciousness. We consciously extract ourselves from this cocoon.

The 'incessant running commentary' ceases automatically once we begin to systematically direct our attention towards inner growth mechanisms each time we become aware that we engage in this type of pointless (inner) chatter.

Though we still experience karmic manifestations that prevent the perfect realization of the Five Freedoms, these manifestations now surface as mere temporary distractions.

The more our experience of level six stabilizes, the more trying become the emotional challenges we face, when unfulfilled de-

⁸ This means small talk about money, women, men, food, politics, crimes, accidents, enmities, art, the stupidity and defects of others, sex, scandal, rumors, half-truths etc.

Small talk definitely has its purpose. As long as we are unable to directly fine-tune our relationship with others (which is necessary for the coexistence of human beings), small talk often represents the outer occasion, while the real emotional communication happens on deeper levels (we use this mechanism on level 1 to 5).

Yet during a major unfolding of our consciousness talk about these themes significantly disturbs our process of expansion.

sires prompt us to go back to the violent emotional density of lower levels. It seems as if ever deeper levels of attachment to sore emotions activate so we might go through them for a last time to get rid of them for good. When these temporary distractions occur, patience and perseverance always help to gain back level six.

As soon as we gain sufficient stability to experience the intensity of the present (phase 1) permanently, and we let go enough of our emotional attachment to limiting mechanisms of our material environment to perceive beyond the five outward senses, we enter phase 2. Here we oscillate between stage six and seven until we become familiar enough with the far higher energies and perceptions of stage seven to proceed further.

7 - From the seventh level (*apramatta virata*) onwards karmic manifestations (limiting themes of life) cease to overshadow our consciousness. Though we still experience them, we are so thoroughly established in the perception of our greater potential that they are unable to unbalance us.

More and more clearly we now perceive the mechanisms by which our consciousness forms our environment. We see how our emotions, desires and our attachments to ideas, concepts etc. act like magnets that attract the conditions in which these longings can be physically expressed. We begin to use this insight creatively to structure perfect circumstances for our growth. In a most natural and automatic way this environment is in complete harmony with the Five Freedoms. All our being now orients towards unfolding the fantastic potential of our consciousness we sense within.

We reach the seventh level as soon as the perception of our serene and distant self becomes more constant. We accelerate this process when we consciously decide to maintain our superior, peaceful perception of the seventh state instead of succumbing

to the limiting emotional attachments that characterize the lower levels.

We experience the seventh stage of development in two phases:

- The first phase of the seventh level is basically a transition-period during which we stabilize the perception of our serene and sovereign self that began to unfold in the sixth stage. Yet on our current level the stability of this perception has a far more assured, profound, superior character than on the sixth level.

This first phase is characterized by rapid oscillations between level six and seven until we get used to the far more intense energies of the higher stage. For a maximum of 48 minutes we remain in level seven and then fall back to level six. But here we also only stay for a short time before we ascend again.

We experience this as a constant alternation between rising excitement for the new dimensions we sense opening and doubt and worry that hold us back. The excitement draws us up, while doubt and worry (i.e. manifestations of our lingering fondness for the familiar themes of lower levels) hold us back.

Fear and worry what an expansion of consciousness might do to us and how our social environment would react is only a residue of past attachments that soon dissolves completely. The path to freedom from all karmic restrictions is never characterized by mounting anxieties, but only by the dissolution of all our fears and also by ever growing assuredness, confidence and insight.

While in this phase, we are unable to experience any of the higher *gunasthanas*.

- Once we enter the second phase of level seven, we are caught by a sweeping current that pulls our consciousness

up into ever more comprehensive stages of development. Where before we needed effort to reach the higher levels, we now are carried by a surge of boundless energy.

The transition between the first and second phase takes us through several stages:

- First we reduce the intensity of the four main negative emotions - anger, pride, dishonesty, greed - by realizing that they really affect only limited areas of our life. We recognize e.g. that anger we feel towards a particular person or situation does not need to influence our entire feeling of life. We compartmentalize this anger, look at it dispassionately and then dissolve it by consciously raising above it.
- In the second stage we experience an extraordinary acceleration of our thoughts. Thousands upon thousands of thinking hours become compressed to mere seconds, to mere flashes of mental images. Our thinking and intuition merge into one. Towering consequences build on each other in our awareness, but with a precise grasp on reality as clear as never before.

Within (a maximum of 48) minutes we reach dimensions of consciousness entirely unimaginable on lower levels. Yet the higher we go, the more natural and comfortable we handle the fantastic features of our consciousness that now unfold.

- As we rapidly comprehend more and more of reality, we recognize the real origin (*adhikarana*) of any restricting circumstances and the cause of our tendency to choose limiting actions and instantly remove our bonds to them. We dissolve all attachments that impede our upward path, leaving parts of reality that kept us confined before.

We reach this second phase as soon as we relinquish our attachment to the four main negative emotions and cherished, but obstructing action-mechanisms of the lower levels.

After we went through these preparatory stages, the second phase of level seven offers us two paths for further progress:

- 1 - The suspension of karma - On this path most our remaining karma recedes into a latent, inactive state. Since up to *gunasthana* eleven inactive karma does not obstruct progress, we become able to experience the character of the higher stages. The path leads via level 8, 9 and 10 to level 11.

Yet we are unable to maintain this stage and have to go back to lower levels. The ascent beyond level 11 is blocked as long as the existing latent karma (i.e. our inactive emotional attachments to experiences on lower levels) obstructs further advancement.

It is not required to experience level 7 to 11 sequentially. We may e.g. bypass all these levels to get a feeling for *gunasthana* 11 and then later go back at will to explore any of the levels we sidestepped.

- 2 - The dissolution of karma - On this path we dissolve our remaining karma once and for all. It bypasses level 11 and leads via level 8, 9, 10, 12 and 13 to level 14 and then to ultimate freedom. Though initially this may take us only up to level 11 until all our residual karmic attachments to levels 8 to 11 are dissolved, this path is the sure way to freedom from all karmic limitation.

In the seventh and higher stages pleasure and pain - as we knew them on the lower levels - still manifest as the respective karmas mature. Yet these feelings now hardly attract our attention. We presently are far more in touch with our own eternal character that was merely suppressed by our attachment to

karma. With intense joy we feel radiant bliss nearby that attracts us far more than any pleasure or pain the lower stages might offer.

As we follow the path of 'suspension of karma' that takes us rapidly from level 7 to level 11 and down again, we may at will stop at any of the *gunasthanas* we want to experience more closely. An analogy would equal this to a circular subway-system that gives us the option to get in or out at any particular station.

From the seventh level onwards we are far more in control of our fate than ever before. We may at any time choose to dissolve our final emotional attachments to karmic limitations and to proceed to level 12 and finally to ultimate freedom.

But we also have the choice of temporarily going back to stage four or five (though never to stage 1, 2 or 3), if we feel that the experience of particular events or emotions in these stages may enrich our scope of life and be necessary for our further progress. During our return to these (emotionally far denser) levels we may lose much of our previous higher insights until only a vague memory remains. Yet our time on the lower levels is limited. After completing the desired experience, we automatically raise again to the higher level we came from.

8 - On the eighth level (*apurva karana*) entirely new and unknown abilities open up. Our consciousness recognizes itself in everything it encounters. Though mild forms of passions still arise, we experience immense delight in either dissolving them or checking their consequences. From this stage onwards the practice of the highest form of meditation (*shukla dhyana* - 'white mediation') becomes possible. *shukla dhyana* is the instrument that enables us to achieve ultimate freedom.

9 - In the ninth *gunasthana* (*anivrita karana*) we experience an expansion of the abilities of the eighth level.

10 - In the tenth stage (suksma samparaya) we dissolve or deactivate even the subtlest forms of greed.

11 - On stage eleven (upa shanta moha) we begin to perceive the real splendor and majesty of our consciousness for the first time. We get a notion of the eternal, majestic being we really are beyond the limits of this universe.

We now experience our existence within the limited material frame of the body as only a small part of our being, - like a puppet-master who directs his figurines through an animated performance, but commands for himself an immeasurably greater, cosmic understanding that extends far beyond all meaning of the enacted play.

Our eyes look upon the activities of the corporeal part of our self with boundless loving understanding and in infinite peace and certainty that all paths our embodied self may choose will bring it to the desired goal, - irrespective of how much our 'small' self in bodily form understands this process, or how troubled it is by the events it confronts.

This subtle insight into the real nature of our existence becomes possible, because all our deluding karma is inactive (latent) in this stage. As we temporarily extricate our consciousness from all limiting influence, we get a first glimpse what freedom from all karma will be like. This temporary insight into our real, magnificent character enables us to consciously decide when to dissolve our last emotional attachment to limiting karmas. We now do not blindly enter an unknown, mysterious state, but know exactly where we go, when we irrevocably choose our path to ultimate freedom.

At the end of our stay on level eleven the latent deluding karmas become active again, our longing for further experiences within material limits again takes over our consciousness and we go back to level seven, eight, nine or ten. From there we may ascend again.

Once we choose the path of complete dissolution of our karmas (see *gunasthana* 7), we proceed directly from level ten to level twelve.

- 12 - **The twelfth stage (*kshina moha*)** can only be reached from stage ten. In stage twelve we dissolve all karmas that produce delusion. In consequence this causes the shedding of the last karmas that still blocked knowledge and intuition and caused obstructions. Shortly before reaching stage thirteen, sleep and deep sleep end. Our consciousness reaches clarity unknown. We now cease to be at the mercy of karmic forces, but are the perfect master of our life. Our ultimate freedom is ensured.
- 13 - **In the thirteenth *gunasthana* (*sayoga kevali*)** we reach the state of omniscience (*kevali*). Our consciousness now encompasses the totality of knowledge. If we have bound special *tirthankara*-karma, we teach on this level. Activity - *yoga* - is the only influence we are still subjected to. And this last bond we dissolve at our ascent to level fourteen.
- 14 - **The fourteenth *gunasthana* (*ayoga kevali*)** immediately precedes ultimate freedom. Here we separate our consciousness from our last remaining karmic bonds. We liberate ourselves from status, emotions, body and limiting time and thereby dissolve all restrictive connections to the non-living elements (*ajiva dravyas*). We leave the fetters of the entire strata of bodily existence to regain full command of our greater, majestic self, - immensely enriched by our experiences in the restricted, separated circumstances we voluntarily and consciously subjected ourselves to.

The moment we reach ultimate freedom we again assume what was never really lost to us, - pure unrestricted consciousness. We now fully experience our inherent nature - unlimited cognition, unlimited love, unlimited knowledge, unlimited power and timeless bliss.

Each higher stage brings about a substantial acceleration of development and our ability to comprehend. This acceleration can be compared to the mechanism of an e-curve, which after a long, drawn-out starting-phase with only few small changes, rapidly increases in dynamic to reach the final state only a short time later.

Though we may spend long time in *gunasthana* one and four, we should not infer that the higher stages require an equal amount of time for their unfoldment. From the fifth *gunasthana* onwards we experience an unprecedented acceleration of our development that cannot even be imagined in the preceding stages.

This acceleration is further supported by the fact that entire groups of karmas that are active only on a lower stage, automatically fall off once we stabilize our consciousness on a higher level. The broader and more comprehensive understanding of the new level automatically dissolves our emotional attachment to these themes of life (karmas), which then dissipate without manifesting much of an effect.

Though this may sound like magic, it is nothing other than what we experience while growing up. Tasks that needed all our energy and attention when we were in the playing pen - e.g. putting three wooden blocks on top of each other - cease to occupy our attention as soon as we grow out of them. Though we could build far better towers when we are 16, we would never even think of doing so.

We can use this mechanism to accelerate our development significantly. If - instead of 'battling' annoying and limiting theses of life on the level on which they occur - we shift our attention to higher levels, these themes will dissipate in a similar way as they did in the playing pen.

This description is a brief overview. The characteristics, mechanisms and inner logic of the *gunasthanas* are far more extensive and complex than can be covered in this book. For deeper understanding it is recommended to read *Gommatasara - Jiva Kanda* and *Karma Kanda*.

One word regarding the classification of our own presently active stage of development:

It is safe to assume that almost everyone who reads these lines for the first time spends most of his time in the first level (*mithyaktva*). Yet an interest in the theme of this book indicates that our mind is already searching for opportunities to leave this stage of perpetual delusion.

A realistic evaluation of our own position - without self-deception - is one of the few essentials of a successful journey to far more fascinating levels of existence.

The following diagram shows a visual representation of all 14 stages of development (*gunasthanas*).

The diagram is partitioned into four blocks. Each block comprises several stages that are connected by mechanism of expansion unique to this phase. The subsequent pages explain these blocks in detail.

F R E E D O M

14 *ayoga kevali* - last stage before ultimate freedom
separating our consc. from all limiting influences

limited duration (brief)

13 *sayoga kevali*
omniscience / state of a *tirthankara*

limited duration -

12 *kshina moha*
dissolving all karmas that produce delusion

limited duration

11 *upa shanta moha* - suspended delusion
first glimpse of the real majesty of our consciousness

limited duration

10 *suksma samparaya*
suspending or dissolving all subtle forms of greed

limited duration

9 *anivritta karana*
expanding the new abilities of stage 8

limited duration

8 *apurva karana* - new and unknown abilities
recognizing ourselves in everything we encounter

limited duration

7 *apramatta virata*
karma ceases to overshadow our consciousness

6 *pramatta virata* - vividness of the present
freedom from emotional and thought patterns

Phase 1

limited duration

5 *desavirata* - directing **action** towards freedom
partial transfer of our mental insights into activity

limited duration

4 *samyaktvi* - directing **thoughts** towards freedom
clear **mental** insight how reality functions

Phase 1

max. 48 min.

3 *misra* - learning how to decide for growth
clear mental insight mixed with delusion and error

max. 48 min.

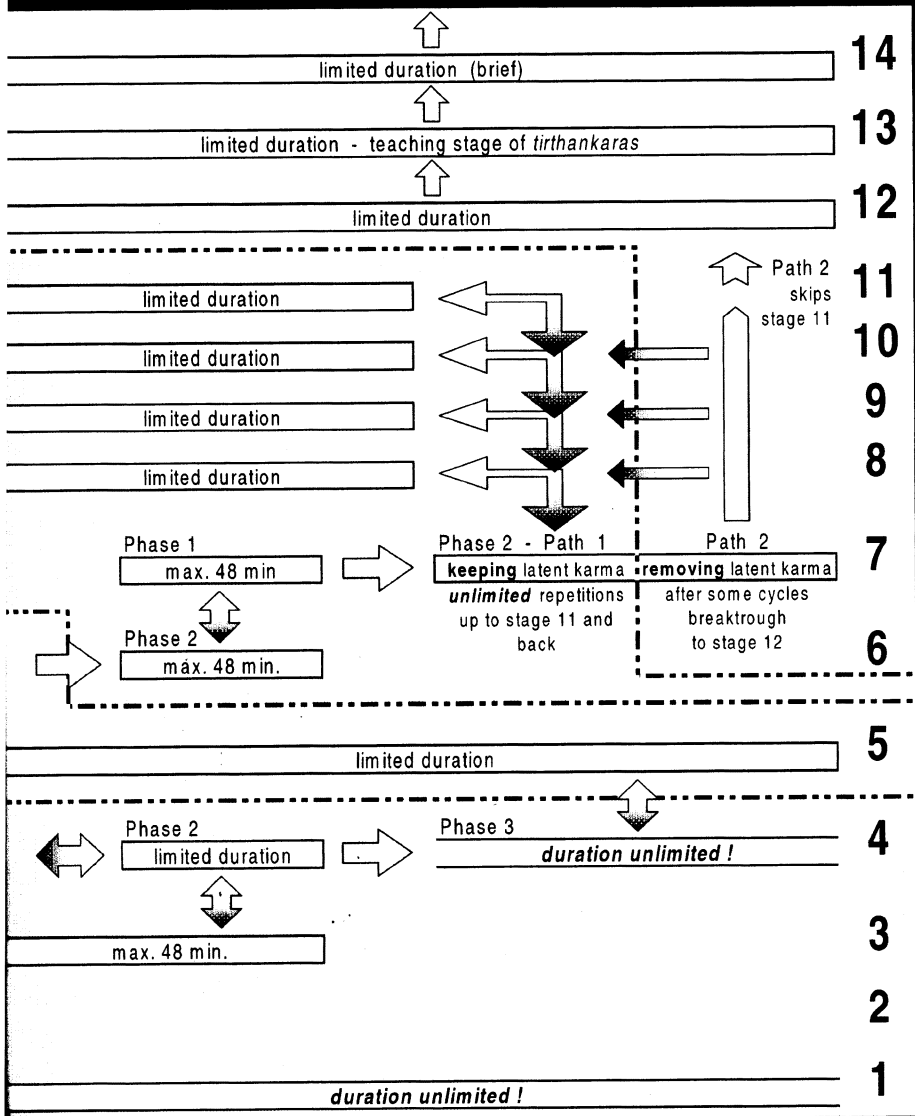
2 *sasadana* - transitory downfall stage
clear mental insight becomes only a vague memory

1 sec.

1 *mithyaktva* - state of delusion, error, misconceptions
deeply absorbed by emotions, events, activities

duration unlimited !

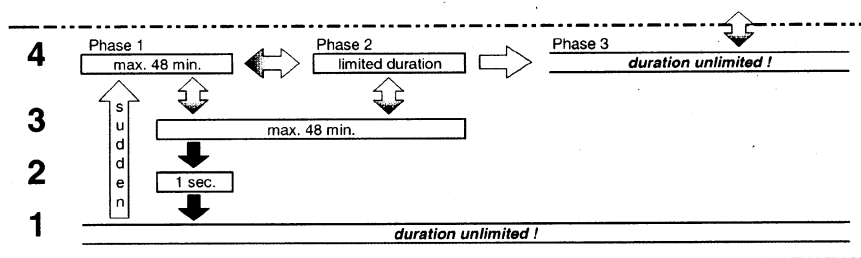
of our consciousness from all karmic restrictions



PART 1 - Stage 1 - 4

Leaving the dense emotional envelope our everyday activities weave around our consciousness.

Discovering our ability to shift our attention to more advanced stages.



In stage 1 we are still deeply caught up in all our emotions, activities and events. Yet almost everyone experiences unexpected, brief insights into stage 4.

This feels as if we all of a sudden wake up from a day-dream-like state. Though initially these insight are very brief, we experience them with great clarity and often remember similar incidences in our past. Encounters of this kind usually occur every 3 - 6 weeks. They are highly agreeable.

For the duration of this insight, we perceive stage 4. Our attention shifts directly from stage 1 to stage 4 without perceiving level 2 and 3.

We experience stage 4 in three phases.

In the first phase our insights remain fleeting. As long as we do not direct our attention there, we never experience more than brief impressions. In this case we fall back to the level of delusion (stage 1) after only minutes or seconds while passing stage 3 or 2.

Yet once we direct our attention towards these insights, they automatically lose their fleeting character so we become able to perceive them longer and clearer. We then also have a clearer perception of stage 3 where our clear understanding of level 4 and the delusion and prejudices of level 1 exist simultaneously and parallel to each other. Here we can decide whether to give in to the attraction of the familiar hypnotic envelope of level 1 and fall down to it, or to raise the energy to again reach the clarity of level 4.

It is the purpose of stage 3 to train us in this decision. Though initially not every effort to re-establish the clarity of level 4 might be successful, we create a momentum that eventually but unfailingly will permanently transfer our awareness from stage 1 to stage 4.

After some time we exceed the maximum time we can stay in this phase and thereby automatically advance to phase two. Yet even in phase 2 we lose this state of clarity from time to time and fall back to delusion and prejudices. Depending on the strength of the emotions that draw us to this lowest level, we can become so involved in its hypnotic envelope that we completely forget the clarity of stage 4 or regard it for so unimportant that we invest no effort into regaining it.

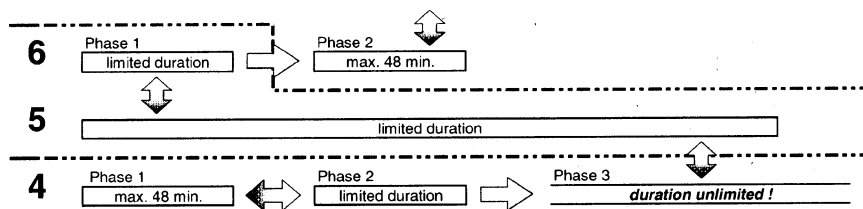
Yet when we take every slipping into the envelope of stage 1 as an incentive to increase our efforts to again reach level 4, we stabilize our awareness of the higher stage. We then proceed from its second phase to the third phase, from where we do not fall down to stage 1 any more. This transition is not marked by a clear experience like our sudden ascent from stage 1 to stage 4. We only notice that the silver lining of our conscious perception of the awareness of our self never disappears again.

The permanent shift of our awareness from stage 1 to stage 4 can be reached within one year. This only depends on how seriously we are interested in progressing and how much energy we invest in this undertaking.

PART 2 - Stage 5 - 6

Consciously choosing and accomplishing selected activities to free ourselves from limiting material events.

Gaining the skill to leave restrictive emotions behind.



In the stable phase (3) of stage 4 we reached clear understanding of the real functioning of the world. To proceed to stage 5, we need to transfer this mental insight into action.

Yet the stable phase (3) of stage 4 is highly static. We here get easily trapped in a complacency that prevents our ascent to higher levels as intensely as the dense emotional cocoon that trapped us on stage one. We might well experience some seeming growth of understanding, if we do not raise the energy to break out of this static contentment, our stay in stage 4 will last eternally.

ACTIVITY is the main key that tilts our life towards the higher stages.

Stage 5 is mainly characterized by the following theme: Though we fully recognize the potential the Five Freedoms offer us, we consciously reject to transfer all this insight into action. We know exactly what activities and emotions we need to change, but don't act accordingly. The more we realize that only we shape our development and the better we transfer this insight into action, the faster we will recognize more fascinating dimensions of our life. The more we under-

stand that only we ourselves are responsibly for our progress, that it is only we ourselves who structure our development, and the more we succeed to really transfer this insight into action, the more new and more fascinating dimensions will open up in our life.

Stage 6 is our long desired breakthrough into tangible superior understanding. At the first unfolding of this stage, we feel an intense vividness of the present never before experienced.

With liberating clarity we recognize how severely the thought- and emotional patterns of our past and the expectations (and dreads) we project onto the future limit our perception of the present. The immediacy with which we recognize these deep-rooted patterns enables us to fundamentally break free from their overshadowing influence.

Yet the first phase of stage 6 is not stable. We drift in and out of this state. The key to stabilizing the sixth stage of development is our decision to extricate us from our emotional attachment to limiting themes of life. If we experience once how the sixth stage feels like - even if only for a short time - we become able to reach it deliberately.

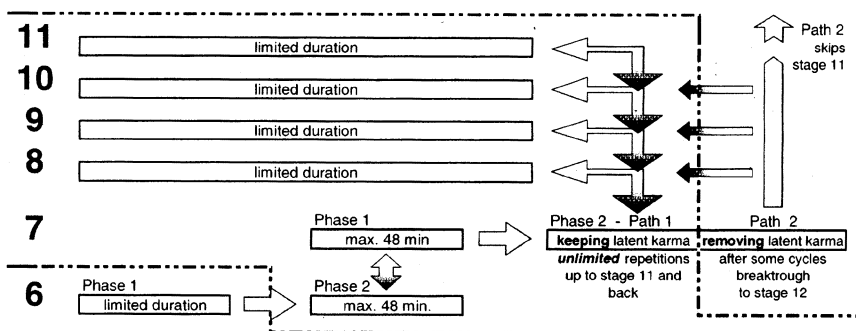
As soon as we gained sufficient stability to experience the intensity of the present - phase 1 - on a more permanent basis, and let go enough of our emotional attachment to limiting mechanisms of our material environment to perceive the world beyond the five outward senses, we enter phase 2.

In phase 2 we oscillate rapidly for some time between stage six and seven until we become comfortable enough with the far higher energies and perceptions of stage seven to proceed further.

PART 3 - Stage 7 - 11

Discovering and exploring the world beyond our senses.

Glimpsing the real majesty of our consciousness and orienting towards experiencing more of it.



Stage 7 we experience in two phases that differ significantly from each other. Phase one is a transition-period during which we become familiar with the more intense energies and abilities that characterize this stage. For some time we oscillate between stage 6 and 7 until we stabilized the perception of our sovereign higher self that began to unfold from stage 6 onwards.

In phase two we are caught by a sweeping current that pulls our consciousness up into ever more comprehensive stages of development. The transition between the first and second phase takes us through several stages, during which our mental processes accelerate so intensely that an entirely new comprehension of reality opens up within us.

After we went through these preparatory stages, the second phase of level seven offers us two paths for further progress:

1 - The suspension of karma - On this path most our remaining karma recedes into a latent, inactive state. Since latent karma does not obstruct our progress up to stage 11, we become able to experience the character of the higher stages. Yet we are unable to maintain this high state and always fall back to the lower stages. The ascent beyond level 11 is blocked as long as our temporary inactive, yet nevertheless existing emotional attachments to experiences on lower levels (i.e. our undissolved latent karma) obstructs all further advancement.

It is not required to experience level 7 to 11 sequentially. We may e.g. bypass all these levels to get a feeling for stage 11 and then later go back at will to explore any of the levels we side-stepped.

Stage 8 opens up entirely new and hitherto unknown abilities. We recognize ourselves in everything we encounter.

In stage 9 we experience an expansion of the abilities of stage 8.

In stage 10 we dissolve or deactivate even the subtlest forms of greed.

In stage 11 we begin to perceive the real majesty and splendor of our consciousness for the first time. We get a notion of the eternal, majestic being we really are beyond the limits of this universe.

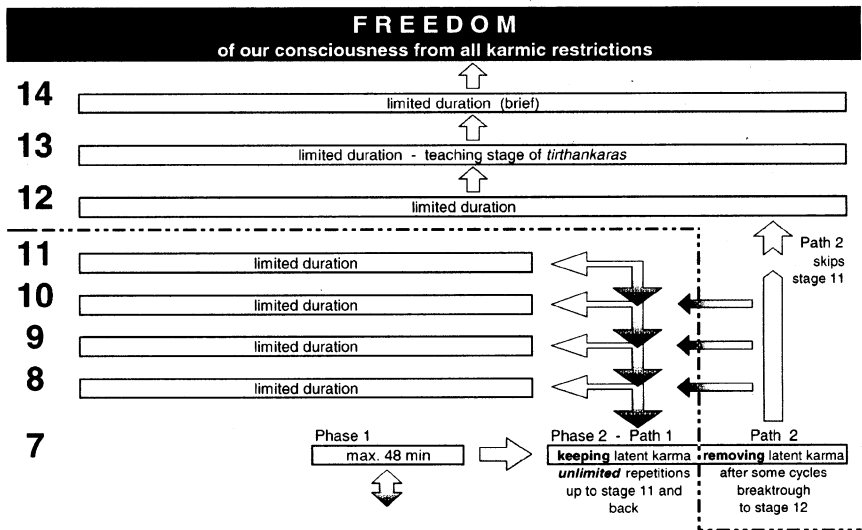
At the end of our stay in stage 11 the latent deluding karmas become active again, our longing for further experiences within material limits again takes over our consciousness and we go back to level seven, eight, nine or ten. From there we may ascend again.

2 - The dissolution of karma - On this path we dissolve our remaining karma once and for all.

PART 4 - Stage 7 - 14 and beyond

Consciously deciding to experience the majesty of our consciousness without restrictions.

Reaching all-comprehensive understanding and ultimate freedom from all limiting circumstances.



When we choose the dissolution of all karma in the second phase of stage 7, we fundamentally decide for reaching ultimate freedom.

This path bypasses level 11 and leads via level 8, 9, 10, 12 and 13 to level 14 and then to ultimate freedom. Though initially this may take us only up to level 11 until all our karmic attachments to levels 8 to 11 are dissolved, this path is the sure way to freedom from all karmic limitation.

Stage 12 can only be reached from level ten. On level twelve we dissolve all karmas that produce delusion. In consequence this causes the shedding of the last karmas that still blocked knowledge and intuition and caused obstructions. We now are no more at the mercy of karmic forces, but the perfect master of our life. We will reach the ultimate freedom for sure.

In stage 13 we reach omniscience (*kevali*). Our consciousness now encompasses the totality of knowledge.

If we have bound *tirthankara*-karma, we transfer our know-how from this level. Activity - *yoga* - is the only influence we are still subjected to. And this last bond we dissolve at our ascent to level fourteen.

Stage 14 immediately precedes ultimate freedom. Here we separate us from our last desires for limiting experiences (from all our remaining karmic bonds). Free from all fetters of the bodily level we regain full command of our great, majestic self, - immensely enriched by our experiences in the restricted, separated circumstances we voluntarily and consciously subjected ourselves to.

The moment we reach ultimate freedom we again assume what was never really lost to us, - pure unrestricted consciousness. As an enlightened being (*siddha*) we now fully experience our inherent nature - unlimited cognition, unlimited love, unlimited knowledge, unlimited power, and timeless bliss.

FIVE FREEDOMS

The 'Five Freedoms' are five specific lines of action. After reaching the fifth stage of development, we recognize them as the five major types of activities that lead to freedom from all karmic limitations. The Five Freedoms are:

1 - Profound understanding of all living beings and the feeling of natural compassion towards them

We recognize our own aspirations and path in other beings. - This produces a growing awareness how our actions affect others. It leads to a way of life where we automatically take care that our actions do not restrict the vitality and expression of other beings and naturally avoid injuring or killing them.

2 - An intense craving for truth

From the fifth stage of development onwards truth is perceived as all mechanisms that lead from misconception and confusion towards freedom from all karmic limitations. This automatically produces the insight that communicating misleading information, false or unconfirmed rumors and vague statements is essentially damaging, since it promotes and maintains a state of deception in others. We realize that only by living and communicating truth do we create that refined aura of clarity around ourselves which enables us to intuitively select from the many al-

ternatives of daily life the one path that leads to real freedom. This attitude makes us naturally express truth in all our speech and action.

3 - The insight that all components needed to reach freedom from karmic limitations already exist within us and in our very own environment

It is the awareness that we only need to identify and understand these components to receive optimal support for our path. - Once we realize this, we experience that everything needed for our own development is always provided in abundance. - This automatically produces the insight that any craving for the possessions of others is irrelevant and pointless.

4 - The intention to grow

This is experienced as a burning desire for ever higher dimensions of our consciousness. It is the main drive of our path to ultimate freedom. From the fifth stage of development onwards our intention to grow amplifies our efforts with an additional energy that becomes stronger the more intensely we pursue this direction.

5 - The recognition that material possessions play no significant role for reaching ultimate freedom

We experience matter more and more as only a *partial* aspect of life, whose influence on our growth-process is continuously diminishing. This does not mean to give up all possessions. We only recognize the decreasing importance of material components for our path and consciously support this development.

From the fifth stage of development onward we perceive more and more clearly that these five broad lines of action systematically unfold superior levels of comprehension and are essential for reaching ultimate freedom. This realization imparts an additional, invigorating energy that incites us to steer our life consciously along these five main lines.

The Conventional Interpretation

The above interpretation differs significantly from the way the Jains usually interpret the Five Freedoms. According to their understanding the Five Freedoms are:

- 1 - To be free from killing or hurting living beings - directly or indirectly.
- 2 - To be free from falsehood, deception and dishonesty.
- 3 - To be free from taking what is not given voluntarily.
- 4 - To be free from the inner compulsion that allows sexual needs to govern our life.
- 5 - To be free from the attachment to material possessions.

The Jains generally interpret the Five Freedoms as 'vows'. Many of them believe that everyone who formally accepts these vows proceeds directly and automatically from the first to the fifth stage of development (*gunasthana*). However, this general understanding does not correspond with the mechanism of the 14 *gunasthanas* as it is described in the ancient scriptures. It rather indicates that much of the basic comprehension of this dynamic method of development has been lost - irrespective of how widely the erroneous understanding may be believed in.

A mere formal acceptance of these vows can never cause the transfer to a higher stage of comprehension and development. Certainly - taking the five vows can mark an initial point from where growth in this direction may start, but higher stages of development will only unfold when we remove the karma that blocks our perception of these stages.

Unfortunately the flawed conventional interpretation often leads to much pointless world-renunciation, self-punishment and intense ascetic behavior.

The Five Freedoms are a method of dynamic growth that has nothing to do with sacrifice, self-denial or renunciation of the world. On the contrary - feelings of remorse, self-punishment, mortification

etc., (which are often associated with sacrifice and renunciation) not only hamper our path to freedom from karma, but may block it altogether. Self-denial, remorse etc. only indicate a negative bond to the objects and situations denied and not a fundamental freedom from them. As hate is just proof of a highly emotional attachment to the hated person - only in a negative way - so also remorse, self-denial etc. only indicates a negative bond to the resented objects, it does not produce freedom or detachment from them. As long as any object we want to be free from still plays a role in our life, we are not free from it.

Furthermore - any kind of self-denial or remorse always orients towards past experiences. It forever looks back to atone for deeds, emotions or thoughts gone by. It never inspires dynamic impulses towards future progress. But as long as we only strive for a freedom from something rather than aspiring a freedom to do something, we have not found true freedom yet.

The Five Freedoms are never directed towards the sacrifice of elements of life, but always towards attaining new, more fascinating and broader dimensions of experience. We are reaching this new state because it attracts us more than the old one. That the old state becomes obsolete in this process and falls away, is a side-effect, not the main aim. One example: When we switch from a radio station with 'boring' music to one with a more interesting program, we would never regard this switch as 'sacrificing the boring music', but rather as a nice change for the better.

When we realize the lines of actions the Five Freedoms point out, we waste no energy on any attempt to abolish old conditions, but instead concentrate on the experience of new and more attractive levels of life. The shedding of old conditions and behavior patterns consequently happens automatically, without any forcing.

In the original Sanskrit the Five Freedoms are also called *sanyama* which translates as 'control' or 'steering'. The conscious steering of our life along the five lines of action described in the beginning is the real mechanism that leads towards the experience of higher levels of consciousness.

The Intention to Grow

The fourth freedom is customarily interpreted as 'the restraining of sexual activity'. Yet this restrictive understanding does not agree with the dynamism with which the other four freedoms accelerate the expansion of human experience and development.

The Sanskrit-word '*brahma*' denoting this freedom means 'growth', 'evolution', 'expansion'. It is not in any way connected to sexual sense-experiences.⁹

None of the Jaina scriptures offer an explanation why the restriction of one particular sense-experience would cause inner growth. The few dogmatic statements about this subject do not conform to the precision of Jaina knowledge which usually presents quite exhaustive elucidation.

For all these reasons it is probable that between the time and teaching of Mahavir (557 to 527 BC) and the writing of the Tattvarthasutra 700 or 800 years later, the word *brahma* has changed its meaning - as it happened several times in the history of Sanskrit.

Returning to the original meaning of 'expansion' and 'growth' freedom from non-growth (*a-brahma*) certainly means 'the intention to grow'. - which is far more in step with the dynamic expansion that characterizes all Jaina knowledge, than its reduction to sexuality.

It certainly is everyone's own decision to interpret *abrahma* in the conventional way. In our modern world this would be 'freedom from the need to always search for (new) sexual partners'. However, it is recommended to observe whether practicing this interpretation really brings about a noticeable expansion of consciousness.

Yet - irrespective how this is assessed - our very own 'intention to grow' doubtlessly constitutes the core-element of any path to ultimate freedom.

⁹ The term '*brahmacharya*' is also used. It translates '*the way of life directed towards growth*' and is not connected to sexuality either. Only habitual usage associates *brahma* and *brahmacharya* with a restriction of sexual experience.

REINCARNATION

Karma is easily associated with reincarnation. Not without reason; - though karmic mechanisms definitely operate in the actual present, they also are placed in the context of successive embodiments. The West often looks upon this model with disdain and without much further consideration relegates it to the domain of oriental fairy tales - usually with a mild ironic smile.

But we easily forget that our precious Western idea of existence is also just a concept. The presumption that life is created from nothing to assume a brief corporal existence, then - at its end - is transferred to another type of body to remain rather eternally in heaven or hell, - this presumption originates in religious beliefs hardly accessible to logic.

Ever since science successfully propagated the idea that only what is physically perceived is permitted to exist, heaven and hell are dismissed. Our life (and our consciousness) was reduced to an accidental play of chemicals that neither exists before the body's birth, nor after its death and therefore could not possibly have any deeper meaning.

Now - every concept - whether originating in the divine, scientifically proven or practically tested - is always only a mental model, a pattern projected onto a set of personal experiences. And these patterns always amplify some parts of the experience while ignoring or reducing the relevance of others.

Unfortunately many of these models exclude entire sections of reality which govern highly important mechanisms of life. It is impossible to discover these missing mechanisms from the inside of a concept with only the help of the concept's tools and logic. And it often is very difficult to even get a notion that something else exists outside the cherished model. As long as we rigidly adhere to one single model, there always is the danger that entire sections of reality are inaccessible to us.

Yet we cannot live without concepts. We need a conscious idea how to successfully handle life. But since no concept is capable of embracing the entire latitude, depth and dynamism of our existence, it doesn't make sense to take the belief in one system as the ground to principally reject the serious examination of others.

Karma and reincarnation are also nothing other than concepts projected onto this world. They are not holy and there certainly are areas in which they are not valid. Yet karma and reincarnation encompass a far broader section of reality than many other (Western) models. They open up experiences and mechanisms other concepts do not believe accessible.

Reincarnation manifests our craving to physically experience all the values, ideas and ideals we carry deep within us. Our present life is a very expression of this craving. What we encounter now IS reincarnation! We ourselves consciously attracted all the circumstances we experience at present. We ourselves created all the challenges, the tension, the impossible situations we confront now so as to bring out the values hidden within us. We did and do create this because we were unable to experience the fulfillment of these aspirations in previous lives.

Not everything we want to experience needs necessarily be regarded as positive in the social context in which we incarnate. It may well set us against norms, break rigid rules, upset ourselves and others, and much more, but nevertheless it is all driven by the same intense desire to manifest those values within us. Some of these values

might find success, some might face opposition and become failures and some might die off in the process without even leaving a trace. But this is only one part of the learning process we subject ourselves to. The most important thing in all the actions, attitudes and emotions we create is that we manifest them in the first place, - is that we do not keep them bottled inside us, - is that we express what we feel within us in the physical world.

When we leave our present body, we take with us all the abundance of the experiences gained by these attempts, all the sagacity, the maturity, the sovereignty we accumulated within us. We might even choose to carry detailed memories into our next lives, but this is rare. Most of us favor to enter a new life unencumbered by the recollection of past events.

Death is a highly overrated experience. It is nothing other than leaving our physical body to experience different levels of existence. It is nothing other than what we experience while we are dreaming. When entering the dream-state, we take it as a self-understood fact that we do not take our physical body with us. It remains behind in bed while we take on a 'dream'-body that feels as real as our physical body. And this 'dream'-body often enables us to experience action far more flexible, intense and exciting than our present conditions would ever permit. We also never lose our identity while entering dreams, we always take the 'I' with us, - and we always feel completely normal and natural in our dream-identity while doing the most extraordinary things.

Though we all experience leaving our physical body several times during sleep each night, we usually do not connect our dream-experiences to the mechanism of death. Yet death is also nothing more than our consciousness leaving our physical body. Sure, it appears different because we do not return to this particular physical body and its familiar environment. But then - have we ever cared much about the many 'dream-bodies' we left behind when waking up? Once our consciousness has left one particular level of percep-

tion, our awareness becomes so captivated by the new body and the new environment we then experience that we entirely forget our previous frame of reference - irrespective if we have the option of returning to it (dream) or not (death).

And as we were able to retain our identity, character and memories while entering the dream-world, we also take all our identity, character, wisdom and everything we are and learnt with us at our time of death.

The apprehension with which the West looks upon death stems from the idea that our present life is the only one we will ever have and that - if we botch it - we never will get another chance.

This is a good illustration how rigid concepts can limit our scope of life. As long as we believe that this is our only life, we tend to get as much physical excitement out of it as possible. Especially in our youth we focus almost exclusively on the joy our body can give us. We casually presume that older bodies would be less capable of doing so and that any non-material enjoyment would be more difficult to reach. We hardly ever recognize or even hold possible that alternative dimensions of life may bring far more intense thrills and ecstasy.

Unfortunately this exclusive focus on material enjoyment often carries over into our more mature part of life. Instead of recognizing the limited range of material enjoyment and progressing to more satisfying dimensions, we frequently attempt to re-enact particular positive experiences of our youth - often with less and less success. At the end of our life we then may look back in frustration and with the unspoken question what this was all about. Yet though we certainly will have another opportunity (another life) to figure this out, this is missing the point.

The far more interesting question is - where do we go from there? What is our intention after we leave our physical body?

All the values and ideas we were unable to express in our current life will leave an unfulfilled longing at our time of death. This longing has the tendency to make us again choose circumstances that offer the potential of fulfilling this craving.

Yet it is an illusion to hope that our next life will bring the desired satisfaction if we do not actively take concrete steps necessary for fulfilling our aspirations NOW. Only sitting and waiting for something to happen will never produce the desired results - and NEVER in this case means the endless repetition of our present dissatisfying circumstances.

So why not face the challenges we carry within us now? If our next lifetime will confront us with similar circumstances as we currently experience, what makes us hope that we will take up the opportunity then, if we fail to take charge of manifesting our ideas now, - in the very present?

The idea that this is our very first incarnation and that any successive life in a bodily context is re-incarnation, is naïve and illogical. There has been a long chain of lives before this one and there might be an equally long and monotonous chain ahead of us for as long as we continue to avoid manifesting our inner ideals and values.

Now is our point of power. Now is the only point in time when we are able to do something. If we transfer this power to another - future - re-incarnation, we basically surrender the control of our life(s) to a diffuse future that will never arrive.

The fact that the theme of this book triggered your interest is the best indication that materially oriented themes do not engage your full interest any more and that you now are - consciously or subconsciously - searching for other and more rewarding realms.

yoga

IN THE TATTVARTHASUTRA

The Western world regards Yoga mainly as a system of gentle Indian exercises, aimed at balancing our body and mind. Yet the usage of the word Yoga exclusively for this kind of exercises does not do justice to its original, far broader meaning in the context of Hinduism.

Yoga is one of the six classical systems of Hinduistic philosophy. Its development was completed about 1500 years ago. One element of this system explains the correct body-posture (*asana*) in preparation for and during meditation. The exercises associated with this element developed into the concept of Yoga we presently are familiar with in the West.

The Tattvarthasutra uses *yoga* in an entirely different understanding that has nothing in common with Hinduistic Yoga philosophy or the system of exercises known in the West. The Tattvarthasutra assigns *yoga* a characteristic, unique meaning that is almost unknown so far.

The Tattvarthasutra characterizes *yoga* as 'the activities of our body, speech and mind'. These three types of activities attract karmic matter to our consciousness. *yoga* (literally: 'the connection between two or more components') is the main cause for the activation of

karmic mechanisms that may produce bonds between a living being and particular types of actions.

Yet even after we dissolved all obstructive and knowledge-impeding karmas, activity remains a basic feature of our consciousness (*jiva*). Once we reach freedom from all karmic limitations (*moksa*) we therefore do not lose the ability to act, we only cease to bind karma by our activities.

WHAT TO DO

Now that you have read the book, the question might arise: - How may I experience all this myself? - What can I do to unfold all these intriguing dormant states of consciousness within myself?

Well, - first of all, - regard your path to freedom from karmic limitations not as a grave obligation or as a heavy load on you, but rather as an adventure, - a venture of discovery, - a romantic quest for something new and fascinating, - an exciting journey of exploration. There is no compulsion not to enjoy your venture. You are not obliged to behave grave, solemn and glum while reaching for the highest, or to regard it as hard work only. It is nowhere stated that you are forbidden to laugh and play and to have fun while you achieve real freedom.

What to do? - Well, - carry out the directions given in 'HOW TO DISSOLVE KARMA' (see 'CHECKLIST FOR REAL GROWTH' at the end of this book) and follow these seven suggestions, - higher dimensions of your consciousness will then become reality automatically:

1 - Become aware of the many insights you already have

Put your attention on your moments of wakefulness, no matter how short and fleeting they are, - on these moments of clear understanding that give you insight into broader and deeper meanings of this world. Become aware that these sudden breakthroughs give you vital information about the many dimensions of consciousness hidden within you.

Remember the emotions that accompany these insights, these breakthroughs and try to re-experience what you felt while they occurred.

As a result your understanding will expand. Your fleeting insights will stabilize and become a natural feature of your life.

2 - Always go for the highest choice

If you can choose between a comfortable and an uncomfortable path, - choose the uncomfortable one, that's the right one for you.

See, you already know the comfortable path, because otherwise how could you possibly recognize that it is more comfortable. What we already know always feels more comfortable. It is the unknown that makes us feel awkward and uneasy. It is always the unknown that requires considerable more energy to face than the familiar.

Choose the uncomfortable path because it will lead you out of the known circle of your life, - it is the one that will break your boundaries, - it is the one that will expand the envelope in which you move.

3 - Really carry out what you intend to do

Initiate the actions you want to experience. Intentionally put yourself into those situations and positions that make you really meet the challenges you want to face.

Try out the path you see in front of you. Do change all the components of your current life you feel need changing.

But don't procrastinate, don't lose yourself in endless preparation. Go ahead through learning by doing.

And don't seek too much advise. Advise from well-meaning friends and relatives is one of the major reasons why well-intentioned projects fail. Especially the people close to you

more often than not have not the slightest clue what you are reaching for.

You are shaping your very own, individual path according to your very own needs, - if you are serious about it, you definitely will know what to do, - you don't need much advise.

And if you don't know what to do? - If nothing comes to your mind how to create your path to higher stages, then

4 - Make a list

Make a list of all the things you'd like to do or to become this life. Write down all your aspirations, ideals, dreams, fantasies, everything that comes to your mind, even if it looks utterly absurd to you and even if it does not seem to lead into a spiritual direction:

Do write down the things you want to learn, to master, to apply.

Write down the situations you want to experience, the places to visit, the people you want to meet, to interact and to have fun with.

Write down the honors you want to receive, the amount of money you would like to have and what you will do with it once you attained it.

Write down the challenges you want to meet and how much excitement they should bring to your life.

Write down the adventures you want to experience, and how much risk you are prepared to face on these ventures without known outcome.

Never censure your thoughts while you are writing, - never evaluate whether your desires are feasible or not, whether they appear comfortable or not, whether you are afraid of them or not. Do not even put them in any sequence - like what to do first, what takes priority, what is most or least feasible. All this

comes later. During this first step just define that colorful part of yourself you have not manifested yet.

And never regard this list closed. This is only your very first list, add more items at any time you like.

Arrange this list according to your preferences.

Then do whatever is necessary to playfully realize all your ideas, desires, fantasies and aspirations. -

Become all what you really want to be.

It will give you self-assuredness, charisma and power.

It will make you aware of new areas of life.

It will alert you to the ways you manifest your dreams.

It will unfold more advanced perception within you.

It will intensify your life.

This process frees you from your dormant desires. Enjoy it! - And at one certain point in time you will notice that you have become what you ever wanted to be and to experience. Now your emotions and mind are free to explore higher levels. Now you perceive the higher avenues that previously were clouded by dormant desires you did release through action.

There is no need to hasten this process, but keep at it steadily.

5 - LIVE instead of only watching TV

If you want your life to be interesting, stop watching TV. TV takes all your creativity, energy and focus and dumps it into the low-level reality it covers. It gives you nothing in return.

You might think you only watch very little and then only carefully selected programs of high cultural value. - But don't kid yourself. Even watching a little TV thoroughly undermines your ability to recognize the lines of action leading to inner expansion.

Get rid of these debilitating machines. You fully need to extract your consciousness from their paralyzing power if you seriously intend to discover any of the higher realities within yourself.

6 - Live vegetarian

Many experience more subtle insights once they completely switch to vegetarian food.

So - give it a try. Don't eat any kind of meat or fish for two solid months. You should feel the effect 4 to 6 weeks after the switch.

Then decide whether you prefer the clarity of mind, the lightness of your body and the easiness of comprehension you now experience to the fleeting taste of meat or fish - and make your decision permanent.

But - if you go for this test - become 100% vegetarian for this time. Don't break your intent even once or for any (social) reason during this period. Otherwise you might not feel any effect.

Water only boils at 100° Celsius, - below this temperature nothing will start. Do it wholeheartedly.

7 - Be courageous - don't fear

And finally - be courageous in your quest for higher stages of development. Fear is always only acquired. And most of the time it is entirely groundless.

Sure, - any conscious confrontation with situations whose outcome is uncertain and unforeseeable may cause initial fear or apprehension. Don't be afraid of this 'initial fear' itself. Don't permit fears to run your life.

You cannot escape fear by avoiding situations you believe will produce fear. This merely directs this negative emotion towards other situations, persons or objects.

Courageously confront your fears, realize how unnecessary they are, and then be free of them.

Pericles - Athenian admiral and statesman (495-429 BC) successfully defended Athens against overwhelming outside aggression and brought about its highest bloom. He lived true to his words -

*'Knoweth -
the secret of happiness is freedom,
but freedom's secret is courage.'*

Checklist for Real Growth

To cut out - copy - carry with you - realize

General

- 1 - recognize the many insights you already have
- 2 - always go for the highest choice
- 3 - really do what you intend to do
- 4 - make a list - arrange it - realize it - complete it
- 5 - live instead of only watching TV
- 6 - live vegetarian
- 7 - be courageous - never fear

Dissolve existing karma / prevent new karma

- conduct your activities consciously
- be aware of your personal behavior
- consider the needs of others
- fundamentally rethink your situation
- prevent: - rage (anger) - arrogance (pride) - deceiving others (manipulation) - addiction (greed)
- dissolve: - prejudices, intolerance, laziness, skepticism etc.
- persevere when confronted with difficulties
- maintain equanimity
- re-evaluate deep-seated attitudes
- be open to new influences
- rise above personal boundaries: - think big, act big
- receive the love of others and give love
- direct thoughts and actions towards real freedom

- From 'HOW TO DISSOLVE KARMA' - KARMA - THE MECHANISM

Re-thinking Our Situation

- Everything we confront in this world is transitory and subject to change.
- As long as we focus on limiting themes of life, we attract restrictions (karma) and experience them.
- The sequence of bodily existences we presently experience significantly restricts our potential abilities.
- Only we cause all the situations and actions we experience.
- Our consciousness is fundamentally different from the non-living elements (matter, time, space etc.) that enable us to experience activity (karma) within this universe.
- Our present state of incarnation inhibits the perception of our real, majestic self.
- Our longing for limiting activities (karma) is the main cause for our bodily existence.
- We can stop this longing (for new karma).
- We can dissolve our prejudices, strong negative emotions, laziness, intolerance etc. (our existing karma).
- What do we expect of this universe?
- What is the purpose of reality - and do we live up to our part in it?
- How often do we gain access to effective methods that free us from all karmic restrictions?

- From 'HOW TO DISSOLVE KARMA' - KARMA - THE MECHANISM

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Parallel to his research he built up a computer company and a European network for modern water-purification. For major corporations he developed and conducted courses for advanced management. Since 1994 he works as an author.

Hermann Kuhn lives in Greece, India and the USA. He likes trekking, jazz and holds pilot-licenses for airplanes and helicopter.

1978 - while exploring an ancient Indian temple - Hermann Kuhn discovered an old manuscript with instructions how to access uncharted dimensions of human experience. Fascinated by the precision of the archaic text he experimented with the described methods. To his surprise he found out that they enable us to expand into entirely uncharted regions of our consciousness even today.

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