

## Positive Control

What do you think of when you hear the word – control? Some people think of self-control, or discipline; but generally, as a word, control has suffered a lot of bad press. Though it can have both positive and negative connotations; it has long since been linked with feelings of oppression, people that have been fettered, told what to do, been made unhappy; and people who have had their emotions, thoughts, and indeed lives, suppressed by unscrupulous individuals or organisations. This type of control is best described as inhuman and negative. It leads to rebellion in oppressed children, arguments in suppressed adults, revolution in disrespected communities, and nothing short of full-scale war in nations forced to fight for independence at the hands of tyrannical governing bodies. What I am describing is negative control; a type of restriction placed by one person on another as a way of being able to feel “in control.” This type of controlling individual acts in such a manner primarily because self-control cannot be obtained. The basic human need to have control is either acted out on others, or reserved for mastery over oneself.

Control over oneself is what I refer to as positive control. Simply put, this is control over aspects of yourself that your intelligent mind has deemed harmful to your self or others. As a basic example; if you have a bad chest infection and you smoke cigarettes – you lack positive control; because you are not acting in accord with your intelligence, which is guiding you otherwise. This is a lack of self-mastery or discipline. That one act, or lack of positive action, could lead you to take your frustration at not being able to control yourself out on an innocent person. You may try to control them in some way, as a way of feeling “in control” again. However, if you did that, again you would be lacking positive control. If you have problems with your joints and you refuse to exercise, but instead you eat incorrectly and try to control other people by telling them what to do – you seriously lack discipline, self-mastery, and positive control. Without doubt, most problems can be attributed to a lack of positive control, and the necessary repercussions of this deficiency.

According to Vedanta, which is part of the four Vedas - the ancient Indian books on spirituality, philosophy, science, lifestyle etc. there are three levels at which we, as embodied souls in creation, operate. One is the mind, senses, and body – the worldly level, or Manas; one is the energetic level consisting of chemical, emotional, oxygenic etc. activity – called Prana, and the other is the level of intelligence, wisdom, spiritually, and serenity – called Buddhi. The second level, Prana, is our source of conscious life force and energy, without which we cannot function in creation, and this energy is constantly being fought over by the two other levels.

The first level we will look at is the worldly level, Manas, which is constantly drawing us into sensory pleasure and temptation. It has no regard for positive control – it is only concerned with maximising enjoyment and pleasure; which in themselves are not bad things, but as we know from living in this world - happiness, pleasure, and enjoyment are not qualities that can be permanently extracted from material things. This is because happiness is an attribute of the soul and not of the elements. The reason this level, which is what we perceive with our five senses, draws us towards it so strongly is a simple matter of physics – magnetism, to be precise. Without going into too much detail, gross physical creation is constructed on the negative, or Tamasic, pole of the universe. So, when we focus our positive

intelligence, which is required to cognise it, and our life force, which is required to experience it, we are simultaneously drawn down into it. This Tamasic Manas pole, called physical creation, is what we generally consider as reality.

On the opposite pole of the first, above-mentioned level is the third level, Buddhi. This is a force drawing us toward the soul and the universal Spirit – which can give us enlightenment, bliss, peace, and liberation. This force encourages us to positively discriminate between that which keeps us bound to sensory creation and that which unites us with the soul; it is the initiator of positive control. This force is situated along the positive current of universal magnetism, the Sattwic pole, and is trying to draw the life energy towards seeking permanent satisfaction in the abode of the soul.

So herein the battle lies. The soul, or the Atman, which is the immortal aspect of us all has been trapped in creation – as part of a plan by the Spirit – the father of Souls. Creation, which includes our mind, senses, human body, and the entire perceptible universe, is just one side of the universal magnetic puzzle, and our intelligence, intuition, creativity, and other positive attributes lie on the other side. In the centre is the neutral representation of spiritual energy in creation – Prana. Every time this Prana goes toward the material world without control, it imprints a groove in the mind, or a Samskara, which becomes a habit. These habits lead the soul – which is living through the Prana, repeatedly, along the same grooves into creation; in which, no permanent joy is to be found – as per the plan of the Great Spirit.

It is the opposite positive current of creation, Buddhi, which encourages the Prana to be wise and cease creating Samskaras in the world of Manas, and instead turn its attention to the source of pleasure and happiness which lies, not externally, but within oneself. To realise this, Buddhi must convince the embodied soul to withdraw its indulgence in sensory satisfaction, and place its attention on the positive, Sattwic, current of the universe – which will free the soul from the entrapment of the senses and the mind.

Every day this battle rages on. For some, this battle is imperceptible, because they block out the voice of Buddhi. They choose to live and die trying to extract as much excitement as possible from this world. For others, who wish to elevate themselves beyond this dimension in some way, the voice of Buddhi is all too audible!

Negative control is an authoritarian restriction of sorts without reason or alternative. The positive control offered by wisdom is for the benefit of one's long-term happiness. For example, it may make you happy to smoke a cigarette – even though you have a chest infection; but in the long-term, it will probably make your illness worse; Manas is telling you to enjoy, Buddhi is telling you to be wise. One is encouraging you to act with abandon, and the other is requiring of you positive control – that is to discriminate that which is beneficial and pleasing for you, from what is sensually satisfying, but evidently harmful for you. The pull in both directions is the direct result of universal magnetism, which we perceive as wise and unwise, or positive and negative thoughts or influences.

Positive control is the difference between delusion and freedom; but it is not easy to master. In fact, it is incredibly difficult, with few people ever succeeding. But it is the only way out of a creation, which at best is temporarily exciting, and at worst is permanently depressing.

This creation only has a negative effect on us when we allow it to have control over us. For example, you cannot become obese and suffer a heart attack, if you have control over your senses, and eat foods low in fat and cholesterol, and take regular exercise. You cannot argue, offend, and cause grief to others, if you have control over your speech. You cannot be

broken-hearted and depressed if you have control over what you do, and how you deal, with your emotions. Without Positive control, you are destined to travel in circles for the rest of your existence.

Positive control comes in either two ways. One is through incidence and the other is through calmness. Incidence is when something happens to wake you up from the sleep of life, and you realise you have to change. For example, a lady is overweight and her doctors, family members and friends have told her to slim down because not doing so is adversely affecting their health, but she does not have the impetus or motivation to control herself. Then, one day, a friend's small child innocently begins laughing and pointing at her – directly making fun of her size. Soon a small group of kids are mimicking the way she moves and calling her names. That day, she begins her diet, sticks to it, takes control of her senses, overcomes her negative attachment to food, loses weight, improves her health, and in the process gets closer to her positive spiritual side, her Buddhi, and become a better, brighter person. In this way, something urges you to direct your Prana toward you higher mind and take control of your mind, senses, and body, or Manas – which incidentally, is the root word for Man, or Mankind.

The other way of taking control is through calmness. The sensory mind acts on stimulation. It is like a drug addict looking for a fix. There is no rest until a source of excitement is found, whereas the intelligent mind, or Buddhi, does not function without composure. Sitting down, and intelligently contemplating and planning to take control over areas of your life, which require discipline is one way of calmly bringing about positive control. Meditating, writing, relaxing, and introspecting are all ways of peacefully instigating the changes in your life, which require great positive control.

Whichever way you choose to take positive control over your life, there is no doubt that, unless you want to live on a roller coaster, running round in circles, and not knowing your direction; positive control, discriminative intelligence, and gentle, calm, discipline, is the way in which you should try to be constantly aiming. Positive control does take effort, it does require patience, and forgiveness if you do not succeed immediately, but it is always worth trying. He who is master over himself, is master over all else.