

The Main Frame of Traditional and Integral *Jnana Yoga*

“For knowledge does not mean renunciation of works, it means equality and non-attachment to desire and the objects of sense; and it means the poise of intelligent will in the Soul free and high-uplifted above the lower instrumentation of *Prakriti* and controlling the works of the mind and the senses and body in the power of self-knowledge and the pure objectless self-delight of spiritual realisation, *niyatam karma*.”¹

Sri Aurobindo

The traditional *Karma Yoga* becomes easier for him who is established in *Jnana Yoga*. Because by the Spiritual experience stabilised in *Samadhi*, the centre of living shifts inward and upward; in this new birth of Soul, the Spirit in which work is done changes; one loses attachment to world, loses attachment to sense enjoyment and loses attachment to work and result of work; he is less bound by the action of ego. He can pursue *Karma Yoga* easily by renouncing fruits of work and can pursue *Bhakti Yoga* easily by renouncing emotional enjoyments. In the greatest integral Yogi, the *Karma, Jnana and Bhakti Yoga* are entirely reconciled and one is most united with the triple poise of static Self and triple poise of dynamic Divine through this triple Yoga.

- 1) “Delivered from liking and fear and wrath, full of Me, taking refuge in Me, many purified by austerity of knowledge have arrived at My nature of being...Whose inceptions and undertakings are free from the will of desire, whose works are burned up by the fire of knowledge; him the wise have called a sage. Having abandoned all attachment to the fruits of his works, ever satisfied without any kind of dependence, he does nothing even though engaged in works. He has no personal hopes, does not seize on things as his personal possessions; his heart and self are under perfect control; performing action by the body alone, he does not incur sin. Satisfied with whatever gain comes to him, lifted beyond the dualities; **void of jealousy**, equal in failure and success, he is not bound even when he acts.”²
- 2) “The sacrifice of knowledge is greater than any material sacrifice. Knowledge is that in which all actions culminate (not any lower knowledge, but the highest self-knowledge and God-knowledge), O *Partha*. Learn that highest knowledge by prostrating at the feet of the teacher, by questioning and by service. The men of Knowledge who has seen the true principles of things will instruct thee in that knowledge. When thou hast known this highest Knowledge, thou shalt not (Spiritual) fall into the

- confusion of three *gunas*, O *Pandava*; for by this thou shalt see all existences (becomings, *bhutani*) without exception in the Self, then in Me.”³
- 3) “Even if thou art the greatest doer of sin beyond all sinners, thou shalt cross all the crookedness of evil in the ship of knowledge. As a fire kindled turns to ashes its fuels, O *Arjuna*, so the fire of knowledge turns all (defects of) works to ashes. There is nothing in the world equal in purity to knowledge, the man who is perfected by Yoga, finds it of himself in the self by the course of Time. He who has faith, who has controlled the mind and sense, who has fixed his whole conscious being on the Supreme Reality, he attains knowledge; and having attained knowledge he goes swiftly to the supreme Peace.”⁴
- 4) “Verily in whom ignorance is destroyed by self-knowledge, in them knowledge lights up like a sun the supreme Self. Turning their discerning mind to That, directing their whole conscious being to That, making That their whole aim and the sole subject of their devotion, they reach a state from which there is no return, their sins washed away by waters of knowledge. Sages see with an equal eye the learned and cultured Brahmin, the cow, the elephant, the dog, the outcaste. Here on earth itself their mind is established in equality; the equal *Brahman* is faultless, therefore they live in the *Brahman*. With the intelligence stable, un-bewildered, the knower of Brahman, living in the *Brahman*, neither rejoices on obtaining what is pleasant, nor a sorrow on obtaining what is unpleasant.”⁵
- 5) “An understanding without attachment in all things, a soul self-conquered and empty of desire, man attains by renunciation a supreme perfection of actionlessness, *naiskarmya siddhi*. How having attained this perfection of actionlessness, one thus attains to the Brahman, hear from Me in brief, O son of *Kunti*, --that which is the supreme concentrated direction of knowledge. Uniting the purified intelligence (with the pure spiritual substance in us by the *Yoga of Buddhi*), controlling one’s self with a firm and steady will, having renounced sound and other objects of the senses, casting aside liking and disliking, dwelling in solitude, abstemious, (self – disciplined) controlled in mind, body and speech, constantly resorting to the Yoga of meditation, observing *Vairagya* (desirelessness and non-attachment) perfectly, having put away egoism, force, arrogance, desire, wrath, and the sense and instinct of possession, free from all I-ness and My-ness, peaceful –one is worthy of becoming the *Brahman*.”⁶
- 6) “Devoting all thyself to Me, giving up in thy conscious mind all thy action into Me, resorting to Yoga of the will and intelligence, be always one in heart and consciousness with Me.”⁷

- 7) “Because they know Me and know at the same time the material and the divine nature of Being and truth of the Master of sacrifice, they keep knowledge of Me also in the critical moment of their departure from physical existence and have at that moment their whole consciousness in union with Me.”⁸

The Injunction issued to the Seekers of integral Jnana Yoga:

“A **reconciling wisdom** looked on life;
It took the striving undertones of mind
And took the confused refrain of human hopes
And made of them a sweet and happy call;
It lifted from an underground of pain
The inarticulate murmur of our lives
And found for it a sense illimitable.”

Savitri-90

“An **inspired Knowledge** sat enthroned within
Whose seconds illumined more than reason’s years:”

Savitri-37

“Assent to thy high self, create, endure.

Cease not from knowledge, let thy toil be vast.”

Savitri-340

Integral Yoga of Knowledge is the extensive extension of the Gita’s teaching of traditional *Sankya* and *Vedanta*. Through this Yoga the higher Nature of *Sachchidananda* and the lower nature of mind, life and body are reconciled to such extent that the Matter becomes the manifesting field of the Light, Force and Joy of *Sachchidananda*; life becomes all-blissful conscious force of *Sachchidananda*; sensational mind and emotional mind become play field of Divine Love and universal Delight and intellect transforms into Divine Knowledge-Will.

- 1) All Life is Yoga of Nature through Knowledge which is something self-existent, everlasting and infinite. All life includes a higher truly conscious existence which our half-conscious humanity does not yet possess and can only arrive at by a self-exceeding spiritual ascension. All life is extended towards pursuance of this knowledge in three stages. Firstly, the power to do nothing, which is quite different from indolence, incapacity or aversion to action and attachment to inaction, is a great power and a great mastery; the power to rest absolutely from action is as necessary for the Jnanayogin as the power to cease absolutely from thought, as the power to remain indefinitely in sheer solitude and silence and as the power of immovable calm. Whoever is not willing to embrace these states is not yet fit for the path that leads towards the highest knowledge; whoever is unable to draw towards them, is as yet unfit for its acquisition. The

endless difficulties that arise from the environing world are dismissed by erecting firmly against them a defense of outer physical and inner spiritual solitude; safe behind a wall of inner silence, he remains impassive and untouched by the discords of world and others. The seeker of the integral state of Knowledge must be free from attachment to action and equally free from attachment to inaction. Any tendency to mere inertia of mind or vitality or body must be surmounted, and if that habit is found growing on the nature, the will of the Purusha must be used to dismiss it. **Secondly**, the difficulty of realisation the divine life with human living, of being in God and yet living in man is the very difficulty that he is set here to solve and not to shun. If there is an opposition between the Spiritual life and that of the world, it is that gulf which he is here to bridge, that opposition which he is here to change into a harmony. The example of great *Avataras* is there to show that not only by rejecting the life of the world as it is can help, but also and more by accepting and uplifting it. **Thirdly**, all knowledge is ultimately the knowledge of the One, through himself, through Nature, through her works. Mankind has first to seek the knowledge through the external life; for until its mentality is sufficiently developed, Spiritual knowledge is not really possible, and in proportion as it is developed, the possibilities of Spiritual knowledge become richer and fuller.

2) *Sarvam karmakhilam Partha jnane parisamapyate*, Knowledge is that in which all action culminates, O *Arjuna*! Due to the defect in work, knowledge is considered greater than action. And Bhakti is recognised as highest element of Yoga. Integral Yoga accepts this hierarchy of traditional Yoga and further defines Divine Will as foundation and is fit to occupy the Driver's seat whereas Divine Knowledge and Love are its willing subordinate.

3) Traditional *Jnana Yoga* leads to the rejection of phenomenal worlds from the consciousness as an illusion and the final immergence without return of the individual soul in the Supreme. The point of the departure of Integral Jnana Yoga from traditional path of knowledge is the realisation of the supreme Self not only in one's own being but in all beings and, finally, the realisation of even the phenomenal aspects of the world as a play of the Divine consciousness and not something entirely alien to its true nature. The unique object of Integral Jnana Yoga is that it seeks the truth of existence in its completeness and converts all forms of mundane knowledge into activities of the Divine consciousness utilisable for both in itself and through the play of its forms and symbols.

4) "The seeker of the integral knowledge will not stop either at half-way and attractive or high-pinnacled and exclusive end. He will not limit himself within any religious creed and philosophical dogma. He must soar to the utmost height, circle and spread to the most all-embracing wideness, free to admit and combine all the soul's highest and greatest and fullest and most numerous experiences. If

the highest height of Spiritual experience, the sheer summit of all realisation is the absolute union of the Soul with the Transcendent who exceeds the individual and the universe, the widest scope of that union is the discovery of that very Transcendent as the source, support, continent, informing and constituent spirit and substance of both these manifesting powers of the divine Essence and the divine Nature.”¹⁵ “We **must be prepared** to leave behind on the path not only that which we stigmatise as evil, but that which seems to us to be good, yet is not the one good. There are things which were beneficial, helpful, which seemed perhaps at one time the one thing desirable, and yet once their work is done, once they are attained, they become obstacles and even hostile forces when we are called to advance beyond them. There are desirable states of the soul which it is **dangerous to rest in** after they have been mastered, because then we do not march on to the wider kingdoms of God beyond. Even divine realisations **must not be clung to**, if they are not the divine realisation in its utter essentiality and completeness. We **must rest** at nothing less than the All, nothing short of the utter transcendence.”²⁰

5) The method of Integral Knowledge is initiated through mind’s method of abstraction which is the most effective means of enlightening the ignorance by the practice of gathering and reflection, *sravana*, meditation and fixed contemplation, *manana*, absorbed dwelling of mind in its object, *nidhidhyasa*. The whole preparatory method of Yoga is psychological and it does not exclude the forms of lower knowledge, so that the outward-going sensuous, pragmatic preoccupation of the lower knowledge with phenomena and forms is replaced by the one Divine preoccupation. ‘Contemplation of God in Nature, contemplation and service of God in man and in the life of man and of the world in its past, present and future, are equally elements of which the Yoga of knowledge can make use to complete the realisation of God in all things.’¹⁷ ‘The highest truth, the integral self-knowledge is not to be gained by this self-blinded leap into the Absolute but by a patient transit beyond the mind into the Truth-consciousness where the Infinite can be known, felt, seen, experienced in all the fullness of its unending riches.’¹⁸ ‘The status of knowledge, is a “realisation”, in the full sense of the word;... it consists of three successive movements, (1) internal Vision, complete internal Experience and Identity.’¹⁹

6) Our mind gives a false report, an imperfect construction, an attenuated and erroneous figure in its relation with the Existence until they are enlightened by the faculty of higher Spiritual, Supramental and suprasensuous Knowledge. The Supreme has the right relation with our individual being and with the universe and it transcends both the Soul and the Universe. The object of a Yoga of Spiritual knowledge is this eternal Reality, this Self, this *Brahman*, this Transcendent, this All that dwells over all and in all and is manifest and yet concealed in the individual and disguised in the universe. Ordinary objects, the external appearances of life and matter, the psychology of our thoughts and actions, the

perceptions of forces of the apparent world are the part of this knowledge and are the part of the manifestation of the One. Intellectual analysis can only lead to a clear conception, intellectual deliberations and right discriminations are meant to remove the difficulty of the path; all concentration, purification of understanding, psychological self-knowledge, all seeking by the heart through love, by the senses through beauty, by the will through power and works and by the Soul through peace and joy are only keys, avenues, first approaches and beginnings of the ascent which we have to use and to follow till the wide and infinite levels are attained and the Divine doors swing open into the infinite Light.

7) The comprehensive Yoga of Knowledge includes all the mass of graded experience existing behind the closed doors to which the consciousness of a seeker may find. It need not confine to the seeking after the Absolute alone but the hidden truth of material world and occult powers of great natural forces through the cultivation of Science and higher Spiritual planes and worlds and possibilities of our being through Yoga which are aimed at and cultivated by great Religions. The consciousness of the Absolute is the highest reach of the Yoga of Knowledge and the first, foremost, greatest and ardent object is the possession of this highest Divine and to neglect it for any inferior knowledge is to afflict our Yoga, Life and Evolution with inferiority and fall away from its true characteristic object. So the integral Yoga of Knowledge takes account of all things, unifies their diverse truth and embraces all the Divine in its relations with ourselves and the world on the different planes of Existence.

8) **The first object of integral Yoga of Knowledge**¹³ is realisation of pure Self, pure Existence, *jyotirmaya Brahman*, above the terms of mind, life and body which is achieved after long persistent concentration or by other means the veil of mind is rent or swept aside. In this experience, Self is realised as present, real and concrete to physical sensation. After this realisation whatever darkness and fading of the light may afflict the Soul, the experience is inevitably renewed and must become frequent and constant depending on our sincere effort and persistence. **The first result of the aim of *Jnana Yoga***¹⁶ is an absolute quietude; for unless the old action of Nature in us be entirely quieted, it is difficult if not impossible to find either any true soul-status or any divine activity. Our first object on the path of knowledge is rather the liberation that comes by detachment from the desire-mind and by the renunciation of its passions. Therefore to get back to this eternal fact of complete Oneness is our essential act of self-knowledge and whole aim of our Yoga of knowledge; to live in it must be the effective principle of our inner possession of our being and of our right and ideal relations with the world. For integral self-possession we must be one not only with the Self, with God, but with all existences; this realisation of oneness of *Sachchidananda* in himself and this practice of oneness in difference or oneness in all His manifestation is the whole basis of Yoga. **The second object of integral Yoga of Knowledge**¹⁴ is that we

begin to realise that the first Spiritual experience is not sufficient and we must realise the Self or Brahman in its essential mode of triune reality of static *Sachchidananda*. Thus Existence, Consciousness and Delight are experienced as silent, passive, quietistic, self-absorbed, self-sufficient, impersonal, without play of qualities and turned away from the universe with indifference and without participation. **The third object of integral Yoga of Knowledge**¹⁴ is the realisation of dynamic *Sachchidananda* which is sovereign, free, lord of things, acting out of an inalienable calm, pouring itself out in infinite action, infinite quality acting out of integral self-concentration, all possible play of personality of the one Person, possession of the infinite phenomenon of the universe attachment, without aloofness and without indifference. Thus the Divine Manifestation takes place with Freedom, Divine Mastery and luminous Self-delight without any bondage. **The fourth object of integral Yoga of Knowledge**¹⁴ is the holding together the static and dynamic aspect of the *Sachchidananda* in a Transcendent Consciousness which is not the personal God of the Religions or the qualified *Brahman* of the philosophers, but that in which personal and impersonal, quality and non-quality are reconciled. **The fifth aim of integral Yoga of Knowledge**¹² is to possess the Divine and be possessed by the Divine either through movement of Consciousness or through identification or through reflection of the Divine Reality. This possession of the Divine in himself is extended to Divine in the world and the Divine in all things and all beings. This possession of the Divine is to be realised either in the oneness or in the infinite diversity, in his personality and impersonality, in his purity free from qualities and in his infinite qualities, in time and beyond time, in his action and in his silence, in the finite and in the infinite in this life and in all life. **The sixth aim of integral Yoga of Knowledge**¹² is to put on in our surface life the Divine being and Divine nature. And since Divine is *Sachchidananda*, it is our responsibility to raise our being into the Divine being, our consciousness into the Divine consciousness, our energy into the Divine energy, our delight of existence into Divine delight of being. This higher consciousness is to be found on all the planes of our existence and in all our members, so that our mental, vital, physical existence shall become full of the Divine nature. Our intelligent mentality is to become a play of the Divine knowledge-will, our mental soul-life a play of the Divine love and delight, our vitality a play of the Divine life, our physical being a new-mould of the Divine substance. **The seventh aim of integral Yoga of knowledge**¹² is realised by an opening of oneself to the Divine gnosis and Divine *Ananda* and, in its fullness, by an ascent into and a permanent dwelling in the *Vijnanamaya Purusha* and the *Anandamaya Purusha*. One lives within the binding limitation of the material plane and in normal outward-going surface experience; the Mind and Life are preoccupied only with externality of material existence. One can raise the internal consciousness from lower plane to higher planes through true and right relations of *Purusha* with *Prakriti*, *Ishwara* with *Shakti*, *Brahman* with *Maya* and *Sat* with *Chit*. Thus mental being ascends to the Gnostic being and the Bliss-self and

assumes the Gnostic and the Bliss nature. By raise of this inner life one can experience the positive transformation of the whole out-ward going existence. Thus the Material life will be dominated and possessed by the Spirit with all its circumstances moulded and determined by the purity of Being, by the infinite Consciousness possessing the finite limiting consciousness of Mind, Vital and Physical, by the invasion of Divine energy, joy and bliss of the Spirit.

9) *Samadhi* or trance is given great importance in the Yoga of traditional knowledge, because there it is the very principle of its method and its **object** to raise the mental consciousness into a clarity of and concentrated power by which it can become entirely aware of, lost in, identified with true being. In integral Yoga, Yogic trance is not accepted as aim but only a means utilised not as an escape from waking existence by cessation of life but includes the possession of the Divine in life through waking trance, by enlarging and raising the whole seeing, living and active Consciousness.

10) The limitation of traditional *Jnana Yoga* is that when one enters higher or highest state of Consciousness of inner *Samadhi*, absolute state of *Turiya*, either through concentration on single object, or through contemplation, meditation or through silencing of the mind either through rejection of thought-suggestion or through witness state of standing back from the mental action; one loses hold of the inward *Samadhi* when he is awake or ‘descend into the contacts of the world.’⁹ This truncated possession of the perfect Consciousness may be accepted as initial Spiritual experience of the beginners of integral Yoga but this higher/highest Consciousness must be finally called down to the waking state ‘to take possession of the lower being, to shed its light, power and bliss on our ordinary consciousness.’⁹ Thus *Purusha* can exercise its full conscious control over *Prakriti*. This repeated and prolonged calling down of the dynamic Divine *Shakti* to the nether untransformed Nature is identified as ‘not of a pilgrim following the highroad to his destination, but, to that extent at least, of a path finder hewing his way through a virgin forest’¹⁰ and there will not be merely negative quiescence of waking trance but effective dynamisation of positive transformation of Nature. Yogic trance is not the aim of integral *Jnana Yoga* but an important means to ‘enlarge and raise the whole seeing, living and active consciousness.’¹¹ Thus one becomes established in waking trance in which he experiences all the four planes of Waking, Dream, Sleep and *Turiya* Consciousness or Divine union of multiple (ten) Selves with the respective Sheaths, *koshas*, in waking state. The Divine life is possible with self-identification with all the four planes and a right relation with *Purusha* and *Prakriti* is restored. Thus through movement of highest Consciousness to the lowest Matter the Spirit’s Face is revealed.

Recapitulation:

A traditional *Jnana Yogi* is considered great if in him *Akshara Purusha* or Spiritual Being is first dynamised through renunciation, *tyaga*, *vairagya*, effort and practice of Yoga, *abhyasa*, concentration, *samyama* and askeis, *tapasya*. In a greater *Jnana Yogi*, by the pressure of this Spiritual being or descent of Divine Force from above the head, *Kshara Purusha* or Psychic being in the heart is dynamised. His Yoga becomes easier as he actively participates in the world action through activation of *Kshara Purusha*. In the greatest *Jnana Yogi*, *Uttama Purusha* is dynamised along with *Kshara* and *Akshara Purusha*. This *Purushottama* Consciousness is settled in the body where the *Jiva* holds together the triple *Purusha*. In this state of Consciousness waking trance is stabilised and one moves freely in his multiple subtle bodies without losing waking consciousness. In integral Yoga he will direct the Supramental energy dynamised due to his relatively stronger part of Divine Knowledge towards relatively weaker parts of his untransformed emotional and volitional Nature.

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Managed by The Mother's International Centre Trust,
Regd.No-146/24.11.97. Vill: Ramachandrapur, PO: Kukudakhandi-761100,
Via: Brahmapur, Dist: Ganjam, State: Odisha, India
Web site: www.srimatriniketanashram.org