

33. Yoga maarga

CAN thirst be quenched by water droplets or hunger appeased by grains of rice? The realisation of the Truth of Creation and the Creator involves hard discipline and steady faith in the paths prescribed by the sages. These paths lead man to the goal through inquiry, devotion, dedicated work, meditation, worship and other such disciplines.

There is also the process of *Yoga* (divine communion) which is widely advocated now-a-days as a means for self-realisation available to practitioners. It is being taught and propagated as a sure and simple means of Liberation. Novices and common folk are misled by the high promises, and they have to be warned in time of the limits and possibilities of *Yoga* as now taught and propounded.

The very first axiom of *Yoga* as a spiritual discipline is to 'conquer the agitations of the mind.' However, this is more easily said than done, for the mind has to be dead, not dormant. Of course there are persons who have achieved this victory, but none of them will be available to you for guidance in mind-control or mind-conquest. They would be so sunk in *aanandha* (divine bliss) that the demands of the body, the time, the causal chain, etc. can never reach them.

Yoga is mergence of the individual into the Universal

What can be expected from a teacher of *Yoga* is only a diluted, limited, pseudo type of *Yoga-dharshan* (*Yogic* Vision or realisation), for only those who have stopped half-way in the path of *Yoga* will come forward as instructors and guides. When one has gone the entire length of the road, one has perforce to leave the world and its needs behind.

Yoga means union or yoking, and the *jeevaathma* (The Individual Soul) has to be yoked with the *Paramaathman* (Supreme Soul); one has to find its fulfilment in the Whole, of which it is a part. As the rivers carry the waters of the sea back into the sea itself happy to lose the limitations of their names, their size etc In that consummation, so the individual merges Into the Universal. That is *Yoga*. It is *Yoga* that happens to the salt doll that is dropped into the depths of the sea to calculate the depth of the water. The salt too comes from the sea and becomes one with the sea.

Man has five *koshas* (sheaths) covering his individuality---the *annamaya* (material), *praanamaya* (vital), *manomaya* (mental), *vijnaanamaya* (intellectual) and the *aanandhamaya* (blissful). When man turns from the objective world to the subjective world within him, he can unsheath his Individuality and reach his Bliss Nature. But most men revel in the very first sheath---the material sheath---and remain engrossed and entangled In material pursuits and pleasures. Man does not realise that he sees only what he wants to see; he cannot see beyond his need. Therefore unless his desires are purified and clarified, he cannot penetrate it into the inner realms of delight.

The various *chakras* in the body

If you ask any one where the words he utters come from, he will reply that they do so from the vocal chords. No. The vocal chords can produce sound, but not words. The spinal column, from the *muulaadhaara chakra* to the *ajnaa chakra* (the energy centre at lowest point of the column to the energy centre at mid-brow spot) is like the *veena*, the strings of which when drawn and played upon, produce resonance. The vital and the mental sheaths are Involved in these regions. When the playing fingers halt and press on frets fixed on the *veena* at irregular intervals,

different notes are created and delight ensues. When the mind decides upon an idea that is to be communicated, the *praana* (life force) plays upon the strings and words emanate.

The *muulaadhaara*, the lowest of the *chakras* (energy centres) at the lower end of the spinal passage, is the embodiment of the *Prakrithi* (Nature) principle. Therefore it is related to the *annamaya kosha*, the material facet of man. It is the *prithvi thathwa* (the earth-principle.)

The *swaadhisthana chakra* at the point of the navel, is the guardian of the *praanamaya kosha*, the vital facet of the person. It is the *agni* principle, the spring and source of warmth in the body, that maintains the processes of digestion and protection from environmental change. The *manlpuuraka chakra* is the next highest on the spinal scale. It is the *jala thathwa* (water-principle), that helps the circulation of blood both into the heart and out of it, from all parts of the body.

The *anahata chakra* is in the region of the heart. It embodies the *vaayu* (wind) principle which is in charge of the breathing process, inhalation and exhalation, so vital for life and activity. It also vitalises the spinal force, and passes over the frets of the inner *veena*.

The *visuddha chakra* is in the pit of the throat, near the pituitary gland. It represents the *aakaasha* (space or ether) principle and promotes *sabdha* (sound).

The *ajna chakra* on the mid-brow spot is the embodiment of *vijnaana*---the Splendour of Aware-ness---for when this *chakra* is reached, man glimpses the Truth, gets transformed and becomes translucent. It is only a step away from the final realisation, when the *Sahasraara chakara* (the thousand petalled energy centre) on the crown of the head is attained. That is the consummation of all *saadhana* (spiritual effort), of all search.

The stage of desire operates in the first two *chakras*, the stage of endeavour (*kriyaa shakthi*) In the next two and the stage of awareness (*Jnaana shakthi*), is most evident in the last two. The awareness is there, latent in every one, ready to surface when the veils of ignorance are removed. The individual life-force or *jeevathathwam*, resides like a lightning flash in the womb of a blue cloud between the ninth and the twelfth rings of the spinal column. It will be alert and awake only when *saadhana* of any type is done after the cleansing of character and habits.

Essential qualifications for the aspirant of Yoga

If, however, the *Yoga* path is undertaken when the senses are still potent and overbearing, the effects on one's emotions and passions will be disastrous. One will become insane and talk and write absurd and ribald things about oneself and others. I have known many cases of such *saadhakas* (spiritual aspirants) who have gone astray. That is why *shama* (control of the outer senses), *dhama* (control of the inner passions and emotions), *uparaathi* (withdrawal of the mind from external pursuits), *thithiksha* (acquisition of the power to bear heat and cold, grief and joy, profit and loss etc., with equanimity), *shraddha* (faith in the scriptures and in the experience of sages) and *samaadhana* (equal-mindedness and fortitude), have been emphasised as qualifications for the aspirant.

Yoga as taught and learned at present is, at best, only a system of physical exercises, a means to acquire health and a sense of physical well-being. It cannot be spiritual discipline leading to self-realisation. The body which is composed of the five elements, can be affected by these *Yoga* practices. The mind has no illumining power of its own and, like the Moon, it can only reflect the light of the Sun or the *Aathman* (Divinity) within. The *Aathman* can be known only through Love; all claims to the contrary are spurious and missing the mark. Through the *kundalini shakthi*

(Serpent Power) and its ascent through the *chakras*, it is well-nigh impossible to realise the Universal *Aathman*. Even when realised, the experience is not communicable through lessons. The vision attained must be of the One without a second; only then can it be genuine. The core of every being must be recognised as One.

There was once a *Guru* (preceptor) who initiated his pupil in the *Naaraayana manthra*: *Om namo Naaraayana*. When the pupil left his presence, he called him back and gave an additional direction saying, "Have the form of *Naaraayana* (Lord Vishnu) before your mental eye when you repeat the *manthra* (sacred formula)." The pupil left, but the *Guru* called him back again and told him, "But be careful that you do not think of a monkey when you are reciting the Name and contemplating the Form." The pupil agreed, but whenever he Sat down to meditate, the monkey could not be pushed aside. He kept telling himself that he should not think of the monkey but the monkey insisted on peeping into his consciousness. So he complained to the *Guru* and asked for his advice.

The *Guru* said that *Naaraayana* is Omnipresent and immanent in every being and so he can meditate on *Naaraayana* as the reality of every being that appears in his vision. How can you separate some things as not God and others as God? They are all limbs, organs and cells of His body. If you separate all such limbs, organs and cells, what Is left of the body?

Therefore do not be led into the *yoga marga*. It is fraught with danger since there can be no efficient teachers. But *yogaasanas* can always be practised for better health under proper guidance.

Summer Course, 16-6-1977