

From Doing to Being: Embodying Three Sacred Teachings of the Yoga Tradition

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Session 3: The Lighthouse of Dharma



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Imagine a blind turtle, roaming the depths of an ocean the size of the universe. Up above floats a wooden ring, tossed to and fro on the waves. Once every hundred years the turtle comes to the surface.

To be born a human being is said by Buddha to be more difficult than for the turtle to surface, accidentally poking its head through the wooden ring.

And even among those who have a human birth, it is said, those who have the great fortune to make a connection with the teachings are rare; and those who really take them to heart and embody them in their actions even rarer, as rare, in fact, as stars in broad daylight.

Adapted from the Majjhima Nikaya



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Svadhyaya: Self-study, the study of the Self

1. What?
2. So what?
3. How?

Three-step Method of Study

1. *Shravana*: Listening, hearing, receiving (what?)

“the way a deer listens to music...”

- Which words stand out for me?
- What other teachings (in yoga or elsewhere) have I heard that are similar?
- What are meanings of the individual words; what are their origins, common uses, and synonyms?
- When I read this teaching, what feelings, images or sensations come up?

2. *Manana*: Reflection, taking it in, making it your own (so what?)

“the way a cow chews her cud...”

- Which parts of it resonate with my experience? Which parts are challenging to understand or difficult for me to relate to?
- How would I express my understanding of this teaching in my own words? Through movement or gesture? Visually?

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3. *Nididhyasana*: Meditation on the truth, extracting the essence, integrating it into your experience (how?)

“the way a swan separates out milk from water...”

- What would it be like if I was living fully aligned with this teaching?
- How can I apply my understanding of this teaching concretely in my practice, my teaching, or to a situation in my life?

The Lighthouse of Dharma



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The Lighthouse of Dharma

dhr - that which upholds

dharma - that which upholds creation, protects it from harm, and bestows good, righteous action, right action, sacred duty

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Purushārtha - The Four Goals of Life

Artha - Wealth

Kāma – Pleasure

Moksha - Liberation

Dharma – Righteous action

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It is better to strive in one's own dharma than to succeed in the dharma of another. Nothing is ever lost in following one's dharma but competition in another's dharma breeds fear and insecurity.

Bhagavad Gita 3.35

(translation: Eknath Easwaran)

The Lighthouse of Dharma

In the beginning, there was only the holy darkness, the Ein Sof, the source of life. And then, in the course of history, at a moment in time, this world, the world of a thousand, thousand things, emerged from the heart of the holy darkness as a great ray of light.

And then, perhaps because this is a Jewish story, there was an accident, and the vessels containing the light of the world, the wholeness of the world, broke. And the wholeness of the world, the light of the world was scattered into a thousand, thousand fragments of light, and they fell into all events and all people, where they remain deeply hidden until this very day.

Now, according to my grandfather, the whole human race is a response to this accident. We are here because we are born with the capacity to find the hidden light in all events and all people, to lift it up and make it visible once again and thereby to restore the innate wholeness of the world. It's a very important story for our times. That we heal the world one heart at a time. And this task is called tikkun olam in Hebrew. It's the restoration of the world.

Rachel Naomi Remen

