

How our Lives are Built

In speaking or writing about Vashanas, it is easy to give the impression that they are something "bad." Actually, these "habit energies" are neither good nor bad. It is impossible to live everyday life without building such habit energies. You would not be able to drive a car, play a piano, or cook a meal without having formed a pattern for performing these acts. Only a monk or a recluse can noticeably cut down the making of Vashanas and the eventual tendencies (Samskaras) that come from them. Patanjali, called the "Father of Yoga," said that Yoga Practice was "Chit Vriti Narodha," suppression of mental modifications. These mental modifications, called "Vritti," are what dictate our lives, indeed, form us.

To live a life in which the making of mental modifications is attenuated or suppressed is impossible in ordinary life. Only the one determined to make the spiritual progress necessary to assure better lives in the future, with "Moksha" (Salvation) being the eventual goal, can live the kind of life necessary for progress, giving up all possibility of Greed, Anger and Delusion. And this includes the Greed for Life.

It is not difficult to see how these Vashanas form our Karma, or, rather, the Fruits of our Karma. "Karma" means "action," though not in the ordinary sense, and we reap the fruit of our actions (the motive being all important). We can control our future by being careful of the Karma we build.

This is not an easy subject for people with only superficial interest to understand, but it, obviously, is the most important matter in the world. We are all born and we all die; this is inevitable. But how, in what state, are we born again? Remember, your future lies in your own hands. Recently I counseled a former student of mine, "In this life, do what is right, not what you think you can get away with." Sounds like preaching, doesn't it? Yet, in light of what is written above, it is necessary to add it for the good of all.

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