

YOGA FOR YELLOWBELLIES

Fourth Lecture

Salutation to the Sons of the Morning!

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

1. I should like to begin this evening by recapitulating very briefly what has been said in the previous three lectures, and this would be easier if I had not completely forgotten everything I said. But there is a sort of faint glimmering to the effect that the general subject of the series was the mental exercises of the Yogi; and the really remarkable feature was that I found it impossible to discuss them at all thoroughly without touching upon, first of all, ontology; secondly, ordinary science; and thirdly, the high Magick of the true initiates of the light.

2. We found that both Ontology and Science, approaching the question of reality from entirely different standpoints, and pursuing their researches by entirely different methods, had yet arrived at an identical *impasse*. And the general conclusion was that there could be no reality in any intellectual concept of any kind, that the only reality must lie in direct experience of such a kind that it is beyond the scope of the critical apparatus of our minds. It cannot be subject to the laws of Reason; it cannot be found in the fetters of elementary mathematics; only transfinite and irrational conceptions in that subject can possibly shadow forth the truth in some such paradox as the identity of contradictories. We found further that those states of mind which result from the practice of Yoga are properly called trances, because they actually transcend the conditions of normal thought.

3. At this point we begin to see an almost insensible drawing together of the path of Yoga which is straight (and in a sense arid) with that of Magick, which may be compared with the Bacchic dance or the orgies of Pan. It suggests that Yoga is ultimately a sublimation of philosophy, even as Magick is a sublimation of science. The way is open for a reconciliation

between these lower elements of thought by virtue of their tendency to flower into these higher states beyond thought, in which the two have become one. And that, of course, is Magick; and that, of course, is Yoga.

4. We may now consider whether, in view of the final identification of these two elements in their highest, there may not be something more practical than sympathy in their lower elements – I mean mutual assistance.

I am glad to think that the Path of the Wise has become much smoother and shorter than it was when I first trod it; for this very reason that the old antinomies¹ of Magick and Yoga have been completely resolved.

You all know what Yoga is. Yoga means union. And you all know how to do it by shutting off the din of the intellectual boiler factory, and allowing the silence of starlight to reach the ear. It is the emancipation of the exalted from the thrall of the commonplace expression of Nature.

5. Now what is Magick? Magick is the science and art of causing change to occur in conformity with the Will. How do we achieve this? By exalting the will to the point where it is master of circumstance. And how do we do this? By so ordering every thought, word and act, in such a way that the attention is constantly recalled to the chosen object.

6. Suppose I want to evoke the 'Intelligence' of Jupiter. I base my work upon the correspondences of Jupiter. I base my mathematics on the number 4 and its subservient numbers 16, 34, 136.² I employ the square or rhombus. For my sacred animal I choose the eagle, or some other sacred to Jupiter. For my perfume, saffron – for my libation some preparation of opium or a generous yet sweet and powerful wine such as port. For my magical

1 Antinomy, a contradiction between two beliefs or conclusions that are in themselves reasonable; a paradox.

2 Jupiter equates to Chesed, the 4th Sephirah, so its number is 4. The "subservient" numbers come from magic squares. $16 = 4 * 4$. 34 is the "magic constant" of a 4x4 magic square. 136 is the sum of the integers 1 – 16.

weapon I take the sceptre; in fact, I continue choosing instruments for every act in such a way that I am constantly reminded of my will to evoke Jupiter. I even constrain *every* object. I extract the Jupiterian elements from all the complex phenomena which surround me. If I look at my carpet, the blues and purples are the colours which stand out as Light against an obsolescent and indeterminate background. And thus I carry on my daily life, using every moment of time in constant self-admonition to attend to Jupiter. The mind quickly responds to this training; it very soon automatically rejects as unreal anything which is not Jupiter. Everything else escapes notice. And when the time comes for the ceremony of invocation which I have been consistently preparing with all devotion and assiduity, I am quickly inflamed. I am attuned to Jupiter, I am pervaded by Jupiter, I am absorbed by Jupiter, I am caught up into the heaven of Jupiter and wield his thunderbolts. Hebe and Ganymede bring me wine; the Queen of the Gods is throned at my side, and for my playmates are the fairest maidens of the earth.

7. Now what is all this but to do in a partial (and if I may say so, romantic) way what the Yogi does in his more scientifically complete yet more austere difficult methods? And here the advantage of Magick is that the process of initiation is spontaneous and, so to speak, automatic. You may begin in the most modest way with the evocation of some simple elemental spirit; but in the course of the operation you are compelled, in order to attain success, to deal with higher entities. Your ambition grows, like every other organism, by what it feeds on. You are very soon led to the Great Work itself; you are led to aspire to the Knowledge and Conversation of the Holy Guardian Angel, and this ambition in turn arouses automatically further difficulties the conquest of which confers new powers. In the Book of the Thirty Aethyrs, commonly called 'The Vision and the Voice', it becomes progressively difficult to penetrate each Aethyr. In fact, the penetration was only attained by the initiations which were conferred by the Angel of each Aethyr in its turn. There was this further identification with Yoga practices recorded in

this book. At times the concentration necessary to dwell in the Aethyr became so intense that definitely Samadhi results were obtained. We see then that the exaltation of the mind by means of magical practices leads (as one may say, in spite of itself) to the same results as occur in straightforward Yoga.

I think I ought to tell you a little more about these visions.

The method of obtaining them was to take a large topaz beautifully engraved with the Rose and Cross of forty-nine petals, and this topaz was set in a wooden cross of oak painted red. I called this the shew-stone in memory of Dr. Dee's famous shew-stone. I took this in my hand and proceeded to recite in the Enochian or Angelic language the Call of the Thirty Aethyrs, using in each case the special name appropriate to the Aethyr. Now all this went very well until about the 17th, I think it was, and then the Angel, foreseeing difficulty in the higher or remoter Aethyrs, gave me this instruction. I was to recite a chapter from the Q'uran: what the Mohammedans call the 'Chapter of the Unity.' 'Qol: Hua Allahu achad; Allahu assamad: lam yalid walam yulad; walam yakun lahu kufwan achad.'³ I was to say this, bowing myself to the earth after each chapter, a thousand and one times a day, as I walked behind my camel in the Great Eastern Erg of the Sahara. I do not think that anyone will dispute that this was pretty good exercise; but my point is that it was certainly very good Yoga.

From what I have said in previous lectures you will all recognise that this practice fulfils all the conditions of the earlier stages of Yoga, and it is therefore not surprising that it put my mind in such a state that I was able to use the Call of the Thirty Aethyrs with much greater efficacy than before.

8. Am I then supposed to be saying that Yoga is merely the hand-maiden of Magick, or that Magick has no higher function than to supplement Yoga? By no means. it is the co-

3 "Say: He is Allah, the One! Allah, the eternally Besought of all! He begetteth not nor is he begotten. And there is none comparable unto Him." (This translation by Mohammed Marmaduke Pickthall.)

operation of lovers; which is here a symbol of the fact. The practices of Yoga are almost essential to success in Magick – at least I may say from my own experience that it made all the difference in the world to my magical success, when I had been thoroughly grounded in the hard drill of Yoga. But I feel absolutely certain that I should never have obtained success in Yoga in so short a time as I did had I not spent the previous three years in the daily practice of magical methods.

9. I may go so far as to say that just before I began Yoga seriously, I had almost invented a Yogic method of practising Magick in the stress of circumstances. I had been accustomed to work with full magical apparatus in an admirably devised temple of my own. Now I found myself on shipboard, or in some obscure bedroom of Mexico City, or camped beside my horse among the sugar canes in lonely tropical valleys, or couched with my rucksack for all pillow on bare volcanic heights. I had to replace my magical apparatus. I would take the table by my bed, or stones roughly piled, for my altar. My candle or my Alpine Lantern was my light. My ice-axe for the wand, my drinking flask for the chalice, my machete for the sword, and a chapati⁴ or a sachet of salt for the pantacle of art! Habit soon familiarised these rough and ready succedanea.⁵ But I suspect that it may have been the isolation and the physical hardship itself that helped, that more and more my magical operation became implicit in my own body and mind, when a few months later I found myself performing *in full* operations involving the Formula of the Neophyte (for which see my treatise 'Magick') without any external apparatus at all.

10. A pox on all these formalistic Aryan sages! Unless one wants to be very pedantic, it is rather absurd to contend that this form of ritual forced upon me, first by external and next by internal circumstances, was anything else but a new form of Asana, Pranayama, Mantra-Yoga, and Pratyahara in something very near perfection; and it is therefore not surprising that the Magical

exaltation resulting from such ceremonies was in all essential respects the equivalent of Samyama.

On the other hand, the Yoga training was an admirable aid to that final concentration of the Will which operates the magical ecstasy.

11. This then is reality: direct experience. How does it differ from the commonplace every-day experience of sensory impressions which are so readily shaken by the first breath of the wind of intellectual analysis?

Well, to answer first of all in a common-sense way, the difference is simply that the impression is deeper, is less to be shaken. Men of sense and education are always ready to admit that they may have been mistaken in the quality of their observation of any phenomenon, and men a little more advanced are almost certain to attain to a placid kind of speculation as to whether the objects of sense are not mere shadows on a screen.

I take off my glasses. Now I cannot read my manuscript. I had two sets of lenses, one natural, one artificial. If I had been looking through a telescope of the old pattern I should have had three sets of lenses, two artificial. If I go and put on somebody else's glasses I shall get another kind of blur. As the lenses of my eyes change in the course of my life, what my sight tells me is different. The point is that we are quite unable to judge what is the truth of the vision. Why then do I put on my glasses to read? Only because the particular type of illusion produced by wearing them is one which enables me to interpret a prearranged system of hieroglyphics in a particular sense which I happen to imagine I want. It tells me nothing whatever about the object of my vision – what I call the paper and the ink. Which is the dream? The clear legible type or the indecipherable blur?

12. But in any case any man who is sane at all does make a distinction between the experience of daily life and the experience of dream. It is true that sometimes dreams are so vivid, and their character so persistently uniform that men are actually deceived into believing that places they have seen in dreams repeatedly are places that they have known in a waking life. But they

4 Chapati (in Indian cooking), a thin pancake of unleavened whole-grain bread cooked on a griddle.

5 "Substitutes"

are quite capable of criticising this illusion by memory, and they admit the deception. Well, in the same way the phenomena of high Magick and Samadhi have an authenticity, and confer an interior certainty, which is to the experience of waking life as that is to a dream.

But, apart from all this, experience is experience; and the real guarantee that we have of the attainment of reality is its rank in the hierarchy of the mind.

13. Let us ask ourselves for a moment what is the characteristic of dream impressions as judged by the waking mind. Some dreams are so powerful that they convince us, even when awake, of their reality. Why then do we criticise and dismiss them? Because their contents are incoherent, because the order of nature to which they belong does not properly conform with the kind of experience which does hang together-after a fashion. Why do we criticise the reality of waking experience? On precisely similar grounds. Because in certain respects it fails to conform with our deep instinctive consciousness of the structure of the mind. *Tendency!* We *happen* to be that kind of animal.

14. The result is that we accept waking experience for what it is within certain limits. At least we do so to this extent, that we base our action upon the belief that, even if it is not philosophically real, it is real enough to base a course of action upon it.

What is the ultimate practical test of conviction? Just this, that it is our standard of conduct. I put on these glasses in order to read. I am quite certain that the blurred surface will become clear when I do so. Of course, I may be wrong. I may have picked up some other body's glasses by mistake. I might go blind before I could get them into position. Even such confidence has limits; but it is a real confidence, and this is the explanation of why we go ahead with the business of life. When we think it over, we know that there are all sorts of snags, that it is impossible to formulate any proposition which is philosophically unassailable, or even one which is so from a practical standpoint. We admit to ourselves that there are all sorts of snags; but we

take our chance of that, and go ahead in the general principles inculcated by our experience of nature. It is, of course, quite easy to prove that experience is impossible. To begin with, our consciousness of any phenomenon is never the thing itself, but only a hieroglyphic symbol of it.

Our position is rather that of a man with a temperamental motor-car; he has a vague theory that it ought to go, on general principles; but he is not quite sure how it will perform in any given circumstances. Now the experience of Magick and Yoga is quite above all this. The possibility of criticising the other types of experience is based upon the possibility of expressing our impressions in adequate terms; and this is not at all the case with the results of Magick and Yoga. As we have already seen, every attempt at expression in ordinary language is futile. Where the hero of the adventure is tied up with a religious theory, we get the vapid and unctuous bilgewater of people like St. John of the Cross. All Christian Mystics are tarred with the same brush. Their abominable religion compels them to every kind of sentimentality; and the theory of original sin vitiates their whole position, because instead of the noble and inspiring Trance of Sorrow⁶ they have nothing but the miserable, cowardly, and selfish sense of guilt to urge them to undertake the Work.

15. I think we may dismiss altogether from our minds every claim to experience made by any Christian of whatever breed of spiritual virus as a mere morbid reflection, the apish imitation of the true ecstasies and trances. All expressions of the real thing must partake of the character of that thing, and therefore only that language is permissible which is itself released from the canon of ordinary speech, exactly as the trance is unfettered by the laws of ordinary consciousness. In other words, the only proper translation is in poetry, art and music.

6 The best elucidation of this I have found is: "the Trance of Sorrow represents the period before acceptance in which one realizes, as certainly as one is aware that they are alive at any given moment, that their life is transient, and that all of the things which are precious to them will not last forever, and that there is not one thing which is to be done to prevent this."

16. If you examine the highest poetry in the light of common sense, you can only say that it is rubbish; and in actual fact you cannot so examine it at all, because there is something in poetry which is not in the words themselves, which is not in the images suggested by the words 'O windy star blown sideways up the sky!'⁷ True poetry is itself a magic spell which is a key to the ineffable.

With music this thesis is so obvious as hardly to need stating. Music has no expressed intellectual content whatever, and the sole test of music is its power to exalt the soul. It is then evident that the composer is himself attempting to express in sensible form some such sublimities as are attained by those who practise Magick and Yoga as they should.

17. The same is true of plastic art, but evidently in much less degree; and all those who really know and love art are well aware that classical painting and sculpture are rarely capable of producing these transcendent orgasms of ecstasy, as in the case of the higher arts. One is bound to the impressions of the eye; one is drawn back to the contemplation of a static object. And this fact has been so well understood in modern times by painters that they have endeavoured to create an art within an art; and this is the true explanation of such movements as *surréalisme*. I want to impress upon you that the artist is in truth a very much superior being to the Yogi or the Magician. He can reply as St. Paul replied to the centurion who boasted of his Roman citizenship 'With a great sum obtained I this freedom'; and Paul, fingering the Old School Tie, sneered: 'But I was free born.'

18. It is not for us here to enquire as to how it should happen that certain human beings possess from birth this right of intimacy with the highest reality, but Blavatsky was of this same opinion that the natural gift marks the acquisition of the rank in the spiritual hierarchy to which the student of Magick and Yoga aspires. He is, so to speak, an artist in the making; and it is perhaps

not likely that his gifts will have become sufficiently automatic in his present incarnation to produce the fruits of his attainment. Yet, undoubtedly, there have been such cases, and that within my own experience.

19. I could quote you the case of a man – a very inferior and wishy-washy poet – who undertook for a time very strenuously the prescribed magical practices. He was very fortunate, and attained admirable results. No sooner had he done so that his poetry itself became flooded with supernal light and energy. He produced masterpieces. And then he gave up his Magick because the task of further progress appalled him. The result was that his poetry fell completely away to the standard of wet blotting paper.

20. Let me tell you also of one man almost illiterate, a Lancashire man who had worked in a mill from the age of nine years. He had studied for years with the Tosophists⁸ with no results. Then he corresponded with me for some time; he had still no results. He came to stay with me in Sicily. One day as we went down to bathe we stood for a moment on the brink of the cliff which led down to the little rocky cove with its beach of marvellous smooth sand.

I said something quite casually – I have never been able to remember what it was – nor could he ever remember – but he suddenly dashed down the steep little path like a mountain goat, threw off his cloak and plunged into the sea. When he came back, his very body had become luminous. I saw that he needed to be alone for a week to complete his experience, so I fixed him up in an Alpine tent in a quiet dell under broad-spreading trees at the edge of a stream. From time to time he sent me his magical record, vision after vision of amazing depth and splendour. I was so gratified with his attainment that I showed these records to a distinguished literary critic who was staying with me at the time. A couple of hours later, when I returned to the Abbey, he burst out upon me a flame of excitement. 'Do you know what this is?' he cried. I answered casually that it was a lot of very good

⁷ I have no citation for this. It appears as a reference in Crowley's *Moonchild*, but all other citations lead back to that book or this essay.

⁸ This is Crowley's snide rendering of "Theosophists".

visions. 'Bother your visions,' he exclaimed, 'didn't you notice the style? It's pure John Bunyan!' It was.

21. But all this is neither here nor there. There is only one thing for anybody to do on a path, and that is to make sure of the next step. And the fact which we all have to comfort us is this: that all human beings have capacities for attainment, each according to his or her present position.

For instance, with regard to the power of vision on the astral plane, I have been privileged to train many hundreds of people in the course of my life, and only about a dozen of them were incapable of success. In one case this was because the man had already got beyond all such preliminary exercise; his mind immediately took on the formless condition which transcends all images, all thought. Other failures were stupid people who were incapable of making an experiment of any sort. They were a mass of intellectual pride and prejudice, and I sent them away with an injunction to go to Jane Austen. But the ordinary man and woman get on very well, and by this I do not mean only the educated. It is, in fact, notorious that, among many of the primitive races of mankind, strange powers of all kinds develop with amazing florescence.⁹

22. The question for each one of us is then: first of all, to ascertain our present positions; secondly, to determine our proper directions; and, thirdly, to govern ourselves accordingly.

The question for me is also to describe a method of procedure which will be sufficiently elastic to be useful to every human being. I have tried to do this by combining the two paths of Magick and Yoga. If we perform the preliminary practices, each according to his capacity, the result will surely be the acquisition of a certain technique. And this will become much easier as we advance, especially if we bear it well in mind not to attempt to discriminate between the two methods as if they were opposing schools, but to use the one to help out the other in an emergency.

23. Of course, nobody understands better than I do that, although nobody can do your work for you, it is possible to make use – to a certain very limited extent – of other people's experience, and the Great Order which I have the honour to serve has appointed what I think you will agree is a very satisfactory and practical curriculum.

24. You are expected to spend three months at least on the study of some of the classics on the subject. The chief object of this is not to instruct you, but to familiarise you with the ground work, and in particular to prevent you getting the idea that there is any right or wrong in matters of opinion. You pass an examination intended to make sure that your mind is well grounded in this matter, and you become a Probationer. Your reading will have given you some indication as to the sort of thing you are likely to be good at, and you select such practices as seem to you to promise well. You go ahead with these, and keep a careful record of what you do, and what results occur. After eleven months you submit a record to your superior; it is his duty to put you right where you have gone wrong, and particularly to encourage you where you think you have failed.

25. I say this because one of the most frequent troubles is that people who are doing excellent work throw it up because they find that Nature is not what they thought it was going to be. But this is the best test of the reality of any experience. All those which conform with your idea, which flatter you, are likely to be illusions. So you become a Neophyte; and attack the Task of a Zelator.

There are further grades in this system, but the general principles are always the same – the principles of scientific study and research.

26. We end where we began. 'The wheel has come full circle.'

We are to use the experience of the past to determine the experience of the future, and as that experience increases in quantity it also improves in quality. And the Path is sure. And the End is sure. For the End is the Path.

Love is the law, love under will.

⁹ Florescence, the process of flowering.