

Fanning the Fires of Faith

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The fourth route to *Yoga* through *śraddhā* (faith,

trust, enthusiasm, interest, motivation), can be fanned though never taught. The more intense the *śraddhā*, the faster we arrive at our heart's deepest desires, so fanning the fires of faith should be a priority for teachers, encouraging their students' transformation.

Patanjali's *Yoga Sūtra*-s (YS) I-21

T?vra (very high)-*samveg?nam*(speed) *?sanna?* (be there ? arrive)

The more *?raddh?* we have, the faster we will arrive at our goal of *samadhi* (enlightenment).

Patanjali?s Yoga S?tra-s (YS) I-22

m?du (low) *madhya* (medium) *adhim?tra*(high)-*tv?t tat?* (that)?*pi*(further) *vi?e?a?*
(differentiates)

?raddh? can be further differentiated by these three levels: low, medium, and high.

Faith is Taboo

The word *?faith?* immediately triggers ideas of being controlled and manipulated by a belief system that is not based in logic or science. In the West, we left the Dark Ages, the *?Age of Faith?*, in the 11th century with the early medieval universities, and later with the rebirth of art, culture, and humanism during the Renaissance. This culminated with the Age of Enlightenment/Reason, which questioned the authority of church over state and religion over science. Even though during the postmodern era, philosophers started to question our addiction to science and discursive logic, with its clearly defined subject-object relationships, most of us still revert to a modernist Enlightenment viewpoint that claims reason, logic, and science reign supreme over superstition, faith, and ignorance of the facts. If faith is equated with intellectual laziness and *naïveté*, why would we want to fan these fires of faith?

The Universe is Friendly

Contemporary metamodernist philosophers such as Timotheus Vermeulen and Robin van den Akker in *Notes on Metamodernism* [1] are trying to bridge the gap between reason and faith as well as absolutes and relativism with an informed *naïveté*. They offer a bridge between the modernist faith in science and the post-modernist mistrust of it. They present a way to believe that life has meaning and purpose without falling back into superstitious belief systems. Chaos is tempered by knowing that there is an intelligence that pervades the whole.

This cultural shift can be seen in rhetoric from politics to sporting events. Barack Obama?s 2008 speech to Democratic Assembly asserted *?Yes, we can change.?* The 2010 Vancouver Winter Olympics? motto for Team Canada was *?I believe?*. Both point to an optimism that was made mechanistic by the modernists and naïve by the post-modernists. Metamodernism bridges that schism of world views, restoring our faith in a life that often feels uncertain.

Trusting that the Universe is friendly, that our Life has a certain logical flow, and that we are on Earth to learn, can all help us live happier lives that feel safe to embody. In order to move forward in our lives with any goal, we need a good dose of faith. We would not even wake up in the morning if we didn?t have faith that the Sun would come up and shine on us again. To some extent, we need to believe that most things will continue to flow as they did yesterday. We need to believe that things are semi-permanent to survive the constant flux of life events. Depressive realism is labeled as a psychological abnormality for a reason. We have to have faith and hope to survive our lives, which are constantly challenging us with unforeseen changes.

The Mind is Not as Smart as the Heart

As my monk friend Matthew used to say to me in India, "The mind is just not sharp enough to penetrate reality." According to the Yoga tradition, practicing being present is the only way to bypass our addiction to thinking that the mind will free us from our suffering. We need to find ways to create space for our Hearts to be heard away from the daily grind of obligations and tasks. With that practice, we will start trusting (*raddh*) the wisdom of our Hearts, our intuition, and our deepest sense of Self. This faith will bring us much more comfort than a harsh intellectualism that refuses to believe in the impossible or the unseen worlds of the mystic.

Believing in your Self and your Life

When we have learnt to trust our Hearts over our heads, we have developed a level of wisdom that cannot be taught but can certainly be encouraged by our teachers and friends. As that trust deepens, the innocence (from Latin "to not harm") of our presence expands. We start to radiate an authenticity that others can feel. We feel less fear about outcomes and more certainty that Life will provide us with exactly what we need at any given moment. As my Yoga Sutra-s teacher, DV Sridhar once said to me over 10 years ago, "Live as if everything in your life is perfect and see what happens!?" Now that is Faith!

Yoga Sutra Questions What do you believe in? Is your level of faith high, medium or low? Is it enough to motivate you to transform your life into the one your Heart is asking for? If not, how can you fan its fires to inspire such change?

Yoga Sutra [2]

I-21 [3]

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Maggie Reagh, MA in Teaching, E-RYT 500, Certified Yoga Therapist (CYT)

conducts private and public Yoga Therapy classes as well as her own 1000-hour Yoga Therapist Diploma program [5], recently accredited by the International Association of Yoga Therapists (IAYT). She regularly teaches Therapeutic Yoga programs at Capilano University where, in addition, she teaches and coordinates the English for Academic Purposes Department. She started her own yogic studies in the Krishnamacharya lineage in 1995 in Vancouver before going to Mysore, India in 2000 with BNS Iyengar. She went on to study with the Desikachars in Chennai, India and the Kraftsows on Maui. She studied for 5 years with Lindsay Whalen, an Iyengar-based Yoga Therapist in Vancouver. She continues her studies in Yoga Therapy, Philosophy, Chanting, and Ayurveda with DV and Radha Sridhar, Viji Vasu, and Dr. Ganesh in Chennai, India. www.yogatherapyinternational.com [6]

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Links

[1] <http://www.metamodernism.com/2010/07/15/what-is-metamodernism/>

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