108 Saṃskṛta Core Concept Pointers – 10 – Avidyā

Root:
vid
Devanāgarī:
अविद्या
Translation:
illusion; spiritual ignorance; connate misidentification
Similar words:
viparyaya, ajñāna
Opposite words:
vidyā, saṃvid, kaivalya
Related concepts:
puruṣa, cit, prasupta, tanu, vicchinna, udāra, kleśa, asmitā, rāga, dveṣa, abhiniveśa, duḥkha, viveka, kuṇḍalinī, saṃyoga, aṣṭāṅga
Appears in:
Yoga Sūtra:
Chapter 2: 3 , 4 , 5 , 24

Links to Related Resources & Longer Articles:

- I do feel that verses 10 and 11 Yoga Sūtra Chapter Two offer……
- Religiousness in Yoga Study Guide: Chapter Seventeen Theory: Various Approaches to Yoga Pages 237-249
- The pursuit of 'Yoga happiness' can be so demanding or intense……
- Thus Yukti Anumāna or skilful inference through the process of……
- Trumperies and Tactics for the Discerning Gardener……
- Yoga can be a mystery to be resolved or a question to be solved……

Collated Related Short Posts & Quotes:

"The Section on the assimilation
of what thinks it perceives,
with the source of perception."
– Paul Harvey introduction to Yoga Sūtra Chapter One

"In Sūtra 1.19 Patañjali appears to be alluding to
two possible cul-de-sac's for misplaced intention,
in terms of experiencing an illusion of freedom.
What are they and how can they be avoided?"
– Paul Harvey on Yoga Sūtra Chapter One verse 19

"Kriyā Yoga is more about
working with the symptoms.
Aṣṭāṅga Yoga is more about
working with their cause."
– Paul Harvey on Yoga Sūtra Chapter Two verse 2

"Avidyā is anything else other than Vidyā."
– TKV Desikachar on Yoga Sūtra Chapter Two verse 3

"We may have intellectual Vidyā,
but in reality we follow some deeper force of Avidyā."
– TKV Desikachar on Yoga Sūtra Chapter Two verse 3

"Anguish arises from the illusion feeding
the conflation of I-ness and Am-ness,
the consequences of pleasure and suffering,
and underpins the fear of not feeling alive."
– Paul Harvey on Yoga Sūtra Chapter Two verse 3

"Illusion is the field out
of which the others grow,
though they may appear
as if asleep, or arise weakly,
be inconsistent or dominant."
– Paul Harvey on Yoga Sūtra Chapter Two verse 4

"When something is understood differently from what it truly is, it is called Avidyā.
What is changing is taken to be non-changing. For example the mind.
What is subjected to decay is assumed to be pure. For example the body.
What is leading to suffering is taken to be the source of pleasure.
What is not conscious is assumed to be conscious.
All these errors in perceptions have many possibilities.
But the ultimate stage of Avidyā is to assume that we are the Masters, not Īśvara."
T Krishnamacharya on Yoga Sūtra Chapter Two verse 5

"Avidyā is the illusion of recognising:
the ephemeral as the eternal,
the profane as the profound,
pain as pleasure and
the silhouette as the source."
- Paul Harvey on Yoga Sūtra Chapter Two verse 5

"Until we see through the illusion of life,
we will be unable to see,
through the illusion of life."
- Paul Harvey on Yoga Sūtra Chapter Two verse 5

"Patañjali reminds us of
the pitfalls of the illusion of
recognising psyche as awareness."
– Paul Harvey on Yoga Sūtra Chapter Two verse 5

"One of the artful illusions presented by the Citta,
is its ability to as if dress in disguise,
so as to appear as if the Cit."
- Paul Harvey on Yoga Sūtra Chapter Two verse 5

"The search for understanding is driven by misunderstanding,
though not always in the right direction."
- Paul Harvey on Yoga Sūtra Chapter Two verse 5

"Avidyā is the illusion of experiencing
what feels real, as if it is actually true.
However, that we experience a feeling as real,
does not in fact actually mean that it is true.
So how to discern as to whether a feeling
that we experience as real, is really true?"
- Paul Harvey on Yoga Sūtra Chapter Two verse 5

"'Who' is it that misidentifies?"
- Paul Harvey on Yoga Sūtra Chapter Two verse 5

"Still subtler layers of meditative reflection
as in Samādhi, can reveal the source of this
confused sense of "I" Am-ness, as in leading us
to the roots from which the tree trunk, and then
the branches grew, namely the ultimate illusion.
These hidden roots sustain this existential illusion

where, what in reality is transient, adulterated,
infused with suffering and non-Spiritual,
is personally lived and experienced as if
everlasting, unadulterated, infused
with pleasant feelings and Spiritual."
– Paul Harvey on Yoga Sūtra Chapter Two verse 5

"That's our starting point...
This curious conjunction
of being Human and
yet human Being."
– Paul Harvey on Yoga Sūtra Chapter Two verse 6

"Within the sense of "I" Am-ness,
the I-ness is Prakṛti and
the Am-ness is Puruṣa.
The illusion is the sense of as if One–ness."
– Paul Harvey on Yoga Sūtra Chapter Two verse 6

"Āsana alone can be a support for
our outer relationship with living.
However, can Āsana alone be a support
for our inner relationship with dying?
Especially as our disposition towards
clinging to life is continuous, as well as
being deeply buried within our psyche.
This is why Yoga offers vehicles beyond Āsana
for the inner and especially the final journey."
– Paul Harvey on Yoga Sūtra Chapter Two verse 9

"The arrangement of Yoga Sūtra Chapter Two involves four components:
1. Duḥkha – What is it that I want to avoid?
2. Avidyā/Saṃyoga – Association or from where has this come?
3. Kaivalya/Viveka – Where should we be in order to be free from this association?
4. Viveka/Aṣṭāṅga – What is the way?
What is the discipline that will give Viveka, not just for a moment, but there all the time?
This is the place of Yoga."
– TKV Desikachar on Yoga Sūtra Chapter Two verses 16 - 28

"Through Avidyā we see two as if one.
Through Vidyā we know two is as if one.
Hence before there can be a state of Yoga,
there needs to be a process of Viyoga."
– Paul Harvey on Yoga Sūtra Chapter Two verse 17

"Where there is Duḥkha, there is Avidyā."
– TKV Desikachar on Yoga Sūtra Chapter Two verse 24

"Better to be clear about being confused,
rather than being confused about being clear."
- Paul Harvey on Yoga Sūtra Chapter Two verse 24

"Yoga is not just about engaging
the overt nature of the symptoms,
but also engaging with the
covert cause of the symptoms."
- Paul Harvey on Yoga Sūtra Chapter Two verse 24

"Avidyā and Freedom do not exist together.
Here Avidyā represents both the basis and attitude towards our action.
The aim of Yoga is to reach that state where our actions are not based on Avidyā."
– T Krishnamacharya on Yoga Sūtra Chapter Two verse 25

"Some define their experience of life by seeking Duḥkha,
some by seeking Sukha.
The Yoga Practitioner sees both as Avidyā
and defines their experience of life by seeking
what lies beyond duality through unwavering Viveka."
– Paul Harvey on Yoga Sūtra Chapter Two verse 26

"Pratyāhāra is not feeding the tendency of the Citta
to automatically form a positive, negative, or neutral
identification with whatever stimuli the senses present to it.
From that, we can begin to understand how their external gathering
activities stimulate our conscious and especially, unconscious choices.
From this, we can begin to understand how the impact
of this sensory knowing can lead us to travel in different directions
and trigger different levels of response, often without us being really
conscious of how deeply their input stimulates our psychic activities.
From these responses, there will be the inevitable re-actions,
again quite possibly unconscious and multilevelled,
according to our psychic history in terms of our memory,
habit patternings and deeper memory processes.
From those initial insight, we can begin to understand
and interact in how we can resist unconsciously slipping
into the trance states that can so often culminate with
the Kleśa manifesting fully in the entrancing dance of
Udārā Rāga, or Udārā Dveṣa, or Udārā Abhiniveśa,
the potent and profligate children of Avidyā."
– Paul Harvey on Yoga Sūtra Chapter Two verse 54

"Even though Yoga talks about the possibility of
a state of being expressing motiveless action,
for the rest of us there is always an ulterior motive.
The issue is what it truly is, rather than just whether it
had what we believed as a white, grey or black intention.
Also, whether this intention is what we wanted to believe,
or is there another truth lurking within our sense of right?
Thus, the outcome may well differ from what we believed.
However, as many of our motives fall within the grey spectrum,
a deeper introspection into the reality of intention is important.
To at least minimise Viparyaya, existing as a flight of fancy, or
posing as if a truth convincing in its rightness to exist, when in
reality, merely an opinion, even if not its deeper partner Avidyā."
– Paul Harvey on Yoga Sūtra Chapter Four verse 7

"'What' is it that identifies
that we misidentify?"
– Paul Harvey on Yoga Sūtra Chapter Four verse 18

"Feelings from the past remain eternally potent ravagers,
especially pervasive within the illusion of our present and
with it a tendency to recreate an old shape from our past,
whilst we are believing it to be a new shape for our future."
– Paul Harvey on Yoga Sūtra Chapter Four verse 27

"The journey with and through the Bhagavad Gītā
is one of a Vinyāsa Krama with three distinct stages.
Firstly, the Pūrva Aṅga aspect of our journey in the ascension
from confusion to clarity, as epitomised in the first hexad.
Here we start from being disturbingly yoked to Viṣāda
as in the first Chapter, and through a chapter by chapter
process, we deepen our self-inquiry into the nature of who.
In other words, this hexad is an exploration of our relationship
with what we perceive and identify with as if our perennial self.
Through chapters two to five, we learn how to approach and
refine the practice of Dhyāna as in Chapter six, through which
clarity arises in our efforts to cultivate a sense of an inner guide."
- Paul Harvey on Gītārtha Saṃgraha of Śrī Yāmunācārya Śloka Two

"Sāṃkhya – Redefining the Marriage of Wisdom and Action -
Until the Dancer (Citta) deeply realises that
the Observer (Cit) of the Spectacle (Viṣaya)
is not interested in the drives (Avidyā) which animate the dance,
the Dancer continues to Dance."
- Paul Harvey on Sāṃkhya Kārikā Āryā 59

"When the mind thinks it is seeing rather than the Puruṣa there is Avidyā,
and this is the beginning of Duḥkha."
– TKV Desikachar Religiousness in Yoga Chapter Six Page 85

"The Yoga Sūtra says that as we practice Prāṇāyāma,
more and more of the covering of the mind,
Avidyā, is removed and there is clarity."
– TKV Desikachar Religiousness in Yoga Chapter Ten Page 137

"While it is used as a metaphor that the Kuṇḍalinī
is going up, really, it does not make sense.
If we say that Kuṇḍalinī is an energy that gives us truth,
then we have to a accept the fact that we have
two energies in life, Prāṇa and Kuṇḍalinī.
Some also say that energy is sleeping.
What is meant by this?
Many of these ideas, I'm sorry to say,
are based on incorrect translations.
Kuṇḍalinī represents Avidyā,
and the absence of Avidyā
represents absence of Kuṇḍalinī."
– TKV Desikachar Religiousness in Yoga
'Various Approaches to Yoga' Chapter Seventeen Page 248

"A Yogi is one in who Pariṇāma and Saṃskāra are in harmony.
When there is no harmony there is the wrong
combination of Pariṇāma and Saṃskāra.
This is known as Avidyā or not knowing a thing as it is.
The right combination is Vidyā."
– TKV Desikachar on Sāṃkhya and Yoga

"Our action has two foundations.
One, Vidyā never leads us into trouble.
Two, Avidyā leads us into troubl
because of something we did into the past
influencing our present action."
– TKV Desikachar France 1983

Question to TKV Desikachar on Pariṇāma:
"Change is universal but not the same for everybody.
Pariṇāma gives life to Saṃskāra.
Saṃskāra gives stability to Pariṇāma.
So there is an order in any change.
If there is no Pariṇāma or Saṃskāra there is no Vidyā or Avidyā."
– TKV Desikachar France 1983

"We can summarise all the Bheda into three:
– Saṃskāra Bheda (division by tendencies)
– Pariṇāma Bheda (division by transformation or change)
– Avidyā Bheda (division by illusion)
They are not bad things, only different.
We need to recognise and do something so the negative differences don't take us over."
– TKV Desikachar France 1983

"Thus we can only know Avidyā through īśvara Praṇidhānā by action and its results."
– TKV Desikachar France 1983

"Duḥkha is the expression of a problem.
Duḥkha is an emotion,
it could be an illusion."
- From study notes with TKV Desikachar England 1992

"Duḥkha is the starting point for the
Yoga journey of four junctures from:
the symptom, as in Duḥkha or suffering,
to the cause, as in Avidyā or illusion,
to the goal, as in Kaivalya or independence;
via the tools, as in Aṣṭāṅga or 8 limbed path,
for the means, as in Viveka or discernment.
This ancient fourfold process is at the heart of
the teachings in Yoga, Āyurveda & Buddhism."
- 108 Study Path Pointers

"Perhaps be careful that the habits
you are re-habituating towards
are not just as blinding as the
habits you are de-habituating from."
– 108 Yoga Study Path Pointers