

The Way of Yoga

Change of Consciousness: The Meaning of Yoga

113

Yoga is a means by which one arrives at union with the Truth behind things through an inner discipline which leads us from the consciousness of the outward and apparent to the consciousness of the inner and real. Yoga consciousness does not exclude the knowledge of the outer apparent world but it sees it with the eyes of an inner, not an outer seeing and experience, alters and sets right all its values in the light of an inner deeper greater truer consciousness and applies to it the Law of the reality, exchanging the law of the creature's Ignorance for the rule of a divine Will and Knowledge.

A change of consciousness is the whole meaning of the process of Yoga[.]

114

Yoga is the science, the process, the effort and action by which man attempts to pass out of the limits of his ordinary mental consciousness into a greater spiritual consciousness[.]

115

All yoga is in its essential [.] heightening or deepening of our consciousness so that it may become capable of something beyond our ordinary consciousness and our normal Nature. It is an entering into depths, an ascent towards heights, a widening beyond. Or it is contact with depths within, heights

above, vastnesses beyond us, an opening to their greater influences, beings, movements or a reception of them into our surface consciousness and being so that the outer [is] altered, enveloped, governed by what is not our ordinary self. For the Reality which we are seeking does not lie on our surface or, if it is there, it is concealed and only a deeper, higher or wider consciousness than any to which we now have access can reach, touch or know and possess it. Even if we dive below our normal consciousness to find what is there it is some aspect of the Reality into which we enter.

116

By Yoga is meant — the word is not here used in the limited sense given to it in the disputations of Pandits — the use and [?] of certain processes of self-discipline [and] self-exercise or spontaneous and automatic self-intensification and self-extension of the mind and whatever in us is limited and that by which we enter into a larger deeper consciousness than is ordinarily ours.

This consciousness is aware of external things not only through the physical mind and senses but by other though often similar means of Mind, an inner sense or senses, an inner tact or feeling such as a projective or responsive awareness of things at a slight or great distance, a premonitory sense of things about to happen [or] preparing to happen, a feeling of things or persons not seen, an inner vision of physical objects and happenings not before the eye and hundreds of other phenomena not normal to the ordinary mind. These phenomena are ordinarily labelled occult or psychic or described as hallucinatory according to the point of view of the speaker, but such epithets explain nothing. This range of phenomena exists and for anyone who would know the nature and origin and possibilities of consciousness an examination of them is imperative.

This range of phenomena is however only an outer fringe of Yoga. It is more important that it admits to an inner field of

experiences of the utmost import, to a growth of psyche and spirit, to deepest realities and [?finally] to the deepest of all; [.]

But what precisely do we mean by the word Yoga? It is used here in the most general sense possible as a convenient name including all processes or results of processes that lead to the unveiling of a greater and inner knowledge, consciousness, experience. Any psychic discipline by which we can pass partly or wholly into a spiritual state of the consciousness, any spontaneous or systematised approach to the inner Reality or the supreme Reality, any state of union or closeness to the Divine, any entry into a consciousness larger, deeper or higher than the normal consciousness common to humankind, fall automatically within the range of the word Yoga. Yoga takes us from the surface into the depths of our consciousness or it admits us into its very centre; it takes us up to the hidden topmost heights of our conscious being. It shows to us the secrets of the Self and the secret of the Divine. It gives us the knowledge, the vision, the presence of the Immanent and the Cosmic and the Transcendent Reality; that is its supreme purpose. On a lower grade it gives us the key to an inner and larger consciousness that is subliminal to us and brings out its experiences, its powers and possibilities and unless we know these things the secret of Consciousness and the knowledge of our whole being must escape us. It is through this door that we pass from a nescience of our true nature into a full light of self-knowledge.

But there are methods, schools, disciplines of Yoga that are turned towards one restricted aim, follow each a different path, win control of a separate province and by following that exclusive path we shall know that province of our being only or reach a single summit. It is by the integrality of Yoga that one can attain the integrality of consciousness. Our aim must be to embrace in this new knowledge all the planes of consciousness and all its summits. Then in the light of the knowledge brought to us and its widening and heightening of our consciousness, it is in the light of the top of things

that we have to see and know all. It is then only that our ignorance or a very partial and surface awareness of ourselves can be flooded by a light of self-revelation and turn into self-knowledge.

117

Yoga is in its essence a passage from the ordinary consciousness in which we are aware only of appearances into a higher wider deeper consciousness in which we become aware of realities and of the one Reality. Not only do we become aware of it, but we can live in it and act from it and according to it instead of living in and according to the appearance of things. Yoga is a passage from ignorance to self-knowledge, from our apparent to our true being, from an outer phenomenal mental vital material life-existence to an inner spiritual existence and a spiritualised nature.

By Yoga we pass from the phenomenal to the real Man, from the consciousness of our own apparent outer nature to the consciousness of our real self, Atman, an inner and inmost man, Purusha, that which we truly and eternally are. This self or true being remains constant through all the changes of our phenomenal being, changes of the mind, life or body or changes of our apparent personality; it is permanent, perpetual and immortal, a portion or manifestation of the Eternal.

By Yoga we pass also from our consciousness of the phenomenal appearance or appearances of the cosmos or world around us to a consciousness of its truth and reality. We become aware of the world as a manifestation of or in universal being who is the true truth of all that we see, hear, experience. We become aware of a cosmic Consciousness which is the secret of the cosmic Energy, a cosmic Self or Spirit, the cosmic Divine, the universal Godhead.

But by Yoga we become aware also that our own Self or true being is one with the cosmic Self and Spirit, our nature a play of the cosmic Nature; the wall between ourselves and the

universe begins to disappear and vanishes altogether. We realise the selfsame Pantheos in ourselves, in others and in all universal existence.

But also by Yoga we become aware of something that is more than our individual being and more than the cosmic being, a transcendent Being or Existence which is not dependent on ours or the existence of the universe. Our existence is a manifestation of and in that Being, the cosmos also is a manifestation of and in that one Supreme Existence.

This then is the Truth or Reality to which we arrive by Yoga, a one and supreme Being or Existence and Power of Being which manifests as a cosmic Self or Spirit and a cosmic Energy or Nature and in that again as our own self or spirit which becomes aware of itself as an individual being and nature.

Union: The Aim of Yoga

118

It is the aim of all Yoga to pass by a change of consciousness into the Reality that is behind things and live no longer in their appearance. To enter into some kind of union or communion or participation in that is the common object of all Yoga.

But the Reality presents itself to the consciousness of man the mental being under many aspects. We seek after union or closeness to the Divine, whatever the Divine may be. We see the Divine as a personal Godhead or as an impersonal Existence. A God of Love or compassion attracts us or a God of might and power. It is a divine Friend who meets us or a Divine Master or a World Father or World Mother or an almighty Lord of all or a Divine Lover. We are in the presence of a Cosmic Spirit in whose universal consciousness we lose our separate ego or a Supracosmic Absolute in whom we lose altogether our cosmic as well as our individual existence. We find our own highest Self or the Self of all or we pass into a sublime

Mystery without relation or feature where neither self nor all can exist any longer. Or it may be the inexpressible mystery of an original Nihil that abolishes for us all suffering along with all existence — or else that Nihil may be a mystic All that is far other than the false and illusory being created for us by mind and life experience.

119

Yoga is our union with some Being or some Reality, which is greater than ourselves or is our own greatest and real Self; it is That which by Yoga we join, enter into or become.

120

All Yoga strives towards union with the Highest, the Spirit, the Self, the Divine, or whatever other name or aspect we seize of the One Eternal and Infinite.

And by union we mean, first, contact constant and increasing with the consciousness of the Divine or Infinite, then to assimilate it or assimilate ourselves to it, then to become not only like to it and full of it, but to enter into it and dwell in it, to become that divine consciousness and being, essence of its essence and so abolish all division that separates us from the Divinity from whom we came.

121

To be one with the Eternal is the object of Yoga; there is no other object, because all other aims are included in this one divine perfection.

To be one with the Eternal is to be one with him in being, consciousness, power and delight. All that is is summed in these four terms of the infinite, for all else are but their workings.

To be one with the Eternal is also to live in the Eternal and in his presence and from his infinite nature, — sayujya, salokya,

samipya, sadrishya. These four together are one way of being and one perfection.

To live in the Eternal is also to live with the Eternal within us. Whosoever consciously inhabits his being, his conscious presence inhabits. God lives and moves and acts in us when we live and move and act in him[.]

122

Yoga is the contact of the humanity in us with the deity in which it dwells, of the finite with the Infinite, of the as yet accomplished evolving & imperfect humanity with its yet unevolved attainable perfection, of the outwardly active waking consciousness which is controlled with the inwardly active controlling consciousness, of man with God, of the changing outward apparent ego with the secret real and immutable Self. By that contact the lower rises to the higher, the unevolved evolves, the unborn is created, humanity assumes some part of godhead, man moves upward to God. This upward and self-expanding movement is the utility of Yoga.

123

To be one in all ways of thy being with that which is the Highest, this is Yoga. To be one in all ways of thy being with that which is the All, this is Yoga. To be one in thy spirit and with thy understanding and thy heart and in all thy members with the God in humanity, this is Yoga. To be one with all Nature and all beings, this is Yoga. All this is to be one with God in his transcendence and his cosmos and all that he has created in his being. Because from him all is and all is in him and he is all and in all and because he is thy highest Self and thou art one with him in thy spirit and a portion of him in thy soul and at play with him in thy nature, and because this world is a scene in his being in which he is thy secret Master and lover and friend and the lord and sustainer and aim of all thou art, therefore is oneness with him the perfect way of thy being[.]

124

The human being on earth is God playing at humanity in a world of matter under the conditions of a hampered density with the ulterior intention of imposing law of spirit on matter & nature of deity upon human nature. Evolution is nothing but the progressive unfolding of Spirit out of the density of material consciousness and the gradual self-revelation of God out of this apparent animal being.

Yoga is the application, for this process of divine self-revelation, of the supreme force of tapas by which God created the world, supports it & will destroy it. It substitutes always some direct action of an infinite divine force for the limited workings of our fettered animal humanity. It uses divine means in order to rise to divinity.

All Yoga is tapasya and all siddhi of Yoga is accomplishment of godhead either by identity or by relation with the Divine Being in its principles or its personality or in both or simultaneously by identity and relation.

Identity is the principle of Advaita, relation of Dvaita, relation in a qualified identity of Visishtadvaita. But entire perfection comes by identity with God in essential experience & relation of difference with Him in experience of manifestation.

125

In the end a union, a closeness, a constant companionship in the soul with the Divine, and a yet more wonderful oneness and inliving[.]

Yoga Partial and Complete

126

Yoga means union and the whole object of Yoga is the union of the human soul with the supreme Being and of the present

nature of humanity with the eternal, supreme or divine Nature.

The greater the union, the greater the Yoga, the more complete the union, the more complete the Yoga.

There are different conceptions of the supreme Being and to each conception corresponds a school of Yoga with its separate idea and discipline. But these are partial and not complete systems; or rather they are complete in themselves, but do not cover the whole human being and nature. Most of them lead away from life and are useful only to the few who are moved to turn away from human existence and seek the bliss of some other state of being. To humanity at large this kind of Yoga has no real message. The complete Yoga will be one which accepts God in the world and oneness with all beings and solidarity with the human kind, fills life and existence with the God-consciousness and not only raises man the individual but leads man the race towards a total perfection.

127

The aim put before itself by Yoga is God; its method is tapasya.

God is the All and that which exceeds & transcends the All; there is nothing in existence which is not God but God is not anything in that existence, except symbolically, in image to His own consciousness. Humanity also is a symbol or eidolon of God, we are made in His image; and by that is meant, not a formal image, but in the image of His being and personality, the essence of divinity & its quality, the divine being & divine knowledge.

There are in every thing existing phenomenally or, as we shall say, symbolically, two parts, the thing in itself & the symbol, Self & Nature, *res* (thing that is) & *factum* (thing that is made), immutable being & mutable becoming, that which is supernatural in it & that [which] is natural.

Everything in existence has something in it which seeks to transcend itself; Matter moves towards becoming Life, Life moves towards becoming Mind, Mind moves towards becoming ideal Truth, ideal Truth rises to become divine & infinite Spirit.

The reason is that every symbol, being a partial expression of God, reaches out to & seeks to become its own entire reality; it aspires to become its real self by transcending its apparent self. Thing that is made is attracted towards Thing that is, becoming towards being, the natural to the supernatural, symbol towards Thing in itself, Nature towards God.

The upward movement is the means towards fulfilment of existence in the world; downward movement is destruction, Hell, perdition. Everything tends [to] move upward; once it is assured of its natural existence, it seeks the supernatural. Every nature is a step towards some supernature, something natural to itself but supernatural to what is below it. Life is supernatural to Matter, Mind supernatural to Life, ideal being supernatural to mental being, infinite being supernatural to ideal being. So too man is supernatural to the animal, God is supernatural to man. Man too as soon as he has assured his natural existence, must insist on his upward movement towards God. The upward movement is towards Heaven, the downward movement towards Hell.

The animal soul fulfils itself when it transcends animality & becomes human. Humanity also fulfils itself when it transcends humanity & becomes God.

By yielding to Nature, we fall away both from Nature & from God; by transcending Nature we at once fulfil all the possibilities of Nature & rise towards God. The human touches first the divine & then becomes divine.

There are those who seek to kill Nature in order to become the Self; but that is not God's intention in humanity. We have to transcend Nature, not to kill it.

Every movement of humanity which seeks to destroy Nature, however religious, lofty or austere, of whatever dazzling purity of ethereality, is doomed to failure, sick disappointment, disillusionment or perversion. It is in its nature transient, because it contradicts God's condition for us. He has set Nature there as a condition of His self-fulfilment in the world.

Every movement of humanity which bids us be satisfied

with Nature, dwell upon the earth & cease to look upwards, however rational, clear-sighted, practical, effective, comfortable it may be is doomed to weariness, petrification & cessation. It is in its nature transient because it contradicts God's intention in us. He dwells secret in Nature & compels us towards Him by His irresistible attraction.

Materialistic movements are as unnatural & abnormal as ascetic & negatory religions & philosophies. Under the pretence of bringing us back to Nature, they take us away from her entirely; for they forget that Nature is only phenomenally Nature but in reality she is God. The divine element in her is that which she most really is; the rest is only condition, process & stage in her development of the secret divinity.

Not to be ensnared, emmeshed and bound by Nature, not to hate & destroy her, is the first thing we must learn if we would be complete Yogins & proceed towards our divine perfection.

Being still natural in the world to transcend Nature internally so that both internally & externally we may master & use her as free & lord, swarat samrat, is our fulfilment.

Being still the symbol to reach through it the thing that symbolises itself, to realise the symbol, is our fulfilment.

Being still a figure of humanity, man among men, a living body among living bodies, though housed in life & matter yet a mental being among mental beings, being & remaining all this that we are apparently, yet to exceed all this apparent manhood and become in the body what we are really, God, spirit, supreme & infinite, pure Bliss, pure Force, pure Light, this is our fulfilment.

Our whole apparent life is a becoming, but all becoming has for its goal & fulfilment being & God is the only being; to become divine in the nature of the world, in the symbol of humanity is our fulfilment.

Yoga in its practice may be either perfect or partial, either selective or comprehensive. Perfect and comprehensive Yoga avoids limitations by aspects and leads to entire divinity.

If we are to exceed our human stature and become divine,

we must first, in our Indian phrase, get God; for this human ego is the lower imperfect term of our being, God is its higher perfect term. God in us is the possessor of our super-nature and without Him there is no effectual rising. The finite cannot become infinite, unless it perceives & desires to touch its own secret infinity; nor can the symbol-being, unless it knows, loves and pursues its Self-Reality, overcome the present limits of its merely apparent nature. This necessity is the imperative justification of religion, — not of a church, creed or theology; for these things are all outward religiosity rather than the truth of religion, but of that personal and intimate religion, a thing of temper and spirit and life, not of views or ceremonies which draws each man to his own vision of the Supreme or his own idea of something higher than himself. Without the worship of the Supreme in the heart, the aspiration towards it in the will or the thirst for it in the temperamental cravings we shall not have the impulse or the strength for the difficult and supreme effort demanded of us. Therefore have the prophets spoken and the Avatars descended, so that mankind may be inspired to this great call upon its upward-straining energies. The aim of rationalism & Science is to make man content with his humanity and contradict Nature, baffling her evolution; the aim of religion, — but not unhappily of the creeds & Churches — is to farther the great aim of Nature by pushing man towards his evolution.

The attainment of God is the true object of all human effort for which all his other efforts political, social, literary, intellectual, are only a necessary condition & preparation of the race; but then there are both differences in the state of the attainment, differences in its range & effectivity. Three states of divine attainment may usefully be distinguished, touch with God, indwelling in Him & becoming He. The first is initial & elementary; unless passing the veil of our ordinary nature we touch the divine Being or He leaning down impose His touch [on] us, unless we come first into contact with Him either in our heart, our mind, our works or our being, we cannot go on to indwell in Him. If we are strong in spirit, the touch may indeed be rapid & summary & we may wake at once & stride

forward to the state of divine indwelling, soul of man in the soul of God, the individual in the universal; but the touch must be there. To enforce this preliminary step, to bring man into some kind of contact with God, is the common and sometimes the sole preoccupation of human religions. It does not matter greatly to Nature for her purpose how it is done, — in however crude & elementary a way, through whatever intellectual errors & emotional blunders or ethical outrages, the touch must be established; this imperatively & above all things the religious spirit demands. Nature, as is always her way, presses on to her all-important, immediate steps and is willing to purchase a single great & general gain by any number of particular losses. Man, besides, is so various in the arrangement of his human qualities, the master spring as well as the peculiar temperament differs so greatly or so subtly in each individual that there can never be, for this purpose of Nature's, too many sects, disciplines or different religions. Swami Vivekananda has well seen the consummation of religion in a state when each human individual has his own religion dictated by his own spiritual needs & nature; for collective creeds, Churches & theologies, in spite of their temporary necessity & some undeniable permanent advantages, help to formalise the upward effort & deprive it of its adaptability, freedom & perfect individual sincerity. The priest & dogma will seldom leave God & the soul free to meet each other in that solitude & spontaneity which gives the union its highest force & delight. They are always pressing in to control & preside at the marriage & legitimise it with formulas, rites & official registration.

Moreover the intellect of natural man is narrow, his effort soon exhausted & easily satisfied with imperfection. If he is led to think that his way of contact with the Divine is the only way, his own freedom of higher development is fettered or entirely taken away from him & in his intellectual & religious egoism he militates against the freedom of others. Most religions tend easily to believe that the contact with God once established, no matter with what limitations or of what kind, all is done that needs to be done, all fulfilled that God demands of us.

Popular religions tend naturally to be dualistic and to preserve a trenchant distinction between man & God dividing the symbol being from That which expresses itself in him; while with one hand they raise man towards his super-nature, with the other they hold him down to his ordinary nature. The lower is suffused with the glow of the higher & touched with its power & rapture, but it does not itself rise into & dwell within it. At its lowest the dualistic soul cherishes the taint of its imperfections, at its highest, unless in rare self-transcending moments, keeps itself distinct in awe & reverence from the divine Lover, worships at His feet but cannot hide itself in His bosom.

Therefore Nature, still following her upward surge, has provided a mightier rank of human souls who are capable of going forward beyond this preliminary effort & having entered into the very being of God, of dwelling there in beatitude. Entering into the consciousness of the Infinite, feeling it all around them & in them, ever thrilling with its touch, aware of identity with It in nature, joy and inner awareness, they yet preserve a constant separateness of their special being in that identity. They do not plunge themselves wholly into the divine ocean or, if they go down into it, they keep hold on a fathomline which will preserve their touch with the surface. In their nature — whatever be their opinions — such men are *Visishtadwaitins*, souls not drawn towards entire oneness. But unless man plunges himself wholly into God caring not whether he reemerge, unless the human sacrifices himself wholly to the divinity, keeping back no particle of his being, not even the least particle of separateness of the individual ego, *jivatman*, the divine purpose in man cannot be utterly accomplished. Therefore Nature or the Will of God — for Nature is nothing but the Will of God in action — has provided that some, having indwelt in God, human soul in divine soul, shall be irresistibly called immediately, with brief respite or at long & last to the utter immersion. These go onward & throw away the last trace of Ego into God. Some of us, it has been said by a great teacher, are *jivakotis*, human beings leaning so preeminently to the symbol-nature that, if they have lost it utterly for a while in the Reality, they lose themselves; once

immersed, they cannot return; they are lost in God to humanity; others are ishwarakotis, human beings whose centre has already been shifted upwards or, elevated in the superior planes of our conscious-existence from the beginning, was established in God rather than in Nature. Such men are already leaning down from God to Nature; they, therefore, even in losing themselves in Him yet keep themselves since in reaching God they do not depart from their centre but rather go towards it; arrived they are able to lean down again to humanity. Those who can thus emerge from this bath of God are the final helpers of humanity & are chosen by God & Nature to prepare the type of supernatural man to which our humanity is rising.

There are, then, these three divine conditions, states separately conceived of humanity's God attainment. Man being limited in energy & discriminative rather than catholic in intellect, fastens usually on this separate conception & limits himself to one or other of these conditions; Yogic method, also, being careful of the different natures of men, suits itself to their limitations, becomes selective and concentrates upon one of these conditions or another. Or even it becomes partial as well as selective; for in its contact with God, it relates itself to a part of divine quality rather than the perfect divinity, to a God of mercy, the God of Justice, the Divine Master, the Divine Friend, or else with some aspect of divine impersonal being, to Infinite Rapture, to Infinite Force or to Infinite Calm & Purity. In the indwelling there may be the same limitations, in the becoming also they may persist. There is no fault to be found with this selective process or with this partiality. They are necessary; human limitations demand this device; human perfectibility itself finds its account in these concessions. Nature knows her task & she proceeds to it with a wide, flexible & perfect wisdom which smiles at our impatient logical narrownesses & rigid, onesighted consistencies. She knows she has an infinitely complex & variable material to deal with & must be infinitely complex & variable in her methods. We only consider precise method & ultimate fulfilment; she has to reckon on her way with thousand-armed struggles & infinite possibilities.

Nevertheless, her ultimate aim & the perfect & comprehensive Yoga is that which embraces rather than selects. We are meant to be within the symbol of humanity what God is in Himself & universally. Now God is free, absolute from these limitations & all-comprehensive. He is always one in his being, yet both one with & separate from his symbols & in that differentiated oneness able to stand quite apart from them. So we too in our ultimate divine realisation when we have become one with our divine Self, may & should be able also to stand out as the self still one in all things and beings, yet differentiated in the symbol, so as to enjoy a blissful divided closeness such as that of the Lover & Beloved mingling yet separate in their rapture; & may & should even be able to stand away from God with a sort of entire separateness holding His hand still, unlike the pure dualist, but still standing away from Him so that we may enjoy that infinity of human relation with God which is the wonder & beauty & joy of dualistic religions. To accomplish this is the full, the purna Yoga, and the sadhak who can attain to it, is in his condition the complete Yogin.

Is such a triune condition of the soul possible? Logically, it would seem impossible; logically, all trinities are chimeras and a thing must be one thing at a time & cannot combine three such divergent states as oneness, differentiated oneness & effective duality. But in these matters an inch of experience runs farther than a yard of logic, & experience, you will find, affirms that the triune God-state is perfectly possible & simple once you have attained God's fullness. We must not apply to the soul a logic which is based on the peculiarities of matter. It is true of a clod that it cannot be at the same time a clod hanging up or pasted on some bough, a clod protruding from the earth and a shapeless mass trodden into the mother soil. But this is because the clod is divided from the earthly form. The soul is not divided from God by these barriers of material & dimension. What is true [of] matter is not true of Spirit, nor do the standards of form become facts applied to the formless. For matter is conscious being confined in form, the spirit is conscious being using form but unconfined in it; & it is the privilege of Spirit that though

indivisible in its pure being, it is freely self-divisible in its conscious experience & can concentrate itself in many states at a time. It is by this tapas, by this varied concentration of self-knowledge that Divine Existence creates & supports the world & is at one & the same [time] God & Nature & World, Personal & Impersonal, Pure & Varied, Qualified & without Qualities, Krishna & Kali, Shiva & Brahma & Vishnu, man & animal & vegetable & stone, all aspects of Himself & all symbols. We need not doubt therefore that we, recovering our divine reality, shall not be bound to a single condition or aspect but can command a triune or even a multiple soul-experience. We, becoming God, become that which is the All & exceeds & transcends the All. Sarvabhutani atmaivabhud vijanatah. The soul of the perfect knower becomes all existent things & That transcendental in which all things have their existence, ihaiva, without ceasing to possess his human centre of separate experience. For this is the entire divinity that is the result of the perfect & comprehensive Yoga.