

Chapter I **Life and Yoga**

1. THERE are two necessities of Nature's workings which seem always to intervene in the greater forms of human activity, (a) whether these belong to our ordinary fields of movement (unconscious Yoga) or (b) seek those exceptional spheres and fulfilments which appear to us high and divine (conscious Yoga). (1) (Firstly) Every such form tends towards (a) a harmonised complexity and totality which again (b) breaks apart into various channels of special effort and tendency, only to unite once more in a larger and more puissant synthesis. (2) Secondly, development into forms is an imperative rule of effective manifestation; yet all truth and practice too strictly formulated becomes old and loses much, if not all, of its virtue; it must be constantly renovated by fresh streams of the spirit revivifying the dead or dying vehicle and changing it, if it is to acquire a new life. **To be perpetually reborn is the condition of a material immortality.** We are in an age, full of the throes of travail, when all forms of thought and activity that have in themselves any strong power of utility or any secret virtue of persistence are being **subjected to a supreme test** and given their opportunity of rebirth. The world today presents the aspect of a huge cauldron of Medea in which all things are being cast, shredded into pieces, experimented on, combined and recombined

either to perish and provide the scattered material of new forms or to emerge rejuvenated and changed for a fresh term of existence. Indian Yoga, in its **essence** a special action or formulation of certain great powers of Nature, itself specialised, divided and variously formulated, is potentially one of these dynamic elements of the future life of humanity. The child of immemorial ages, preserved by its vitality and truth into our modern times, it is now emerging from the secret schools and ascetic retreats in which it had taken refuge and is seeking its place in the future sum of living human powers and utilities. But it has first to rediscover itself, bring to the surface⁶ The Conditions of the Synthesis the profoundest reason of its being in that general truth and that unceasing aim of Nature which it represents, and find by virtue of this new self-knowledge and self-appreciation its own recovered and larger synthesis. Reorganising itself, it will enter more easily and powerfully into the reorganised life of the race which its processes claim to lead within into the most secret penetralia and upward to the highest altitudes of existence and personality.

2. **In the right view both of life and of Yoga all life is either consciously or subconsciously a Yoga.** For we mean by this term a **methodised effort** towards self-perfection by the expression of the secret potentialities latent in the being and—highest condition of victory in that effort—a union of the human individual with the universal and

transcendent Existence we see partially expressed in man and in the Cosmos. But all life, when we look behind its appearances, is a vast Yoga of Nature who attempts in the conscious and the subconscious to realise her perfection in an ever-increasing expression of her yet unrealised potentialities and to unite herself with her own divine reality. In man, her thinker, she for the first time upon this Earth devises self conscious means and willed arrangements of activity by which this great purpose may be more swiftly and puissantly attained. Yoga, as Swami Vivekananda has said, may be regarded as a means of compressing one's evolution into a single life or a few years or even a few months of bodily existence. A given system of Yoga, then, can be no more than a selection or a compression, into narrower but more energetic forms of intensity, of the general methods which are already being used loosely, largely, in a leisurely movement, with a profuser apparent waste of material and energy but with a more complete combination by the great Mother in her vast upward labour. It is this view of Yoga that can alone form the basis for a sound and rational synthesis of Yogic methods. For then Yoga ceases to appear something mystic and abnormal which has no relation to the ordinary processes of the World-Energy or the purpose she keeps in view in her two great movements of subjective and objective self fulfilment; it reveals itself rather as an intense and exceptional use of powers that she has already

manifested or is progressively Life and Yoga 7organising in her less exalted but more general operations.

3. Yogic methods have something of the same relation to the customary psychological workings of man as has the scientific handling of the force of electricity or of steam to their normal operations in Nature. And they, too, like the operations of Science,are formed upon a knowledge developed and confirmed by regular experiment, practical analysis and constant result.

AllRajayoga, for instance, depends on this perception and experience that our inner elements, combinations, functions, forces, can be separated or dissolved, can be new-combined and set to novel and formerly impossible workings or can be transformedand resolved into a new general synthesis by fixed internal processes.

Hathayoga similarly depends on this perception and experience that the vital forces and functions to which our life is normally subjected and whose ordinary operations seem set and indispensable, can be mastered and the operations changed or suspended with results

that would otherwise be impossible and that seem miraculous to those who have not seized the rationale of their process. And if in some other of its forms this characterof Yoga is less apparent, because they are more intuitive and less mechanical, nearer, like the Yoga of Devotion, to a supernal ecstasy or, like the Yoga of Knowledge, to a supernal infinity of consciousness and being, yet

they too start from the use of some principal faculty in us by ways and for ends not contemplated in its everyday spontaneous workings. All methods grouped under the common name of Yoga are **special psychological processes** founded on a fixed truth of Nature and developing, out of normal functions, powers and results which were always latent but which her ordinary movements do not easily or do not often manifest.

4. But as in physical knowledge the multiplication of scientific processes has its disadvantages, as that tends, for instance, to develop a victorious artificiality which overwhelms our natural human life under a load of machinery and to purchase certain forms of freedom and mastery at the price of an increased servitude, so the preoccupation with Yogic processes and their exceptional results may have its disadvantages and losses. The Yogin tends to draw away from the common existence and lose his hold upon it; he tends to purchase wealth of spirit by an impoverishment of his human activities, the inner freedom by an outer death. If he gains God, he loses life, or if he turns his efforts outward to conquer life, he is in danger of losing God. Therefore we see in India that a sharp incompatibility has been created between life in the world and spiritual growth and perfection, and although the tradition and ideal of a victorious harmony between the inner attraction and the outer demand remains, it is little or else very imperfectly exemplified. In

fact, when a man turns his vision and energy inward and enters on the path of Yoga, he is popularly supposed to be lost inevitably to the great stream of our collective existence and the secular effort of humanity. So strongly has the idea prevailed, so much has it been emphasised by prevalent philosophies and religions that to escape from life is now commonly considered as not only the necessary condition, but the general object of Yoga. **No synthesis of Yoga can be satisfying which does not, in its aim, reunite God and Nature in a liberated and perfected human life or, in its method, not only permit but favour the harmony of our inner and outer activities and experiences in the divine consummation of both.** For man is precisely that term and symbol of a higher Existence descended into the material world in which it is possible for the lower to transfigure itself and put on the nature of the higher and the higher to reveal itself in the forms of the lower. To avoid the life which is given him for the realisation of that possibility, can never be either the indispensable condition or the whole and ultimate object of his supreme endeavour or of his most powerful means of self-fulfilment. It can only be a temporary necessity under certain conditions or a specialised extreme effort imposed on the individual so as to prepare a greater general possibility for the race. The true and full object and utility of Yoga can only be accomplished when the conscious Yoga in man becomes, like the subconscious Yoga in Nature, outwardly conterminous with life itself and we can once

more, looking out both on the path and the achievement, say in a more perfect and luminous sense: "All life is Yoga."

Summary: Perpetual change is the formula of physical immortality. Man's inability and unwillingness to change perpetually draws him towards a limited narrow life of suffering, disease, decay and death._

1. Nature in her workings on man's greater activities seems to have 2 general approaches
 - a. A move towards harmonising most actions to a greater whole as well as a breaking up of the movements in specialised fields and paths which are again harmonised for the benefit of the whole.
 - b. Manifestation utilises form for effectiveness , but Nature is careful to repudiate stale forms and notions is is constantly giving new life to old forms and Truths.
2. All of nature's work is Yoga, either consciously or sub consciously to exceed herself towards a greater vision of herself. In man, she has created a self conscious entity that can help her reach this aim. Yoga is only the compression of the tardy workings of nature over several life times in a single life time or a few years.
3. All yogas(rajayoga, hatha yoga etc) use some existing faculty in us, based on some psychological process not normally contemplated for use in such manner or usually latent and not easily visible in nature

4. The Synthesis of Yoga can be satisfying which ends in its aim of uniting the imperfect Matter and the perfect Spirit in a liberated, ecstatic and fulfilled human existence.
5. Over time, the methods and processes have expanded to such a degree that they have become mechanical and cumbersome and the gain from them is at tremendous cost, especially to a harmonious outer existence – and in fact the outer life is derided in order to achieve some ecstatic inner union. This needs to be corrected. We must recognise that yoga is nothing other than the same process (in a more concentrated fashion) that nature uses to exceed herself and that like nature's subconscious evolution towards the divine that includes all life, so should the conscious yoga of the individual – All Life is yoga.
6. It has identified that one man's perfection or one soul's specialized extreme effort, *tapasya* is infinitely more valuable resource to draw the race towards greater general possibility.
7. A new life through Yoga asks us to constantly renovate all our existing truth and practice through fresh instreaming of spiritual experiences.
8. The Life Divine proposes the general progress of the race through revolutionary individual effort and The Synthesis of Yoga proposes this progress through special extreme individual effort and for this isolation from the collectivity is a temporary necessity and even in certain stage indispensable.

9. So we have to accept all life (this whole life combined with all past and future births and bodies) either consciously or unconsciously as Yoga. Unconscious Yoga is the slow evolution in Ignorance and conscious Yoga is the swift Spiritual evolution in Knowledge. One is the unillumined soul season of mind's effort and endeavour and other is the illumined soul season of the Spirit's spontaneity and infinite enlargement.

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