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## **Shankalpa**

Our will is the mental tool we use every day (unless we choose to remain inactive) to control and realize willful acts in life. According to Yoga, there is also an extraordinary will-consciousness called *shankalpa* which has two aspects :

- a) The will-consciousness itself that activates the conscious field (*chitta*) known to us as desire (*kama*) according to Bhagavad Gita and
- b) an ultra-consciousness that remains inactive - Prana Shankalpa.

Here shankalpa is imbedded in everything, it's by its power that fire burns and light illuminates. But shankalpa is also the power that sustains *Dharma* operating in the cosmic field - *maya*.

Thus, in addition to the actions that are governed by our will, shankalpa also manifests as an extraordinary driving force that brings forth and guides specific actions according to certain standards that sometime seem to be quite irrational in common life.

This driving force differs from human desire by the fact that it has no human primary momentum viz. desire (*kama*), that mechanism which ordinarily decides and triggers everything human beings do and achieve.

It's rather common to hear enthusiastic spiritual seekers express the feeling, quite subjective, that they are guided by such an extraordinary will as if they had been selected by and instrumental to a Divine tool. Too often such a kind of delusive willful-thinking seems to be associated with the need to

escape their primarily sense of responsibility and dignity that belongs to all human adults. In the worse of cases, such a perception may conduct to fatalism, the sentiment that whatever is happening in their lives, significant or petty, is not just predetermined or subject to fate, but actually caused by a presumed Divine will thus depriving them from any kind of responsibility or initiative in life regarding their duty to exercise an inborn free-will inherent to human nature - with its rights and obligations.

However, there are those extremely rare cases of human beings whose destiny is very special, as if blessed in carrying most positive messages, of hope and inspiration. But, in our dual world there are also those beings who, from humanistic point of view, seem to be "cursed" in disseminating cruel and destructive messages. However, all these crucial messengers are equally manifesting the incredible powerful force that shankalpa is.

This different will-factor explains the driving powers observed in the conduct of many *avatars* and *vibhutis* in India and elsewhere. These exceptional beings' shankalpa is a pure force of will, with no ego-driven desire. The Varaha-Upanishad (11.45) describes it as Original Power and as such the actual origin and support of the Universe.

Nevertheless, according to Hindu Scriptures this extraordinary faculty must be abandoned by those who pursue the integral dissolution of their beings.

How and where ?

Enlightened Yoga masters assert that such a dissolution takes place in the highest state of consciousness called *nirvikalpa samadhi*.