

# Triune Nature of Man

## Part 2 of 2

Franklin Merrell-Wolff

April 1978

As we enter into the discussion of yoga, I find that there are some preliminary considerations which should be discussed. There is that which we might call the function or principle of self-identification, and this has an important place in, at least, the yoga of Sri Shankaracharya. We can think of ourselves as this animal, this outer apparent, sensuous being dwelling in this world, and the identification takes the form: I am this sensible entity; I am this body; I am this animal. This would seem to be the most common position taken by most human beings, but it is not the only possible self-identification. There are those who identify themselves with the man, with the mental being, the thinker, the discriminator: I am this mind would be the form of its formulation. And finally there is the identification with the spiritual being: I am this spiritual entity with respect to which this mind and this animal organism are only instruments. The latter is the identification favorable to the yogic breakthrough at least in the path of knowledge.

There are between these different instruments, or entities, a series of possible relationships that are present to us for our discussion. There is a relationship between the sensuous animal and the man or thinker. There is a relationship, or a potential relationship, between man the thinker and the spiritual entity. There is also conceivable a possible relationship directly between the sensuous being, or the animal, and the spiritual being. And finally, there is a compound relationship between all three, namely, the sensuous being or animal, the thinker or the mental being, and the spiritual being. The yogic step may be called an awakening of the spiritual being, but this term could be misunderstood. It would suggest that the spiritual being is in a state of sleep, but I reject that idea. Rather the awakening is that the lower entities, namely, the animal and the man, become conscious of the spiritual being, and there is established, when the awakening takes place, an interaction between the spiritual and the man, or a possible interaction between the spiritual being and the animal, or finally a possible interaction between the spiritual being and both the man and the animal. I maintain the position that only in the latter case do we have fully developed yogic Awakening. In the other cases outlined, I suggest that the yogic Awakening is partial and incomplete.

There are a number of different forms of yoga mentioned in the literature. Thus, in the *Bhagavad Gita* we have *Bhakti* yoga, *Karma* yoga, and *Jnana* yoga. And also in connection with this the additional conception of the synthesis of yoga introduced by Sri Aurobindo, where all three yogas are recommended as practices to be followed by every *sadhaka*. The idea being that each yoga is more or less incomplete and that the full attainment in its maximum richness requires the employment of all three either simultaneously or successively. Then in the field that falls under the word *Tantra*, there is another group of yogas, namely, *Hatha* yoga, which involves the employment of the body in complex ways, *Raja* yoga, which is more mental, and finally *Kundalini* yoga. There is

also the term *Kriya* yoga which occurs in the literature. This latter I am not familiar with, but from what I have read it appears to be centered upon the arousal of various *siddhis* or powers . . . the *Ch'an* yoga of the Chinese connected with the hierarchy introduced to China by Bodhidharma, and the Zen yoga of the Japanese, which is related to the former.

I do not regard these various forms of yoga as ways which every individual must comprehensively follow, rather, they are adjustments to different temperaments, different needs, different races, different kinds of human beings, and, rather, there is a right way for each individual, and the right way for one individual may be different from the right way for another individual. They are alternative courses, or, as in the case of the *Trimarga* in the *Bhagavad Gita*, they may be employed in the way suggested by Sri Aurobindo.

In entering upon a discussion of the subject of yoga, I am involved in the embarrassment of the sheer mass of the material connected with this subject matter. I make this point right now. I shall not attempt a comprehensive discussion of the subject for I am not qualified for that. I shall emphasize that portion of it with which I am directly acquainted, and sketch only the balance in a collateral sense. Perhaps the best procedure is to determine what the ultimate aim of yoga is.

Now, the word 'yoga' gives us a hint. It comes from a root meaning to yoke. In other words, yoga aims at the yoking of this outer self-identity with the true inner reality; and this true inner reality may be conceived of in two contrasting senses: first, who am I in reality? What is my true self-identity? Am I none other than this separate personality, or is that an illusion or a delusion and I may find myself quite other. This may be viewed as the orientation to the *Atman*, to the attainment of that state in which I can truly say as a result of insight and real self-identification that I am the *Atman*. But it may be also viewed as an attempt to achieve a unification with the divinity, and as we probably will see before we are finished, that these two can fuse into an identification of meaning. The state attained as the ultimate goal is one of Liberation. By this is meant that one ascends above the compulsions and restrictions implied in the conceptions of space, time, and law, which means that one achieves identity with that from whence space, time, and law are derived. It does not mean that in functioning in the mundane order one can ignore the limitations imposed by space, time, and law.

Thus, we may say the ultimate goal is Liberation, but the proximate goal with many individuals may be much less than that. It frequently is an orientation to *siddhis* or powers, such as the power to heal oneself from any illness, or to aid in the healing of others from illness; or powers in the sense of capacities to acquire knowledge in ways that are unfamiliar to us here; or to make acquisitions that may be purely mundane, or other acquisitions for consciousness that may be of a supermundane nature. But I would emphasize the fact that all of these proximate goals are inferior and not comprehensive, and I fully agree with Shankara when he warns against the orientation to powers. Rather, the orientation should be to Self-realization or God-realization, or, in general, Liberation. Powers may come to one as the result of such attainment, or he may for adequate reason after having made such an attainment seek powers in order to increase his effectiveness.

The goal of yoga is one thing, the method by which one obtains that goal is quite another subject matter, and as one peruses the yogic literature he finds a great variety in

the various forms of methodology. I shall not attempt anything like a comprehensive treatment of all these forms of methodology. I shall emphasize that which I know best and deal lightly with that which I know in the sense of: thus I have heard or thus I have read. For the latter I cannot vouch for its effectiveness, but I give to what is written or said a presumption of validity. I know with assurance only the way with which I am familiar, and naturally I shall emphasize that.

Now, there are two strongly contrasting principles employed in method. One may be called the method of *radical inclusion*, or the *iti-iti* method in Sanskrit terms, and the other is the method of *radical exclusion*, or the *neti-neti* method. In the *iti-iti* method one extends his identification with everything conceivable, all the objects before him in the sensuous world, all the objects of a mental sort, all that there is as far as he can go. The aim is universal inclusiveness. The contrasting method is that of radical exclusion called the *neti-neti* method. In other words, I am not this, not this, not this, not any object whatsoever before consciousness, either in the sense of objects of sense or objects of thought—sensuous objects or conceptual objects. I am not anything that can be conceived of as an object. In the last analysis one recognizes his identity with the ultimate subject to all consciousness, which never is an object of consciousness. This is the principle of radical exclusion, and it is the method with which I am personally familiar.

Now, I would like to into a certain correlation of the *iti-iti* method, or the method of radical inclusion, and certain orientations that are present in current depth psychology. Those who are oriented to *goodness* are those who give primacy to morality and devotion. They are particularly centered upon the principle of compassion. They exclude badness, evil, and sin. Those who are oriented to *wholeness* tend to be, so far as I have known them, functioning in the field of therapy. They deal with people who in some sense are incomplete—the man who is suffering with a disease, physical or psychological, a broken body or whatnot; they aim to make this whole, complete. It would be illustrated by the case where a very worthy compassionate individual with a saint-like character is brought into the hospital at the same time that a man who was a rapist, a torturer, and a murderer was brought in with broken bodies. Who would be served first? The therapist's position would be he who is in the most precarious condition regardless of his personal character. The therapist would say it is not his business to judge the character. And he who is oriented to *wholeness* would exclude all that is partial or, in general, partialness, and all of the potential developments that belong to a partialistic emphasis. He who is oriented to *truth* would be well represented by the pure mathematician, for in this discipline, truth is revealed with the highest order of certainty that can be attained in the mundane order. So the passion of the mathematician is truth for its own sake. His negation is falsity of all sorts.

Now, I conceive, but do not necessarily know with assurance, that in the end, in the culminating state, truth, wholeness, and goodness are totally compatible and imply each other, but on the way to that culminating state, and certain choices are made, those who have these different orientations would make relative choices. Thus, the physician, if he had to choose between a *wholeness*, involving something of evil, and an uncompromising goodness, would choose the former. He who is oriented to *goodness*, if facing the choice between illness and possible death, on one hand, and compassionate action, would choose the latter and accept the illness and possible death. And he who is

oriented to *truth* would insist upon the truth even though it involved a sacrifice of health or even of kind and good action. This is a matter of emphasis that belongs to types. We are not dealing here, necessarily, with ultimates. Now, I wish to affirm this principle, that each of these three, and any other possible orientations there may be, have a right to their orientation. There is a tendency for the psychologist, in the modern sense, as I have found, to think of himself as having the more ultimate orientation. I reject that. For my part, I orient to truth first of all.

As a footnote remark, I wish to say that I find in listening to the material so far produced, there is some violation of the principle of unity in developing a discourse. What I am doing is developing the various elements of the thesis as they burst forth in my mind before they tend to vanish, and I hope before I am through to bring all of these elements together into something of an ultimate whole.

End of the footnote.

Let us now consider a certain tie-in which seems to exist between the yoga of universal inclusion, or the *iti-iti* way, and the holistic or gestalt psychology. Universal inclusion implies a certain acceptance of all that is, and that would seem to be a holistic point of view. Thus as we deal with the facts of life in this world, we have a vast number of interests and attitudes, and among the attitudes are those which we would call those that are oriented to the light principle, the goodness principle, and those which are oriented to the dark or bad principle. Yet universal inclusion would imply that one does not withdraw himself from either the dark or bad principles and give exclusive inclusion to the light or good aspects. It implies that one includes all, and identifies himself in some sense, at least, with all. I am evil in some part of my nature, with all of the evil ones, as well as identical with the good in some part of my nature, and so far throughout all of the dichotomies of the pairs of opposites. This would seem to be in substantial accord with what the holistic psychologies propound. Now, this is not the way with which I am personally familiar, therefore my discussion of it is largely from the outside.

On the other hand, there is the yoga of universal exclusion—a withdrawing of oneself from all that exists within the mundane order, both the good and the bad in the relative sense. Radical exclusion, as I have already noted, implies the severance of all self-identification with anything that is objective. It is a radical stripping off, stripping off, stripping off until one achieves that critical term where he realizes that he is identical with that which is the subject to consciousness and which never becomes an object. This is a movement, as it were, in one sense, to a sort of zero state. Now, zero, in terms of number, is identical with the point in terms of geometry, so I called this state the *point-I*, and it must be conceived of as having no qualities, no description, and therefore it is a bare point. It is that in which all cognition and volition is centered. But now there intervened an autonomous process to which I have found no reference in the literature so far. There seemed to be a movement, like an ascension in consciousness, which at a certain point involved a discontinuity, something like an instantaneous blackout, and there followed a sense of my identity with an *illimitable sphere* that embraced the whole cosmos both external and internal. A sense that I enveloped all and was not particularly associated with any single human personality, but was equally associated with all creatures whatsoever. This was a radical enantiodromia. There was then a return to the point-I state. Now, the sense of the illimitable sphere is holistic in that it embraced all that

is, but it was so upon a transcendental level. It was not an empirical holism, but a transcendental holism. The result is that the method of radical exclusion resulted in a transcendental holistic position. There is, thus, the implication that one can become identical with the whole by radical exclusion. What one becomes by radical inclusion, as a technique applied to processes in the mundane order, is a question to which I cannot give an answer based upon my own experience or *imperience*. However, the principle of symmetry might suggest that there could be an enantiodromia in this case that would result in a transcendental exclusiveness, but I do not affirm that as necessarily so.