

Atharva Veda 5, 20

The lion roars for joy during the chase
expecting the food
The bull bellows for joy battling the yearling
expecting the heifer
So does the drum whet the voice of the hero
entering the battle expecting to win

Even when the rules are known and advantage enjoyed
victory is uncertain
but loss is yet unreasonable to expect
Having played well, prepare now to gather your winnings
As a gambler holding a high hand
As a Priest preparing for what must be sacrificed
Declare your message pleasantly and clearly:
it will resound in all directions like thunder
Your voice is counsel and strength to your friends
Songmaker! Give us a song of victory to sing!
Winner - or loser - you will gain honor in this fight
Like a drum, you inspire heroes to success
Even if beaten to pieces!

Alternative version for easier speaking:

Even when all the rules are known and advantage enjoyed, victory is uncertain

But despite this uncertainty, it is still unreasonable to expect to lose

Like a gambler holding a high hand, you've played well - now prepare to gather your winnings.

The lion roars for joy during the chase, expecting food

The bull bellows for joy battling the yearling, expecting the heifer, so too does the drum whet the voice of the hero entering battle expecting to win.

Like a Priest preparing for what must be sacrificed, speak now what you have to say. Pleasantly and clearly.

It will resound in every direction like thunder!

Your voice is a counsel and strength to your friends

Now, give us a victory song to sing!

Winner, or loser, you will gain honor in this fight.

Like a drum, you will inspire heroes to success

Even if beaten to pieces.

NOTES ON VEDA

The Vedas are four texts in Hinduism which provoke understanding (as in when you tell someone to do something or about events and they say "I know!"). Here, the Priest encourages a sacrifice of attachments to winning and losing so that the sacrificer may obtain the truer victory of honor. To a Yogi, it is not whether you win or lose, but how you play the game that matters more to whether it is worthwhile and enjoyed. There is an intensity and vibrancy to life that develops by Yoga, and while we all live similar lives, a Yogi becomes aware of their living, and by this awareness, considers how to better live.

Some things are impossible to accomplish. But success is never one of them. The warrior who falls in battle may die, but remains unconquered. They may be captured and humiliated, but rebelling, disobedient and defiant, remain unconquered. Lands and people who lose a war to be occupied are not necessarily conquered. But a hero, the one with sufficient honor, will conquer, and sit (Asana) in this victory. And would be worthy of their subjects. Thus, the victory blow, the strike which ends an enmity and fulfills the vow for which fighting was begun is made not by destroying the opponent, but by winning their friendship. Thus, the Yogi earns their own self-respect, and honor: the fighter will eventually lose, thus a Yogi who struggles against themselves eventually will win.

The drum being compared to thunder invokes Indra. Thus, the Priest encourages you to exhaust yourself, to sacrifice your strength, to trust you'll recover your strength, and thereby gain honor: this is the surest means to heroism.

Hinduism is a violent religion: there is no concept of peace, like in Christianity. Pax is not Shanti. Shanti is the strength to withstand anything undisturbed, whereas Pax comes at the end of war. Pax is not Ahimsa, either: Ahimsa is a promise of non-harm, to not

unnecessarily or intentionally cause injury, it is a promise of safe passage. The Yogi is always at war with themselves. Asanas are a system of occupation and oppression of the breath. Much like a field must be continually weeded to remain cultivated, or a wheel continually trued to remain round, or an animal continually trained and practiced to remain domesticated, a Yogi continually remains aware and alert of their breathing. And comes by permission and tolerance of themselves, by Ahimsa, to withstand, Shanti, all their distress.

Finally, the drum is a ceremonial instrument, and from this, also a symbol for the Dharma. A drum keeps everyone in Time (Time is Vishnu). The drum, beaten hard enough, will break, and need repaired, and when repaired, will be quieter than before. Eventually, the drum is discarded and remade - like the Dharma. It becomes quieter and quieter, broken and broken, and eventually forgotten and unheard. But it is easily remade. The same rhythm is beaten on a different instrument, a new "incarnation." Vishnu, in each manifestation, compares him/her self to a drum; this drum is the instrument, the tool of Shiva. It is the tool of dancers and performers of the Dharma, it is the tool of armies who conquer and occupy. It is the means by which we are kept in Time, and led to heroism, even if beaten to pieces.

What is a Hindu? Am I a Hindu?

Do I believe in God?

You'll forgive me, but i am a terrible teacher. i will only tell you what you already know. And assure you that you know more than i do. i am not good at public speaking, and require notes to remember what to say. There are those who remember fancy words, and quotes - but this proves only they have good memory, and doesn't speak to their experience. i would speak to your own experience.

If we were to talk about Hinduism we should begin by talking about rivers in India: the Indus is a river in India, a place once known as Bharat. Indu-ism is a word that its conquerors used to describe the bewildering multitude of practices undertaken beyond that river Indus, without taking the time to understand if or even how these practices interrelated.

These practices *were* interrelated, as were the practices that extended from India eastward and westward: developed in the thaw of the ice age, it was already mature long before Christ, before Abraham, when Hindu missionaries brought Buddhism to pre-classical Greece and ancient Egypt, when they carried Ganesh as far as islands of Japan, and further, and in modern times, when they were taken to this country, to our home, the connection in practice has never been broken. It is a practice that spans continents.

It is a practice that *predates* concepts of God and practices of religion, and consequently views all gods and belief systems with some degree of cynicism. Wouldn't you, if you remembered the invention of your god and religion?

Yoga unites body and mind, to strengthen both. Yoga is performed by Asanas, a fancy word for "resting." Just as sitting is a rest from standing, so is standing a rest from sitting; stillness rests from

movement, movement from stillness. Go to Temple this is an Asana, then come home - no one stays at Temple all day, home is an Asana too; go home and go to work, this is also an Asana, go to work and then go play. There are millions of Asanas, and it is both impossible to practice them all, and ill advised to. Not all are suitable to your goals. Keep your goal to benefit from your work, from your sacrifice! This is Kama. This is the means of Dharma.

Some Asanas are easier than others, some work is easier than others. But this does not make it any more right or wrong than what is difficult. But it does permit you to accomplish what is difficult. Free to do what is difficult or easy, you discover what is necessary to do. And how to do it expediently.

This “necessary” is Dharma. Discover your Dharma, your nature, your duty. Knowing your duty, you won’t hesitate to sacrifice what is required to accomplish it. Sacrificing for this necessary work becomes easier by practice, as any Asana does: sometimes it is necessary to work a difficult job, sacrificing for your family. Sometimes our duty is more difficult than this. Dharma permits work, Artha - by tirelessly working the Yogi learns that the benefits of this difficult work must be enjoyed if it is to be worthwhile, Kama. If something is necessary there will necessarily be benefit from the sacrifice, and all effort, required for it.

Hold not long enough, and you won’t benefit. Hold too long, and you’ll harm yourself - this you also shouldn’t do. How long to hold an Asana? Svaha was the wife of Agni, a famous Yogi, who would practice so long his wife had to call him home: she said, “well said, you did it, sufficient, enough, success.” Svaha! When Svaha calls to you, you have become like Agni. No, you have become Agni - Svaha calls to you. Do you hear her? This is the secret knowledge by which Yoga is learned.

A teenager attends to every strand of hair in a mirror before leaving the house: perhaps to extreme. What is enough? So should you exert self-control, to sufficiency. In meditation we observe body, mind, thought, even self – self, our identity. We do not have souls or spirits - we do not believe in them. We have self, identify.

We develop awareness and insight for the purpose of self-improvement. Why self-improve? Because it is by self-control one becomes capable of sacrifice. Yoga is the literal “yoke” for this work. The Yogi holds the reins in self-restraint and bears the yoke, training so they may practice in improving their nature to perform their duty. Like Ganesh, the Yogi perfects their wisdom into contentment. Then, they can make a beginning of beginnings, and an ending of endings. Then they can sacrifice sacrificing. Having begun Yoga, they may come to stop it.

May we now perform a sacrifice? By Yoga one learns to give up, share, use up, exhaust. This is what a Yogi means by the word sacrifice:: giving, sharing, using, exhausting. A book has a back cover: the Yogi puts it down when done. Favorite shirts wear out with use, and new style is taken up. The teacher is surpassed – and year by year, century by century, we push the frontiers of the possible further, discovering our potential. And neither god nor religion nor any other triviality really is the purpose or the means of this exploration.

Our practice embraces belief and theology, even mysticism with its crystals and magic, understanding its importance for sacrifice into atheism and disbelief: what is laid down must be first taken up. But we then go beyond, to nontheism, and go further - far beyond disbelief, and non-belief.

We believe there are beliefs: these beliefs are taken up, then held onto. Even obsessed upon. Ignorance of truth creates a desire for belief, and this causes a hatred of what is contrary to that belief.

We believe beliefs in this way cause distress. But beliefs can be let go of and uprooted.

Seeing is believing. Seeing is a belief. Hearing is a belief. Touching and tasting and smelling are all beliefs. Our perceptions are highly unreliable, shaped by biased thought, experience and incompetence. Bias! Through logic, through reason, we are able to understand better: there is no truth, there is no falsehood, there is only that which is not wholly untrue. Though there is no such thing as a perfect square or circle, we can draw them to understand their relationships, and tolerate their imperfections. We construct counterfeit dharmas, training rules, and ritual that we may learn to not pray. It is by strength and opportunity a Yogi fulfills their wishes.

But don't forget: we are not Yogis. We have been for some recent years "Hindus." And our Hindu rituals continue to strain against the nomenclature of a Christianity which *cannot* understand it. So our slogans, singing and training becomes an act of prayer, our lack of any god becomes a belief in the *invisible* god of the Christian, our lifelong, devoted, loyal friendships become *marriages*, our freedom in society becomes constrained to caste by birth, and our lawlessness and immorality becomes barbaric, even wicked.

It is a fact we had no morality. So the Christian gave Hinduism morality, and the words to describe right and wrong. We had no religious leadership, no books of authority, no law – so we were given these too. And it was by the generosity of Christians we now have so many illustrious Gurus and Swamis, all of whom supported their system of moral law. There is so much counterfeit dharma! Yet the Priesthood is still our right --

-- Because counterfeit dharma is itself an important part of our practice, whether we give it to ourselves or are given it by others.

Counterfeit dharma leads to a desire to let go of and sacrifice what is impure, inauthentic. This leads to take hold of what is

authentic. And this then too is sacrificed, and let go of in its proper time and way. The purpose of practicing sacrifice is to sacrifice sacrificing.

The spectrum of Hinduism is practiced simultaneously, each individual accomplishing the Dharma. The Hindu slaughtering animals in sacrifice, whether on their dinner plate or on any other altar, is quite as Hindu as the Hindu sacrificing animals in an act of vegetarianism: all earn the same honor, performing an identical rite differently. None are more advanced nor primitive than the other. This same sacrifice is practiced in different ways, frequently for different goals. But with the same urgent necessity, the same Dharma. And with time, as we grow stronger and smarter, we learn the most expedient means to accomplish our goals. And what goals are most necessary. We learn what foods are more wholesome, how better to provide that food, and the purpose of gaining strength, and perpetuating our lives with food.

A Yogi cherishes their ritualized mysticism, even crystals and singing bowls. This is a rational and logical thing for any atheist to do if they will move beyond atheism to nontheism, and beyond nontheism by sacrifice.

I assure you, identification can be ceased. The suffering of identification can cease. And it must now cease. This is a call to sacrifice. Give up your beliefs, your identifications! Give up self, become selfless. Perform the self-sacrifice, and then begin Karma Yoga.

What is a Hindu? Am I a Hindu? Do I believe in God? I will tell you for someone who understands the Dharma, the question never arises even if I am man or woman? Or, am I anything at all? The question never arises, am I a Hindu? We do not attach to beliefs of such things as "I." Or "God." Not without the purpose of giving them up.

A conversation with Koinonia in Preparation for Talking

Sherri, with Koinonia: At first the phrase “you inspire heroes to success even if beaten to pieces” sounded violent (beating someone to pieces) and then I decided it means you can inspire others by standing up for what is right even if you lose the battle and are shredded yourself. So, I would love to hear what you have learned from this reading.

Loka Hatha Yoga:

In this Veda, the Priest encourages the sacrificer to give up (sacrifice) notions of win and loss, that they may obtain honor sufficient to be a hero.

Hinduism *is* a violent religion: there is no concept of peace, like in Christianity. Pax is not Shanti. Shanti is the strength to withstand undisturbed, whereas pax has the connotation of a cessation of hostility at the end of a war. Yoga is undertaken through Asanas, a system of occupation and oppression. Much like a field must be continually weeded to remain cultivated, or a wheel continually trued to remain round, or an animal continually trained and practiced to remain domesticated, a Yogi continually remains aware and alert. Nivana (ni-not, vana-wild) is an ongoing process, distinct from nirvana (the extinguishment of sacrificial fire, the conclusion of sacrifice, the sacrifice of sacrifices, freedom) - the former is required to accomplish the latter - whereas (as I understand it) grace (required for communion with god) is a permanent procedure.

The drum is a ceremonial instrument, and from this, also a symbol for the Dharma. To coin the English phrase, a drum keeps

everyone in Time (Time is Vishnu). The drum, beaten hard enough, will break, and need repaired, and when repaired, will be quieter than before. Eventually, the drum is discarded and remade - like the Dharma. It becomes quieter and quieter, broken and broken, and eventually forgotten and unheard. But it is easily remade. The same rhythm is beaten on a different instrument, a new "incarnation." Vishnu, in each manifestation, compares him/her self to a drum; but the drum is the instrument/tool of Shiva. It is the tool of dancers and performers of the Dharma, it is the tool of armies who conquer and occupy. So there are many many layers of symbolism in that word.

The drum being compared to thunder invokes images of Indra, the attendant (and intendant, in a martial sense) of Vishnu.

The concept of standing up for what is right is a Christian one, as we do not have "right" and "wrong." Heroism has a different meaning in Yoga. It is defined by being honorable, or worthy of honoring. Not in the sense of merit, but in terms of truth, which in this one circumstance may be compared to the Christian concept of nobility (truth is a multifaceted word, unlike nobility). Honor has a different concept depending on the purpose and identity of that which is honored: there are concepts of loyalty and reliability (which is a factor of courage), but also exceptional strength and intelligence; that which is honorable meets (nearly) every necessity; a hero, that which is honored, is the necessary means to success. And this necessity is different for any person and situation.

Whether one wins or loses, whether the drum is beaten to pieces or serves through the entire performance, it is the nobility of the person and/or their instrument/tool which inspires. The old american political slogan, "he's our man, if he can't do it, no one can!" exemplifies this: even if the task is uncompleted, that which is honorable cannot be exceeded. Some things are impossible to accomplish. But victory is never one of them. The warrior who falls in

battle may die, but remains unconquered. The captive who rebels and disobeys may be defeated, but remains unconquered. The land and people who lose a war to be occupied are not necessarily conquered. But a hero will conquer, and sit (Asana) in this victory. And would be worthy of the submission of their subjects. Thus, the vrtrahatha, the victory blow, the strike which ends an enmity, is made not by destroying the opponent, but by winning their friendship.

In the wider mythology, Vishnu's many manifestations follow a single war between the Devas and Asuras (and all other beings who ally, one way or another, with one or another opposing side) to this conclusion of friendship.

Sherri, with Koinonia: If you have a brief comment on how the roles & rights of Hindu men differ from those of Hindu women, I would be interested. Also, I'm interested in how your Hindu practices affect your everyday life (i.e., what is different between your lifestyle and that of your non-Hindu neighbor?).

Loka Hatha Yoga:

Rights and roles of men and women and all other beings are understood to be the same - man, woman, animal, plant, fungi, bacteria, even the many unseen beings. All are equal.

In this equality, there is an obligation to cultural norms, and to bring these cultural norms (gradually, gently) to conform to the concepts of equality. This contradiction of respecting wrong practices of grandparents and ancestors with new traditions of equality is resolved by the sacrifice of family and nation. "Homelessness."

Some rituals are limited to practice by men, or women, or other beings, by nature of their form. Form is not illusory - a man cannot give birth, nor can a woman produce sperm. Neither men nor women can produce flowers like a plant, or iron like a mountain, or wood like a

tree. There are differences in youth and old age, too: many things are inappropriate to ask of a child, or an elder. And there are many other differences besides. And sometimes rituals require the cooperation of two or more kinds of beings. This said, most rituals may be performed by all beings. Or be easily adapted: there is no difference between a wildfire started by a cloud and a fire started by a match - each are suitable for sacrifice.

This is why whoever understands the rituals truly will not be limited by their form: one who understands does not consider they are a man, or a woman, or a human, or anything at all. The wolf doesn't consider itself a wolf when it defends the wheat for the farmer from the sheep: it does so because this is its Dharma. Nor should any person consider their form as particularly significant: they will accomplish their duty. Form easily and constantly changes, and by practicing Jnana Yoga, we learn to control our form. Both now and in the future, when necessary, as necessary.

As for a "Hindu lifestyle," well, I suppose the shortest answer is to say that while we all clean our bathrooms (well, almost all of us), a Yogi cleans their bathroom well enough they want to invite their friend to defecate in it. The Yogi will select the "best" cleaning materials, and honor those materials by knowing they are heroic, and defend the bathroom for their friend's use. They will love and honor their heroic friend, and know they have served their friend by preparing this toilet for them. They perform the work for its own sake, because a toilet should be clean - that is a toilet's nature.

There is an intensity and vibrancy to life that develops by Yoga, and while we all live similar lives, a Yogi becomes aware of their living, and by this awareness, considers how to better live. The Yogi, able to grow stronger and smarter, to control their form, their identity, their work, their means of living, their way of living, their lifestyle, chooses the best lifestyle - for themselves, based upon what is necessary for

them to do. How would you live differently, how would your lifestyle be different, if you were freed of concepts of right and wrong, of all morality, if you cultivated strength of mind and body, if you were increasingly aware and conscious? How would you live, if you were more truly human?

Sherri, with Koinonia: I am still unclear on the relationship of Hinduism and Buddhism. I read this:

“Hinduism and Buddhism are closely related. Buddha was a Hindu prince before founding his own path to enlightenment. For westerners I’ll often say that the relationship between the two is like the relationship between Judaism and Christianity in some ways. Christianity was inspired by the life of a Jew and Buddhism was inspired by the life of a Hindu (though the Buddha rejected Hinduism and did not find it to be the right path for himself).” (Ambaa Choate) Is this accurate? It seems more clear to me than other explanations I’ve read. Likely, if I understand it, it isn’t accurate!

Loka Hatha Yoga:

From my own experience, the White Hindu (Choate) is somewhat incorrect about judaism and christianity - at least as those two were explained to me by jews and christians! But then i am not actually an expert there, either. Perhaps it would be best to start from scratch?

As mentioned previously, ”hinduism” is not a good term to unify the diverse practices of yoga, whether in India (hindustan) or in the wider world. A person’s personal yogic practices will evolve as they practice more and more, until eventually, they come back to where they started - in this sense it is linear, but self-contained (like a line curved back on itself to form a circle). Understanding this, it is possible to understand that as not so much a line (a circle), but a circle

of circles (a sphere): after accomplishing several skills in Yoga, it is possible to connect different parts of the same line.

An example: one might be stuck in a village in South America, until one learns about other places. Following directions, one can travel in a line east to west to the next village. From this, one learns to also travel west to east. Eventually, one learns how to pilot a boat, and travel around the equator, east to west, beginning in South America, discovering and then going through Asia, Africa, and ending in South America. Perceiving a sphere, one then understands non-euclidean geometry - one can also travel around the equator, from south america to africa by way of Australia. Eventually, one learns there are entirely other planets to travel to. So there are multiple dimensions of practice: as one gains skills, one is no longer limited to one point on a circle, nor one direction in a circle, nor even a linear progression.

Buddhism is one village on this circle, a part of a "continent" of non-theism. Continents of "atheism" and "theism" also exist. It is possible to travel between them, not only by a process of linear adoption and sacrifice, but utterly beyond them.

The Buddha's innovation was the discovery of negatory logic, a skill of analysis that revealed concepts of relevancy and relativity. These had been theorized before the Buddha was born and exerted himself. In much the same way that people theorized the earth was spherical before circumnavigating it. These and other skills he developed were necessary to accomplishing the (then also now still largely theoretical) practices of Kalkism. When these are understood fully, it will be possible to go far, far beyond the "world" of theism, atheism and nontheism.

His posits were at first widely accepted throughout Bharat, and even exported beyond to Africa, Europe and Asia.

Hinduism is a Yogic nationalist movement of India. Yoga is a wider non-geographical, non-political practice.

The origin of this nationalist movement lies in the iron age: a political rebellion against Ashoka's Buddhist Empire formed: traditionalists insisted on local governance, and developed hyper-identification of local indigenous culture, local indigenous religion, and other indigenous and ethnic traditions against the homogenization of Empire. These localities eventually overthrew the Empire, and fractured into numerous small Kingdoms and Republics. A general rejection of Buddhism (because it had encouraged unity) was made, and Buddhism was no longer widely practiced there. Thus, Hinduism (now associated with a political endorsement of local indigenous ethnicity, culture and religion) became a nationalist movement in the modern era too, against the British Empire.

Nevertheless, you can see Ganesh in Japan as easily as you can in India, and there is very little practical difference between the two traditions outside of India. In India, there is cultural antagonism, but this has largely been eroded in the 20th century by a Vedantic movement. Subsequent Vedic movements also bridged the gap. In India, religion and nationalism go hand in hand. And make everyone crazy. Elsewhere, there never has been any significant difference between Hinduism (Yoga) and Buddhism.

The principle difference in logic can be refined to a disagreement on the mathematical nature of zero: whether it is real, or whether it is an abstraction. There are those who say "nothing" (zero) is not directly measurable, and so it is abstract (arguing how can you divide zero by anything?): these monists insist, instead, that everything is therefore "1" (all is one): everything is a component of an infinite but definite whole. Then, there are those who say that zero is real, and present as evidence a system of statistical and theoretical mathematics which is rejected by opponents because it is not based in geometrics. In the West, there was a similar disagreement until George Boole developed a system of logic similar to the Buddha's: if

we posit that the only two alternatives are either zero exists or it doesn't, we must accept (by circular logic) that zero does in fact exist. Circular logic is a crutch, but it gets the job done: in the East, the Buddha's system of logic went a little further. When zero is accepted as a mathematical reality, it is possible to conclude that there is no truth, but only not-untruth. There is no known, only not-unknown. Such negatory logic forces us to confront the basic nature of our reality differently: what is absent matters less than what is present; and total information is both unnecessary, and contradictory to the purpose of understanding.

Sherri, with Koinonia: Christians CAN NOT understand Hinduism or DO NOT? Is this accurate: Non-Hindus interpret Hinduism in their terms and label Hindu practices as prayer, or non-belief in a god, etc., when that is not at all what the Hindu practices actually mean?

Loka Hatha Yoga:

The word "cannot" was intentionally selected, because the "lens" of Christianity prevents understanding: in the same way that a belief in geometric circles prevents seeing they do not actually exist, even when presented with something which is clearly not a geometric circle, a geometric circle will still be seen through optical illusion.

The attachment to belief prevents understanding what exists beyond that attachment, after sacrifice of belief is made. You are correct: non-Hindus interpret Hinduism in their terms and label Hindu practices as prayer, or non-belief, when that is not at all what the Hindu practices actually mean. For the sake of trying to communicate on similar terminology, for lack of words. And, by and large, Hindus tend to see christian practices through a lens of Hinduism. It has been my experience there is a lot miscommunication, by talking at

cross-purposes. Thinking we are talking about the same thing, when upon closer examination, the assumption was wrong to make.

Sherri, with Koinonia: The idea that there was no morality seems jarring to me. I think of all groups of people having morality, I guess. Isn't Dharma related to proper conduct, which maybe is related to morality? Aren't efforts to alleviate the suffering of other living beings 'moral' undertakings? I think I have some grasp of Christians using their terms (such as God, morality, right, wrong) to describe Hindu practices and the Christian terms being inaccurate, irrelevant, inappropriate. But again, it seems odd to me that there is no concept of right and wrong in Hinduism. Am I just missing the point, yet again?)

Loka Hatha Yoga:

The fact that the concept of non-morality (as opposed to immorality or morality) is jarring speaks something to the lens by which you are studying Hinduism. It is a fallacy to assume all people have morality. Dharma is not proper conduct, but a word which more properly might be rendered into English as necessity, or nature. The soldier kills unarmed civilians out of necessity - that is their Dharma. The thief ambushes, kills, and robs the corpse - because that is their Dharma. Laxmi teaches these are both acceptable sacrifices. There is no right or wrong until you adopt a belief of one kind or another. And Yoga is a process by which beliefs are sacrificed. One must become freed from the constraints of morality: geometrically speaking, it is only when we have found the limits of morality that we measured it. What is the measure of good conscience? Should you ever have the misfortune that you would have to undertake this exercise, I promise that you will then conclude, as other Yogis do, morality is a cowardly

and callous philosophy - lacking in any substance of value. It is shocking to see such difference. From either side of the divide.

Sherri, with Koinonia: My definitions of atheism and sacrifice do not seem to work in this context. Are you saying 'A yogi cherishes his/her rituals, such as singing bowls. But, as the practitioner learns to be more 'one with the universe', belief in g(G)od(s) no longer seems relevant?? I'm thinking 'giving up' should be substituted for 'sacrifice', if possible. Most Koinonians have heard messages of sacrifice on the cross and go to this image. I think this will impair our ability to hear what you are saying.

Loka Hatha Yoga:

Good point about sacrifice - the word could be confusing in the context of Christian sacrifice. Give up would be more appropriate. As would be share, use up, or exhaust. I had risked the word, thinking it might be a bridge by which a christian might better understand hindu sacrifice as different and similar. But it may be a bridge too far.

Working toward translation and glossary

Loka Hatha Yoga:

As requested, here is a detailed glossary...

Dharma

Dharma: There is no single word definition for Dharma, but it does develop connotations of law, in the sense of natural laws of science: laws of physics, laws of economics, laws of humanity. Because of related conceptualizations, it is understood to connote what is proper, necessary, appropriate, or usually correct. In the sense that it is usually correct that a person may navigate by the north star (though exceptions are notable: this is not wholly an accurate understanding of "north" and cannot be used in the southern hemisphere, or with clouds, etc.): what is proper or necessary or appropriate or usually correct is not always so. From Dharma a concept of duty develops: in the sense of holding to principles of appropriateness (but being flexible in letting go of those principles). This holding (dhar/dar) can be understood by what is suitable, or fit. In the neo-Darwinian sense of fitness: survival of the sufficient (luck and opportunity play as much a role in survival as strength and intelligence): dharma is in this way understood by exploring in asanas "svaha," what is sufficient, successful, completed.

Asana

Asana: with the connotation of the seat of an elephant driver, or the military encampment of an occupying army posted against an enemy in that enemy's territory, the halt or rest in a military advance (in particular the last rest of annexation), or a dwelling where one sits (in the latin sense of sedes - a seat of power), or merely the

non-martial necessity of sitting down to prevent or as a result of exhaustion and to recover strength, it is a compound form of "as" (presence, especially an aggressive assertion of that presence in close proximity, an urgent and exertive personal effort, and especially the exclamation of effort ("oh!" "ah!" "argh!" in English) and "ana" which means the breath or breathing (in the sense of "catching one's breath"). Together, this connotes aggression without malice - in the way that sports players will not hold malice against each other but still exert themselves fully, or an occupying army holds no malice to the new citizens being annexed, a needed rest or seat. In the sense that when one has stood too long, one must sit, or stand from sitting too long, finding rest in what action is easier to exert for what is difficult. Energetically, purposefully seeking and accomplishing rest.

Agni

Agni: the embodiment of the sacrificial fire or its heat, the stomach in the act of digestion or the gastric acids of digestion (in the sense that food is sacrificed by placing it into the burning/dissolving gastric fire by eating it), the color of fire (gold, not the metal, but the color), the abstract concept of "next." Or the conceptualization of the warmth of a room's the sunward exposure. It is also the abstract conceptualization of the matter of energy (energy and matter and force are all different concepts, which are basically the same in western scientific thinking). Also, the proper name of a deva (deva is not "god" but "player," in an athletic or theatrical sense of the word who is renowned for sacrifices and yoga.

Indra

Indra: this is also the proper name of a deva (not a god, but player), but is better understood as a concept - one which is far too

subtle and complex to adequately describe with succinctness. However, as an abstraction of "spirit" - in the sense of "athletic spirit," "heart" or "vigor" it may be understood in this context as the "igniter" of the fire (spark being necessary to fuel and air for combustion). In the understanding that the fire produces light as a benefit, and that a pupil is designed to accept that light (both the pupil of the eye and a pupil of a teacher). The pupil is what permits light to be seen (after shaped by the iris and lens) prior to being understood and controls all thought arising from that sensory organ ("seeing is believing"), in the understanding, that water may not be obstructed forever in its journey from sky to sea to sky again, Indra is the "King" of light, and belief (a form of maya). Indra is the second wind of an athlete, the recovery of strength after exhaustion or defeat, an unconquerable and indomitable freedom. Indra's primary "tool" is the vajra, a weaponized dart that symbolically represents a moment of time, a flash of understanding (like lightning), a strike or blow that brings victory by fulfilling the vow or purpose for the fighting (i.e. hatha yoga), success, victory. It is a weapon that is easily carried everywhere, easily mastered, and when tipped with glass or diamond, can control white light to separate the colors of the rainbow, revealing the composite nature of form, or pierce through any shielding, lie, illusion or other maya, and in this sense is partially symbolic of logic's power over belief. Indra connotes excellence, primacy, the first among equals, a subduer of challenge. As the lightning strike causes a wildfire that eventually burns itself out when it is "enough," accepting what is suitable, and rejecting what is not, Indra and Agni work together to complete a sacrifice.

Shanti

Shanti: the strength to remain undistressed against the action or presence of stressors, the ability to withstand aggression, or even

change, the ability to conclude effort, whether successful or unsuccessful - peace.

Sherri, with Koinonia:

I tried to look over your text and think about what definitions might be useful to include. I came up with the list below. Most of these were extracted from your detailed glossary. Please review and correct as needed. Ahimsa, Brahman, & Yogi definitions were not on your list. Please correct these, or delete if that is more appropriate.

PROPOSED GLOSSARY:

AHIMSA: the principle of nonviolence toward all living things; begins by ceasing to harm ourselves, and that which we love

ASANA: aggression without malice; energetically & purposefully seeking and accomplishing rest

BRAHMAN: the Divine/ the Absolute/God, ever-present, all-powerful, and beyond comprehension.

DHARMA: that which is proper, necessary, appropriate, or usually correct; from Dharma a concept of duty develops (holding to principles of appropriateness)

INDRA: the second wind of an athlete, the recovery of strength after exhaustion or defeat, an unconquerable and indomitable freedom

OM (composed of 3 syllables: ah, oo, mmm): the sound of creation and the universe; vibrations created by the changing of Om are sacred and powerful.

VEDA: one of Hinduism primary texts, means 'knowledge' in Sanskrit; existed as oral tradition for thousands of years

YOGI: one who disciplines body and mind without expecting return; accepts with equanimity whatever is (all things are plays of divine light & shadow)

Loka Hatha Yoga:

These are better definitions:

AHIMSA: literally "no-harm." A promise of passive security or safety ("no-harm") received or given the form of permission, permissiveness.

ASANA: a declined form of "As-" "sit" or "occupy [as in after conquest]." Connoting aggression without malice; energetically & purposefully seeking and accomplishing rest

BRAHMAN: a person who knows the Vedas sufficiently to supervise those conducting sacrifices, and correct their mistakes - and is capable of the final sacrifice of sacrificing. Generally: a fundamental principle, or elemental component, as in purified gold.

DHARMA: that which is necessary, suitable, or fit for sufficiency; a law in terms of natural or social law (like gravity in physics, or economics in anthropology).

INDRA: King of the Devas, the second wind (as of an athlete) connoting the recovery of strength after exhaustion or defeat: unconquerable and indomitable freedom; associated with thunder and lightning, sudden understanding.

OM: a compound trisyllabic letter (a-u-m) composed of au-'m, used prior to language to signify it is an abstract illustration or fiction intended to convey subtle truth, like a linegraph portrays numbers, or communicate co-conditionality of concepts, or reference required prerequisite knowledge of the vedas and their practice and method of sacrifice.

VEDAS: four texts in hinduism which provoke understanding (as when you tell someone to do something or about events and they say "I know!").

YOGI: The proper description of a person practicing "Hinduism" (AKA "Yoga"), aimed at Dharma, Artha and Kama - that they may become capable of sacrifice, ultimately the sacrifice of sacrificing.

Sherri, with Koinonia:

Since the terms 'Artha' and 'Kama' appear in the definition of 'Yogi', could you please define these for me? For Artha, I had 'prosperity' and for Kama, I had 'enjoyment of life'. However, I prefer to use definitions that you provide.

Loka Hatha Yoga:

Definitions for artha and kama are below - but i am curious, because your definitions are so different, what dictionary are you using? And may i recommend a sanskrit/english dictionary? There are a few good ones out there. It is best to get one which relies on contextual translation (use of words in context) or scientific dictionaries (which develop definitions based on analysis of root compounds). You might try <http://sanskritdictionary.com/> if you prefer web-based dictionaries - it's approach combines the two techniques of translation.

ARTHA: The desireless cause, motive or reason for which one would want (lack) advantage/ing, use/fulness or utility/ization of a resource, and thus seek its acquisition - and, more precisely, the methods or means of that acquisition by skillful service, profession or business. Thus, Artha is not only the purpose of Dharma, but an elemental construct of "Dharma."

KAMA: The enjoyment of, the benefits of, what is acquired (by Artha), effort without any regret at all - Kama is not only the purpose of Artha, but an elemental construct of it. Kama is the means of understanding Dharma: when one understands the reason for Artha, one is able to perform Dharma.

Sherri, with Koinonia:

GATHERING WORDS (adapted from Paul Coehlo & others):

One: Humanity's delusion: I am here and you are out there.

ALL: We must learn a new way to THINK before we can master a new way to BE.

One: We are travelers on a cosmic journey; stardust, swirling and dancing in the eddies and whirlpools of infinity.

ALL: We have stopped for a moment to encounter each other . . . to meet, to love, to share.

One: In every community, there is work to be done. In every nation, there are wounds to heal.

ALL: In every heart, there is the power to do it.

Loka Hatha Yoga:

Though i wish i could contribute to the discussion about gathering words, we do not have any similar tradition. Focusing on the present is difficult, because unlike other forms of time, it does not exist in any measurable way (like zero, nothing). Nevertheless, presence may be quickly discerned through the first Jnana. At the jail, i teach "shortcuts" to presence as i might in instructing a child - jail is hard enough. "King of the Fish," "Lotus," "Mountain" and especially the mudra of "Yoni" are all beneficial in achieving the first Jnana: i have never had a student fail to achieve the first Jnana in less than a minute using these positions, and have even seen a student (without any prior training) manage to achieve the fourth Jnana within five minutes using these positions. i cannot recommend them too much - i hope they are helpful to you. Perhaps, in experiencing the present, you will find the words you are looking for? Or maybe become comfortable being without words... at least for now?

Regarding your words, they seem nice - but i would be interested to understand from you what they mean?