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The Power of the Mind: Mastery Through Meditation and Wisdom

By Yagna Pant

The mind is the most powerful and essential element in human life. It has the ability to lead us toward a peaceful, meaningful, and joyful existence; conversely, a turbulent mind entangled in negativity can ruin one's entire life. When the mind is left untrained, it becomes our greatest adversary, yet when mastered, it transforms into our truest guide.

The Dual Nature of the Mind: Friend and Enemy

Recognizing this internal dichotomy, the Bhagavad Gita 6.5 highlights the profound responsibility we hold over our own psychological state:

उद्धरेदात्मनात्मानं नात्मानमवसादयेत् ।

आत्मैव ह्यात्मनो बन्धुरात्मैव रिपुरात्मन: ॥ 5 ॥

Elevate yourself through the power of your mind; do not degrade yourself. For the mind can be your greatest friend, as well as your worst enemy.

Building upon this mastery, the sacred process of removing negative thoughts, restlessness, and harmful emotions from the mind—guiding and training it in the right direction—is known as Dhyan (meditation).

Stillness of the Senses: The Path to Supreme State

When we engage in this practice of mental discipline, the restless waves of sensory input begin to settle. The Kathopanishad 2.3.10 beautifully captures this profound state of inner stillness:

यदा पञ्चावतिष्ठन्ते ज्ञानानि मनसा सह ।

बुद्धिश्च न विचेष्टते तामाहुः परमां गतिम् ॥ १० ॥

When the five senses (sight, hearing, smell, taste, and touch) become calm and still alongside the mind, and the intellect ceases all restive activity or external distractions, that state is referred to as the 'Supreme State' (the highest state of Yoga).

Wisdom in Action: The Sthitaprajna and the Two Arrows

The second chapter of the Bhagavad Gita presents the core essence of the entire teachings. In this chapter, Arjuna inquires about the qualities of a spiritually awakened person, and Lord Krishna describes them using a profound term: 'Sthitaprajna'—a person of steady and unshakable wisdom. A Sthitaprajna is one who remains inwardly calm through all of life's ups and downs, neither disturbed by sorrow nor losing self-control in excessive joy.

In this context, Gautam Buddha's teaching of the 'Two Arrows' is also deeply insightful. According to Buddha, the first arrow represents the painful situations and external events that the world shoots at us, over which we have no control. The second arrow, however, is our own reaction and negative mindset toward those situations, which only multiplies our suffering. While we cannot always avoid the first arrow, through meditation and mindfulness, we can protect ourselves from shooting the second arrow.

The Ocean of Inner Peace

Lord Krishna similarly compares the mind of such a wise person to a vast ocean: just as rivers continuously flow into the ocean without causing it to overflow its boundaries, a wise individual effortlessly accepts life's changing circumstances while maintaining inner peace and calmness. They seek happiness within their own inner self rather than in external things.

In today's busy and stressful world, this teaches us that true power lies not in attempting to control external events, but in mastering our own mind through meditation and spiritual practice.

A Lifeline for Nepal's Daughters

Madan Baral
CEO Run for Our Daughters Education Charity

Nepal is one of the most beautiful countries on earth, and one of the hardest places to live. It sits in a geographically difficult location, with towering mountains in the north and hills covering most of the rest of the land. Earthquakes and floods strike often. The economy is not large enough to absorb disasters of that size, so Nepal needs constant help.

Growing Up Beside Struggle

I grew up in Nepal and saw how much society suffers. People from lower-income families suffer more, and those living in remote areas suffer the most. Far from roads, markets, and hospitals, families have little to fall back on when money runs out.

The cost often falls on girls. I saw girls unable to finish school because of their family's financial situation. With few jobs available and an uncertain future, many families could not justify the expense of keeping a daughter in class.

From One Marathon to a Charity

To change this, I started a campaign called "Run for Our Daughters" and ran the 2023 Chicago Marathon. With the funds I raised, I provided scholarships to 500 students in different parts of Nepal.

Many people responded with encouragement and feedback. Together with a few friends, I established Run for Our Daughters Education Charity, a 501(c)(3) organization in Illinois. In 2026, the charity provided scholarships to more than 100 students in remote parts of Nepal. All together this charity has provided scholarships to 600 students to this date.

Help Beyond the Headlines

A major flood recently hit the Rasuwa region, and donations poured in for the victims. That generosity is wonderful. But much of Nepal needs continuous help, not only help after a headline disaster. Help can be small, yet for people in great need it is a lifeline.

Earning Trust

I have met many people who hesitate to donate because they don't know where the money goes. Sometimes funds are consumed by administrative costs, and sometimes they are misused. To address that skepticism, the charity publishes its finances and scholarship details on its website. We also welcome suggestions and ideas for providing female education and improving female literacy in Nepal.

Why I Keep Doing This

In three years of volunteer work, some stages have been hard. Fundraising is sometimes difficult, and finding the right school can be difficult too. But I like the challenge, because the extra effort means a girl in remote Nepal who is ready to drop out can instead hold on to a lifeline. She can complete high school and be ready for college.

That changes her life. It opens opportunities for her personally, and it also changes the outcome of female education in Nepal, which makes for a better world for all of us.

The Disappearing Water Source of a Village

Abhudaya Phuyal
Science and Environment

In a village located in the hilly region of Nepal, there was no water shortage in the past. There was a dense forest in the upper part of the village, and a small spring flowed through the forest. The villagers used the water from this spring for drinking, cooking, and farming. During the rainy season, rainwater was absorbed into the forest soil and gradually collected underground. This water later emerged through the spring. The elderly people in the village understood the relationship between forests and water very well. Therefore, they did not allow people to cut down trees or throw rubbish around the spring.

As time passed, road construction began in the village. Many trees were cut down to build houses and obtain firewood. Some people also used forest land to expand their farmland. Initially, the villagers did not notice any major effects. However, after a few years, the amount of water in the spring began to decrease during winter. The spring, which had flowed throughout the year in the past, started drying up during summer. There was not enough water to irrigate the fields, and the production of some farmers decreased. Since people had to travel long distances to collect water, even students began arriving late at school.

As the water shortage increased, a schoolteacher assigned students a project to find out the causes of the problem. The students talked to elderly villagers, observed the condition of the area around the spring, and collected information about water usage. They identified deforestation, increasing pollution around water sources, and the inability of rainwater to enter the ground as possible causes of the problem. After that, the students, teachers, and villagers worked together to clean the area around the spring, planted native tree species, and established a rainwater harvesting system.

Within one year, the spring did not begin flowing as strongly as it had in the past. However, the villagers learned many things about water conservation. They understood that growing trees takes time and that the trees must be cared for regularly. At present, rules have been established in the village for water use. This incident has taught the villagers that we must be aware of the importance of conserving natural resources not only after problems arise but also before they occur.

A Lifeline for Nepal's Daughters — How You Can Help

If you would like to donate to Run for Our Daughters Education Charity, please contact me or one of our board members. Website link is: https://runforourdaughters.blogspot.com/

Model T Car

Aavah Shrestha

Have you wondered how life would be without cars? That’s why Henry Ford invented it! The car helped people move around places and a lot of people could afford it. Also, the car was a lot easier to start than setting up a horse. If the car wasn't here, people wouldn’t be able to travel from place to place fast, and people wouldn't be able to go to far places.

The car that Henry Ford made was affordable and easy for everyday families to buy. Since other gas powered engine cars were only affordable for wealthy people, Henry Ford made the Model T affordable for everyday families. The Model T cars helped families go in a car instead of a horse. The Model T was also a lot easier than riding a horse! You have to attach the horse to a wagon, add straps and feed it, but for a car all you have to do is fill it with gas, turn on the engine and drive. The Model T car was affordable and easier than taking care and riding a horse.

Also, cars let families go to different places other than their town. Since it would be a lot of work for a horse to travel far places like out of town, the car helped families go to far places without putting a lot of effort. If they wanted to go in the winter, they wouldn’t be able to take a horse because the horse could get sick, but you can take a car in the winter because a car is not a living thing. When it's a very hot day in the summer the horse might faint because it's so hot, but a car wouldn’t be able to faint. All you have to do so it continues working is to fill it up with gas. The car allows people to move around different places in the area.

The car is a lot faster than a horse, and faster setting up than a horse. If you need to go somewhere in five minutes but the place is far from town, the horse might take a long time but a car won’t take a long time. If you are late for work you have to do a bunch of stuff to set up a horse, but the car is easy to set up. If cars weren't here lots of people would be late to go to a lot of places. If the car wasn’t here the kids that live far from school will be late for school, since they have to walk, or their parents have to set up the horse. The car is a lot faster than a horse!

We are able to travel and go fast because of the car. Without the Model T car how will we travel to far places, how will we travel fast, will only the wealthy people be able to drive a car? Now that the car is here we can make improvements. One of the improvements is electric cars. Maybe some day in the future there will be a flying car!

A Beautiful Fall Day

Ruby Phuyal

I love every season, but fall is my favorite because it makes me feel wonderful! Every fall, we visit farms to enjoy pumpkin decorations, rides, and different fun activities.This year, we visited Sunny Acres, which is only 15 minutes away from our house. I asked my Baba to buy some goat food, and he bought it for us. My brother and I fed the goats, llamas, and hens. We loved that part of our visit!After that, we enjoyed the rides and had lots of fun. At the end of our visit to the farm carnival, we bought some candy. We also took many photos to capture our beautiful memories.We enjoyed the decorations, hay, scarecrows, and pumpkins everywhere. It was such a wonderful evening filled with fun, laughter, and happiness with our whole family. Fall truly brings us special moments and unforgettable memories!

Thank You



The Effect of Fatigue on the Patellar Reflex

By: Purnima Pathak

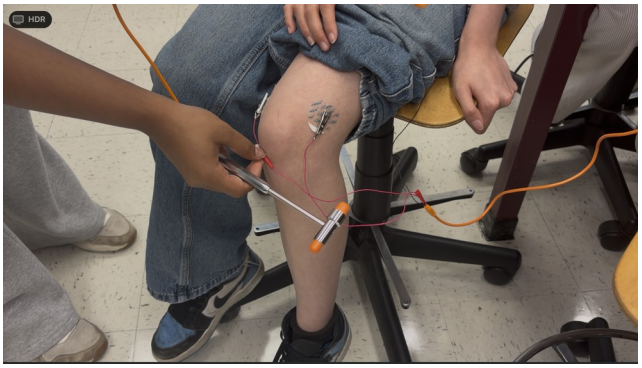
This summer, I took an Intro to Neuroscience class at UChicago. As part of the class, my group (Fatigue Factory Inc.) decided to test whether fatigue impacts the speed of your patellar reflex (aka the knee-jerk).

When a doctor taps just below your kneecap, this stretches your quadriceps (large muscle on the front of your thigh). The stretching causes a specialized proprioceptive muscle spindle to send a signal to your spinal cord, which then sends a signal back to your quadriceps, causing it to contract. The quickness of this response is very quick, requiring little brain processing.

For our experiment, we decided to test whether the speed of our reflexes would change depending on how worn out our legs were. We hypothesized that yes, being more worn out would affect the speed of our reflexes. To do this, we attached electrodes to either side of one of our classmate's quadriceps and attached them to an amplifier called a spikerbox, where we were able to measure the voltage readings. We began by tapping the tendon below her kneecap with a reflex hammer to establish her baseline knee jerk. Next, our classmate did lunges for 30, 60, and 90 seconds while we tested her reflexes immediately after. We also tested the effect of running as opposed to lunges, in order to see if different exercises produce different results.

Ultimately, our hypothesis was not supported. Neither lunges nor runs seemed to have a significant effect on the speed of her knee-jerk, although several of our data points did show signs of a possible increase in speed. For instance, one of my classmate's tests showed an increase in voltage right after 60 seconds, then again decreased at 90 seconds, possibly establishing some sort of pattern of adaptation. As a group, we noticed that while the speed of the knee-jerk did not change, the voltage decreased as her muscles became more fatigued. Perhaps the patellar reflex is a resilient response, and it maintains most of its power regardless of fatigue until the muscles are absolutely exhausted.

While we do not have strong evidence to support our original hypothesis, there is possible evidence that the knee-jerk does slightly decrease in power (voltage) as the muscles become more tired. In order to test this further, we might want to take readings from many more participants, as well as increasing the amount of time spent exercising.





The Architecture of Suffering: How Great Writers and Thinkers Mapped the Four Noble Truths

Alpabiram

Beneath the Bodhi tree, Siddhartha Gautama set out the Four Noble Truths: life involves suffering, suffering has a cause, it can end, and there is a path to its end (Rahula, 1974). Writers and thinkers far from that tree, from the Russian steppes to the Himalayas, from Bengal to California and Vienna, kept arriving at the same map. Read together, they make a single case: frailty is universal, craving is a prison, and freedom is a choice.

Noble truth (English; Pali; Nepali)	Teaching	Literary voice	Embodied in
1. Dukkha (suffering)𑀤𑀼𑀓𑁆𑀔 · दुःख	Life is marked by unease and frailty	Dostoevsky, Schopenhauer, Tagore, Jung	Raskolnikov; the pendulum of want and boredom; the shadow
2. Samudaya (origin of suffering)𑀲𑀫𑀼𑀤𑀬 · समुदय	Suffering arises from craving (taṇhā)	Steinbeck, Devkota	Charles Trask; Madan's journey to Lhasa
3. Nirodha (cessation of suffering)𑀦𑀺𑀭𑁄𑀥 · निरोध	Suffering ends when craving ends	Tolstoy	Ivan Ilyich's deathbed surrender
4. Magga (path to the end of suffering)𑀫𑀕𑁆𑀕 · मार्ग	A conscious path leads to freedom	Steinbeck, Frankl	Timshel; the freedom to choose one's attitude

Note. Pali has no script of its own; terms are shown in Brahmi, the script of Ashoka's edicts and the earliest Buddhist inscriptions.

The Diagnosis: Dukkha (Suffering)

Pali: 𑀤𑀼𑀓𑁆𑀔 Nepali: दुःख

The first truth names dukkha, the unease built into ordinary life. Fyodor Dostoevsky charted it from within. In Crime and Punishment (Dostoevsky, 1866/1992) and The Brothers Karamazov (Dostoevsky, 1880/1990), suffering is not something that happens to people; it grows out of the ego. Raskolnikov's feverish isolation and Ivan Karamazov's despair are among the sharpest modern portraits of dukkha.

Arthur Schopenhauer, one of the first Western philosophers to draw seriously on Eastern thought, gave the diagnosis its starkest form: life swings like a pendulum between the pain of wanting and the boredom of having (Schopenhauer, 1818/1969). A century later, Carl Jung, who wrote extensively on Buddhist and other Eastern texts (Jung, 1969), added a psychological insight: what we refuse to face in ourselves, our shadow, does not disappear but rules us from below (Jung, 1951/1959). For all three, as for the Buddha, healing begins only when suffering is looked at honestly.

Rabindranath Tagore (1913) captured a quieter form of the same truth. In Gitanjali, the soul's ache comes from being so absorbed in passing griefs that it cannot sense the infinite around it.

The Cause: Samudaya (The Origin of Suffering)

Pali: 𑀲𑀫𑀼𑀤𑀬 Nepali: समुदय

The second truth traces suffering to taṇhā, or craving (Rahula, 1974). John Steinbeck built East of Eden (1952) around the oldest story of craving, Cain and Abel. When Charles Trask beats his brother Adam, it is not for food or money but for the father's love he believes Adam has taken. Craving becomes envy; envy becomes violence. We lash out at the world when it refuses to give us what we demand of it.

Laxmi Prasad Devkota told the same story in the Himalayas. In Muna Madan (Devkota, 1936), Madan leaves his wife, Muna, to seek his fortune in Lhasa. Falling gravely ill on the journey home, he is abandoned by his companions and saved only by a stranger's kindness; by the time he returns, Muna has died of grief. The poem's lesson is plain: wealth is like dust on the hands, and the life we neglect while chasing it is what truly matters.

The Architecture of Suffering

Alpabiram • Continued from page 5

The Cessation: Nirodha (The End of Suffering)

Pali: ⊥ŤD Nepali: निरोध

The third truth offers hope: suffering ends when craving is released. Leo Tolstoy dramatized this in The Death of Ivan Ilyich (Tolstoy, 1886/2009). Ivan spends his life pursuing status and comfort. Only on his deathbed, stripped of both, does he let go of the belief that he lived as he should have, and feel real pity for his wife and son. In that moment his terror of death falls away. He does not escape death; he escapes craving.

The Path: Magga (The Way Out)

Pali: ४ĀΛ Nepali: मार्ग

The fourth truth is a path of right understanding, right effort, and mindfulness. Steinbeck's counterpart is timshel, the Hebrew word he renders as "thou mayest" (Steinbeck, 1952). His characters read God's words to Cain not as a command or a prophecy but as a permission: we are free to choose. We need not repeat the patterns we inherited.

Viktor Frankl tested that claim in the hardest place imaginable. Writing after surviving Auschwitz, he concluded that even when everything else is taken away, a person keeps the freedom to choose their attitude toward their circumstances (Frankl, 1946/2006). Frankl's psychiatry and Steinbeck's fiction arrive where the Buddha began: the way out of suffering is a choice, made and remade each day.

A Modern Counterpoint: The White Lotus

The third season of The White Lotus (White, 2025), set at a Thai luxury resort, shows what happens when this wisdom becomes decoration. Piper hopes to live in a Buddhist monastery but retreats to comfort as soon as she meets its simplicity. Belinda, long exploited by the rich, takes a $5 million payout and leaves behind Pornchai, the partner with whom she had planned a new life. Both stay on the wheel of dukkha because they choose craving over the harder work of letting go.

Conclusion

Across centuries and continents, these voices reach the Buddha's verdict. Suffering is certain, but it is not the final word. Dostoevsky and Schopenhauer name it, Jung asks us to face it, Steinbeck and Devkota trace its roots, Tolstoy shows its release, and Frankl and timshel point the way out. We always hold the power to master our desires, break our own cycles of cruelty, and choose our own path to freedom.

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Love In Fear

Prisha Parajuli

“I’m sorry to ask but what happened?”

10:19 P.M. was when he finally picked up. He was awake and I knew it. He was online just ignoring my calls. I know it’s not healthy for me to be clinging to him like this but I can’t help it.

He pleaded his separate case of lies. The whole “what do you mean” and then some excuses of “just being busy.” I rolled my eyes behind the screen.

Something has been weird about him for the past month and I’m sick of ignoring it. I know it's just the little things but it's getting to a point that's just irregular.

I had 56 points on that list and I showed him. His different habits, the way he spoke was a little different, nothing too weird.

“Astrid..” He whispered. It's pitiful, I love it.

“I love you and it feels like you don’t love me.”

“That’s disgusting.”

It was sharply said. Pure disgust. Something changed. That’s not like him.

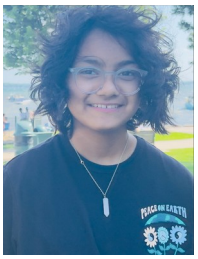
“You’re not right in the head, that’s not.. It's wrong to be like that. I don’t want to do this anymore. I’m done. We are done. Don’t ever speak to me again.”

He doesn’t want me? For what? All I did was communicate my feelings just like a healthy couple.

I asked him what I did that made him react like that, but he hung up on me. Oh well, he wanted to be mine so mine he will be! No take backs. I’ve seen those witch spells that make people love you back. I know he loves me back, I'm sure he does. Maybe he just needs some time to adjust.

***

It’s been two days and he hasn’t texted me once. It’s his birthday and he hasn't invited me to any plans or offered to go on a date. I thought about the idea that he’s waiting for me to ask him so I’m thinking up what to say to him right now. I think I'll ask him if he’s home. He always loves it when I come to his house when no one is home!



He responded immediately with “can’t you see” when did he learn that? That’s for me to see and only me. Oh, that’s why he wants me gone. He found out how much I love him. He’s not supposed to know how I love him. All he needs to know is that I do. And with everything in me I love him. I love him.

“I love you with all my heart”

It was the same words he texted me two days into our relationship. Now I’m texting him the same thing two days after our first fight. I don’t like being away from him. It’s awful. It’s like watching my heart being ripped away from me. He would never be away from me unless someone else wants him away.

He would never want to be away from me. There’s someone taking him away.

He’s not safe. He’s not safe. He’s not safe. It’s the truth I know it is. It has to be. I’ll save him. I have to. I’m the only one who can.

“Get out of my house!” Elio slammed the door in my face with a loud

crack. At least he thought he did. But that crack wasn’t a broken door. I felt three of my fingers shatter keeping the door open, but it's all worth it as long as he’s saved. I took a peek inside and he was by his kitchen. It would be fine to walk in as long as I'm quiet.

He had a knife in his hand. He heard me.

“Get out! If you don't... I’ll do it! Right here! In front of you!” He screamed. He’s scared. Am I scaring him? I couldn’t be.

“Aww.. I’m sorry you’ve been here like this. But there's no need to be so scared.”

“What the hell are you talking about..?” He was still scared. Poor Elio.

“I’m here to take care of you. So, drop the knife and no one will be hurt anymore.”

“Anymore!? What did you do! For every person or animal, you’ve hurt, that pain is going on me.” He took the knife and raised it to his neck closer and closer. And he did it. Right there. So I would join him? A life without him isn’t worth living.

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Halloween

Riya Phuyal

Fun and scary
People dressed up as fairies
Go to different houses
And get some candy
A yummy treat
That is supper sweet
People in different costumes
Some witches with brooms
Halloween is fun
Soon we will be tired and done
Thank you and Namaste



Halloween

Sophie Adhikari

