

Purpose, Method, and Policy of this Work

Part 14 of 15

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The next yoga which we shall consider is that which is known as the yoga of knowledge, or *jnana* yoga. This is associated with the intellectual mind sheath, or that which I have commonly called the conceptual mind. In this particular form of yoga, the philosophic orientation becomes of high importance, even premier importance. This is not true of the yogas discussed heretofore. In the case of *karma* yoga, *bhakti* yoga, and the *raja* yoga, a philosophic orientation may be lacking or play only a subordinate role, but in the yoga of knowledge, the philosophic orientation becomes a very important part of the practice, or *sadhana*. This yoga has been especially developed by Sri Shankaracharya and was oriented by him specifically to the *Brahmin*, even the male *Brahmin*. In modern psychology, we would say that it is oriented to a specific psychological type, namely, the introverted thinking type with intuition as the auxiliary function; or, the introverted intuitive type with thinking as the auxiliary function, which would seem to correspond to the *Brahmin* mind. Here the philosophy itself plays a very important role. The philosophy gives an orientation of the mind which is a major aid in the practice of the yoga.

In Shankara's system, the ultimate Reality—that alone which is truly Real—is called *Brahman*. In my system, it is called Root Consciousness. There is no essential disagreement here; it's just a difference of terms, for Shankara repeatedly identifies *Brahman* with the Fundamental Consciousness itself. Consciousness is the ultimate Reality; but this means a deep kind of Consciousness. There are subsidiary forms of consciousness that occupy a derivative meaning, such as that which is called subject-object consciousness, relative consciousness, or *shes-rig*. Bear in mind that when consciousness is viewed as the Root Principle, we mean it in the sense of the deep consciousness, which is variously called Consciousness-without-an-object-and without-a-subject, Consciousness as *Rig-pa*, and Absolute Consciousness. The content of Consciousness, the whole domain which we call the world or the universe of objects, stands as resting in the Consciousness, derived from the Consciousness, and not as independent self-existences independent of Consciousness itself. This is an orientation quite different from that which generally holds in the world today, and even in the philosophic world, particularly in the case of those who are called realists or materialists. Achieving this point of view is of the very first importance in this particular *sadhana*. The logic of the *sadhana*, or practice, is grounded upon this fundamental point of view. This point of view may be the result of actual Realization, but for him who has not such a Realization, it should be taken as a fundamental, or *the* fundamental assumption, and then, the thought and practice is based upon that ground.

In Shankara's system, *maya* and *Ishvara* stand in derivative relationship to *Brahman*. *Maya* is the principle that gives the apparent universe. *Ishvara* is the power

which rules that universe. Now, the universe is, in one sense, completely unreal, and yet, in another sense, relatively real. It is relatively real with respect to the individual; unreal with respect to the ultimate fact. The individual cannot ignore the presence of the universe. Objects have a relative or apparent existence for the individual which he cannot ignore. He has to deal with the objective order as though it was determinant in his life. He cannot ignore the objects that appear around him. He goes around buildings, enters through doors; he goes around mountains, or makes the appropriate effort to climb them. He cannot ignore the trees and the rocks. He has to deal with them as though they were real facts. Yet, in the state of ultimate Realization, all of these objects vanish from his Consciousness. There is no more the experience of a universe. There is no more an experience of multiplicity. *Brahman* is All. And he, in his own essential reality, is identical with *Brahman*. He knows himself as *Brahman* and that all apparent creatures are also, in reality, *Brahman*. The universe may be regarded, in our psychological terms, as a collective projection which is relatively real for the individual. The individual cannot ordinarily disregard this collective projection; thus, it is objective to him. Or, in terms of the conception which I suggested in the discussion of Shankara in an earlier tape, the universe is simply the thought of the “builders,” which is reflected downward into the plane of consciousness on which we here live.¹ It thus is objective to the denizens of this plane. It cannot cease to exist merely by denying that it is. It has to be taken into account in all of our plans and actions, and therefore has an objective value for us. But from the perspective of the plane of the builders, it is capable of being annulled by simply withdrawing a thought.

In Shankara’s system, there are three orders of unreality. First, consider the world about us, the world of our common experience; this is called phenomena, and is relatively objective. It is objective to the individual since he must take it into account. It is therefore called real-unreal: real from the perspective of the entity moving in it; unreal from the perspective of him who has attained Liberation. A higher order of unreality is exemplified by the snake that was apparently seen in a rope. This has no objective factuality. It is not the common experience of all individuals moving in the world. It was the experience of a particular individual, and it was quickly dissolved. The only factuality which it has is that the impression did, in point of fact, happen at some point in time and at some place in space, but it is totally un-objective. A still higher order of unreality is to be found in the case of the logical contradiction, as in the example of the barren woman’s son. A barren woman is defined as a woman who has never had any children; hence, a barren woman’s son is a conception that has no possible reality whatsoever. It is absolute illusion. And here is an important implication, and that is that the sensuous appearance of things has a certain reality which we must consider and take into account in our practical living, but a radical logical contradiction is an absolute unreality—has no substance or factuality in it whatsoever. What is implied here is that violation of the laws of reason produces the most absolute unreality of all; and contra-wise, that which is in accordance with the laws of reason has a real kind of reality. In other words, the conceptual order has a reality transcending that of the perceptual order.

¹ See the audio recording, “Purpose, Method, and Policy of this Work,” part 11.

The entity which we call “man” has a triune nature. And here I introduce a footnote. In certain literature, such as Theosophic literature, he is spoken of as a sevenfold entity, but the sevenfoldness is derivative from the triuneness by taking each of the three entities and considering them one at a time, combinations of two at a time, and the combination of three at a time; and these combinations give us sevenfoldness. The threefoldness is the fundamental base. End of the footnote. Man as a triune entity is as follows: at the bottom, as the entity which we see and otherwise sensuously apprehend, is essentially an animal—an animal body akin to the bodies of other animals, a vital nature akin to the vital nature of other animals, and an emotional or vital-emotional nature akin to that of the other animals, an entity dependent upon the taking in of what we call material food and functioning in the various ways that are known to biology. Above that, man is a mental being, and as such a being, he is properly called man. Now here we must make a distinction between two senses in which the word ‘man’ is employed: man as *manas* is sense-mind—sense-mind man holds in common with the animals; but man has also an intellectual mind, a mind that functions conceptually. As such, he has been able to build a language, to think conceptually, and to develop the powers that generally make a human culture possible that is totally outside the range of the animal *qua* animal. Above this, he is a divine being, or what I have called an introceptual being. This is his ultimate true nature. Now, in this yoga, we use the powers of the intellectual entity, the truly human aspect, to master the whole animal or sensuous aspect of man, and then to carry that human aspect upward into identification with the divine entity.

Jnana yoga, or the yoga of knowledge, is not available to everybody. It is available only to those in whom the habit of identification of one’s self with the animal nature is weak, and can easily be broken. For those who are in the state of strong identification with the animal nature, other yogas must be passed through so that this identification may be weakened and, hopefully, broken. He who has trouble in the matter of severing his identification with his animal nature must first pass through other yogas designed to at least weaken, if not destroy, that identification. And here we get the reasons why there may be necessity to employ the methods of *hatha* yoga, and of *karma* yoga, and of *bhakti* yoga to weaken this identification. If it is essentially weak in a given individual, *jnana* yoga may be entered upon immediately. Otherwise, the individual must pass through the preliminary disciplines.

Not action alone nor devotion alone are sufficient to break the identification with the outer nature and to attain the state of non-dualism. The state of apparent dualism, or of manyness, is a state of ignorance in the sense that Shankara uses this term; and only knowledge can destroy ignorance. Action and devotion can lead to a favorable state for the assuming of this ultimate step of dissolving dualism and achieving the knowledge that I am identical with *Brahman*. Only knowledge can destroy ignorance. In this yoga, the power of the conceptual knowledge is employed to destroy the power of the sensual being, and then to go on to the self-surrender of that conceptual being to the transcendent, introceptual being. Here is the ultimate surrender.

But now, whence cometh the conceptual entity? As we study the nature of the sensational entity in contrast to that of the conceptual entity, there is apparent an hiatus between these two. Sensuality is concerned with the concrete particular. Conceptuality is concerned with the absolute universal—two different orders of organized consciousness

that may seem to one as totally unrelated. I see no way that by pure evolution alone a sensual or animal being could ever become a truly human being. In other words, I see no way that an entity oriented to the concrete particular can become just by development or evolution a conceptual entity oriented to universals. This is something that was obviously seen clearly by Plato.

An explanation has been offered in *The Secret Doctrine* that clarifies this problem. There is a story told there of very great interest. It is to this effect: that at a certain stage in the evolution of the animal, it had attained a point where it was what might be called a nascent human being, but not yet truly human. These entities were called ape-like creatures, something different however from the apes that we know in the world today, which are said to have a totally different source. There was, it is said, at the appropriate time, a descent of entities called *Manasaputra*, or the sons of mind, and these were under the obligation to take incarnation in these ape-like creatures—something to which, apparently, they felt strong resistance. Some complied immediately; others, it is said, projected a ray of themselves into these ape-like creatures; and some merely overshadowed. But not all human races in this world received such an incarnation. It is stated specifically that the natives of Australia, or the Australian Bushmen, and the Bushmen in Africa did not receive such an incarnation; and it is implied that there were other racial groups that also did not receive this incarnation. If we look across the world, we see races that developed conceptual culture, in some cases to a high degree, while others did not. Now, this would explain a discontinuity between the sensuous nature and the conceptual nature, if we view the conceptual nature as derived from the *Manasaputra*. Those who received this conceptual nature became the leaders in world culture and made possible the development of cultures that imply the use of the true conceptual mind. *Jnana* yoga would be available only for those who received the incarnation of the *Manasaputra*, and who had made their predominant identification with their conceptual being and were weak in their identification with the sensual or essentially animal part of their nature. *Jnana* yoga is not a yoga for all men.

The essential technique of *jnana* yoga is self-analysis for the purpose of isolating one's own true identity, that which he really is, and to cut off false identification with the nature, or organism, or instrumentation which is associated with him. The approach is best conducted by dealing first with that part of the total nature which is most objective. He says, I am not this body. The body is an instrument with which I am associated, and which bears me about upon this plane of being which we call the universe. That body is essentially objective to me. A portion of it may be removed, but I am unaffected except that I witness, or experience, a modification in that instrument. Someone may hit the body. The man in the world would say, he hit me; the *yogin* would say, he hit my instrument, or rather the instrument associated with me—which would be akin to hitting the horse on which I am riding, or the automobile in which I may be driving—but he did not hit me. This reverses the view that is very common in the world, and it is very important to build this conviction with all the strength that one can. I am not the body; most emphatically, I am not the body. The body is an object which I cognize, but it is not I.

The next step would be to deal with the vital nature which bears the principle of life, is, as it were, the fuel, namely, the *prana*, which makes the operation of the body

possible and which carries along with it a number of qualities such as our various feelings or affections. This comes closer to us than the body, no doubt, but still it is objective with respect to me. I may receive an insult from somebody, and there is a reaction on the part of the vital feelings, such as a resentment, but he who is practicing this *sadhana* should say, he imposed an injury upon this nature, no doubt, but I was aloof, and I only witnessed it; and I also witnessed the reaction of the nature, the resentment which was aroused by the insult, but I was untouched by all this.

And then, he may move on up to the sense-mind, the capacity which enables us to be aware of the objective universe, and then he will say, this also is merely part of the instrumentation with which I work. I am not the sense-mind. I am not the cognitions of the sense-mind. I am totally different from the universe. I witness what happens in the field of sensuous cognition. I perceive these things, but I am different from all this. They are all external to me. They are only part of my instrumentation.

Then he comes to a next and much more difficult step. I am not the cognitions of my discriminative mind. I am not the conceptual cognitions. This is a more difficult step because this sheath lies considerably closer to the real entity. Yet, if analysis is persisted in, the *sadhaka* will find that he simply witnesses these cognitions. The processes of the intellect, they are still external to me; no doubt closer to me than the items covered heretofore, but, nonetheless, external to me. This stage is more difficult than the stages through which the *sadhaka* has passed before, but it can be achieved.

Then comes a particularly difficult part in the analysis. One may find there is this which says in one, I am I and none other. That is the dictum of the ego. Yet, I am not this. Yet it is very difficult to differentiate between this sense of I am I and none other, and the true Self which I truly am. The ego, though relatively subjective as compared to the items brought under analysis heretofore, yet has a certain objectivity. We can identify it as a quality in a human being. We can identify it as a quality in ourselves. It is thus something that I can cognize as, in a sense, objective. And here comes the critical point: that which is objective, everything, every quality, every attribute whatsoever, is not I. I, in fact, am the pure witness which is not objective, which never under any condition stands as an object before consciousness, but which is always subjective. I am this I, or Self, the pure *Atman*—always subjective, always impersonal, always the witness that is beyond insult or any other injury, which is calm and peaceful, and abides in delight.

When one has really achieved this conviction in his consciousness, the walls fall down, and the breakthrough is accomplished. The delight of the *Brahman* flows upon him and the wealth is so vast that it is beyond his conceiving. He has attained. He knows himself to be beyond all the vicissitudes of incarnate life, that he is eternal, deathless, and above all change. He has arrived at the Realization of *jnana* yoga. He has attained knowledge in the true sense. And though, thenceforth, he may choose to deal with the domain of world affairs, yet he knows that he is no longer conditioned in his essential being by the factors operating in that world of affairs, however much they may affect or condition the organism through which he operates. He is freed at last. He stands at the threshold of *Nirvana*, and the great reward is his.

This is the culmination of the fourth yoga. The possibility now stands before him of entering *Moksha*, or *Nirvana*, to be born no more, to die no more, to be truly free. For

many, this is the ultimate culmination. But we have not yet completed the ascension above the fifth sheath, the sheath of bliss, for bliss is, at this point, the potentially supreme attachment.

The pilgrim has at last completed the path of *jnana*. He stands upon holy ground. He knows the delight beyond the bearing of a carnal body, and he has attained the understanding beyond human conceiving, and he stands face to face with God—the journey finished, the eternal glory attained. But then, a voice speaks within his inner consciousness, and says: thou hast completed the journey of the individual aspirant; behind lie all the trials of the way, before the glory of eternal delight and felicity. But look back at that world thou hast departed from; see all the creatures there travailing in the agony produced by ignorance. Though hast now the powers that could contribute somewhat to assuaging this suffering and to bring others up on the way. Would'st thou accept thy own felicity, content that these should suffer? If not, then return to that domain below which thou hast left and carry with thee all these treasures, but no longer as thy own personal enjoyment, but to bring them to the starving multitude of all creatures. If thou would'st take this way, then accept the Great Renunciation and spend thy days laboring with these little ones. Choose. Before thee lies the two ways: personal bliss and Liberation and Enlightenment and the way of Renunciation that all may attain. Choose.

At this point, there opens up a new way of yoga given in *The Voice of the Silence* and called the *Arya* or Noble Way. The pilgrim is no longer a pilgrim, but one who carries a jewel that may be shared with those who will receive of its value. He faces a way, if he takes that course, from the personal enjoyment of his accomplishment, but is enabled to bear it to these others, to share it with them. If he now takes this course, he finally masters the sheath of bliss, the most difficult step of all, and he will find that he has taken a further step on the path of yoga.

In all of the yoga heretofore, there has been technique employed by the pilgrim, a system of councils and methods that may be employed by the exertion of his own will and decision. At this stage, there is no more technique of this sort. Now, in all yoga there is the operation of two powers: the action by the empiric man, who performs the labors as directed by the manuals and contributes all he can. There is, however, the action from the other side, from that which I have called the transcendental component, and that has been operating in varying degree so far; but in this final step it is the supreme factor in the yoga. When the hour comes, and he makes his final breakthrough, this is not anymore by his own effort, but by the bestowal of the transcendental component. There may walk into his consciousness a state of being and awareness which transcends the bliss of the fourth stage, where he no longer abides in bliss, nor in suffering, but in the neutral place between these two, with the power to move either way, no longer bound to *Sangsara* and no longer bound in a fixed *Nirvana*, but a free mover between these two, one who has transcended the ultimate duality between the universe of objects and the *nirvanic* withdrawal. Here, at last, still free, but laboring to bring that freedom to all these creatures. This is the ultimate culmination so far as we know.