

Amongst the many concepts taught to me by my teacher, to help with understanding and thus working more skillfully with the student, was the notion of Bhava and Abhava.

The teaching within this important concept is that when a student comes wanting to learn Yoga, are they interested in learning Yoga to move towards the deeper teachings of Yoga (Bhava), or wanting to learn Yoga in order to move away from something they find unhelpful or undesirable in their life (Abhava).

For example a student may want to learn Yoga to move away from being unhealthy, or unfit, or less stressed, or an addictive relationship, or a feeling of lack of self esteem, or a sense of not coping, or the intensity of a homelife situation.

Here one may argue that, surely is not the student wanting to move towards health, or fitness, or better self esteem, etc. Yes in a way, yet what is driving us is Dveṣa Kleśa or where the place we are at is like a poison and we want to get away from it. This is the initial impulse that provokes us to find an opposite or alternative state to where we currently experience ourselves.

Plus the drive to get away from an undesirable aspect in our lives can confuse our choice of direction or goal, even generating an illusory sense of what might be seen as desirable in terms of being permanent, or pure, or pleasurable, or even spiritual.

Its not that Bhava is better or more desirable than Abhava as a goal, its about having tools to help understand what impels or compels or repels a student in terms of emotional drives or Kleśa.

Appreciating where a student is coming from and going to with regard to their personalised processes is important within the context of Yoga. It helps the teacher stay alert to appreciating the potential illusory aspects of our emotional drives within our psyche, even when moving towards a seemingly more positive state in life.

Arising out of this initial movement away from some unhelpful experience of and in the body and mind is an opportunity for then moving towards something beyond the mind and its drives.

This is in relation to the deeper movement or impulse within the psyche arising from the Cit or awareness and its potential skilful guidance inherent in every moment and every action.

Here we have a mystery of where for some to be free of a relative suffering and living life within a positive experiential frame is sufficient.

Yet for others even this quality of experiential well being is insufficient and a deeper search arises where we are inevitably drawn, like a moth to a flame, towards Yoga as a yoking to the immanence of the transcendent aspect that lives within every moment and every action.

As a teacher (and student) we can only stay alert:

- To the impact of what is arising from the past and its influence in creating the future.
- To what exists within the present inherent within every moment.
- To its potential in influencing how we handle the impact of the past in determining the shape of the future.