
Raja Yoga - Part 1

Questioner. Gururaj, could you please tell us about the mechanics of Raja Yoga?

Gururaj. (Gururaj laughs) Yes sir. The mechanics of Raja Yoga - I wonder if it means if all mechanics should practise Raja Yoga? We are all really mechanics. We are the mechanics of our lives. We can tighten screws and loosen them, and of course the most important screws to be tightened are somewhere up there. Good, fine. Raja Yoga, as you would know, Raja means royal, the Royal Yoga, the Royal Path to Divine Union, where the individual self merges with the Universal Self, where man finds union with God. That is Yoga.

In the world today the word 'Yoga' has been so misunderstood. It has only been understood in the terms of all those fancy poses, all the Assanas, as they are known. Although Assanas have great value, but that does not constitute the entirety of Raja Yoga. It is a part of Raja Yoga, known as Hatha Yoga. Hatha means 'To be very adamant on one particular aspect', that is Hatha. Fine. So that is a section of Raja Yoga. Now many times you find teachers teaching Raja Yoga, but only a particular aspect of Raja Yoga. They tell you about meditation. Now there are various forms of meditation. There was a question this morning about thoughts and meditation, which I did not want to answer fully because as I said we are going to talk about Raja Yoga and I can cover that point.

You have some teachers that tell you, meditate so many minutes in the morning and so many minutes in the evening, and bob's my uncle. Now that is not true. That is not true. If you meditate so many minutes in the morning and so many minutes at night and everything comes right, it is not true. It is a fallacy; it is a gimmick, given to a susceptible, gullible public who wants everything just instantly - instant coffee, instant pudding, instant self-realisation.

Now the path of Yoga is not as simple as it seems. The path of Yoga, as it has been said by Vivekananda, is the path of the heroes, the path of warriors. There has to be determination. Krishna has said, 'There are few types of people that want to reach me: the one that is in distress, the one that wants worldly gain, the one that is a seeker and, last but not least, the one that has real spiritual knowledge and want to remain for ever in touch with his Maker. He wants to be at home all the time, and not stray away'.

Now, Raja Yoga, as we said, is the Royal Path to that union. Why is it called the Royal Path? Because Raja Yoga combines within itself all the other Yogas, Karma Yoga, which is of right action, right thinking; Jnana Yoga which is of intellectual analysis, wanting to find answers. Good. It combines Bhakti Yoga which is the Yoga of devotion, and surrender and love. Now all these, wherever one starts from according to one's temperament, they all finally merge into the one Yoga, the Royal Yoga, Raja Yoga. Now, some people say that there are eight steps in Raja Yoga. They are not

to be regarded as steps, but they are limbs. Raja Yoga by Patanjali was called Astanga Yoga. Asta means eight; anga means limbs - the eight limbs of Yoga. Now this evening let us examine as far as we can, as far as time allows, the eight limbs of Yoga. Meditation is fine, but if meditation is not backed up with the first two limbs, Yama and Niyama, then meditation can be of some value, it can give you some form of relaxation of mind and body, but it is not enough to lead you to enlightenment, or with the One-ness that we all seek.

Now, what do we mean by Yama? Yama has five aspects to it and the first aspect of Yama is Ahimsa, which means non-violence. Now how shall we define non-violence? We spoke about non-killing last night and we covered a bit of ground there. To be non-violent does not only mean the killing of living beings, of animate things, but non-violence also means a non-aggression upon ourselves and upon those around us. Now, we, having the animal nature in us, do become aggressive; perhaps not in act, but in word and thought. So here, one has to make a very conscious effort in curbing one's aggressive thought and one's aggressive word. There's a lovely Chinese proverb that says that when we become angry, when you want to say some angry words, turn your tongue around in your mouth nine times. Beautiful psychology that, yes, because by the time you've turned and twisted your tongue in your mouth nine times, your anger will have disappeared and you will not utter those words. You will not be aggressive because you can kill with words, and we know how vitriolic some people can become by uttering words of an aggressive nature. We can do so much harm to a person's entire life. If we are aggressive with a stick, that wound will heal in a few weeks, or a month or two; but if we leave a scar on a person's mind, that scar can remain for a lifetime. We find parents for example, in the ill-treatment or not proper treatment, or not proper upbringing of the children, leave an indelible scar for which the child, when grown-up, suffers, and suffers, and suffers. That is one of those in distress that wants to find union. Good.

After Ahimsa, that has to be practised consciously, we have Satya. Now Satya means truthfulness. Truthfulness does not only mean uttering words of truth, but acting truthfully. Now we know how fragmented the human being is. His mind will think of one thing, his mouth will say another thing and he will do another thing. Yes. That is being untruthful to oneself. To be untruthful to oneself means that you say one thing, think another thing and do another thing. So you are pulled to pieces by yourself. Now if we can very consciously combine word, thought and deed, then we are being truthful to ourselves, and when we are truthful to ourselves we can be truthful to others. One of the qualities of truthfulness is sincerity, because a sincere person can never be untruthful. Every act of his, every word of his, every thought of his, because of that sincerity that is within him, will always act with the flow of nature and never against nature. And when we act with the flow of nature, which we have to do consciously, then we become truthful, we become sincere. That is the second part of what we have termed Yama.

Then we have number three - in Sanskrit it is called Astaya, which means non-stealing. Now non-stealing does not mean robbing the bank. It does not mean robbing the bank only, or pick-pocketing someone. Non-stealing also carries with it, within itself, truthfulness and non-violence. When we are unjust to another, we are being violent to that person; and being violent to the person, we are stealing the peace of that person. What greater theft can there be than stealing someone's peace? And stealing implies cheating, unfaithfulness, infidelity, promiscuity. All these things comprise what we call Astaya, non-stealing. So it's not necessary that stealing only means money, but stealing also has to do with one's life style, with one's emotions, and how we harm or hurt other people's emotions. That is Astaya.

Then in Yama, we have what is called Brahmacharya, which is the most misinterpreted word that has ever been given out into this world. Many people feel that Brahmacharya means celibacy, complete continence, non-indulgence in sex. Brahmacharya does not mean this. Brahma means Divinity, achar means the way, the path. So to be a Brahmachari, practising Brahmacharya, means to walk in the path of Divinity. That is the true meaning of Brahmacharya. Now to practise Brahmacharya, one necessarily must exercise some form of control. Now that control can be about eating, can be about sleeping, can be about drinking, or the sexual act.

I've told a story once, I don't know if it was here in England, where a couple came to see me. They were so, so emotionally disturbed. They had met some Swami that said, 'For you to reach God, you must practise celibacy. No sex'. Fine. They took this Swami's word, he was an intelligent man I think, and so that is what they did, they practised celibacy. Fine. And, not being ready for celibacy, not having the abilities to sublimate those energies. Remember celibacy is not for householders, it's not for married people. It is for ascetics where they go through severe asceticism, severe austerities, whereby they could sublimate the sex energy, which is one of the strongest urges in a human being, whereby they could sublimate that energy into what is called Orjas, light. Yes, that is for ascetics, not for the householder.

Now to get back to our story. This couple practised celibacy. Without being able to sublimate their sexual urges and energies, they started having problems, emotional problems. The husband and wife were forever irritable with each other. They were creating unnecessary inhibitions within themselves, unnecessary repressions. And the result was this, that they started becoming unhappier and unhappier. Where there was such compatibility, they started becoming incompatible. And of course the Psychiatrists made a lot of money out of it. I see there's one sitting over there! So they heard of me and they came to our centre in South Africa. And I spoke to them and asked them what the problem was. So I said, 'You go to bed tonight in a double bed'. After a while they came to see me again and they were their old, same old selves again, so, so happy.

So Brahmacharya must not be interpreted only in the terms of complete abstinence but it must be interpreted in the terms of walking along the path of Brahma, walking along the path of Divinity. And when anyone walks along on the path of Divinity, he has to exercise all forms of control within himself. So you see how non-violence, non-stealing and truthfulness also merge into that. Yama is one principle that has these various aspects, which all merge into that oneness again.

So from Brahmacharya we reach Aparigraha. I'll spell it for you later. We have Aparigraha. Now, Aparigraha literally means rejection of all ties. Now, as a householder we cannot reject all ties. By ties I don't mean the lovely maroon one you have on there. The ties that are to be rejected are the unbalanced attachments. Now we do find, we do find in the world how some people are attached to things so, so unnecessarily, things that mean absolutely nothing. I have seen a lady in whose home, very inadvertently, the maid broke the vase; and she nearly had a nervous breakdown. She had a nervous breakdown - I don't know if she thought she was going to take that vase with her - it happened, but her attachment to it was so much, and the attachment not only to the vase but also to the attachment of those that had passed on before her, her mother, her grandmother, her grandmother's grandmother. They are gone, they have reached another sphere. But because of that emotional attachment, all those things that passed away out of her life and that could be of no consequence in her present life, were all centred in this vase. That is wrong attachment. Good.

Now, one should not have detachment, but one should have non-attachment. Now there's a great difference between detachment and non-attachment. Detachment means that you become indifferent, you become indifferent to the world. You seclude yourself from the world. You withdraw yourself from the world in detachment. And that, in most cases, is a form of escapism. I've always said 'escapism' - Amrit taught me the right way! Escapism. Through my travels in the Himalayas and through the various Ashrams and all over the world, I have seen detached people. All those Yogis and Saddhus and Ascetics were nothing but escapists. They could not face life, they could not face the world. They could not handle their problems and their troubles, so this was the easy way out.

There was a time in India when there were six million Saddhus. They call them Saddhus - I call them parasites, living on the fat of the land, not wanting to work, going around begging for their food. Of the six million, there might have been six who were sincere. There might have been six, the others were sick. Good. That is escapism, where they can't really handle themselves in life and they become detached from the world. That is detachment. What we want is non-attachment, where you are functioning in the world. You have your three square meals a day, you love your wife and children, you are close to them. You have all the ties - a wardrobe full! Yet you are not emotionally attached. That is what the Bible means when it says 'To be in the world, but not of the world'. That is what is meant. It does not mean run away. It means come, be in the world. And if everyone starts running away from this world, I tell you what will happen, the cities will be emptied and new cities will be built in the jungles. So you still live where you are. Man can never run

away from himself. A geographical change does not help. So in non-attachment, we face our problems. We face them squarely and we try and find solutions and if we are sincere enough the solutions are there. Because there is no problem that has not the solution inherent in it. The solution to every problem is in-built, built into the problem. Yeah. Good. Fine.

So we have talked about Aparigraha, non-attachment to these ties. It does not mean do not have ties, but view the ties objectively. View the ties objectively, and when we view these ties objectively, we do forget the curse of mankind. And the greatest curse on the head of mankind is 'me and mine'. Me and mine. This is mine, this is mine, this is mine - If it was really ours. As a matter of fact we are just on loan here, on holiday. We do not even belong to ourselves, we belong to the Almighty. But as we spoke about the ego this morning, the ego assumes all supremacy and says I, I, I. That is only an I-dea. It is an idea, and an idea is a function of the mind, created by the mind. So this little I, which I call I, I, I, and which causes all this me and mine, is an idea of the mind.

So when we start recognising that the whole world does not revolve round me, and funnily enough that's what people think, all their troubles are because they think everything revolves round them, everything that happens, happens to me. What me? Good. And that is why there's such little love in this world, such little love in this world because everything is just me, not you, me. Now if you write 'ME' and have a reflection of it, that ME looks like WE - try it. It does, me, turn it around - we. And when we start functioning and understanding the meaning of WE, then there's no ME. And when there's no me there's no mine. Good. So all this falls under Aparigraha, the unnecessary attachments to which we have, we attach – there attach comes again, we attach so much importance. So that is one of the limbs of Raja Yoga.

Now from Yama we would proceed to Niyama. Now Niyama too has five aspects. The first aspect of Niyama is Sochia - that's a Sanskrit word which means 'inner and outer cleanliness', inner and outer cleanliness. Now the outer cleanliness does not necessarily refer to the body, although it's part of it, but outer in this sense could also be environment, and how we react to the environment. Inner cleanliness necessarily involves right thinking. A person that has wrong thinking, can never be clean inside. I was reading a form this evening, a review report, and this person just wrote two, three words, four words, and they were so beautiful, I was so touched. He or she Voice. She.

Gururaj. That is a secret - this person said, 'Through my practices I feel clean inside'. Beautiful. I cried. Tears came out of my eyes. How beautiful it is to feel clean inside? How do we become clean inside? Right action, right thought, right feeling.

Now all these things we have been talking about can be done consciously. We can curb many of the things that happen in our lives. So we have inner and outer cleanliness. Now, if we practise Yama properly, with non-violence, truthfulness, Asteya, Brahmacharya and Aparigraha, then automatically, all these things are so interlinked, automatically we feel clean inside and outside.

Now when we feel clean inside and outside, we find its Santosha. Santosha means contentment. And isn't that what every person wants? Contentment. To be contented in whatever circumstances we are placed in. Now we know that if it rains twice someone says, 'Oh, it's raining'. If it's too hot, 'It's too hot!' What a sad state of affairs. Feel contented. Feel contented. We spoke this morning, we spoke this morning that what ever happens to us is of our own doings. And let me be contented in acceptance, not contented in sitting back and not doing anything about it, but contented in acceptance that this is my lot, and I accept this lot and not worry about it and get nervous breakdowns. That is an aspect of contentment. So Niyama contains contentment.

So, once through the practice of the first limb, Yama, we reach Niyama. Now please remember that these things don't follow step by step. They are all intertwined. They form part and parcel of each other. By developing one virtue within ourselves, we automatically develop other virtues. If a person is kind, then automatically he becomes sympathetic, automatically he becomes compassionate. If he is kind, automatically he would have a sense of service, serving his fellow men. So all these things are interconnected, all aspects of the one thing.

Now Santosha also means keeping an equanimity in all that happens around us, pleasure and pain. Now if we have developed in Yama the sense of non-attachment then we can find contentment, for then pleasure and pain will be viewed objectively and would not have a binding karmic effect upon us. Our problem is that we heap karma upon karma - bad or good, both are binding. But if it can be viewed objectively then it becomes non-binding. And anything which is non-binding, can never add on to karma, and all karma one has to pay for. Whatever you sow you must reap. You know that.

From there, from there it becomes a little more difficult now. We have Tapas which literally means austerity. Now that austerity, like Brahmacharya is also a word so, so misinterpreted. Austerity doesn't mean that you deprive yourself; that if you have a bed at home, a comfortable bed, that you will go and sleep on the ground. It's not necessary. Enjoy life, enjoy - it's shorter than you think. But enjoy it in the right way. And enjoying life in the right way is austerity. That is austerity, enjoying life in the right way. Good. Fine. When a person has the required austerity, then he becomes indifferent to extremes; indifferent to extremes, because after practising the aspects of Yama and Niyama, then nothing can affect you. Hail, wind or storm, it doesn't affect you because now here is a strength built up in you.

Now I want to repeat over and over again this evening that all these things come about by conscious effort and not closing your eyes for twenty minutes morning and evening. That is a help. That gives you strength to put life itself into practice. And by putting life into practice, we live a practical life. That's what we want, not a sleeping life. And most people go to sleep in meditation in any case. Good.

Now the next principle of Niyama is Svadhyaha - that's a Sanskrit word which means - you can have this piece of paper - Svadhyaha means self-study. Self-study and also study of Scriptures. Now, I've given you an example before - I don't know if it was here or in America or wherever - it's worth repeating: what does self-study mean? Self-study can be

interpreted as self-analysis, for one, and it can also be interpreted as self-evaluation, self-evaluation. Now every evening I have a habit, every evening while I'm lying in bed I review the whole day. What have I done during this day? Has this day been lived, and well-lived or not? In my case the answer might be yes all the time, but nevertheless. (General laughter). I am very fun-loving, because life is joy, so be joyful. For example, you know one thing that hurts me very much is that our beloved Jesus is always portrayed with tears running down his eyes. You know it's possible he might have had eye problems like me. (General laughter) But one thing I tell you, that he was one of the most cheerful men on earth, because he said, 'Be of good cheer'. And Jesus would not preach anything which he did not practise. Remember that. So be of good cheer - let's laugh. Good.

So, self-study means self-analysis, and it also means self-evaluation. So when I go to bed at night, I evaluate the whole day, what I have done and what I have not done and what I could have done. Pity the body's not so strong, could have done so much more. Good. Right. Now here is a very simple way for self-analysis. I've spoken about it before, that if a person goes through five seconds of negativity, let the next six seconds be of positivity, you have one second in the credit balance. After that, ten seconds go in negativity, let eleven seconds go in positivity - credit balance, two. Now, if we live our daily life consciously, with the practice of Yama and Niyama, then at night we'll have the finest sleep, no insomnia. No insomnia, because we will sleep contentedly, that totalling up the day's activities I've got so many seconds, or so many minutes, in my credit balance. Now, you count up all those credit balances of each day, times three hundred and sixty five and a quarter. If you total it all up, the year has gone good, times it by another sixty or seventy, or as long as you want to live, and you have evolved. You are then leaving this world, you are leaving this world a much better place than when you came into it, because you are leaving this world a better person. Good. That is the result of self-evaluation, self-study. Good.

Now, we come to the last section of Niyama. The Sanskrit word is Ishwar Pranidarn, Ishwar Pranidam. That is what all religions are about, 'Self-surrender to Divinity'. We talk and we read about, 'Thy will be done' - lip service. As long as we have this me and mine, Thee and Thine are forgotten, always. Self-surrender would imply this very principle, 'Thy will be done'. Now if you cannot surrender yourself to the impersonal God, the transcendental Divinity, then surrender yourself to the imminent God. Is that the right word? Imminent? You surrender yourself to the imminent, personal God. Now who is the personal God? See Him everywhere. See Him in your child, see Him in your wife, your husband, your friend, your neighbour, for Divinity resides in all of them. That is the abstract becoming concrete. So if the mind cannot conceive of the abstract, of the impersonal God, let us conceive of him as a personal God. And that is why, that is why we believe in our spiritual perceptor. That is why we believe and love Jesus, we love Buddha, we love Krishna for that is the incarnation. They are the incarnations of the abstract made concrete to show us the way. For the way is the life, and that is the truth, the real truth. Good.

So we have now covered very briefly, yes, very briefly

Voice. (Interruption)

Gururaj. Pardon

Voice. (Inaudible)

Gururaj. Oh, must we do it in two parts?

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