

Margabandhu — A Spiritual Companion

Article Summaries — a listen-along guide · 114 entries

AI summaries of Shri PVR Narasimha Rao's Margabandhu. Read the full free book at vedicastrologer.org.

BOOK OF PHILOSOPHY

1. Great Golden Being: An Allegory

Imagine Brahman, the Supreme, as a golden being who shapes tiny bits of himself into puppets and stages a cosmic drama, giving each fair rules where every action meets an equal reaction. We are those puppets, feeling we act on our own while unseen strings move us. The motionless and the animated golden being are one and the same. Rather than endlessly debating whether we merge as part or whole, the teaching urges us to focus on sadhana, spiritual practice, and to overcome our likes, dislikes, fears and conditioning, cultivating awe and surrender to the Supreme.

2. Four Actors: A Parable

Picture a great play where a director feeds each actor his lines through a chip in the brain, much as the Supreme scripts our lives. The first actor forgets he is only acting and takes every praise and insult to heart; he stands for ordinary people deluded by Maya, illusion. The second simply walks off the stage; he is a mukta, a liberated one. The third loudly declares it is all a drama yet still craves a better role; he is the pseudo-wise. The fourth plays his part fully, with real feeling, yet stays inwardly clear he is not the character. He is the jeevanmukta, liberated while living.

3. Karma and jnana

Many wrongly see action and wisdom as enemies. Drawing on the Gita and Yoga Vasishtha, the author explains that the bird of the self flies to the Infinite only by flapping both wings, karma, action, and jnana, wisdom, together. Even Krishna, who needs nothing, keeps acting to uphold the cosmic order. What binds us is not action itself but the sense of being the doer and the craving for results. Selfless, sacrificial acts done without attachment or ego do not bind. Liberation, moksha, is spontaneously serving others while desiring nothing, not fleeing action, and it fully ripens only through genuine devotion to the Supreme.

4. Jnana and Karma Continued

A visiting guru said our only purpose here is to enjoy our brief stay and leave, and that trouble begins when we think we must do this or that. True, says the author, but only half the truth. Dropping the notion of must-dos stops us adding new tangles, yet the web already woven from past desires still has to be navigated through action. So the purpose is to disentangle without entangling further. This is why Yoga Vasishtha teaches that the self flies only by flapping both wings, wisdom, jnana, and action, karma, in harmony. Plan and act sincerely, but stay flexible, unattached to the plan.

5. Some questions on Karma answered

Here the author responds to sincere questions about karma, the law of action and reaction. The ideal is to accept every fruit as prasada, a gift from the Lord, with an even mind, but that is hard; so it can help to postpone some very harsh karmas until the mind grows calmer. He distinguishes sanchita, piled-up past karmas, from prarabdha, those already fructifying. A liberated person, acting without ego or agenda, is untouched by new karma. God does not punish or hide reasons; He is simply the impartial balancer. A calm, God-focused mind absorbs life's blows better; an agitated one amplifies them.

6. Who is a Brahmana ?

A brahmana, the author argues, is not defined by birth but by one who prioritizes God-realization above everything else and dedicates himself to it. He gives examples of people, some not born brahmin, who set aside career and comfort to immerse themselves in sadhana and thereby became brahmanas. Veda stands for Self-knowledge, meant for such seekers, and internal purity matters far more than external ritual correctness. Acts done selflessly for dharma are saattwik. As adharmas grow, the world needs many more such dedicated souls. He also counsels judging oneself honestly and ruthlessly, while being slow and generous in judging others.

7. Varna System

India's much-misunderstood varna system divides people by their aptitudes and roles, not by birth or family. Brahmanas, the wise, guide society through self-control and devotion; kshatriyas, warriors, protect and rule; vaisyas, businessmen, generate and supply wealth for dharma; and sudras serve with contentment. Crucially, nonviolence, honesty, truthfulness and freedom from lust, anger and greed are the basic qualities of all four. Those falling outside, the chandalas, are marked by dishonesty and selfishness. The author, born a brahmin, admits carrying qualities of every varna, even chandala, and urges each of us to cultivate our natural varna's virtues and shed the chandala traits. Scriptural guidance on paths, he adds, is relative to time and place.

8. Detachment

Many mistake detachment for aversion toward the world, but aversion is only a negative attachment. True detachment, the author explains, is a great harmonizer. He offers a beautiful image: just as the billions of cells in our body carry out our actions without grasping the whole, we too are like cells in the body of the Supreme, doing our small part while He is the real doer. Detachment is recognizing this and surrendering with faith in His fair laws, neither a stone nor indifferent, still tasting sweet from bitter, still acting rightly, but not agonizing over what lies beyond our control. It frees our energy and lets us live calm, focused and loving.

9. Three levels of meaning of Veda

The Veda is said to carry three kinds of meaning, adhiyajnika, adhidaivika and adhyatmika, but the author stresses these are three perspectives, not literal readings, and all lie far above any literal sense. They describe how the one supreme Self appears as many individual selves, as the many ethereal beings working through them, and as the interactions among them. Even writing this piece, he says, various deities operate within his consciousness. Linguistic skill alone cannot unlock the Veda; it needs subtle awareness ripened by sadhana and the grace of the hymn's rishi. Learn to chant, revere the deity, and one day an insight may dawn.

10. Veda Mantram Interpretations

Offering his own reading of two hymns from the Rig Veda addressed to Indra, the author shows their inner meaning. The verses reveal that reality is a hierarchy of countless beings, yet all of them are the one Self: the Lord is worshipped by Lords, the Sun by Suns, the sing-worthy Gayatri sung by Gayatris. Like a person on a high summit who cannot see what lies below, our awareness rests at one level and stays unaware of the deeper activity supporting it, just as we perceive an object without sensing the countless cells that produce that perception. Hierarchy of roles does not mean superiority; all remain Self.

11. Shruti Vakhya

We treat shruti, that which was heard within by the Vedic seers, as the final authority, but the author points out a subtlety. Speech has four levels, from the subtle seed-intent down to spoken words, and written words are the grossest, easily misread across generations, which is why hymns are translated so differently. True shruti is not the words in a book but the pristine state of mind the sages heard within. When an unenlightened scholar quotes a verse, that is really smriti, colored by conditioning; when an enlightened master speaks from a clear conscience, that itself is shruti. So calm the mind toward that inner vibration, and never let ego cling to your practice.

12. Hidden Meaning of Bhrigu's story

In the famous tale, sage Bhrigu tests the Trinity and, after being angered by Brahma and Shiva, is met by Vishnu with only tender concern when kicked, and so declares Vishnu greatest. The author decodes it inwardly. Bhrigu, from a root meaning to shine, is the mind's power to throw light on things and judge them. Brahma, subtlest rajas, creates distinctions; Shiva, subtlest tamas, dissolves them; Vishnu, subtlest sattwa, sustains a delicate balance among all forces. That balancing spirit is unshakable and quietly uses our discriminating faculty without our knowing. Puranic stories, he reminds us, are metaphors for the interplay of forces within our own consciousness.

13. Esoteric meaning of the story of Holika.

In the Holi story, the demoness Holika, immune to fire, sits in the flames holding the young devotee Prahlada, but she is burned to ash while he emerges unharmed. The author reads it inwardly. Hiranyakashipu stands for treating material objects as the absolute; Prahlada, meaning supreme bliss, is the joy born of unconditional surrender to the Lord within. Holika, from a root meaning to conceal, is the veiling of our true spirit. That concealment can resist the low fire of mere logic, but before the bliss of surrender the fire becomes the higher flame of discrimination, which spares the bliss and burns away the concealment itself.

14. Puranic stories are external metaphors for internal realities

The author shows that the names in Puranic tales are keys to their inner meaning, and that these dramas unfold within us at any time. Bhargava Rama beheading and reviving his mother pictures how maturing inner bliss cuts off our rootedness in the material world, then restores it free of attachments. His slaying of the proud kshatriyas shows bliss destroying pride and entitlement. Other stories reveal how mind joined to discerning intellect gives birth to the power to learn, and how raw flashes of intuition must be dressed before sharing. Yet, he cautions, understanding is neither necessary nor sufficient; sadhana and grace are what truly transform.

15. Sanatana Dharma and other deities

After a saattwik scholar was trolled for honoring Divine Mother in forms like Isis, Yemaya and Mary alongside Hindu goddesses, the author defends a broad, all-encompassing vision. Just as village goddesses are revered as lower emanations of the one Supreme Mother, any form worshipped with devotion anywhere is Her emanation too. Sanatana Dharma is eternal precisely because it is ever-evolving and absorbs the good in every tradition, echoing the Rig Veda's ekam sat, the truth is one though the wise call it by many names. Rather than fighting wholesale, embrace what is saattwik in each path. He closes praying that Sanatana Dharma flourish across the whole earth.

16. Ashta Pashas

Scriptures speak of the ashta pashas, the eight nooses that bind the soul to a limited identity, and liberation means breaking free of them. The author lists them: ghrina, aversion; lajja, shame; bhaya, fear; shanka, doubt; jugupsa, disgust; kula, sense of community; jati, kinship by birth; and sheela, clinging to notions of proper conduct, each rooted in forgetting that all is the one Self. He links them to the planets, with Ketu alone signifying liberation, and shows through charts of Vivekananda, Ramakrishna and others how one can read which noose binds most strongly. Even without astrology, we can each identify our dominant noose and work to loosen it.

17. Advaita (non-dualism) and Dwaita (dualism)

Think of physics. To build a car we use everyday Newtonian laws, even though, deep down, matter is mostly empty space and uncertain waves of energy. Both descriptions are true, for different situations. So it is with the spiritual path. Dwaita, duality, is how we live with desires, actions, and consequences, and it works beautifully. Advaita, the truth that all is one consciousness, applies only when the sense of I has grown truly subtle. Don't treat them as rivals. Apply the right one to your circumstances, and let realization ripen naturally.

18. Pseudo-understanding of Adwaita

Adwaita, non-duality, is the ultimate reality, yet for nearly all seekers it is like a coconut handed to a monkey. Just as quantum physics is useless for building a car, Adwaita is misleading for most sadhakas, who should rely on Dwaita, duality. Dismissing what you clearly experience as delusion frees no one; acting carelessly because nothing matters can ruin your life. Lord Dattatreya made even Parashu Rama prepare for years before teaching this. So trust a higher Force, surrender, be kind, keep faith when things go wrong, and let realization come naturally rather than declaring you have arrived.

19. Dwaita vs Adwaita

If all is truly one Self, why does the Veda lovingly describe Indra, Varuna, Agni and other forces? Because prematurely rejecting duality is not the way to reach non-duality. Two Rigvedic hymns show it beautifully: Gayatri sing of Gayatri, Suns worship Sun, Lords are arranged within Lord. Consciousness works through layered hierarchies, aware of one level yet unaware of those below, just as we see an object but not the countless cells that produced the seeing. All these are Self, playing different roles. Understand and work through duality to establish the mind firmly in non-duality.

20. Tripuraa Rahasyam

Among the great non-dual scriptures, this text, taught by Lord Dattatreya to Bhargava Rama and prized by Ramana Maharshi, stands apart. Most Adwaita texts dwell on the destination but trivialize the path and its challenges, which matters far more. One who longs for Shiva while belittling Shakti reaches neither. You do not escape the grip of duality by hating it or by mere intellectual understanding; you escape only through love, acceptance, respect, and true surrender to the Force behind duality. Its very first story warns of the seeker ruined by half-baked, complacent wisdom that all is Self.

21. Tripuraa Rahasyam - Allegory explained

Tripuraa Rahasyam, allegory explained. Hemalekha tells her husband an ancient story where I is the individual self, pure like its Mother, pure consciousness. Its friend Buddhi, intelligence, becomes entangled with Avidyaa, ignorance, and Moha, delusion, giving birth to Asthira, the restless mind, who weds fickleness and desire and fathers the five senses, anger, and selfishness. Chasing pleasure, he finds only misery in his city of ten gates, the body. Only when Buddhi finally surrenders, finds a good husband, clarity or a Sadguru, and restrains her offspring does she reach the Mother and rest in bliss. Self-enquiry means peeling off these perishable layers.

22. On the Worship of "Formless"

On the Worship of the Formless. A teacher once boasted of meditating on the formless by visualizing a reservoir of energy, dismissing rituals. But energy, light, and sound are still forms; the true formless is the source of all forms. How, then, to worship it? As Lord Shiva taught Vasishtha in Yoga Vaasishtam, not with lamps, flowers, or incense, but with unbroken awareness of the indwelling consciousness. Offer every experience and action, pleasure and pain, poverty and prosperity, to the Lord, accepting whatever comes unsought with equanimity. What matters is not the path but inner transformation. Drop pride, walk your path, and surrender.

23. Cows and Horses in Veda

Drawing on Sri Aurobindo, the author unveils hidden layers in Vedic words. Go means cow, but also rays of light and sense organs; cows stand for insights that bring clear perception of reality. Ashwa, horse, from a root meaning to pervade and to be strong, stands for prana, the vital force, and the organs of action. Dawn arriving with her cows is illumination dawning within. So praying for cows and horses in Sri Suktam is really asking for clear perception and vital force. Even the Ashwamedha ritual symbolizes the perfected desireless karma yogi, surrendering vitality to the fire of wisdom.

24. The Veiling power of Lord

All knowledge and all experiences, material and spiritual alike, are merely the Lord's veiling power. To acquire them is not to find the Lord; it is only groping at the periphery. Just as your consciousness works through every cell of your body, the Lord's consciousness works through all beings, each playing its role. So move through whatever life brings, doing what is natural, but see yourself and others as cells in the Lord. Only one who has so deeply internalized this that nothing disturbs equanimity, facing pleasure, pain, even death, with the mind fixed on the Lord, has truly found Him.

25. Everything as an offering to the divine

As long as we identify with a body and mind, life splits into I and others: what we do to others are our actions, what they do to us our experiences. The practice is simple. See every recipient of your action as a limited manifestation of the Lord, and the action as an offering to Him. See every experience as a blessing from the Lord in that form. Even taking medicine that kills bacteria becomes an offering. Doing this, one can act firmly with a calm mind and face even death without panic, as pride, guilt, and fear slowly dissolve.

26. Worshipping the formless

A proud teacher once claimed to meditate on the formless by picturing a reservoir of energy, looking down on rituals. Yet energy, light, and sound are still forms; the real formless is the source of all forms. As Lord Shiva taught Vasishtha, the Lord is worshipped not with lamps or flowers but with unbroken awareness of the indwelling consciousness, offering every action and experience, joy and suffering alike, accepting whatever comes unsought with equanimity, spontaneity, and surrender. No path is superior; what matters is inner transformation. Beware too that the ego, denied one food, feasts on spiritual pride itself.

27. Phases in Spiritual Evolution

Our subtle self is woven of five elements, each ruled by a chakra and colored by the three gunas. Earth, at the root, governs structure and habit, purified by karma yoga, selfless action. Water governs emotion and belonging, purified by bhakti yoga, devotion. Fire governs will and mastery, purified by raja yoga, self-control. Air governs empathy and expansiveness, purified by jnana yoga, discrimination that narrows the gap between I and others. Space governs pure being beyond agendas, purified only by Ishwara pranidhana, complete surrender. As sattwa grows in each, the seeker moves from selfish to selfless, and finally to simply being.

28. True sannyasa

Sannyasa is usually read as renouncing everything, but here it means fixing the mind on the absolute, holistic truth, sat-niyasa. It is knowing that all good and bad happening to you and the world is transient, while your real Self is the unchanging essence connecting all. This is inner, and outer appearances can mislead: a hermit may be proud, a king may be truly detached. Crucially, as Krishna taught, one may cut down on what one takes from the world but never on what one gives. Keep giving sacrifice, charity, and penance without attachment or expectation, and walk steadily toward that state.

29. Deeper Meaning of Durga Saptashati (Part 1)

Deeper Meaning of Durga Saptashati, Part One. Chandipath is held equal to the Vedas, so it must be far more than a tale of battles; it maps the journey of self-realization. In chapter one, frustrated king Suratha, the able body, and merchant Samadhi, the focused mind, seek rishi Medha, wisdom, for body and mind rightly guided by intellect begin the journey. The slaying of demons Madhu and Kaitabha, honey and bee, symbolizes overcoming our attraction to worldly things pursued with endless toil. Vishnu waking to fight them is sattwa awakening within, starting self-enquiry, empowered by Mahakali's mighty primordial force needed to break slumber and complacency.

30. Deeper Meaning of Durga Saptashati (Part 2: Chapters 2-4)

Deeper Meaning of Durga Saptashati, Part Two, chapters two to four. Having overcome tamas and worldly attraction, the seeker now battles rajas, restless activity. One does much passionate sadhana yet falls prey to pride, symbolized by the buffalo-demon Mahishasura. The devatas pool their energies into Divine Mother, who was never truly created but existed forever as the energy animating the Supreme. Mahisha's generals stand for cut knowledge, haughtiness, greed, selfishness, fickleness, craving followers, and hurling abuse. As Mother strikes, pride keeps shifting form, one may even grow proud of recognizing pride, so hard is it to conquer. Mahalakshmi's grace and balance help overcome rajas.

31. Deeper Meaning of Mantra Pushpam

This Vedic hymn, chanted at the close of most rituals, seems to speak simply of water, saying whoever knows the abode of water becomes established, naming Fire, Wind, Sun, Moon, Stars, Indra, and Year. But apas means not only water but action; inspired action flows from consciousness as water flows from a mountain, sustaining the universe. These seven, ruling the physical, subtle, and spiritual realms, mind, destiny, senses, and time, are the real agents acting through us when we falsely think I did this. Knowing the true doer, and seeing the Lord as doer and experiencer, establishes one firmly in reality.

BOOK OF RITUALS AND MANTRAS

32. Rituals in Kali Yuga

In this age, who performs a ritual matters greatly. Sage Parasara is our authority for dharma now, and his classic teaching says a rite such as a homa, a fire offering, done in your name by a priest is the least potent. Done by your own disciple it is a hundred times stronger; by your own child, a hundred times stronger again; and performed by yourself, another hundredfold. In effect, doing it yourself is a million times more powerful than hiring a priest. As Kali deepens, we are increasingly on our own, so learn to do your own practice.

33. Following the recommendations of scriptures

Scriptures are not a single monolith but a compassionate collection of options for people at different levels and in different circumstances. They hold two kinds of teaching: the generic and absolute, like raw grain that keeps long but needs cooking; and the specific and relative, like cooked grain, ready to use but quickly spoiled by distance in place, time, and person, one's desa-kala-patra. Taking one text literally forever risks eating stale food. Instead, favor a recent realized soul close to your own time and setting, so you make wiser trade-offs and don't miss the essence.

34. Following rules vs enjoying a spiritual practice (Part 1)

Following rules vs enjoying a spiritual practice, part one. There are no fixed formulas for reaching the Divine; rituals only give a helpful structure suited to a time and place. Abandoning all rules brings chaos, but rigid adherence suffocates, so you never enjoy the practice. Balance is key, mirrored in the yogic channels: Pingala, the solar push toward rules and structure, and Ida, the lunar pull toward spontaneity and enjoyment. Direct perception flows through the middle channel, Sushumna, which requires balancing the two. So keep minimal rules, gently step outside your comfort zone, and lean against your own nature toward balance.

35. Enjoying Rituals vs technicalities

Some seekers drown in rules; others dismiss ritual entirely, forgetting that even meditation is a mechanical ritual for most. Real freedom comes from patiently expanding your comfort zone while still enjoying the practice. Worshipping the Divine in fire, homa, is a powerful path. Don't belittle the standard deities: Ganapathi, Rama, Krishna, Vishnu, Lakshmi and others can grant anything, even liberation, and are safer for most of us. Don't chase a Mahavidya, a fierce goddess, out of greed for something advanced or faster; She may uproot your life. Pick a form you feel drawn to, and enjoy it.

36. Clash of contradictory desires/sankalpas

Clash of contradictory desires and sankalpas. Why do some receive quick results from rituals while others, despite sincere practice, do not? A sankalpa, a heartfelt resolve, may fail for two reasons: too little force behind it, or a conflict with an older resolve already carrying great momentum. Nature keeps re-adjusting our path to fulfil our many, often contradictory desires. Sometimes the one performing a rite gains nothing while an attendee with deep faith and surrender does, for the ritual is only a proxy connecting us to God within, the true giver. Accept what is already set in motion, and steady the mind now.

37. Right Attitude

Like reading books, rituals help only when done with the right attitude; done mechanically, out of obligation or for show, they accomplish little. It is mental activity that brings inner transformation, and rituals merely provide a framework to guide that activity. We may know in theory that all is Self, yet still be frightened or enchanted by its manifestations, just as we react to a film we know is unreal. Watching fire consume offerings, or contemplating a deity's qualities, gently turns the mind toward truth. Choose a practice that genuinely interests you, free of pride, fear, or anxiety, and be grateful.

38. The Cat

A guru who did a daily fire ritual kept a cat tied in the corner so it would not disturb him. After he died, his disciple, wanting to continue the tradition, bought a new cat and tied it up too, mistaking an incidental habit for part of the rite. Today's rituals are full of such needless cats added over time. Keep only minimal focus on technicalities and put your heart into respect, love, and surrender toward the sacred fire. Some initial actions are needed, since merely repeating 'all is God' does not imbue understanding, but do progress beyond ritual. Jnana and karma are two wings of one bird.

39. On Effort vs Results

Why do some gain quick benefits from rituals while others, despite sincere practice, do not? Fruits are hard to trace when our chain of past actions holds contradictory resolves. A sankalpa may go unfulfilled either for lack of force or because an older, stronger resolve opposes it. Nature keeps re-routing us toward freedom through our tangled desires. A ritual is only a proxy that connects us to God within, the true giver, so an onlooker of deep faith may benefit more than the performer. The best approach: stop analyzing the results, keep some clarity about what you want, and simply focus on the practice.

40. Push vs Pull

All of life is a delicate balance between the push instinct and the pull-back instinct, linked in yoga to the solar and lunar channels, and in medicine to the fight-or-flight and rest-and-digest systems. Too much push and you burn yourself; too much pull-back and you grow stagnant. This holds everywhere: balancing change and stability in growth, discipline and fun in raising children, process and flexibility at work. In spiritual sadhana too, you must force yourself enough to begin, yet not push so hard you never enjoy it. Stay mindful of these two forces, and never let either have a free run.

41. Advice on how to do Sadhana/Ritual/Pilgrimage

Advice on how to do Sadhana, Ritual, and Pilgrimage. When you take up a practice or rite, don't hurry or strain to do it perfectly. Do what you can, but calmly. Sadhana, spiritual practice, is not a race but a simple break from life's complexities, an attempt to slow and still the mind. On pilgrimage, don't greedily rush to see every attraction; settle in one place you like and contemplate God, letting go of some possessions and preoccupations so you grow lighter. In both, you are searching for God, who is very subtle, so make it about God, not about your own process of searching.

42. Weapons of Deities in Hindu Iconography (repost)

Weapons of Deities in Hindu Iconography. The objects deities hold are symbolic, showing how each acts upon our consciousness. Mangala, Mars, carries a mace for bold, aggressive close combat, matching its energy and drive; Sani, Saturn, carries bow and arrows, needing the patience and focus that are his nature. Vishnu bears mace, bow, conch and discus, standing for fighting obstacles, declaring intention, and clear discernment of the permanent from the impermanent. Ganesha's noose, goad, and axe reflect focus, directed groundedness, and cutting away distraction. Even fierce goddesses like Bagala point inward, symbolizing restraint of speech and holding the reins of the mind.

43. Ugra Vs Soumya Devatas

Fierce versus gentle deities. Imagine someone who has spent his whole life in a dark cave stepping out at midday; the sun feels cruel and unbearable, though to others it is the giver of life. The state of consciousness shown by ugra, fierce, deities like Kali and Chinnamasta is that blazing midday sun, the pure light of the Self, which feels fierce to us who dwell in the darkness of body-bound notions. Their fearsome iconography captures this. The same carrying energy appears differently by one's nature: fierce to the tamasik, mighty to the rajasik, peaceful to the saattwik. Soumya, gentle, deities let one adjust gradually, like emerging at dawn.

44. Ramblings On Pratyangira Devi

First, a caution: non-saattwik substances like pepper and chillies should not be used in any homa, fire offering, though some wrongly use them for Pratyangira. Her name means 'approaching the Angiras', the brilliant sparks of deep insight that give rise to conscience and wisdom. She is the subtle, intense force animating those inner sparks, and because our awareness clings to the surface of emotion and logic, sensing that deep force can feel fierce and unsettling, hence her fearsome image. Only the rarest sadhaka who sees no distinction between pure and impure may worship freely; most of us should use auspicious fire and saattwik offerings.

45. Initiation for mantras

Some powerful mantras are said to need initiation by a guru: because they are intentionally coded and need decoding, because an accomplished guru can give a jump-start, or because they may awaken Kundalini, one's self-awareness, which can destabilize a seeker who is not yet realized. But in Kali Yuga most potent mantras have been deliberately disabled, so they now serve simply as vessels for devotion, and for that no initiation is needed, just chant with faith from a book. A capable, willing guru is unlikely to be found, yet the unseen Sadguru is always with you; hurdles come to all, even the initiated, and help purify.

46. On Rishi, Chhandas, Beeja, Shakti, Keelaka & Nyasas

On Rishi, Chhandas, Beeja, Shakti, Keelaka and Nyasas. A written mantra is only the tip of the iceberg; it truly represents a mental vibration, a state of mind. The rishi is the seer who first resonated with it, and we honor him with gratitude. Chhandas is the rhythm; beeja the seed; shakti its nourisher; keelaka what unlocks the result. The nyasas are vibrations felt in different parts of one's being. Chant reverentially, then lose yourself in the mantra. Stillness is not reached by rushing, so be patient and expect no miracles.

47. Mantra Shakti

Mantras do not work by magic. The word means that which shields the mind, and they bring three benefits: mental discipline, material results, and spiritual progress. The power lies in the mind, not the mantra; the mantra simply channels it, like a dam holding a chaotic river. As one overcomes desires and surrenders to the Lord, the mind grows stable and catches the vibration better, gaining great power yet fewer desires. Rules help channel this power, but bhakti matters more. Standard sattwik mantras of Vishnu, Shiva, Lakshmi and Durga suit everyone; do not greedily chase the perfect mantra.

48. Corrections in Sri Sooktam & Chandi

Corrections in Sri Sooktam and Chandi. In the Saptashati yantra used with Chandipath, the outer lotus names twenty-four goddess forms, but the fifth chapter of the text lists only twenty-two. Two, dhriti and pushti, forces of firmness and nourishment, seem to have been dropped long ago. For those doing Chandipath or Chandi homa, the author recommends adding them back. He also clarifies two disputed verses of Sri Sooktam: the cool golden lunar words belong together, and the hot reddish solar words belong together. Sri Sooktam is not only about wealth but about all-round well-being.

49. Gopi Jana Vallabhaya

On the surface, this phrase in the Krishna mantra means the beloved of the cowherd ladies. But deeper meaning waits within. In the Veda, go, meaning cows and stars, is a code word for the senses, which feed us and light up our world. Gopas are the inner forces controlling perception; gopis are the energies that animate them. When these energies that drive all our sense experiences turn instead toward the Supreme Being, it brings the Yogi balance and equanimity. Krishna's play with the gopis symbolizes offering every experience of the world back to the Lord.

50. Symbolism of Mother Maatangi

Maatangi, one of the ten Mahavidyas, holds a veena, a parrot, a sword and a skull. The veena is skill and ability, the parrot external speech, the sword cutting attachments, and the skull the destruction of ego. So she embodies learning and command over expression, but with detachment. Her name traces to sage Matanga, meaning that which follows one's thoughts, for words follow the mind; being an outcast reflects how speech leaves the inner core. His daughter Maatangi stands for pure, sublime, divine speech, arising from a seeker with genuine detachment.

51. “Vichche” in Navarna Mantra

Vichche in the Navarna Mantra. A friend asked the meaning of the word vichche in the Navarna mantra of Durga Saptashati. The root vit means to know, understand or perceive; cha means and; and the long vowel ee stands for Shakti, the kinetic energy that stirs consciousness into movement. So the mantra says that the creation, sustenance and destruction of all beings is for the Divine Mother's awareness and play. Though only the Self exists, as Shiva and Shakti, worlds arise simply because Shakti wished to know and delight in them. This is the essence of Veda and Vedanta.

52. Chandipath without "initiation"

Chandipath without initiation. One may chant the Sanskrit verses even without formal initiation. Initiation is like a father funding a son's account, but one without such a guru can still build spiritual wealth through honest effort. For material aims a guru guards against pitfalls, but in this age it is wiser to do mantras simply to deepen surrender and accept whatever God gives; that very attitude is itself an initiation. Gentle deities give slowly with fewer hiccups, fierce ones faster with some spillage, for the fruits are our own past karmas. A sincere attraction to sadhana already reflects good vasanas.

53. Vishnu sahasra nama stotra to nakshatra padas

Vishnu Sahasranama Stotra and the Nakshatra Padas. Many teach chanting the one verse of the thousand names that matches your birth star, mapping the hundred and eight verses to the hundred and eight nakshatra padas. But the author holds that counting should begin from Sravana, Lord Vishnu's own star, not from Aswini. Because today's calculations are often slightly off, your chosen verse may be wrong. As always, he says, stop chasing formulas and simply surrender. To be safe, chant all hundred and eight verses, or chant the seven-syllable Amrita mantra, Sree Rama Rama Rama, with a focused, pleasant mind.

54. Shani Mantram interpretation

The author offers a subtler reading of the Shani mantra that Maharshi Parasara recommended to appease Saturn. Where common commentaries take aapaH merely as water, he explains that throughout the Veda water stands for action and inspired action, flowing from consciousness as water flows from a mountain. So the mantra prays: may our inspired actions serve the fulfillment of divine will, may we be willing instruments of the divine, and may peace and equanimity flow to us for our protection. This fits Saturn, who personifies the spirit of hard, disciplined, impassioned work within us.

55. Keelita Mantra

Someone asked whether Sri Sooktam is keelita, or locked, and how to unlock it. It is not locked, the author says, but its text was deliberately corrupted by sages before Kali yuga so it would not be misused. Two verses jumble the pairs pushti and yashti, suvarna and pingala, chandra and surya; the right combination follows the cool nourishing lunar Ida channel and the hot burning solar Pingala channel. In this age, mantras are locked or corrupted to keep powerful tools from the undeserving. Stop chasing technical perfection; become a helpless child before God. Women too may freely chant it.

56. Nature and Importance of Fire

Fire is the most enigmatic element: born from friction, it consumes whatever it touches, sustains itself while there is fuel, then withdraws. Life is just like this. The fire of life consumes our food, breaths, thoughts, wisdom and bliss across the five koshas, or sheaths. As company shapes the mind, keeping company with Fire strengthens the life force within and helps us digest our vasanas. Nearly every great culture revered Fire to connect with the Divine. The author invites us to install Fire lovingly, tend it, make offerings, and meditate before it, letting our consciousness become an offering.

57. Fire tongs for Homa Kunda

Fire tongs for the Homa Kunda. It is perfectly fine to use tongs or sticks to rearrange burning materials in the fire pit; many yogis who tended fire carried tongs. God dwells in the fire, but the strength and nature of that fire reflect the state of your consciousness. Fire cramped by a badly arranged pile struggles to burn, just as divinity within us struggles when hemmed in by tangled vasanas. Rearranging to let the fire burn better is no disrespect. The scriptures ask for bright, spread-out fire, not smoke. The author recalls Ramakrishna's reminder to Tota Puri that Maya is stronger than we imagine.

58. Homa Esoteric Meaning

The author unfolds the inner meaning of a homa's standard steps. Sitting steadily channels earth, sipping water channels water, lighting the lamp channels fire, pranayama channels air, and the sankalpa, or declaration of intent, channels space, purifying the five elements through the chakras. We then honor Ganapati for stable planning and Varuna for persistence. The early offerings address five aspects of the Divine that bind and free our awareness through the middle, solar and lunar channels. Closing offerings thank Fire, Wind and Sun, who govern physical, mental and spiritual realms. Such practices were designed with great care by compassionate souls.

59. Agni Mantra Interpretation

This RigVeda verse, used to salute Agni after lighting the homa fire, describes a mighty being with four horns, three feet, two heads and seven hands, bound three ways, who animates all beings. The standard commentary links these to the Vedas, daily sacrifices, ceremonies and Vedic metres. Narasimha offers a subtler reading: Agni is the soul or Kundalini within us. The four horns are the four purusharthas, the three feet the three bodies, the two heads doership and experiencership, the seven hands the seven chakras, and the three bonds the three granthis or knots that tie infinite awareness to a limited life.

60. Can women do homa?

Yes. Modern orthodoxy discourages it, but Divine Mother's own command was to let anyone do fire ritual, regardless of gender or caste. Though men's and women's gross bodies differ, their subtle bodies are identical, and both need purifying. Valmiki Ramayana shows Rama's mother Kausalya making offerings in holy fire with hymns, and the Kanchi Paramacharya taught that aupasana, personal fire worship, is a woman's own Vedic right. The old bias may stem from Kundalini stirring in a pregnant woman, but that is exceedingly rare. Women today are often the more sincere seekers, and holy fire is a powerful ally in their sadhana.

61. Poornahuthi

Poornahuti means the complete offering, the total surrender of the ego. For a small homa you need not offer a whole coconut; a piece of dried copra, a raisin, an almond, even a spoonful of ghee will do. What matters is the visualization of surrendering your ego, not the substance. Narasimha sees homa as the process of life: into the fire of life force you offer thoughts and actions, overcome desires, and finally surrender the ego and transcend. He prefers to keep meditating as the offering burns, rather than leaving right after. When travelling, he even does homa mentally, imagining feeding a bright fire at the base of the spine.

62. Forcible extinguishing of fire

Narasimha warns against a common temple practice of forcibly putting out lamps or homa fire, whether by handing a lamp to a volunteer to snuff, by pouring milk, or by pressing a flower on the flame. Bringing fire to life for a holy purpose and then killing it is a terrible karma; drowning or smothering it is no better than any other killing. Let it die naturally as the fuel runs out, and if you don't want a long burn, use less oil. Blowing out birthday candles is similarly unwise. Accidentally extinguishing a small flame and reviving it is fine, and a match transferring fire to an incense stick is fine too. Only uncontrolled, destructive fire may be put out.

63. Meditation during eclipse

Meditation and homa during an eclipse are extraordinarily powerful, some say a thousand times more so. Within us the Sun is the soul or facilitator, the Moon the experiencing mind, and the earth the actor. At an eclipse these align, and Rahu and Ketu, the spirits of grasping and of detachment, overpower them, making the time ideal for fulfilling deep desires or for liberation, but not for ordinary dharma, which is why temples close. You may take a reasonable, dharmic sankalpa, or simply meditate on the mantra and forget body and surroundings, aiming for union. Solar eclipses work wherever you are. Ugra-deity mantras suit this time; even a first, simplest homa is welcome.

64. Swami Satha Sivom

Swami Satha Sivom, who normally does a grand Chandi homa with a big fire and many materials, showed on a visit to Boston how small a homa can be. In people's apartments he did homas in little silver bowls of the kind used at Indian homes to hold akshatas, using only small pieces of dried coconut, some sesame seeds and a few nuts. It released hardly any smoke. Inspired, several people began doing a simple daily homa this way at home, placing the bowl under an exhaust fan when a little smoke came near the end. Fire worship on a mass scale, Narasimha says, will transform the planet in the decades to come; these are just the early days.

65. Seeing Shapes in Homa

A friend doing a Durga homa during an eclipse saw Krishna and Hanuman in his photos of the fire, and asked what it meant. Narasimha replied that various deities may appear in holy fire whatever homa you do, and some may not show up in any photo at all. It does not matter. As he put it, what counts is not how many great cricket shots you watched, but whether it improved your own batting. A deity's energy touching your consciousness matters far more than a photo of fire resembling a deity. It is fine to feel good and a little proud at first, like resting on a long journey, but then one must resume the journey.

66. Mahalaya Amavasya/ Pitru Paksha/Tarpanam

Mahalaya Amavasya, Pitru Paksha, Tarpanam. The fortnight of ancestors, especially Mahalaya Amavasya, is the best time to offer Pitru Tarpana, a simple ritual of sesame-water oblations you can do yourself. Our minds resonate with the lingering unfulfilled desires of ancestors, and this offering, made with strong intent, frees us of those influences to mutual benefit. Narasimha clears two misconceptions. First, you may offer Tarpana even if your father is alive, since your own karmic debts to ancestors differ from his; the rigid three-generation formula is an arbitrary social construct. Second, women can and should offer Tarpana, being equally influenced by these lingering thoughts and often the more sincere seekers. A respected Aghora scholar affirmed both points.

67. On Tarpanam

Narasimha answers a few questions on Tarpana. In offering water from three positions on the hand, the thumb stands for the ego or sense of I, and the other fingers for the four purusharthas: dharma, artha, kama and moksha. The finger-tips, under purest sattva, honor the devas and sages; the mount of Mercury below the little finger invokes logical achievement in divinely inspired humans; and the mount of Jupiter below the index finger, with the thumb, activates wisdom and the urge for liberation in the ancestors. Offering directly into beach sand is fine. The closing narakeshu prayer offers this sesame water for the relief of all beings, relatives and strangers, across every realm from Brahma to a blade of grass.

68. Queries on Sadhana

A collection of answers on homa, mantra and tarpana. For a first homa, start with the simplest Ganapati manual or a deity you feel drawn to; different deities suit health, protection, career or finances. Use copper or clay, not iron or aluminium; start with a small fire, chant silently, and any posture, even a chair, is fine. Rules give structure, not suffocation, so approach fire with gratitude and simply enjoy the divine presence. With mantras, the key is to focus the mind on something; rishis gave many options for different temperaments. On tarpana, you may offer even with your father alive, at any convenient time, and for children, strangers, even dogs.

69. Kundalini

Kundalini is simply the force that makes us identify with a body and notions as I. In most people it works while asleep; when it awakens, self-identification frees from the body, and one may experience oneself as anything, ultimately the infinite Self. But it reaches infinite bliss only if all desires are released; otherwise it clings on the way, causes fear, and falls back, often inflating the very ego it tried to transcend. So it is no achievement or trophy, and forcing it is unwise. Better to overcome desires, build total faith in the deathless Self, and let it rise naturally, even if only at death. Narasimha's tips: guard vata, keep an honest companion who watches for ego, don't crave followers, and don't cling to experiences. Manish Pandit adds: worship Ganapati, enjoy life, and above all practice compassion, for all beings are also you.

70. Sarve janāH sukhino bhavantu

Sarve janah sukhino bhavantu. Most rituals close with this line, usually taken to mean may all people have pleasures, which never quite made sense to Narasimha. Dr Robert Svoboda shared how his guru, Aghori Vimalananda, unlocked it. The word sukha is subtler than comfort: su means good or auspicious, and kha means space, so sukha originally meant the auspicious space element within one. Space is the subtlest element, the one that supports all others; it stands for the pure sense of just being that underlies everything within us. So the prayer wishes that this sense of being, in everyone, rest in a pure and pristine state, a truly noble aim. Likewise dukkha is really a bad sense of just being. Recovering words' original meanings deepens the sages' teachings.

BOOK OF SONGS

71. adrijaAsuputrakaM - Verse on Ganesha

adrijaAsuputrakaM, a Verse on Ganesha. This short hymn praises Lord Ganesha, the beloved son of Parvati, daughter of the Himalaya. It hails his elephantine strength that crushes enemies, his gracious disposition, and his radiant elephant face, and it delights in how devotion to Shiva pleases him. At heart it reads Ganesha as the lord of stability, the earth principle who removes both outer obstacles and inner unsteadiness, and who opens the gateway of the spine when the awakening inner energy longs to rise toward the Self.

72. shrI raaghavaaShTakaM

This octet in praise of Lord Rama, the jewel of the solar dynasty and the delight of Sita of Videha, moves like a quiver of arrows through his whole story. It recalls the sage-taught prince who slew demons, broke the great bow to win Sita, freed those in bondage, built the bridge, led the vanaras, and vanquished mighty foes. Yet through the heroism it keeps returning to him as the primeval Being, supreme beyond the supreme, worshipped by the gods, promising liberation to all who lovingly sing it.

73. Narasimha Pancharatna Stotram

, five gems in praise of Lord Narasimha. Each verse is a heartfelt cry of a devotee begging the fierce lion-faced Lord to protect and rescue them. It invokes his terrifying, dazzling form that burst from the pillar to end the demon, yet dwells equally on his tenderness toward devotees and his freeing them from distress. The refrain calls on the fiercely radiant Lord again and again, celebrating him as beyond the three qualities, the essence of all mantras, knowable through devotion, and the giver of liberation.

74. śrīsatyadevāṣṭakam

Sri Satya Devashtakam, eight verses in praise of the personification of Truth. This hymn adores Satyadeva, the Lord of the abode of Truth, the very sound of Om and source of the universe, worshipped by all the gods and best honored at the full moon. It recalls his ten incarnations from Matsya to Krishna, and pleads with him as the compassionate one who ends devotees' misery and frees them from the snares of this age of strife. Its recurring prayer asks him to crush the six inner enemies and to dwell in one's speech, mind, and heart.

75. tārā maṅgalāṣṭakam

tara mangalashtakam, an octet of auspiciousness to Mother Tara. This is a devotional song honoring the goddess Tara, one of the great forms of the divine Mother, invoked as the compassionate one who helps the seeker cross the ocean of worldly existence. In the tradition of auspicious eight-verse hymns, it calls down her blessing and well-being, celebrating her radiant, fear-dispelling presence and her power to carry devotees safely across every difficulty toward the light of higher awareness.

76. dasha mahA vidyA stotram

dasha mahA vidyā stotram, a hymn to the ten great wisdom-goddesses. In ten verses this song bows to the divine Mother in her ten forms of Supreme Learning, one by one. It praises Kali as the root and the beyond of time, Tara who helps one cross, radiant Shodashi at the center of the Sri Chakra, Bhuvaneshvari who sustains the worlds, Bhairavi of dissolution and renewal, Chhinnamasta, Dhumavati, Bagalamukhi who frees from bondage, Matangi the power of speech, and Kamala of abundance. Together they reveal the one Mother as every face of cosmic power and knowledge.

77. navagraha karāvalamba stotram

navagraha karavalamba stotram, a hymn seeking the supporting hand of the nine planets. Composed in a flowing classical metre, this song addresses each of the celestial deities in turn, the Sun, Moon, Mars, Mercury, Jupiter, Venus, Saturn, Rahu, and Ketu, and adds a verse to the Lord of speech. To each it offers loving epithets and the same tender refrain, please give me your hand and uphold me. The mood is one of humble surrender, trusting the planetary powers as compassionate givers of wisdom, fortune, and grace, closing with a threefold prayer for peace.

78. Verse on Lord Hanuman

This short devotional verse praises Hanuman, the mighty son of the wind and devoted servant of Rama, whose worship dispels darkness and fear. It celebrates his boundless strength and his role as the one who leaps across every obstacle, and it dwells on his deep, self-effacing devotion. A key phrase points to Hanuman as inseparable from Rama, the true servant merged in the Lord he serves. The tone is warm and reverent, offering salutations to the beloved protector who removes the devotee's dread.

79. Verse on Lord Shiva

This verse seeks refuge in Shiva as pure consciousness itself, ever-moving yet utterly still, possessing all qualities yet beyond them, like an ocean beyond the qualities of its ripples. It reimagines the familiar image of Shiva seated in the cremation ground as the supreme awareness at the crown, where all conditioning, desires, and notions are burnt away when inner energy merges with him. Ending the three cities becomes the dissolving of physical, mental, and spiritual realms. Finally he is hailed as both center and circumference, the source of all and all its manifestations.

80. Verse on Mother Chandi

This verse envisions Chandika not as a warrior goddess with many arms slaying demons, but in a deeply Vedantic light as the Supreme Energy and original source of all. She is the form of cosmic consciousness, the root cause of the universe, the bridge to divine bliss, and the ender of ignorance, known only through devotion. Its striking image likens the ego-sense to a rope tying us to her as to a sacrificial post, where we offer up all we call mine and rest our mind on the Mother as we let the ego be sacrificed.

81. Verse on Mother Kaali

This verse extols Kalika as the supreme beyond all and the source of all, the giver of wisdom by which one masters one's own evil tendencies and expectations, and the slayer of great delusion. Her supremely loud laughter is read not only as her fierce nature but as the primordial sound at the very source of space and time, like a cosmic big bang the seeker crosses in deep samadhi. As consort of Great Time, she destroys the eight bondages, among them fear, shame, and even modesty, so the devotee may be liberated.

82. Verse on Mother Kalaratri

Kalaratri means deep darkness, and this verse honors this form of the divine Mother as the state of stillness where all activity within the Self subsides and every object merges back into it. It salutes her as the beneficent bringer of auspiciousness, protector who grants fearlessness to her servants, and ruler of all three worlds. Like the great oceanic force calming its own waves until every ripple grows still, she quiets all beings, who are her slaves, until their fears and agendas dissolve and they rest in bliss under her control.

83. Verse on Lord Vishnu

A short devotional verse in praise of Vishnu, remembered here as Hari. It celebrates him as the giver of boons, comfort, and auspiciousness, the one who reclines upon the cosmic serpent, oversees the three worlds, is ever accompanied by the supreme cosmic energy, and brings an end to the demons. Understood by the sages, he is held in loving remembrance. The mood is serene and adoring, a simple act of calling the Lord to mind with gratitude and trust.

84. Verse on Lord Narasimha

Composed by the author, this verse salutes Lord Narasimha as a radiant point of light surrounded by flames, the essence and source of all, ringed by the layers of illusion. He is the breaker of unreality and the lustre of the fire of consciousness, terrifying yet wise, who drains away every enemy. The mood is fierce and awe-filled, evoking a blazing fire of wisdom that burns through illusion and keeps the seeker focused on the one true source. The commentary links this fiery consciousness to Mars.

85. Verse on Supreme Being

A brief verse of surrender, taking refuge in the Supreme Being beyond name and form. It praises that reality as the one without a second, containing all, marvellous, free from every modification, and imperishable. It is the one who sets in order the endless variety of manifestation, utterly absolute, stainless, and perfect. The mood is quietly reverent and contemplative, an act of taking shelter in the changeless ground of all existence, described through negation of all that is limited or divided.

86. Verse on Lord Krishna

A short verse of loving worship to Vishnu as Krishna, the lord of Vraja, the land where he grew up. It praises him as the remover of evils and of delusion, the far shore reached by those who grow indifferent to the ocean of this material world, and the very essence of the supreme and boundless manifestation. The mood is tender and devotional, the poet offering reverent prayer to the beloved lord who both dispels illusion and stands as the goal beyond it.

87. Verse on Lord Dattatreya

A devotional verse praising Dattatreya, the good son of the sage Atri, as the compassionate preceptor. It celebrates him as the one who rescues minds bewildered by the forest fire of this worldly existence, showering upon them the cooling waters of wisdom. He is liberated, dispassionate, and forever soaked in the infinite of pure consciousness. The mood is warm and grateful, honoring the guru whose grace pours like rain to quench the burning confusion of samsara and lead the seeker to freedom.

88. Searching for Mother

A heartfelt English poem describing the poet's long, restless search for the Divine Mother through books, temples, rituals, meditation, saints, and countless spiritual paths, all in vain. The turning point comes when he realizes he was confining Her to a single form his mind could imagine, and so missing Her presence all around. He then sees Her energy in every growing plant, orbiting planet, and living being. The mood moves from longing to joyful awakening: like air, She is everywhere, and one need only open the heart to Her.

89. Sri P.V.S. Achalapathi Rao

A loving tribute by the author to his late father, a courageous, truthful, and deeply dharmik man who lived simply and on his own terms. He wore a single old towel, walked miles, ate simple food, and chanted stotras for hours as a devotee of Mahalakshmi and Narasimha. Never lying gave him uncanny power of speech and prophecy as an astrologer. Fearless of convention and of death itself, he prepared for his passing with serene confidence that his Mother Mahalakshmi would care for him. A rare bhakta and yogi.

90. Jatala Sadhu

The author recounts visiting the Simhachalam ashram of Sri Rama Viswambharadas, known as Gayatri Baba or Jatala Sadhu, a Sun and Gayatri worshipper said to have lived over four hundred years and done daily fire ritual for decades. Doing homa before his cave, the author felt this sage is the unseen force behind the grassroots "do homa yourself" movement. The mood is humble and inspired. He urges that no guru be placed on a pedestal; the true hero is Agni, the fire, with whom each seeker should build a living relationship.

91. Yogananda Lakshmi Narasimham

A grateful tribute to the author's childhood Sanskrit teacher, fondly called Yoganandam master, who bicycled across town every morning and evening to teach free Sanskrit classes, never accepting a paisa and instead giving students gifts and sweets. Selfless and without possessiveness, he encouraged the author even after he stopped attending. That early love of Sanskrit later enabled the author's work in astrology, homa manuals, and spiritual writing. The mood is warm and thankful, holding him up as an example of the "pay it forward" spirit of Sanatana Dharma.

92. Sri M

The author describes a deeply satisfying satsang he attended in New Jersey with Sri M, a teacher who, dressed plainly and without religious trappings, showed rare mastery of Sanatana Dharma while making subtle ideas simple, relevant, and even witty. He was frank yet gentle, giving freely what was truly useful. A favorite teaching: self-realization is not projecting one's own ideas of the Self, but honestly accepting where one stands. The mood is appreciative and refreshed, celebrating a genuine saint at peace with himself, who insists there are no shortcuts on the spiritual path.

BOOK OF PRACTICAL KNOWLEDGE

93. Annapurna and Bhoomi

Food is divine, and we should never waste it. But overeating wastes food just as surely as throwing it in the trash, and it may be worse, since undigested food turns to toxins inside the body, our closest temple. So estimate honestly how much you can eat, and buy, cook, and serve only that much, erring on the lower side if it cuts waste. Where possible, give surplus food to those who can use it. Balancing your duty to yourself, others, and society takes intelligence and strict discipline, not blind rules.

94. Advice for parents

When a teenager turns to atheism or doubt, relax. Questioning is normal and healthy, and behaving well in the world matters more than believing in God by a particular name or form. Even Vivekananda questioned popular religion until his doubts were answered. If the right seeds were planted, they will sprout at the right time. Sanatana Dharma even counts atheism as one path to God. What truly counts is being selfless and fair to others, the tangible forms of the divine. Do your limited part, be patient, and leave the rest to God.

95. Adversity is the greatest teacher!

Falling sick, the author found how hard it is to focus the mind in meditation when the body aches. That is exactly why we should do our sadhana, our spiritual practice, with good focus while we are well. If we wait until troubles strike, we will not be able to do much. Adversity is also a true reality check: people may say wonderful things about us, but our real mettle shows only under great pain. The deepest practice is to surrender wholly to the Lord as the doer through all of us, not just selectively for convenience.

96. Negative energy from Idol at home

Negative energy from an idol at home. If you keep a Shiva linga or idol and do no pooja to it, no negative energy comes into your house. An idol is like a piggy bank: originally just stone or metal, but as you reverently imagine the divine in it daily, a real divine presence slowly builds up that can help you in need. Stopping practice may bring a brief inner disturbance, like pausing an exercise, but nothing flows out of the object. A few drops of water with 'Om namah Shivaya' suffices. Only if fear or guilt troubles you should you keep following the rule you fear.

97. Pronunciation

When a mantra's seed-syllable ends in 'm' and is followed by a vowel or by y, r, l, v, sh, s, or h, it helps to soften that 'm' toward an 'ng' sound, with the g left silent, like the n in 'king' or 'monk'. This lets you glide into the next sound without a break, since those letters are formed at the back of the mouth rather than the lips. So 'om hreem shreematre' becomes 'ong hreeng shreematre'. Try both versions and notice the difference. Devotion matters most, but technicalities have their role, for different sounds work differently on the mind.

98. Meditation during an eclipse

An eclipse is extraordinarily powerful for spiritual progress, some scriptures say a thousand times more potent than ordinary times, because Sun and Moon, which represent soul and mind, line up, making it easy for the mind to align with the soul. So during an eclipse avoid regular orderly worship like Satya Narayana vrata or idol pooja, which temples suspend, but do feel free to do a homa or, better still, japa, chanting a mantra. You may meditate with a reasonable, dharmic wish, or simply focus on the mantra or a deity's form and forget all else, which is easiest to achieve at this time.

99. Out-sourcing Poojas vs Doing by Oneself

Out-sourcing poojas versus doing them yourself. The sage Parasara, the authority for this age, holds that a ritual done by oneself is a million times more powerful than one a priest performs in your name, because of the feeling and empathy you bring. So do not fear making mistakes: if your goal is the well-being of yourself and family, God is a loving father, not a fault-finding boss. A simple ritual done with real feeling beats an elaborate one done mechanically. Beware money-minded astrologers who scare you into costly poojas. And even when a priest officiates, join in mentally with full devotion, and the same benefit becomes yours.

100. Uninvited Guests

Someone asked whether doing a homa, a fire ritual, at home risks inviting unwelcome entities instead of the intended deity. The answer: whether we notice or not, we are always surrounded and influenced by countless beings and vibrations, even while simply sitting and doing nothing. But the beauty of homa is that fire has a uniquely powerful vibration that filters and modulates all those influences. This is why fire is called the original priest and foremost guru in the Veda, and why so many ancient civilizations worshipped the divine through fire. Far from being a danger, the fire is your protection.

101. On Death

Death is nothing to fear. As the Gita teaches, the soul leaving one body for another is like removing worn clothes and putting on new ones. When the author's father once felt life ebbing while alone at night, he did not panic; he simply lay down and chanted stotras, resolved to go in peace thinking of God. That is the right attitude. Live fully, give and receive, enjoy every experience, but be ready to go any time, confident that death is not the end, only an interval. When we lose someone, remember them with gratitude rather than endless worry.

102. Resuming rituals after death of close one

Resuming rituals after the death of a close one. Some hold that vratas like Satya Narayana cannot be done for up to a year after a father passes. The author respects that view, but firmly believes that spiritual sadhana done without personal desires, purely to increase dharma in the world, can and should continue as long as it brings comfort and joy. As he puts it, after his father left he did not stop eating or breathing, so why stop his dharma toward the world? Dharma is subtle, and broad rules made for one time and place may not fit another; the right course needs the judgment of one's guru or oneself.

103. Approach to Guru

There are two valid paths. On the first, one gives absolute faith and surrender to the guru, no matter what arises. Through such faith, God and the true guru guide you, and even following an unrealized guru you can become realized yourself, like an innocent child parents never abandon. But it is hard, for if faith breaks you can get lost. On the second path, one follows the guru while keeping some skepticism and trusting one's own judgment; yet judgment can be flawed and rarely honest about one's hidden motives. The guru's main purpose is to light up our blind spots, since the inner voice of conscience is too weak in most seekers.

104. How to recognise a Guru

The honest answer is that you cannot confidently recognise a realized master from outside, since it is inner attitude, not actions, that distinguishes one. And even if you could, chasing after such a person rarely helps an unprepared seeker. So don't waste time searching. Instead, benefit fully from whatever guidance is available to you now, and trust Nature to arrange the next step. If a true guru is meant to guide you, he will find you. Above all, learn to listen to the voice of conscience within, which is the real guru.

105. Artificial Sweetness

Being spiritual does not mean simply being outwardly sweet and pleasing. In a world of duality, friction is natural, and no matter what you do you will please some and hurt some. What truly matters is which inner force drives your actions. Honestly ask yourself: am I acting from survival, sense-gratification, the need for praise, or a higher purpose? Aim to be a conduit of higher forces without attachment. Cultivating a gentle exterior while ignoring the troublesome instincts within is like putting perfume and jewellery on a corpse. It looks good briefly, but rots nonetheless.

106. Nasal cycle

Throughout the day our two nostrils take turns being more open, in a natural rhythm first taught by Shiva to Parvati. When the right nostril leads, we are in a "pushing", active mode, good for exercise, arguments or emptying the bowels. When the left leads, we are in a calmer "pull-back" mode, good for music, reading or sleep. When both flow equally, that inner dawn or dusk is the very best time to meditate. You can check the flow by breathing through each nostril, and even switch it by pressing under the opposite armpit. Plan your activities around this cycle.

107. Uttaraayana

Uttarayana means the Sun's "northern travel", and it truly begins at the winter solstice around December 21, not on January 14 as most Hindus now observe. You can see this for yourself: at midday the Sun stands lowest in the sky on December 21, then begins climbing north. The author explains that sidereal signs should be used only for casting charts, which concern space, while tropical signs must be used for reckoning time, calendar, seasons and ayanas. Sage Parasara was clear on this in the Vishnu Purana. Using sidereal signs for the calendar is a corruption of the Kali age.

108. Price on Dharmik Activities

Never put a price on teaching sacred knowledge such as Jyotisha, Tantra or the Upanishads, or on spiritual practices like homa, japa and meditation. Accept only what is offered freely and happily, and even reject that if it springs from regret or pressure. Charging money does not raise a teaching's true value; a practice grows valuable only when it genuinely changes lives, and that spreads slowly with patience. The one exception is if an enlightened guru has explicitly ordered you to charge. And even from a flawed teacher who sells knowledge, a sincere student may still progress.

109. Eclipse Time meditation/homa/Japa

Eclipse Time meditation, homa and japa. Eclipse times are especially powerful for spiritual practice, with some scriptures saying such sadhana is a thousand times stronger than usual. Solar eclipses work everywhere, because the Sun represents the soul with infinite reach, while a lunar eclipse only matters where it is visible. During an eclipse the soul, mind and actor within us align, favouring both desire-fulfilling and detachment-seeking practices, and the worship of fierce deities. It is not a time for ordinary temple worship, since the Sun and Moon that uphold worldly order are overpowered. So use this rare time for inner sadhana, not merely watching the sky.

110. Correct pronunciation

The author recalls that he was once passionate about the correct pronunciation of Sanskrit sounds, discovering that each can be derived logically and systematically, rather than being a matter of opinion or majority habit. But as his real spiritual evolution began, he realized that pronunciation and other technicalities are only about one percent important, while the correct bhaava, the inner feeling, matters far more. Still, feeling that God inspired him to gather this knowledge for a purpose, he recorded a video explaining each sound with grammar and linguistics, so the findings would not be lost.

111. Re-Incarnation

Curiosity about our past lives usually becomes a distraction rather than a help. Some such "memories" are simply deluded, and even correct ones tempt people into pride or easy self-validation. Notice that Krishna did not try to behave like Rama; each incarnation simply did its own fresh work. It is a blessing that Nature lets us forget; whatever we truly need carries forward hidden in our instincts and inclinations, blooming at the right time. So decipher the work of your present life and do it diligently, without worrying who you were or how important your mission is. Surrender the rest to God.

112. Vastu shastra

Vastu is now practiced too simplistically, as a set of blind thumb rules that miss its deeper essence. Each direction of a home carries its own vibrations, and health depends on harmonizing your activities with them. For example, the southwest belongs to Nirriti, whose energy can afflict food cooked there, yet that same energy of breaking conventions might suit someone doing unusual cooking experiments. Likewise a child's fiery southeast room aids study but may disturb mere sleep. So instead of memorizing rules, understand how these subtle forces flow, and intelligently balance your lifestyle with the energies of your space.

113. Healthy Eating(Ayurvedic based)

Healthy Eating, Ayurvedic based. No food is universally good or bad; what suits you depends on your Ayurvedic body type, whether Kapha, Pitta or Vata. So learn your type before deciding what to eat, since yogurt, salads, apples or a given oil can heal one person and harm another. How you eat matters just as much: eat only when hungry, slowly and with reverence, chew until the food is a smooth paste, stop at ninety percent full, and avoid gulping water with meals. Favour fresh, wholesome, unrefined foods and good elimination. The author adds that the most powerful mantra of all is simply gratitude.

114. Epilogue

The book closes with a simple ideal: be like the Sun. Expect nothing and trust the Divine, for nothing physical anyone gives can be carried beyond the funeral pyre; only blessings and one's own sadhana and karma go with us. When friends ask how they may offer donation, the author says the Sun gives light and warmth to all without differentiation and expects nothing in return, and he wishes to do the same. The best gift you can give him is to simply do homa when you can, joyfully and without pressure, enable others to do the same, then quietly withdraw.