

## Raja Yoga - Part 2

Gururaj. Good. Last night we spoke about Yama and Niyama. Now, if you remember what we spoke about, you will find that it encompasses all the ethical and moral precepts on how to live a good life. Good. Now, in living a good life, one would find that automatically one draws upon oneself that indefinable thing called Grace. Now in drawing Grace upon us, to us, our lives do become harmonious. We find a greater integration within ourselves. Now in order to enhance the good life, there are other principles involved. The body has to be looked after. So we reach the third stage or the third limb of Raja Yoga, which is called Assana. Now Assana as you would know, is the basic thing that has to do with Hatha Yoga. Good. Now, why is Hatha Yoga necessary in a person's life? For example, we might have a person who is deformed and cannot practise Hatha Yoga. Then for that person there is no hope lost that he must undergo these various Yogic exercises. But in India at that time, when Patanjali started off formulating his Raja Yoga, they started aspirants off from a very, very young age. When you were eight or ten you went to the Ashram and you were put through all these various exercises.

Now Hatha Yoga, which is, comprises of Assanas, is there to give a certain form of exercise to the body. It is not only the body that one concentrates on so much, although it is beneficial to the body, but they have found, ancient Physiologists have found, that the outer body manifests all the discrepancies that are in the inner body, the organic self. So where Hatha Yoga differs from ordinary gymnastics is this, that in ordinary gymnastics we exercise the muscles of the body, while in Assanas we exercise the internal organs of the body. We exercise or massage or stimulate the liver, the digestive functions, and everything that has to do with that which is inside the skin of our body. Now, by keeping that in trim, by keeping the body in trim, one becomes helped in the process of meditation. Now the purpose of Hatha Yoga, by keeping the body in trim, tries to seek union with that which is even deeper within ourselves, the spiritual body. Fine.

Now meditation starts off from inside you and the internal self is brought to the external self, while in Hatha Yoga you start with the external and try to reach the internal. Many people practise Assanas just to keep fit. That helps, it keeps a person fit, but that is not the sole purpose of Yogic Assanas. The sole purpose is to form a co-ordination between body, mind and spirit. Now if a person does these Assanas mechanically then his only benefit would be to the body, and the organism, the organic self of the body. But, while doing these various Assanas, if his mind is tuned totally in the Assanas, then a co-ordination comes about between body and mind.

Now you would find that all these Yogic Assanas are never really strenuous. They take you from very simple Assanas to more difficult ones. With practice the difficult Assanas too become very simple. So this becomes such a natural flow in the exercise of the body that the mind is tuned with the body, the mind is infused in the body, and every cell of the body awakens to the thought in the mind. Now when a person does Assanas and the mind is tuned to every cell of the body, then it is a necessary must that the mind must contain good uplifting thoughts. Now how does the mind have good uplifting thoughts? Because the person has practised Yama and Niyama, by having lived a good life, living a good life, his mind naturally tends towards the higher Self. So here, the forces, the mental forces now attuned to the higher Self infuses itself with every cell of one's physical body. Now when that attunement takes place, when that attunement of mind and body takes place through these Yogic Assanas, it leaves the spirit free. It frees the spirit from the bondage of the mind and body. And when the spirit is free, it shines forth. So a second infusion takes place. The mind is infused in the body and now the spirit, being free, also fuses itself in the body and here, while you are doing your round of Assanas, you are acting there with mind, body and spirit as a totality. That is the purpose of Assanas, and not only taken for exercises or to lose weight or whatever.

So now, Assanas is a science on its own. Hatha Yoga is not only Assana itself, but a total purification and cleansing of the body which, at its highest limits would not be good for our present society. There are certain exercises where, for example, string is put up from one nostril and out the other nostril, and we have what is called 'Noli' - cleansing. You are also taught to have an enema without using an enema, where you go into the river and through the anus you drop water in to the system and clean your entire bowels. This comes in the higher form of Hatha Yoga. We don't need that. Good.

There are other exercises where the tongue is elongated, and this little piece of skin that keeps the tongue to the – what do you call it – not the palate –

Aide. The floor of the mouth

Gururaj. The floor of the mouth, yes, that's it. Good. Then slowly, slowly, slowly that little skin is cut away. That little skin is cut away so that the tongue can be more and more elongated. It's a process that takes years. Now the purpose of doing this is to acquire the ability to roll up the tongue and block the entire throat with your own tongue. And by taking in a breath, you preserve the subtle essence of the breath so that you can live without breathing. This is the secret behind what we hear some of the Yogis do. They get buried underground for forty days and they come out alive. This is how it is

done. Now we don't need these things for God-realisation. Now, these things are there or people of certain kinds of temperament. I have met .... (General laughter). Fine. So Yoga, Patanjali's Yoga caters for every temperament, that's what I'm trying to say.

Now in order to achieve this, one studies the fourth stage, in order to do the third stage, which is Pranayama. Now during the Mandala checks, Amrit and Robert has given you some explanation of Pranayama. Basically Pranayama is to bring the body into a particular rhythm. Now, many of you do the basic Pranayama exercise – four, sixteen, eight - inhaling four, retaining sixteen, and exhaling on the count of eight. This is a rhythm and ancient Yogis have found that this rhythm takes one in attunement with the universal rhythm. If you can stand apart from the universe, you'd find the Universe pulsating like this all the time in that rhythm; pulsating all the time in that rhythm. So here too is Yoga, which means union, you are uniting your individual little being to the universal being, and thereby you find that one-ness, you find self-realisation, where you become identified with the universe. That is the basic principle behind Pranayama.

Now when a person breathes rhythmically, a greater relaxation takes place. When a greater relaxation takes place, he could perform his Assanas better, and in attunement. When one's Assanas are performed in attunement, when there's a rhythm within oneself, life becomes easy to practise Yama and Niyama. You see how these things are not steps that follow one upon the other, but they are all inter-related. One is helping the other, and the other is helping that. So these things form an integral part, in this path of Yoga, to reach self-realisation. So here we have talked about looking after our moral and ethical selves and the principles of Yama and Niyama, if you study them closely, are non-different from the Ten Commandments. But here is a practical method. Instead of saying, 'Thou shalt not' and 'Thou shalt', these are practical exercises in making all those Commandments possible in our daily living. So we try and attain a suppleness of the body. We try and keep the body healthy by Assanas. We bring a rhythm into the body through Pranayama and of course in Pranayama, it is not the outward breath that is so important. It takes a secondary place, because with every breath we are drawing into ourselves a vital force, you can call it life force.

Now with these various methods of breathing, there are many sections. Retention is called by one name, the inward breath is called by another name, the outward breath is called by a different name. And they have five categories - the reason why they form these categories is to give you an understanding that, 'Am I breathing in correctly?' or 'Am I breathing out correctly?' That is why all these various categories are there. Now this would come under 'advanced' in an advanced form of Pranayama, in which we are not interested now, at the moment. But proper breathing is necessary.

Do you know that ninety nine percent of us do not know how to breathe? We only breathe with this little part of the chest. The proper way to breathe is - you breathe in and let the air go down to the stomach, and then from the stomach you push it up. Do you notice that? The stomach bulging out? I've got a big one though (General laughter]. That makes a complete breath, that gives oxygen to the entire system. That is the right way of breathing, and as you would know, that breathing gets rid of all the carbon dioxide, is it, carbon dioxide from the system. So it helps purify the body, it helps in purifying the body and, by purifying the body, you become more successful in doing Assanas. Fine.

Now this is the lower part of Yoga, the Yama and Niyama, Assanas and Pranayama. After that we go into deeper waters. After that we have what is called Pratyahara. Pratyahara means withdrawal of the senses. Now how does one withdraw the senses? There are five senses as we know - seeing, touching, smelling, tasting, hearing - we have these five senses. In Yoga we are taught that we have to withdraw these senses. Now to withdraw the senses, a certain amount of preparation is necessary, and the preparation could be through Assanas and through Pranayama, where the mind and body are in such attunement, where the mind and body are in such attunement that you subdue the mind and body. Now we have all found through our practices, that many times we become entirely oblivious of the body. Many times you would be conscious of the phone ringing, but it would be so far away. You'd hear the doorbell and the doorbell would seem as if it was ringing next door; because you have withdrawn your senses within yourself. And by withdrawing the senses within yourself, you have mastered the needs of the senses. That is called Pratyahara.

Now without having Pratyahara, Dharana, which is concentration, cannot be fully achieved. To develop concentration, we do Tratak. Now remember, these are not stages, they all are intertwined. And the methods we have in our meditational system is to combine all these things, and perhaps soon we might even have Yoga classes. We are thinking very seriously of organising this. Good. So from Pratyahara, we reach what is called Dharana. Good. Dharana, Dhyana and Samadhi are the three higher aspects of Raja Yoga. It is only the concentrated mind - now we do know that our minds are fragmented - one portion of it pulls one way and the other portion the other way. At one moment we'll be thinking of dinner and the next moment we'll be thinking of Brighton beach! The weather must be nice there now! Good. So, our minds are forever flitting around, like a butterfly. So the mind has to be brought into control.

Now to bring the mind into control, it can not be done with effort. The more you exercise effort in controlling the mind, or controlling thought, the more would thoughts come. Thoughts are like monkeys on a tree. Yes, they are monkeys. If you want to still the monkeys, it would not help shaking the tree, they will jump more. So if the thoughts are left to themselves, as the monkeys, if they are left to themselves, they will settle down by their own selves. They will settle

down. But for them to settle down, a certain amount of concentration is required. If we try to achieve the powers of total concentration, we are surely bound to meet up with failure, like shaking the tree on which the monkeys are. So what we do is this, we let the mind play. We let the mind play on its own and the thoughts soon would settle down. But before we do this, if we have developed a form of togetherness of the mind, a form of concentration of the mind, then thoughts could settle down much faster.

Now how to gain concentration of the mind without concentrating? That is the secret. What we do in our Tratak practice is just that. Where we take our attention to the flame. We do not concentrate on the flame, we take our attention very easily to the flame. And by doing that, all the mental forces that are so scattered gain a togetherness, becomes focused. Now, with continuous and regular practice of the Tratak exercise, our minds become automatically concentrated, because to reach the highest stages of Yoga one needs mental force, mental energy rather. One needs that energy so that one becomes oblivious of the body first, because of that mental energy, and then one goes beyond the mental energy. Good. So, once we have developed the powers of concentration, then we enter the realms of Dharana, contemplation. How many of us experience this daily, that we start off on one thought, as we said just now, and the mind roves away into another thought. And from the second thought to the third, to the fourth, to the fifth, and like that it continues. The mind is unanchored. It is not anchored. Proper contemplation is to allow the mind to start at point A and systematically proceed to point Z. That is how thoughts should be. And that is called contemplation. The classic analogy used in Eastern literature, is pouring oil from one vessel into another vessel, in an unbroken line. So when we have attained a certain measure of concentration, then our contemplation improves. And when our contemplation improves, Dharana, where our contemplation improves, then we can really know what Samadhi is. Then we can really know what Samadhi is. Samadhi, loosely interpreted, is called meditation. Now there are many forms of meditation. Good. The two most important forms of meditation is Cervikalpa Samadhi, which is meditation with form, and Nirvikalpa Samadhi, which is meditation without form. Good.

Now here there are two stages - that is why thought is important in the first stage of meditation. Good. But that thought can only proceed from A to Z, if the mind is concentrated. To allow the mind to be concentrated, a certain rhythm is required in the body. For the certain rhythm to be in the body, a certain rhythm to be within oneself, the body has to be in a fair healthy condition. And, a fair healthy mind and body can be brought about by right thinking. And right thinking can be brought about by the practice of Yama and Niyama, right living. You see how all this is interconnected, interconnected?

Now in the higher forms of Samadhi - let us call it meditation - in the higher forms of Samadhi, we have Sarvikalpa Samadhi and we have Nirvikalpa Samadhi. Sarvikalpa Samadhi, with form, necessitates thought. And Sarvikalpa Samadhi becomes effective and powerful if the thought forces have a natural flow from one point to the other.

Now there are forms of meditation where a certain object is used. For example, in our case we use the Mandala, where we try and become - try is not the word, - but effortlessly we become absorbed in the Mandala. And when, through Tratak and the Mandala Practice, we find the absorption, then we become successful in visualisation, where (Side One ends here)

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So we come to the stage of Sarvikalpa Samadhi. Now why we need Sarvikalpa Samadhi is because our conception of Divinity could be with form, and our conception of Divinity could be without form. We describe this normally as the Personal God sitting in Heaven, and then the Impersonal, transcendental God. But everyone on the path of

spiritual progress has to reach the Personal God first. Therefore in our prayer we say, 'Our Father which art in Heaven'. Good. Now in order to appreciate this, we can use Krishna, or Christ, or Rama, whichever Deity you believe in, you can use that as your focal point. So from the simplest form of getting this concentration, we develop the visualisation of our ideal, Ishta Devata, as it is called in Sanskrit.

Now you read many stories where, for example, Ramakrishna, the Sage that lived at the turn of the century, just before the turn of the century, to him he believed in Mother Kali, an Indian goddess, and he could actually converse - this stone image would come alive to him - and he could actually converse with Mother Kali. What has happened is this, that by intense concentration, by having developed the power of concentration, not through concentration itself but by training one's attention, the mind is capable of generating such a force, such a power, that it could bring a stone image alive. You would hear this same thing told to us by Christian mystics, that they would say that 'Christ appeared to me'. So you see how powerful the mind is and how the mind can be cultivated, how the mind can gain that depth of concentration. And through the depth of concentration, proper contemplation takes place. And by proper contemplation anything can be brought to whichever the mind desires.

Now, for the mind's desire to take a tangible form, there has to be Yama and Niyama, the purity of life. It is not only a matter of belief, it is a matter of practical experiencing. It's a matter of practical experiencing. So we have two conceptions of Divinity, that with form, Saguna Brahman, as they say in Sanskrit, and we have Divinity, Nirguna Brahman, which is another Sanskrit term for the Impersonal Transcendental God. Now to achieve Saguna Brahman one has to have an object of focus, and that object of focus, like Christ or Buddha or Rama or Krishna, can be brought to its tangible reality here on earth, in front of us. It is not difficult to speak to Krishna, it is not difficult to speak to Christ here and now. It is not difficult. It happens if only we cultivate the mind to its finest level, because all those beings of flesh and blood that lived on this earth have been none better in flesh and blood than you and I. But the quality that was there, that which shone through, was the eternal Spiritual Self. There is no difference between Krishna-consciousness and Christ-consciousness. It is the same consciousness, and everyone can say that 'I have that consciousness' but everyone cannot say that 'I express that consciousness'. That is why, that is why it is said that Christ lives eternally, Krishna lives eternally, Buddha lives eternally, because that Divine Consciousness is eternal. Time to time, when the world needs it, that very Consciousness embodies itself to help the world. Good.

Let us get back to Saguna Brahman, the Personal God, and to recognise the Personal God one needs Sarvikalpa Samadhi, that means meditation with form. So it is not wrong for anyone at all to carry one's ideal within one's heart, in

whatever form. Your ideal could be your wife, your ideal could be your husband, your ideal could be your Guru, your ideal could be your Ishta Devata. It could be Christ, Krishna, anyone. As long as the recognition is there that it is not the outward form I carry in my heart, but it is the inner spirit that must and does permeate me, and which I must not only recognise by the mind, but experience and realise. So that is the purpose of Sarvikalpa Samadhi, to train the mind, attune the mind in a communion with a tangible reality. That is one form of meditation.

Now when a person progresses beyond meditation with form, then he reaches the stage of Nirvikalpa Samadhi, Samadhi without form, meditation without form. In that state, what happens is this, that you have now become pure in mind and body. You have now gained the ability to withdraw from your senses. Senses are forever outward-going, therefore one has Pratyahara and one goes inward. One becomes oblivious to all the objects which the senses perceive or experience, because the senses can only perceive or experience the things that they are capable of doing, and the capacity and capability of the senses is very small, very small. Fine.

So in Pratyahara, by withdrawing the senses, a total absorption takes place because the mind is concentrated. A concentrated mind means that all the mental forces which are so scattered are brought together, fine, and after having brought all the mental forces together, contemplation is there, like as we said, oil being poured from one vessel into another in an unbroken line. Now, when that kind of contemplation has been achieved, then our Ishta Devata, or the Deity we believe in, becomes a reality because of the force generated by our own minds. So that becomes Sarvikalpa Samadhi.

Now from there to reach Nirvikalpa Samadhi, the transcendent Divinity, one has to go beyond all form. Now one could never approach the abstract directly except through the concrete. If you have no perception of the concrete, the abstract will forever remain abstract. Although the abstract is the most tangible reality, for having reached the absolute or the abstract, all this becomes but a dream. All this becomes but a dream. We know that while we are dreaming, the dream is so real, but it is only when we wake up from the dream we see in retrospection that it was a dream. Same thing with this life. Same thing with the life that we live, same thing with this world, same thing with this universe, because when we go beyond, then in retrospection we will know that this is a dream. It becomes non-existence. And that is what is meant by the transcendental being. Now many people will tell you that you can achieve that transcendence within one week, four lessons, I'm sorry; half-an-hour each. I've only started. Is it one o'clock?



Now that is not the experience of Divinity. That is not the experience of the Absolute. There are many exercises, very simple exercises, which will still your mind. And stilling the mind, and stilling the mind you will think that you have reached the Absolute. But it is not so. To reach the Absolute is the most difficult thing on earth and in heaven, because heaven too is a conception of the mind. Yes, it's the most difficult thing. Do not be deluded. What we have to do is meditate effortlessly but our daily living must be filled with effort. The man that is not alert of his daily actions, he could never experience the Absolute. No. Therefore all these exercises, all these principles of Yoga, is to produce in you that alertness, this deep concentrated mind, the deep contemplative mind, the well-being of the body, breathing properly, which adds to the well-being, and drawing upon the vital forces to revitalise you. All these things are necessary.

To be alert and the alertness, the awareness can be developed to such an extent that everything we perceive becomes living and filled with life. This flower can speak to you, if only you'd allow it to. It will laugh with you. Have you taken a walk through these trees here? How they whistle and dance, and that is Shiva's dance, the dance of creation. How beautiful. But we need the alertness. And it's not only a mental appreciation but it is an experience of what is. Now, what experiences the 'isness', the 'is' experiences itself. Therefore we say, 'I am that I am'. The greatest phrase in the world, 'I am that I am'. But to know, 'I am that I am' requires sharp alertness, awareness, and everything becomes so alive. And then we could really sing the praises of the glory of God, the transcendent God. Up to now He is abstract, but we, by ourselves, bring that abstractness into concreteness. And then you tell your wife 'I love you', every word becomes alive. Your wife or your husband does not believe you when you say, 'I love you'. Why? Because your words are dead. Every word becomes alive. And then you know the Biblical saying, 'First was the word, and the word was with God, and the word was God' - is God, something like that? Your word must be the same, because there's no difference between your word and that 'Word', because it is that word, that sound, that has solidified itself into our little individual selves and so, so connected, vibrationally. Now, if you were sitting here, if you could see how beautifully each and everyone is connected, like one wave connected to another wave in this beautiful sea of life. And then you can really practise the precepts of religion, 'Love thy neighbour as thyself'.

Now, to love thy neighbour as thyself is good, Sarvikalpa Samadhi, Samadhi with form. Ah, but there's still somewhere higher to go. The ideal is to become love. Then I don't need to love you, when I am love. And when you are love, all the little loves merge into you. They all merge, there's no separation. How can I love you when you are me? How? How? No question is left. No effort is left, and you just exist in your Is-ness. You exist in the essence. And that is what Nirvikalpa Samadhi does for you. That is the joy and the glory of life. Why suffer limitations when you are limitless? Each and everyone of us has the right to say, 'I and my Father are one'. If we reach Christhood, if we reach that stage,

then all becomes one; then there is no object, there's no subject, there's no duality, there is Unity. And that Unity-consciousness comes through Nirvikalpa Samadhi. And that, according to Patanjali's Yoga, is the purpose of life. Now, Patanjali's Yoga is very good. Fine. Very good two thousand, five thousand years ago. Fine. Yah, yah, very good.

Aide. .... (Inaudible)

Gururaj. Give me two minutes more. I'll round off. There, there, yes, yes. You see how limited we are – yeah, pushed around - eat on time, do that. Bondage, bondage, bondage!

Aide. ....come back .... (Inaudible)

Gururaj. Yes. True, true, true. Now I could have said a lot in this little time that we spoke now. Yes.

So, in that unity-consciousness, this is how Divinity, the highest concept or the highest form of abstract Divinity is brought into our concrete lives. Now Patanjali's Yoga, which was composed about five thousand years ago, was very good, and more good, more good than good at that time. What we have done in our system of meditation is taken the essence of all the Yogas, taken the essence of all the Yogas of Patanjali's Yoga, of Sankhya Yoga, of Vedanta, of all the various Christian teachings, Buddhistic teachings, Tibetan teachings, Taoistic teachings, and taken all the essence of all these teachings and brought it into a very simplified form, so that it can be practised in this modern century. And our teaching is there to last for another two thousand years. Remember that. Okay.

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