

# Power of the Will

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This evening we propose to give a tape in a direction and with an emphasis different from the tapes given heretofore. First, those present are: Elmer Rader, Marguerite DeCono, Mr. and Mrs. Bullard, Lillian Reid, Jim Mugridge, Gertrude Wolff; and I'll leave it to your power of inference or intuition to determine whom the dictator of this tape is.

In the previous work, both written and on these tapes, the emphasis has been upon the philosophic side of the yoga of knowledge—the knowledge aspect, as it were. But man is not only a being of knowledge; he has, in point of fact, three aspects that are of prime importance, and these three are: cognition, affection, and conation, or the activist element in consciousness. These three correlate with the three forms of yoga known as the *Trimarga*, namely, the yoga of knowledge, the yoga of love or devotion, and *karma* yoga.

There is a tendency for one to view the yoga of knowledge as only a matter of knowledge alone. That is not wholly true. As I am acquainted with it, it involves also the element of devotion, or self-giving, and a complete self-giving at that, and, as well, the action of the will. And the will is quite clearly the principle factor in what is known as *karma* yoga, or the yoga of action. Now, these parts which are relatively subordinate in the yoga of knowledge have been more or less neglected in past tapes. It is my intention now to give more importance to these relatively neglected sides, for otherwise the *sadhaka* may make the error of thinking that sheer scholarship is all that is required. Scholarship is important and is a great aid, but it can also be a barrier because one may be taken up by a consideration of ideas to an exclusion of other features that are essential. There is such a thing as being overloaded with scholarship so that the ideational process is all the time too active. Incisive ideas are more helpful in the actual *sadhana* than carefully modulated ideation which takes in a multitude of exceptions. The ideas are tools so far as the *sadhana* is concerned, and a sharply defined tool is a much more effective tool than one with the blunted edge of too much modification or consideration of exceptions. The amount of scholarship that is good for the individual would vary from individual to individual. But scholarship becomes too great and is a barrier when one is everlastingly hung up with the process of ideation. Remember, scholarship is only a tool; it is not the end; it is not the goal. The goal is another way of knowing; is another way of cognizing or being aware. And in principle it should be possible for one to attain this without scholarship; but scholarship can be a very great aid if one is not attached to it, not bound by it, not inclined to view it as an end-in-itself and thus make it a substitute for the real *sadhana*.

Now, there is a feature in the practice that is of great importance to which I shall give attention in other tapes, and that is the ethical side, the moral principles that are involved. But if there is such a thing as morality, of which I do not in the least doubt, that

is dependent upon the side of man that is free, or indeterminant. Now, it is true that man is in part determined, he is in part conditioned, the consequence of causes, and so forth. But he also is an indeterminant entity, in other words, a free entity; and only in so far as he is a free entity, is he a moral entity. Now I wish to make this point: that while it is of value to consider man in the side in which he is determined, one can give too great importance to this side. What I wish to urge is that it is of prime importance to regard the *sadhaka* as a responsible, moral agent; and that means giving prime importance to him as an undetermined, free entity.

Now, there is a great tendency among students, and in the world at large, at this time, to overemphasize the determinant side, and that's the point I want to drive home especially tonight. In so far as we are interested in numerology, in palmistry, in astrology, in documents such as the *I Ching*, we are concerned with the determinant side of man—not with the indeterminant or moral side of man, not with the side that is free. Now, there is a variation in the degree that entities are determinant and indeterminant. I would say at the level of the stone, determination is almost 100 percent. There may be, indeed, a certain degree of indetermination there, but I'm unable to measure it. In the state of the vegetable, the degree of determination is somewhat reduced, and there is a small degree of freedom coming into the picture. With the animal, this degree of freedom, of self-determination, has become greater. But with man especially, this is the important part of the man. And from the simplest, most nearly animal-man—such as, say, an Australian primitive—up to a full Buddha, the degree of the free determination of the individual grows substantially. Now, yoga means the effort to realize oneself as a Buddha; and that means as a predominantly free, self-determined entity; and this means transcendence, in high degree, of the determinant factors. Nothing is more important in the yoga than the moral factor.

Now, there are approaches to yoga, to which I do not attach much importance, which seek to produce states of consciousness by a means that is equivalent to turning a crank to effect changes of consciousness. I refer to all use of chemical agents, such as alcohol and the drugs, also to all physical manipulations—posturing, and so forth. These are extraneous and not central. What I mean is in first importance in yoga is the use of central powers, not these extraneous things that belong essentially to the vital being. In *jnana* yoga especially, the issue is primarily between the mental being and the true spiritual entity. It's not an activity centering on the animal being, which is everything physical.

Now, I shall, in other tapes, take up certain moral principles and their probable extension in use by the *sadhaka*—not primarily moral principles as they may be applied by the non-*sadhaka*, but as by the *sadhaka*. But here I wish to emphasize something which underlies all morality, and that is the principle of the will.

Will may be viewed as a cosmic force—as the very force that maintains the stars in their courses, and so forth. But the will that concerns us is the will that can be exercised as the volition of the individual *sadhaka*. It would be very difficult to overemphasize the importance of this will. I've not spoken of it in the past in my own experience, but the direct action of the will can be all-powerful. It can render most technique, in the yogic sense, unnecessary and become the most important single agency, in addition to ideation—possibly the primary agency. But what is necessary in the

exercising of the will is to bring it into concentrated focus; avoid diffusion of it; avoid the loss of it through a multitude of side interests. Learn concentration almost before everything else. Discourage the tendency of the mind to jump from here to there, from point to point, bringing into play every possible side issue. Cut them off. Focus the mind to a center where all of the energy is brought to bear upon a fine point, namely, the breakthrough. Remember, it has been said that the kingdom of heaven is taken by violence. It is in this sense that it is taken by violence: by a finely focused will, brought to a fine point, maintained day after day after day, until the walls of Jericho fall—not because you have asked them to fall, not because you have said please, but because you have made them fall. The kingdom of heaven, which I read in this case as *Nirvana*, is taken by violence. It is not a game for a softy, for one who is too gentle with himself. The will must be brought to the pitch where everything that stands in the way is sacrificed except the rights of other entities. But he would sacrifice life; he would sacrifice his vital being; he would sacrifice his ambitions, his attainments, his wealth, everything, if necessary, to make that breakthrough—to be content with nothing less than making that breakthrough. Remember that one of the Brothers, the one known to us as K.H., has said in *The Mahatma Letters*, “All the powers of nature lie before you; *take what you can.*”<sup>1</sup> Don’t beg. Don’t plead. Take it by committing yourself 100 percent.

Now the power of the will becomes rather highly impressive when you realize some of the things it will do, that virtually none of the walls that surround us and hide us from the Beyond can stand, ultimately, against a highly concentrated, focused will, single-pointed in its effort, that will accept nothing less than success, and that will sacrifice everything else whatsoever, except other creatures, for that success. This is as important a part of the yoga as anything that is. It is the one message I want to leave with you tonight. If you’re soft, if you’re self-indulgent, if you’re more or less indolent, the walls will not fall. Literally, you must be willing to accept death rather than failure in seeking your goal of Realization. This is not a childish business. It is the greatest conquest ever. Beside this conquest, the ordinary warriors—the Caesars, the Napoleons, the Genghis Khans—are mere weaklings as compared to this, for they conquered only minor things. This is the conquest of *Nirvana*—Liberation, the transcendence of the *Sangsara*, the universe of objects, the evolution. This is nothing less than mastery. This is not supplication; it is warrior battle, in the true spiritual sense, a will that will dare to conquer the Beyond.

This is the aspect of yoga that I think has generally been overlooked, but it explains the reason why the *sadhakas* have been called “Warriors of Light.” There is a battle side. There is that which is a battle with your own weaknesses and anything in the nature that might interfere, but it requires that if those elements in the nature cannot be brought to conform, that then you will have the will to cut them off and destroy them if necessary. Nothing is to stand in the way. This involves the intensity of an all-consuming passion, and the Beyond is not conquered with anything less. To be sure, the mapping of the way is important, but this determination is essential.

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<sup>1</sup> A. T. Barker, ed., *The Mahatma Letters* (Adyar: The Theosophical Publishing House, 1923), 65. The text reads, “There are the powers of all nature before you; *take what you can.*”

Now, there is a tendency in the world to excuse weaknesses; to excuse criminal action and view it as mere failure because of society; to excuse people who allow themselves to become victims of chemical substances like alcohol or drugs, and say it's only a sickness. It's more than that. It is a failure to use will. It is fundamental moral failure. And that is the point that should be emphasized. Everything else is secondary. In our depths we are part and parcel of the Ultimate, and the Power of the Ultimate functions through us, potentially, if we will exercise it; and nothing extraneous is more powerful than this Power. One is subject to extraneous things because he fails to use the Power that is really in him. It is, therefore, a confession of moral failure. We are not weak if we will use our Power—not any of us—because in the last analysis, every one of us has in his central being that divine Other, which is All-Powerful. And he who fails to use this is not to be excused. That is failure, moral failure, not to do it.

Thus, I emphasize man as a self-determined being, not as an externally conditioned being. Granting the fact that in part he is such an externally conditioned being, primarily he is a self-determined being, and it is his obligation to use this Power. And it is all-important that he should use it on the path of yoga.

Now, I'll close now with these few words, but I wanted to drive this point home.