

# Yoga of Knowledge and the Aryan Path

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When Robert Johnson was last here, he made a remark to me to this effect, that he was oriented to wholeness, whereas most people were oriented to goodness. This is rather a startling statement, but it is also a very profound one. I think it tends to be the attitude of the therapist and leads to treating saint and sinner alike. It seems to be particularly the orientation of those who work in the field of depth psychology—achieving of wholeness being the goal.

Now, there is in Indian yoga two radically contrasting forms, one of which is called *iti iti* and the other *neti neti*. The *iti iti* is a form of progressive inclusiveness, a sort of fusing oneself with everything whatsoever that may be in the universe. I am identical with all that is. The ultimate position is a relationship between the devotee and the Divinity. This is the *bhakti* form. It reaches a position that is dualistic, and that is its culminating point—a relationship between the lover and the ultimate Beloved. There have been *bhaktis* who, when they learned of a yoga that was nondualistic, said they did not want that. Aurobindo quotes one who said—who was very famous back in earlier history of India—to the effect, “I do not want to be sugar, I want to eat sugar.”<sup>1</sup> Those of you are familiar with the life story of Sri Ramakrishna know that in his earlier days he was a *bhakti* and that it was a relationship between him and the Divine Mother. But when the one who was called the Naked One came and offered him a chance to accept the discipline of *jnana*, he did accept it, but he said first he would ask his Mother if he should. The Naked One who was an austere individual who had made the breakthrough after 40 years of concentrated effort was a bit disgusted that a grown man should feel he should ask his mother. But Ramakrishna did not mean his natural mother, he meant the Divine Mother, and she gave him permission. For a time he was not successful in trying to follow the discipline imposed by his current *guru*. One day, it is said, that his *guru* picked up a stone and pressed heavily on a point between the eyebrows and said focus there. And Ramakrishna successfully broke through, but at the price of seeing his Mother dissolved; and he wept bitterly. However, he succeeded. This is the yoga of progressive inclusion. Ultimately aiming at the inclusion of all the universe, of all that I in my philosophy call the object.

The contrasting yoga of *neti neti* involves this: the radical process of exclusion. I am not this, not that, not that, not that; ultimately reaching through all objects whatsoever—subtle as well as gross. A movement, you might say, toward ultimate emptiness of all that we mean by the object. What is ultimately achieved is the Realization that I am *Atman*, which may be represented as a bare point having no attributes that would render it as an object before consciousness in any sense. I am THAT

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<sup>1</sup> Ramakrishna often said, “I don’t want to become sugar, I like to eat it. I never feel like saying, ‘I am Brahman.’ I say, ‘You are my Bhagavan and I Your servant.’”

which is never an object before consciousness. I am not this universe—subtle or gross. I am the Self or *Atman* alone.

Now, speaking from my own experience, there is an autonomous process that then is set up in which, as it were, the consciousness ascends and at a critical point passes through a point of discontinuity whereby the Self is no longer a point, but may be likened unto a sphere which embraces all that is, in which the sense of “I” is no longer particularly associated with a certain physical personality, but is associated with all creatures whatsoever. I am no nearer to this person than I am to all creatures throughout the universe, who are now one. In fact, the sense of multiple creatures tends to dissolve and only *Brahman* remains. This we may call the path of radical exclusion. In discipline it tends to be the path of the hermit, the ascetic. This need not be actually a physical separation with a life in some distant cave. It can be a psychical separation in which one moves aloof among men, as it were, still a hermit, though moving where others are. This I’m speaking of applies to the period of the discipline. The inclusion is not a progressive attainment. It is an Awakening to an eternal fact, not a becoming, but a state of eternal Being, a state of the *Brahman*, the permanent and eternal. One Awakens to an eternal fact; he does not achieve it by a process of becoming. This is the yoga of knowledge. One who has attained that point is at the threshold of the *nirvanic* withdrawal into a Consciousness where there no more is a universe. One can see that universe and all its creatures dissolving, vanishing, and even vanishing from the memory unless he stops the process. It would involve a movement into a domain where there is no more cognizance of suffering, of himself or of any creatures. Not only does the universe cease, but it also ceases to ever have been.

But there’s another yoga of which we are told in *The Voice of the Silence* which begins at this point. It brings a message to this effect: that the release of the individual is not enough. The *nirvanic* withdrawal, however it may be graced with inconceivable bliss, is not enough that one should so withdraw, for it leaves the innumerable creatures in the world still suffering. And he who has reached this point may, if he so chooses, facilitate the *nirvanic* withdrawal for all creatures by taking the way of the great, the supreme renunciation to linger in the world, to bring what aid he might bring, what aid that *karma* permits to those who are still suffering. It’s the noble path and it’s called the *Arya* path. This is the *Arya* yoga.

I chose to go that way, though it seemed a grim choice. But I was advised to look for something involving a cycle of thirty-three. I sensed that it was a time cycle, but I did not know what units were involved. It proved to be a cycle of thirty-three days. And there walked into my consciousness something I did not know existed, something I was not seeking therefore, because at least you must know something is in order to seek it. And the quality of this Consciousness was not bliss, but a neutral position between suffering and bliss with the capacity to move either way. It was aloof in the sense that made it indifferent to enjoyment and pain. I therefore called it the High Indifference. And then there ultimately became revealed the fact that even the redemption of all creatures by their withdrawal into the *nirvanic* state is not the last word; that there is a value in the evolution; that it is not a thing to be brought to an end; that it serves an ultimate purpose so that one should abide in that state where, on one side, there lies the inconceivable bliss

of withdrawal and, on the other side, the domain of action which may be freed from the suffering which we see so largely characterizes it today.

I agree with Shankara that the yoga of devotion is not the final way, that beyond the yoga of devotion lies the yoga of knowledge which is attained by the path of universal exclusion until there is attained that enantiodromia in which one finds the unity of all in the ultimate Self, the *Paramatman*.

Now, we'll go on with our tape.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> The tape referred to may be "Purpose, Method, and Policy of this Work."