

# Purpose, Method, and Policy of this Work

## Part 13 of 15

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We shall next proceed to a consideration of *raja* yoga in so far as it is related to the *Mano Kosha*, or sense-mind sheath. This yoga involves more than a relationship to this sheath, in fact it covers a very broad range; but it is perhaps the most effective yoga with respect to this particular sheath. It ranges pretty far, and in *The Yoga Aphorisms of Patanjali*, there are means suggested for the awakening of a large number of powers, or *siddhis*, many of them phenomenal.

A word may be said here concerning phenomenal yogic powers. To the tyro, it is this aspect of yoga that may be the most impressive of all, but a word of warning should be uttered. The goal of yoga is not *siddhis*, or powers. They can be achieved, and they can be useful, and they also can be spectacular, but they are incidental entirely to the real purpose of yoga. The purpose of yoga, in the end, is the attainment of Liberation or Enlightenment, a destroying of the bondage to the *Sangsara*, or the universe of objects, to achieve the point where one can enter into *Moksha* or *Nirvana* and render all further incarnation here no longer necessary; and there is often a warning made that interest in the powers can divert the attention of the *sadhaka* from this ultimate goal. And in general, I would say, as Shankara has said, avoid the powers, aim at the ultimate goal. Nonetheless, the powers exist and they may be useful aids on the way. On the other hand, they may be diversions that lead one to become intrigued by the use of powers so that the aspirant is diverted from the ultimate objective. I do not attach prime importance to these powers, although I recognize them as possible in principle and as being capable of profitable use under the appropriate circumstances, provided the *sadhaka* is not diverted from the ultimate goal.

Now to return to the major problem that concerns us, the penetration and overcoming of the *mano*, or sense-mind, sheath. Incidentally, this is not a form of yoga which I have personally practiced in this lifetime. My acquaintance with it in this lifetime is through literature. My real interest in yoga, and the practice of it, is connected with the yoga of Shankara, which belongs to a later sheath in the series. But with respect to the sense-mind sheath these points should be emphasized. The sense-mind gives us the world of our common experience. It is that which gives the universe, in fact, in terms that are sensuous. We know the stars because we see them. We know the world about us because we see them; we have reports through hearing, and through the others of our various senses. And among these there is one of particular importance, namely, the kinesthetic sense, that is the sense of muscular effort; and from that sense, in peculiar degree, we get the idea that among the things before us there is substance, there is a something that opposes resistance to our effort. Through the kinesthetic sense we derive the conceptions of mass and weight, and these appear to have a particular power in giving us the sense that the world outside is real and essentially objective. We cannot, ordinarily, in normal

consciousness, act as though the objects of our environment were not. Therefore, they appear as objective to our consciousness. And this has led to the common assumption that all the sensuous objects about us are in reality non-conscious things which preexist consciousness, even; and thus that we are, in a degree at least if not in large measure, dependent upon that objective universe, that we are merely entities moving within a real objective environment, existing wholly independent not only of our private individual consciousness, but independently of consciousness *per se*.

I've analyzed this problem, or point of view, in other tapes and will not go into any considerable discussion of it here. The point is that the object has for us in the empiric sense an enormous power over us. It provides the environment with respect to which we must come to terms. We are not free of it. It binds us. It restricts our actions. Our decisions must take it into account. And there's no question about this in the empiric sense; but, ultimately, he who has gone far enough on the path of yoga can destroy for himself this whole appearance of a universe. I refer you here to the repeated statements of Sri Shankaracharya. And I can testify that there is a state on the way where all of these seemingly impressive objects—the mountains, the valleys, the streams, the oceans, the cities, the planets, and all the rest—are reduced to empty phantasmagoria that tend to vanish away leaving only Pure Consciousness in a state of bliss.

We seek security by acquiring possession of many objects. We build our security upon this possession. But, in fact, this consists of the very bonds which restrict us and hold us down. He alone is free who though dealing with objects is not bound by them, who is freed from the need of possession, who, even, is freed from the feeling that he must command by his own possessing the food which he eats. This means that the apparent objects about us function as determinants, not as mere instruments which we can freely command. We are in large part, I mean the whole humanity, slaves of the object; and if man would be free, he must rise ascendant above all the apparent power possessed by the object. And remember, that by the object I mean all of the portentous powers which seem to exist in the environment.

This yoga, particularly, deals with this problem, as do certain other yogas, and this problem is much more difficult than the problem that was assayed by both the *karma* yoga and the *bhakti* yoga because the grip the object has upon us is so deeply entrenched in our experience that freeing ourselves from it is one of the most difficult problems of the way. Yet, he who has gone far in freeing himself from dependence upon the object may then turn upon the object, which, bear in mind, means the whole world and its resources, and make use of it and may manipulate it for the fulfillment of any purposes which he may have. To be master of the object, one must first free himself from the bondage imposed by the object. He need not then destroy it for his consciousness, but he may deal with it, and then deal with it with a masterly hand. This is part of the process of winning real mastery.

An important point needs to be made here. When I speak of the sensuous object, I am specifically excluding the objects of the pure reason, or the objects of the conceptual function. These constitute another order of objective appearances and of a vaster power, as Plato well knew and as Shankara well knew. The ascending above the power of the conceptual object, or the object of the pure reason, belongs to another yoga, namely, *jnana* yoga, and will be handled in due course.

Now, in this discipline of Patanjali, meditation comes to occupy a place of premier importance. Here the end of meditation is not the reflective use of discrimination, as it will be employed later in the yoga of Shankara, but is meditation to the end of rising superior to the object, toward a position of consciousness not engaged in sensuous awareness. In modern terms, it is the use of meditation to achieve sensuous deprivation. In our day, other means have been used for accomplishing this end. The achieving of a state of sensuous deprivation in the full sense, not only of cutting off the recording of impressions from without, but also the cutting off of impressions from within, awakens one to the reality of Consciousness itself, unconcerned with content, and then to the Realization of the primacy of this Consciousness and the overthrowing of the delusion of the primacy of sensible objects, which includes, let me remind you, the whole world and all its objects and, in addition, the whole cosmos. They then become reduced to mere contents subordinate to the Consciousness that contains them.

There is another method with which I am familiar for undercutting the power of the sensuous object which does not employ the methods of sensuous deprivation either by mediation or by entering upon the use of dark, silent rooms and immersion in water at body temperature. This is the method growing out of the protracted study of pure mathematics. Pure mathematics is the crown of the conceptual function. All conceptions as they become purified, clear, and distinct, regardless of their subject matter, become mathematical conceptions. I recall to your minds Williamson's definition of a mathematical concept which appears in the ninth edition of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, "Any conception which is completely determined by a finite number of specifications is a mathematical conception."<sup>1</sup> Mathematics, thus, when taken in the pure, not the applied sense, is a force of maximum purification in conceptual thought. Here we, too, also have an object; it is the conceptual object. But the method here is the employment of the higher, subtler, more powerful conceptual object to overcome the power of the perceptual object. The later operation of transcending the conceptual object follows in due course, but here we are dealing with the problem of overcoming the power of the world upon our consciousness—a power which is enormous because it is ever-present and has historically established itself in our lives. We inherit it practically at the time when we are nourished at the breasts of our mothers. We feel that our existence, our very being, is dependent upon it, so that breaking this power is extremely difficult and yet extremely important for him who would attain the liberating Realization. In this case we are using the power of the subtle object to destroy and undermine the power of the sensible object.

I can give a report of my own experience in this matter, and this experience took place, very largely, before I even knew there was such a domain as yogic discipline and the attainment of Fundamental Realization or Enlightenment. As we start with that which is the common and most familiar domain called mathematical, we deal with number entities. In our earliest acquaintance with this, there is not any departure as yet from the sensible domain. We count, first of all, by setting up a one-to-one reciprocal correlation between our fingers and certain other objects with which we are dealing. In

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<sup>1</sup> *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, vol. 15 (Chicago: The Werner Company, 1894), 629. The full quotation is, "Any conception which is definitely and completely determined by means of a finite number of specifications, say by assigning a finite number of elements, is a mathematical conception."

this case, we are employing strictly sensible means, namely, the fingers and the other objects. Later, we may pick up a number of stones and put them in a container, and we may use these to determine how many objects are before us, such as the number of individuals in a band of sheep. A shepherd may start out in the morning with his sheep and set up a one-to-one correlation between these sheep and the individual stones, and has then just the same number of stones in his bag as there are sheep in his flock. He takes them forth into the field. There they may be subject to inroads by the natural enemies of sheep—the wolves and other sheep eaters. And it may not always be evident to the shepherd that all of his sheep have been securely protected from such inroads. So when he returns again with his flock, he proceeds to set up a one-to-one correlation between the sheep and the stones in his bag, and if in that process there are some stones left over, then he knows that he has lost sheep. Maybe they have wandered, and he may go back and hunt for them, or they may have been captured and eaten. This is elemental counting, the beginning of arithmetic.

When we as young children went to school, we found that long since the advanced portion of humanity had gone far beyond the reciprocal one-to-one correlation between certain sensible objects and a bag of stones. In place of the bag of stones, we had marks on paper organized in a form which we later learned was called the decimal system. And we were able to manipulate quantities far more efficiently. We were not limited, now, to the finite restrictions imposed by any possible bag of stones. Our numbers rose in series one upon another from units, to tens, to hundreds, to thousands, to ten-thousands, hundred-thousands, millions, billions, trillions, quadrillions, quintillions, sextillions, and so on. And then we learned to use a better way of naming, so that in place of a hundred, we said  $10^2$ , in place of a thousand,  $10^3$ , in place of a million,  $10^6$ , and so on. And then far beyond all named numbers, such as  $10^{100}$ , which some youngster called a googol—that means a number 1 with a hundred zeros beyond it. And yet we reach on, and on, and on, until  $10^{100}$  becomes insignificant, the distances of a cosmos only the smallness of an invisible microscopic dot. Number grew and grew until we conceived of 10 to the infinite power, and that was called by a name, namely, Aleph-Null, and beyond that numbers of a magnitude that would require the raising of  $\aleph_0$  to the  $\aleph_0$  power to reach  $\aleph_1$ , and then on through  $\aleph_2$ ,  $\aleph_3$ , and so on to  $\aleph_\infty$ . Imagination long since has become totally inadequate. We can conceive this only. We have long since transcended the power of sensuous correlation.

But this is only part of the picture. We learned that there are other than the natural numbers, the 0, 1, 2, 3, 4, and so on. We could have such a thing as an apple cut in two, and we could then have 2 one-half apples, or one-half any other objects, or any other fraction consisting of a natural number in the numerator and a natural number in the denominator. But that was still only the beginning. We introduced next the notion of the negative number, the number that developed in the opposite direction of the positive number with which we have dealt heretofore, and which still had correlations that could be interpreted in sensuous terms. Thus, if a man had a group of assets and a group of liabilities, and the sum total of these two taken together came out as a debt of \$1,000.00, we would say his wealth was  $-\$1,000.00$ . So it still had sensuous correlations, but it reached far beyond that. There came a time when a discovery was made that transcended all of this domain. It was made by Pythagoras and could not be understood by the Greek world of his time, and was

even said that he was ashamed of having made the discovery, and this was the discovery of the irrational number, the number of the form the  $\sqrt{2}$ , or of the general form the  $n$ th root of  $a$ , in most cases—a number that has become important in our calculations that can never be written down completely in the ordinary form of rational fractions. Then we reach on beyond this to a notion that is still more subtle. Any number multiplied by itself, that is squared, is positive in form: thus,  $+1 \times +1 = 1$ ,  $-1 \times -1 = 1$ , positive. Or it could take any other number which we could call  $a$ :  $+a \times +a = a^2$ , or  $-a \times -a = a^2$ , with a positive sign. But we introduced, without my going into the process, a number called  $\sqrt{-1}$ , a new kind of entity. We called it imaginary, yet it still had applications in the field of actual practice in applied mathematics. What is it? Here we're on the very edge of mystery itself. With this brief statement of a development that started with the setting up of a one-to-one reciprocal correlation between the fingers and certain external objects, we have come a long way, far, far beyond sensuous correlation; yet we are still dealing with objects, but objects of conceptual thought.

Now, I will take up a certain relationship, or experience you might say, that came into my own life, and this is pertinent to the problem before us. To introduce this I shall have to note a further development. You all know that there is the development of mathematics in the field of geometry, as well as the development in terms of the field of number. We took a step in the field of number whereby we no longer dealt with specific numbers but with number as such, and used signs to represent it—usually certain letters of the alphabet like  $a$ ,  $b$ ,  $c$ , and  $x$ ,  $y$ ,  $z$ . This is a further step in abstraction in which we no longer deal with something specific in the numerical sense, let alone in the sensuous sense. This proved to be a very powerful way of handling number, and it was called algebra. Then a marriage was affected between algebra and geometry, and we had a great access of power in dealing with geometric problems. A geometric configuration was represented by an algebraic equation, and we could use the algebraic equations and algebraic methods to determine facts about geometric relationships.

Now, in one case only, let us take two circles—each circle would be represented by an equation. Let us assume first that the circles meet in actual space, that they intersect each other. What are the points of intersection? We solve the corresponding algebraic equations and their solutions will represent the points in which those two circles intersect; all right, but how about circles that do not intersect? They each also have algebraic equations. We solve those equations; we get two points representing the points of intersection. But now note, the answers involve the  $\sqrt{-1}$ , or  $i$ , lowercase  $i$ , as is commonly used. Now, are those intersections real in the philosophic sense? In a technical mathematical sense we call them imaginary, but are they real in the philosophic sense? Do they correspond to some reality? Sensuously, they do not have such a correspondence. This, then, suggests that there is another domain of intersection that is non-sensuous. Is it real or is it a fiction?

The sensualist, or the materialist, namely, those who are most in bondage to the sensible object, would say it is a fiction, it is not a truth. But one who's come up the mathematical way has had all along the sense that he's dealing with truth. He's had the sense that here he's dealing with that which he can most certainly trust. I faced this situation. I decided that the so-called imaginary intersections were not a fiction, that if there is any lie here, the lie comes from the sensuous order, not from the ideal order of

mathematics. And since that time, the power of the sensuous order was for me broken. Though I deal with the sensuous order as a matter of practical operation, I have no trouble believing it as essentially unreal, a kind of *maya*; and its power was broken in that day even before I knew of yoga; and it proved to be a change of orientation very helpful when I came to face the yogic problem, which, in fact, I faced as another, though very difficult, mathematical problem—one that took 24 years to break.

Out of the experience of the sensuously non-intersecting circles, along with many others, I found that here is a discipline that can lead one into the acceptance of a totally non-sensuous reality that transcends vastly everything that lies within the sensuous order, and that has been an experience of prime aid in my own *sadhana*; and there was not necessary any spending of many hours sitting with the feet upon the thighs—a strained and uncomfortable position that is very boring—but it made the way beautiful and thoroughly thrilling.

So I say, that in pure mathematics, not applied mathematics, Western man has provided an aid to the *sadhana* that is necessary for the way that renders certain of the practices of Eastern yoga unnecessary, but adds a new approach to the problem of the great breakthrough to Realization. I do not reject the other ways. They are in principle valid, for they have been used, no doubt, successfully, but here is one way that is indigenous to Western man. Although, no doubt, there may be few who can employ it, still it is a way in which he no longer is required to reject his cultural background.

A note may be added onto what has been said so far in this portion of the discussion. We have, thus far, employed a method of destroying or reducing the power of one kind of object by the use of a more potent type of object. It does not mean that the capacity to be aware of the first object is destroyed. It is the power of the sensuous object that has been weakened or destroyed. The one who has taken this step may very well continue to be aware of the sensuous objects of this domain, and may deal with them, may work with them, may think concerning them, but a certain power they have from antiquity possessed over our consciousness has, at least, been weakened. One still can deal with objects as the scientists deal with them, or as the businessman deals with them, or as the financier is related to them, or as the builder is related to them, or as the politician is related to them, but his attitude towards the object is changed. Its importance is reduced. Its command over his consciousness is, at least, reduced. What had been the serious business of life now becomes essentially a kind of game. He is dealing with things that are no longer the really important things of his life, but with relationships that have a certain importance on a certain plane of consciousness, and no more than that. The proofs of the empiricist are for him only relatively valid—valid only with respect certain planes of relationship. And those problems, essentially, become no more than part of a kind of game. They are not of foundation value, most emphatically is this so. They are not the processes by which one determines ultimate truth, but only a transitory relative truth of relationships valid for a specific plane of consciousness, and no more than that. There are pretentious fools in this world who think that by dealing with the problems of the empiric world and finding the answers that it may give, that he may arrive at, that he has produced answers that are final and determinant. They are not that. He is playing only a game that enables him, no doubt, to deal with certain relationships of a temporary nature, but relationships no longer valid when the hour of death comes. And he who has

not found the answers to the problem of death has not found the supremely important answer.

I, as an empiric entity moving from room to room in the house, use the doors and the other openings to pass from room to room; or, as I move in outer nature, I dodge the rocks and pay attention to the mountains. So on, in all the relations of the sensuous order, I move in accordance to the laws of the plane on which that sensuous order exists, but I know that that plane can be wiped out by an ascension to another plane and become unreal. If there should appear in my study an entity who did not use the door, I would be intrigued, no doubt, and I might ask him as to the technique which he employed, but I would not have to change my philosophy.