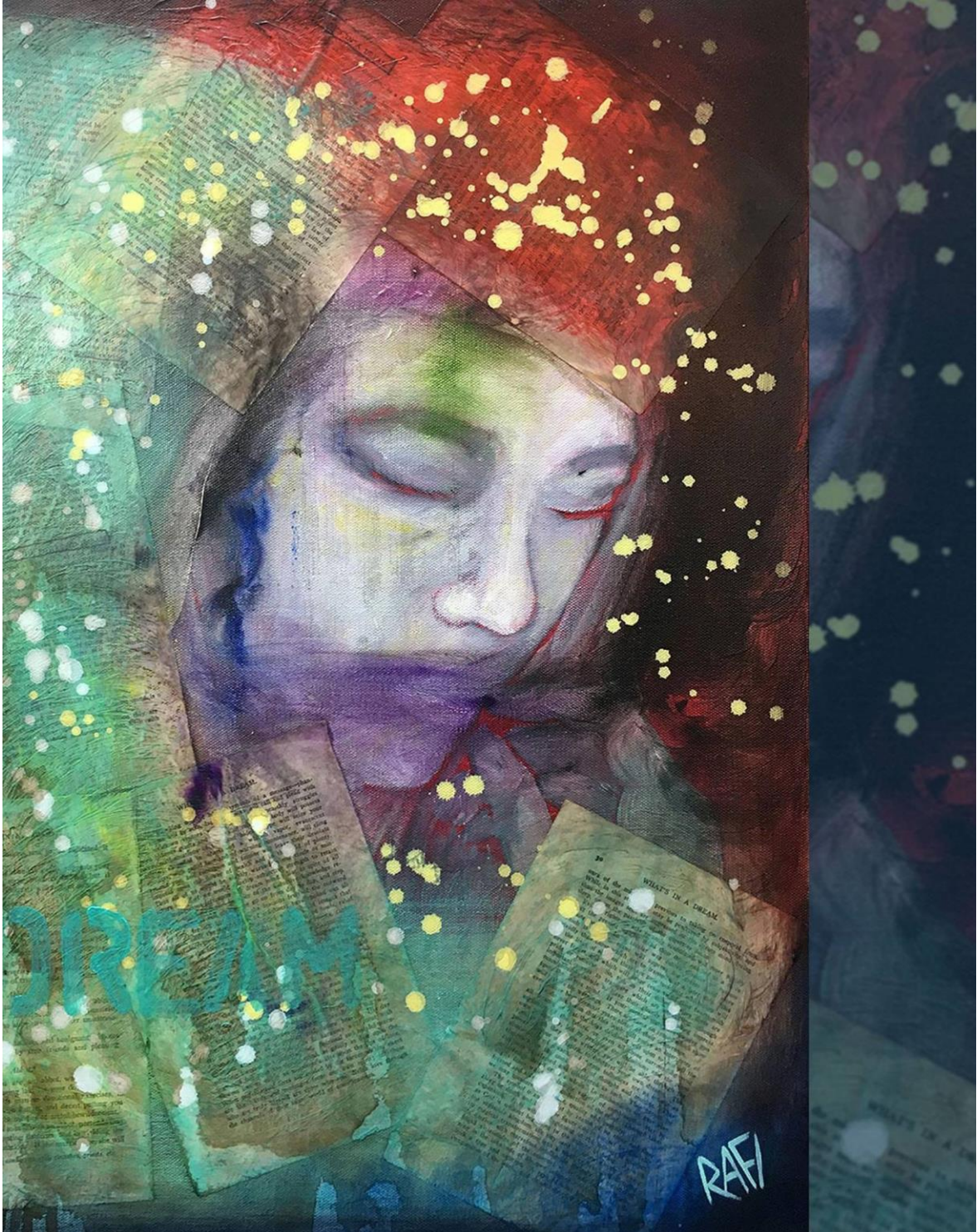


# *Is the Practice of Concentration Beneficent?*



# Dangers of Meditation

## Part 1 of 2

### Esoteric Section Instruction No. III

*Blavatsky Collected Writings, XII pp. 603-6.*

#### Is the practice of concentration beneficent?

Such is another question asked by members of the E.S.T. I answer: Genuine concentration and meditation, *conscious and cautious*, upon one's lower self in the light of the inner divine man and the Pāramitās, is an excellent thing. But to "sit for Yoga," with only a superficial and [604] often distorted knowledge of the real practice, is almost invariably fatal; for ten to one the student will either develop mediumistic powers in himself or lose time and get disgusted both with practice and theory. Before one rushes into such a dangerous experiment and seeks to go beyond a minute examination of one's lower self and *its* walk in life, or that which is called in our phraseology, "The Chela's Daily Life Ledger," he would do well to learn at least the difference between the two aspects of "Magic," the White or Divine, and the Black or Devilish, and assure himself that by "*sitting for Yoga*," with no experience, as well as with no guide to show him the dangers, he does not cross daily and hourly the boundaries of the Divine to fall into the Satanic. Nevertheless, the way to learn the difference is very easy; one has only to remember that *no esoteric truths entirely unveiled will ever be given in public print*, in book or magazine.

In the *Book of Rules* I advise students to get certain works, as I shall have to refer to and quote from them repeatedly. I reiterate the advice and ask them to turn to *The Theosophist* of November 1887.<sup>1</sup> On page 98 they will find the beginning of an excellent article by Mr. Rāma Prasad on "Nature's Finer Forces."<sup>2</sup> The value of this work is not so much in its literary merit, though it gained its author the gold medal of *The Theosophist* — as in its exposition of tenets hitherto concealed in a rare and ancient Sanskrit work on Occultism. But Mr. Rāma Prasad is not an Occultist, only an excellent Sanskrit scholar, a university graduate and a man of remarkable intelligence. His Essays are almost entirely based on Tāntra works, which, if read indiscriminately by a tyro in Occultism, will lead to the practice of most unmitigated Black Magic.

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<sup>1</sup> Vol. IX

<sup>2</sup> The references to "Nature's Finer Forces" which follow have respect to the eight articles which appeared in the pages of *The Theosophist* [Vol. IX, November, 1887; February, May, June, August, 1888; Vol. X, October, November, 1888; March, 1889], and not to the fifteen essays and the translation of a chapter of the *Saivāgama*, which are contained in the book called *Nature's Finer Forces*. The *Saivāgama* in its details is purely Tāntric, and nothing but harm can result from any practical following of its precepts. I would most strongly dissuade a member of the E.S. from attempting any of these Hatha-Yoga practices, for he will either ruin himself entirely, or throw himself so far back that it will be almost impossible to regain the lost ground in this incarnation. The translation referred to has been considerably expurgated, and even now is hardly fit for publication. It recommends Black Magic of the worst kind, and is the very antipodes of spiritual Rāja-Yoga. Beware, I say.

Now, since the difference of primary importance between Black and White Magic is simply the object with which it is practised, and that of secondary importance, the nature of the agents and ingredients used for the production of phenomenal results, the line of demarcation between the two is very, *very* thin. The danger is lessened only by the fact that every *occult* book, so called, is [605] occult only in a certain sense; that is, the text is occult merely by reason of its blinks. The symbolism has to be thoroughly understood before the reader can get at the correct sense of the teaching. Moreover, it is never complete, its several portions each being under a different title and each containing a portion of some other work; so that without a key to these no such work divulges the whole truth. Even the famous *Śaivāgama*, on which “Nature’s Finer Forces” is based, “is nowhere to be found in complete form,” as the author tells us. Thus, like all others, it treats of only five Tattvas instead of the seven in esoteric teachings.

Now, the Tattvas being simply the substratum of the seven forces of nature, how can this be? There are seven forms of Prakriti, as Kapila’s *Sāṅkhya*, [the] *Vishnu-Purāna* and other works teach. Prakriti is nature, matter (primordial and elemental); therefore logic demands that the Tattvas should be also seven. For, whether Tattvas mean, as Occultism teaches, “forces of nature” or, as the learned Rāma Prasad explains, “the substance out of which the universe is formed” and “the power by which it is sustained,” it is all the same; they are *force* and *matter*, Prakriti. And if the *forms*, or rather planes, of the latter are seven, then its forces must be seven also; that is, the degrees of the solidity of matter and the degrees of the power that ensouls it must go hand in hand. “The Universe is made out of the Tattva, it is sustained by the Tattva, and it disappears into the Tattva,” says Śiva, as quoted from the *Śaivāgama* in “Nature’s Finer Forces.” This settles the question; if Prakriti is septenary, then the Tattvas must be seven, for, as said, they are both substance and force, or atomic matter and the spirit that ensouls it.

This is explained here to enable the student to read between the lines of the so-called occult articles on Sanskrit philosophy, by which they must not be misled. Every Esotericist who reads *The Theosophist* must remember how bitterly Subba Row, a learned Vedāntin Brahman, arose against the septenary principles in man. He knew well I *had no right to* and *dared not to explain in The Theosophist*, a public magazine, the real numeration, and simply took advantage of my enforced silence. The doctrine of the seven Tattvas (the principles of the universe as in man) was held in great sacredness, and therefore secrecy, by the Brahmans in days of old, by whom now the teaching is almost forgotten. Yet it is taught to this day in the schools beyond the Himālayan Range, but it is now hardly remembered or heard of in India except through rare Initiates. The policy has been changed gradually; Chelas began to be taught the broad outlines of it, and at the advent of the T.S. in India, in 1879, I was ordered to teach it in its *exoteric* [606] form to one or two, and obeyed. To you who are pledged, I give it out esoterically.

Knowing that some of the members of the E.S.T. try to follow a system of Yoga in their own fashion, guided in this only by the rare hints they find in Theosophical books and magazines, which must naturally be incomplete, I chose one of the best

expositions ever written upon ancient occult works, “Nature’s Finer Forces,” in order to point out how very easily one can be misled by their blinds.

The author seems to have been himself deceived. The Tāntras read esoterically are as full of wisdom as the noblest occult works. Studied without a guide and applied to practice, they may lead to the production of various phenomenal results, on the moral and physiological planes. But let anyone accept their dead-letter rules and practices, let him try with some selfish motive in view to carry out the rites prescribed therein, and — he is lost. Followed with pure heart and unselfish devotion merely for the sake of the latter, either no results will follow, or such as can only throw back the performer. Woe, then, to the selfish man who seeks to develop occult powers only to attain earthly benefits or revenge, or to satisfy his ambition; the separation of the Higher from the Lower Principles and the severing of Buddhi-Manas from the Tāntrist’s *Personality* will speedily follow, the terrible Karmic results of the *dabbler* in Magic.

In the East, in India and China, *soulless* men and women are as frequently met with as in the West, though vice is, in truth, far less developed than it is here.

It is *Black Magic* and oblivion of their ancestral wisdom that leads them thereunto. But of this I will speak later, now merely adding — you have to be warned and know the danger.

Meanwhile, in view of what follows, the real occult division of the Principles in their correspondences with the Tattvas and other minor forces has to be well studied.

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### Esoteric Section Instruction No. V

*Blavatsky Collected Writings, XII pp. 691-94.*

The study of Consciousness has further to be pursued. We must therefore learn to understand more fully the Septenary Constitution of Man, and the workings of consciousness in every part thereof.

The student will, in this *Instruction*, address himself to the understanding of the Lower Quaternary, as defined in Diagram V, and to the workings of consciousness as manifested through that Lower Quaternary. The study of the Higher Triad pertains to further Instructions, and for the understanding of the Higher Triad it is needful that the Lower Quaternary shall be in some measure understood. And first let the student clearly realize that he cannot see things spiritual with the eyes of the flesh, and that in studying even the Body he must use the eyes of the Spiritual Intelligence, else will he fail and his study will be fruitless. For growth is from within outwards, and always the inner remains the more perfect. Even the development of a physical sense is always preceded by a mental feeling, which proceeds to evolve a physical sense. As said<sup>1</sup> all senses are but differentiations of the one sense-consciousness, and become so differentiated on the Astral plane, where perceptive life proper begins;<sup>2</sup> from that the differentiation is continued on to the lowest sub-plane of the Prākritic plane, to which the physical molecules of our Bodies belong. For instance, fishes living in dark

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<sup>1</sup> p. 672

<sup>2</sup> p. 660

subterranean waters are blind; but if they are taken and put into a pond, in a few generations they will develop eyes. Nevertheless, in their original state, though they had no organs of physical vision, they were yet endowed with a sense of sight. Otherwise, how could they, in the darkness, have found their prey and have avoided obstacles and dangers?

The fewer the coverings over the sense-consciousness, the clearer the vision, for each envelope adds something of illusion. Only when the true discerning or discriminating power is set free is illusion overcome, and the setting free of that power is the union of Manas with Buddhi — the attainment of Adeptship. That is why in Devachan the being is still under illusion, for there the mind is the mind of one who, while in the body, had not made the union so as to complete the Trinity. It [692] is only when the union is completed in the living human being that delusion is at an end. Meanwhile, with each descent to a lower plane illusion is increased.

To render active the inner vision the student must purify his whole nature, moral, mental and physical. Purity of Mind is of greater importance than purity of Body. If the Upādhi<sup>1</sup> be not perfectly pure, it cannot preserve recollections coming from a higher state. An act may be performed to which little or no attention is paid, and it is of comparatively small importance. But if thought of, dwelt on in the Mind, the effect is a thousand times greater. Therefore it is above all things of importance that the thoughts should be kept pure. Remember that you have, so to speak, to enclose the Square within the Triangle; in other words, you must so purify the Lower Quaternary that it shall vibrate in unison with the Upper Triad.

And this is no easy task. The flesh, the Body, the human being in his material part, is, on this plane, the most difficult thing to subject. The highest Adept, put into a new Body, has to struggle against and subdue it, and finds its subjugation difficult. But this is from the automatism of the Body; the original impulses have come from thought. What we call the desires of the Body have their origin in thought. Thought arises before desire. The thought acts on the Brain, the Lower Manas being the agent; the brain acts on the bodily organs, and then desire awakens. It is not the outer stimulus that arouses the bodily organs, but the Brain, impressed by a thought. Wrong thought must therefore be slain, ere desire can be extinguished. Desire is the outcome of separateness, aiming at the satisfaction of self in Matter. Now the flesh is a thing of habit; it will repeat mechanically a good impulse or a bad one, according to the impression made on it, and will continue to repeat it. It is thus not the flesh which is the original tempter, although it may repeat automatically motions imparted to it, and so bring back temptations; in nine cases out of ten it is the Lower Manas which, by its images, leads the flesh into temptations. Then the Body automatically sets up repetitions. That is why it is not true that a man steeped in evil can, by sudden conversion, become as powerful for good as he was before for evil. His vehicle is too defiled, and he can at best but neutralize the evil, balancing up the bad Karmic causes he has set in motion, at any rate for that incarnation. You cannot

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<sup>1</sup> Upādhi means that through which a force acts. The word “vehicle” is sometimes used to convey the same idea. If “force” be regarded as acting, “matter” is the upādhi through which it acts. Thus the Lower Manas is the upādhi through which the Higher can work; the Linga-Śarīra is the upādhi through which Prāna can work. The Sthūla Śarīra is the upādhi for all the principles acting on the physical plane.

take a herring-barrel [693] and use it for attar of roses; the wood is too soaked through with the herring-drippings. When evil tendencies and impulses have been thoroughly impressed on the physical nature, they cannot at once be reversed. The molecules of the Body have been set in a Kāmic direction, and — though they have sufficient intelligence to discern between things on their own plane, *i.e.*, to avoid things harmful to themselves — they cannot understand a change of direction, the impulse to which comes from a higher plane. If they are too suddenly and too violently forced into a reverse action, disease, madness or death will result.

The student will find in what follows a variety of classifications and septenary divisions. He must bear in mind that every Principle in man has its seven aspects, and every cell and organ its seven components. A Principle may have an organ in the Body specially related to it, as the Spleen to the Linga-Śarīra; none the less will the Linga-Śarīra have its correspondence in every cell in the Body, as also in other great organs. Thus the Brain has its seven divisions, each corresponding to a Principle, though it corresponds as a whole to the Psycho-Intellectual Man. In this there is no contradiction, as the elementary student at first imagines, when he finds different correspondences [694] given for the same Principle, but only an exemplification of the great truth that every molecule is a mirror of the universe, every microcosm the mirror of a macrocosm.

Man's Physical Body has its seven aspects, each aspect representing a Principle; then each of these has its seven sub-divisions, each subdivision in its turn representing a Principle; and we have the "forty-nine fires" as seen in the Sthūla-Śarīra. It is because of this intricate correspondence, carried out in every detail, that man will ultimately be able to come into contact with every realm of being in the Universe. This, and this alone, makes Rāja-Yoga possible.

