

# YOGA THEORY AND PRACTICE

*by*  
SWAMI ABHEDANANDA



RAMAKRISHNA VEDANTA MATH  
CALCUTTA : : INDIA

## YOGA, ITS THEORY AND PRACTICE

*Yoga, Its Theory and Practice* is a new and unpublished book, containing nine illuminating lectures on Yoga, delivered sometimes between 1901 and 1915, in America. Three books of the Swami on Yoga, dealing with psychology science and philosophy, were published under the titles of *How to be a Yoga*, *Yoga Psychology*, and *True Psychology*.

The book, *Yoga, Its Theory and Practice* has been dealt with a systematic way, showing their scientific method and importance in the practical life of men. The Swami is of the opinion that until and unless science, philosophy, psychology, or any other subject of knowledge, are not applied in our practical life, they are useless. So Yoga should be studied, learnt and practised with some purpose of human life and society. This book, *Yoga. Its Theory and Practice* is the sure guide of that purpose.

Price Rs. 25'00



Onno + Hrouk 1903

Aug. '96



YOGA, ITS THEORY AND PRACTICE.

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO





# YOGA ITS THEORY AND PRACTICE

*by*

SWAMI ABHEDANANDA



RAMAKRISHNA VEDANTA MATH  
CALCUTTA : : INDIA

First Published in May, 1967  
Second Edition in May 1978

Published by Swami Pranabeshananda, Ramakrishna Vedanta Math,  
19B, Raja Rajkrishna Street, Calcutta-6; and printed by D. N. Basu  
at Ananda Press & Publications Private Limited., Calcutta-700054.

## PREFACE

*Yoga, Its Theory and Practice* is a new and unpublished book, containing nine illuminating lectures on Yoga, delivered sometimes between 1901 and 1915, in America. Three books of the Swami on Yoga, dealing with psychology, science and philosophy, were published before under the titles of *How to be a Yogi*, *Yoga Psychology* and *True Psychology*.

The present book, *Yoga, Its Theory and Practice* has been dealt with a very systematic way, showing their utility and importance in the practical life of men. The Swami is of opinion that until and unless science, or philosophy, or psychology, or any other subject of knowledge, is applied in the practical life, they are useless. So Yoga must be studied, learnt, and practised for the practical purpose of the human life.

The first chapter of this book deals with the aphorisms of the Raja Yoga and their importance. The aphorisms explain the constitution and nature of the mind, the modifications of the mind as well as the scientific methods of controlling them. In Sanskrit, mind is known as the *manas*, and Swami Abhedananda has compared it with an ocean with a vast sheet of water. When it remains calm, it is known as the mind, and when it is agitated by the wind of desires and passions, it takes the form of different modifications (*vrittis*). The modifications are also known as the modal consciousness, as they import some kinds of partial knowledge about something. In Vedanta, the tranquil, calm, and balanced state of the mind is known as the *Antahkarana* or the internal organ, though some of the Vedantists do not admit it as an organ (*indriya*). Vedanta says that when the *Antahkarana* is tinged with different objects, it takes the forms of them. The same *Antahkarana* again functions in four different ways of doubting or thinking discriminating or determining, reflection or remembering, and self-conceiting in the forms of *manas*, *chitta*, *buddhi*, and *ahamkara*, as the same primordial energy or *Prakriti* manifests as the qualities of *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*. It is commonly or rather erroneously believed that the four *vrittis*, or the modal forms, constitute the stuff of the *Antahkarana* (in the Western psycho-

logy and philosophy, the *Antahkarana* is commonly known by the word, mind), but, in reality, those psychic forms are the manifestations of the same *Antahkarana*. The desires and passions are the cause of the disturbance of the mind ocean. The desires and passions disturb the balance, or the state of equilibrium, of the mind substance, and create sorrows and sufferings in the life. The practice of Yoga controls the mind, and brings balance in the mind, and causes the mind to be concentrated upon some desired thing and thus prepares the ground of meditation as well as of the attainment of the super-conscious state or *samadhi*, in which the individual soul finds its permanent consolation and peace, and attains to the God-consciousness.

The Raja Yoga, or the *Yogasutras* of Patanjali, explain and describe many things about the mind and its functions, and teaches us the means and methods of suppressing (*nirodha*) the modification of the mind, the ways of bringing the mind to its simplest form, or to its causal state, and to transform it into its real form which is no other than the self-shinning consciousness (*chit*). So the function of Yoga is very important and useful. Swami Abhedananda says that there are different kinds of method of practising Yoga, and mainly they are known as the Raja Yoga, the Bhakti Yoga, the Karma Yoga and the Jnana Yoga. These are regarded as different paths towards the same goal which is no other than the realization of the *Atman*, and different Sadhakas select them and practise them according to their tastes and likings. As different rivers, coming down from the same snowy mountain, run in different ways, and fall at last in the same ocean, so different practices of Yoga lead the different Sadhakas towards one and the same goal, and enable them to reach the same universal ocean of the Absolute.

Swami Abhedananda says that the Raja Yoga is regarded as the 'royal road', or the best and highest method. It teaches the methodical or systematic practices of Yoga which lead to the ultimate goal of the human beings. It teaches the gradual methods in practice, by which a Sadhaka reaches to the state of concentration through the *pranayama*, or the controlling of the breath or *prana*, and from concentration he reaches to meditation, and from meditation to the superconscious state or *samadhi*, the ultimate goal of the yogic *sadhana*. The Swami

says that by the practices of the Raja Yoga when a Sadhaka dives deep into the ocean of meditation, his mind is absorbed in that ocean like the salt-doll, and is transformed into the pure consciousness and becomes one with the *Atman* in the *samadhi*.

The second chapter deals with the practice of Yoga. Swami Abhedananda says that those who practise the Raja Yoga with its proper knowledge of science and theory as well as of psychology and philosophy, gain the sound health and the perfect mind along with the living inspiration of entering into the states of concentration and meditation which prepare the ground of entering into the superconscious state. It has been explained that there happens the divine communion of the *jivatman* with the *Paramatman*, where a Sadhaka realizes the oneness with the *Atman*, or the Brahman. But Sankara has criticised this yogic idea of oneness, and has said that in the yogic idea of oneness there remains a duality in a causal form, whereas in the advaita vedantic *sadhana*, a Sadhaka realizes the *Atman* as one without the second, and there remains no duality which is no other than the nescience or *maya*, and for that reason Sankara has called the followers of the *Sankhya* and the *Nyaya* as the dualist (cf. the commentaries on the *Vedanta-sutras*, *Yukti* or *tarka-pada*). But viewing from the standpoint of Yoga or the yogic *sadhana*, one should reduce his mind to its simplest form, and should concentrate it on the *Atman*, and then through meditation, he will attain ultimately to the state of *samadhi*, and will reach the perfection.

In the third chapter, Swami Abhedananda has explained the importance and value of the correct breathing. Here controlling the breath means to conserve the vital energy or life-force, which enable one to enter into the supreme state of *samadhi* and to realize the *Atman*. In the fourth chapter, the Swami deals with the culture and knowledge of the healing power of the breathe or *prana*. When the *prana* is controlled or balanced, he acquires some psychic powers (*siddhis*) which bring success in the material plane. Swami Abhedananda says that Patanjali has regarded these powers as the obstacles. These obstacles obstruct the path of the spiritual illumination, and entangle men in the den of delusion. So the Swami warns all the followers of Yoga and also all the seekers after the highest

Truth not to run after the trivial psychic powers which delude and always mislead, but to dive deep into the blissful state of the superconsciousness, where the sadhaka attains to the *Atmajnana*.

In the sixth chapter, the Swami has described about different methods of *pranayama*. The word *pranayama* connotes the idea of controlling (*ayama*) the breath (*prana*, or the vital energy). When a Sadhaka sufficiently conserves his energy or the vitalforce in him, he is fit to gain the power of concentration, and concentration gradually brings unto him the state of meditation and *samadhi*, where he finds the real value of his life, and realizes the supreme Soul. It should be mentioned in this connection that the practice of the *pranayama* is not indispensable in the advaita vedantic *sadhana*, which advocates the practices of *shravana*, *manana* and *nididhyasana*. This *shravana* is not merely the hearing of the *mahavakayas*, but it is accompanied with, or supported by, the acts of discrimination (*viveka*) and ratiocination (*vichara*). The supporters of the Vivarana School advocate *shravana* alone for realizing the absolute Brahman, because, according to them, this *shravana* goes along with the act of ratiocination or the *Brahma-vichara*, and so *manana* and *nididhyana* are not necessary there; and it is a fact, say the Advaita Vedantists, that in the practices of *shravana*, *manana* and *nididhyasana*, or by the practice of *shravana* alone, the mind is automatically controlled and balanced, and is concentrated upon the cherished object, the *Atman*, is purified, and is transformed into pure consciousness. Besides the vedantic *sadhana*, the mind is controlled and concentrated in the yogic *sadhana* too without the help of the *pranayama*, as the function of controlling the breath or *pranayama* is automatically goes on at that time. So it will not be correct to think that concentration and meditation are the result, or the product, of the act of the *pranayama*, because if anyone practises concentration and meditation without taking any help of the *pranayama*, his breath or *prana* is also suspended or controlled and well-balanced. It is a law of nature that as the mind is distracted and divergent when the breath or respiration is rapid and irregular, so when the mind remains very active, or is engaged in different objects, the breath or the respiration is also rapid and irregular, because the activities of

both the mind and the breath are inter-connected together. So Swami Abhedananda says that those who are inclined to practise Yoga for attaining to the perfection, follow the process of the *pranayama*, and when their mind is sufficiently controlled and balanced i.e. silenced, they enter into the state of concentration (*dharana*), and when their concentration is ripe and deep, they enter into the state of meditation (*dhyana*), and when their meditation is well-accomplished, they attain to the state of the superconsciousness (*samadhi*), which is the ultimate goal of the yogic *sadhana*. It has been said before that in the superconscious state, the individual soul (*jivatman*) communes with the cosmic Soul (*Paramatman*).

In the seventh chapter, Swami Abhedananda has beautifully discussed about the meaning of the universal word or sound, Pranava, which is commonly known as OM. The Swami says that the word or sound, OM is constituted out of the three unifying letters, A-U-M, that represent the states of *jagrat* (waking), *svapna* (sleep) and *sushupti* (deep sleep) as well as the stages, gross (*sthula*), subtle (*sukshma*) and causal (*karana*). The *Mundaka* and the *Mandukya Upanishads* have beautifully explained these states. The *Atman*, or the Brahman, is beyond these four states and also of these three stages. The universal word or sound, OM includes all the words, letters, and sounds of the universe, and it is the pointer, indicator, or discloser, of the indeterminate (*nirguna*) Brahman: "*tasya vachakah pranava*", and so Vedanta calls this sacred universal sound, OM as the determinate (*saguna*) Brahman, as it determines the indeterminate Brahman, which cannot be expressed by word, deed and thought. It is also a fact that the Sadhakas aim at the absolute Brahman, yet they begin their vedantic and yogic *sadhana*s from the determinate Brahman, or through some mediums, because the determinate Brahman, or the symbol, or the medium, can be thought of, can be mediated upon, and can be taken as a means to an end. The Grammarians and the musicologists call this 'OM' as the Shabda-brahman, or the Sphota, from which all the letters, words and thoughts and that mean every thing phenomenal world evolved. The Tantrikas call it the *mundamala*, composed of fifty matrikas or letters. However, the *Yogashastra* calls this OM (Pranava) as the sign or symbol (*pratika*) as it indicates, directs or determines the

absolute Brahman, which is beyond thought, speech, and words. The intention of the *Yogas'hastra* is that the Sadhakas shall reach the formless *Atman* through the medium of the form.

Swami Abhedananda has elsewhere said: "So long as the devotee thinks of God with a form and believes that He is outside of the soul and of the universe, he can make a mental picture of Him and worship the divine Ideal through the form; or he may keep before him some symbolic figure like the cross which remind him of the Ideal at the time of devotion.\* \* Gradually as the *bhakta* approaches God, he will rise above such dualistic conception and realize that his Beloved is not only transcendent, but also immanent in nature, that nature is His body, and that He dwells everywhere.\* \* The *bhakta*, then, reaches that state which is called qualified non-dualism". And from the state of qualified non-dualism the *bhakta* gradually reaches the state of non-dualism or Advaita (cf. Swami Abhedananda: *How to be a Yogi*, the Bhakti Yoga). Patanjali has prescribed the symbol (*vachaka*) Pranava as a means to reach the end, the transcendental *Atman*. So Swami Abhedananda has said to scientifically study and mediate upon the sacred word or sound, OM.

In the eighth chapter that deals with concentration, Swami Abhedananda's discussions are remarkable and unique. There the Swami says that when our mind is controlled and concentrated upon a cherished object, we withdraw our mind or the divergent modifications of the mind from the organs of the senses. The different organs of the senses have different portions in the brain, where they view certain sensations. There is a self-conscious entity which is known as 'personality', and that entity really translates every molecular changes that happen in the brain in the form of vibrations. The modern scientists have described these changes as the states of consciousness. This consciousness is recognized as the light that illumines all objects in this universe. But if we try to know what consciousness is, we cannot do it, because consciousness cannot be an object of knowledge; or if we try to know consciousness, we know it by the help of consciousness. Again existence is inseparable from consciousness, as we exist and our existence depends upon our consciousness. Further it is also a fact that there is no other second consciousness by which we can under-

stand the nature of our own consciousness. Therefore consciousness is unique and one, and this one consciousness manifests as sensations, conceptions, emotions, feelings, and knowledge. In other words, the expansion of the range of consciousness discloses all kinds of knowledge, sensation, and experience.

No, from this it is understood that there is a common principle, of which consciousness and existence are the two inseparable manifestations or phases, and this common principle is the *Atman*, or the Soul. The Western philosophers like Kant, Hegel, Schelling, Fichte, Nietzsche and others have admitted the inseparability of consciousness and existence, but they have missed to discover the fountain-head of them. The Vedanta philosophy and the Yoga psychology of India have been able to find out that missing link of the Western philosophers, and have said that the all-knowledge and all-intelligence *Atman* is the source of consciousness as well as of existence. So the Vedanta philosophy and the Yoga psychology have instructed all the seekers after truth to concentrate and meditate upon the *Atman* and when the mind loses its separate existence and dissolves into the ocean of the *Atman*-knowledge, all things in this universe are known to the realized souls: "*yasmin vijate sarva-vijnanam bhavati*". For that reason, the Yoga psychology have specially given stress upon the practices of concentration and meditation, and has said that through the practice of Yoga one can control and calm down his mind, and can transform the mind into the pure consciousness, and can realize the *Atman* as non-different from his own being.

The ninth or the last chapter has been devoted to the discussion on the superconscious state and its obstacles. Swami Abhedananda says that *samadhi* means the tranquil state of the mind, where the conscious mind is in abeyance, and the *Atman* is beyond the conscious plane, but manifests its own glorious nature (*svarupa*). *Samadhi* has been divided by Patanjali into two broad divisions, *sabija* and *nirbija*, *savitarka* and *nirvitarka*, *savichara* and *nirvichara*, *savikalpa* and *nirvikalpa* and *samprajnata* and *asamprajnata*. The *savitarka* and *nirvitarka* as well as the *savichara* and *nirvichara samadhis* are accomplished with the gross (*sthula*) and the subtle (*sukshma*) objects and are included in the category of the *sabija* or *samprajnata samadhi*

(“*ta eva sabijah samadhi*” 9. 1. 46). The commentator, Vyasa says: “ता श्रुतस्य समापत्तयो वहिर्वह्नुवीर्जा इति समाधिरपि सवीजः, तत्र स्थुलेऽर्थे सवितर्क निर्वितर्कः सूक्ष्मेऽर्थे सविचारः निर्विचारः इति चतुर्धा उपसंख्यातः समाधिरिति ।” ४६ .....

and when the *nirvitarka* or the *nirvichara samadhi* is ripe and matured then the *asamprajnata-samadhi* is accomplished:

‘निर्विचारवैशारद्योऽध्यात्मप्रमादः’ \* \* (1.47). Then there arises the *ritambhara-prajna* (1.48), by which the Sadhaka determines the real nature of the *Atman*. The *asamprajnata-samadhi* is really the *nirbija-samadhi*, where there remains no *bija* or *samskara* (impressions of any kind), and it is called the *mukti* or freedom, according to Yoga. Patanjali says: “तस्यापि निरोधे सर्वनिरोधात् निर्वीजः समाधिः’ \* \* \* (1.51), and Vyasa comments upon this 1.51 *sutra* as: “\* \* निरोधजः संस्कारः समाधिजान् संस्कारान् वाधते इति । \* \* संस्कारैश्चित्तं विनिवर्तते, तस्मिन्निवृत्ते पुरुषः स्वहमप्रतिष्ठः अतः शुद्धो मुक्त इत्युच्यते ।”

Here ‘*nirodha*’ means the complete destruction of the impressions (*samskaras*). The seed (*bija*) means the impression which causes the soul to reincarnate again and again. The words “*purushah svarupapratisthah*” mean that the individual soul realizes then his real sublime nature, and comes to know that he is not entangled in the trap of *maya*, but is free forever and ever.

Swami Abhedananda says that when an individual soul realizes the perfect oneness, he feels himself as the universal Soul in the state of *samadhi*. But before reaching the state of *samadhi* or the superconscious state, every seeker after Truth shall have to pass through some steps or states, and these steps or states really take or lead to the final step or goal. But, in the path of *samadhi*, there are many obstacles which have been described by Patanjali. Patanjali has called these obstacles as ‘*yogamalas*’ or *antarayas*. The Swami has said that all these obstacles can be removed very easily by the constant thinking, “because what thou thinkest, shalt become, and it is as true as that I am sitting here. What we are today is the result of our own thoughts. We have made ourselves what we are, and what we have brought ourselves to this plane of existence,

\* \* The moment we begin to know better, we live on a higher plane". But we should remember that most of the Sadhakas are enchanted with the charms of the *siddhis* or *vibhutis*, achieved through the practice of Yoga, and most of them also fail to attain to the highest goal for the obstacles in the path of the practices of Yoga. Diseases, physical and mental laziness, mental distress, disappointment, doubt, cessation of calmness, false perception, non-attaining of concentration, grief, weakness, etc. are the obstacles and obstructions to the path of *samadhi*. (cf. *Patanjala-darshana*' 1.30-31), and Swami Abhedananda says that these obstacles can be studied carefully, and should be removed for getting the spiritual illumination, permanent peace and tranquil happiness. "It is a fact that when all the obstructions are conquered, the result would be a perfect concentration. Perfect concentration will lead to meditation, and meditation will lead to superconscious realization. Then we shall be able to know our immortal and true nature, that exists in our spiritual Self". Therefore the practice of Yoga is necessary to remove the bondage of nescience (*ajnana*) and to simultaneously realise the *Atman* which is the *sumnum bonum* of the human life.

SWAMI PRAJNANANANDA

## CONTENTS

	<i>Subject</i>		PAGE
	Preface	... ..	5
CHAPTER I:	The Raja Yoga Aphorisms and their Importance	... ..	15
CHAPTER II:	The Practice of Yoga	... ..	39
CHAPTER III:	The Value of Correct Breathing	... ..	52
CHAPTER IV:	The Healing Power of Prana	... ..	60
CHAPTER V:	The Vedanta Philosophy and the Science of Breath	... ..	67
CHAPTER VI:	The Pranayama	... ..	73
CHAPTER VII:	The Sacred Word 'OM'	... ..	80
CHAPTER VIII:	The concentration	... ..	89
CHAPTER IX:	The Samadhi and Its Obstacles	... ..	104

## CHAPTER I

### THE RAJA YOGA APHORISMS AND THEIR IMPORTANCE

(Thursday Night, February 12, 1915, 839 West 17th Street)

When we hold our mind to one point, make our mind one-pointed, and do not let our mind be distracted by other things at the time of concentration, then our mind is concentrated. In other words, it is the restraining of the mind stuff from taking various forms known as *vritti* or modifications. Now, the restraining of the mind from taking various modifications (*vritti*) in the mind stuff is known as suppression (*nirodha*). In Sanskrit, the mind stuff is known as *manas* or *chitta* which means the substance that takes various shapes and various changes, and each of these changes is called a state of consciousness, or a mental function. We may call it emotion. We may have it in the form of a thought, in the form of a desire, in the form of an intellection, in the form of an ideation, or in the form of a discrimination. But all these are the different names of the same mind substance. The mind substance, being churned all the time, throws out some circles of thought-activity of the mind just now. We will take the mind in its various forms and modifications, for it is a substance which is constantly changing. And so our mind is never at rest, and we cannot keep it still. We appear to hold it, but it slips away, because that is the nature of tendency of the mind to run away. So the most difficult thing for anybody is to conquer his mind. One may conquer the whole world, but may not conquer the mind. It is said: "He would not be the emperor of the world, who conquers the whole world or all nations, but he would be the slave of ambition; but he who conquers his own mind, is the real conqueror of the world". It is one of the sayings of Buddha. It is also expressed in the Bible in a different way that when the spirit is the master, it is the conqueror of the whole world. But still it is better ex-

pressed in the teachings of Buddha when he says that the conqueror of his mind is greater than the conqueror of the whole world.

Now think for a moment why it is difficult to control the mind. Because, the mind substance is propelled by the nature from within to get into different shapes. It is like a fountain. You have seen a fountain of the electric light that it is continuously throwing out. That is the activity, and you cannot stop it. If you try to stop it, it will be very difficult. So it requires the tremendous will-power. But our will-power is not strong enough. Try to see how weak is your will-power and try to conquer your mind through continuous and steady practice. You will be able to gain that conquest eventually by restraining the mind from taking various modifications. The thought currents evolve and manifest first as one sensation, then evolves another thought or another idea; and, in this way they are continuously coming one after another in a train. But they are all linked together to one unit which is known as the association of ideas. If there be one suggestion made, that suggestion will lead you to various associations, and the veins will continue to work, and it will dig out from the pigeon-holes all the latent impressions that you have gathered during your lifetime. There come even those impressions which you hold from your previous incarnations. Each impression takes a seed form. It rises up and invests itself in a certain modification as soon as it gets a suggestion. And that is the state of our mind. It is like a mad elephant. It is always swaying like a pendulum. The mind stuff is going like that. Try to arrest your mind, but you cannot do it. It will go to sleep, and often in sleep the mind is not at rest. As soon as you sleep, you might dream. So the dream state is the state, caused by the modifications of the mind stuff. Some changes are going on in your mind all the time, and you are being-conscious of them. There is a state, called the dreamless sleep state (*sushupti*). These different states are called in Sanskrit by different names, such as the waking state is known as *jagrat*, the dream state, as *svapna*, and the dreamless sleep state, as *sushupti*.

In the dreamless sleep state (*sushupti*) the mind goes back into its causal state. So there is a causal (*karana*), a subtle

(*sukshma*), and a physical (*sthula*) body. These are various stages or states of the mind. When you study your own mind, you have to go on studying the different phases of the manifestations of the mind. For the present, we will have to study the meaning of the mind i.e. we will study the process of having control over the mind. A good deal of explanation is necessary to clarify it. We have to understand what the mind stuff is and what are these modifications. You can take the illustration of the process of perception of sight. You can observe how the perception of sight, or, sensation of colour, takes place. If you study a little of the physiology, you will understand how the perception of sight takes place. It takes place when you look at a book, or at a flower. You know what happens in the process of this perception. The rays of the light fall from the sun, or from the lamp, on that book or flower and are reflected upon the retina. Now the retina is like the dark room of a camera where the inverted image takes place. Through the eyes the rays go inside, and like a photographic camera the form is inverted on the retina. Now that impression produces a little vibration in the molecules of the retina, and that vibration is carried by the optic nerves those are connected with the eyes and also with the cortex of the brain at the back of your head. There create some minute changes, and these are the changes that physiology can explain through mechanical process. In fact, this is done through mechanical process. The reflection has produced the inverted image and there are certain changes which have occurred in the optic nerves and in the brain cells. But who sees the book, and where do you see it? You do not see it from outside at first. If you were born blind and suddenly your sight was restored, you would not see the distance. You would see everything as if touching your eyes. You would have no sensation or idea of distance. This idea made in other ways by the feeling of by touch. The idea of space and distance we cannot get through sight, but through habit. We have now gained the power of measuring the distance by sight, but that is possible only with the association of ideas, or with the quick reckoning by the intellect, or by the reasoning faculty, and then by taking the feelings that are produced by the sense of touch to the idea of distance. They are all complex, but when you come to simplify these things, you

will find it very difficult to get at the bottom of things.

Now, we do not see that inverted image which is in the retina. We are not conscious of the brain vibrations, or the vibrations in the cells of the brain. We feel as sensation of colour, extended. The colour in a certain form is all that we can see. But the feeling of sensation is produced by another sense organ which is the sense of touch, and we combine these two. The eyes are only the channels through which we can get the vibrations of the colour. It is a fact that colour is produced by the vibration of the ether, and the light waves produce the colour. Therefore, we know that colour is nothing but a certain state of vibration. Now, there is a state of vibration that have range from red violet, but below and above that range we cannot see. There may be other colours too which we do not know. We have no organ by which we can perceive other colours. The physiological difference is here described that certain changes have taken place in the brain, but the brain does not see them. It requires something else to see the colour, and that something else is to be understood, and its nature must be learned. The eyes also do not see. The eyes are merely the instrument. The optic nerves do not see. The brain-cell, or the centre of the brain, does not also see. There is a mind that sees, and that mind is touching that centre in the brain, changing that vibration of the molecules of the cells of the brain into sensation, i.e. to a state of consciousness. How that is done no one can explain. No psychologist has ever been able to explain how the translation of the material vibration causes a state of consciousness. It is the mysterious power of the soul of the cell. That power has the power to change that instantaneously. It changes the material vibration into a state of consciousness, when we call it red, yellow, or any other colour.

But when the mind is distracted, these physiological conditions will continue to occur, but you will not have any sensation of colour. The organ of vision is in the nerve centre of the brain. But the two eyes will not be sufficient alone to see the colour. Sometimes a man is asleep with his eyes open. Now, if you sleep with your eyes open, all the reflections might fall on your eyes, when all these pictures would be formed in the retina mechanically, and the molecular changes would

befall. These changes would be carried to the cortex of the brain, and still you would not see, as your mind is separated from the organ of sight. So, those who have the materialistic theory that the brain sees and there is nothing beyond the brain, are mistaken. They see only the physiological side, but do not deep enough.

In the modern psychology, these factors have been explained in a physiological way. The modern psychology traces the conditions of perception to the brain centre and there it stops. It does not consider the mind stuff as something beyond the brain centre that makes all these changes or translates the vibrations of the brain cells into the states of consciousness or sensation. It does not go so far, and, therefore, the study of psychology in the schools and colleges is imperfect. But the time will come when they will go deeper<sup>1</sup>. It is not meant for the young men and women to go so deep. They can get a flimmer of the process. And that is why this psychology is allowed a little in the schools and colleges. Years ago, psychology used to be the subject for those who were advanced in their studies in the higher schools and colleges.

Now you understand the physiological process of the psychology. It has been said before that sometimes a man is asleep with his eyes open. The light is there in the eyes and the picture is in the retina, but still a third object is necessary to see a thing. The mind must be joined to the organ, because if that mind is not joined we do not see anything. Similarly with our ears in hearing of sound. The cars roll down the street and we do not hear them when we are asleep, because our mind has not attached itself to the organ of hearing. We hear the vibrations of air which we call sound, and these vibrations, touching the tympanum of our ears, are carried by the auditory nerves to the nerve centres in the brain, and these some changes being created are translated in the terms of sound by a self-conscious mind. If the mind is separated or disconnected from that organ in the brain, then the physiological conditions might be fulfilled. There might be a noise near our ears, but so long as our mind is disconnected, we would hear nothing of them.

---

<sup>1</sup>This lecture was delivered in 1915.

Some time ago, in 1896, I went to London. Swami Vivekananda invited me to come to London, gave me the charge of his classes there, and went back to India. I took to his classes, and started with my lectures. One morning I was lecturing on 'concentration'. It was about eleven o'clock. We had a hall on Victoria Street on the fifth floor, on the top. Victoria Street was a very busy street, and it was one of the main street in London. While I was lecturing, there was going on a big parade of soldiers, and a brass band was being played. Then the audience, I think many of them, thought that my lecture would be disturbed by the noise, and that I would also be disturbed. But I did not hear anything of the noise. There was amongst the audience an Episcopal minister, Dr. Howeis. He was a great musician who wrote on Wagner—he was a great man. There were also other friends. After the lecture was over, they asked me if I was disturbed. I was astonished and answered: "Disturbed by what?" They said: "Didn't you hear that noise?" And I replied: "No, but where was it?" Really I had not heard any sound. My mind was so concentrated on my subject that when the big parade was going on that road, I could know nothing of what was happening outside. In fact, my mind was disconnected from the organ of hearing. Dr. Howeis and others admitted that this was a perfect example of concentration.<sup>2</sup>

My mind was so concentrated that it was withdrawn from all others sensations. I was looking at my subject intently. You may have that in a similar way, or in different ways, when you are reading very intently. As for instance, when you are interested in a study, you do not hear even the ticking of a big clock. A street car may pass, somebody may knock, and there may be a terrible noise, but you do not hear them as because your mind is disconnected from the organ of hearing. As soon as the mind is connected with the organs of hearing, sight, taste, touch and smell, you hear, see, taste, touch and smell. The mind cannot do more than one thing at a time as the Naiyaikas consider that the form of the mind is like an atom or *anu*. The function is operated very quickly when you are

---

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Swami Abhedananda: *Spiritual Unfoldment*.

seeing and hearing at the same time. In truth, the mind hears or sees first and then goes back. It is done so quickly that you cannot perceive the interval. But the mind always takes up at the utmost at a time, either one sound, or one colour. It will see the object of sight, and hear the sound one after another, and in this way the mind works. It is always necessary to understand that the mind takes in and that we can perceive only, when the mind is connected with the centre or organ of our sensation.

There are finer organs in the brain, and there are the ones that are connected with the mind stuff. The cars may roll down the street, but you do not hear them going because your mind has not attached itself to the organ of hearing. First, there is the instrument, then the organ and then comes the attachment of the mind to these two. Now we have understood that. First the instrument, or the external instrument, the eyes or the ears, the nostrils, or the instrument of touch, then there is the organ or in the brain centre. Now, the third is the attachment of the mind to these two, that is, to the instrument and the organ. The mind takes the impression further in. The mind stuff, which is generally called *chitta* takes the impression which is produced by the organ, and takes it in and presents it to the discriminative faculty. And you cannot know whether it is this or that. The cogitative state of the mind is the first state, and then the determination, or the determinative faculty. You can understand this better when a certain idea rises in your mind. You will easily understand the movement of your thoughts that move or rise in your mind. You may think: "Shall I go there, or not? No. I had better go. No, I ought not to go" etc. These vacillating states of the mind is known as the cogitation. You have that first in everything, and then in the next. There is another faculty that determines: "No, I must go". Then you decide that you would go. But in every action you do that.

So there are two faculties: one, the cogitative faculty of the mind, which is presented before the determinative faculty, and the other, the determinative faculty which determines. And now you take the action. Then it becomes a will, and that will is obeyed by the nerve centres in the spinal column, in the muscles, and in the whole body. As a result, you will obey

that command of the will. But you cannot have that will until you have determined. First you vacillate as to whether you will do or not. Your mind first takes this impression which picks it up, and then it shows on both the sides, yes or no. Then the determinative faculty determines, and in that way we perceive a sensation. This faculty reacts and brings the determination, and when that determination is done along with this reflection, then flashes the idea of egotism that means the sense of 'I'. When the sensation has come, you compare whether it is hot or cold, or something intermediate. If you decide that it is cold, instantly you connect the sense of 'I' with it, and say, 'I am cold'. It is that first you feel the cold and that is a sensation of cold. You know that you are separate from it, but at once identify yourself with it i.e. with the sensation of cold. That is called egotism. Then the mixture of action and reaction takes place which you do know always when you are angry. At first you feel a creeping sensation coming up, and you feel that it is anger. But gradually it becomes overwhelmingly strong and covers the whole sea of mind. It is like a wave, and is an absorbing passion. Now you determine: 'I am angry' and then connect it with 'I'. This is, at first it remains separate and gradually becomes attached to you, and then the anger and yourself become inseparable.

Carefully study your own mind, and you will find the passion and the feeling come together. At first the feeling is separate from you, but the sense of 'I' will come later when you attach the sense of 'I' with it. It is the most interesting and absorbing study. You can study the whole universe by studying first your own mind. You have in yourself a moving picture-show all the time. There is enough of these moving pictures within yourself. These pictures are rising, falling and disappearing all the time in yourself. You do not have to go outside. Better save your ten cents, and study yourself, and that study will help you in gaining more knowledge. You will not strain your eyes either, but you will go into the innermost recesses of the nature, and find that there is nothing more absorbing than the study of your own mind. A few people have patience and perseverance for this study. Those who will, take it up for a few times, and drop it. But once you get a taste, you will put your whole life to it. That is the way it

happened to me. At first I used to argue with my Master.<sup>3</sup> I said: "No, I do not believe this or that". And my Master stressed: "You will believe in everything later on". I asked: "When I would know that I will". He then fascinated me so much that I could not give it up. Thereafter I had to dedicate my whole life to it, because one life is not sufficient for it. You give your whole life in doing foolishness, but instead of that you may give it to some serious study or in search after some truth or knowledge that is better.

I shall tell you a story which is very interesting. Some people came to Sri Ramakrishna and called him insane, as he was not of the world. He did not care for anything of the world, and so they thought that he was unbalanced and insane. Sri Ramakrishna said to them: "My friends, who is not insane in this world? This world is like a gigantic lunatic asylum. Some are mad for money, some for beautiful wife or husband, another for name and fame, or for nice comforts. But they are not crazy for God, whereas I am crazy for Him. Which is better?" It is better, when you fool away. Your time to fool it away with something that will bring some good to you, and that good is worth-having. No money can buy it. It is the knowledge you are getting. You will have to study carefully and understand your nature. And he is greatest spiritual teacher who opens the spiritual eye of the pupils so that the pupils can see things in a different light. It is better when your eye-opener opens the eye, so that the seeker can see completely the light and get a glimpse of the truth. Who is better in between an earthly father and a spiritual father? Which one is greater? The wise will say that the spiritual father is greater than the earthly one, because the earthly father gives birth to the body that lasts only for a short time, whereas the spiritual father opens the spiritual eye which is an eternal heritage. Therefore, the spiritual father is greater. We all regard our spiritual teacher as our real father, and never think of going to him without reverence and respect, just as a dutiful son would show his spiritual master with the same feeling of respect and reverence. These qualities are to be acquired.

Now, you understand these states: (1) the cogitative state of the mind, and (2) the determinative faculty. The sense of

---

<sup>3</sup> Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa.

'I' must be connected with it, and then the whole mixture of action and reaction is presented with your true Self or Spirit. Then the object is perceived. You now come to know that there are colour, sound and other things. This whole thing takes place within a very short time, so short that you can hardly catch it. It is almost simultaneous. It is done just like a flash of lightning. All these different presentations and activities of the mental faculties take place one after another, but whole thing is done like only a flash of lightning.

The mind stuff is the finer matter in vibration. It may be said to be ethereal. The finer matter goes on producing these various states those are said to be the modifications (*vruttis*) of the mind stuff. The waves can be called the whirlpool. And what is that? That is a force which is absorbed in nature, the infinite storehouse. The instrument takes hold of that force; and when it passes out at the other end, it is called the thought. This force is supplied through food. We observe that the mind is not intelligent and still it appears to be intelligent. The mind stuff itself really is not intelligent and shining, but it becomes so by coming in contact with our self-shining spiritual Self. This spiritual Self is like a furnace that has all the heat and the light. The mind stuff is like a dark iron-ball, but when it comes in contact with the furnace, it becomes heated and glows red hot, just as an iron-ball, when put into the fire-place, that heat and firey colour are borrowed. They are not of its own nature. They are produced by getting in touch with the fire. So the iron-ball of the mind stuff, when placed into the furnace of your true shining Self, becomes red hot, or, in other words, it becomes shining or intelligent. Just as your material body has no consciousness, but yet it appears as self-conscious, so your inner body has absorbed the consciousness. But, in truth, the source of consciousness is in your Self. So you see how many things you have to study. You will have to study the physical body and the organs. But by studying these alone, you cannot get all. You do not learn all by studying physiology, or by studying modern psychology. There is something more you have to learn. The study of your own self will not be complete, unless you feel these different things separately in yourself by trying to possess each of these points, and then you make it a part of your own knowledge.

I have already discussed that the mind itself is not intelligent. It appears as intelligent, because the intelligent soul is behind it. It has been said that the mind is a finer matter in vibration. The vibration is caused by the intelligent Spirit or the *Atman* that is behind the mind. So if you want to study your true divine Self, you will come to know that your true Self is not clothed with the mind stuff, but it forms the background of the mind stuff, and when that background which contains the source of consciousness, intelligence and knowledge, comes in direct touch with the mind substance, then the mind substance appears to be intelligent. That, by which you can separate these different functions, is a science that has been taught in the science of Yoga. The science of Yoga can be called as the higher spiritual psychology, and this spiritual psychology is of great value to you. You must study it carefully and understand its processes, and then you will gradually get into the practical side of it. First, you have the theory. I will tell you later on how to get control over these things, and how you can withdraw your mind from one kind and fix it on another, just as you take a switch from the telephone. You see it done at the central office; one connection is made, and then another. In that way, you can disconnect and connect at your will, and then you will become absolute master of yourself. Then concentration will be the process or the method by which you can do that. Of course, a study of concentration will not end in an hour or two. It will take many hours, nay, many days, and sometimes many years. But I can assure you that the method of concentration can be studied. It can be attained through the sincere efforts and perseverance; and when it is attained, meditation comes, and makes a man perfect.

The science of Yoga is vast. It includes all the methods by which the highest realization of the supreme Brahman, or the eternal Being can be achieved. Our universal religion (*sanatana dharma*) describes the ultimate goal of human life, and it is the attainment of the superconscious state of the Divine realization. The superconsciousness may be described in Sanskrit as *samadhi*. So, *samadhi* means the superconscious state, or the Godconsciousness, or the consciousness of the supreme Being. At present we are conscious of our physical bodies, and are conscious of our surroundings, of the buildings,

of the relatives, of our family, our home-life, and of business. But this is not all. There is no consciousness which is greater or higher or more up-lifting and more beneficial to us all than that which gives us immortality as its fruits. That state is regarded as the highest state which a human soul can attain after struggling through various ways and by which it can realize the force of nature and the various phenomena of nature. That highest goal has been the ideal of the eternal religion. In Buddhism, that is also regarded as the highest. It is called in Buddhism 'Nirvana'. Nirvana is not a negative state by which we go into nothingness, but we attain to the highest realization of the infinite Being. The real meaning of Nirvana is suchness or *tathata* i.e. something that exists, and not nothingness or void. It has also been described in the Vedas, in the *Upanishads*, and in the Vedanta philosophy. In the Vedanta philosophy, Nirvana has been said to be the attainment of the infinite consciousness which is also known as the Brahma-Nirvana.

Now, we are conscious of those things which are dependent upon our sense perception. We have senses, such as, the eyes, the ears, the nose, the mouth and the touch. These five senses reveal the objects which we see and feel around us; but beyond these senses there is a higher sense which is described as the third eye in the middle of the forehead. We have seen the pictures and scriptures of our great *Rishis* and *Devas*, where on their forehead we have found the third eye. This third eye on the forehead of the *devas* and *devis* is the spiritual eye. It is not meant for the gods and the goddesses alone, but meant for all. We have not that eye at the present stage in a rudimentary state. At present we have not got the God-vision and, therefore, we are bound by the limitation of our senses. When that eye is open in us, we begin to observe little glimpse of the eternal Truth and become more and more free and divine. Their third eye, that I have described, is the spiritual eye, and we make that eye open. But how to make that eye work, so that we can have a greater vision of the infinite Spirit, has been the question which also troubled the minds of our great seers and philosophers and also of the great saviours like Buddha, Krishna and others. In order to open that eye, they developed different methods. They found by spiritual practice

the different ways by which that eye could be opened. These methods are classified under four heads, and they are called the four Yogas.

The word Yoga comes from the Sanskrit verb root *juj* which means 'to join'. In fact, Yoga means the method by which we can join our individual soul with the divine soul or the divine Being. The English word 'yoke' on the bullock cart is derived from the same Sanskrit root *juj*. So Yoga means the same as 'yoke', as I have already explained in some of my books<sup>4</sup> that most of the English words can be traced back to Sanskrit words. So Yoga is the method by which we can unite our individual souls with the universal spirit, the 'Brahman, or Siva, or Vishnu, or Mahadeva. or Mahadevi, or Buddha, or Tistse (the highest Being according to the Chinese philosophy). You will find the same ideal in all religions. The Moham-medans believe that Allah is no longer a personal Being, but an infinite Being who has attained that universal consciousness, or the goal of *samadhi* or *mukti*. The Christian mystics of the middle ages of Europe described that ideal as *samadhi*, or the superconscious state, and that is the highest ideal of Christianity. However, in all religions, you will find that there is only one aim known as the Godconsciousness.

#### THE KARMA YOGA

The Karma Yoga means the path of action. 'Karma' means work'. That is, all the works we do during our daily life, can be made to go towards the one ideal, or can be made as acts of worship. In fact, the followers of the universal religion (*sanatana dharma*) alone have made the daily works of their lives as acts of worship, but in other religions the act of worship is separated from the daily works. They have a special kind of devotion, for instance, as you know, the Christian people once in a week go to the church. But their daily works are different. They are entirely different from their devotional exercises. They will cheat, rob, and tell lies, but at the time of devotion they are different. But in our universal religion of the Hindus, we find that we are not allowed to tell a lie and

---

<sup>4</sup> Cf. Swami Abhedananda: *How to be a Yogi*, and the *Yoga Psychology*.

do anything which is wicked, because all actions must go towards the supreme Being, just as Krishna said in the *Bhagavad Gita* (IX. 27):

यत् करोषि यदन्नासि यज्जुहोषि ददासि यत् ।

यत् तपस्यसि कौन्तेय तद् कुरुष्व मदर्पणम् ॥

“Whatsoever thou doest, whatsoever thou offerest, whatsoever thou givest, and whatsoever thou doest of austerity, do thou that as an offering unto me.” Even when we sit at the table and get our food, we first offer the food to the supreme Spirit before we begin to eat, and this is the greatest idea, and an idea that we must offer our food to the Lord before we can use it for ourselves. This idea is that we eat it as the *prasadam* of the Lord of the universe. It is the grandest thing or conception in the world. There is no nation which has performed this ideal so earnestly and so sincerely, as the Hindu people of ancient, mediaeval and modern India have done.

The Karma Yoga is the path of work. We have the right to work, but we have not the right to seek the result of our work. We must work through love for works sake and as an offering to the Lord, and that ideal was given by Sri Krishna in the *Bhagavad Gita*, when Arjuna at the battlefield did not want to fight against his kinsmen. Krishna said: “My friend, do not seek the result, to work thou hast the right, and not the fruits thereof”. So we have the right to work, but not to seek the results thereof. We must leave the results to the Lord, and by that we become free from the bondage of the law of *karma* i.e. from the bondage of action and reaction. Then our souls will be purified.

The purification of the heart is the most important thing. In other religions, we find the same ideal being held at the highest. Christ said: “Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.” The purity of heart is the precondition of the God-vision. You cannot see God unless your heart is pure. purity means to be free from all the bad ideas and selfish motives and also desires of the flesh. It makes your heart free from envy, jealousy, greed, lust, anger, etc. These are all the enemies we have to conquer one by one, and that conquest would come only if we are sincere seekers after the highest

Ideal. Further, the Karma Yoga means the method by which we become free from bondage, or cut off the tie that holds us down to the plane of the earthly attachment, purifies our heart, and makes ourselves ready to attain the highest goal. And, therefore, the Karma Yoga is the first stage, and there is another Yoga which is called the Bhakti Yoga.

### THE BHAKTI YOGA

The Bhakti Yoga means the path of devotion, or the path of love. In this path, we must be devoted to the Ideal, must love the Ideal, and must worship the Ideal through love only and not for gaining any result on this plane. There are four kinds of worshippers who worship the Lord. The first kind is of those who are sick, and who want to be healed. You find thousands of the majority of the people in Europe and America are sick people. They want to be cured, and so the Christian Science and the New Thought Movement have taken up the healing as the highest ideal of their religion. But in our universal religion (*sanatana dharma*), we consider healing or healing practice as the lowest stage. He who worships God for curing diseases, is the lowest kind of worshipper. There is another kind who seeks the material results through worship. There are thousand of men and women in Europe and America who worship the Lord to have a good wife or a good husband. This kind of worship is the lowest, but they consider this to be the highest. I have been to Catholic countries like Italy, which is the headquarters of Roman Catholicism. These Catholics call us idolators, but they are more idolators than we are. I give you an illustration of it. The Christians have a baby Christ. and it is a gold statue put in a glass case. The statue is about 2½ feet tall, just like the figure of a baby with its head, face, arms, etc. and clothed with a beautifully embroidered silk robe, and all the ornaments that you can imagine, are decorating its arms, head and body. I saw a big gold watch hanging with a gold chain round its neck, and they do all these things for their desires to be fulfilled, and prayers to be granted. When somebody gets a child they put an ornament, and when a woman gets a good husband, she gives a necklace. The Italian peasants are also very superstitious. They consider the

Bambino as a living God. When there is a draught and crops do not grow, they pray for rain; and if there be no rain, they get a stick and beat the Bambino, because the Bambino does not grant their prayer. Now, it is a ridiculous thing that they call us the superstitious idolators. Go and see these things they are doing. So I say that we are far better off than they are. They have accepted all the images of the saints and their statues, and they worship each one. They have a saint, and there are plenty of snakes, and they worship him so that he may drive these snakes away. This custom is even found in Ireland and other Catholic countries. So you are not the only who have idols and statues. There are others too worse than you.

The devotion, that is prescribed in the Bhakti Yoga, is a different kind of devotion, and that devotion is the offering of the heart and the soul and all our ideals to the supreme Being, and that supreme Being may be called Vishnu, Siva, Mahadeva, or Mahadevi, they are all manifestations of the one supreme Being. So the Bhakti Yoga gives us the path of love. Some of the Christian missionaries state that there is no place of love in the Hindu philosophy, or in the Hindu religion, and it is all dry. But, my friends, our whole religion is based upon the greatest love than can be imagined. Our religion is based on an unselfish love, and not on the shop-keeper's love, which, I can say, is known to the majority of people in Europe and America.

Do you know what shop-keeper's love is? So long as a buyer buys things in his shop, he praises him well, and speaks very kindly with him; and when he does not buy, he tells him to keep out. And this is the form of shop-keeper's love. But our love is different.<sup>5</sup> We sacrifice everything to the ideal and do not seek any result, and this is grander. Devotion, without seeking any objects of desire, would enrich us on this plane.

The third kind is the seeker of knowledge which is considered as greater. Those who know God, cannot help but loving God, and cannot help but worshipping God, are included in the third category. Those who attain to the knowledge of the supreme Spirit through love, reach the highest

---

<sup>5</sup> Here Swami Abhedananda means to say that in India the spirit of love is different.

state, and they are the real Yogis. There are other Yogis also who want to have their desires fulfilled.

### THE JNANA YOGA

The Jnana Yoga is the path of knowledge, or the path of discrimination and ratiocination (*viveka* and *vichara*). This path is very deep and wonderful. The Jnana Yoga tells us that the world is like a dream or a delusion. It would be very difficult for us to understand, because we are not in a position to see anything that is beyond our vision, or our perception. In the materialistic and commercial world of Europe and America, this idea of delusion of all the material objects is spreading very fast today. This is done by the Christian Science movements. It was first started by Wover who married three times, and after marrying three times she was awakened to the spiritual knowledge. She was a sick woman, and she healed herself by a method by which all sickness can be cured, and that is through the spiritual force which lies in each of us. She also discovered first that this world is like a dream; everything that is material is on the sense plane and, therefore, is not eternal. It is *maya* or delusion, and is like a dream, and beyond that *maya*, there shines the eternal Truth or the supreme Spirit. That is the path of Jnana or the path of discrimination or wisdom.

### THE RAJA YOGA

The other Yoga is called the Raja Yoga which has been described before. 'Raja' means 'king' i.e. it is the king of all the Yogas. This Yoga teaches us how to concentrate our minds upon one subject and how to develop the power of meditation. It is a mental method, or a physic method, by which we practice concentration. We know that concentration is the most wonderful thing, as without concentration nothing can be achieved. We cannot be great scientists unless our minds are concentrated upon one object for a certain length of time. Look at the astronomers who discover the distant heavenly bodies, by fixing their eyes steadily on the path of the planets, and stars day after day, night by night, month by month, and

year after year. Sometimes they do not eat their meals, nay, they have no time to eat. They do not even take care of their books, because they concentrate their minds althrough. And in this connection I would like to tell you about Thomas Edison, the great scientist.

I met the great scientist, Thomas Edison in one occasion. I went to his laboratory and had a great talk with him. He was a friend of the Hindu philosophy. This man has his own laboratory, and it is in this laboratory, when he has a problem to solve, he sits at his table with the problem. His breakfast is brought to him in the morning and kept in the corner, but he has no time to take food. His mind is all fixed upon the problem. The breakfast gets cold, and it is taken away. He is not conscious of it, and he does not feel hungry. Day by day his tiffin is brought and put in the corner. But he has no idea of time, and the whole day goes by, he sits there solving the problem with a firm determination that he would not move till the problem is solved, and, therefore, he sits unmoved. The evening supper is brought, gets cold, and is taken away. He does not go to bed. He sits at the table, and when he feels very sleepy, he dozes and bends his head for a few minutes, and gets up again, and solves the problem. In this way, he would remain for days until the problem is solved. And that is concentration. Have you got concentration in you? If you have, then you will be the greatest man today. In any branch and in any line, fix your mind upon that one ideal; you will find all the questions and their pros and cons arise, and then you will be able to find their solution. The same man Thomas Edison is determined to invent an instrument by which everybody would be able to communicate with the departed spirit. He is not going to stop until he gets that. See, what benefit he has done to the whole world, by catching electricity and putting it into two wires, and giving you light. Why you cannot do such kind of things? It is because you have not the power of concentration. So, learn the method and practice it everyday, and you will be able to discover the secret of success.

It has already been said that the Raja Yoga means concentration which is the king of all the Yogas. You cannot cook a good dish unless your mind is concentrated upon the cooking. If your mind wanders all over the world, your food will be

burnt, and you would never have a good dish to eat. So you need concentration. When you drive a motor car, you need concentration, otherwise you will run all over the whole place and kill the people. When you ride a bicycle, you need concentration, else you will fall down and break your neck. Therefore, concentration is the first thing, and in view of that our great Rishis taught us how to concentrate. You see, in the temples, the statues of our gods and goddesses. These symbols are not really gods, but they aid to the process of concentration. You cannot fix your mind on the infinite Brahman all at once unless you first begin from the concrete object. The concrete object is placed in the temple, and when your mind is concentrated upon the object, then from the coarse you go to the fine and from the fine you go to the finer until you reach the absolute Spirit. How can that be attained? It is regular practice. Patanjali also said: "*tatra yatno'bhyasah*", i.e. if you sincerely strive day after day, that repeated efforts will be truned into habit. So, everyday you have to sit in concentration. Concentrate our mind upon the ideal, and form a habit hold it up there for a certain length of time so that the mind will not move away.. There is no break when you pour oil from the vessel to another. So should your concentration be. Then it will be perfect. Then you will be able to solve all the problems that are before your eyes today, and you will be able to be the greatest man in the world.

Therefore the Raja Yoga is the greatest. Siddhartha became Buddha through concentration and meditation. He struggled for six years, living on a small quantity of food. He was emaciated and was reduced to a skeleton with only skins and bones. He could hardly stand up, and after six years of asceticism and struggle, he found that he had not reached the goal. Then he sat down under the Bo tree (Banyan tree) with the determination that he would not move till he reached the goal. He said: "Let my body be dried up at the spot". He said too with firm determination: "Let my bones be scattered to the four winds, and my flesh be eaten by the insects and worms, but I shall not move an inch from this spot, until I reach the highest goal which is so difficult to be attained even by gods". And with that determination he sat down and attained to *samadhi* in three days and then he became Buddha,

the Englightened, the saviour of the mankind. This is the power of concentration of the Raja Yoga.

By concentration you must have self-determination and so if you have this self-determination, nothing can stop you. If you have confidence and self-determination, all forces and powers, no matter in what plane you are working, will come to you. Therefore have confidence in yourself. The old religions use to teach that he who does not believe in God, is an atheist but I say that he who does not believe in himself, is an atheist. You are the child of God, but you do not know God. You say that you know the son of Mr. and Mrs., or of So and so, but you do not know the immortal soul which is the real entity of all the sentient and the insentient objects. So remember that your body may be finite, but our soul or *Atman* is infinite. You are struggling now for a few dollars, and working like a slave. It is a degeneration to you. But you can be realized that you are the child of Gog. The Raja Yoga teaches that God dwells within us, and we are not to seek God far away. He is not sitting above the clouds, but He is here and in everyone of you. Believe me that I see God in each one of you.

Now, in this connection I would like to remind you one thing. Perhaps you know that we do not shake hands, but bow down, and that is the recognition of the Divinity in man. We salute a man means we salute God who is dwelling within a man. And this is our method of salutation (*pranama*). Do you know the origin of your shaking hands? You think that shaking hands is the most respectful way of receiving your friends. In ancient times, when people were uncivilized and uncultured, everyone used to doubt every other as an enemy. Because they had no real love for the *Atman*. They had swords in their left hands, and their right hands were free to draw the sword. When somebody came to them, they did not know whether he was a friend or an enemy, and if he was an enemy they were ready to kill him; and when they found that he was a friend, they gave him the right hand. It means, if you are my friend, I am not going to draw my sword. Do you think that we would adopt it? No, we cannot do it. We would rather salute the Lord, and this is based upon the spiritual truth. Now-a-days, you do not understand the meaning of this

shaking hand or salute. You will be to convert the whole world if you can understand it. The ignorant people cannot appreciate the higher truths just as sowing pearls before the swines. You must have self-confidence, and then you will be able to make others realise the truth that you have realised in yourself.

In the Raja Yoga, you will find that concentration and meditation lead to the highest state of superconsciousness or Godconsciousness. That state can be attained to step by step. But, along with the practice of concentration and meditation, what will you gain? As you progress, you will develop the wonderful powers i.e. the powers of reading other's minds. You will be able to send your thoughts to your friends, just as through wireless telegraphy, and you may send messages across the oceans, thousands of miles away, in an infinite part of a second. You will be able to send your message like a wireless telegraphy from mind to mind. Certainly you know that you send your thoughts when your friends receive them instantaneously. Even the historians of Europe have conceded that this power of telepathy was known among the Hindus during the time of the Mutiny. There was no other way of communicating messages. They used to send their messages by the power of thought, and this has been recognised all over the world. You can send a message from one part to another, regarding the movement of the enemies by this power of thought.

Then you get another power of clairvoyance which means clear vision at a distance. You would be able to see from America what is going on in Calcutta now. You need no telescope. You do not have to see through these eyes, but there is an eye, as I have described it a third eye or the spiritual eye, which will enable you to see things at a distance, and that will be gained by the practice of the Raja Yoga. Then there is another power of clariaudience. You can hear at a distance the music of the spheres in the heaven, and that power you will be able to develop, and heal others. You will be able to develop the healing power in you, which was manifested by Jesus the Christ. We have had many healers among the Yogis of India who have cured innumerable diseases by the power of thought.

Today you will find these things among the Europeans

Psychical Research Societies. The members of the Societies are investigating the mental powers like the power of suggestion. I will give you an illustration of what can be done by the power of suggestion. There was a great doctor in Europe who gave a suggestion to a girl that on every Friday she would develop a red-cross on her chest for six weeks. She was first put into a hypnotic sleep. If you make some poses and make the person gaze upon one object, you can put the person to sleep. And that is called the hypnosis. In that sleep, the conscious mind is in abeyance, but the subconscious mind is ready to receive the suggestion of the operator, and gives the suggestion to the person who is operated; and thus the doctor gave the suggestion to the girl that on every Friday morning she would raise a red-cross and true to this suggestion she raised a blister in the form of a cross. On every Friday she did that. That is the power of suggestion, that works through the subconscious mind into the conscious plane. If you give a suggestion to a sick person or a lame one that he would be better, he would be able to walk or he would be cured. It is the power of spirit by which all healing is done. The medical men do not know the power of healing, but the power of healing is a power of thought, and that is demonstrated today in the scientific circle of Europe and America. You can develop that power. That is nothing new to us, because the Raja Yoga has taught us that this can be done, and the same power is developed in a great degree in our Rishis. Then there are other powers such as by which you can disappear from among the crowd. There are the Yogis who can do that even now in India and who will make themselves vanish, if and when they are imprisoned and put in a room with the doors locked and the windows shut; they will disappear, and that is the power described in the Raja Yoga.

This Raja Yoga is practiced by the Yogis in India. It is not a myth, but is a fact. Then there is another power that whatever you desire you get. If you want wealth and prosperity, you draw it from the Infinite. The Infinite is everything, and if you direct your thoughts with proper concentration and meditation, you will get abundance of wealth, abundance of health, prosperity, and everything you desire. Nothing can stop you. The channel must be opened between yourself and the

infinite Spirit, and those secrets were known in India long ago before the Christian era, and long before an other nation became civilized. These truths were given out by the ancient vedic sages. The auto-suggestion is nothing but that it describes the methods by which those different desires can be obtained through the power of mental suggestion. If you study the Raja Yoga, there is no limit to your powers. There is another power by which you rise above the surface of the earth. You are seated in an *asana*, and practice some of the RajaYoga exercises, such as the breathing exercise (*pranayama*) and you will rise above the surface about three feet. You will float in the air, and it is possible. Do not think that these are all myths, but these are facts, and the scientific world is experimenting on these and has found that these are true. There is scientific explanations that whoever counteracts the power of the gravity and make himself like feather, he would rise above the surface. If you want to kill an animal by your will-power, you can do that, but that is not regarded as desirable. It is considered as a black magic. It should not be done. There is an injunction against it, and it is prohibited. Because these mental or psychic powers are obstacles to the path of the spiritual progress. But you can know for your knowledge how can these powers be developed by the practice of the Raja Yoga i.e. by practising the science of breathing. By the *pranayama* we can keep our health and be free from all diseases. No malaria will touch us if we regularly practice this *pranayama*. No influenza will also attack us. No cholera will attack us, and not any other germs may attack us. We will develop the power within us by which we will kill these germs. A Yogi is never afraid of these diseases. He will live in the midst of cholera patients and nurse them and not catch the contagion, because he has the power to kill the germs. And this is done by the Raja Yoga.

So, the Raja Yoga is the greatest study. I can talk to you for hours on the Raja Yoga, because it is my speciality. But I am not going to detain you very long. In conclusion, I shall say that all these different Yogas lead to the same goal. You study and practice everyday whatever path is suited to your ideal. Take a suitable path, and follow it diligently and sincerely, and you are sure to reach the goal even in this life.

You will be able to realize who and what you are, why you have come to this world, and what you will be after death. All these questions will be solved. Christianity and no other religion of a sectarian nature can solve these questions. But these questions can be solved by the practice of the Raja Yoga of India, by developing the power of opening the spiritual eye which is hidden at the present time, or which is closed and is rudimentary at this moment. Then through the opening of the eye you will be able to understand the hidden power which is working in the form of *kundalini*<sup>1</sup>, the coiled up energy at the base of the spinal column. When it passes the six *chakras* and reach the *sahasrara* at the top of the head, you will have *samadhi*. You will penetrate through all the phases, and enter into the very door of eternal bliss and infinite existence. There is the goal of all religions. There is the ideal of life. Unless you realize that, no matter how wealthy you are, and no matter how much possession you have. You cannot carry even a pin to the grave. Therefore, why are you so attached to these material things? You are rather a slave to these passions. It is only on account of the *maya*. So, my friends, there are teachers here among us who can show us the way, by which we can get out of these limitations and enter into the abode of the infinite existence, eternal happiness, and everlasting bliss. This abode is the prime goal of all human beings, and it is the be-all end-all of their life.

---

<sup>1</sup> *Kundalini*, *kula-kundalini*, *kamakala-kundalini* are the same thing. It is the stored up basic vital energy.

## CHAPTER II

### THE PRACTICE OF YOGA

#### I

The science of Yoga is the most practical of all the applied sciences, and is the most beneficial to mankind under all conditions and circumstances. Those who practice faithfully the teachings of this science of Yoga, will surely gain a perfectly healthy body and a healthy mind. They will understand the higher forces and the higher laws of nature, and will eventually unfold the higher powers which are latent in their body, mind and soul.

In practising the teachings of Yoga, the students are not required to believe in any special doctrine or dogma of any sectarian religion, but the main thing is for them to understand the laws which govern their soul-life and to obey those laws in daily actions of their earthly existence. Earnestness and sincerity are the first qualifications for the students of Yoga. So those who wish to practice Yoga, should be earnest and sincere. But those who take up the practice through curiosity, will gain some good results in the end, but perhaps they will not have patience and perseverance to continue for a long time. If they be earnest and sincere, they would be able to enter into the realm of their true being, and be familiar with the laws which govern their inner nature or higher self. At present we do not know our own inner nature. We may think that we do, but we know very little. Really we are not conscious of our higher Self. We think that we are mortals and are one with the body and that we are born with the body and shall die with it, and that is the common belief in every man. But that is an error. We are not one with the body and not the mortal souls, but we are immortal *Atman*. We have eternal existence, but we do not know it. We do not know even our own beings. So how can we know God? As no one can know God without knowing his or her own being first. So first we must know ourselves, and then we would find the greatest help

from this science of Yoga. Because, it teaches how we can know ourselves first, and then by knowing ourselves, we shall know the universe and also know God. Those who are earnest and sincere, will be able to overcome all the obstacles that exist in the path of the practice of Yoga.

There are a great many obstacles, such as laziness of the body, depression of the mind, and so on. I have mentioned about these obstacles which you will find in the thirtyfirst aphorism of the Raja Yoga. The first obstacle is disease. The physical disease is an obstacle. So, we must overcome that. The mental laziness is another obstacle. Doubt or a doubtful state of the mind is another obstacle. The cessation of struggle for the attaining to realization is also known as an obstacle. We may struggle for a few days, then drop it entirely, and that is an obstacle. Heaviness of the body and the mind is an obstacle. Thirst of the mind for worldly things is a great obstacle, but ordinary mortals do not know that it is an obstacle. Those who run after worldly things, do not think for a moment that they are losing the sight of their soul-life i.e. losing their eternal being. The false knowledge is also an obstacle. We are self-deluded at present. What can be more self-delusion than this state is that we are identified with the material body, that we are born and going to die? There cannot be any other state worse than this. This is the worst state of self-delusion or false knowledge that we are living at present. The non-attaining of the power of concentration is an obstacle. We may struggle to gain the power of concentration, but we fall and give it up. We also have no patience and perseverance. Then falling away from the state, when attained, is also an obstacle. If we rise on a higher state of realization, but cannot keep it, we fall down and come down to the lower plane as quickly as possible, because the attractions to worldly things are too powerful. Then grief from pain fear or other physical causes, mental distress, melancholy state of depression of the mind, and restlessness of the body are also obstacles. So, we cannot quietly sit for five minutes in one position; and that is the most undesirable condition. It is a nervous state and, consequently, it is an obstacle in the path of the practice of Yoga. The irregular breathing is an obstacle. Very few people can breathe\* correctly and regularly. We do not pay

any attention to that, and, therefore, we cannot get mental poise and nervous repose.

There are many other obstacles too, as the unfavourable environments of discouragement caused by unjust opinions of relatives and friends, and so on. These obstacles prevent the curiosity-seekers from continuing the practice of Yoga. But those who possess earnestness, sincerity, firmness of will and strong determination, will overcome or surmount all these difficulties and obstacles very easily. There is a saying: 'Where there is a will, there is a way', and so, if we have firm or determined will, then we can accomplish anything on this plane. The fickleness of the mind and the tendency to run after fads for a certain length of time are the characteristic traits of those who cannot accomplish great results in any line, whether in art, or in music, business, or any other line. Patience and perseverance are called the great virtues, because they bring success in the end in all line of work. If we have the patience and perseverance, we can become great musicians, great artists, great scientific men or great astronomers. Even in business-life, we cannot accomplish good results without patience and perseverance, and so it is in the spiritual life, or in the path of spiritual realization.

Some people have an idea that spiritual realization is easier than acquiring money or gaining any talent, like that in art or music. It is not correct, but it is most difficult thing. If you spend half of your life to become a good musician, you will have to spend perhaps three times of your present life in order to acquire the art of music. So, if we devote the whole of our life in becoming an artist, how much more time we ought to devote in order to realize the Divinity, or to attain to the Godconsciousness! We do not think this for a moment. People come here<sup>1</sup> to study just for a month, or for two months, or for a year, and they think that they ought to realize God right a way, and then to go to business. They cannot do it as it is impossible for them. It is a life's work. Jesus the Christ devoted his whole life before he attained to perfection. So we must be prepared to devote our whole life to attain to the Godconsciousness.. At least we should have that firmness

---

<sup>1</sup>To attend the class lectures of Swami Abhedananda.

and determination in our mind to attain to that highest goal. What else is to be acquired on this earth? We spend our whole life for acquiring wealth, the success and prosperity in business, but they last only for a short time. They are transitory, and they never permanently satisfy the soul. So we must realize who we are and what we are in reality, what relation we bear to the universe, and whether we are immortal or not. These are the most important question, and so we must try to solve them first.

The students of Yoga should never be fickle-minded. They should never take up the practice of Yoga as a passing fad, but should exercise patience and perseverance, and follow the instruction of a Yogi teacher as faithfully as possible. The Yoga teacher must be pure in his life. He should be chaste in his character and unselfish in his acts. In this country, there are some who pose as Yogis, take Hindu names, and then begin to teach with a view to gratify their selfish desires. They make a commercial success of it. The earnest and sincere students of Yoga must learn to discriminate these false teachers with those who are genuine and true, by examining their character, their mode of living and what they want, and also by understanding their private lives.

The students of Yoga should first begin to practice that branch of the applied science which is known as the Hatha Yoga. The practice of the Hatha Yoga would be the first thing, as it is most beneficial to all those who are desirous to gain the good results through the practice of Yoga. They should change, or rather restrain the mode of their living and should live a better life. They should observe hygienic laws and practise physical cleanliness by taking daily baths, and so on. They should breathe pure air, eat simple vegetarian food and drink pure water. Vegetarian diet is necessary for them, because the meat diet is unhealthy and dangerous, as they excite the mental feelings of the practitioners. Those who are habituated to eat meat, will find it difficult first, but they must try to overcome that desire or that weakness of the system which seeks meat diet, as vegetarian food will be extremely helpful and beneficial. Some people think that the lower animals are created for our food, and they do not think of the sacrificing highest, or some spiritual experiences. An evangeli-

cal preacher once said of Christianity: "Our religion is not a religion of fasting and privations; it is a religion of beef-steaks." Now, those who think that beef-steak is absolutely necessary for becoming spiritual and gaining perfect health, cannot practise Yoga. So, those who would like to attain to the highest results of Yoga, should not live in rooms over-heated by steam, and so on. Because that is not healthy. We must have fresh air, and learn to bear heat and cold as much as possible, and have out-door exercises. The students of Yoga should not waste their nervous energy unnecessarily, just as most people do by rash habit and dissipation. Regularity in eating, drinking and sleeping should be observed. Occasional fasting is helpful and good. It must be remembered that most of the diseases we get from eating too much and, especially, from eating meat. Those who suffer from rheumatism and gout, should give up meat entirely and should become vegetarians, breathe fresh air, and drink as much fresh water as they can. Purity, chastity, continence and other moral virtues should be held before the mind as ideals. The students should practise daily to reach those ideals as perfectly as possible within the limits of their environmental conditions.

Those who live on the sense-plane like the animals, should practise self-control. Self control is the first step in moral and religious life. We must control our senses, passions, ambitions and desires, and must not become slaves to those passions and desires, but must live as masters. We have no idea how much strength will come to us, if we live as the master and not as a slave of passions and desires. The whole world will be at our feet, if we know the greatness of our soul. We must live as the masters of ourselves. Self-mastery should be our ideal. Self-control will come to those who practise regularly, and hold such higher ideals always before their minds under all circumstances. Then the students of the Hatha Yoga should study the science of breath and practise the breathing exercises as given in the Raja Yoga.

The science of correct breathing is the most wonderful science. Nothing is more practical than this correct breathing. So we must regulate our breath. We may ask what relation there is between the correct breathing and the mental condition, or the spiritual realization. But we will find that there is a

very close relation between the two. Our mental condition and our respiration are closely related to each other. If one is affected, the other is also affected. If we have irregular breathing, we have restlessness in our minds. At the time of extreme passions, anger and hatred, we will notice that our breath is quick and short; but when our mind is quiet in repose, and is meditative and absorbed in higher ideals, higher thoughts, and divine love, we will find our breath smooth, regular and deep, and sometimes perhaps we would not notice that we are breathing at all. Then our breath will become slow. The breathing will be inward and not external at that time. So, the art of correct breathing should be learned by the students of the Hatha Yoga from the competent teachers who are versed in the science of breath, and then should practise it regularly.

These and other instructions of the Yoga teachers will help the students within six months to see changes in their own systems, and the improved health will be the result. If we practise regularly and faithfully and live the right kind of life which is required for gaining good results, then we will find within six months wonderful change in our systems. Then we will be able to understand the value of this science of the Hatha Yoga, and we will know what right living means. A few people understand the true meaning of right living. The majority of people live the most artificial kind of life. They eat too much, drink too much, and waste their nervous energy by dissipation by going to theatres, and so on, and still they wonder why they do not possess perfect health and healthy minds and why they have the nervous prostration. The nervous prostration is the inevitable result of dissipation. So, if we do not want the nervous prostration, we must not be dissipated. Remove the cause, and the result will be removed by itself.

The practice of the Hatha Yoga will lead to the practice of the Raja Yoga. As the Hatha Yoga is the science which deals entirely with the physical constitution and its ideal, so, on the other hand, the ideal of the Raja Yoga is a perfectly healthy self-controlled mind. It deals with the mind and the mental functions and teaches how we can develop the power of concentration. The power of concentration is very important and valuable in our daily life. The majority of people do not possess this power, and, consequently they cannot have success in their

business, in art, music, and other branches of their profession of works.

The power of concentration can be developed only by the practice or *abhyasa*. The practice is absolutely necessary for concentration. If we practise regularly and follow the instructions of a teacher, we can gain wonderful results within six months. The power of concentration will be so developed that you will be able to fix your mind on one subject for a long time and understand all the conditions for and against that subject.<sup>1</sup> A Yogi is supposed to know the past, present and future. How does he know that? He knows all these things by the power of concentration. You will be able to know what is going to happen to you, simply by concentrating your mind upon the conditions that are about to come. If you wish to know what you were in your previous incarnation, you may be able to know simply by the power of your concentration. Concentrate your mind upon your past, and then you will know the exact conditions and circumstances that you had before. All these impressions and ideas of our past lives are pigeon-holed in our subconscious plane. We shall be able to arouse them by directing our concentrated mental energy towards those latent impressions. So, you will notice how valuable is the power of concentration, which cannot be developed except through practice. We must devote at least half an hour everyday to the practice of concentration. Take any object that is very attractive and pleasing, and think of it for five or ten minutes, and gradually increase the time everyday, then you will see what a wonderful result will come to you. Those who have studied the *Patanjala-darshana*, will understand how valuable and important this branch of the science of Yoga is. Its ideal is to unfold all the latent powers of our own self, which are now dormant in our subconscious mind. We can unfold and gain wonderful results in every possible way. It describes them through the repeated practice, and can develop them the psychic phenomena, and at the same time, tells us why these psychic powers are obstacles in the path of spiritual realization. The psychic powers are not the same as the spiritual

---

<sup>1</sup>The subject of concentration has been discussed in a separate chapter.

powers. A few people understand the difference. You may possess the psychic powers, but you may not be spiritual. There are persons who can read other people's minds, or who are clairvoyant and clairaudient. But if you ask them or study their character, you will find that they are not spiritual at all. They have also no spiritual consciousness. So, by studying the Raja Yoga, we would be able to understand the relation of the psychic powers to our mental conditions and the reason as to why they are not helpful in gaining the highest spiritual realization, or the Godconsciousness.

The Godconsciousness is the ideal of the Raja Yoga. Through the practice of concentration and meditation, one can attain to the Godconsciousness. Some people may ask, why should we try to attain to the Godconsciousness? Well, it will make us free from all bondage, it will make us realize our past and future, as we know our present. What else do we want to have? If we attain to that Godconsciousness, we may not be rich materially or commercially, but we will be rich spiritually. Some people have an idea that God is like a multi-millionaire sitting above the clouds and possessing enormous wealth, and so they try to become perfect like God by acquiring wealth. That is a mistake. God is not rich materially, but he is the absolute bliss, omniscience, omnipotence, and is absolutely free. He is the master of everything, and if we can become masters of our environmental conditions and attain to peace and higher knowledge, then we will be approaching the divine Being.

The students of the Raja Yoga and the science of Yoga can be divided into three classes. The first class are those who are the born Yogis; that is, those who are born as the awakened souls. After practising Yoga in their previous incarnations they acquired a tendency to live a pure life, and so these awakened souls manifest those tendencies from their childhood. Nothing of this world attracts their mind. They do not care for anything of this world. The mortals are dying to have certain things, but these awakened souls do not want them. Can we imagine what state of mind these awakened souls possess? Why is it that they do not care for those things for which others are dying? What do they possess? They possess something which is much higher and much greater

than what we possess now. These awakened souls do not care to have luxuries and sense pleasures, but they are longing for something which they do not know. By the law of attraction, they are drawn into the surroundings of some great Yogis, or wise men, and then these souls feel quite at home. The instructions of these Yogis appeal to them, and they follow the instructions of them, and, in a short time, they gain wonderful results. Nothing can obstruct their progress. They take up the practice of Yoga from the very point, where they left off in their previous incarnation. Nothing is lost, and they go on practising till the highest ideal of their life is attained.

The second class includes those who are the half-awakened souls, who need more experience, and who try to find their ideal by going into various things without striking the right one at the very beginning. They waste a great deal of their time and energy. They do not know exactly what they want. They think that they want the world at certain moments, and at other times they think that they do not want the world, and so they vacillate from one state into another. Sometimes they follow the world and get certain results, and then are dissatisfied and try to become spiritual, but they are not steady enough to stay in that state. They go back again to the world, and, in this way they waste a great deal of their time and energy. They take up the practice of Yoga for some time, and they do not like it. They give it up again and then after a few years they wake up again and take it up. They cannot make any steady progress. They find a great many obstacles, but they are not strong enough, as they are weak. Their mental conditions are disturbed. They find a great many distractions, but still in the long run they can attain to the highest goal through constant practice.

The third class includes those who take up the practice of Yoga for the first time in this incarnation, who are born as unawakened souls, who have no spiritual ideals, and who live on the animal plane. The sense pleasures and the sense desires are the highest ideal of their lives. If you ask them anything about the spirituality, they do not know or care for it, and if they try to practice Yoga, they find a great many obstacles. Perhaps their physical conditions are not favourable. They

may have many diseases, and their environmental conditions are not helpful, and so they cannot overcome those obstacles. But after a long practice, they find very little results. These obstacles are stronger than their desire to accomplish the higher result, but if such persons follow faithfully the instructions of a Yogi and take up the breathing exercises, and practise them faithfully, then wonderful results will come to them. Then they will be able to remove all those obstacles gradually, and will gain the perfect health by correcting the errors in their mode of living, and so on. In fact, the science of the Raja Yoga is beneficial for all these classes of people which we find in the world. It is a science which has been in existence for ages in the East. It was extolled by Pythagoras, Plato, the Neo-Platonists, Plotinus, Porphyry and Proclus as well as by the Gnostics the Christian mystics of the Middle Ages and the Roman Catholics. You will find amongst the monks and the nuns of the highest order the practice of concentration and meditation, but they have converted this universal science into a sectarian system.

As I have already said that the students of Yoga are not required to have any particular belief in a particular doctrine or a dogma of any particular religion, so one can practise the religion by retaining his faith in creeds and dogmas, in which he was brought up. A student of Vedānta may be a Christian, or a Buddhist, or a Mohammedan, or a believer in any creed. The practice will bring the result and not the belief only. The belief is secondary, but practice is the first thing necessary. The earnestness, sincerity and faithful practice will bring good result. Spencer, Kant, Schopenhauer, Ralph Waldo Emerson and others spoke highly of this science as one which unravels the mysteries of the soul and of the universe. It was kept secret in India for a long time. The Yogis would not give these instructions and teachings to ordinary persons, but only to their faithful disciples. They did not want to throw the pearls before the swine. When a faithful disciple came to them, they would teach, otherwise they would not. Now the Yogis in India have become more liberal, because they find that the people who are living a different kind of life, ought to know a little of this, and ought to practice a little. They will get some results in the end; and, therefore, they give it freely.

The first steps of this science of Yoga are eight in number, and the first four of these include all the moral trainings. We must not kill any living creature. Non-killing should be practised in thought, word and deed. We must not injure anyone. We should practise the golden rule. "Do unto others as you wish others to do unto you". If you kill others, others will kill you. Why do you not think of that? As we do not want to be killed' so we should not kill any living creature. We must not steal another person's property. We must speak the truth. We must practise continence and have the higher moral ideal. The perseverance, fortitude, and all other should be practised. Here you will notice in these first two steps all the teachings which make up the Sermon on the Mount are embodied. That is the beginning of a pure, spiritual and godly life. And then we can go higher and higher through practice and at last we attain to the highest realization.

There are other branches of Yoga, the Karma Yoga, the Bhakti Yoga, and the Jnana Yoga. The Karma Yoga tells us how we should live in this world. This is very practical and important. How can we make our works as the acts of worship? It is possible only by understanding the secret of the work. So we will know that all these daily works of our lives can be turned into the acts of worship, and can be made the means towards the attainment of the highest realization of the absolute Truth.

The science of the Bhakti Yoga is called the science of the divine Love. It covers the whole field of emotions and feelings. It teaches how to transform our human affections and earthly love into the divine Love by directing them towards God, and then those human affections which are a source of bondage today, will become the means for the liberation of our souls. Therefore, let us direct our thoughts towards God let us feel that God is our dearest friend, our husband, wife, father, mother, brother sister and everything. Let us have all these emotions directed towards Him. That is a wonderful science, and also the most practical one. You will find in India hundreds and thousands of people are struggling everyday to devote their human affections to God, who after a short time become saintly and divine. The path of love is regarded by many as the highest path for realization, but it is at the same

time most dangerous, because there are a great many attractions or distractions and temptations in this path. We cannot keep up the highest ideal before our minds all the time. We may slip and plunge into the world again, but if we have competent teachers or *Gurus* then through their instructions we can overcome all these temptations and difficulties, and gradually, we attain to the highest goal through love and love alone.

The other path is the path of the right knowledge and the right discrimination. It is for those who are intellectual and philosophical in their tendencies, who can analyse the nature of things, and who are able to sacrifice their earthly ideals for the sake of knowledge. It is the Jnana Yoga, or the path of knowledge. The path of Jnana Yoga is described as the most difficult path. It is as difficult as to walk on the sharp edge of a razor, having the fear of being hurt at every moment. But there are students all over the world who are capable of travelling on this path of knowledge. Then can attain to the highest goal through the right discrimination and right analysis, and they will not stop until the highest Truth is realized.

The Jnana Yogis are those who have conquered death in this life through right knowledge or divine wisdom. The sufferings of body, pain and disease do not affect their souls. As the difficulties which encompass this path do not exist in relation to those who are living in different planets and so the pain and sufferings which affect the body, do not affect the souls of those who are dwelling on the higher atmosphere of the absolute Truth. Drinking the cup of the eternal bliss, they conquer death and all troubles of life, and they enjoy the everlasting bliss even in this mundane life. They see Divinity everywhere and they live like the emancipated souls. They stand on the top of all scriptures of the world, and they are regarded as the great ones, or the enlightened souls. The masses of people worship them as the ideal of the nations, nay they themselves become the ideals. They attain to that state of oneness with the Divinity.

The attainment of oneness is the highest goal of all kinds of Yoga. All the practices of all kinds of Yoga teach that to be one with God or to become Divine, is the ideal of all souls, and he who has attained to that state, has become perfect. So we see how many-sided is the science of Yoga, and how practical

it is too. A true Yogi sees Divinity everywhere, as is described in the *Bhagavad Gita*, in the verse which runs thus: "He who has attained to that realization of oneness, sees God in all animate objects of the universe, sees God everywhere, he dwells in God, and ultimately becomes one with God, and remains there forever and ever."

## CHAPTER III

### THE VALUE OF CORRECT BREATHING

The science of breath is the most important of all sciences, and no other science is so closely connected with our earthly existence, as this science of breath is. The right knowledge of correct breathing is the most important thing in our daily life. Our earthly life commences with the breath, and ends with the passing out of the breath. If a child right after its birth does not breathe for some time, we give up the hope of its life. So also the old man is said to be dead when the last breath passes out of his body. Whenever we think of our life, or of our living substance consciously or unconsciously, we associate it with the breath. Our system is so organized that we cannot live without breathing. We may live without food or drink for hours or days, but we cannot stop our respiration even for a moment. The first lesson we receive direct from the mother nature is the lesson of breathing. Our physical health, growth, and purification of blood, and, consequently, the activities of the internal organs depend entirely upon the respiratory process, and, therefore, the study of the science of breath will help us in getting a clear idea of the wonderful powers and marvellous results that can be obtained through correct breathing. The correct breathing destroys all the germs of diseases that enter into our system, and we can get rid of all the microbes which we constantly draw from the atmosphere around us, if we know how to breathe correctly.

In the first place, let us understand the physiological conditions of the respiratory process. We all know that our breathing apparatus consists of the lungs and the air-passages, such as the nose, the pharynx, the larynx, the wind-pipe, and so on. We also know that the atmospheric air is drawn through these passages by the mechanical action of the diaphragm which is nothing but a strong and flat muscle which separates the chest from abdomen. The oxygen of the air, entering through the open door of the lungs, filters through the thin

walls of the pulmonary capillaries, comes in contact with the venous blood, produces a kind of combustion, and destroys all the impure matter that is deposited in the blood, and as the result of this combustion, carbonic acid gas is generated which comes out in the form of breath. Ordinarily, when we inhale the air that contains about twenty-one per cent. of oxygen, and when exhaled, it contains twelve per cent. in the system, and the blood which has once been used will be of no further service, if it were not purified by the lungs. In a healthy adult man, the average pulsation is seventyfive in a minute, and two ounces of blood are driven from the heart by lungs by each pulsation, or nine pounds and six ounces in a minute. The whole quantity of blood in the system is considered to weigh about one-fifth of the entire weight of the body, or twentyeight pounds in a man weighing one hundred and forty pounds, and this quantity of blood will take about three minutes to pass from the heart to the lungs or through the lungs, or thirteen thousand and five hundred pounds in twentyfour hours. Ordinarily we use one-sixth of the full capacity of the lungs. If the full capacity of the lungs be brought into proper use, who can tell what marvellous results might not follow. The nature has not given capacity to any organ without a purpose, and we are sure that if every one were to use the full capacity of the lung power, the weak and diseased lungs would be found nowhere. All the disease like tuberculosis and others that of the lungs will be driven away from the civilized community by a single generation of correct breathing. If we know exactly the causes which produces such diseases and how to remove those causes, then we shall gain perfect health and live in this world without being affected by any of the germs of diseases that we come in contact with. The science of breath teaches us how we can develop the lung power to its fullest capacity, and how, by regulating, we can purify the cells, the tissues and the organic activities of our system.

Modern physiology tells us that blood is nothing but a vehicle to carry oxygen in the oxy-haemoglobin throughout the system in the cells, tissues and organs of the body; and the organic combustion does not take place in the lungs only, but also in the cells and the tissues themselves. The oxygen invigorates and strengthens every part of the body, and helps

in digesting the food by producing chemical changes in the food; and those who suffer from indigestion and poor digestion, will find that their system lacks in proper supply of oxygen and, if they can get the proper supply of oxygen into system, they will be free from all such troubles of digestion. They should also remember that, in order to get proper nourishment, every particle of food and drink that we take into our system, must be properly oxygenated, when imperfect nutrition is the result of insufficient supply of oxygen in our system. Deep breathing will be extremely helpful to us in drawing larger quantity of oxygen into our system from the atmosphere. It will be especially beneficial for those women who wear tight dresses around their waist, and most of the diseases from which they suffer, can be traced to the lack of adequate supply of oxygen in their systems. In this country (America) especially, many people have their internal organs undeveloped or abnormally developed, on account of the unnatural clothes worn, and the deep breathing will help such people in overcoming those defects, and thus becoming free from all diseases and all organic troubles from which they suffer continuously. Deep-breathing, however, should not be practised through the mouth, but always through the nose. Mouth-breathing is extremely injurious to our health, and this habit which we find amongst many people all over the world, should at once be corrected. Parents should never allow their children to breathe through the mouth, or sleep with open mouth. Many of the contagious diseases are contracted through the mouth-breathing and catarrhal troubles of the throat come through this practice. Why should people breathe through the mouth when nature has supplied them with the splendid apparatus for breathing, with dust-catchers and mucous membrane along the wind-pipe and air-passages? Mouth breathing is not only injurious to our health, but also we get all kinds of the germs of diseases, and there is no protection from them. The passage from the mouth to the lungs is unprotected, while the passage through the nose is well-protected, and, if we breathe air through the mouth, all dust and impure substances will find clear track through the mouth into the lungs, and the nostrils will, in course of time, get clogged up on account of disuse, and then other troubles will begin. The pain in the forehead between

eyebrows which is generally caused by chronic catarrh, will be the result if we continue mouth-breathing. So the nostrils should always be kept clean for taking air for breathing.

Those who do not practise deep breathing, generally breathe from the chest. Chest-breathing can be divided into two classes, the one is the high or the collar-bone breathing, and the other is the rib-breathing. In the first (that is, in the collar-bone breathing), the collar-bone and the shoulders are raised up and a small quantity of air enters into the lungs and only the upper part of the lungs is filled, and, consequently, a very small supply of air is taken in by that method. This is the worst of all kinds of breathing, i.e. the high collar-bone breathing is injurious to health. . . That kind of breathing does not help us in getting sufficient amount of oxygen into the system. The second or the rib-breathing is a little better than the first. In this, the abdomen is drawn in, and the diaphragm is pushed upward, while the chest is somewhat expanded. This kind of breathing, of course, fills the upper and the middle parts of the lungs. The music-teachers generally give this kind of breathing to their students, and they get good results and their chests are expanded to a certain extent. But the deep-breathing is different from these two kinds of breathing that I have just described. It is sometimes called the abdomen-breathing, or the diaphragmatic breathing. Deep breathing is now given in Delsarte and in the physical culture schools; but the Yogis of India, who have studied the science of breath very carefully, prescribe a different method of breathing, by which we can develop the power of the lungs, and use the full capacity, and learn the method, by which we can draw the largest quantity of oxygen from atmosphere for use in our system. That method is not merely the deep breathing, because if we simply continue the deep breathing, we may get the tissues and the cells of our lungs inflated or increased in time, but we must learn how to draw more oxygen into the system by regulating our breath. The science of breath means not only a proper supply of oxygen in the system, but also it tells us how we should learn to regulate our respiratory process, and that is the most important thing, because when we have learnt to control the motion of the diaphragm, we can do anything with those organs.

## II

The Yogis of India claim that through the breathing exercises all kinds of diseases can be cured, and there is a science behind it. They say that it is not merely the oxygen that cures all the diseases, but there is a different force of different powers. The healing power is not merely the oxygen, but it is what they call the power of the *Prana*. The power of the *Prana* is neither oxygen, nor electricity, nor molecular attraction, but is a force distinct from these forces and also other physical and chemical forces. It is not produced by oxygen, but it is a power which governs and directs the physical forces of the nature. It is sometimes called the nervous force or the life force, or the vital force, or the vital energy. In Sanskrit, it is called the *Prana*, and the object of these Yogis in India is to gain absolute control over this *Prana*. By gaining control over this *Prana*, we can not only get the physical results, but also the mental moral, and spiritual results can be obtained. That is a thing unknown to the physiologists and the medical practitioners of the West, but the Yogis of India claim that this is possible, and their theory is that the mind and the thought and all other mental functions are closely related to the respiratory functions of our systems. They say that we gain perfect self-control, peace, and calmness of mind through the process of the correct breathing. The tranquillity and the spiritual enlightenment can be obtained through correct breathing, and the Yogis of India as well as the greatest thinkers of the ancient times, after studying the science of breath, discovered the proper method, by which these higher results can be obtained through the breathing exercises. They call these higher breathing exercises the *pranayama* which means the 'control of breath'. The word *Prana* is, as I have stated, a Sanskrit term which stands for that higher force, or the vital force, or the vital energy, or the life-force, or the nervous energy, and they say that this *Prana* is all-pervading.<sup>1</sup> It exists everywhere. It is in the atmosphere, it is in the rays of the sun. It is the cause of the heat, light, motion, and electricity. Sometimes it is called the 'breath of life'.

---

<sup>1</sup> In the *Upanishads* and the *Brahmasutra*, their *prana* has been mentioned as the 'Brahman'. But it should be remembered that this *prana* is known as the *saguna-Brahman*.

It is also the cause of our will-power and thought-force, which are the first manifestations of a living soul. A living soul must begin to think, and must possess will-power, and these powers are the highest manifestations of that energy which is called by the Yogis of India the *Prana*. This energy is also the cause of gratification, and all the physical forces of the nature are but so many manifestations of that one eternal energy, called the *Prana*. God, we know, is a living God. But how does He live? He does not live merely by breathing air from the atmosphere, but He lives without breathing, that is, by the vital force of this *Prana*. If we study our own system and the organic functions, we will find that the air drawn in and breathed out by the lungs, is drawn in by that motion of the diaphragm, and that motion of the diaphragm is caused by some nervous energy which exists in our system. What is the cause of this motion of the diaphragm? The Yogis say that it is caused by the *Prana*, and that motion of the diaphragm produces motion in the lungs, and then by the pump action the air is drawn in and thrown out.

But that *Prana*, or the life force, or the vital energy, is located in the spinal column, from which all the motor and sensory nerves branch out and spread all over the system or over the organs. The activity of the heart is regulated by this nervous energy of the *Prana*. The nerve currents flows through the channels by this power of the *Prana*, or the life-force. Without this life-force, the organic activities will be impossible, the heart will not beat, the lungs will not move, and other organic functions will stop. There is a special organ for the manifestation of this *Prana*, and that is called the spinal column in the vertebrates, equivalent organ in other animals. This spinal column affords a vehicle for this energy of the *Prana*, and it is located in the nerve-centres in the spine, and from there it flows through the nerves all over the system.

This will give us a little idea of the importance of this power of the *Prana*, and if we can store up a certain quantity of this power of the *Prana*, or the vital nervous energy, we can gain perfect health, both physical and mental. The power of the *Prana*, again, is the cause of all mental functions. The power of the *Prana* is the cause of our will and thought. If the vital energy, or the nervous energy, does not manifest itself

in the brain cells, the brain will be unable to think, and a man who lacks in this power of the *Prana*, lacks in his will-power, and also in his thinking power. In order to gain the perfect control over our will, or to develop our will-power, thinking power and intellectual faculties, we must learn the method, by which we can store up this *Prana* in our system. Then the Yogis say that this *Prana* exists in the atmosphere, in water and in food. Everything that we eat or drink contains a certain quantity of this *Prana*, and a student in the science of breath knows the method, by which a larger quantity of the *Prana* can be drawn in our system from the atmosphere, from food, from water, and from everything. Of course, we are naturally drawing this *Prana* to a certain extent into our system from the system of our environments, but when we do it consciously, we gain control over it. The whole respiratory process is caused by this power of the *Prana*, but at present we do not know how to gain control over this *Prana*. How are we to regulate this *Prana* or the vital energy, and make it manifest on the highest plane, how to develop the will-power and conquer our hunger, thirst and all the mental passions and desires, to which we are enslaved in our ordinary life? The Yogis of India claim that one can attain the absolute control over the organic functions as well as over the mental and the intellectual functions, by controlling the power of the breath. But the power of the *Prana* is invisible. We cannot see as well as perceive it, we know its external manifestation in the form of the motion of the diaphragm, and its most outward expression is the respiratory process. The air is drawn in and breathed out. The inhalation and the exhalation of air are the grossest manifestation of this power of the *Prana*. In order to gain the absolute control over this invisible force, we must begin with the grossest manifestation, because we can get hold of it very easily.

Now, if we try to stop the motion of the lungs, or the motion of the diaphragm, how can we do it? Simply by controlling our breathing exercises or respiratory process. When we have done that, we have given a tremendous shock to our system. The power of the *Prana*, or the whole nervous system, is agitated. If we are under the direction of competent teachers, we can learn very easily a method by which we can control

that agitated state of the *Prana* and transmute that power into our will-power. When we have tried to control the motion of the lungs we are needed to exercise our will-power. At first, the will-power may be very weak, but gradually it will be strengthened. Then the will-power will, in course of time, be so strong as to control the activity of the lungs and also of the diaphragm. The ordinary people may not believe that it is possible to bring this mechanical activity of the diaphragm and the movements of the lungs under absolute control, but it is possible. I have seen the Yogis who can control the heart-beat by their will-power and who can control the motion of the diaphragm. There are instances of persons who were buried alive for forty days with their ears and nostrils sealed with the sealing-wax, and their bodies kept in hermetically sealed boxes and then buried under ground. Constant watch was kept over that spot and after forty days the body was raised and the person revived, lived after that. That shows that it is possible to develop the power by the absolute control over the motion of the lungs and the motion of the diaphragm. In fact, that power is latent in every individual, but it is never brought into play by ordinary persons. Only the Yogis have studied it carefully and have developed a system by which this can be done. So the practice of Yoga is necessary, and we should realize the value of the correct breathing which will enable us to control over the breath and also our mind; and when the mind is controlled, or its activities are silenced, or are balanced, then concentration and meditation help us to realize the *Atman*.

## CHAPTER IV

### THE HEALING POWER OF THE PRANA

Our earthly life consists in a continued adaptation to environments. A living substance is that which is capable of adapting itself to its surroundings, and the very moment it completely fails to do so, it is dead. The more perfect is the adaptation, the more perfect is the manifestation of life. All vegetable, animal, and human lives are subject to this great law of adaptation. This law manifests itself, and governs every step of existence, growth, evolution and development of a living creature. That power, by which an organism can adapt itself to its environments, is not a mechanical one, and not merely a chemical force, but it is what we understand by the word 'life-force' or 'vital energy'. Wherever there is the manifestation of this life-force, there is a natural tendency to bring a perfect harmony with the surrounding condition as well as with the laws that govern them. This tendency is to be found in all the living beings as well as in every department of nature, whether vegetable, animal, or human. Therefore the fulfilment of this tendency, the establishment of a perfect harmony with the environment, and obedience to the natural laws, are implied in the meaning of adaptation, and these are the products of the life-force, or the vital energy.

The moral manifestation of the life-force under favourable environments, creating perfect harmony with them and obeying the laws that govern them, is the state which is ordinarily understood by the common expression 'health'. In other words, health means the life under natural conditions, where the law of adaptation and other laws that govern the environments are not violated in the least. But if these laws be violated, if the conditions be abnormal, and if the adaptation be imperfect, then the result will be the lack of health or that state which is meant by such expressions as ill-health, sickness, or disease—all of which mean the lack of health. The disease is not a real entity, which stands outside of ourselves as the enemy of health and attacks us from time to time, as some

take possession of us from outside, but is produced by the inability of the life force to adapt itself to its environments and to obey the laws of nature. In order to adapt ourselves to our surrounding conditions, whether internal or external, we need a certain amount of the energy and the force, and when that amount decreases either by the waste or dissipation, or by the lack of proper nourishment, or by the violation of the hygienic laws, then we grow weak, and, consequently, become unable to resist environmental influences which are constantly working against the earthly existence, and are trying to crush it, then we succumb under the pressure and become subject to of the life-force under the abnormal conditions. It does not people may think, but it is simply an imperfect manifestation of the various ailments. As for example, when the temperature of the atmosphere is low, if we cannot adapt ourselves to that external change by getting enough of warmth, then our system will be affected and we shall catch cold, or be frozen. If the food be too rich or unwholesome, our system will try its best to assimilate it, but if it fails, then the result will be indigestion, etc. If water which we drink, contains germs or impure substances, they will enter our system and try to dwell there, produce various symptoms of abnormal conditions, which our system will naturally struggle to throw off and recover its normal condition.

If there be enough of the life-force, the organs will destroy all the germs of the disease and also all the microbes and bacteria which are constantly entering into our bodies through breath, food and drink as well as through the pores of the skin and are attacking the cells and the tissues. And abundance of the life-force is necessary to resist their influences, or to drive them away, or to kill them, and eventually bring back the normal condition, which we understand as health. No disease can arise in the system, if there be a sufficient amount of the life-force and if the cells are able to resist the influences of the common environments. The life-force has the primary tendency to preserve itself. The tendency for self-preservation is manifested not only by the individual being, but also by every organ and every tissue, nay, by every minute cell of the whole organism. Propelled by this force, each cell acts instinctively, as it were, to protect its normal or healthy state, and to remove

all such obstacles as stand in its way. If any part of the body be wounded or injured, immediately the minute cells which are floating in the blood, begin to work with an extra force to remove that obstacle, to attack that enemy, and to recover the normal state of that part. As in a bee-hive, when any part is injured, thousands of bees will rush to attack and remove the enemy to repair and restore the natural state of the hive, so when the body receives any injury, or when any germ enters the system and attacks the cells, the other cells rush forward with tremendous force and fight against the enemy; and if they succeed in driving that enemy away or killing that germ, the health or normal condition of the body is restored; but if they fail, the result will be pain, aches, or disease. Each cell possesses that life-force or power, by which it preserves itself, and heals the wound. Ordinarily we say that the healing power is generated by the drugs and the medicines which are given by physicians. But do they impart the healing power to us? Take a concrete example of it. When a bone is broken, what does the medical surgeon do? He simply sets it in its proper place, and with the help of the bandage keeps it in the same position for a few days. The mending and repairing are done by nature, as we all say. But what do we mean by nature? The nature is nothing else but the life-force or the vital energy which dwells in the organs and the cells. No other force of the nature than the life-force can perform this task. It is the healing power of nature which manifests itself in the human body in the same manner as in all animals and vegetables. When the bark of a tree is scratched or torn, the same life-force of the tree heals it and makes it perfect. The healthy condition of the body is the result of the normal activities of the vital energy, or the life-force. We all know that if the life-force, or the vital action, is perfect, a man can easily recover from any injury or disease, however malignant it may be. But when the vital force is wasted, the nervous system is run down, the recovery becomes much more difficult, and recuperation is impossible, and then the life-force is impaired or extremely weakened or compelled to work continuously under adverse conditions.

No disease will ever arise, if free scope is given to the vital energy, or the life-force to act under proper conditions. On

the other hand, limit its scope and provide adverse conditions, the life-force will naturally take vigorous measures to overcome, or to remove the obstacles. The results of this effort will appear in the form of aches and pains, and, eventually failing to resist and recover the normal activities, the organism will die under heavy pressure, producing the symptoms of incurable disease.

Thus we can understand that nature has supplied us with a certain amount of the healing power. This power dwells in every form of the living substance. But its quantity varies in different individuals; some have tremendous power of healing, and others have little. A healthy child possesses an abundance of the life-force. If a bone broken, or any organ is injured, it will be cured in a shorter time than in a grown-up person whose life-force is wasted by dissipation.

In the science of Yoga, this healing power of nature is called the *Prana*. It is a Sanskrit term, meaning the life-force, or the vital energy, which is sometimes translated as the 'breath of life'. That breath of life, which is described in the 7th verse of the second chapter of the Genesis: "And the Lord God had formed a man of the dust of the ground, and breathe into his nostrils the breath of life"; and again in the Book of Job, Chapter XXXIII, verse 4: "The Spirit of God hath made me and the breath of the Almighty hath given me life," does not mean merely the atmospheric air which enters into the nostrils, but it means the life-force, or the *Prana*. It does not signify that a specific quantity of air was bottled up in the human system by God at the time of our birth which must be exhausted before death comes, but it means the power of the *Prana*, which is the source of life, the cause of the respiratory process and the producer of the vital actions.

According to the science of breath, each living soul possesses the power of the *Prana*, by which are caused the activities of the motor and sensory nerves. The nerve-currents which travel through these nerves are produced by the vibration of the *Prana*. The nerve-centres in the spine are the storehouse of this life-force where it is generated and kept. In case of emergency, this life-force goes through different parts of the body, distributing the healing powers. The more we can store away

this power of the *Prana*, the stronger we shall be physically and mentally. He who possesses sufficient quantity of this breath of life, or the *Prana*, has perfect health and enormous vitality and strength which he can impart to others if he wishes to do so.

This is the secret of the magnetic healing. The loss of the *Prana*, or the nerve-force, is the cause of nervous prostration and of all other diseases. He who has gained mastery over this breath to the diseased part, can generate new vibrations in the cells of those parts, and by the higher breathing exercises and destroying the cause of the disease, he can easily gain perfect health and strength. He can bring health and strength constantly to every part of his body. By polarizing the activities of the cells, he can remove the obstacles that prevent the normal vibration of the vital current of those cells. The cells are moving in certain directions, but he can make them all obey his will-power, and then he can do anything with them, and cure all diseases. But an ordinary person who has not control over the breath of life, cannot do it. A true Yogi claims that he can gain mastery over this breath of life, and can cure all diseases, of course, such diseases as have not produced decomposition or disorganization, but all other diseases in the preliminary stages can be cured by these higher breathing exercises. The breathing exercises will bring actual control over this nerve-force, and they will help us to draw the *Prana* from the atmospheric air, and from food, water, etc., because this life-force is all-pervading.

The manifestation of this force is only to be found through the nerve-centres and the nerves. Therefore if we know the secret of drawing from the atmosphere the life-force or the *Prana* into our system, since the quantity of air which passes through our lungs, possesses the *Prana*, if we can extract it and store it in the nerve-centres, then we can use it at any time when it is needed. Nature possesses it, but no individual can give it, unless that individual possesses a superabundance of the *Prana*. Therefore, when we go to a healer, he may give it, and we may feel better for the time being, but as soon as it is used up, we shall be obliged to return to him once again. The true Yogi, however, says, if you know the method by which you can

manufacture that life-force in yourself, then there will be no need of your going to others and borrowing it from them.

The Christian Scientists, the Faith Healers and the Mental Healers can cure disease without the drugs, but if they knew the secret of manufacturing the life-force, or the *Prana*, through the breathing exercises, as taught by the Yogis of India, they would surely gain more marvellous results. Having learned the secret of manufacturing the life-force a Yogi says that one can easily become master of his body and the mind. Here we must not forget that all these different methods are either by the power of arousing the healing power of the *Prana* in the patient through suggestion, or by transmitting that power of the *Prana* to the patient. A Yogi can cure diseases by the power of touch, or by the power of command, by simply saying: 'Be thou cured, be thou healed'. Such instances of instantaneous cures can be found in all countries. Jesus the Christ was one who possessed the power of command. Buddha and Sri Ramakrishna also had this power.

The power which is developed through the breathing exercises, as given in the Yoga classes, held under the auspices of the Vedanta Society of New York, will produce wonderful results in a very short time. Those who know the secret of manufacturing and storing away the *Prana*, possess perfect health. But this cannot be achieved in a day, or in a month, it will require some time to gain that mastery over the breath of life, and it will also require an absolute self-control. One should live a pure and chaste life, and learn the secret of transmuting the nervous energy and the sex energy into the will power, by practising the higher breathing exercises of a Yogi.

In order to cure disease, we must wield a tremendous will power in us, and that will-power can be more strengthened and increased by the breathing exercises. This development of the will-power is one of the ideals of a Yogi, or of a student of the science of breath. The first effect of the successful breathing exercises is the control of the nerves, or what we call the freedom from nervousness as well as from all diseases which proceed from the nervous disorder. The physical strength will be almost unlimited, and the person will be so strong and hardy that he will not be easily affected by sudden changes of weather, nor by hunger or thirst, a small

quantity of food or drink will be enough to produce great results. Anyone who practises the breathing exercises faithfully as given in the Yoga classes, will gain highly beneficial results both in the body and the mind. He will remove all impurities from his system, and overcome all abnormal and diseased conditions. He will no longer be subject to rheumatism, stiffness of joints or muscles, paralysis, and other ills, for the higher vibrations of the *Prana* will destroy their causes. Every individual, whether young or old, man or women, is bound to get some result, if the exercises are properly practised for six months. He is furthermore sure to cure the mental *dis-ease*, that is, a restless state of the mind. He will be master of his senses as well as of the passions and the animal desires. He will conquer anger, hatred, anxiety, jealousy, and worry by raising the vibration of the *Prana* on the higher plane of psychic activity.

This *Prana* produces the will-power and this will-power is the highest manifestation of power. The spiritual power will also come to him who has gained absolute mastery over himself. Thus gradually conquering hunger and thirst, and gaining mastery over his body, mind and senses, he will live in the world like a true Yogi, and he will know what this breath of life is and how wonderful is the healing power of the *Prana*.

## CHAPTER V

### VEDANTA PHILOSOPHY AND THE SCIENCE OF BREATH

The Vedanta philosophy is as old as the first and most ancient civilization of the world. It is one of the oldest systems, and has given the highest ideals of life as well as the best explanations of the phenomenal world. The phenomenal universe is described in Vedanta as the expression of one supreme Being, the eternal existence. That eternal existence is called by various names, and is worshipped under various forms. The most ancient writing of this philosophy, the Rig Veda, tells us that the ancient sages realized this unity of existence 5000 years before Christ and declared to the world in a trumpet voice: "That which exists, is one, men call it by various names." This Vedanta philosophy is not like any other purely speculative philosophy; it is not like the German philosophy, or any of the Western systems of philosophy which deal merely with speculations, but it has given the most solid foundation to a system of religion which is nameless, creedless and without dogma. It is the universal religion which underlies all the special religions of the world. The special religions are but so many expressions of this nameless and formless universal religion.

The Vedanta philosophy is not only a system of philosophy, but it is also the foundation of the universal religion. It is not speculative, but it gives an explanation of the universe which perfectly harmonizes with the latest conclusions of the modern scientists. Some people may wonder how those ancient seers could have realized certain truth of the universe which are in perfect harmony with the latest facts of the modern science. But when we remember that truth is one and truth is true all through eternity, then we do not wonder. The same truths that were realized and discovered by the ancient seers of India centuries before Christ was born, are the truths of today, and will remain truths throughout eternity. Whether Herbert Spencer discovered these truths, or did discover Plato, or Buddha,

or Krishna, or any other sage of the vedic period, it does not matter. But the truth is one, and that eternal truth is the foundation, upon which the structure of the Vedanta philosophy and religion has been founded. Furthermore, Vedanta is the most practical system. It teaches where philosophy ends and where religion begins. The practical side of philosophy is religion and the theoretical side of religion is philosophy. In India, as we all know that philosophy, science, and religion have never been separated from one another. That which is unscientific and unphilosophical, cannot be called religious. It must appeal to our reason, and that which appeals to our reason, must be based upon the practical truth. So Vedanta embraces the various branches of science. These are described under different names, as given in Sanskrit, and is meant to describe a system, by knowing which, we can benefit ourselves. The Sanskrit name for each of these systems is Yoga. If we study the method, by which this science of Yoga was discovered, we will find that even in those ancient days observation and experiment were considered to be the best means of discovering the secret truths of nature. By the process of observation and experiment, the ancient seers of Truth discovered the laws which govern our lives. The finer forces of nature and the description of these laws as well as these forces are embodied in the various branches of the science of Yoga.

Among these the science of breath is most important. It is more closely related to our earthly existence than any other science; and a knowledge of this science is more beneficial to our earthly life than the knowledge of any other science of the world. Because the breath is a part of our life. We cannot live without breathing. We may go without food for days, and we may live without drinking for hours, but we cannot stop our respiration even for a few minutes. Our physical health, growth, development, evolution of the organism, and activities of the internal organs depend entirely upon the breath, and a study of the science of breath, together with the practice of the breathing exercise, will help us in gaining the marvelous results. The correct breathing cures all diseases, and kills all the germs that enter into our system.

First of all, let us learn the physiological conditions of the breathing. The breathing apparatus, as we all know, consists

of the lungs and the air-passages, such as the nose the wind-pipe, and so on. We also know that the external air is pumped in by the mechanical action of the diaphragm, which is a strong flat muscle separating the abdomen from the chest, and the oxygen of the atmosphere enters through the open door of the lungs, filters through the pulmonary capillaries, and comes into direct contact with the venous blood which is laden with the waste matter of the system, producing a kind of combustion which destroys the imperfect, or the impure matter, and purifies the blood. As the result of this combustion carbonic acid gas is produced, which comes out in the form of the breath. Air, when inhaled, contains about 21 per cent of oxygen and when exhaled 12 per cent, having lost 9 per cent, and the blood which had been once used will be of no further service if it is not purified by the lungs. In every adult man, the average pulsation is 75 in a minute and 2 ounces of blood are driven from the heart to the lungs at each pulsation, or 9 pounds and 6 ounces in a minute or 13,500 pounds in 24 hours. If we examine the weight of the whole quantity of blood in the human body, we know that the weight of the blood is about one-fifth of the weight of the entire body or 28 pounds, in a man weighing 140 pounds, and this whole quantity of blood will take 3 minutes to go to the lungs, and become purified. At present it is a familiar fact that ordinarily we use only one-sixth of our lung power, but the science of breath tells us that if the remaining five-sixths of the lung power be brought into play, no one can say what marvellous results may not follow. The science of breath claims that a person who uses the full capacity of the lung power and breathes correctly, will never be diseased, will kill all disease germs, and will acquire perfect health. All the lung troubles and other organic troubles will then be a thing of the past. One single generation of correct breathers will destroy all the germs of disease that prevail in a civilized community.

The physiology tells us that blood is nothing but a vehicle for carrying the oxygen in the form of air from one part of the body to another that this oxygen filters through the different cells, and that organic activities are produced by this filtering through of the oxygen. The organic combustion does not take place in the lungs only, but also in the tissues and the cells themselves. When the oxygen enters a cell, that portion of

the oxygen produces a kind of combustion, however minute it may be, removes impurities, and helps its growth and normal activity. The oxygen invigorates and strengthens our bodies, and it also helps in the digestion of the food. In order to have perfect digestion we must have a sufficient quantity of oxygen in the system. If we do not forget that before we get any nourishment, every particle of food and drink must be properly oxygenated, then we shall pay the proper attention to the breathing exercises, and the science of breath will help us to learn the secret by which we can draw a greater quantity of oxygen into the system and voluntarily let it pass through all the internal organs, thereby gaining the wonderful results. The deep breathing will help us to do this, and it will be especially beneficial to those women who wear tight dresses. But the deep breathing must not be practised through the mouth. The mouth-breathing is extremely dangerous. It is injurious to our health, and parents should never allow their children to breathe through mouth, or to sleep with open mouth.

Those who do not practise deep breathing, generally breathe from the chest. The chest-breathing can be divided into two classes. First the collar-bone breathing in which the upper parts of the lungs are only filled with air; and second, the rib-breathing, in which the abdomen is drawn in, the diaphragm is pushed upward, and the chest is extended on the sides. The music-teachers generally give this kind of breathing for the voice culture, and by this breathing we can fill nearly half the upper half of our lungs with the atmospheric air, but the lower half cannot be filled by this process. The deep breathing is entirely different from these two classes of breathing. By this method the lower part of the lungs also can be filled with air. In some of the physical culture and the Delsarte schools, we get lessons in the deep breathing, but, in India, the teachers of the science of breath who are called Yogis, say that there is another kind of breathing, by which all the parts of the lungs can be filled without producing any injury to the system, and the science of breath tells us that this peculiar method of breathing will help us in gaining control over our nervous system, internal organs and our minds, and that by this method we shall be able to possess the perfect health as long as we shall live on this earth. Besides these physical results,

moral and spiritual results can also be obtained through the practice of the breathing exercises. These yogic breathing exercises are described as the means by which the self-control can be obtained. One who has mastered one's breath, has mastered one's mind. He has conquered his passions, and has gained the absolute self-mastery. In fact, he has mastered his physical nature. The self-control, the calmness of mind, tranquility and peace, the spiritual enlightenment and the moral upliftment will come through the breathing exercises, if one is properly directed by a Yogi.

From the very ancient times the Yogis of India observed the effects of the different systems of the breathing exercises upon their own bodies, and those results, gathered through centuries of investigation, have been handed down to us. By studying these results and also methods we find that there is nothing in the world which cannot be achieved by one who has mastered his breath. But the breath does not mean merely drawing in, or pumping out, the air, nor does it mean a large quantity of oxygen. It has a different meaning, and the Yogis have described how by the higher exercises of breath one can attain the spiritual perfection. They called these higher breathing exercises in Sanskrit the *pranayama* which means the control of the *prana*. The *prana* is commonly translated into English as breath, but it is not the breath. It means that power or force, which draws the air in, and which gives life and vitality to an organism. But what power is that? That power is that by which we are able to say that we are the living beings. The science of breath tells us that if we can gain control over this *prana* and store a great quantity of it in the nerve centres, we shall possess a super-abundance of the strength, health, and power, and the vital and healing power which can be transmitted to others if we choose to use the force in that way. Not only this, but the science of breath also claims that the will-power and the mental activities are also the manifestation of this *prana*.

I have already said that the breath has a close relation to the mind. If you notice the condition of your mind and also the condition of your breath at the same moment, you will find the relation between them. They are so closely related that if the breath of a person, who is extremely angry, be examined,

you will see that his whole system is poisoned for the time being. If a mother is angry and feeds her child at that time, the child will drink the poison. If, on the contrary, you examine your breath, when your mind is peaceful and spiritually inclined, you will see that your breath will be deep, rhythmic, gentle, and slow. Gradually, when your mind becomes absolutely centered upon the highest Truth or the supreme Being you will find that your breath will stop. And what will happen then? The sixth sense, or the spiritual eye of the soul, will be opened, and a great and a most wonderful illumination will come. In that state, the soul will realize its true nature, and gain the absolute mastery over the mind, intellect, and passion. Thus we see what wonderful results may be attained through the study of the science of breath, and the Vedanta philosophy admits or welcomes this study for quitting the modifications of the mind and to realize the highest Truth which is the ultimate goal of the human life.

## CHAPTER VI

### THE PRANAYAMA

(Delivered in America, in 1901)

The *pranayama* means the control of the *prana*. It is an art as well as a science of controlling the breath or *prana*. In my lecture on the *prana*, I have explained what the Yogis mean by it. So it will be needless to describe here fully what the word '*prana*' signifies. The *prana*, when it moves the universe, is called the cosmic *prana*<sup>1</sup>, or the life-principle of the individual *prana*. The cosmic *prana* is the same as what the modern scientists call the eternal cosmic energy. It manifests in the form of different forces in the external and internal nature. From the minutest atom up to the biggest solar system the whole universe is nothing but the result of the vibrations of the eternal cosmic *prana*. When that cosmic *prana* begins to manifest, it vibrates, and produces different force-centres which are known by the nature of the atoms, or the ether. Then those force-centres are set in motion, and that motion is known by the name of attraction (*akarshana*) and repulsion (*vikarshana*). The manifested vibration of the *prana* is called by different names, such as the gravitation, the heat, the electricity, the magnetism and so forth. All the action and reaction of the external and internal world can be reduced to a single expression which a Yogi uses as the vibration of the '*prana*'. The sun, the moon, the stars, nay, every object of the universe are the result of that vibration. The various discoveries of the physical forces are nothing but the discoveries of different kinds of vibration of the same *prana*.

All our sensations are but the vibrations of the *prana* within time and space. If in 1/1000th part of a second there be four billions of vibrations of the ether then the eye would see the red colour, the skin would feel 31° centigrade of the heat,

---

<sup>1</sup>The cosmic *prana* is the sum total of all the individual *pranas*.

and the ear would hear the tone of e. Our whole life consists in a continuous struggle between the being and the non-being, and that struggle is nothing but the highest state of vibration. The cause of all such vibrations is the motion of the *prana*. The finest manifestation of the vibrating *prana* is the mind, and the grossest manifestation is the matter. The less the vibrations, the grosser is the manifestation. Suppose the whole universe is like the ocean of the ether, set into motion by the cosmic force, called the *prana*, and the greatest number of vibrations of the ether in a second will produce the finest thought, a little less will produce the electricity, still less will become the gravitation, and so forth. Thus the whole universe, when analysed, can be reduced to the degree of vibration of the one force which is called by the Yogis, the *prana*. The lowest manifestation of this *prana* is the mineral, a little higher is the vegetable, and higher than vegetable is the animal. So each stage from the insect up to the highest man who is extremely advanced in spirituality, shows the difference in the degree of the *prana*, both physically and mentally. When a higher kind of vibration comes, the lower vibration merges into that higher and disappears. The noise of a thunder or the sound of a cannon ball, when fired, overpowers and drowns the other sounds which are caused by less number of the vibrations. If the vibration, which causes sound, be enormously increased, our ear will not hear any sound at all. Our eyes can see under a certain number of vibrations of the ether, which we call light. If the number be increased, we shall not see the light. If our mind vibrates in a higher degree, the functions, caused by the slower vibration, will be stopped and controlled by that higher vibration. In our ordinary state, the mind vibrates in a certain degree, and produces all the lower functions which we call the animal desires. If the vibration of the mind increases, it produces the higher thought, and drowns the lower thought as long as the higher thought exists, and overcoming the animal nature, makes us moral and intellectual. When the vibration is still more increased in number, it produces the spiritual blaze which overcomes all other lower activities.

This is the natural method of subduing the lower by the higher. The highest vibration of the mind produces the super-

conscious state, what the Yogis call the *samadhi*. In this state of *samadhi*, all other states of the mind are controlled or subdued. This production of the highest vibration of the mind which brings the superconscious state, is the aim of a Yogi. A Yogi who has reached that state, has got the perfect control over all other states. It may come through concentration, through devotion, through proper discrimination, or through the practice of controlling the manifested *prana*, or the motion of the lungs, which moves the whole system of the body. This control of the manifested *prana*, or the motion of the lungs, produces the results, both physical and mental. It brings the health in good order, prolongs the period of lifetime, and prevents untimely decay of the physical frame.

There is one class of the Yogis in India who practise this control for the physical results. They are called the Hatha-Yogis. But there is another class of Yogi who goes to the psychical side. Their object is to bring the superconscious state of the mind. They are known as the Raja Yogis. These Raja Yogis say: "We want to shorten the time for reaching the perfection". Every human being, after passing through the various stages of evolution, will reach the state of the perfect control of the body and the mind, but instead of going through the slow process of walking all the way on foot, they want to go by the quickest means of attaining to it, and become perfect in this mundane life. All the great sages and prophets of the world did the same thing. Each one of them passed in a span of life through some stages which might have taken hundreds of births, or thousands of centuries. They thought of nothing else, and they worked for no other thing, but they worked for the realization of the perfect state, and so they shortened the time, and reached perfection in this very life.

A Yogi says that the perfect control over the mind and the body can be reached by controlling the motion of the lungs. He says that there are various nerve-centres in the spinal column, from which proceed the motor and the sensory nerves all over the body. The centre, which regulates the respiration, is that which is opposite to the thorax. It is a kind of controlling power over the other centres. Therefore he tries to control this centre that regulates the breathing system, or the plexus, as the Yogis call it. Then the control of the other centres

become easier. There are three other centres below this and two above the brain. I shall not go to the detailed explanation of these centres. Those who wish to know, will understand clearly by reading carefully the elaborate explanation, given by Swami Vivekananda in his *Raja Yoga*, and in my books, *How to be a Yogi* and the *Yoga Psychology*.

From each of those centres have come out the several nerves which carry the sensations as well as the motions of the body into the brain, and afterwards bring them out of the brain to the different parts of the body. One current is going from the body to the brain, and the other is coming out from the brain. They are known as the afferent and the efferent currents. These two currents run through the right and the left channels in the spinal cord. They are called *ida* and *pingala* by the Yogis. I have dealt it in my book, *How to be a Yogi*. In the middle, there is the *sushumna*. As long as these two currents are passing through the innumerable ramifications of the nervous system, it is impossible to control them. The whole nervous energy is scattered all over the body. It can only be controlled, if the principal stations or centres can be controlled, and all the centres move as long as the respiratory centre is moving. Therefore by controlling the respiratory centre, we can control all other centres, and collecting the nervous power that lies in each centre, if we direct it through the *sushumna*, the whole nervous system will be controlled, and a new power will be produced which would make the mind vibrate in the highest degree, and the result will be the attainment of that superconscious state or *samadhi*.

Thus we have understood that *pranayama* is not only the method or process of controlling the breath, but also the method or process of controlling the power or force which causes the lungs to move, or, in other words, it is the process of controlling the vital forces. The method of obtaining such a control, that has been discovered by the Yogis in India, is most scientific, and produces wonderful results. They say that ordinarily we have an irregular breathing. Again there are natural differences of breathing between men and women. The cause of this irregular breathing is the irregularity of the motion of the lungs. Again the irregular motion of the lungs is caused by the irregularity of the respiratory centre. If we

can regulate the motion of the respiratory centre, the motion of the lungs will be regular, and, consequently the respiration will be regular; and, conversely, as the respiration, the motion of the lungs and the respiratory centre in the spinal column are working simultaneously by regulating the one, the other two will be regulated. So, if the breathing is regulated, it will check the irregular motion of the lungs, and when the motion of the lungs is regulated, the respiratory centre will move regularly. Consequently, the Yogis first begin with the practice of regulating the breath. It takes a long time to change the course of the breath, because if I practise utmost half an hour to breathe regularly in the morning and half an hour in the evening and the remaining twenty-three hours I am breathing irregularly, then shall I be able to make my respiration regular in a week, or in a fortnight? Moreover, if my manner of living be irregular, then I shall have to practise for months, before I can get my respiration regular.

So the eating, sleeping, and other physical works ought to be regular. These things will help us to a great extent. Those who practise breathing without taking notice of these things, do not find proper results, and at last find fault with the practice of the *pranayama*, and say that it is useless to practise, as it does not produce the good results. Therefore, if you want to find the good effects of the method of the *pranayama*, then you will have to make your manner of living regular, and at the same time you will have to practise the regular breathing.

The first lesson in the breathing is just to breathe in a measured way. Before you begin to practise, you will have to sit upright, keeping the body, neck and head in a straight line, and then count one, two, three and four, when you breathe in and out. Count and breathe as slowly as you can without feeling any kind of straining. Do it three times a day early in the morning before the breakfast before the lunch, and before the dinner. If you do not get time before the lunch, do it twice before the breakfast and before the dinner. Do it regularly. After a week, or a fortnight, you can increase the number from four to six. In India, instead of counting one, two, three, etc. we use a symbolical word such as OM. The word OM ought to be uttered or pronounced in such a way that it will flow in and out harmoniously and rhythmically

with the breath and think of the meaning of that OM. There is no danger of any kind, nor any fear of disease in going through this practice. But the effect of this practice will be perceptible, if one leads a regular life. If after practising for sometime, you do not find any result, try to investigate into what irregular food you had taken, and so forth. But do not give up the practice, but try to be regular from the next time.

Then the second lesson is this: when you have practised it for a few months, you can breathe in slowly through the left nostril, and utter OM for four times, and then breathe out through the right nostril, and utter OM for four times. Then reverse the process, and breathe in through the right nostril, and breathe out through the left one. Again breathe in through the left nostril. This breathing in and breathing out will make the *pranayama*, and make four such breathing in and breathing out in the morning and four in the evening. When it will be easy, you can increase the counting of OM gradually from four to six, and do it for sometime, and when you will be able to do it easily, you can increase from six to eight. Then after a few months' practice, you will find a marvellous change in the whole system. Then your psychic powers will manifest, your mind will be restful, and your health will be fit for the higher form of the *pranayama*, as is described in the Raja Yoga. These two processes are preliminary to the higher *pranayama*. Those who can go through these, feel no difficulty in getting good results from the higher practice. These two are perfectly harmless, and there is no fear of any kind.

The third lesson is not for the beginners, but for those who have passed through the first and the second lessons. It is the breathing in, then holding the breath and then the breathing out. In India, the Hindus are taught this from their childhood, and so it is easy for them. But this third lesson ought not to be tried without going through the other two. As the Yogi advances through these practices, he gradually gains the power of control. And when this *pranayama* is practised accompanied with concentration then it produces the great will-power, and one can read the thought, and can foretell what will happen, and experiences the various phenomena which he never experienced before. Then he gradually reaches the highest state of *samadhi*, and acquires the perfect control

of the mind and the body. In this state of *samadhi*, he realizes the *Atman* which is beyond the *prana*. Then he realizes the *Atman* which is described in Vedanta as self-luminous and formless Brahman which is without and within, and which is beyond the *prana*, the mind and everything. Then the Yogi attains to the self-realization which is known as the perfection (*mukti*).

## CHAPTER VII

### THE SACRED WORD 'OM'

(Delivered in Tuesday, January 29, 1901)

In the twenty-seven aphorism of the first chapter of the Raja Yoga, we read: "His manifesting word is OM".<sup>1</sup> We have read it over and over, and again and again in the New Testament, the first gospel: 'In the beginning, was the Word and the Word was God'. But it is very difficult to understand the real meaning of the Word; what was the significance of the Word which was in the beginning, and which was God? This idea, however, is not new to the Hindu mind. It existed in India many centuries before the first gospel was written. In the Vedas, we find the similar ideas. We read in the *Mahabharata* as well as in the *Upanishads*: "He who existed by himself, let first stream forth the eternal word, without beginning or end, and out of which the evolution of the word came into existence." What is the meaning of that 'word', It was one with the Divine, one with that first being, and was the cause of the evolution of the universe.

Before we can understand the real meaning of the 'word', we must know the relation between the thought and the word. Every word we utter has some idea behind it, and some thought connected with it. The words may vary, but the idea is the same. As for instance, there are many words which are used to signify a 'cow', or a 'horse'. The cow in Sanskrit would be *gau*, the horse would be *asva*. Now, each word is the symbol of some idea, or some thought, and the manifestor of a certain thing. When we use a word, we use it for something, or when we think of something, we think is along with the word. Again in using a word, we have a thought behind it. Try to think of a type without using the word 'type'. But all thoughts must be connected with the words, and the words are also the manifested forms of the thoughts. The thoughts exist in the mind

---

<sup>1</sup>'*Tasya vachakah pranavah*'. 1.27.

and when they are universally expressed, they take the form of the words. If you try to understand the thoughts of a person, you will have to read the words, or understand the meaning of the words, used by the person.

Therefore if we realize properly, we will find that the whole world is the consumption or projection of the thoughts of the universal mind, and, consequently, God projects His thought, and the result is a type. He thinks of a form and thinks in the words, and afterwards when that thought is projected in the external world, the shape takes place, and the thing is changed according to the nature of the thought.

The words are the manifested thoughts. In other words, the words are like the embodiment of the manifestations of the thoughts, and every object of the phenomenal world is the garment of the thought, and the external objects are the material embodiments of the world. In fact, that word exists in the cosmic mind, and every natural thing is nothing but the expression of the idea which exists in the cosmic mind. These are like the types which Plato called, and these types are eternal, or the types eternally exists. The Indian grammarean philosophers call their type the *sphota* which is uncreated and eternal. The modern theory of evolution tells us that a protoplasm going through certain changes takes at last the shape of a man and further passes through different stages. Now each stage is a type. There is a tree type, a man type, and thousands and thousands of varieties of the animal type, and at the same time, as a type, they are all the same. We are sitting here; we have many different faces and different figures, but at the same time, the type is human and it exists eternally. Whenever the process of evolution reaches the human stages, it will continue in this way; and if this whole universe be dissolved and reduced to its primordial condition, after a certain period, this energy goes through the same process, and will appear through all these types. The type will come out just as the seeds may remain latent or potential during the winter season and after the snow melts away the seeds produce that kind of trees, of which the seeds are the type. So the same process is going on in the universe, and there are infinite varieties of such types and each type exists through a certain thought or idea. In the Rig Veda, the oldest scripture of the Hindus, it has been

said that God, the Creator, creates the sun, the moon, and all the universe as before, in the beginning of each cycle with the help of their respective types or causal seeds those exist eternally after the dissolution (*pralaya*) of the universe: "*suryachandramasau dhata yatha purvamakalpayat*". God creates or projects everything by his thought (*samkalpa* or *iccha*), and the Vedas say that everything evolves when He wills or desires. From this it is understood that thought and word are the cause of creation, or of the phenomenal everything.

When a protoplasm takes the type of a man, it does not come by accident, but there is some thought connected with the process of evolution of that protoplasm. It grows under the direction of a certain intelligence, mind, and thought; and it will go through many changes and then reach the human form, where it will rest for a certain length of time. There are types of the gods, or of the *devas*, and these types are eternal in the same way. When we understand this that we are types or general, then we can classify the whole universe. There are the gross materials and the objects of senses, there are the material objects and the minute particles of atoms, there is the stage of energy, and all these can be included under the name of the phenomenal energy which contains the names, or the words and the thoughts.

The objects of senses are the projections of the cosmic ideas i.e. the ideas of the cosmic mind,<sup>2</sup> and the objects of our thoughts are also the projections of those ideas of the cosmic mind. We see certain things during our waking state, and during our dream state we do not see these things as in the dream state we see certain things which exist on the psychic plane. During the deep sleep we are conscious of a certain state, and that will come under the classification. All these states, like gross, material, unmanifesting, waking, and deep sleep, can be divided into two classes, individual and universal. Each individual has certain experiences during the dream state and also during the deep sleep state. Taking the sum total of all these experiences of the individual souls during the dream, the deep sleep, and the waking states, every one of these objects

---

<sup>2</sup> The cosmic mind (*samashiti manas*) is the sum total of all the minds of all individual beings, and this cosmic mind is known in Vedanta as *Isvara*, *Avyakta* or *Prajna*.

is the expression of the exact word and thought or idea that exists in the cosmic mind. That is the source, and through that source different objects have evolved, as has been said before.

In order to understand and to represent the cosmic mind, we made a word which would include all these different stages. Still these things which are connected with a particular individual, should be included by the word which would represent the cosmic mind. But is there such a word? Because all these ideas exist in the mind, and we made a word which would include all these things. We utter a word like God, and it includes a certain state, but does not include the material objects, the forces, and the experiences of the individuals. In trying to express all these ideas, we must have a word which would be the basic word, or the foundation, of all the words, and the ancient philosophers of India discovered a word which included all the ideas and which is considered to be the common basic word. It can be asked as to why is it the basic word? To this it can be said that because it consists of three basic sounds A-U-M which include all the sounds of the universe. These three sounds are included in that one sound OM. The sound 'T' is 'U' as in hut. If we examine carefully the process by which that sound is produced, we find that we do not make any motion within the mouth. It is a perfectly free sound; it is the basic sound; and all other sounds are more or less connected with this basic sound. The second sound is 'U' or 'OO', and last sound is 'M', made by closing the lips. The first sound 'A' i.e. 'U' is made by opening the mouth, and the last sound is 'M', and all the different sounds are nothing but the combination of these three basic sounds 'T-U-M'. In the Vedas, it is said: "You cannot pronounce any *asshara* (letter) and *mantra* (contemplative composition) without the help of the sound of UH'. There are many sounds, and this OM is the basic sound. In the English word 'go', we have the sound 'guh'. All the sounds must be based on that first sound, the simplest 'UH' sound, and when we get this, we have the foundation of all sounds that can be pronounced or uttered by any organised being, or by any individual\* or animal who can pronounce or utter anything. Out of these three we can make thousands and thousands of words and sounds. And

these three, when combined, become the sound of AUM. First pronounce the word 'A' opening your tongue and then pronounce 'U', and then close the lips and pronounce the sound 'M'.

These sounds 'AUM' include all the different stages. The sound 'A' stands for the gross as well as for the waking state which are individual and universal. When we think of the meaning of the word 'OM', we take it as symbolic, and cover every object of the universe with this sound. It was first tuned by the divine Being, before the beginning of the evolution, when there was no vibration of the atoms, and when everything was in one etherial ocean. At that time all the particles of matter were in a state of perfect equilibrium (*samyavastha*). Then it begins to vibrate, and produce a sound like humming. The whole universe is producing that sound, and we cannot hear it, because our ears are too gross. But if your ears are tuned to hear the music of the spheres, you will hear the sound which is produced by the motions of all the different objects of the universe and the vibrations of the molecules and all the things of the universe. The Yogis hear that causal sound. It is like the sound of a bell, or like an unconnected sound. The whole universe, in this way, is singing the praise of the Almighty.

So the sound 'OM' is perfectly formed for the expression or representation of the cosmic mind, because it covers all sounds and all words. All words and sounds have in their background the thoughts, or the ideas. Again all thoughts or ideas are included in the universal basic sound 'OM'. So if you try to substitute any other word in the place of the sound of 'OM', you cannot do it satisfactorily, and you will have to take these basic sounds. So if you take them and put them together, you will have to have the sound or word 'OM'.

In the 28th aphorism of the first chapter of the Raja Yoga, it is said that if you think of the meaning of this word 'OM,' you think of the cosmic mind, and you also understand the whole universe. That is one of the subjects for meditation. When you are going to think of the words that are included in this sound 'OM,' you will have to take the three sounds as symbolical of the different stages of the universe. Take the three states, the waking, the dream, and the deep sleep; then take the gross subtle and unmanifested states and you will see

that these are all expressions of the words, and everything that exists in this stage, is but the expression of that one idea. Then take the sum total, and take the ideas and the impressions that exist on the psychic plane, and take all that is the sum total of that which exists on the higher plane, or the state of the unmanifested energy of the unmanifested universe. Then you take the sleep state, and you will find that all these things must be included in the meaning of these three sounds, the gross, the subtle, and the unmanifested. There are also different names given in Sanskrit for these three stages. The unmanifested state is called the 'causal' state.

It may be the same being who experienced certain ideas in the dream state, but still there is a difference in the perception and experience, and this difference can be explained very clearly if we give the different names. We call the being which is conscious of the objects that exist on this plane of consciousness. 'A', the same being when dreaming, is called 'B' and when it is sleeping soundly without having any other kind of experience, it could be called 'C'. So in trying to differentiate them, we give the different names. 'A' may be one who is conscious of the objects which exist on this plane of consciousness. 'B' is another name for the being who would exist in the dream state, and 'C' is the other name for the being who is sleeping soundly without having any other kind of experience.

Now, the sum total of all the experiences of all living creatures in the waking state may be called 'A'; in the dream state, we call it 'B', and the sum total of the experiences of the causal state may be called 'C'. These are the principle sounds. Having understood the different stages that are included in that one sound 'OM,' if we think of the meaning of the sound 'OM', when meditating, then we gradually go from the gross to the subtle and from that to the causal state, and from that to the realm which is beyond all the relativity.

The object of Yoga is to reach to the Absolute and to understand that beyond which no mind can do. By understanding of the law of causation, we know that the gross is the manifestation of the subtle, and the subtle is the manifestation of the causal. Now what do we mean by the subtle state? Everything that goes through the evolution, takes different forms and becomes the objects of the senses. If we have the

finer perception we may, going into a room, smell an odour that will not be noticed by another. So with our hearing. The Western ears would notice many of the finer notes in music, which the Eastern ears are tuned to them. Those who are colour-blind, do not distinguish different shades of the colour. In fact, all of us are more or less colour-blind. What we can see, is very limited, and beyond a certain vibration we do not realize the things. Professor Huxley said that when a rose-bud blooms, it produces a sound like a gun shell. If we had ears to hear, we could hear the sound, and if we realize our inability to do so, we find that our perception is in a limited scale. But these finer perceptions must be included though our senses are most imperfect. Some of the Western minds depend much upon the senses, and cannot find the real thing,<sup>1</sup> but the Indian mind go beyond the senses, and realize the essence of the thing. Most of the scientists try to find the existence of soul, try to perceive the soul, and to catch it with instruments, but they do not get it, and as they do not get it they deny its existence. The pity is this that they do not think that their senses delude them almost every moment about the soul. The soul is described as a very subtle object, because it is not perceived by the senses. There are the subtle things and the subtle forces which are not seen, but the gross manifestations which are but the expressions of those subtle things and forces are easily cognizable. Again the finer objects and the subtle particles of the matter and the force are the expressions of the causal state of the universe, which cannot be cognized in any way by the senses. This universe existed in the beginning of the evolution in the unmanifested causal state, and has been projected on this plane of consciousness in the manifested form, and that is the reason why we perceive with our senses. In fact, this world exists in relation to us and to our senses. If we shut our senses, the whole world disappear. If we close our eyes and stop our ears, nose and sense of touch, the universe is gone beyond our relation. So of these three states, we must remember that the gross is the expression of the subtle, and the subtle is the expression of the causal, and beyond these three states shines the *Atman*.

Now, in trying to think of the meaning of the word 'OM',

---

<sup>1</sup> The Swami here meant to say about the direct realists of the West.

the Yogis in India adopt a certain method, and by that method they merge one state into another. In pronouncing the word 'OM', when they make the first two sounds or words, 'A' and 'U', which are gross and subtle, they try to dissolve the gross into the subtle, and then the subtle into the causal. When the first (the gross) is merged into the second (the subtle), think of what they are going to do and what they ought to do, and the case stands for a certain abstract thought and idea. This word 'OM' is a symbolic word, meaning the gross is merged into the subtle and that is again merged into the causal, and that which is beyond these three, is the truth, or the reality of the universe.

Now when you have closed your lips, it is no longer 'M', but something higher, and that is the fourth part which is the Absolute. It has been before that after the gross and the subtle, the causal is merged into the Absolute, and so there remains no longer the causal, the subtle and the gross, but each one is reduced to that absolute ocean of the Divine intelligence and bliss. The Nature, or the cosmic mind contains the seed of all the different forces, types, ideas, words, names, and forms, and the Absolute is the (so-called) cause and ground of the cosmic mind. The Absolute does not change its nature. It is not transformed from one state into another and it is not affected by any other things. Supposing that you have a canvas, and upon that canvas you paint something and brush it off and paint again, but the canvas quality remains the same and unchangeable. So these different things we perceive are like the paintings upon the canvas of the Absolute. We can go to that background, or rise above all conditions, if we try to enjoy the paintings. But we see every moment that we cannot do it. Try to keep it in any state all the time, but it is impossible, because everything is in constant change. That which is within time, space, and, causation, is subject to the laws of evolution, and, therefore, that must change. So it is a vain hope to expect that this body will remain unchangeable. It will take its own course otherwise there would not be development of any kind.

So a Yogi, understanding that there is no permanent peace and happiness in the material manifestations, tries to go beyond that state, where there is permanent peace and happi-

ness. Then he comes to know that real peace and happiness are possible in that state which is unchangeable and not anywhere else. In order to reach that unchangeable state, you will have to rise above all conditions. This plane of the phenomenal consciousness is limited, and does not go far. So, until we reach the higher state, we cannot understand the absolute Truth. The absolute Truth cannot be brought down to this material plane, and if it could be possible, it would take the name of the conditional, and the moment it becomes conditional, it is subject to all the laws of the phenomenal world, and is also subject to changes. So peace or happiness that arises from the changeable condition is but temporal and ephemeral. We crave for the continuance of all kinds of happiness, but that craving is seldom satisfied. The time is coming when we will have to leave this plane and go to some other condition. The Yogi, understanding this truth, does not waste his energy by following the phantoms of hope, but makes the best use of his time and energy by trying to go beyond the conditions, and, consequently gain that happiness which is everlasting. The everlasting supreme state exists in the abode of that being which is called the absolute Being of the universe. It is the abode of the transcendental knowledge and bliss. In that, supreme state there is no pain, no sorrow, no suffering, no disease or death, and all other states below is subject to all kinds of pain and misery.

If we keep this ideal in our mind and repeat the word 'OM' and understand the different sounds that are included in the universal sound or word 'OM,' then we realize that the gross will merge into the subtle and the subtle, into the causal and that causal again, into the transcending Absolute. Then we realize something which cannot be realized by any other method. A Yogi who has accomplished this realization, is happy, peaceful and restful, and is above all the conditions of suffering, disease, and death. Having realized that state which is described as the state of the eternal bliss or perfection, a Yogi becomes one with the source of 'OM.' and becomes 'OM.' Then he becomes the cosmic mind, nay, he becomes one with the absolute and when that is accomplished, the purpose of the human life is served, and the ultimate goal is reached.

## CHAPTER VIII

### THE CONCENTRATION

Well has it been said by Ralph Waldo Emerson that the only good in life is concentration and the only evil is dissipation. It is true that one can gain success in business, in politics, and in all the avocations of life through concentration. After exercising the power of concentration, one can accomplish anything, either in music, or in any of the arts, in astronomy, or in any science, or even in war. So concentration is the secret of all success.

First of all we will have to understand the object of concentration; then to find out the difficulties that attend the accomplishment of that object; and if we consider those difficulties carefully, understand the causes, and find out the method by which those difficulties can be removed, then we are bound to have success. We all wish to have success. We do not know exactly where we are lacking. The lack is not in the object itself, but is in the methods which we have adopted to accomplish the object. If we do not practise concentration in our business, on the contrary, if our minds are scattered all over the world in different things and the mind is distracted, then we cannot converge the cell-forces and the mental energy towards one point. The rays of our minds are scattered, and the forces are dissipated through the doors of the senses, being coloured by the objects of the senses. The senses are the doors and the windows. The objects of the senses are the objects towards which the forces are running from our centre, just as in an electric lamp the rays are scattered. Of course, that produces some kind of the diffused light, and when we converge the scattered rays of an electric lamp and direct them towards one object after focussing, then that flood of light will illumine the mind in details as well as the mind in brief of that object. That is called the search-light. When the mind is well concentrated, it may be compared to a search-light. If you can converge the rays of your mind that are going through your different channels, and can focus them on one point and forget

everything outside of that object for the time being, then every minute detail of that object will be plain and clear to you, and you will see all the difficulties as well as all the causes of the success and the failure. All great businessmen who have achieved the great success in their lives, have exercised the power of concentration.

Take an example of a great scientist like Edison. What did he do? He had the tremendous powers of concentration. Think of the wonderful results that he achieved by his mental efforts. I went once to his laboratory at East Orange in New Jersey, and had a conversation with him. He was stone deaf, and could not hear anything; yet he was a wonderful man and had remarkable power of concentration. When he tried to solve a problem, he used to sit at his desk, and forgot everything about himself. The comforts of his body he never thought of. His breakfast was brought into the room and placed on the table, and no one was supposed to disturb him while he was engaged in his work. They left the breakfast and the luncheon and the supper on the table. They stayed there, got cold and were taken away, and he had no time to get up to eat his meal. His mind was absorbed all the time, and he did not think of anything else. He continued in that way for days and nights. At night he did not go to sleep. He sat at his desk, and when he got very tired and needed the sleep, he just took a doze, bent his head over the desk for a short time, took a nap, and then he woke. He dreamt of all his problems, and his mind was so engrossed that he could not be satisfied, and he could not have any rest or peace in his mind, until he got the solution. And the result of his work you can see in the form of the light, in the phonograph, and in many other inventions that he made.

Now we find that all the great men in all ages have accomplished all the discoveries and inventions through this power of concentration. Think of the concentration of that man who is studying the stars and watching the heavenly bodies through a powerful telescope night after night. His whole energy is focussed in that one direction. Think of the absorption of that scientist who is watching the movements of the micro-organism through a powerful microscope, watching their activities, until he finds the solution of the problems

which he is trying to solve. Concentration is the one and only method by which we can know something. You cannot know anything unless your mind is concentrated. If, for instance, you are disturbed by the music, or by anything else, you will not be able to follow or understand me; but when your mind is absolutely concentrated, you will not hear anything else, and you will hear only what I am saying. Ordinarily, when our attention is fixed on a very interesting story which we are reading or telling, suppose there is a big clock in the room, or in the hall and there is ticking, but you do not hear that tick. The street cars are running with the sound of the horns, and there are going on the ringing bells in the churches, but those do not disturb you, because your mind is concentrated. That is the secret of success. At such times our minds are concentrated. It is a kind of suspension of sensation i.e. the senses are in a suspended condition during concentration. You see this when you watch a cat catching a mouse. The cat tries to fix all its energy in one direction, and it exercises a tremendous power of the self-control. It paralyzes the muscles and the cell-power behind the muscles of its body. Through concentration it is able to catch its prey. When an eagle catches its prey, it looks down upon its victim, and its eyes are so concentrated that they cannot lose a moment's time in any other direction, or think of any other object other than the prey, and it has always a great success in that particular line.

So you find in studying your mind that concentration is absolutely necessary in all kinds of work. Without exercising this you will find that your life will be in danger. When you are walking in the street, if you pay no attention to the cars and automobiles those are hurrying by, you will be run over. You know that without exercising the power of concentration the motorman could not run the car. You have seen the sign in every car: "Do not talk to the motorman". Why is that? It is to avoid all the dangers and collisions and other accidents. So it is absolutely necessary that we should exercise this power of concentration.

In order to gain this power of concentration we should study our minds a little more carefully. We should understand that we are going to accomplish. Of course, concentration of our energy will be directed towards the particular object we

wish to gain. And if that object be a material success, or a business success, we shall learn to discriminate. The method of discrimination is one of the most important things in getting the good results of concentration, getting the right kind of success that we wish.

Now, when our mind is concentrated we withdraw our mind from the organs of the sense. The different organs of the senses have different positions in the brain, where they view certain sensations. For instance, the sound which is a vibration of air is carried through the nerves into the brain. There certain molecular changes take place, and these changes are turned into a self-conscious entity which we call 'personality', and that entity translates all changes into the sensation. Nobody has ever been able to define it. It is nothing but a state of consciousness. The modern scientists have described them as the states of consciousness. Every feeling, every sensation, every idea, and every thought, that rise in our mind, when properly analysed, will be found to be nothing more or less than some state of consciousness. Now, what that consciousness really is you cannot find out, or you cannot satisfactorily explain, because the consciousness is like the light which illumines everything. The light which illumines everything, cannot be known by itself, or cannot be made an object of knowledge, because it would presuppose another consciousness to enlighten that which we do not have. Now you are sitting here. You are conscious that you are sitting here and listening to me. Do you know where that consciousness is? Your existence is inseparable from that consciousness. You cannot live and remain unconscious of yourself. Again the consciousness and the existence are inseparable. They are the two phases of the same thing. You exist and your existence depends upon your own consciousness, and this consciousness is the light that illumines everything. By that light you know that there is the electric light which illumines all the things at night. The light of the sun illumines everything in this universe. We know that the sun rises and sets. The sunlight cannot make us realize the rising and the setting of the sun, if we were just dead or unconscious like the stones and the tables, then you would not know the rising and setting sun, although there might be the light of the sun falling on you. Therefore the whole source

of knowledge is in that consciousness. That consciousness is again the part and parcel of our being. The being means the existence, and the existence without consciousness is impossible, because we cannot exist and remain unconscious of ourselves. Now for that reason the great philosophers like Nietzsche, Kant and Hegel, have always come to that one point of the oneness of the consciousness and the existence. They have only reiterated or repeated the same truth which has been taught by the greatest philosophy of the world, the Vedanta philosophy. It has been described in the Vedas, and it is that by which you know everything. By what will you be able to know that by which you know everything? That is the consciousness, and that consciousness is your life and being, and by that consciousness you are able to know everything. There is no other second consciousness by which you can understand the nature of your own consciousness<sup>1</sup>. Now when you understand this thought, then you will come to know that everything else is a state of consciousness, of sensation and feeling, and all other emotions. These are nothing but the states of consciousness, and these states of consciousness are like the clouds rising in the firmament of your own being or personality.

Now you remember that you are the centre of your world. You cannot enter into my world of feelings and sensations; neither can I enter into your world. Then I touch a table, I have a certain feeling or sensation. But I cannot express it in words, and I can only say that it is hard or soft, it has roughness or smoothness, and further that it is inexpressible. If I ask you to express your feeling or sensation about it, you cannot express them. But it is your feeling or sensation. Try to express what hardness is. You cannot do it, as it is purely abstract. You can form an idea according to your feeling or sensation. Similarly you cannot actually describe what the colour is. If I say the colour of this wall is yellow, you ask me what is yellow. It may be a particular shade of perceiving, but that minute shade of difference you do not consider in your ordinary conversation. So practically you ignore that. Now when you

---

<sup>1</sup> We generally divide consciousness as primary and secondary ones. The primary consciousness is the first and basic one, and the second one, by which we know the first, or the basic one, is known as the secondary consciousness. In truth, both are consciousness as the unit of knowledge or *chit* (cf. the author's *True Psychology*).

see a horse, you form a particular idea or concept about the horse, and that idea or concept of a horse which you have, may not be the same as I have, and at the same I cannot also express that. If you ask me: "What is that?" I would only say: "This is a horse". I learned to call it a horse, but your perception may be entirely different from my perception, and there is no way of comparing.

In that way, if you examine and analyse your feelings and try to compare them with the feelings of another person, you will find that you are the centre of your world of feeling, you are living in your world, you are radiating these forces from your centre within yourself, and you are also radiated by these forces from this enclosed feeling, or from your self-consciousness, personality, or entity, and you have drawn a boundary line around it, and that is the limit of your world. Anything that is beyond that limit, you know nothing about it, unless you expand that range of boundary of your consciousness. When you learn something new, what has happened? It was at first the outside of the boundary of your world, or of your consciousness, and, therefore, you did not know it. Either you have brought that in by some method within the range of your consciousness, or you have expanded the range of your consciousness to cover that living. Then it becomes known to you. That is the meaning of knowledge. No one has ever gained knowledge from outside, but all knowledge is within yourself. You may not know it, yet that is the real explanation of knowing a thing that we did not know already within the boundary of our own consciousness, or expanding the zone of our consciousness which would enclose or cover those things which were unknown to us. And we are doing that all the time. There are also different zones of consciousness. To the man, living on the material plane, his zone is limited by the sensations of his own body, and he seeks nothing else. His zone of consciousness is very narrow and limited; but gradually it will expand, and will include his relatives, wife, children and neighbours. It will still expand, and this expansion will continue until it covers the whole universe.

That is what we are going to do. We are going to expand the zones of our consciousness, and we cannot stop until we reach the infinite and really become God the Absolute. We

have come from this perfect centre in which everything was in a potential or unmanifested state, and we are manifesting all the powers. Everytime we do it we become conscious of it. I will give you an illustration. You have the power of thinking, reading, walking, and doing various things. Perhaps you are a musician, or an artist, and you can perform the wonderful music, or do other very interesting things. Now, all these powers are in you. When you go to sleep, and when you are sleeping soundly, all these powers have gone down to your subconscious or unconscious plane. Then you are not conscious of them. Do they exist in relation to you when you are sleeping? No. Why not? Because you are not conscious of them. Anything of which you are unconscious, does not belong to you, but they are all these. As soon as you wake up and become conscious of those forces, they are yours. The state, in which these forces remain when you are in sound sleep, is the state of potentiality, and in your waking state, they have become kinetic or actual. Therefore one state is unmanifested, and the other is manifested. When you are asleep, they will remain dormant or latent, just as in a seed form. When you wake up, they are potent, and are ready to do their work. At the time of death, all these forces will be converged into one point, and they will remain latent, or in the unmanifested state. Then perhaps you will get another awakening, and then they will become the part and parcel of your own being or existence. This is the way we are living, and this shows that the unmanifested condition is the seed or causal form of the manifested force.

Before the world was created, everything gross and subtle remained in a seed form, and everything was unmanifested. Then creation began. Now, what do we mean by 'creation'? It does not mean getting something out of nothing. In the beginning, the world as in an unmanifested state, and it gets out, and gets back again. It takes millions of years to be evolved. This present state will go back to its primordial nebulous state, and it will remain in that state perhaps for million of years, and then it will come out again. This expansion and contraction of the whole manifested world into the unmanifested energy is the eternal process of the infinite Being. There is no ten cycles or anything like that, and you

will have to understand the process of nature, or the process of evolution, or creation in this way.

If you study your own self you will find that everything is clear to you. Man is the microcosm, and the universe is the macrocosm. My Master, Sri Ramakrishna used to say it in this way, *Ya ache bhande, ta ache brahmande* i.e. what exists in the microcosm exists also in the macrocosm. So you cannot study nature unless you study yourself. Try to study any micro-organism, and you will see that you are studying your own state of consciousness. You cannot get into the mind, or the force, of somebody else. The external object produces a certain change in your brain, and that change is carried or translated into a state of consciousness, and this you are stating, whether that is caused by an animal, or a plant, or a leaf, or a fish, or a star, it does not make any difference. When you see a star, you are stating your own state of consciousness. When you hear the music, you state your own state of consciousness. So you cannot go beyond your own state of consciousness. It is absolutely impossible to go beyond the consciousness, and that is our limitation. You cannot know the real matter, i.e. the matter *per se*, or by itself, no one has ever seen. It is the unknown and unknowable substance of the universe. And that is the object, and you are the subject. The object is unknown and unknowable, and only it produces certain changes in your consciousness. And that is all you can know about the object, or the matter.

So what the materialists would call the matter, is the same thing a spiritualist would call the spirit. The difference between them is only in name. But both are unknown and unknowable, as you cannot differentiate them. The matter and the mind are the two phases of one substance. One half of the world is the object, and the other half is the subject. If you take away the one half, the other half will be gone. So the mind and the matter are like the two poles of the same magnet, the positive and the negative as I have discussed in my book *Self-knowledge*. Take away the one pole, and the other is gone. If you deny the matter, you also deny the mind, as the Christian Science does. The Christian Science says that the matter does not exist in outside in the world, but it exists in the mind. The Christian Science seems to be influenced by

the subjective idealism, as advanced by Bishop Berkeley and others. Devid Hume also holds that everything can be reduced to the ideas or sensations only. The Yogachara Buddhists also believe that everything external is the representation of the mind or *vijnana*, and the mind or *vijnana* is only real, and the erternal world is like a dream and unreal. The philosophy of the *Yogavasishtha-Ramayana* subscribes to the same view, and it seems that the *Yogavasishtha* was more or less influenced by the *vijnanavada* of the Yogachara Buddhists. The Christian Science also maintains the same view. The Madhyamika Buddhists absolutely deny the existence of the world.

So you cannot deny the matter and also the mind, because one exists in relation to the other. There is the fallacy. The moment you deny the matter as the object of perception, you have denied the perceiver also. If the object of perception does not exist then the perceiver does not exist either. When you deny the matter, you deny something that is a part of your state of consciousness. Have you seen the matter? You have seen a table, or a piece of gold. That is not matter. You have never seen the matter. You have seen something that evokes the sensation of hardness or toughness. The eyes see colours, but they do not see the hardness, or the softness. The ears hear sound, but these are only the vibrations. When you deny the matter, what are you denying? Are you denying the vibrations or something that you call the matter? In reality, if you have denied the matter, you have also denied your mind. If your object of perception is denied, the subject is also denied. But, in reality, you cannot deny either so long as you exist on this plane. You have to take both, or neither. The one pole of the magnet is the matter, and the other pole is the mind; and the neutral point is neither, yet it is the cause of both. The infinite is neither the matter, nor the mind, but it is the neutral state or point. It is beyond both the matter and the mind.

Have you tried to go beyond the matter, or beyond the mind? That is the ideal. We must do this in order to reach the truth. Truth is neither the subject, nor the object, neither the matter, nor the mind, neither the perceiver, nor the object of perception; yet it is the cause of both. You will have to direct your whole attention towards the neutral point. That

you can do it with your concentration. If you wish to know the truth and understand the laws of nature which are governing not only your physical body, but also all the forces which are known, the finer forces of nature which are working in your mind and intellect, and in your moral nature and in your soul, how are you going to understand those states? You will have to develop your power of concentration, and direct your concentration towards that neutral or central point, which is neither the matter, nor the mind, yet the cause of both. You will have to go beyond the realm of thoughts. Thoughts are the states of consciousness. Everything that you know is nothing but a state of consciousness. If you wish to go to the source of consciousness, just withdraw your mind from all the different objects of senses, and do not let the mind of your being be influenced or be subject to the changes that are produced by these external objects. These are called the modifications (*vritti*) of the mind, known as anger, hatred, desire, etc.

When you look through a Kaleidoscope, there are pieces of glass making a conventional figure. That form is a delusion. Now, why do you see them? You do not know. That is a delusion or *maya*. Here in this world, you are seeing all these changes, and feeling these changes of sensation, feeling, and desires. Your mind has become like a Kaleidoscope, and you have become subject to change. You have become absolutely under the control of the external influences like the slaves. For this reason you have no power to get hold of ourselves. You have no power to get hold also of your mind. You have become like the machines. You do something, feel tired, go to sleep, wake up, and do the same routine once more, but if you want to realize something, or to know something, or to understand something of your own self, you will have to withdraw your mind from the sense organism and learn to control these sense-forces, and direct them towards your own personality. By 'personality' I mean your being. That is, that which thinks, that which perceives, and that which knows, is your personality. Try to converge the forces towards your own self, and introspect, and that will solve all the problems of life and death. Then you will know how great and wonderful and mighty you are. You are the creator. You are the part and parcel of the

infinite wisdom. You do not have to go outside to gain a little knowledge from here and there, but the whole ocean of knowledge is behind your being.

You are just like a mouth-piece. Enter yourself into your innermost being, and there you will find God, the omniscient spirit dwelling, and directly your whole nature will be changed. There you will become immortal. I mean that when you become conscious of your immortal nature, you become immortal. You are already that now. You do not get that by going through a change or by becoming angelic. At this moment you are immortal, but you are not conscious of it, or do not feel it. What is the cause of it? There is something that distracts the knowledge or the consciousness. Now take that veil away, and open your eyes. Then you will see or realize your immortal nature. Ask, and it shall be given unto you. Knock, and it shall be opened. But you have not knocked. That is the reason why the door is closed. You do not know perhaps how to know. When you pray, go to the closet and shut the doors. Now the closet is this body and the doors are the senses. You will have to shut these doors so that the external conditions do not produce the changes of the modifications of different states of consciousness. But hold your consciousness towards that neutral source of the matter and the mind. If you can do it, everything else will be added unto you. If you can develop the power of concentration, success in business and success in everything will be the child's play. Wherever you go, you will have the success, because you will then understand the law. Everything that you try to accomplish by other methods, if you have success, it is only temporary and not real. Every time you understand the laws of nature, you make your vibrations harmonise with the universal vibrations, and then whatever is in the universe, will come to you. You will have to learn to make your vibrations *en rapport* with the vibrations around you. Every time you think of something, you are sending a current of vibrations. Every time you think that you are effecting the vibrations, but when you do it consciously, it produces wonderful results, and it is the knowledge that brings power. But we cannot get that knowledge without the power of concentration.

Ordinarily our mind can be divided into four states, first,

the state of scattered, or that of distraction; second, the state of stupidity. You go to sleep, you cannot keep awake, and it is too much of an effort. Perhaps you will have to regulate your food. Sometimes that perhaps after eating some good dishes you will find that your brain wants to take rest. There was a gentleman in Boston who could not live without eating chunks of beef; and he was a great scientific man. Through our constant efforts his method of life was changed; from a meat eater he became a vegetarian, and the first thing he said was: "Now, Swami, I can think better. My mind is clearer. My thoughts are finer. I can see a change in myself. Now how it is?". I said: "You have changed the vibration of the molecules of your system from coarser vibration to finer vibration, and when your vibration is finer you can see things better and get the finest points".

So the food should be considered. What kind of food will help you in clearing the impurities of your brain and also in removing the stupidity and inertia, that should be examined. In Sanskrit, in the Hindu psychology, we divide all these states of the mind into three: *tamas*, *rajas*, and *sattva*. That which produces dullness, stupidity, inertia its *tamas*. The second, the *rajas* creates the passion, activity and tremendous energy. The other, the *sattva* is the best, and is the state of equilibrium. Your whole system will be in perfect poise, the forces will be well balanced and you can realize the truth if you develop in you the *sattva* quality.

At present you must watch what food and what kind of work make you stupid. That you can find out if you watch. Take the effect of food in your own system, and see what kind of vibrations that particular kind of food produces, and then make a note of it. Take another kind of food, and you will find that certain kinds produce certain effects. I cannot prescribe for you. There is no one standard for everybody. Just as the two vases are not alike so the two bodies, or the two systems are not alike. There would be the differences in the degrees of vibrations. You will find these changes which are peculiar to yourself. I have noticed that one particular kind of food may not be suitable or agreeable to all. Some cannot take milk, and at the same time it is the most nourishing food. A baby would gain strength by living on pure milk. And now

there is a kind of treatment, the milk cure, and it can cure almost all your diseases. Yet you will find among people those who cannot digest milk. Their system is different, and if they tried to live entirely on milk, they might find it not agreeable. If they keep it up for a while they will find that all the disagreeable conditions will change and that it will be source of health and strength. So in that way one particular kind of food may not be good for everybody. You will have to regulate your own diet and find out what kind of food will bring peace and equilibrium into your brain. Your ideas will be in a perfect state of harmony, not only harmony with yourself but also with the universe.

If you can find that, then you have come to that third state, the state of well balance. However, I was describing the four states of the ordinary kind. One is scattered, and the other is stupid. Then there is the intermediate state, partly scattered and partly stupid, sometimes tremendously active, sometimes dull, just as you find among all working men and women. The mind is active during the working hours and then gets dull. When your mind is well poised, in a state of equilibrium, when you can sustain the balance of forces that are working through you and through your mind, you will never get tired in your mind. You will be able to equalise and equipoise the vibrations in such a way that your tired condition will be removed, and it will be restored by the new vibrations. That is, there is a source of infinite energy behind your mind, and you will learn to draw energy from that infinite source. You feel fatigue when your power of energy is exhausted, but if you can draw from that infinite source of energy that is behind your mind and let the door open and let some of that current of energy flow in and strengthen your mind and intellect, why should you have any fatigue? Perhaps we have shut the door, and cut off the connection between the infinite sources of energy and the divine mind, the centre of our personality. Now we have to go back and open the door, and get the connection right, and we can do that only by practising the power of concentration.

The fourth state of the mind is concentration. You can hold the mind on one point for a long time. It is just like a pendulum. You can take the illustration of an elephant. An elephant is never quite, it is always having a pendulum-like

motion. You will have to hold your mind steady on one point. At first you cannot succeed, and it will run away. From the outset you cannot see the strength of its force. That is like the Niagara. From its surface it is smooth and calm, but try to check that current. So your mind is running in one direction, and if you try to check its current, you will fail many times. So practise every day. There are various methods by which you can develop that power. That power could be brought to play in order to bring the perfect results, and concentration is one of the methods by which you may converge these scattered rays and forces of your mind, and hold them on one particular point.

Take a flower, and hold your mind on it solely. Try to think of it and of nothing else. Take a concrete object first. Many people give you the abstract thoughts, like the thought of love and pity and all that kind of thing. You cannot think of love, or you cannot have a thought of love without somebody loving another person. Love is an abstract feeling. You cannot think of love as an object at first. Your mind is not trained to it. We go from the concrete to the abstract, from the abstract to the absolute. So take a concrete object, fix your mind on the concrete something, and then gradually, when your mind is held on that concrete form, you will go on to the abstract i.e. to the absolute and to the infinite.

These are the methods, roughly speaking, which might be considered as steps towards concentration. So try to learn to develop the powers of concentration, and for this development regular practice is absolutely necessary. If you like to take private lessons and instruction, then I shall be glad to help you in that particular line. If you like to make experiments, devote a little time i.e. any time during the day and just try to draw all the forces into the centre. Your forces are scattered from the head to the toe, but you can withdraw and can develop your will power, and when you have done this, you will be able to send your thought. Then you can regulate it. There are different nerve centres in the system and you can call on different centres, and get different results. Then the power of thought reading and other psychic powers will come to you. Then other mental powers will also come. Finally you will be able to reach the highest goal. You will be able

to reach the neutral point of the magnet, which is at the same time the cause of both the mind and the matter. And when you will reach the neutral point, you will be near to the heavenly Father who is the eternal Being and the omnipotent Lord of the universe. In reality we are one with Him, but at present we do not know that. But through concentration and meditation we will be able to commune with that Being, and become one with Him in the end. Concentration brings all the divergent modes or modifications of the mind in one point and helps to absorb in the unfathomed ocean of meditation. In meditation, the mind loses its active phase or existence and is reduced to its own form which is no other than the pure consciousness. And when the mind is transformed into pure consciousness, it shines as non-different from the Brahman-consciousness. Therefore concentration brings the state of meditation, and meditation brings the state of the super-consciousness (*samadhi*), and the superconscious state brings a man face to face with the *Atman*.

## CHAPTER IX

### SAMADHI AND ITS OBSTACLES

The superconscious state is called in Sanskrit *samadhi*. *samadhi* means that tranquil state of the mind where the conscious mind is in abeyance, and the *Atman* is beyond the conscious plane, but manifests its own glorious nature. It is a state where the divine communion is accomplished and where the individual soul is united with the universal Spirit and realizes the perfect oneness. This is a state which was reached by all the great prophets and saviours who have appeared on this earth, and no one came a spiritual teacher of the world without attaining that state of super-consciousness.

Now, all the spiritual truths that have ever been described by any human being on the earth, were attained in that state of *samadhi*. It is a state of the spiritual realization. It is called by the Buddhists the state of the Buddhahood, which means one who is enlightened. It is also called the state of salvation in this life, or the state of the Godconsciousness, which having been reached one overcomes sorrows, sufferings and miseries of this life and transcends all the relative conditions of the phenomenal universe. It is called by the Christian mystics the state of ecstasy. It is the ideal of all the followers of all religions, whether he be a Mohammedan, or Christian, or Buddhist, or Hindu. Everyone is struggling after the attainment of that highest state, and at the same time many are missing to attain to that state. It is so highly esteemed and appreciated by the Hindus and by those seekers after truth who have lived in India from ancient times. The kings and the princes have renounced their thrones for the attainment of that ever blissful calm state. The rich people have renounced name, fame and everything for attaining to the superconscious state or *samadhi*. Buddha, Chaitanya and other saviours have renounced their home and hearth for attaining to the everlasting calmness which is obtained in that highest state of *samadhi*. Jesus the Christ became the son of God after reaching that state.

True religion begins after one reaches that state of *samadhi*.

If we study the lives of the great spiritual seekers, we find that their ideal is the same. Plotinus, the neo-Platonist, reached that state three times during his life. Dionysius attained to that state and called it the state of union with God. Porphyrius also attained to that state. Eckert, the great Christian mystic who lived in the 14th century said: "There must be perfect stillness in the soul, before God can whisper its word into it, before the light of God can shine in the soul and transform the soul into God. When passions are still, when worldly desires are silenced, then the word of God can be heard in the soul." Then the soul reaches that truth which is the goal of all religions, and becomes one with God.

In that state of *samadhi*, one realizes all the ideals that are given in the sacred scriptures of the world. You may read any scriptures and get higher ideals perhaps and these will all be your own property if you attain to them through that state of the superconsciousness, which is the realm of the absolute Truth. It is for this reason the Yogis, throwing aside all other ideals, have made this the highest aim of life. All the practices of Yoga are really for the attainment of that superconscious state that comes through concentration and meditation, achieved by the breathing exercises. All these are helpful in the way of quieting the disturbed and highly strung nerves of the mankind.

Before the mind can be still we will have to go through some practices of Yoga. Then we come to that state where the worries and anxieties of life do not bother us, and we come to the state of the superconsciousness or *samadhi*. Those who can practise concentration and meditation do not care so much for the sense enjoyments. Their desires for the sense pleasures are diminished, and they do not seek the comforts of the worldly life. The Yogis can do this easily, but others who are on the sense plane, do not care for meditation, because their highest ideal is just the little happiness that comes through the sense pleasures, and that is their aim. How can we expect that such people will realize the purposes of life and solve the problems of life and death? There are some who try to attain to that state, and seek a comfortable path. They want to get the results, but do not want to renounce anything. They do not want to be deprived of any of the pleasures of life, their

energy is divided, and so they are unsuccessful in their life to attain to that state of *samadhi* and to enjoy permanent peace and happiness. So their mind must be one-pointed before concentration can be acquired, and when concentration is perfect, then he attains the state of meditation, which brings unto him afterwards the state of *samadhi*.

The first step is the longing for truth, and extreme desire for the realization of the *Atman*; it comes to a very few, because all of us have a kind of longing for material something, thinking it will satisfy the desires, then we find it is not that the soul really desires. That longing becomes different to a few who have gone through the different stages of the spiritual unfoldment. We find that when the soul longs extremely for the truth, his mind becomes calm and concentrated, and whatever he thinks, he thinks keeping the ideal before his mind, and thinks of the ways by which that realization of the Divine will come, and when the mind is thus concentrated, the concentration remains unbroken, and this unbroken flow of concentration (*dharana*) is known as meditation (*dhyana*), and when no other thought takes possession of the soul and no anxieties remain in the mind, then that individual soul is ready and well-fitted for the attainment of the superconsciousness (*samadhi*). He then overcomes all the obstacles, which come in the path of the superconsciousness.

There are many obstacles, and these must be overcome first through the constant practice of meditation. Among the obstacles, the first one is the disease of the body. When the body is diseased, the mind is also disturbed, and consequently, the health is also affected, because I have said before that the mind is closely related with the body. The perfect health is that state when the mind does not think of the body and is not enhanced by the conditions of the physical form. So any diseased person cannot be a Yogi. Because, when he tries to concentrate upon the higher ideal, his mind is drawn toward the affected part or parts of the physical form, and he will have to struggle and fight, and this will end perhaps after a long struggle or may not end at all. Those who have the perfect health already, have the best physical condition for the practice of Yoga, and the sincere practice leads him to the attainment of the superconsciousness (*samadhi*).

The second one is the mental laziness. When the mind is in a low state of activity, it wants some trivial thing, and refuses to think of anything higher. It is a kind of laziness and it brings an obstruction in the path of practice of Yoga. The third one is the doubt. This is also a great obstacle in the path of spiritual unfoldment. There are many kinds of doubts, as we may doubt the existence of truth, we may doubt the attainment of truth by the mortal beings etc. and these doubts will prevent one from practising the lessons and exercises that are given by the Yogis for the attainment of the super-conscious state. The fourth one is the cessation of the struggle for the attainment of the superconsciousness. There suddenly comes a time when the mind is distracted by some other thing, and we lose interest in the ideal, the attainment of truth is the highest ideal, and if that ideal is covered by some trivial ideal, our interest is shaken, and we do not try to struggle for the cherished attainment of the realization of the highest.

The fifth one is the heaviness of the body and the mind. If we have cold, our body is over-powered by it, the mind is affected by it, and we feel tired all the time and do not like to sit and mediate. The sixth one is the thirst of the mind for the worldly pleasures. As long as our mind is attracted by these things of the world we do not seek the highest. We rather remain contented with this changing of the world. The seventh one is the false knowledge. This is of many kinds. As when we think of ourselves as bodies, this is false knowledge (*mithya jnana*). By taking care of the body we can take care of the soul, and that is a false knowledge. If we think that this body will remain for ever and will not be destroyed, then that is also a false knowledge.

The eighth one is the non-attaining concentration. Some people try to concentrate, but cannot do so, because their mind is not yet ready. It will be ready if they practise, but it may take some time. Those who cannot concentrate, cannot expect the superconscious right away. The ninth one is the falling away from the state when attained. The mind is distracted and you are brought to a lower plane, and you begin to think of other things. Some people attain to the highest state of concentration and meditation. While we meditate on some high ideal,

suddenly some trivial thought appears in the mind and they fall. That is one of the obstacles.

Now these are the distracting obstructions along with them, and these may be grief, sorrow, fear, or some physical cause. If a friend dies, the soul does not die, and we carry the dead body all the time. If the mind is overpowered with grief and sorrow, that person cannot concentrate. For this reason, if a friend dies, all the exercises must be stopped, because it will not help the mind for a month or two weeks, or during the time of mourning. The material disasters may come through the loss of fortune, or money, or from the non-fulfilment of our desires. If we have a certain desire and do not succeed in securing it, we have a material disaster.

The tremor of the body is also an obstacle to the practice of Yoga. The American people have a great deal of restlessness. The irregular breathing is another obstacle. The mental activity becomes irregular by irregular breathing. Each individual has a particular way of breathing, and if we examine the different ways of breathing, we find some differences in them. There is a difference between the breathing of men and that of women. When the body is not in a good condition, we do not breathe properly, and this produces a bad effect on our mental condition. That is the reason why the breathing exercises are helpful in controlling the nerves and the mind. There are some other obstacles, but these can be overcome by the constant practice of the meditation and the breathing exercises. The mind must be trained in such a way as to think of the ideal constantly. The body may work and the senses may work, but the mind will think of and look at the highest ideal. The mind should be three-fourth towards the ideal; and that state is to be accomplished. But the persons who have accomplished it, are very few in every country. Their one ideal in this life is the realization of the truth, and whatever they do, and wherever they go, their mind is constantly thinking of the truth. If these have been accomplished, then the superconscious state is near at hand.

All the obstacles can be removed very easily by constant thinking, because 'what thou thinkest that thou shalt become,' and it is as true as that I am sitting here. What we are today, is the result of our own thoughts. We have made ourselves what

we are, and we have brought ourselves to this plane of existence. We have been living this way, because we do not know better. The moment we begin to know better, we live on a higher plane. If we think of the ideal constantly, the mode of our life will be different, and our work will be different from that which we are doing now, and this work would no longer please or satisfy us.

In order to attain to the superconscious state and also to overcome the obstacles, we must practise that kind of meditation which is one-pointed, i.e. that kind of process of meditation should be adopted in which the mind must be pointed towards the ideal, just as the compass points towards the north. So the mind must be pointed towards the ideas even in the dreams. The dream state shows what thought is predominant or strong in the mind in the waking state, appears in the form of a dream. There are other obstacles which should be considered. Again, killing or injuring any living creature, either for our own benefit, or for serving our own purpose, is considered as one of the obstacles. Killing is of three kinds: to kill ourselves, to cause another to kill for them, and approving of the killing caused by another. These three kinds of killing or injuring must be avoided. One may kill an animal, another may not kill himself, but go to a butcher and make him kill, and the third will go to a butcher and buy some meat. Now every meat eater is responsible for the animal which is killed, whether in Chicago, or in London. If there were no meat eaters, the butchers would not kill. So that kind of killing, either cutting, or causing another to cut, should be avoided if we wish to attain to the highest state of the superconsciousness.

Telling a lie is also an obstacle. It is also of three kinds: telling, causing another to tell, and approving of another person's doing so. These should also be avoided. The stealing is another obstacle. It is also of three kinds, and those must be avoided. The desires for attaining the Yoga powers should also be avoided. As for example, the desires for curing the disease, the raising of money, the acquiring of fortunes etc. should be avoided because they are the obstacles in the path of the practices of Yoga. Now, if these lower yogic powers (*siddhai*) are overcome, the higher powers manifest. The internal and external purification of the body and the mind as well as

chastity and purity of the mind must be observed by repeating some of the formulas like OM, or any other formula, which is expressive of the highest ideal of the union of individual soul with the divine spirit by the practice of meditation upon the eternal Truth. The lack of these practices brings obstacles in the path of the superconsciousness (*samadhi*). Again when the non-killing is established, there shall be no enemy of the Yogi in the world. And it is also a fact when one has firmly established the habit of the non-killing, there shall be no enemy of him in the universe and even the lower animals will not harm that person consciously, tigers or snakes will not hurt him and this is one of the results of the establishment of the non-killing. Similarly when the truth-telling is established, whatever we utter, becomes truth. If we say to a person 'be blest', that person will be blest. After attaining to the establishment of truthfulness, if we say to any one 'be thou cured' that person will be cured. That is the power which comes by the practice of Yoga after the establishment of the perfect truthfulness. Again when non-stealing is established, all wealth comes to that person; whatever he needs, he gets, he will not have to work for it, and he does not know himself how he would get it, but he does get it.

When chastity is established, the spiritual strength comes to that person. Those who have read the Raja Yoga, will find that by the practice of purity and chastity, some powers come to the soul. It is spiritual power, and is far-reaching in its influence. When you sit in the presence of a Yogi, you will find the effect; he may not speak eloquently, or have a nice combination of words, but he will produce effect through this power. The non-receiving of the gift is another means to peace. The moment we receive the gift from any person we put ourselves in the condition of dependence upon the giver. So a Yogi tries to avoid the receiving of the gifts. When a mother does anything for a child, we do not call it a gift. If a stranger gives a gift to help a person, we would call it a kind of indebtedness. Again when a gift comes through that desire, it is not to be accepted. The non-receiving of the gifts produces a help to the mind. If you do not find a gift at the Christman time, how you become unhappy. When non-receiving of the gifts is perfectly established, a Yogi can see and read his past

life. He understands his past life, his present and future. The past, present and future become eternal present to him. Then he is not bound by any condition or dependence upon any being. In order to gain perfect independence of the mind, he refuses to accept all gifts.

When we observe the purification of the body, if we constantly try to keep the body clean, then the attachment to the body ceases and we can realize how unclean the body is. It must be remembered that the body is not soul, and in order to get over the attachment to the body, the purification of the body along with the idea of the perfect cleanliness should be practised. When the purification of mind is established, the mind becomes one-pointed and concentrated. If all the impure and trivial thoughts and ideas are removed, then the mind is ready to rise higher, and we gain the self-control. Then our understanding becomes profound, we can understand things better and the abstract truths become easier for our comprehension. That is the result of the purification of the mind. "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God". The God-consciousness is only possible when the mind and the heart are pure and are free from evil desires and selfishness.

We must always be contented. Too much ambition makes us slaves. If the ambition is fulfilled, what is gained? Supposing you become the ruler of the three continents, but will the real happiness come to you? No, because true happiness does not come through ambition. The ambitious men are always unhappy, but those who are contented with their condition in life, gain perfect happiness. In fact, the supreme happiness comes to those who are contented with simple living. If the person is contented, and instead of following the fortunes for help, develop in him the spiritual thirst, he will realize the truths which the millionaires and multi-millionaires do not get.

One may think highly of the happiness which comes through the fulfilment of desires, another may think of that happiness which comes through sense desires, and may think to be the highest, but true happiness comes only through the thirst after right knowledge, which is the highest. All the desires cannot be fulfilled in this life, because the span of our life is very short. So we must use the right discrimination and

through it we should realize that by the fulfilment of many of our desires, we shall not be satisfied in this life. Moreover hundreds and thousands of our desires will have to be fulfilled. So if we be contented with the things we have at present and make the best use of our energy for the attainment of the highest, we gain the highest in this life. A Yogi is wiser than those who are following the phantoms of ambition. We should follow the example of a Yogi, and then we shall be able to control our mind, and be happy.

By the practice of austerity, a Yogi gains the power of seeing and hearing at a distance. A yogi does not practise these powers which come automatically to him. He does not care to have them when his real aim and ideal are to attain to the superconsciousness. In fact, the attainment of the superconsciousness is gained through meditation upon the divine Being. When one has succeeded in fixing his mind steadily upon the divine Being, he knows everything, and understands everything, and sees the divine Being everywhere and that can be attained very easily through concentration and meditation. If we have a strong longing for the psychic powers, that longing is one of the obstacles. Those powers come, automatically through the practice of Yoga, but if we pay attention to these powers, we stay there and cannot progress any further. Sometimes they come and manifest in the daily life, but if we use these powers, we do not make progress in the spiritual life. Christ said: "First seek ye the kingdom of heaven, and all these things will be added". So we should try to attain to the superconsciousness, and then all other powers will manifest in us. But we should not pay any attention to them, because if we wish to attain to these powers and make them the highest ideal of life, then the superconsciousness will not be attained in our life. It has been asked what shall we gain by attaining to that state? To this it can be said that first, we shall know what we are. Second, freedom from the slavery of senses will come and the perfect freedom will be attained. We are thinking that we cannot live without this or that. How unhappy we will be, if we do not know ourselves. We shall gain our divine nature and shall be conscious of that truth that each one is a child of immortal Bliss. Then the whole world can be put aside; we shall no longer be subject to birth and death. Why have we come to this plane?

Because we wanted to have these things of pleasure. If we have the same desires after death, we will have to come again. But when the desire of the attainment of highest truth comes in us we become conscious of our Divine being and after attaining to the superconscious state or *samadhi*, we become perfect as the Father in heaven is perfect, and thus attain to the goal of all religions, and understand what Christ meant when he said : "I and my Father are one". Then we eternally escape from the chain of nescience, and become one with the absolute Brahman.







SWAMI ABHEDANANDA, an apostle of Sri Ramakrishna—Born on October 2, 1866—Spent his early life among the brotherhood in Baranagar monastery near Calcutta in severe austerity—Travelled barefooted all over India from 1888-1895—Acquainted with many distinguished savants, including Prof. Max Muller and Prof. Paul Deussen—Landed in New York and took the charge of the Vedanta Society in 1897—Became acquainted with Prof. Williams James, Rev. R. H. Newton, Prof. Josiah Royce of Harvard, Prof. Hyslop of Columbia, Prof. Lanmann, Prof. G. H. Howison, Prof. Fay, Mr. Edison, the inventor, Dr. Elmer, Gates, Ralph Waldo Trine, W. D. Howells, Prof. Herschel C. Parker, Dr. Logan, Rev. Bishop Potter, Prof. Shaler, Dr. Jaynes, the chairman of the Cambridge Philosophical Conference and the Professors of Columbia, Harvard, Yale, Cornell, Berkeley and Clarke Universities—Travelled extensively all through the United States, Canada, Alaska and Mexico—Made frequent trips to Europe, delivering lectures in different parts of the Continent—Crossed the Atlantic seventeen times—Was appreciated very much for his profundity of scholarship, intellectual brilliance, oratorical talents, charming personality and nobility of character—Made a short visit to India in 1906—Returned again to America—Came back to India at last in 1921—On his way home joined the Educational Conference, Honolulu—Visited Japan, China, the Philippines, Singapore, Kualalampur and Rangoon—started on a long tour and went as far as Tibet—Established centres at Calcutta and Darjeeling—Left his mortal frame on September 8, 1939.

**The Complete Works of  
SWAMI ABHEDANANDA  
In Ten Volumes including a volume  
PHILOSOPHICAL IDEAS OF  
SWAMI ABHEDANANDA,  
the Guide book in English**

The writings and speeches of Swami Abhedananda, a direct disciple of Sri Ramakrishna, were spread over a long period of spiritual ministrations both in America and in India. His deep philosophical insight and spirituality attracted many learned and thinking men to his lectures. His writings and speeches, so far brought out in stray volumes are now being published in a set *ten volumes* entitled THE COMPLETE WORKS OF SWAMI ABHEDANANDA, on the occasion of his Birth Centenary 1966-67. We invite all lovers of philosophy, religion and culture to avail of this golden opportunity to collect this set printed in demy octavo on good quality paper, bound with cloth and covered with coloured jacket.

*Complete Set ( in Eleven volumes )*

