

YOGA FOR YELLOWBELLIES

First Lecture

Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the Law.

Let us begin this evening by going briefly over the ground covered by my first four lectures. I told you that Yoga meant union, and that this union was the cause of all phenomena.

Consciousness results from the conjunction of a mysterious stimulus with a mysterious sensorium. The kind of Yoga which is the subject of these remarks is merely an expansion of this, the union of self-consciousness with the universe.

We spoke of the eight limbs of Yoga, and dealt with the four which refer to physical training and experiences.

The remaining four deal with mental training and experiences, and these form the subject of the ensuing remarks.

2. Before we deal with these in detail, I think it would be helpful to consider the formula of Yoga from what may be called the mathematical, or magical standpoint. This formula has been described in my text-book on Magick, Chapter III., the formula of Tetragrammaton. This formula covers the entire universe of magical operations. The word usually pronounced Jehovah is called the Ineffable Name; it is alleged that when pronounced accurately its vibrations would destroy the universe; and this is indeed quite true, when we take the deeper interpretation.

Tetragrammaton is so called from the four letters in the word:

Yod, He, Vau, and He'. This is compared with the relations of a family – Yod, the Father, He, the Mother; Vau, the Son; and the final He', the Daughter. (In writing she is sometimes distinguished from her mother by inserting a small point in the letter.) This is also a reference to the elements, fire, water, air, earth. I may go further, and say that all possible existing things are to be classed as related to one or more of

these elements for convenience in certain operations. But these four letters, though in one sense they represent the eternal framework, are not, so to speak, original. For instance, when we place Tetragrammaton on the Tree of Life, the Ten Sephiroth or numbers, we do not include the first Sephira. Yod is referred to the second, He to the third, Vau to the group from 4 to 9, and He' final to the tenth. No. 1 is said to be symbolised by the top point of the Yod.

It is only in No. 10 that we get the manifested universe, which is thus shown as the result of the Yoga of the other forces, the first three letters of the name, the active elements, fire, water and air. (These are the three 'mother letters' in the Hebrew alphabet.) The last element, earth, is usually considered a sort of consolidation of the three; but that is rather an unsatisfactory way of regarding it, because if we admit the reality of the universe at all we are in philosophical chaos. However, this does not concern us for the moment.

3. When we apply these symbols to Yoga, we find that fire represents the Yogi, and water the object of his meditation. (You can, if you like, reverse these attributions. It makes no difference except to the metaphysician. And precious little to him!)

The Yod and the He combine, the Father and Mother unite, to produce a son, Vau. This son is the exalted state of mind produced by the union of the subject and the object. This state of mind is called Samadhi in the Hindu terminology. It has many varieties, of constantly increasing sublimity; but it is the generic term which implies this union which is the subject of Yoga. At this point we ought to remember poor little He' final, who represents the ecstasy – shall I say the orgasm? – and the absorption thereof: the compensation which cancels it. I find it excessively difficult to express myself. It is one of these ideas which is very deeply seated in my mind as a result of constant meditation, and I feel that I am being entirely feeble when I say that the best translation of the letter He' final would be 'ecstasy rising into Silence.' Moral: meditate

yourselves, and work it out! Finally, there is no other way.

4. I think it is very important, since we are studying Yoga from a strictly scientific point of view, to emphasise the exactness of the analogy that exists between the Yogic and the sexual process. If you look at the Tree of Life, you see that the Number One at the top divides itself into Numbers Two and Three, the equal and opposite Father and Mother, and their union results in the complexity of the Son, the Vau Group, while the whole figure recovers its simplicity in the single Sephira of He' final, of the Daughter.

It is exactly the same in biology. The spermatozoon and the ovum are biologically the separation of an unmanifested single cell, which is in its function simple, though it contains in itself, in a latent form, all the possibilities of the original single cell. Their union results in the manifestation of these qualities in the child. Their potentialities are expressed and developed in terms of time and space, while also, accompanying the act of union, is the ecstasy which is the natural result of the consciousness of their annihilation, the necessary condition of the production of their offspring.

5. It would be easy to develop this thesis by analogies drawn from ordinary human experiences of the growth of passion, the hunger accompanying it, the intense relief and joy afforded by satisfaction. I like rather to think of the fact that all true religion has been the artistic, the dramatic, representation of the sexual process, not merely because of the usefulness of this cult in tribal life, but as the veil of this truer meaning which I am explaining to you tonight. I think that every experience in life should be regarded as a symbol of the truer experience of the deeper life. In the Oath of a Master of the Temple occurs the clause: 'I will interpret every phenomenon as a particular dealing of God with my soul.'

It is not for us to criticise the Great Order for expressing its idea in terms readily understandable by the ordinary intelligent person. We are to wave aside the metaphysical implications of the phrase, and grasp its obvious

meaning. So every act should be an act of Yoga. And this leads us directly to the question which we have postponed until now – Concentration.

6. Concentration! The sexual analogy still serves us. Do you remember the Abbe in Browning? Asked to preside at the Court of Love, he gave the prize to the woman the object of whose passion was utterly worthless, in this admirable judgment:

'The love which to one, and one only, has
reference
Seems terribly like what perhaps gains God's
preference.'

It is a commonplace, and in some circumstances (such as constantly are found among foul-minded Anglo-Saxons) a sort of joke, that lovers are lunatics. Everything at their command is pressed into the service of their passion; every kind of sacrifice, every kind of humiliation, every kind of discomfort – these all count for nothing. Every energy is strained and twisted, every energy is directed to the single object of its end. The pain of a momentary separation seems intolerable; the joy of consummation impossible to describe: indeed, almost impossible to bear!

7. Now this is exactly what the Yogi has to do. All the books they disagree on every other point, but they agree on this stupidity – tell him that he has to give up this and give up that, sometimes on sensible grounds, more often on grounds of prejudice and superstition. In the advanced stages one has to give up the very virtues which have brought one to that state! Every idea, considered as an idea, is lumber, dead weight, poison; but it is all wrong to represent these acts as acts of sacrifice. There is no question of depriving oneself of anything one wants. The process is rather that of learning to discard what one thought one wanted in the darkness before the dawn of the discovery of the real object of one's passion. Hence, note well! Concentration has reduced our moral obligations to their simplest terms: there is a single standard to which everything is to be referred. To hell with the Pope! If Lobster Newburg upsets your digestion – and good digestion is necessary to your practice – then you do not eat Lobster Newburg.

Unless this is clearly understood, the Yogi will constantly be sidetracked by the sophistications of religious and moral fanatics. To hell with the Archbishops!

8. You will readily appreciate that to undertake a course of this kind requires careful planning. You have got to map out your life in advance for a considerable period so far as it is humanly possible to do so. If you have failed in this original strategical disposition, you are simply not going to carry through the campaign. Unforeseen contingencies are certain to arise, and therefore one of our precautions is to have some sort of reserve of resource to fling against unexpected attacks.

This is, of course, merely concentration in daily life, and it is the habit of such concentration that prepares one for the much severer task of the deeper concentration of the Yoga practices. For those who are undertaking a preliminary course there is nothing better, while they are still living more or less ordinary lives, than the practices recommended in 'The Equinox'. There should be – there must be – a definite routine of acts calculated to remind the student of the Great Work.

9. The classic of the subject is 'Liber Astarte vel Berylli', the Book of Devotion to a Particular Deity.¹ This book is admirable beyond praise, reviewing the whole subject in every detail with flawless brilliancy of phrase. Its practice is enough in itself to bring the devotee to high attainment. This is only for the few. But every student should make a point of saluting the Sun (in the manner recommended in Liber Resh) four times daily, and he shall salute the Moon on her appearance with the Mantra Gayatri.² The best way is to say the Mantra instantly one sees the Moon, to note whether the attention wavers, and to repeat the Mantra until it does not waver at all.

He should also practise assiduously Liber III. vel Jugorum.³ The essence of this practice is that you select a familiar thought, word or gesture, one which automatically recurs fairly often during the day, and every time you are betrayed into using it, cut yourself sharply upon the wrist or forearm with a convenient instrument.

There is also a practice which I find very useful when walking in a christian city – that of exorcising (with the prescribed outward and downward sweep of the arm and the words 'Apo pantos kakodaimonos'⁴) any person in religious garb.

All these practices assist concentration, and also serve to keep one on the alert. They form an invaluable preliminary training for the colossal Work of genuine concentration when it comes to be a question of the fine, growing constantly finer, movements of the mind.

10. We may now turn to the consideration of Yoga practices themselves. I assume that in the fortnight which has elapsed since my last lecture you have all perfected yourselves in Asana and Pranayama; that you daily balance a saucer brimming with sulphuric acid on your heads for twelve hours without accident, that you all jump about busily like frogs when not seriously levitated; and that your Mantra is as regular as the beating of your heart.

The remaining four limbs of Yoga are Pratyahara, Dharana, Dhyana and Samadhi.

I will give you the definition of all four at a single stroke, as each one to some extent explains the one following. Pratyahara may be roughly described as introspection, but it also means a certain type of psychological experience. For instance, you may suddenly acquire a conviction, as did Sir Humphry Davy,⁵ that the universe is composed exclusively of ideas; or you may have the direct experience that you do not possess a nose, as may happen to the best of us, if we concentrate upon the tip of it.

1 Liber 175, A. . . A. . . Publication in class B.

2 A mantra based on a Vedic Sanskrit verse from a hymn of the Rigveda, attributed to the rishi Visvamitra. Translated: "May we attain that excellent glory of Savitar the god: so may he stimulate our prayers."

3 *Jugorum* means "practice" in Latin.

4 Greek: "Away, all evil spirits." Modern Greek takes "kakodaimonos" to mean "misfortunes".

5 18th/19th Century British chemist and inventor.

11. Dharana is meditation proper, not the kind of meditation which consists of profound consideration of the subject with the idea of clarifying it or gaining a more comprehensive grasp of it, but the actual restraint of the consciousness to a single imaginary object chosen for the purpose.

These two limbs of Yoga are therefore in a sense the two methods employed mentally by the Yogi. For, long after success in Samadhi has been attained, one has to conduct the most extensive explorations into the recesses of the mind.

12. The word Dhyana is difficult to define; it is used by many writers in quite contrary senses. The question is discussed at some length in Part I. of my Book IV. I will quote what I have written about it in conclusion:

'Let us try a final definition. Dhyana resembles Samadhi in many respects. There is a union of the ego and the non-ego, and a loss of the sense of time and space and causality. Duality in any form is abolished. The idea of time involves that of two consecutive things, that of space two non-coincident things, that of causality two connected things.'

13. Samadhi, on the contrary, is in a way very easy to define. Etymology, aided by the persistence of the religious tradition, helps us here. 'Sam' is a prefix in Sanskrit which developed into the prefix 'syn' in Greek without changing the meaning – 'syn' in 'synopsis,' 'synthesis,' 'syndrome.' It means 'together with.'

'Adhi' has also come down through many centuries and many tongues. It is one of the oldest words in human language; it dates from the time when each sound had a definite meaning proper to it, a meaning suggested by the muscular movement made in producing the sound. Thus, the letter D originally means 'father'; so the original father, dead and made into a 'God,' was called Ad. This name came down unchanged to Egypt, as you see in the Book of the Law. The word 'Adhi' in Sanskrit was usually translated 'Lord.' In the Syrian form we get it

duplicated Hadad. You remember Ben Hadad, King of Syria. The Hebrew word for 'Lord' is Adon or Adonai. Adonai, *my* Lord, is constantly used in the Bible to replace the name Jehovah where that was too sacred to be mentioned, or for other reasons improper to write down. Adonai has also come to mean, through the Rosicrucian tradition, the Holy Guardian Angel, and thus the object of worship or concentration. It is the same thing; worship is worth-ship, means worthiness; and anything but the chosen object is necessarily an unworthy object.

14. As Dhyana also represents the condition of annihilation of dividuality, it is a little difficult to distinguish between it and Samadhi. I wrote in Part I., Book IV. –

'These Dhyanic conditions contradict those of normal thought, but in Samadhi they are very much more marked than in Dhyana. And while in the latter it seems like a simple union of two things, in the former it appears as if all things rush together and unite. One might say this, that in Dhyana there was still this quality latent, that the one existing was opposed to the many non-existing; in Samadhi the many and the one are united in a union of existence with non-existence. This definition is not made from reflection, but from memory.'

15. But that was written in 1911, and since then I have had an immense harvest of experience. I am inclined to say at this moment that Dhyana stands to Samadhi rather as the jumping about like a frog, described in a previous lecture, does to Levitation. In other words, Dhyana is an unbalanced or an impure approximation to Samadhi. Subject and object unite and disappear with ecstasy mounting to indifference, and so forth, but there is still a presentation of some kind in the new genus of consciousness. In this view Dhyana would be rather like an explosion of gunpowder carelessly mixed; most of it goes off with a bang, but there is some debris of the original components.

These discussions are not of very great importance in themselves, because the entire series of the three states of meditation proper is summed up in the word Samyama; you can translate it quite well for yourselves, since you already know that 'sam' means 'together,' and that 'Yama' means 'control.' It represents the merging of minor individual acts of control into a single gesture, very much as all the separate cells, bones, veins, arteries, nerves, muscles and so forth, of the arm combine in unconscious unanimity to make a single stroke.

16. Now the practice of Pratyahara, properly speaking, is introspection, and the practice of Dharana, properly speaking, is the restraint of the thought to a single imaginary object. The former is a movement of the mind, the latter a cessation of all movement. And you are not likely to get much success in Pratyahara until you have made considerable advance in Dhyana, because by introspection we mean the exploration of the substrata of the consciousness which are only revealed when we have progressed a certain distance, and become aware of conditions which are utterly foreign to normal intellectual conception. The first law of normal thought is *A is A*: the law of identity, it is called. So we can divide the universe into A and not-A; there is no third thing possible.

Now, quite early in the meditation practices, the Yogi is likely to get as a direct experience the consciousness that these laws are not true in any ultimate way. He has reached a world where intellectual conceptions are no longer valid; they remain true for the ordinary affairs of life, but the normal laws of thought are seen to be no more than a mere mechanism, a code of conventions.

The students of higher mathematics and metaphysics have often a certain glimmering of these facts. They are compelled to use irrational conceptions for greater convenience in conducting their rational investigations. For example, the square root of 2, or the square root of minus 1, is not in itself capable of comprehension as such; it pertains to an order of thinking beyond the primitive man's invention of counting on his fingers.

17. It will be just as well then for the student to begin with the practices of Dharana. If he does so he will obtain as a by-product some of the results of Pratyahara, and he will also acquire considerable insight into the methods of practising Pratyahara. It sounds perhaps, at first, as if Pratyahara were off the main line of attainment in Yoga. This is not so, because it enables one to deal with the new conditions which are established in the mind by realisation of Dhyana and Samadhi.

I can now describe the elementary practices.

You should begin with very short periods; it is most important not to overstrain the apparatus which you are using; the mind must be trained very slowly. In my early days I was often satisfied with a minute or two at a time; three or four such periods twice or three times a day. In the earliest stages of all it is not necessary to have got very far with Asana, because all you can get out of the early practices is really a foreshadowing of the difficulties of doing it.

18. I began by taking a simple geometrical object in one colour, such as a yellow square. I will quote the official instructions in 'The Equinox'.

'Dharana – Control of thought.'

1. Constrain the mind to concentrate itself upon a single simple object imagined. The five tatwas are useful for this purpose; they are: a black oval; a blue disk; a silver crescent; a yellow square; a red triangle.
2. Proceed to combinations of single objects; e.g., a black oval within a yellow square, and so on.
3. Proceed to simple moving objects, such as a pendulum swinging; a wheel revolving, etc. Avoid living objects.
4. Proceed to combinations of moving objects, e.g., a piston rising and falling while a pendulum is swinging. The relation between the two movements should be varied in different experiments. (Or even a system of flywheels, eccentrics and governor.)
5. During these practices the mind must be absolutely confined to the object

determined on; no other thought must be allowed to intrude upon the consciousness. The moving systems must be regular and harmonious.

6. Note carefully the duration of the experiment, the number and nature of the intruding thoughts; the tendency of the object itself to depart from the course laid out for it, and any other phenomena which may present themselves. Avoid overstrain; this is very important.
7. Proceed to imagine living objects; as a man, preferably some man known to, and respected by, you.
8. In the intervals of these experiments you might try to imagine the objects of the other senses, and to concentrate upon them. For example, try to imagine the taste of chocolate, the smell of roses, the feeling of velvet, the sound of a waterfall, or the ticking of a watch.
9. Endeavour finally to shut out all objects of any of the senses, and prevent all thoughts arising in your mind. When you feel you have attained some success in these practices, apply for examination, and should you pass, more complex and difficult practices will be prescribed for you.'

19. Now one of the most interesting and irritating features of your early experiments is: interfering thoughts. There is, first of all, the misbehaviour of the object which you are contemplating; it changes its colour and size; moves its position; gets out of shape. And one of the essential difficulties in practice is that it takes a great deal of skill and experience to become really alert to what is happening. You can go on day-dreaming for quite long periods before realising that your thoughts have wandered at all. This is why I insist so strongly on the practices described above as producing alertness and watchfulness, and you will obviously realise that it is quite evident that one has to be in the pink of condition and in the most favourable mental state in order to make any headway at all. But when you have had a little practice in detecting and counting the breaks in your concentration, you will find that

they themselves are useful, because their character is symptomatic of your state of progress.

20. Breaks are classed as follows:

- Firstly, physical sensations; these should have been overcome by Asana.
- Secondly, breaks that seem to be indicated by events immediately preceding the meditation: their activity becomes tremendous. Only by this practice does one understand how much is really observed by the senses without the mind becoming conscious of it.
- Thirdly, there is a class of break partaking of the nature of reverie or 'day-dreaming.' These are very insidious – one may go on for a long time without realising that one has wandered at all.
- Fourthly, we get a very high class of break, which is a sort of aberration of the control itself. You think, 'How well I am doing it!' or perhaps that it would be rather a good idea if you were on a desert island, or if you were in a sound-proof house, or if you were sitting by a waterfall. But these are only trifling variations from the vigilance itself.
- A fifth class of break seems to have no discoverable source in the mind-such might even take the form of actual hallucination, usually auditory. Of course, such hallucinations are infrequent, and are recognised for what they are. Otherwise the student had better see a doctor. The usual kind consists of odd sentences, or fragments of sentences, which are quite distinctly heard in a recognisable human voice, not the student's own voice, or that of anyone he knows. A similar phenomenon is observed by wireless operators, who call such messages 'atmospherics.'
- *There is a further kind of break, which is the desired result itself.*

21. I have already indicated how tedious these practices become; how great the bewilderment; how constant the disappointment. Long before

the occurrence of Dhyana, there are quite a number of minor results which indicate the breaking up of intellectual limitation. You must not be disturbed if these results make you feel that the very foundations of your mind are being knocked from under you. The real lesson is that, just as you learn in Asana, the normal body is in itself nothing but a vehicle of pain, so is the normal itself insane; by its own standards it *is* insane. You have only got to read a quite simple and elementary work like Professor Joad's 'Guide to Philosophy'⁶ to find that any argument carried far enough leads to a contradiction in terms. There are dozens of ways of showing that if you begin 'A is A,' you end 'A is not A.' The mind reacts against this conclusion; it anaesthetises itself against the self-inflicted wound, and it regulates philosophy to the category of paradoxical tricks. But that is a cowardly and disgraceful attitude. The Yogi has got to face the fact that we are all raving lunatics; that sanity exists – if it exists at all – in a mental state free from dame's school⁷ rules of intellect.

With an earnest personal appeal, therefore, to come up frankly to the mourners' bench and gibber, I will take my leave of you for this evening.

Love is the law, love under will.

6 C.E.M. Joad, an early 20th Century English philosopher and broadcasting personality. His *Guide to Philosophy* was published in 1936.

7 An early form of a private elementary school in English-speaking countries, usually taught by women and often located in the home of the teacher.