



# From the lower self to The Higher Self

finding balance

**The lower and the higher self are not opposites, different or against each other; they are simply different expressions of the same source. In Hindu traditions, there is Brahman and there is atman. Brahman is universal consciousness, and by developing or connecting to our higher self, we naturally become closer to it, moving away from maya (delusion and temporal) or the lower self. So in more simple words, the lower self relates to our material and mundane aspect (ego-attachment-desires) individuality, in general, while our higher self is related to atman, or what it could be called the individual aspect of Brahman. Ultimately, there is not one way of describing this concept, yet where most agree is in the sequential aspect of it, meaning...**

# We come from and we go Brahman

- Brahman is the universal (source of Creation)
- Atman is the individual aspect of Brahman
- Higher self is an aspect of Atman
- Lower self is the gross aspect of the human experience
- All the aspects or expressions of Brahman



**Atman is not created by Brahman in the conventional sense. Atman is an variation and extension of it, in the same way that our ego and attachments to the world is a part of our lower self. But why do we want to turn away from attachment and the world? Is that the point? No! the point is to find balance and to live a joyful life that ultimately takes us back to our original source.**

Spiritual traditions offer various reasons why we should strive to become better human beings. Some of the main reasons include:

Spiritual growth: Many spiritual traditions believe that the purpose of life is to grow spiritually, and that becoming a better human being is a key part of this growth. By cultivating positive qualities like compassion, love, and wisdom, we can progress on the path of spiritual development and move closer to our ultimate goal.

Compassion and service: Many spiritual traditions emphasize the importance of compassion and service to others. By becoming better human beings, we can better serve those around us and make a positive impact on the world.

Personal happiness: Becoming a better human being can also lead to greater personal happiness and well-being. When we cultivate positive qualities like kindness, generosity, and patience, we tend to experience more positive emotions and better relationships with others.

Connection to a higher power: In some spiritual traditions, becoming a better human being is seen as a way to connect with a higher power or to fulfill a divine purpose. By cultivating positive qualities and living in alignment with spiritual values, we can strengthen our connection to the divine and live a more meaningful and purposeful life.

Overall, the desire to become a better human being is often rooted in a desire for personal growth, well-being, and connection to something greater than oneself. By striving to cultivate positive qualities and live in alignment with spiritual values, we can bring greater meaning and purpose to our lives and make a positive impact on the world around us.

# The joining of thought, word & action

In many spiritual traditions, the idea of joining thought, word, and action is an important concept related to living a life of integrity, authenticity, and alignment with one's values.

At its core, joining thought, word, and action means that our thoughts, words, and actions are all in alignment with each other. When we have a thought or idea, we express it in our words and then follow through with actions that are consistent with what we have said. This means that our inner thoughts and intentions are reflected in our outer words and behaviors, creating a sense of wholeness and coherence in our lives.

In practical terms, joining thought, word, and action involves being mindful and intentional in all areas of our lives. We strive to cultivate positive and constructive thoughts, speak truthfully and with integrity, and act in accordance with our values and principles. When we are able to join these three aspects of our being in a coherent and integrated way, we are better able to live a life of authenticity and fulfillment.

Joining thought, word, and action is also closely linked to the concept of karma in many spiritual traditions. According to this idea, our thoughts, words, and actions have a ripple effect on the world around us, influencing the people and situations we encounter. When we live with integrity and alignment, we create positive karma that can lead to greater happiness, fulfillment, and spiritual growth.

**Different traditions might have different approaches to achieve the goal of harmony in thought, word and action, here are some examples**

# According to Advaita Vedanta

The central teaching is that the ultimate reality is non dual and that the individual self is identical to the universal self. To join thought, word, and action in accordance with this teaching, you can focus on developing a greater awareness of the unity of all things and work to align your thoughts, words, and actions with this perspective. You can practice meditation and self-inquiry to cultivate greater awareness of the nature of the self and work to align your behavior with this understanding.

# According to Yoga

The practice of yoga involves aligning the body, mind, and spirit through physical postures, breathing exercises, and meditation. To join thought, word, and action in accordance with yogic teachings, you can focus on cultivating mindfulness and awareness of the body, breath, and mind. You can also work to integrate the principles of the Yamas and Niyamas, which are ethical guidelines for living, into your daily life. For example, you can practice nonviolence, truthfulness, and contentment in your thoughts, words, and actions.

# According to Buddhism

Buddhism: In Buddhism, the central teaching is that suffering arises from attachment and that the path to liberation involves cultivating mindfulness, wisdom, and compassion. To join thought, word, and action in accordance with Buddhist teachings, you can focus on developing greater awareness of your thoughts, emotions, and behavior and work to cultivate non attachment and compassion in your daily life. You can practice mindfulness meditation, compassion meditation, and the cultivation of the Four Noble Truths and Eightfold Path to align your thoughts, words, and actions with Buddhist teachings.

# According to hermeticism and Stoicism

**The teachings of Hermeticism** emphasize the principles of mentalism, correspondence, and cause and effect. To align thought, word, and action in accordance with these principles, you can focus on cultivating a greater awareness of the power of your thoughts and the relationship between your inner and outer worlds. You can practice meditation, visualization, and positive affirmations to align your thoughts, words, and actions with your desired outcomes.

# According to hermeticism and Stoicism

**The philosophy of Stoicism** emphasizes the importance of cultivating wisdom, courage, justice, and self-control. To align thought, word, and action in accordance with Stoic teachings, you can focus on developing greater self-awareness and practicing self-discipline in your daily life. You can practice mindfulness, journaling, and reflection to gain greater clarity about your values and principles, and work to align your behavior with these values.

# According to hermeticism and Stoicism

Both **Stoicism** and **Hermeticism** emphasize the importance of living in accordance with virtues. In Hermeticism, virtues are identified with the seven principles: mentalism, correspondence, vibration, polarity, rhythm, cause and effect, and gender. In Stoicism, virtues are identified with wisdom, courage, justice, and self-control. To align thought, word, and action in accordance with these virtues, you can focus on cultivating greater awareness of how your behavior aligns with these virtues and work to make conscious choices that are consistent with your principles.

**In summary**, by focusing on the power of thoughts, cultivating self-awareness and self-discipline, and living in accordance with virtues, you can align thought, word, and action in accordance with the teachings of Hermeticism and Stoicism.

# What CBT has to say

One major key to aligning thought, word, and action is to identify and challenge negative or distorted thoughts that can lead to unhelpful behaviours.

For example, CBT suggests that thoughts, feelings, and behaviors are interconnected and can influence one another. Negative thoughts can lead to negative emotions and behaviors, while positive thoughts can lead to positive emotions and behaviors. Therefore, the goal of CBT is to help individuals identify and change negative thought patterns that may be contributing to unhelpful behaviors.

One of the key techniques used in CBT is cognitive restructuring, which involves identifying and challenging negative thoughts and replacing them with more positive and realistic ones. This technique can help individuals align their thoughts with their desired behaviors.

Another technique used in CBT is behavioural activation, which involves identifying and engaging in activities that bring a sense of pleasure or accomplishment. By engaging in positive activities, individuals can align their behaviour with their desired goals and values.

In summary, CBT suggests that the key to aligning thought, word, and action is to identify and challenge negative thoughts that may be contributing to unhelpful behaviours, and to engage in positive activities that align with desired goals and values

# Some scientifically proven techniques:

**Mindfulness:** Neuroscience research has shown that mindfulness can help regulate emotions, reduce stress, and improve attention and cognitive function. By practicing mindfulness, you can cultivate greater awareness of your thoughts and emotions, and work to align your behavior with your values and goals.

**Build habits:** Neuroscience research has shown that habits are formed by the repeated firing of neural pathways in the brain. By focusing on developing positive habits, you can align your thoughts, words, and actions with your desired behavior. You can use techniques like habit stacking, where you link a new habit with an existing one, or implementation intentions, where you plan in advance how you will deal with obstacles that may arise.

**Self-reflection:** Neuroscience research has shown that self-reflection can help improve emotional regulation, increase self-awareness, and improve decision-making. By taking time to reflect on your behavior, you can identify areas where you may be out of alignment, and work to adjust your behavior to be more consistent with your values and goals.

**Set clear goals:** Research has shown that setting clear, achievable goals can help improve motivation, focus, and behavior. When you have a clear goal in mind, it can help you align your thoughts, words, and actions towards achieving that goal.

# Some scientifically proven techniques:

**Visualization of goals:** The brain is wired for visual processing, and research has shown that visualization can help improve performance and motivation. By visualizing your goals and imagining yourself taking action towards achieving them, you can align your thoughts, words, and actions with your desired outcomes.

**Develop self-awareness:** Studies have found that developing greater self-awareness can help improve emotional regulation, decision-making, and behavior. By practicing mindfulness and self-reflection, you can become more aware of your thoughts, emotions, and behavior, and work to align them with your values and goals.

**Hold yourself accountable:** Research has shown that accountability can help improve behavior and motivation. By setting up systems of accountability, such as telling someone about your goals or tracking your progress, you can align your thoughts, words, and actions towards achieving your desired outcomes.

# Some recommendations

**Practice mindfulness:** Being present in the moment and aware of your thoughts, words, and actions can help you cultivate greater coherence and alignment in your life. You can practice mindfulness through meditation, breathing exercises, or simply paying attention to your thoughts and feelings throughout the day.

**Reflect on your values:** Take time to reflect on your core values and principles, and how you can bring them into your daily life. Consider how your thoughts, words, and actions can align with your values, and where there may be inconsistencies that you can work to resolve.

**Speak truthfully:** Practice speaking truthfully and with integrity, even if it may be difficult or uncomfortable. Avoid exaggeration, gossip, or other forms of dishonesty, and strive to communicate in a way that is clear, honest, and respectful.

**Set clear intentions:** Before taking action, take time to set clear intentions and reflect on how your actions align with your thoughts and words. Consider the impact your actions may have on others, and how they fit with your values and principles.

# Some recommendations

**Act with compassion and kindness:** Cultivate compassion and kindness in your thoughts, words, and actions, and strive to treat others with respect and empathy. This can help create greater coherence in your life and build positive relationships with those around you.

**Live with purpose:** Consider how your thoughts, words, and actions can contribute to a greater purpose or meaning in your life. Set goals and take actions that align with your vision for your life and the impact you want to have on the world.

**Cultivate self-awareness:** Take time to reflect on your thoughts, emotions, and behaviors, and how they may be impacting your alignment and coherence. Consider seeking feedback from others or working with a coach or therapist to gain greater self-awareness and work on areas of improvement.

*By practicing these recommendations and techniques, you can work to join thought, word, and action in your daily life, creating greater coherence, authenticity, and fulfillment.*

**In summary, by practicing mindfulness, visualizing and setting clear goals, focusing on habits, engaging in self-reflection, developing positive habits, and holding yourself accountable are scientifically-proven methods to build coherence of thought, word, and action.**

# Conclusion

In yoga philosophy, one of the keys to aligning thought, word, and action is the concept of "sankalpa". Sankalpa refers to a firm resolve or intention that is made with the heart and mind aligned.

The idea is that when we set a clear intention, it creates a strong impression in our minds and helps to align our thoughts, words, and actions towards a particular goal. By making our sankalpa with a pure heart and strong determination, we can align our entire being towards achieving our desired outcomes.

To set an intention, one should begin by reflecting on their deepest values and desires, and setting an intention that is in alignment with those values. The sankalpa should be formulated in the present tense, as if it is already true. For example, "I am living a life of joy and abundance."

Once the intention is set, it is important to continuously bring it to mind and align our actions with it. This can be done through daily practice of yoga, meditation, and self-reflection. By staying focused on our sankalpa and consistently aligning our thoughts, words, and actions towards our goals, we can develop greater coherence and harmony in our lives.

By continuously focusing on our sankalpa or intention and aligning our actions towards it, we can develop greater coherence and harmony in our lives.

# Practices

For this class, it is up to you to design a plan and decide how you will approach this challenge.

Use all of the information given and make an action plan to reach the goal of aligning thought-word and action and begin the journey from the lower self to the higher self.

Remember to not overwhelm yourself and to be realistically optimistic. The journey to know thyself has it all. So remember to “Serve, Love, Give, Purify, Meditate and Realize”