

THE HIGHER AND LOWER YOGAS

Disregarding the various technical divisions of Yoga, of which there are several, we may divide Yoga into two major types commonly known as Hatha and Raja. Stating the essential difference between these two types of yoga in very simple terms we may say that Hatha Yoga places its technical emphasis upon the gross object while Raja Yoga operates upon subtle objects or: the plans of the mind. The primary gross object of Hatha Yoga is the physical body and the functions peculiar to the physical body. In contrast the primary objects of Raja Yoga are the intellectual and moral. In any case the ultimate goal of true Yoga is first of all Liberation from dependence upon the object, so that all objects are employed only as instruments of method. But no method, as such can guarantee the Goal, and it is entirely possible for a Yogic method to lead to a state of consciousness quite different from the ideal Goal and even into a position from which extrication is even more difficult than the original starting point. Some Yogic practices are far more likely to lead to the adverse cul de sacs than others for the simple reason that they lead to the breaking out of adequate moral purification or of understanding. This is especially true of Hatha Yoga and it is for that reason that we stand opposed to Hatha Yogic Practices. While it is true that Hatha Yoga does not necessarily imply black magic, the likelihood of Hatha Yogic practices leading to the path of the shadow is very great.

Organically considered, the field of operation of the Royal or Higher Yoga lies in the head. Through the mastery of certain centers, control is achieved over the body Chakras and, thus, in the end, the Higher Yoga leads to mastery of the lower powers as well as of higher-powers which are quite outside the range of the Hatha Yoga. But the higher spiritual or intellectio-spiritual powers are aimed at first . . . this gives at once the superior position in consciousness from which the lower powers may be assimilated.

Man is a triune being. On his lower level he overlaps the animal. He has an animal body with its animal functions. On the intermediate level he is a Manasic being. In this respect he has qualities which he does not share with the animal but which are more or less conscious on this plane. On the highest level he is a spiritual Being. Only the relatively few have this phase of consciousness awakened on plane. Yoga aims at the awakening of spiritual consciousness. It is very difficult to accomplish this by operating upon the animal body and its functions. In fact, at best, the highest level to which the lower Yoga can attain is the highest plane of form-consciousness and that is still a Sangsaric state and, therefore, less than liberation from bondage to form. Since the Manasic side is nearer spirit than the animal aspect, the Royal Yoga offers a path that is not only far more certain, but the only one that is efficient for crossing beyond the limits of the object or form.