

III

YOGA FOR THE MIND

WE NOW COME to that branch of Yoga which deals with the subject of Consciousness or Mind. The physical body being the vehicle of the mind and the instrument through which it operates, it follows that for practical purposes we can only approach the mind through the body. But it is equally true that we can only approach the body through the mind. If either is out of order the other is affected in its operation. The mind, in the usual meaning of the term, is a function of the nervous system, which is nourished by the blood, the purity of which depends on the purity of our food, the thoroughness with which this is digested, and other similar factors. This is the reason why, from a practical standpoint, we considered first how to keep the instrument in a good state of repair.

The branch of Yoga which concerns itself specifically with the mind as such is called Raja or Royal Yoga. Its aim is to develop control of thought and mastery of our emotions and thus bring our consciousness, while functioning on this plane, into tune with the higher consciousness of higher planes. Tennyson expressed this in these words:—

*“Self-reverence, self-knowledge, self-control,
These three alone lead life to sovereign power;
Yet not for power (power of herself
Would come uncalled for), but to live by law,
Acting the law we live by without fear.”*

This, in a nutshell, is the ideal of Raja Yoga. All religions and ethical systems have this same goal in view, but Yoga offers, in addition to the ideal, a technique for achieving it. What are the laws which govern control of the mind and how can we become acquainted with these laws and obey them? The quest we have in view is to discover what, precisely, is to do the controlling.

As in Hatha Yoga and all other Yogas, there is a metaphysical aspect to this branch, and although, in adapting this subject to everyday life I do not intend to go into metaphysics, nevertheless, in view of the fact that most of the books mention the metaphysical side, I will summarize it very briefly.

In the metaphysical presentation of Raja Yoga there are seven stages of progress. The first is called *Yama-Niyama*, a Sanskrit term which means the practice of restraint. This is the cultivation of moral virtues, what we would call in the West the ordinary Christian virtues: honesty, kindness, tolerance, self-restraint, generosity, consideration for others and devotion to an ideal. It is important to note that these are regarded as an essential foundation for study. We shall see later why this is so.

The second stage embraces *Asanas* and *Mudras*, that is to say postures and certain kinds of movement. A study of posture and movement is important because these affect the working of the nervous and the glandular systems. (It will be noted that at this point Raja Yoga and Hatha Yoga begin already to overlap.)

Thirdly, *Pranayama*, that is control of the Life-force, *prana*, through the breath. Its practice is greatly aided by being combined with the preceding *asanas* and *mudras*. Next comes *Pratyahara*, which is the ability to withdraw the senses from the object of sense.

The fifth is *Dharana* or concentration. It means that the mind, being freed from outside sensation, is able to turn inwards entirely upon itself and achieve what we call inner concentration.

The sixth stage is *Dhyana*, meditation. When you are able to practice the inner concentration you fix the mind on a certain idea and there it rests until the mind identifies itself with the idea.

Finally, the seventh step is called *Samadhi*, which is a state of ecstatic peace at which the mind arrives when it has passed through all the preceding stages. Ecstasy is really identification with the cosmic consciousness which is the object of our study. It is assumed that to pursue these practices the student is able to isolate himself completely from the world.

Expressed thus in Sanskrit terms this subject sounds abstruse. Let us try and reduce it to simple, elementary terms which anybody can understand, and discover how much of this science we can hope to apply in the circumstances of ordinary life.

The first point to observe is that the first stage of Raja Yoga, *Yama-Niyama*, corresponds precisely with the ideal principles of non-credal religion. For example, the Sermon on the Mount is, from start to finish, a statement of the principles of *Yama-Niyama*. It consists, so to speak, of moral exercises designed to develop character. Jesus, who was fond of hyperbolic forms

of expression, employed forceful and characteristic terms to impress the hearers of his time, and his illustrations were coloured accordingly. In a word it may be said that the essence of Yama-Niyama consists in loving one's neighbour as oneself and doing unto others as we would that they should do to us. This, which some might regard as the attainment of the Christian ideal, in Raja Yoga is regarded as an essential starting-point, the foundation on which the study of mind is built up.

With the next two stages of postures and breath control we have dealt already. From the standpoint of Yoga they are essential before the mind can even begin to operate unhampered. In elementary Yoga this would correspond to raising our general level of health and mental efficiency to the maximum possible in the given circumstances.

The remaining stages of Raja Yoga consist of methods of training our consciousness to higher or supranormal levels. To what extent can we apply this teaching in the restricted circumstances of everyday life?

Let us first examine what consciousness is, and consider the different kinds of consciousness with which we are familiar. Firstly, there is ordinary consciousness, the consciousness with which we are working at this moment, the consciousness of waking life. We also possess a sub-consciousness, which contains all our memories and instincts. There is a further state of consciousness we call sleep, and a state of consciousness midway between waking and sleeping—half-awake, half-asleep. Still further there is deep sleep, dreamless sleep. All these states of consciousness are familiar to us, even though we may not understand them. But besides these there is also what we instinctively feel to be a region which we can only speak of as super-consciousness, a higher state of consciousness than our ordinary consciousness, of which we become aware in flashes, by fits and starts. These flashes we often refer to as intuition or inspiration. They come to us from some higher level of consciousness, and are within the experience of most people at one time or another. When this occurs it means that we have accidentally tuned in to a higher rate of vibration, with the result that we receive a message, as it were, from the realm of super-consciousness. These fleeting messages are unfortunately often unreliable, particularly if they relate to something which we try to explain to ourselves in terms of logic: they get mixed up with the impressions of daily life and become corrupted and distorted by being subjected to the limitations

of reason. We shall get a better understanding of these fleeting contacts if we acquaint ourselves in greater detail with what we mean by ordinary consciousness. Let us analyse it, and see if we can discover a means whereby to render ourselves more receptive to the vibrations to which we occasionally tune in on a higher plane.

Another word for consciousness is awareness. Everybody knows that there are different degrees of awareness. Firstly, there is the state of being wide-awake, on the alert, on the "tip of your toes". At the other extreme there is a state of being half-asleep. Some people are in that condition most of the time: we all know the type of person who is always in a sort of fuzzy dream. Between these two extremes there are endless gradations. If a person is attentive we say he is mindful; if he is inattentive we say he is absent-minded, his mind is somewhere else, like the absent-minded professor who at the railway station kissed the porter and gave his wife sixpence. We are all absent-minded at times. What then is the mind, if it can "wander"? If you relax and just let it take its own way it does not settle down, it meanders about and presents you with a panorama of memories and visions. Where, in this proceeding, does the personal pronoun "I" come in? That is what we must discover. The mind, in what we would call its natural state, is unstable and the consciousness with which we operate most of the time is a very low level of awareness. Even the consciousness with which we are operating at this moment is only a low level of awareness. Attentive though you are, and perhaps because of that, a great many people in this hall will have forgotten for the moment that they are breathing. You will also have forgotten about the digestion which is taking place inside you. And yet it is due to the things which you have forgotten that you are able to listen at all. The level of awareness in the broader sense is, therefore, low. As a matter of fact, many, if not the majority of people, exist largely in a state of passivity from which it requires some kind of shock to awaken them. You can see the vacant look with which they automatically go about their daily business. Within our ordinary state of consciousness there are indisputably many degrees. By intensifying the top range we may possibly approach a little nearer to the borderline of super-consciousness. The first step towards this is, as indicated already, the purification of the physical instrument through which our mental operations take place.

But we now encounter a serious impediment of a psychological nature. It is the idea that we exist as constant personalities, indicated by the pronoun "I". We already touched on this point, but it is necessary to examine it in greater detail. We feel proud of the pronoun "I": to us it appears to fix our position as separate entities in the universe. Because it is attached to our body and to our name we regard it as stable, as something fixed and permanent. Yet examination shows that it is nothing of the sort. On the contrary, the only constant thing about it is that it is constantly changing. If you say "I am fresh" or "I am tired", you are really referring to two opposite "I's" so to speak. You cannot be both fresh and tired. "I am angry . . . I am pleased. I am sober . . . I am drunk. I am awake . . . I am asleep. I am happy . . . I am miserable." Which? All these are totally different "I's", as different as night and day. It requires very little consideration to see that when we use this personal pronoun we are not dealing with anything fixed and independent but something which wavers, alters, varies in quality and intensity, and is allied to what we call moods. If you are angry you are one person, if you are pleased you are another, but you attach the personal pronoun "I" to both. We do in fact identify our "personality" with a mood or with a physical condition, in both cases with something that frequently changes. These changes may take place with remarkable rapidity. In five minutes you can pass through several moods. Which of them is the *real* "I"? At about five o'clock in the evening you begin to feel worn out after a heavy day's work, so you go off to the club and have a cocktail to buck you up, to give you a different "I" from the one with which you left the office. Which of these is *you*? The mood varies, to the mood you attach the personal pronoun "I", and that is all! "I" is a mere convention attached to our name—which is nothing—and to our physical body which is always changing every instant. What we so proudly term "I" is no more constant than the clouds in the sky which seem fixed for a moment but really are always appearing and disappearing.

This is a difficult thing to face because it destroys our conceptions of personality in the sense in which we usually use that term. Our self, our personality, is a bunch of varying moods. We are always changing. We are one person at one age—say 20—and a totally different person at 40. But we attach the same personal pronoun "I" to both. The moment we learnt to speak at two or three years of age we said "I". But at 80

are we not different from what we were at three—yet we apply the same personal pronoun "I" to both and to everything in between!

The deception of the personal pronoun "I" arises from two facts: firstly, we possess names and we attach the personal pronoun "I" to the name. But the name is only the label outside the bottle; we can change it at will. And the other cause of the deception is the relatively slow passage of time, or what appears to us to be the slow passage of time. It is too slow for us to notice that we are never the same being for two moments running. If we could photograph our moods and run the picture off on a screen we would hardly believe the spectacle; it would appear to us both comic and tragic. Stability of personality and temperament, our "I", can only be relative; indeed, a state of fixity would mean stagnation. It is through the flexibility of our personality that we are able to grow and develop. If our "I" were unchanging we could never progress. It will therefore greatly help our progress to observe closely and watch how our mind and emotions fluctuate, for in this way we can increase our control over them. The change is sometimes rapid, sometimes slow, but it never ceases. We shall, for instance all be different people when we go out of this hall to-night, if for no other reason merely by virtue of the fact that we shall be an hour or two older; for if there is a clear difference between 20 and 30, you need merely narrow the gap and you come down not to 10 years but to 10 hours, and 10 minutes. We are constantly changing, all the time.

This is the real starting point for arriving at an understanding of what we mean by mind. The "I" which appears to be the centre of our consciousness is something unstable, unreal; one thing now and another thing another moment, identified usually with a mood. Let us call it the conventional "I". It is deceptive, it is merely an appearance, which constantly changes its form like a cloud in the sky. When you are angry what you really mean is that something we interpret as anger has seized *you*; and when you are pleased what you really mean is that pleasure has seized you. The anger comes and goes and the pleasure comes and goes, you as it were steep yourself in it for the time being. Both are impermanent and it is a deception upon ourselves to attach to these moods the personal pronoun "I" and then think it is stable. We must therefore face the drastic and revolutionary idea that the "I" or the personality, or whatever

it is to which we attach the personal pronoun "I", simply does not exist in the fixed form in which we are accustomed to accept it, whether in ourselves or others.

In pursuing this train of thought we quickly arrive in a realm of paradox and contradiction, because there is at the same time a sense in which this "I" *is* real, even in the sense in which we customarily use the term. For instance, it would be foolish for me to try to persuade you that looking up here at the platform you do not see *me*. You do; and I see *you*. These are only appearances—but very real appearances. For the purposes of convention, agreeing amongst ourselves for the moment that I am I and you are you, we are real to each other. So to this extent we are *real*, as an *appearance* which is an experience common to both of us. For practical purposes in life we have to accept this. And yet at the same time it remains true that the "I" or "we" with which we operate is only a convention like our clothes—we can change it like a coat. In this way it may truly be said that the real becomes the unreal and the unreal becomes the real, whichever way you like to put it. After all, many natural phenomena are similar to this, a rainbow for example. We know a rainbow is merely a transient appearance, yet how intensely real it is while it lasts. So also with ourselves. For the moment we are intensely real to each other; but this appearance may change very quickly, "beyond recognition" as the saying goes, yet we still continue to speak of each changing appearance as "I", "you", "he", "she", because we have no other word to use. So we must face up squarely to the indisputable fact that the "I" with which we operate is only transient, it is not a fundamental unchanging truth. We shall see how very greatly a frank recognition of this will help us to acquire more self-control, a greater degree of real and lasting stability.

At first all this is very difficult to accept, even intellectually. It requires practice. We must closely observe and actually perceive that the real may become the unreal and the unreal the real, according as it is viewed. This apparent contradiction is entirely in accordance with the latest findings of modern science, which tells us emphatically that *nothing* is what it appears to be. The ancient sages who wrote the Vedas thousands of years ago said the same, sometimes putting it very trenchantly. "Truth," they said, "is an illusion, and illusion is a truth." We can see how this seemingly absurd statement applies precisely to the argument in hand. Fundamentally, from the point of view of permanent truth, our personal "I", being

merely the expression of a changing condition, is illusory, but this illusion becomes a truth when we accept it for working purposes as an attachment to our name (which is something quite artificial) and to our external appearance, as this is seen by others, in a process of time which moves too slowly for us to notice the never-ending change. I am well aware that the proposition that "truth is an illusion and illusion is a truth" is a hard morsel to swallow, but it is our digestion that needs improvement, not the morsel.

It is very difficult to grasp that, using logic, we must progress beyond logic and, using intellect, we must discern beyond the intellect. Yet it must be clear that to define anything, as required by logic, it is necessary to confine or limit it, and truth in the deeper sense cannot be limited. Limiting it by logic at once makes it only partially true and it consequently begins to be an illusion. Logic is essential to thinking, conversation, and exchange of ideas. We must think as reasonable beings, but reason and logic will not carry us very far along the path towards super-consciousness. We arrive very quickly in the realm of paradox, a paradox being a proposition which, though logically absurd, is really true. By way of illustration, to serve the purpose of this argument, consider the following proposition: "If God is omnipotent He must be able to make a stone so heavy that He cannot lift it". It is a logical construction but quite illogical in its content. Yet this impossibility *must* be possible if God is omnipotent. We shall frequently be up against this problem, so we must be prepared for it. It is a stage beyond logic, yet much closer to Understanding, for true Understanding implies Feeling, and the emotions lie in a sphere beyond logic. Logic may give explanations, but not always understanding, and the two are by no means identical.

To acquire Understanding it is necessary to add to logic feeling, emotion. The emotions are the driving force behind our thoughts and therefore a much more important realm than logic, and yet we must not despise logic, it is essential to carry us a certain distance along the path. One may perhaps express it thus, that we *think* with the mind, but *understand* with the heart. One of the next paradoxes that we encounter is that logic itself *will* point the way beyond logic, reason *will* show the way beyond reason. We *can* use the intellect to guide us to transcend intellect. Just as we can use a ladder to mount to a place higher than the ladder by climbing the extra step with an effort, so we can use the intellect to discern the existence of a higher level than intellect. This is the level of

intuition. Here we are in the realm of insight rather than thought, superior to and more penetrating than ordinary thought. A keen realization of the non-existence of a constant "I" in our personality is essential to successful progress along this path, for attachment to the mundane ego imprisons us on the mundane plane.

Oddly enough, although people are often taken aback by this presentation—they are liable to resent being told their "I" does not exist in the form in which they are accustomed to think it does exist—nevertheless we all tacitly imply this very fact when we speak of "my" mind. *Whose* mind? Who is the owner of "your" mind? You say, "My mind is in a whirl, my mind is made up, or my mind is not made up, my mind is disturbed", even "I am in two minds" about something! *Who* is in two minds? Worse than that: "My mind is playing me tricks!" *Whose* mind is playing tricks on *what*? Can you really identify yourself with the mind that cannot make itself up or that plays tricks apparently on itself? When we say "my" mind we imply inevitably that there is something to which the mind belongs. To discover to whom we really belong and what directs us, that is our quest. When we say we are in two minds we really mean that there are two people in us fighting for the mastery, and when we say "I have made up my mind" we mean that one of those people has "liquidated" the other, to use a current expression. As a matter of fact, there are many people in each one of us, many different "I's", often quite unco-ordinated. These are really different people inhabiting us. This presentation of the case is supported even by common popular wisdom which prompts such expressions as "I am a new man"—following a holiday, let us say—admitting that we are quite different, and indeed we may be, quite literally, a totally different being though in the same physical casing.

Now let us consider for a moment what we mean by thinking. Most people, I suppose, would say thinking is "a process which takes place within the mind". But that is no answer, it does not explain anything. Where do our thoughts come from? In the majority of people, let it be stated bluntly, independent thought rarely takes place at all. What happens is merely a process of automatic reaction to outside stimuli. What we call our thoughts and ideas, even our convictions, are very largely, and in some people completely, merely the sum total of what has been put into the mind from outside, from babyhood onwards, by nurses, parents, schooling, books, newspapers, films, radio, in a word by outside agencies. These are the source of our

ideas, they have come from others. These impressions get shifted around in our minds, much as we might move furniture about a room, making new combinations—but always with the same old furniture—or to change the metaphor, we swish them around like a cocktail in a shaker, producing new mixtures, and this is what we customarily call thought. There is no originality about it, for we are working with borrowed material. That is completely the case with many people, and with all of us to some extent.

There is only one way out of this impasse, and that is by shock. Grief, to take one example, is often a potent means of achieving enlightenment: so are sorrow, despair, humiliation, disillusionment, bereavement, loss, illness, offence of some sort—all these may shock us out of our ordinary state of sleep, that semi-conscious condition which we accept as ordinary consciousness. We are shocked out of the rut of blind acceptance and as a result we begin to review our accepted values, question them, get a new angle on them. This is the first stage of independent thought.

True thought is always somewhat of a revolutionary process, because it requires escape from the process of automatic action and reaction. Through long habit over many years these borrowed ideas become ingrained in us, so that we imagine that they are our own. It becomes difficult for us to remember how they were acquired, and we tend to resent strongly the suggestion that they are not original but only ours by acquisition. The blinder a person is to this fact the louder he protests. True thought is a revolutionary process because it requires always a querying and often a rejection of this stimulus from outside. This process implies readiness to discard any and perhaps all of the ideas which we have acquired, which we have made our "own" only through habit, some of which may even have become what we call "settled convictions", which simply means they have dug themselves in deeply. People are not easily ready to question accepted ideas for which they may entertain a treasured affection. Nevertheless, if we are interested in taking a step beyond the standards and values of this world and the state of ordinary consciousness, we shall have to do it. There is no way out—we must be ready to question absolutely everything. Our own "I" is a very good starting point for it requires comparatively little thought to see that this is more of a transient appearance than a constant reality. And if our

treasured "I's" are transient, unstable and unreal, then everything these "I's" do and hold and possess must also be equally transient, unstable and unreal.

Now, as individuals, apparently independent in mind, we are naturally inclined to be apprehensive of such revolutionary ideas as these because we cannot see where they are going to end. They lead into unknown territory, whereas it is in human nature to seek the line of least resistance and stay where we are, regulated by habit. But the whole process of Yoga is one of aspiring to something above the level of habit, conventionality and accepted ideas. Yoga consists in striving against the line of least resistance. It is not an easy path, quite the contrary. It aims at freeing ourselves from all the values set up for this earthly—or shall we say earthbound—existence. We cannot attain it without a struggle. It will never be handed out on a golden platter. We shall never get it for nothing. We must be willing to pay the price.

When, as the result of shock, we begin to think for ourselves, that is also the beginning of understanding, which, as we have already seen, is a totally different thing from ordinary thought. It is possible to "think" without understanding, in fact most people do. Understanding is a new faculty, developed only through having our ordinary reactions upset. Understanding is only brought about by a shock to our conventional feelings. This new kind of thought—feeling-thought—takes place through the heart, whereas ordinary intellectual thinking takes place only through the mind, the brain. Paradoxically, the highly intellectual type of person is at a disadvantage in acquiring understanding because he wants things presented too logically. The thinker along academic lines, however nimble-witted, clings desperately to logic. But emotion is subject to quite different laws. Without the deep feeling that creates understanding the intellect alone does not carry us very far. A superior intellect is not the same thing as superior understanding; they are quite different things, yet they both involve thinking.

I will give you a simple instance of what I mean. When I was a boy at school we were once told to describe what salt is, and I remember one young boy who said something like this: "Salt is what makes your egg taste not so good if you don't put any on it". That was the closest he could get with his intellect to a definition of salt. And yet that small boy a day or two later did a remarkable thing. One of his companions in his class lost his mother. Well, you know boys by nature are a bit heart-

less. Most of them just didn't say anything. Neither did this boy say much: he just carried the bereaved boy's suitcase down to the station and as he saw him into the train slipped a bar of chocolate into his hand. That was a case of understanding. And perhaps if he had had more intellect he would have had less understanding.

I mentioned earlier that there are various approaches to Yoga suited to different temperaments. The intellectual person may prefer the psychological approach, which is that with which we are dealing to-night. This is part of what is called Raja, or Royal, Yoga. But to another type of person it may be the devotional approach that will make the strongest appeal. No words, no logic, no tangle of verbal paradoxes will make any impression on him except perhaps a tiresome one; when he contemplates the mystery of our being and the wonders of nature of which we are part, he is seized with awe and reverence, his response will immediately be one of worship of the Creator whose works, including our physical organism through which this contemplation is performed, are a never-ending series of marvels and miracles. This, the devotional approach, is known as Bhakta Yoga, *bhakta* meaning love. Again, the man of action may at first be impatient with both, and approach the subject through a life of motion, action, activity, the never-ending processes of change and development visibly expressed in human endeavour and achievement in ever-changing environment. Such will be the attitude of the Karma Yogi, *karma* meaning action, action and reaction, cause and effect. All these approaches, and indeed any other approach, pursued long enough must lead inevitably to the total negation of the personal pronoun "I". In Raja Yoga, the Yoga of the Mind, we arrive at it by intellectual analysis. In devotional Yoga we arrive at it by a process of complete self-surrender, the absolute surrender of the self to the Supreme Being—use whatever term you please, it is not the words that matter. In the Yoga of activity we arrive at a similar position by obliterating the self in activity; say for example work for others.

The most difficult of these approaches is really the intellectual approach, because of the difficulty of the intellectual to escape from the thralldom of logic. His reason tends to become an obstruction to the gateway of the heart, stifling the heart's intuitive spontaneity. The intellectual's progress is consequently liable to be slow under this restricting influence. But in the devotional approach the whole being is surrendered, in

reverence, wonder, worship, love of the Creator. This total negation of "I" is the fundamental condition for seeing what is real and what is not real. As long as a personal "I" dominates one can never see the truth; it will stand in the way like an impenetrable wall hiding the wider reality.

For those who are scientifically minded we can arrive at this same conclusion by an examination of the physiological process of perception. How do we perceive? It is generally said that the eye is the organ of sight and the ear of hearing. But is this true? A ray of light "strikes" the eye, but that is not where the perception takes place. The impulse has to travel along the optic nerve; or if it is sound, along the auditory nerve, until it reaches the brain. Some say the brain is the organ of perception. But is it? The brain can react or not react, and it can be made to act in very different ways by electrical stimulus; furthermore, we may fail to hear even a loud sound if our attention is focussed elsewhere. There are cases in wartime of soldiers even having an arm blown off and not noticing it until after the battle because of the simple fact that their attention was focused elsewhere. What then is the organ of perception? We arrive at a gulf that has not been bridged by Western science. The fact is that something beyond the brain has to function before we perceive anything, and it is only when that indefinable Something functions, beyond the brain, beyond any organ that we know of, that the brain responds and the eye responds and the ear responds.

All this has an important bearing on what is real and what is unreal, for if perception does not depend upon any recognizable organ but upon the operation of Something which is beyond the brain, then the only way in which we can correctly describe perception is by saying that it is a projection of that Something; that Something emits, as it were, a ray—shall we call it a ray of consciousness?—and when this ray enlivens the brain then only can we perceive, in other words then only are we conscious in the ordinary meaning of conscious, and—this is the important point—then only does the "I" of our ordinary consciousness come into being. Far from our "I" being anything we possess, or something which has any directive power whatever, it is nothing but a projection as lifeless in itself as the apparently animate but really lifeless pictures thrown on the screen in a cinema. Everything we imagine we perceive, including the imagination with which we imagine we perceive, comes into being only through the operation of that ray, for if it does not operate we cease to all intents and pur-

poses to exist. How quickly our vaunted personality, this "I" of which we are so proud as a directing entity, is compelled to retreat!

A further aspect of this paradox is that the more intelligent and clever we think we are, the easier it is to fool ourselves into thinking we are truly clever and intelligent, when in fact we are nothing. Without realizing it we become the Pharisee in Jesus's parable who thanked God he was superior to other men and particularly to the publican who knelt in the corner smiting his breast and imploring God to have mercy on him. Jesus always preferred publicans and sinners to the intellectually righteous. And he further stressed this antipathy in his exclamation: "Father, I thank Thee that Thou has concealed these things from the wise and educated, but revealed them unto babes". In the same context consider also his words: "Unless you turn and become as little children you haven't the faintest chance of entering the kingdom of heaven". All our education, all our wisdom, all our intellect and nimble-wittedness, all our intelligence, all our cleverness, all these things, because in our arrogance and conceit we attach to them the personal pronouns "I", "me" and "my", are insuperable barriers to salvation, to illumination, to Yoga, to union with the divine. After all, is it not a commonplace that humility is a cardinal virtue? "He that feels himself to be least among you shall be the greatest in the kingdom of heaven."

I have already pointed out that, in the end, all Yogas are really one, each branch is merely an aspect suited to a particular temperament. One person will find it appropriate to his nature and temperament to contemplate God as Love, another as Consciousness, another as Power, another as Wisdom, another as Knowledge, but in the end they are all one, and they all require that we should arrive at a realization that, as individuals, we exist in this worldly consciousness merely as transient appearances. Is it possible to replace these appearances by something permanent, or to attach the varying facets of our personality to some fixed point of reference? Can we find, as it were, a Ruler or Guide to direct us, to which (or to whom) we can yoke our varying and uncertain "I's"? The experience of sages and mystics shows us that this is possible, and the same promise is held out by all religion when shorn of encrustations of dogma and formalism. "Take my yoga upon you and learn of me"—by substituting the Sanskrit term for the English we perceive the true meaning of those sublime words. But first we must have a clean slate, and the first thing to wipe off the

slate is the whole bundle of our personalities to which we attach such value on this plane. It is no good trying to discriminate between them, judging them by some standard of value of our own, and saying, as it were: "I think *this* aspect of me—*this* I—is all right, but that one I admit is not so good". The one we most cling to is almost certain to be the one we most need to get rid of! Self-surrender cannot be piecemeal, to suit our own whims and prejudices. We find negation of the "I", the process of complete surrender of *all* worldly values, to be the perennial message of every mystic.

Now the question arises: how are we going to rid ourselves of our false ideas of "I" if we only have this "I" to work with? Can the "I" destroy itself? Yes, it can. It can wipe its own slate clean by a process of self-abnegation, self-denial, self-surrender. It is possible even through this illusory "I" of the intellect to perceive that we must penetrate beyond this "I" and discern how unreal everything on this plane is. We must be prepared in this subject to talk in these seemingly contradictory terms. After all, it is only like viewing the two sides of a medal or a coin: according to how you look at it it appears as head or tail. Actually, it is both head and tail at the same time. Similarly everything in life is both real and unreal; real for ordinary conventional purposes and unreal for true purposes, according to how you look at it.

The keen perception of this paradoxical contradiction, and its acceptance as a rule to determine conduct, is the first step towards freedom from what we may call on this plane of consciousness the "thralldom of 'I'". Once we perceive our personalities, functioning under the pronouns "I", "me" and "mine", to be fictional, and once we have even the smallest sensation of contact with the Ruler, that is to say contact with a higher plane, our personalities will no longer operate in the haphazard, indiscriminating manner in which they did before because by accepting the Ruler and identifying ourselves with It—or Him if one prefers to think personally—we shall now give those personalities orders. Such orders will come from the Ruler, or to express it differently, we shall have tuned in to a Higher Consciousness, which will control the lower consciousness to the exact extent of the tuning in. We shall then be able to handle our "I's", with all their emotional manifestations, like an organist pulling out the stops, or as a conductor indicating to the instruments in the orchestra how they are to come in—now these are to be silent, now those are to play.

Patanjali, one of the earliest codifiers of Yoga philosophy,

states that Yoga is brought about by stilling all the processes of thought. This is merely another way of obliterating the personal "I" because we always attach this pronoun to what we call our thoughts. If you suppress thought you obliterate personality. What happens then? The mind ceases to be a ruffled surface; all thoughts are stilled, and the mind becomes like a mirror, or, shall we say, the calm surface of a lake. Such a surface reflects the entire universe above, and also reveals its own depths. This analogy brings us much nearer to the true meaning of the word "mind". True mind is a state of being in which all thought ceases, all personality is obliterated, when there is no longer such a thing as a personal "I" and no obstruction conceals what is beyond the brain. The moment a single thought appears like a ripple on the surface the picture is blurred. This is why it is essential completely to suppress, even at the cost of intense struggle—which may take a long time—all idea of separate personality. "Personality", the conception of "I" and "me" or the "ego" as a separate directing entity is what, above all, veils Truth and renders Yoga unattainable.

We may perhaps throw further light on this difficult subject by considering it from another angle.

When all thought is obliterated a sort of vacuum is created. But nature abhors a vacuum. Something must needs fill it. This must be considered in connection with the symbol of the Ruler to which we have already alluded. Strangely enough, in this tangle of paradoxes we discover that it lies within our power to determine the quality, so to speak, of the Ruler that we are going to accept. This indeed appears an extraordinary claim, but at this point we must recall the first stage of Yoga training, which I mentioned at the outset, called in Sanskrit Yama-niyama. This, you may remember, was the cultivation of what we may broadly term character, or the "moral virtues". Stress was laid on the imperative necessity of this preliminary training, because the nature and colour, so to speak, of this training will determine the nature and colour of what shall appear in the vacuum. For in itself Super-consciousness is neither good nor evil. It is a power, and it just *is*. The colour and character of its manifestation on this plane will be determined by the kind of vessel that has been prepared to receive it. The whole matter was expressed eloquently by Pascal: "Events," he wrote, "are the clear waters from the well of life, coloured only by the vessels into which they are poured." The first essential then is the preparation of the vessel, followed by the

obliteration of all those obstacles attached to our personality which we fondly imagine in our ordinary consciousness to be so important but which are really phantasmagoria of this plane of existence.

I am well aware that it is easy enough to talk about this subject, but a very different matter to practise it because our habits of thought are so ingrained. Nothing is so hard to overcome as habit. Our habits of mind bind us to the manner of thought to which we are accustomed. It is difficult to escape, but with practice it can be done. It will help us to see ourselves as others see us—a valuable ability. We shall acquire a greater capacity to put ourselves in other people's place and see their point of view. This is not only fairer to them, but our own mental horizon is enlarged if it embraces the point of view of others. Not only this, but by obliterating one's own personality and at the same time becoming more sensitive to the vibrations emanating from others one acquires the capacity of sensing in advance what they are feeling and thinking; in other words, the faculty of reading their minds begins to develop, a sort of intuitive insight into their thoughts. This power can only grow when one places one's own personality, including all one's feelings and prejudices, all one's secret conceit and lurking pride, completely in the background. This subtle power will be felt by others, and they will be the more ready to respond to it. Thus, as the result of negating our own personality, our influence will actually increase. The browbeating kind of self-assertion may impress people for a time, but it will not win their hearts. Neither will it bring serenity to one's own inner being. This can come only from reducing one's own self-assertion to the minimum.

I have referred to the particular difficulty of the intellectual type of man to face up to and accept this teaching for the very reason that his ingrained attachment to reason constitutes his greatest stumbling block. Yet the intellectual man, approaching the matter in all sincerity and with goodwill to understand, will often perceive that a surrender of the heart may be imperative where he hesitates to surrender reason and intellect. But if the heart, why not the brain? We arrive back at the proposition that surrender cannot be piecemeal; also at the further proposition, already mentioned, that the "I" we most cling to is sure to be the one we need most to get rid of! A thorough and healthy sense of humour may here prove a blessing. We must learn to laugh heartily at ourselves, at the absurdity of our logic, at the absurdity of the values of this world, at the

absurdity of the fictions we have accepted or invented as standards, at the absurdity of our claim to have received these as final truth for all time. A salutary sense of humour, even if tinged with gentle irony, may save a man from falling into despair in face of the void that momentarily gapes before him when all his hitherto accepted values vanish.

The unstable nature of our observations and inferences is a matter of daily experience, and what we broadly call hypnotism proves the uncertainty of experience itself. As already mentioned, we know it is possible to suffer a severe physical injury and not feel it if our attention is fixed elsewhere; and it is equally possible to feel intense pain through sheer imagination without any ordinary physical cause. This also depends upon the operation of the Unknown Quantity beyond the brain. Inevitably we arrive at the paradox that what we consider real outside may really be unreal—behold the contradiction!—for if we do not perceive it, it is not real to us, it only becomes real when we perceive it. It may be real to one person and unreal to another. Everything is relative, like heat and cold: a person coming out of a hot room into a tepid room says it is cold, a person coming into the same room from the freezing atmosphere outside will say how warm it is. They feel the same thing, but one calls it cold and the other calls it hot. All the phenomena of external life are like that: and just as an understanding of the fictitious nature of our "I's" is the first step towards sweeping them aside and contacting a higher instance through which they shall be directed, so also a keen realization that the phenomena of life depend for their perception upon that which is beyond the brain helps us—if we think about this intensely—to get a little closer to the borderline of super-consciousness and even to cross it. This is a new style of thinking which is really "feeling-thought". We have to *feel* it intensely rather than just *think* it, for it is beyond logic. *Feel* it intensely and its truth dawns on us, and then as we throw off the fetters that bind us to a world of illusion, we shall become better able to operate in that new realm.

But let us not expect that it will be easy, because our habit of thinking of ourselves as a constant "I", and our habit of thinking that everything outside is equally real for everybody, is very difficult to overcome. Progress of course is relative, but if we can gain even a little mastery we begin to be able to dismiss the things that used to worry us and the people that used to annoy us. No longer will so-and-so, whom we do not like and who does not behave nicely to us, be able to annoy us as

before. In such a mood we used really to identify ourselves with annoyance and made annoyance our master. But when we begin even in a small measure to operate on the borderline of super-consciousness, when we open the door even slightly to the Ruler or Master (to continue with this symbol) who is going to control our "I's", and we begin to be able to identify our new "I" with that Master within, then we are in a position to say to ourselves, "Henceforth I will see this or that in such and such a light: I will determine the light in which I shall see things: I shall not allow so-and-so to dictate to me the manner in which I shall react." We begin to be able to say: "I will regard this thus and so, and determine it myself instead of letting it determine me." This has the further profound implication that we shall be able to choose whether to suffer or not: "I will suffer" or "I will not suffer".

Much practice is required to gain proficiency in this art. Our moods are constantly regaining possession, constantly obtruding. When they do regain possession we find that we have forgotten the Master, and lost the master-key which opens or closes the doors. It is very easy for these runaway horses which we call "I" to kick over the traces. It needs a great deal of practice to rein them in, but this practice is the beginning of the acquisition of will. People who react blindly to outside circumstances cannot possibly have will because they make themselves slaves to their reactions, to the illusions which come from outside. The very fact that So-and-so used to annoy you, but now he or she does precisely the same thing and it does not annoy you, proves that So-and-so *as you saw him* was quite fictitious, what he did was fictitious, and "you" were fictitious! Ponder on it and see if it isn't so.

This illusory aspect of existence on this plane is called in Sanskrit, Maya. It means that there is an element of unreality in everything around us, including ourselves, an element of illusion. The world is, in a sense, illusory—our eyes and ears and sensations often deceive us. This gives us necessarily a new conception of the meaning of good and evil. In Yoga we use the terms good and evil very cautiously. They are purely relative. We admit this also in daily life when we say such and such a misfortune turned out to be a blessing in disguise. When the misfortune befell you, you branded it as evil; but then you succeeded in turning it to your advantage or something caused you to see it in a new light, and you were obliged to admit that the apparent evil was in fact good. The reverse is also frequently the case. Our conceptions of good and evil are

entirely relative. But this need not be interpreted as saying that we think of nothing as good or as evil. It is simply that we avoid using these terms in any absolute or dogmatic sense. The use of these terms dogmatically is a sure sign of an ossified mentality. Bear in mind the words of Shakespeare that "there is nothing good or bad but thinking makes it so".

The highest principle ever propounded in this connection is found in the words of St. Paul: "All things are lawful for me, but all things are not expedient." (I Corinth. 10:23). We have to apply the law of higher expediency. Paul said that to the Romans he was a Roman; to the Jews, a Jew; to the Greeks, a Greek, and so on—an interesting illustration of the operations of the Master within him which enabled him to adopt these various "I's" at will: "I, Paul the Roman; I, Paul the Jew; I, Paul the Greek; I, Paul the Arab." That is what we too have to aim at. Our personality must be like a clean slate on which we write, under higher direction, whatever shall further our higher purpose.

Finally, although by practising with perseverance the successive stages of critical self-analysis, close self-observation, the acceptance of paradoxical truths, the exaltation of thought by infusion with intense feeling, and the cultivation of silence and the quiet mind, we can approach the Superconsciousness seemingly by our own efforts, yet our limitations are so great by reason of the gravitational weight of our ordinary consciousness which, as it were, constantly "drags us back to earth", that we feel instinctively the need of a helping hand to aid us in lifting ourselves out of the mire of earthly values. This is where the conception of a mediator enters the picture. It is one of the deepest paradoxes, yet it is the experience of every mystic, that by the mere process of recognizing acutely the need of a mediator, the mediator appears. A mediator may be anything or anybody—any teacher, any instructor who is able to give you an indication of one single step in the right direction is your mediator for that moment. In times of stress and sorrow the friend who offers a word of sympathy, of love, of consolation, of compassion, of understanding penetrating your distress, is your mediator. When grief and suffering become transformed from self-commiseration into something beautiful and sublime, they change their rate of vibration and raise us to a condition much closer to the higher realm of superconsciousness. But it is so very easy to fall back that we must constantly look out for what can serve as a mediator to help us. It may be a book, it may be anything, and we now see why Jesus called himself

the Great Mediator. But the mediator can only be of assistance provided we are in a state of readiness to receive the mediation. We ourselves must make the effort and the mediator will point the way, so to speak, holding out a helping hand. But *we* have to do the grasping of it, it is a fifty-fifty business, a fair bargain.

In the end—and this is the most sublime paradox of all—we discover that the mediator, whatever form it took, was all the time really our own higher Self, an inner Self, a True Self, concealed by all the petty selves or “I’s” of lower consciousness and now revealed by their elimination. Jesus told us this same thing when he said: “The Kingdom of God is within you,” and “I and the Father are One”. Thus the Christian speaks of “the Christ within us”, the Buddhist of the Buddha—the Enlightened One—within us, and in the *Bhagavad Gita* Krishna uses practically the same words to express the same idea as Christ used 500 years later. The revelation may be prompted by what may appear momentarily to be an outside agency, but, as Raja Yoga has taught for many thousands of years, it is the inner realization alone that counts, and that takes place within ourselves.

What of the instrument through which we achieve these things? If the instrument is out of tune like a piano with slack strings, can it make divine music? It will make music precisely proportionate to the quality of the material and degree in which it is kept in tune and in good condition. The entire process of training, revelation and self-realization takes place through the medium of our nerves. So in the end we get back again to the very beginning, that our first duty is to provide the Master with a fit instrument on which to play. Keep the instrument clean through all those channels of purification which have been tabulated—the bowel, the kidneys, the skin and the lungs. Maintain the highest possible degree of efficiency permitted by the limitations by which each one of us is restricted and constantly seek to remove the limitations—they are often purely psychological and imaginary. Strive to keep the body in good tone in order that the nerves may be capable of sensing vibrations from a higher sphere. Above all, learn the art of breathing, which is our immediate contact with the Life-force. There is a direct relation between our breathing and every emotion, so one of the paths, and a very important path, to super-consciousness is to learn how to breathe rightly and in a controlled manner. The first thing to do is to breathe more deeply and consciously, and practice this all day long. Keep saying to yourself, “Breath is life—breath is life”—and keep taking more of life into you by taking more breath. It fans the smoul-

dering embers of consciousness exactly as smouldering embers are fanned into flames by a bellows. In purely physical terms, our divine Mediator is the Breath. Jesus himself indicated something very much to that effect as recorded in St. John (Chapter 20 verses 21 and 22): “As my Father hath sent me, even so I send you. And when He had said this He *breathed* on them and said unto them ‘Receive ye the *Holy Spirit*.’” The very word “Spirit” means “breath”. It comes from the Latin word *spiro*, meaning “I breathe”.

Next we must at all times be keenly alive to the essential worthlessness of all that is attached to the personal ego, an acute realization that it is essentially fictitious, wraithlike, spectral, a mere expression of mood, and that our pride in it is nothing but folly. A third exercise consists in the constant recollection of one’s own existence as a physical organism which is part of the physical world around us, and not one whit different from it in substance. It sounds simple to say one must remember one’s own existence, yet you may well have forgotten the fact of your own existence while listening to me. That may be flattering to me, but a bad thing in Yoga, because we must never lose sight of the fact that our ability to pay attention at all depends on a complicated series of factors such as the digestion, circulation of the blood, action of the heart, and all that marvellous and incredible process of Life in which our vaunted “I” plays no directive part whatsoever. We all too easily forget this, and to remember it will help to knock the conceit of ego out of us.

We must further try to remember that all our perceptions are a projection from that incomprehensible Unknown that lies beyond the brain. We must realize that what we interpret to ourselves as objective reality is in fact a projection somewhat similar to that on a cinema screen. Do we not often feel such screen projections as if they were real? We react to them, even though we know they are not real but projected by something at the back of the hall, in this case an apparatus which we know of but of the existence of which we momentarily forget. So also all the perceptions of life are projected by That Power which lies beyond the brain, beyond the visible physical body.

We should cultivate the habit of being the spectator of our own selves and of our activities; of looking upon ourselves as somebody else, viewing ourselves as an object and not only as the subject. An exercise that helps in this is to preview the events of the day in the morning before we get up as if they were going to happen to somebody else—we ourselves being

that somebody else. And at night similarly to recall the events of the day as if they had happened to somebody else. These are useful practices because they free the real, the inner Self, from the transient selves or "I's", and promote the constant recollection that all worldly standards are fictitious. Some people think that is a dangerous statement to make: is there then no such thing as a moral standard and the need to obey laws? Yes, but to realize that all worldly standards are fictitious—morality often depends upon geography—does not mean that we must violate society. On the contrary, it is very necessary as part of the exercise of the Christian virtues to respect other people's views, customs, manners and forms of belief at the same time seeing them for what they are—conventions—and not enslaving ourselves to them.

And finally, certain physical exercises in slow motion may be of assistance, compelling us to observe the component muscular and nervous actions that go to make up our ordinary activity. It is in slowness that we develop observation and control, not in speed.

The Western scientist whose approach is through the study of external phenomena, and the Yogi who studies himself, piercing into the secret recesses of his own soul, are really approaching the same end; for the Western scientist, if he is indeed to learn everything there is to learn, will eventually also arrive at himself, for he also is part of this world. Thus, what we might call the externalists and the internalists are looking for the same thing, only the Yogi starts with the apparatus through which perception takes place—himself—the physical organism.

So to progress in the Yoga of the Mind these five exercises should be practised: first, constant attention to the four sacred physical arts; secondly, the constant realization that what we commonly refer to as "I" is a fiction; thirdly, the constant awareness of the processes of life taking place within us; fourthly, the constant reminder to ourselves that all we see, hear, and experience is only a projection from the unknown region beyond the brain; and finally, periodically to check our actions and reduce them to slow motion to perceive how they are actually composed. These exercises will in course of time completely alter the polarity of our vision, the whole of existence will appear in a new light, and even amid the turbulent uproar of what we fondly call civilized life we shall begin to acquire something of that serenity of mind and spirit whose source lies in a state of higher consciousness far removed from that of this world.

IV

THE YOGA OF SOUND

TO SOME this branch of Yoga appears distant and abstruse, yet it permeates every aspect of our lives. How it works becomes clear at once when we consider the enormous part played by the human voice in daily affairs. The tone, quality and pitch of people's voices, the manner of their speech, and the articulation of the words they utter have a profound influence upon us; and when we further consider song, and the place occupied by music, then the paramount importance of sound as an ingredient of practical human life becomes obvious.

When we examine modern civilization the observation forces itself upon us that two of its outstanding features are speed and noise. One might almost say that some people have become speed and noise addicts. Some, the moment they get up, start switching on the radio; it blares from morning to night, and they get so accustomed to it that they would be embarrassed by the comparative silence if it were switched off. Noise is one of the gravest diseases of present-day civilization.

Yet these same vibrations which constitute noise can be as constructive if employed selectively as they are destructive in the form of noise. Music is sound selectively treated; the difference between music and singing on the one hand and noise on the other is simply that in music we have ordered the arrangement of the vibrations, and the proper degree of rhythm has been introduced. But the vibrations of both are essentially the same. Sound, and in particular the sound of the human voice, is also a potent element in hypnotism. Hypnotism is concentrated suggestion, which is the basis of all influence, and it operates largely through the quality of the human voice. Before this was properly understood people used to talk about the "odic fluid" which was supposed to emanate from the tips of your fingers if you pointed them into somebody's face. The word "influence" itself implies fluid. Without denying the reality of magnetic emanations from certain people, the psychic fluid which was supposed to pass from one to the other is nowadays better expressed in terms of vibration.

The power of sound to affect us is familiar to all. What a strange effect such sounds as the sighing of the wind can have upon us, or the noise of the waves of the sea, or the song of the birds, or the roar of wild animals. There are many laboratory experiments that prove the potency of sound. Every school-boy studying physics has seen a glass shattered at a distance by a note played on a violin. Another experiment is to sprinkle sand on the surface of a metal plate; a violin bow is then drawn along the edge of the metal plate in such a way as to produce a musical sound, and before your eyes you see the sand dancing and arranging itself in symmetrical forms, sometimes resembling flowers. The exact pattern will depend upon the note produced. These experiments prove beyond any shadow of doubt both the destructive force (in the case of the glass) and the constructive force (in the case of the sand) of a single musical note.

The mysterious power of sound has attracted the attention of many poets. William Cowper wrote:

*"There is in souls a sympathy with sound
And as the mind is pitched, the ear is pleased;
Some chord in unison with what we hear
Is touched within us and the heart replies."*

Yoga makes a study of this subject in its application to ourselves as physical organisms with psychic potentialities. The question we pose is this: Can we by means of sound affect the physical organism and through it the psyche in some constructive manner with results as remarkable as the shattering of a glass at a distance by a musical note, or the spontaneous rearrangement of sand in patterns?

Western science has already accepted that sound and vibration are really synonymous; they are two ways of expressing exactly the same thing. Where there is vibration there is sound and where there is sound there is vibration. This subject is treated in Yoga under the general title of "Mantra". Mantra does not literally mean sound. *Man* is the Sanskrit root of the verb "to think". *Manas* is one of the words for mind. The nearest literal translation of the word Mantra would therefore be "an instrument of thought". How do we think? As human beings we tend to think in words, and words uttered become sound. So Mantra comes to mean, among other things, the study of words. But besides verbal utterances the human voice also produces song, chanting, singing, incantation, etc., so Mantra comes to mean the study of all these also—in fact, the scientific study of sound, particularly in relation to the effects that can be produced by the human voice. An uttered

formula or prayer is known as a *mantram*. The definition of a *mantram* given in Murray's New English Dictionary is "a sacred text or passage used as a prayer or incantation". But it need not be religious in the narrow sense in which we use the word to-day. I say "narrow" because in Yoga we accept the dictum of St. Paul that *absolutely everything* we do should be sacramental and therefore in a sense religious. He said: "*Whatsoever thou doest, do it as unto the Lord*". In contradistinction to "religious" used in the narrow sense, there are non-religious or secular mantrams which have been very popular. The French doctor, Professor Coué, helped a very large number of people by making them frequently repeat the mantram: "Every day, in every way, I am feeling better and better." The repetition of this formula was effective because it became automatic; in this way it was impressed on the subconscious mind and became eventually, if the habit of repetition was maintained, part of the character of the individual. All mantrams, religious or otherwise, operate by virtue of this same principle.

Mantra Yoga has the same purpose as other branches of Yoga, namely, to establish the correct psychic relationship between the individual and his own soul. By the "individual" we mean here the aggregate of those varying personalities which, taken all together, make up the pronoun "I", while by the "soul" we mean that principle which manifests in us as the Life-force. Mantra Yoga, like the other Yogas, seeks to harmonize or yoke all our personalities with the Life-force. From the point of view of Mantra Yoga this relationship is a vibrational one, and being vibrational it must be capable of expression in terms of sound.

But the human ear is limited, we perceive only a certain very small range of sound. It is well known that there are sounds that a dog can hear and we cannot. Our range of sight also is extremely limited, however, and everybody knows there are forms of light which are beyond our range of vision. We call them ultra-violet rays, infra-red rays, X-rays, and so on; and just as it is the invisible light which is the most penetrating, so also the most penetrating sound is that which is inaudible; so we must seek vibrational contact not only with the sounds that we hear, but, more important, with those sounds which we cannot hear. The key to this problem is familiar to all musicians. It lies in the law of octaves. Correctly tuned, octave notes vibrate sympathetically merely by virtue of their tuning. By way of illustration, I will very gently press down a note on the piano, so that it will not make a sound, say middle C.

Holding this note down silently, I shall now strike the octave below and release it at once so that it will sound only for a fraction of a second. But now, lo and behold, you hear the note that I have *not* sounded but left free. Why? Because it is correctly tuned to the octave below and therefore vibrates in sympathy *without being struck*. This is a physical phenomenon of the most profound esoteric significance, for according to the theory of Mantra through the law of octaves we are able to establish contact with every sound in the universe, including its tonic note.

Let us now pause for a moment to consider the different divisions of this subject which, as you may already perceive, is vast and sublimely impressive. The division which most constantly concerns us in life is that which deals with our chief means of communication with each other, namely, speech. In Sanskrit this is called *Vak*. Speech consists mainly of words. What are words? As a rule they are the means by which we express our thought. Anybody who is going to make a serious study of Yoga will have to devote close attention to the use of words. The mystic studies this matter from the point of view of how it is going to affect his own inner self. The difference between a philosopher, a scientist, and a mystic is that the philosopher poses the question "Why", the scientist the question "How", but the mystic seeks to answer whatever question is in his mind by identifying himself with the problem and finding the answer from within. A mystic is a man who believes that it is possible by inner communion to establish union with the divine, that is, the limitless. The mystic union cannot be brought about by thought alone, nor can philosophy fully answer his questions, because thought itself is limiting. Words have to be defined in order to have sense, and to define is to confine within a certain limited meaning. The precise use of words is of great importance, yet by them you cut out the possibility of realizing that very thing with which you wish to establish contact.

There is a story of an eastern potentate who visited a great sage from whom he sought instruction about God. "I pray your holiness to enlighten my ignorance about the Supreme Being," he said, prostrating himself. For answer, the sage motioned him to sit down before him. The potentate did so, and the sage closed his eyes and sat silent. After some hours the visitor ventured quietly to repeat his request, thinking the sage might not have heard him. But the sage neither moved nor opened his eyes. After another long interval the potentate once again

addressed the sage without apparent response, and again toward the end of the day he repeated his request a little louder. At last the sage opened his eyes. "My son," he said quietly, "all day long I have been instructing you. That which is beyond words cannot be expressed in words. Because you were listening with the outer ear you could not hear the inner voice. Do not deafen your mind with words. Be silent. Go home and ponder on this, and if your heart is ready the Lord will surely reveal Himself to you."

This is one of the reasons why reason and logic can only carry us a certain limited distance along the path to Truth. We quickly arrive in a world of paradox. This is a little nearer Truth, and in the realm of emotion we get still nearer Truth. The fundamental error of both thought and the outward observation of the scientist is that they postulate the separateness of the observer and the thing observed. But Yoga teaches us that this is a fallacy, there is no such separateness, the thing we are observing is composed of the same substance, atoms, and molecules, as ourselves, the observer, and we should therefore postulate an essential identity between that which is observed and that which observes. By becoming absorbed in this mysterious realm with his whole being, the mystic hopes to establish union with the object of his search, and in this way truly to know it and to understand it. Courage is required to venture into this utterly unknown territory. And although it may be possible to describe the experience up to a point, the difference between the description and the experience itself is much the same as the difference between a map and a country. Maps serve a useful purpose, but however much you study the map you will not see the country. No pictures and no description can supplant personal experience. So it is also with mystical experience. It cannot be acquired at second-hand.

There is another vital difference between experimentation in the laboratory and experimentation on oneself. Provided it is properly done, the experiment in the laboratory succeeds regardless of who does it. The man doing the experiment may be good or bad, well or ill, happy or miserable, it does not make any difference to the success of the experiment provided he performs it correctly. But not so when you begin experimenting with yourself in search of mystic union with higher Powers. There are many conditions that have to be observed. The first is that one should be pure. I do not mean in the moral sense, I mean in the real sense. The body, as the instrument through which you conduct the experiment, must be purified by those

means of purification enumerated when discussing Hatha Yoga. The first of the sacred physical arts is elimination, that is getting rid of the poisons and the toxins in the body. The man who is going to experiment with himself in Mantra must be at least reasonably healthy in body. Secondly, success depends very largely upon the state of heart and the state of mind. Both must be right. If we are a prey to negative emotions, we cannot succeed. Faith, hope and courage are the beacon lights. Thirdly, the surroundings must be suitable. We must be isolated, or at least have complete quiet.

The next requirement is the correct posture. Posture, as we saw when we were discussing Hatha Yoga, occupies an important place in Yogic physiology. We must learn to sit symmetrically. To start with we may choose any posture that is symmetrical. This always requires that the spine must be straight, for otherwise the lungs will not be free. The time of day is also important. Sunrise and sunset are the favourite times for this experiment, but you may have to choose the time according to your circumstances. Finally, what remains inside us from the last meal may affect us. An excess of food is a serious obstacle to mantric experimentation, because the oxygen that we were intending to use in the practice of Mantra will be required to burn up the food. So success depends also in some measure on diet. Fasting is a great aid.

What does the experimentation actually consist in? How do we actually go about it in practice? It consists in producing musical sounds, just as is done with the experiments with glass or sand, but with one's own voice. Without going into too many explanations that would carry us far afield, it may be stated that the most fundamental sound according to the philosophy of Yoga is the sound AUM, sometimes spelt OM. This sound has to be intoned in a certain manner which requires practice. The word "home", long drawn out on an appropriate note, will serve to begin with. When perfected, this sound is said to be a reflection, as it were, of the tonic note of the Universe, that "Word" which was in the beginning, which was with God, and which was God. We have to use the word "Word" in this connection because of the poverty of language and want of a more adequate term. In the original Greek it is "Logos", and the dictionary gives the meaning of Logos as being "in the Stoic philosophy the active principle living in and determining the world" (Chambers' *Twentieth Century Dictionary*). The Stoic philosophy occupied a prominent position at that time in Greece. The "active principle living in and determining the

world" would be an excellent description of what we conceive by the word *Prana*. The Logos is the same sound as is referred to in the Lord's Prayer as the "Name" of God: "Hallowed be Thy Name." Practice consists in seeking for a musical note which shall, however faintly and inadequately, reflect this Name. Nor need anyone despair in this practice, for the demonstration of sympathetic octave resonance on the piano shows that the unstruck note will still sound even if the tuning of the piano is only approximate; though, of course, the nearer the tuning is to perfection, the stronger will be the resonance. So progress in this matter is relative as in all else; there is no jump from nullity to perfection; one step is better than none, and effort sometimes deserves more praise than achievement.

The first search must be for the musical note which represents your own personal tonic note or vibration. This is not a constant, for our physical condition varies. However, by observing the conditions indicated, the mind can be brought into a state of quiescence in which for a considerable time the note will be stable. It can be sensed in various ways: the most effective vibration will be felt as if it were reverberating throughout the body, and the tip of the fingers placed on the sternum may give some indication of the degree of the vibration. Various notes, tones, pitch and volume, may have to be tried. As we produce these notes, making them as prolonged and as smooth as possible, we must observe their effect upon us. The probability is that, even if we never succeed in discovering with certainty our own individual tonic note, nevertheless patient and persistent practice will prove so pleasant and so beneficial as a means of soothing the nerves and ironing out so to speak the creases and ruffles of the mind that the seeker will be amply repaid merely by the process of search. It is a case of the treasures found along the path being almost as great as those to be found at the destination. But if we have the good fortune to strike the right note, or even one near it, we shall become conscious of certain internal changes, certain reactions that can be compared to the re-arrangement of the sand from being a disorderly heap into a symmetrical pattern resembling a flower. Expressed physiologically, this miraculous transformation takes the form of an exactly corresponding transformation of the whole nervous system, with its inevitable accompanying effect on the soul or spirit. Where formerly there was chaos, now there is harmony and order. This was the original object of intoning prayers in churches. Alas! the art has been almost completely forgotten, so that church-chanting or incantation

has degenerated into a senseless and usually dirge-like drawl, quite meaningless and often profoundly depressing. The art of Mantra was once a constituent element in all religious worship. As far as Christianity is concerned, when the Church split in the Fourth Century and lost its pristine simplicity, the mantric art, fully understood only by a few highly trained devotees, was lost. The debacle was further hastened by the introduction of instrumental accompaniment in churches, an innovation which led to the decline even of plainsong which had a mantric background. Even singing lost its spontaneity, and the art of mantra took refuge in obscure monasteries where it was practised secretly. I do not wish to deliver a tirade against organs—I have been an organist myself. It is a magnificent instrument, one of the glories of modern music, but it has its right place like everything else; and when it is used as habitual accompaniment, “leading” the singing, as it is called, it becomes impossible for singing to be spontaneous and to be a true reflection of the soul. It is like a golden prop for a man too lazy to walk. The practice of chanting prayers in churches originated as a physiological process. Before the intoning could begin, the intoner, that is the priest, had to be in a condition that would make him an example to everybody else, a physical and mental condition which would allow of the intoning to be correct. With this proviso, in the marvellous setting of our churches and cathedrals, indeed miraculous results could be achieved through trained incantation. But not as the practice is conducted today. Generally you will find that when the Lord’s Prayer is to be intoned the organist provides the note and the priest adjusts himself to that! He has not even the initiative to produce the note spontaneously. He then usually drawls through the Prayer, taking in breath three or four times in the course of it. The manner in which the Lord’s Prayer is repeated in churches habitually today is the worst and most harmful imaginable. It is usually repeated by the entire congregation together in a scrambled mumble, and it is that scrambled mumble which is impressed upon the sub-conscious of every worshipper and impressed upon his soul. And we have the audacity to call that prayer! And even to debase in this way the one prayer handed down by our Lord.

The mischief of this practice has fortunately been perceived by some enlightened minds. In the preface to his striking book, *The Lord’s Prayer in Black and White*, Arthur Wragge has this to say: “The Lord’s Prayer should be prayed alone. Jesus urged us to pray ‘to thy Father which is in secret,’ closing

the doors of our rooms and surrendering ourselves to the poetry of prayer. Yet today this advice is almost forgotten, for usually this prayer of all prayers is said in a dull sing-song voice in company with a crowd of others, most of them bored, conventional, or indifferent. The poetry of the prayer is destroyed by over-much repetition, so that it has almost ceased to mean anything.”

The Lord’s Prayer is a very remarkable composition. According to the records, it is the only prayer Jesus ever dictated. Part of its esoteric significance lies in the fact that it is a measure of a single trained breath for purposes of intoning. Everybody in normal health ought to be able to chant the Lord’s Prayer, at ordinary rate of utterance, on a single breath.

The correct note on which to incant is a matter of experimentation. When one can at more or less normal speed (about the same speed as they repeat the Lord’s Prayer in churches) chant it on a single breath, this will serve as a convenient measure to assess one’s progress in breathing practice.

The most famous and the most fundamental in its effects of all mantrams is the sacred syllable AUM or OM, to which I have already alluded. The incantation of this sound, correctly produced, has a profound effect upon the nervous system similar to the effect an appropriate musical note has upon the scattered sand. Trained breath is required to succeed in the art of intoning, but the very process of learning to chant OM correctly is in itself an effective means of training the breath; the search for the correct tone, pitch, and volume suited to the seeker—which differ according to the individual and at different times of the day—involve a considerable degree of breath control. The process is of course greatly aided by the prior conditions of bodily purification, posture, and moderate diet.

The objective must be to pronounce this sound on the longest possible drawn-out breath, on the deepest convenient note, without the slightest wavering or alteration of tone, pitch or volume. It is extraordinary how one finds sometimes so-called teachers of esoteric philosophy pronouncing this syllable quite ineffectually, as if it were just an ordinary word, or a mere linguistic name of God like God, Dio, Gott, Dieu, Bog, Brahm, Allah, Jehovah, or any other nomenclature applied to the Deity in any other language. The sacred syllable OM is not a word in the ordinary sense at all, it is a *sound*, a *musical sound*, and it has no more value than any other formal word denoting the Deity if it is treated and uttered like an ordinary word. It is a sound which, when correctly intoned, is itself an actual echo

or reflection, however distant, of the voice of Creation itself, an echo borne by sympathetic resonance through an endless sequence of octaves from the Beginning, that Beginning in which is the Word, the Word that is with God, and the Word that *is* God. It is a means of establishing actual vibrational contact, that is, direct soul contact, with the Creator, His Voice speaking, that is, vibrating within us.

This sound, then, is the most fundamental of all sounds, but although it is, so to speak, the arch-mantram this does not mean that it need supersede all other mantric practice. Mantrams such as the Lord's Prayer or the Gayatri have tremendous value for their suggestive content. The Gayatri is a short prayer said to contain the essence of the Vedas, the most ancient sacred scripts in existence. Translated, the words are: "Let us meditate on the glory of Him from whom proceeds the Universe: may He enlighten our minds". Any appropriate text may serve as a mantram, or the student may compose his own. The essential is that the mantrams should be chanted repeatedly on an appropriate note with a single drawn out breath. Short mantrams can be repeated more than once on the same breath. Thus the Gayatri is usually repeated two or three times on a single breath. The words polarize the thought. Their choice is therefore important and, in chanting, their articulation should be clear, as their sound is indelibly imprinted on the subconscious mind exactly as produced. The mantram should be intoned over and over again without alteration of posture, with the eyes closed and the mind stilled. The physical effect is profoundly comforting, and this solace is reflected mentally and spiritually.

This is the principle of intoning and the manner in which it was originally intended to be practised in churches, when the effect of expert incantation by the trained priest communicated itself to the congregation. The loss of this art has resulted in the slipshod and quite senseless manner of intoning which has become the mechanical habit of today. It is a debased relic of what was once a profound esoteric art. Is it any wonder that the Church is losing the influence it should exert, when one of its most fundamental practices has been reduced to such vain and empty repetition? I do not say this out of disrespect for the Church or for religion in general. On the contrary, it is of very great importance that this art should be recovered, for our mediaeval cathedrals were designed for its practice. The masons who constructed our cathedrals never put an organ in. Organs were a secular invention, an imposition from without, and generally the work of the masons had to be violated in

order to find room for this unnatural though decorative prop which was to take so much of the spontaneity out of incantation.

This is a practice which anyone in reasonable health can embark upon with great spiritual profit, even quite alone. It requires no gymnastic ability beyond the ability to sit straight and hold the body in its natural erect posture. To sum up: having taken reasonable care that we are internally clean, that we have not burdened the physical instrument with an excess of food, that we adopt a truly natural posture, and that we obey the injunction of the Master to isolate ourselves and pray to our Father in secret, behind closed doors, it is almost impossible, however awkward or clumsy one's first efforts at incantation may be, not to derive solace from it. There is great power in secrecy, as the Psalmist has told us in superb poetry: "He that dwelleth in the secret place of the Most High shall abide in the shadow of the Almighty". There pronounce the Name of God as only secret conditions will allow of its being pronounced, and forever after eschew the sacreligious habit of the scrambled mumbling among a crowd of people of the most sacred verbal prayer that was ever handed down to us.

If the student chooses the Lord's Prayer for mantric practice but finds it too long at first for complete incantation on a single breath it can be divided up and chanted at first in sections. It is conveniently phrased for such division. Do half of it, down to "Give us this day our daily bread", and then add sentence by sentence as proficiency grows. Attention should first be concentrated on making it technically correct, exactly as a pianist or violinist desiring to do full justice to the composer first perfects his technique so that afterwards his spirit may have free play; this means, in mantric practice, training the breath, selecting the most appropriate bodily posture, finding the best note, and experimenting to make it even and unwavering, repeatedly over and over again. As the technique is perfected the mind and spirit rest ever more and more in the words, discovering in them their deepest meaning, and letting this sink into the innermost chambers of the soul. If patiently and perseveringly practised the result will be the descent from above—or from within, to be more accurate—of that Solace from on high which is the gift of the Holy Spirit—"Spirit" meaning, as it does, Breath. So now perhaps what I have said about the *science* and *technique* of Yoga will be apparent. Yoga does not have a different objective from religion, ethics or philosophy; it simply has a practical approach, and refuses to regard religion and religious aspirations as merely a matter

of sentiment or credal definition. The whole subject is a science, and if its laws are obeyed the results are certain, and the physical, mental and spiritual profit beyond all power of definition or description.

V

YOGA FOR EVERYMAN

LET US NOW consider briefly what advantages can reasonably be looked for by the man in the street from the study of this subject. We have emphasized that one of the most important features of Yoga philosophy is that, for the ordinary purposes of this life, no artificial distinction is made between body, mind and spirit such as is the prevalent tendency in the West. These three aspects of man are inseparable and are always interactive. To pretend to cultivate the mind but neglect the instrument through which the mind must work is therefore regarded as folly. To talk sanctimoniously about the spirit while abusing the vehicle of the spirit is mere hypocrisy. The practical man who simply says he "wants to feel better, and that's all", is less of a fool and less of a hypocrite than those who seek to bemuse us with awesome threats of what will befall us unless we do what *they* say, or who stuff our heads with a lot of facts of questionable value and leave us ignorant of even the most rudimentary principles of the bodily machine upon which the mind must rely for its functioning. At the same time it needs to be stressed that the common sense attitude of the practical man who simply says he "wants to feel better", meaning of course physically, can be immeasurably enhanced and exalted by an understanding of the proper relationship of body, mind and spirit, and by a realization that his *whole being*, mind and spirit as well as body, will inevitably benefit by viewing himself in a composite light. After all, the true meaning of the word Health is *Wholeness*. How can we possibly feel *whole* as long as we accept the prevalent delusion that we must consider ourselves as trisected into three parts each working separately?

The term spirit is often used vaguely, and may be made to mean very different things, but I have used it to indicate mainly the emotional side of our three-fold nature, that aspect of us that determines our leanings, inspires our motives, prompts the *spirit* in which we act. Mind also is difficult to define. We usually associate mind, intellect, and intelligence with our conscious thought. In fact, however, the most intelligent part

of our functioning is obviously the unconscious or sub-conscious, particularly the intelligence that directs those bodily functions which make the very idea of consciousness possible, that higher or deeper intelligence over which the conscious part of our being has no control in ordinary circumstances and which indeed can easily be upset if we tamper wrongly with it with our conscious mind. *That* part of us is obviously the most important part of Mind in the fuller sense, since what we commonly call Thinking depends on it. Compared with the miraculous Higher Intelligence that regulates our bodily functions our conscious intelligence is at best a fumbling, unreliable faculty.

Besides, we found in considering the mind aspect of our make-up that what we usually call thinking is for the most part merely automatic reaction, and it continues to be this until some kind of shock is experienced which compels us to revise the ideas that have been injected into us from outside. These ideas are inculcated partly by instruction and education, and many of them are of course necessary for ordinary life. But they are not original, they are not ours in the sense that we thought them out for ourselves. We see this process operating very strongly in religious, political and social habits of thought. People belong to a certain sect or church or party because they were thus "brought up", it is the family tradition. People acquire quite automatically a certain social stamp that we sometimes call "class". Or they may rebel for equally automatic reasons, because they were "influenced", as we say, by somebody who happened to put other ideas into their head.

For all these reasons it is very difficult to find precise definitions applicable in all cases to words such as mind and spirit. Nevertheless, even if we cannot define the terms with precision, we do have a pretty shrewd idea, which we can accept for working purposes, of what we mean when we say in a general way that the word "physical" shall relate to the action and operations of the material human body; "mind" shall refer to the thinking part of us; and "spirit" to the emotional side of our nature. The spiritual part of us, then, is that which manifests as emotions, our "passions", of whatever coloration or quality.

The process of subduing and disciplining the spirit is the same as that of subduing the mind, it must be stilled. As long as there remain ruffles on the surface of our emotional nature they will prevent the reflection of Reality, just as the ruffles of our thoughts will prevent the reflections of Reality. And the stillness, the surrender, must be complete. "Be still, and know that I am God". Far from being exuberant or abounding or

"rich" in spirit, which is a condition the world tends to admire, we must on the contrary learn to curb it, rein in its manifestations. Then at last the real meaning of the puzzling beatitude becomes clear: "Blessed are the *poor* in spirit". Those who can completely quell their emotional nature, reducing themselves to mental and spiritual silence, these are they to whom it will be granted to see the greater vision beyond the confines of this world. In other words: "Blessed are the dispassionate".

This idea is inherent in one of the most striking of Shakespeare's sonnets:

*They that have power to hurt and will do none,
That do not do the thing they most do show,
Who, moving others, are themselves as stone,
Unmoved, cold, and to temptation slow;
They rightly do inherit heaven's graces
And husband nature's riches from expense;
They are the lords and owners of their faces,
Others but stewards of their excellence.*

The essential meaning of these lines is that only the dispassionate, the "poor in spirit", those who possess a secret power which they will seldom employ, who have learnt the art of non-reaction to environment, who do not reveal their inner thoughts, whose emotions are under control, in a word whose life is lived—to quote the words of the psalmist—"in the secret places of the Most High" utterly concealed from the vulgar gaze, only these shall "inherit heaven's graces", or to use the words of Jesus "shall inherit the earth".

Yet how shall we, in actual practice, through thought conquer thought, through emotion conquer emotion, through spirit conquer spirit? How are we from "rich" in spirit to become "poor" in spirit, from passionate to become dispassionate? How can we through spirit bring spirit to heel, and thus learn to inherit heaven's graces and husband nature's riches from expense? How are we to reduce our emotions to a state of nullity, or "poverty" to use Jesus's expression, and thus "inherit the earth"?

The key is, to tell the truth, in our hands all the time, its secret lies in the very word spirit, for "spirit", as we have already seen, in its original and most fundamental meaning is simply "breath". Inspiration is literally the process of "breathing into", aspiration "breathing towards", expiration "breathing out". To aspire to divinity means literally to breathe towards divinity, to breathe in such a manner as to approach the divine. The relation of breath to the emotions is well known and

observable by anybody. In anger the breathing is stertorous, in fear it is gasping, in serenity even and placid. Breathing is the key to the problem, the Yoga of the spirit is the Yoga of breath. This is the principle laid down by Patanjali at the very beginning of his Yoga Aphorisms as has already been said in dealing with the Yoga of the Mind. By learning the art of slow, deep, regulated breathing, controlled breathing, and especially retention of the breath, the operations of the mind and the disturbances of the spirit can be reduced to a minimum, and that serenity achieved which will permit the Higher Consciousness to be reflected within us.

Through the training of the breath, therefore, the stilling of the mind and the subduing of the emotions can quickest be achieved. Mind and spirit are of course involved in the process all the time, for it is impossible even to start the practice without thinking about it and without hoping for success, hope being the spiritual aspect of the matter at that stage. As the breath is brought under control, the mind and spirit follow suit, they follow the rhythm of the breath. Of course, other factors also enter the picture, two of the principal ones being posture and diet, both of which strongly affect the motions of the lungs, and it is not without profound significance that all the great religions associate prayer, or meditation, with the practice of fasting, and with frequent kneeling and prostration of the body. The fundamental *raison d'être* of these practices, as in the case of incantation, is physiological.

The Yoga of the Spirit then is the discipline which leads to calmness and serenity of the inner being, the ironing out, as it were, of the ruffles of emotion until a state of perfect stillness is attained. It is brought about by processes which are at one and the same time mental, emotional, and physical, these aspects of our nature being always interactive. It is the process of opening the door to the divine within us by removing all the obstacles of thought and emotion which are attached to our narrow conception of personality, "ego", "I", "me", and "mine". The key to the technique of this process being provided by restoring to the word spirit its true and original meaning, namely "breath", the path lies open to illumination.

Reviewing now all these branches of Yoga, Sun-Moon (Hatha) Yoga is that branch which treats of the physical organism, this being the only instrument we possess through which to achieve contact with the divine on this plane of existence. It seeks first to purify the body for its mental and spiritual functions by cleansing it, toning and tuning it up,

raising it to a higher level of efficiency, abolishing disabilities of physique which result from not knowing how to breathe, how to eat, how to restore healthy intestinal activity, how to sit, stand, walk, work, play, sleep and relax to best advantage. Ultimately, on its metaphysical side, it seeks, as its name implies, so to co-ordinate the workings of our physical organism that it shall operate with the same degree of rhythm and harmony as the solar system of which this planet is a member and of which each of us is an integral part. It starts by training the breathing as that function which links us most immediately and most intimately with the Life-force from which we derive consciousness. It seeks to quicken and expand our consciousness and raise it to a higher level.

This is equally the object of the Yoga of the Mind, Raja Yoga, which cannot be achieved without suitable discipline of its vehicle, the physical organism. Precisely the same must be said of Devotional, or Bhakta, Yoga. The idea that "spiritual merit" may be acquired by neglecting the body or even by mutilating it by abominable practices of self-torture is utterly foreign to the ideals of Yoga; it is just as deplorable that some perverted individuals indulge in such practices under the guise of Yoga as that the flagellants indulge in their self-mutilation under the guise of Christianity.

Expressed in terms suited to Western psychology the most valuable aspect of the teaching for practical purposes consists in recognizing the essentially unreal and unstable manner in which habitually we apply to ourselves the personal pronoun "I". Shattering though it may seem at first to be told our treasured personality is unstable and inconstant, since such an assertion deals a serious blow to our vanity, an acute appreciation of this truth is of enormous advantage in daily life, whether in business or home, for it assists us to understand our reactions and master them, it prevents us from so easily falling a prey to automatic response to outward stimuli, to those outward appearances which are themselves in point of fact a reflection of our own projected imagination. The mistake of identifying ourselves with our moods or our physical condition and regarding these as final is one of the chief causes of our suffering. It allows us no way of escape. And yet, very little thought shows us how greatly we deceive ourselves by such identification. Of course, at first great difficulty arises when the seeker, suddenly perceiving the truth of his position and feeling the ground slip beneath him, exclaims: "What then am I? Is life just a quicksand? Where shall I find an anchor that will hold?" The man of

devotional temperament usually cries: "What shall I do to be saved?"—and looks for a guide to whom to turn in his distress. The man of intellectual turn of mind, faced with a void, may at first fall into despair. Yet it is in this very void that the way of escape lies hidden, and the devotional man is merely crying to an unknown, invisible, at first seemingly empty source within himself. The source can of course never be defined because it is "not of this world". That is precisely what we are seeking—a sphere that is not of this world but of another, and the discovery of it and our union with it constitutes Yoga. It is a world of stillness and silence. In outward life this contact reveals itself in a new attitude of dispassion, objectivity towards worldly values, mastery of emotions, clarity of thought, greater power of judgment; it leads to a greater tolerance toward others, a deeper and more discriminating love, combined with the elimination of unreasoned and prejudiced dislikes. It leads us to adopt an open mind towards those who differ from us—a more generous attitude of mind—because if our own "I's" vary, so do the "I's" of other people. We are all in the same boat.

Having learnt this lesson, one is of course still subject to the same buffetings of circumstance, the same slings and arrows of outrageous fortune, but one's understanding of them and reaction to them are quite different. To acquire the technique of turning on or off at will the taps of our emotions gives one tremendous power over circumstances, and often over other people, but at the same time it gives sympathy and understanding, through realizing that less advanced people are in exactly the same situation as we ourselves formerly were. It also results in increased efficiency in one's business, duties, and occupations through comprehension of the true nature of all perceptible phenomena. When these are seen as projections of a Higher Consciousness we shall cease to fear their effect upon us when they take what appears to be an adverse turn. We shall, on the contrary, manipulate these phenomena with a new confidence, knowing that it lies within us to turn the tide to our favour.

Passing to Karma Yoga, the path of action, we found that what we commonly call our activities must be understood in a deeper sense than is usual. We are conscious as a rule only of an infinitesimal fraction of the actions which we are all the time performing; for to the extent that *you* are your *mind*, and your mind depends upon the functioning of the physical organism, then you are your digestion also, you are the circulation of your blood, you are the beating of your heart, you are the

action of every muscle which you use even in the very slightest movement, consciously or unconsciously. These are the departments of our action which we should study first and with great care since upon them depends the quality of functioning of the mind. Our external actions are also far more numerous and varied than we usually realize. We do an enormous number of things by sheer habit, we perform them like automatons. And the same is true of habits of thought. It is desirable to review and analyse all our habits from time to time: it is one of the first steps in learning to see ourselves as others see us, which may be a surprising revelation. Certain practices of physical Yoga help greatly in this.

Then there is the other aspect of Karma Yoga which arises out of the fact that analysis of action involves analysis of reaction—cause and effect. As we sow, so shall we reap. It is a common failing in human beings to complain of their lot. But to understand the cause means to understand the effect. Too many people shirk facing causes and take cowardly refuge in complaint. It may need great courage and profound thought to face causes, for invariably the cause of all our misery and all unhappiness lies within ourselves.

Jnana Yoga, the Yoga of Knowledge, showed us the value of observing the world around and within us, the accumulation of facts, a study of nature, of what really takes place about us, and in us, and the value of science to us in opening our eyes to the mysteries of the external universe. But the externalist also, as we pointed out, if he is to learn about everything in the universe, will sooner or later have to study himself. By his own logic he will be driven to apply the old Delphic motto of the Greeks, "Man, know *thyself*", for without this understanding he will understand nothing. But *with* this understanding knowledge becomes wisdom.

When we come to the Yoga of Sound—a seemingly abstruse study to many at first encounter—we found that it has a close bearing on daily life. Noise is one of the most pernicious features of what we are pleased to call civilization. Its opposite, silence, may have a deeply healing influence upon us, and is in any case an essential condition of meditation, which is a process of getting to know our inner self. Voices affect us greatly. Words are our chief medium of communication. Both involve sound. Sound is vibration. So it boils down to a study of vibrations. This led to a study of the effect on us of musical sounds, particularly those produced by vocal action. Yoga therefore requires a careful study of words, their precise meaning, the tone in

which they are uttered, and their effect on the hearer. Still more important is the production of musical sounds to affect our nervous system by causing certain kinds of internal vibration, with a study of incantation as a means of affecting the nervous system also of others. Through the law of octaves (which I explained with an illustration at the piano) we are able, by approaching the subject scientifically, coupled with an attitude of reverent search and experiment, to tune in—this is the true meaning of in-tone—to higher levels of consciousness, which is another way of saying approaching the divine. People whose conception of religion is bound by formalism and creeds are sometimes horrified at the very idea that contacting the divine is a physiological process, but that is only because of the false distinction they make between physical, mental, and spiritual. Even in its simplest form intoning, and especially the intoning of the sound “OM”, repeatedly and in a harmonious posture, has a profoundly soothing effect on the nerves, and is thus in itself a kind of spiritual balm.

But from whatever angle we consider the subject of our relation to the Divine, we cannot escape from the cardinal fact that our only possible approach is through the physical organism which is our sole medium on this plane of existence. Sentimentalists challenge this with the pretence or mistaken belief that the human mind can be trained without utilizing the brain or nervous system in any way; in other words that the human mind is an entity totally separate from and independent of all processes of living. This is a prevalent form of escapism, a device to avoid facing unwelcome facts. For from the moment that it is admitted that the brain and nervous system may have something to do with thought it follows inevitably that the quality and effectiveness of the thinking process must depend upon the quality and tone of the brain and nerves, which are kept alive only through being nourished by the blood; while in its turn the quality of the blood depends on the quality and selection of food consumed, the manner in which it is eaten and digested, the degree in which it is oxygenated by the lungs, and the completeness with which it is assimilated and waste matter eliminated. This is a hateful doctrine to philosophic and religious sentimentalists because it compels them, if they face it, to accept the fundamental precept of Yoga that our first duty to our Creator is to provide Him with an instrument worthy of His hand; and proper attention to this duty involves a re-assessment of accepted values and a sincere effort to train the

physical instrument to a finer rate of vibration, it being always recognized of course that we are all subject to mortal limitations, but these must not be made an excuse to shirk effort.

The essence of Yoga training of the physical instrument lies in keeping it pure, above all internally. We are told on high authority that the body is the temple of the Holy Spirit—but the manner in which a great many people look after it shows scant respect for the tenant. This disrespect must follow inevitably from the false and sacreligious idea invented by perverted minds that the human body is something to be despised and that its habitual neglect can be regarded with indifference, or even as a virtue! The philosophy of Yoga teaches that the first divine attribute of man is health—wholeness—of body, mind, and spirit—and the neglect of any of these aspects of what is essentially one and the same being must inevitably be reflected in the other two.

Alas, it is all too common to find the function of respiration neglected even among those who should know better; in fact it is not uncommon to find people experiencing discomfort and even a tendency to faint the very first time they try to use to their full extent the lungs with which Nature has provided them. Some even may protest on this account that complete breathing must be wrong—much as a confirmed drunkard or smoker might protest that it must be wrong to correct his bad habit because the first attempt at reform causes discomfort. There is no limit to the obstinacy of some people the moment they are invited to behave normally instead of abnormally as is their habit. To such, the natural appears unnatural. Truly it sometimes seems a wonder that some people take the trouble to breathe at all if they prefer habitually to underuse their lungs!

Expressed in practical terms, the first results of correct Yoga training are the ability to derive more energy from less food, more rest from less sleep, and more vitality with less waste.

A new system of physiological economics is established which is quickly reflected in the mind. Joy and happiness, for oneself and radiated to those around like a lighthouse, increased efficiency in work and pleasure in play, and service to others in everything, firstly by the mere fact of becoming a better being—these are some of the first fruits of glorification of God in the body.

To the man in the street who is not satisfied by theoretical or credal speculations this common-sense doctrine offers a new hope. To improve his health in such a way that his constant objective is increased efficiency of mind and serenity of spirit,

an inward escape from the anxieties and turmoil of life, a new equilibrium among disturbing vicissitudes, here is a gospel with practical value, a gospel which holds out the prospect of a new heaven here and now. Once prompted by the logic of the system, and fired with the hope of success, he applies himself to train his physique to a new level of health and to tune it to a higher standard of mental and spiritual values. In actual practice he begins by re-educating his breathing apparatus as the function that establishes the closest and most immediate contact with the Life-force; then his digestive apparatus; then the general toning up of the muscular system, with special reference to the influence on our psyche of such factors as posture and the need to counteract the effect of gravitation on our internal organs. With his enhanced vitality he trains his imagination to acquire a new sense of independence, a capacity for endurance, heightened powers of resistance to disease, a facility in rest and relaxation. And last but not least, he has the joy of knowing that this new heaven on earth is radiated to all around who cannot fail to be influenced and helped thereby, and the world thus made a better place to live in.

Hitherto it has been a prevalent view of people who have heard anything about Yoga at all that it was not a subject applicable to the man in the street, but that to be a practising student of Yoga you either had to be an ascetic or a recluse. It would however be equally unreasonable to suggest that any other department of learning which has come to us from the East—and almost all learning has come to us originally from the East—should not be applicable in the West. One possible reason why this particular subject took longer to become popularized in the West is that it is not merely an intellectual study but primarily a practical one, but the methods of practice are necessarily different in the East from the West. Consequently, as in many other departments of learning and philosophy, a certain adaptation was required before it became intelligible to the Western world.

I have given only a brief outline of the subject in these pages, but I have endeavoured to express it in terms intelligible to anybody. You do not have to be a scholar to study Yoga, nor do you have to be ascetically inclined. Indeed, a top-heavy intellectual may find it difficult to allow his imagination unhampered aspirational flight. And as for those who conceive virtue as being allied to an exaggerated degree of self-denial concerning the good things of life, such people tend to become fanatical and even to develop an odious attitude of self-righteousness. The best way to love your neighbour as yourself

is certainly not to turn yourself into a crank and expect him to follow suit. The very essence of Yoga as applied to ordinary daily life is Common Sense. Common sense does not cut out high ideals, indeed, to have high ideals is itself sheer common sense.

Bear in mind, therefore, that Yoga need not be regarded as an abstruse or purely metaphysical study relating to the occult and inaccessible to ordinary minds, but—precisely the contrary—is an intensely practical and matter-of-fact philosophy applicable to the most humdrum affairs of daily life. It belongs to the *here and now*, and it is the here and now that it seeks to make heaven. It advocates in the interest of study an open mind that shall not be enslaved by prejudices or by imposed ideas that have not passed through the sieve of reason or been tested in adversity. It is in a word a common-sense philosophy of life, which helps us to live better, more happily, more efficiently, and to radiate this atmosphere of contentment and practical progress to others. It leads to a deep study of our own selves, which has literally endless possibilities, opening up vistas of potentialities of which we normally are quite unconscious, and revealing hidden powers whose existence we have not even suspected. And thus, little by little, we are brought closer to the ideal of that union with the divine purpose which is the very essence of Yoga, “yoking ourselves to Perfection”.