



“Yoga for life” - Fundamental terms

At the heart of Sage Patanjali's teachings is the *pure* spirit of the self (Purusha) and this Purusha is unchanging. The opposite of Purusha is Prakriti - the material world in which we, as individuals, are generally ensnared. And thus there is 'separation'. Prakriti is constantly changing.

Purusa is the true self, soul, pure consciousness. The Purusa is the seer and truly sees. The term **Atman** is often used to express the same meaning – 'the true self'.

Prakriti is the material world, the world that we perceive. Identification is with the *seen* – possessions, for example. What we observe in the world depends on our own capacity for observation – how we *look at* things. We cling to the word 'my' as if our life depends on it. And this identification is the cause of our pain. Prakriti represents “the school of hard knocks!” Once enlightened, we can leave the School and *transcend*.

The modern day spiritual leader, Eckhart Tolle, tells us to reject the term “my life” and says that that terminology suggests that me and my life are two separate things; they are not. “It follows that if I believe that there is an “I” and a “life”, then losing my life to death is a threat.” Tolle tells us that “my life” is a “delusion of separateness” and the source of the ego. He tells us to remember “I don't have a life” but rather “I am life”. And in terms of death, how could I lose something that “I am”?

We humans mistakenly identify ourselves with the activities of the mind and lose the true sense of who we are – which is Purusa. We can find our true essence by practising Yoga.

When you experience yourself in stillness and feel the peace within you, you will come upon a new awareness of who you are. This new awareness will convince you that you are part of a greater whole. Waves are separate energies. They are unique, one of a kind but they do not exist apart from the ocean. You are much like a single wave on the ocean and are, at the same time, a specific expression of that ocean. Ego is when the wave - you or me - mistakenly believes that it stands alone....

Extracted from the teachings of Eric Schiffman

Atman – individual soul or self (individual wave)

Brahman – Absolute or Pure consciousness - (the ocean)

The stilling and quietening practice of yoga

Listen to your 'higher self' – the more time you spend in quiet contemplation, the more the clarity will come. We all have fleeting moments when we feel 'at one' with ourselves. It is our own ignorance/inability to discriminate between real and unreal that causes us pain. We can let go of fleeting desires and this doesn't mean we need to shut ourselves away – rather it means we have a more harmonious approach to life. “When consciousness expands beyond the senses, all is revealed”.