

17 YOGA

1. Each soul is potentially divine. The goal is to manifest this divinity within, by controlling nature, external and internal. Do this either by work, or worship, or psychic control, or philosophy-by one, or more, or all of these-and be free, This is the whole of religion. Doctrines, or dogmas, or rituals, or books, or temples, or forms, are but secondary details.
2. The ultimate goal of all mankind, the aim and end of all religions, is but one-re-union with God, or, what amounts to the same, with the divinity which is every man's true nature. But while the aim is one, the method of attaining may vary with the different temperaments of men. Both the goal and the methods employed for reaching it are called Yoga, a word derived from the same Sanskrit root as the English "yoke", meaning "to join", to Join us to our reality, God. There are various such Yogas, or methods of union-but the chief ones are Karma- Yoga, Bhakti-Yoga, Raja-Yoga, and Jnana-Yoga.
3. As every science has its methods, so has every religion. The methods of attaining the end of religion are called Yoga by us, and the different forms of Yoga that we teach, are adapted to the different natures and temperaments of men. We classify them in the following way, under four heads: Karma-Yoga-The manner in which a man realises his own divinity through works and duty. Bhakti-Yoga--The realisation of the divinity through devotion to, and love of, a Personal God. Raja-Yoga-The realisation of the divinity through the control of mind, Jnana-Yoga-The realisation of a man's own divinity through knowledge. These are all different roads leading to the same centre-God.
4. Each one of our Yogas is fitted to make man perfect even without the help of the others, because they have all the same goal in view. The Yogas of work, of wisdom, and of devotion are all capable of serving as direct and independent means for the attainment of Moksha.
5. Non-attachment is the basis of all the Yogas. The man "who gives up living in houses, wearing fine clothes, and eating good food, and goes into the desert, may be a most attached person. His only possession, his own body, may become everything to him; and as he lives he will be simply struggling for the sake of his body.
6. Vairagya or renunciation is the turning point in all the various Yogas. The Karmi worker renounces the fruits of his work. The Bhakta devotee renounces all little loves for the almighty and omnipresent love. The Yogi renounces his experience's, because his philosophy is that the whole Nature, although it is for the experience of the soul, at last brings him to know that he is not in Nature, but eternally separate from Nature. The jnani philosopher renounces everything, because his philosophy is that Nature never existed, neither in the past, nor present, nor will he in the future.
7. We claim that concentrating the powers of the mind is the only way to knowledge. In external science, concentration of mind is-putting it on something external; and in internal science, it is-drawing towards one's self. We call this concentration of mind.

Yoga. The Yogis claim a good deal. They claim that by concentration of the mind every truth in the universe becomes evident to the mind, both external and internal truth.

8. The Yogis claim that of all the energies that are in the human body the highest is what they call 'Ojas' Now this Ojas is stored up in the brain, and the more Ojas is in a man's head, the more powerful he is, the more intellectual, the more spiritually strong. One man may speak beautiful language and beautiful thought, but they do not impress people; another one speaks neither beautiful language nor beautiful thoughts, yet his words charm. Every movement of his is powerful. That is the power of Ojas.

9. All the forces that are working in the body in their highest become Ojas. You must remember that it is only a question of transformation, The same force which is working outside as electricity or magnetism, will become changed into inner force; the same forces that are working as muscular energy will be changed into Ojas. The Yogis say that that part of the human energy which is expressed as sex energy, in sexual thought, when checked and controlled, easily becomes changed into Ojas, and as the Muladhara guides these, the Yogi pays particular attention to that centre. He tries to take all this sexual energy and convert it into Ojas. It is only the chaste man or woman who can make the Ojas rise and store it in the brain; that is why chastity has always been considered the highest virtue. A man feels that if he is unchaste, spirituality goes away, he loses mental vigour and moral stamina. That is why in all the religious orders in the world which have produced spiritual giants you will always find absolute chastity insisted upon. That is why the monks came into existence, giving-up marriage. There must be perfect chastity in thought, word and deed; without it the practice of Raja-Yoga is dangerous, and may lead to insanity.

10. The utility of this science is to bring out the perfect man, and not let him wait and wait for ages, just a plaything in the hands of the physical world, like a log of drift-wood carried from wave to wave and tossing about in the ocean. This science wants you to be strong, to take the work in your own hand, instead of leaving it in the hands of Nature, and get beyond this little life. That is the great idea.

11. Anything that is secret and mysterious in these systems of Yoga should be at once rejected. The best guide in life is strength. In religion, as in all other matters, discard everything that weakens you, have nothing to do with it. Mystery-mongering weakens the human brain. It has well-nigh destroyed Yoga-one of the greatest of sciences.

12. He is indeed a Yogi who sees himself in the whole universe and the whole universe in himself.

13. This is no child's play, no fad to be tried one day and discarded the next. It is a life's work; and the end to be attained is well worth all that it can cost us to reach it, being nothing less than the realisation of our absolute oneness with the Divine.