

*The prayer of the true
philosopher is his adoration.*



Abstract and train of thoughts

The soul of the true philosopher is in perfect harmony with his divine spirit.

Contemplation, Part 1

The dire effects of sitting for yoga.

4

Raja Yoga deals with the inner man and therefore neither encourages sham, nor requires physical postures.

It is the duty of every man who is capable of an unselfish impulse to do something, however little, for the welfare of Humanity, the great Orphan. Only those of exceptional purity and unconditional love for their fellow man and every living creature, may approach the sacred Majesty of Truth and hear within the sanctuary of the heart the Voice of the Silence.

7

Hatha Yoga is triply distilled selfishness. By encouraging mental passivity, it hastens the opening of mediumistic faculties resulting in gradual loss of self-control.

8

Contemplation, Part 2

Misunderstandings arising from Part 1 resolved.

9

Contemplation, Part 3

Mistaken notions corrected.

11

Inductive reasoning from the known to the unknown should be promoted and practised.

11

True contemplation is the yearning of the human soul to ascend in spirit towards its divine parent, by studying and assimilating the divine laws that govern Universe and Man, and by applying them in everyday life.

12

In this sublime effort the soul relies on the immutable Law of Analogy that underpins the affinity between stars and man. This is the lost thread of Ariadne, which alone can guide us through the labyrinth of matter, and lead us from the unreal to the real.

12

Addendum 1

Additional notes on the philosophy and science of Raja Yoga.

14

Addendum 2

Those who pray silently and intensely gain their object, while those who merely mumble some formula get no answer to their prayers. 16

Suggested reading for students.

From our Living the Life Series. 18

On meditation proper. 20

On true prayer versus vain prayer. 20

On self-adoration and greed. 21



The soul of the true philosopher is in perfect harmony with his divine spirit.

Contemplation, Part 1

Dāmodar K. Māvalankar, “Contemplation,” Part 1 of 3. First published in *The Theosophist*, Vol. V (5), February 1884, pp. 112-14. Republished in Sven Eek (*Comp. & Annot.*) *Damodar and the Pioneers of the Theosophical Movement*. Adyar: Theosophical Publishing House, 1965; pp. 388-94.

A general misunderstanding of this term seems to prevail. The popular idea appears to be to confine oneself for half an hour — or at the utmost two hours — in a private room, and passively gaze at one’s nose, a spot on the wall, or, perhaps, a crystal. This is supposed to be the true form of contemplation enjoined by *Raj Yoga*. It fails to realize that true occultism requires “physical, mental, moral and spiritual” development to run on parallel lines. Were the narrow conception extended to all these lines, the necessity for the present article would not have been so urgently felt. This paper is specially meant for the benefit of those who seem to have failed to grasp the real meaning of Dhyan, and by their erroneous practices to have brought, and to be bringing, pain and misery upon themselves. A few instances may be mentioned here with advantage, as a warning to our too zealous students.

The dire effects of sitting for yoga.

① At Bareilly the writer met a certain Theosophist from Farrukhabad, who narrated his experiences and shed bitter tears of repentance for his past follies — as he termed them. It would appear from his account that the gentleman, having read *Bhagavat-Gita* about fifteen or twenty years ago and not comprehending the esoteric meaning of the contemplation therein enjoined, undertook nevertheless the practice and carried it on for several years. At first he experienced a sense of pleasure, but simultaneously he found he was gradually losing self-control; until after a few years he discovered, to his great bewilderment and sorrow, that *he was no longer his own master*. He felt his heart actually growing heavy, as though a load had been placed on it. He had no control over his sensations; in fact the communication between the brain and the heart had become as though interrupted. As matters grew worse, in disgust he discontinued his “contemplation.” This happened as long as seven years ago; and, although since then he has not felt worse, yet he could never regain his original normal and healthy state of mind and body.

② Another case came under the writer’s observation at Jubbulpore. The gentleman concerned, after reading Patañjali and such other works, began to sit for “contemplation.” After a short time he commenced seeing abnormal sights and hearing musical bells, but neither over these phenomena nor over his own

sensations could he exercise any control. He could not produce these results at will, nor could he stop them when they were occurring.

Numerous such examples may be multiplied. While penning these lines, the writer has on his table two letters upon this subject, one from Moradabad and the other from Trichinopoly. In short, all this mischief is due to a misunderstanding of the significance of contemplation as enjoined upon students by all the schools of Occult Philosophy. With a view to afford a glimpse of the Reality through the dense veil that enshrouds the mysteries of this Science of Sciences, an article, the “Elixir of Life,”¹ was written. Unfortunately, in too many instances, the seed seems to have fallen upon barren ground. Some of its readers only catch hold of the following clause in the said paper:

Reasoning from the known to the unknown, meditation must be practised and encouraged.

But, alas! their preconceptions have prevented them from comprehending what is meant by meditation. They forget that it

. . . is the inexpressible yearning of the inner Man to “go out towards the infinite,” which in the olden time was the real meaning of adoration . . .

as the next sentence shows. A good deal of light will be thrown upon this subject if the reader were to turn to the preceding portion of the same paper, and peruse attentively the following paragraphs. on page 141 of *The Theosophist* for March, 1882:²

So, then, we have arrived at the point where we have determined — literally, *not* metaphorically — to crack the outer shell known as the mortal coil, or body, and hatch out of it, clothed in our next. This “next” is not a spiritual, but only a more ethereal form. Having by a long training and preparation adapted it for a life in this atmosphere, during which time we have gradually made the outward shell to die off through a certain process . . . we have to prepare for this physiological transformation.

How are we to do it? In the first place we have the actual, visible, material body — man, so called, though, in fact, but his outer shell — to deal with. Let us bear in mind that science teaches us that in about every seven years we *change skin* as effectually as any serpent; and this so gradually and imperceptibly that, had not science after years of unremitting study and observation assured us of it, no one would have had the slightest suspicion of the fact. . . . Hence, if a man partially flayed alive, may sometimes survive and be covered with a new skin — so our astral, vital body . . . may be made to harden its particles to the atmospheric changes. The whole secret is to succeed in evolving it out, and separating it from the visible; and while its generally invisible atoms³ proceed to concrete themselves into a compact mass, to gradually get rid of the old parti-

¹ [Consult “Meditation proper is spiritual seership,” in our Down to Earth Series. — ED. PHIL.]

² Vol. III, No. 6

³ [Consult “Adventures and Peregrinations of the Metaphysical Atom,” in our Secret Doctrine’s Third Proposition Series. — ED. PHIL.]

cles of our visible frame so as to make them die and disappear before the new set has had time to evolve and replace them. . . . We can say no more.

A correct comprehension of the above scientific process will give a clue to the esoteric meaning of meditation or contemplation. Science teaches us that man changes his physical body continually, and this change is so gradual that it is almost imperceptible. Why then should the case be otherwise with the *inner man*? The latter too is constantly developing and changing atoms at every moment. And the attraction of these new sets of atoms depends upon the Law of Affinity — the desires of the man drawing to their bodily tenement only such particles as are *en rapport* with them or rather giving them their own tendency and colouring.

. . . For science shows that thought is dynamic, and the thought-force evolved by nervous action expanding itself outwardly, must affect the molecular relations of the physical man. The *inner men*, however sublimated their organism may be, are still composed of actual, *not hypothetical*, particles, and are still subject to the law that an “action” has a tendency to repeat itself; a tendency to set up analogous action in the grosser ‘shell’ they are in contact with and concealed within.¹

What is it the aspirant of *Yog Vidyā* strives after if not to gain *Mukti* by transferring himself gradually from the grosser to the next more ethereal body, until all the veils of *Maya* being successively removed his *Ātma* becomes one with *Paramātma*? Does he suppose that this grand result can be achieved by a two or four hours’ contemplation? For the remaining twenty or twenty-two hours that the devotee does not shut himself up in his room for meditation — is the process of the emission of atoms and their replacement by others stopped? If not, then how does he mean to attract all this time — only those suited to his end? From the above remarks it is evident that just as the physical body requires incessant attention to prevent the entrance of a disease, so also the *inner man* requires an unremitting watch, so that no conscious or unconscious thought may attract atoms unsuited to its progress. This is the real meaning of contemplation. The prime factor in the guidance of the thought is WILL.

. . . Without that, all else is useless. And, to be efficient for the purpose, it must be, not only a passing resolution of the moment, a single fierce desire of short duration, but *a settled and continued strain, as nearly as can be continued and concentrated without one single moment’s relaxation.*

The student would do well to take note of the italicized clause in the above quotation. He should also have it indelibly impressed upon his mind that:

It is no use to fast *as long as one requires* food. . . . To get rid of the inward desire is the essential thing, and to mimic the real thing without it is barefaced hypocrisy and useless slavery.

Without realizing the significance of this most important fact, anyone who for a moment finds cause of disagreement with any one of his family, or has his vanity wounded, or for a sentimental flash of the moment, or for a selfish desire to utilize the divine power for gross purposes — at once rushes in for contemplation and

¹ *The Elixir of Life*

dashes himself to pieces on the rock dividing the known from the unknown. Wallowing in the mire of exotericism, he knows not what it is to live in the world and yet be not of the world;¹ in other words to guard *self* against *self* is an incomprehensible axiom for nearly every profane.

The Hindu ought at least to realize it by remembering the life of Janaka, who, although a reigning monarch, was yet styled *Rajārshi* and is said to have attained *Nirvana*. Hearing of his widespread fame, a few sectarian bigots went to his Court to test his *Yoga*-power. As soon as they entered the court-room, the king having read their thought — a power which every *chela* attains at a certain stage — gave secret instructions to his officials to have a particular street in the city lined on both sides by dancing girls who were ordered to sing the most voluptuous songs. He then had some *gharas* (pots) filled with water up to the brim so that the least shake would be likely to spill their contents. The wiseacres, each with a full *ghara* (pot) on his head, were ordered to pass along the street, surrounded by soldiers with drawn swords to be used against them if even so much as a drop of water were allowed to run over. The poor fellows having returned to the palace after successfully passing the test, were asked by the King-Adept what they had met with in the street they were made to go through. With great indignation they replied that the threat of being cut to pieces had so much worked upon their minds that they thought of nothing but the water on their heads, and the intensity of their attention did not permit them to take cognizance of what was going on around them. Then Janaka told them that on the same principle they could easily understand that, although being outwardly engaged in managing the affairs of his state, he could at the same time be an Occultist. He too, while *in* the world, was not *of* the world. In other words, his inward aspirations had been leading him on continually to the goal in which his whole inner self was concentrated.

Raja Yoga deals with the inner man and therefore neither encourages sham, nor requires physical postures.

It is the duty of every man who is capable of an unselfish impulse to do something, however little, for the welfare of Humanity, the great Orphan.² Only those of exceptional purity and unconditional love for their fellow man and every living creature, may approach the sacred Majesty of Truth and hear within the sanctuary of the heart the Voice of the Silence.³

Raj Yoga encourages no sham, requires no physical postures. It has to deal with the inner man whose sphere lies in the world of thought. To have the highest ideal placed before oneself and strive incessantly to rise up to it, is the only true concen-

¹ [However, consult “God dwells in the heart,” in our Secret Doctrine’s First Proposition Series.

“In the world but not of the world” . . . happens to be a convenient para-scripture (we have quite a few of them today), invented by a third-century Sophist (Diognetos), to the great satisfaction of the church members, who were rapidly becoming very worldly. The passage as it appears in the scriptures says quite the opposite: “For [whatsoever] that is in the world . . . is not of the Father, but is of the world” (*1 John* ii, 16). See “Hermes & John on the Father of things in the World” in our Mystic Verse and Insights Series. — ED. PHIL.]

² [Because “parentless.” — ED. PHIL.]

³ [Cf. *Mahatma Letter* 8 (15) p. 32; 3rd Combined ed.]

tration recognized by Esoteric Philosophy which deals with the inner world of *noumena*, not the outer shell of *phenomena*.

The first requisite for it is thorough purity of heart. Well might the student of Occultism say, with Zoroaster, that purity of thought, purity of word, and purity of deed — these are the essentials of one who would rise above the ordinary level and join the “gods.” A cultivation of the feeling of unselfish philanthropy is the path which has to be traversed for that purpose. For it is that alone which will lead to Universal Love, the realization of which constitutes the progress towards deliverance from the chains forged by Maya around the Ego.

No student will attain this at once, but as our VENERATED MAHATMA says in the *Occult World*:

The greater the progress towards deliverance, the less this will be the case, until, to crown all, human and purely individual personal feelings, blood-ties and friendship, patriotism and race predilection, will all give way to become blended into one universal feeling, the only true and holy, the only unselfish and Eternal one, Love — an Immense Love for Humanity as a *Whole!*¹

In short, the individual is blended with the ALL.

Hatha Yoga is triply distilled selfishness.² By encouraging mental passivity, it hastens the opening of mediumistic faculties resulting in gradual loss of self-control.

Of course, contemplation, as usually understood, is not without its minor advantages. It develops one set of physical faculties as gymnastics does the muscles. For the purposes of physical mesmerism, it is good enough; but it can in no way help the development of the psychological faculties as the thoughtful reader will perceive. At the same time, even for ordinary purposes, the practice can never be too well guarded. If, as some suppose, they have to be entirely passive and lose themselves in the object before them, they should remember that by thus encouraging passivity, they, in fact, allow the development of mediumistic faculties in themselves. As was repeatedly stated — the Adept and the Medium are the two Poles:³ while the former is intensely active and thus able to control the elemental forces, the latter is intensely passive, and thus incurs the risk of falling a prey to the caprice and malice of mischievous embryos of human beings, and the Elementaries.



¹ [Mahatma Letter 8 (15) p. 32; 3rd Combined ed.]

² [Cf. *Blavatsky Collected Writings* (“ORIGINAL PROGRAMME” MANUSCRIPT) VII p. 160]

³ [Cf. *Isis Unveiled*, II p. 588. Also reflect: “The natural medium is, therefore, the serpent, ever active and ever seducing, of idle wills, which we must continually withstand by their subjugation. Amorous, gluttonous, passionate, or idle magicians are impossible monstrosities. The magus thinks and wills; he loves nothing with desire; he rejects nothing in rage. The word *passion* signifies a passive state, and the magus is invariably active, invariably victorious.” *Transcendental Magic*, (THE MEDIUM AND THE MEDIATOR) p. 230]

Contemplation, Part 2

Dāmodar K. Māvalankar, “Contemplation,” Part 2 of 3. First published in *The Theosophist*, Vol. V (7), April 1884, pp. 170-71. Republished in Sven Eek (*Comp. & Annot.*) *Damodar and the Pioneers of the Theosophical Movement*. Adyar: Theosophical Publishing House, 1965; pp. 394-97. Comment by F.T.S., i.e., Fellow of the Theosophical Society, and a Note by D.K.M., i.e., Dāmodar K. Māvalankar.

In the article on the above subject in the February *Theosophist*¹ occurs the following:

1 Without realizing the significance of this most important fact, anyone who for a moment finds cause of disagreement with any one of his family, or has his vanity wounded, or for a sentimental flash of the moment, or for a selfish desire to utilize the divine power for gross purposes — at once rushes in for contemplation and dashes himself to pieces on the rock dividing the known from the unknown.

I cannot understand how an ordinary man, who has, on one hand, the above-mentioned defects in his nature, which he generally tries to control, though sometimes with questionable success; and who, on the other hand, tries also to practise contemplation as explained in the article, runs the danger of being ruined. What are the dangers? Can they be named, and the particular causes which give rise to them?

2 To have the highest ideal placed before oneself and strive incessantly to rise up to it, is the only true concentration recognized by Esoteric Philosophy.

This passage is too learned for an ordinary man. Can an example of “the highest ideal” be given? How is the ordinary man of the world to strive after it?

Suppose an ordinary man of the world rises in the calm hours of the morning after a moderate rest, what is he to do? What kind of ideas should he fill his mind with? How is he to sit? How is he to carry on the contemplation so as to steer clear of all shoals and rocks in the sea of occultism? The greatest aim of the man in question is to spiritualize himself as much as could be done *safely*, so that if he cannot eventually be accepted as a chela, in this life — he may at least have the *assurance* to lead the life of an ascetic in the next birth.

An F. T. S.

Misunderstandings arising from Part 1 resolved.

I regret the whole article is totally misunderstood. All I meant to say was that temporary estrangement, from family or friends, does not constitute an essential qualification for advancement in occultism. This ought to be plain to one who weighs carefully my illustration of Janaka. Although *in* the world, to be not *of* it. Failing to realise the meaning of this important teaching, many a people rush in from a sentimental disgust of worldliness, arising probably out of some worldly disappointment — and begin practising what they consider to be a true form of *contemplation*. The very fact

¹ [Please refer to Part 1 above.]

that the *motive* which leads them to go in for this practice, is as is described in the quotation given by my correspondent — this fact itself is a sufficient indication that the candidate does not know the “contemplation” of a *Raja Yogi*. It is thus impossible in the nature of things that he can follow the right method; and the physical practice, which he necessarily undertakes, leads him to the disastrous results adverted to in the article.

Any reader, who has intuition enough to be a practical student of occultism, will at once see that to work up to perfection is the highest ideal that a man can have before him. That is not the work of a day nor of a few years. “The Adept *becomes*; he is NOT MADE” — is a teaching which the student must first realise. The aspirant works up to his goal through a series of lives. Col. Olcott says in his *Buddhist Catechism*:

. . . Countless generations are required to develop man into a Buddha, and *the iron will to become one runs throughout all the successive births.*

That “*iron will*” to become *perfect* must be *incessantly* operating, without a single moment’s relaxation, as will be apparent to one who reads *carefully the article as a whole*. When it is distinctly said that during the time that this contemplation is not practised, *i.e.*, the iron will is not exerting, the process of the emission and attraction of atoms is not stopped, and that the desires, instinctive or otherwise, must be so regulated as to attract only such atoms as may be suited to his progress — I cannot understand my correspondent when he asks me what he should do at a particular hour in the morning. He should cultivate only such thoughts as would not be incompatible with the highest ideal he has to work up to. By perfection, which should be his highest ideal, (I must add) I mean that *divine* manhood which the Occult Philosophy contemplates the seventh race of the seventh Round will attain to. This, as every tyro knows, depends largely upon a cultivation of the feeling of Universal Love, and hence an earnest desire to do some practical philanthropic work is the first requisite. Even this state, I admit, is not *absolute perfection*: but that maximum limit of ultimate Spiritual perfection is beyond our comprehension at present. That condition can only be intellectually realized as a practical ideal by those *divine men* — Dhyanchohans. To be identified with THE ALL, we must live in and feel through it. How can this be done without the realisation of the feeling of Universal Love? Of course Adeptship is not within the easy reach of all. On the other hand, occultism does not fix any unpleasant place or locality for those who do not accept its dogmas. It only recognises higher and higher evolution according to the chain of causation working under the impulse of Nature’s immutable law. The article on “Occult Study”¹ in the last number gives the necessary explanation on this point.

It is painful for me to find that the very thing I attempted to point out in that article to be mischievous in its results, is again put forward as a desirable attribute or adjunct of true contemplation. I would ask my correspondent to read again the same article, with these additional remarks, before thinking of the necessity of any peculiar or particular posture for the purpose of *contemplation*. I, at any rate, am unable to prescribe any specific posture for the kind of *incessant contemplation* that I recommend.

¹ [By “Lay Chela,” republished in *Five Years of Theosophy*, pp. 221-29.]

Contemplation, Part 3

Mistaken notions corrected.

Dāmodar K. Māvalankar, "Contemplation," Part 3 of 3. First published in *The Theosophist*, Vol. V (11), August 1884, pp. 267-68. Republished in Sven Eek (*Comp. & Annot.*) *Damodar and the Pioneers of the Theosophical Movement*. Adyar: Theosophical Publishing House, 1965; pp. 397-400.

Notwithstanding the article on the above subject in the February *Theosophist*, many of its readers still seem to imagine that "contemplation" is a particular form of gazing or staring at something, which process, when undergone a set number of hours every day, will give psychological powers. This misunderstanding is apparently due to the fact that the main point discussed has been lost sight of. Instead of realising that there is but one chief idea meant to be conveyed by that article by arguing it through many of its phases, it seems to be imagined that almost every sentence expresses quite a distinct idea. It may not therefore be uninteresting or unprofitable to revert to the subject and put forward the same idea from another stand-point and, if possible, in a clearer light. It must first be borne in mind that the writer of the article did not at all mean to imply the act of gazing by the word "contemplation." The former word would have been made use of, were that the idea. *The Imperial Dictionary of the English Language*, 1883, defines the word contemplation thus:

- 1 The act of the mind in considering with attention; meditation; study; continued attention of the mind to a particular subject.
- 2 Specifically, Holy meditation; attention to sacred things.

Webster's Dictionary thoroughly revised, also gives the same meaning.

Inductive reasoning from the known to the unknown should be promoted and practised.

Thus we find that contemplation is the "continued attention of the mind to a particular subject," and, religiously, it is the "attention to sacred things." It is therefore difficult to imagine how the idea of gazing or staring came to be associated with the word contemplation, unless it be due to the fact that generally it so happens that when any one is deeply absorbed in thought, he apparently seems to be gazing or staring at something in blank space. But this gazing is the effect of the act of contemplation. And, as usually happens, here too the effect seems to be confounded with the cause. Because the gazing attitude follows the act of contemplation, it is at once assumed that gazing is the cause which produces contemplation! Bearing this well in mind, let us now see what kind of contemplation (or meditation) the *Elixir of Life* recommends for the aspirants after occult knowledge. It says:

Reasoning from the known to the unknown meditation must be practised and encouraged.

That is to say, a *chela's* meditation should constitute the "reasoning from the known to the unknown." The "known" is the phenomenal world, cognisable by our five senses. And all that we see in this manifested world are the effects, the causes of which are to be sought after in the noumenal, the unmanifested, the "unknown world": this is to be accomplished by meditation, *i.e.*, continued attention to the subject. Occultism does not depend upon one method, but employs both the deductive and the in-

ductive. The student must first learn the general axioms. For the time being, he will of course have to take them as assumptions, if he prefers to call them so. Or as the *Elixir of Life* puts it:

All we have to say is that if you are anxious to drink of the *Elixir of Life* and live a thousand years or so, you must take our word for the matter, at present, and proceed on the assumption. For esoteric science does not give the faintest possible hope that the desired end will ever be attained by any other way; while modern, or the so-called exact science laughs at it.

True contemplation is the yearning of the human soul to ascend in spirit towards its divine parent, by studying and assimilating the divine laws that govern Universe and Man, and by applying them in everyday life.

In this sublime effort the soul relies on the immutable Law of Analogy that underpins the affinity between stars and man. This is the lost thread of Ariadne, which alone can guide us through the labyrinth of matter, and lead us from the unreal to the real.

These axioms have sufficiently been laid out in the articles on the *Elixir of Life* and various others treating on occultism, in the different numbers of *The Theosophist*. What the student has first to do is to *comprehend* these axioms and, by employing the deductive method, to proceed from universals to particulars. He has then to reason from the “known to the unknown,” and see if the inductive method of proceeding from particulars to universals supports those axioms. This process forms the primary stage of true contemplation. The student must first grasp the subject intellectually before he can hope to realise his aspirations. When this is accomplished, then comes the next stage of meditation which is

. . . the inexpressible yearning of the inner man to “go out towards the infinite.”

Before any such yearning can be properly directed, the goal, to which it is to be its aim to run, must be determined by the preliminary stages. The higher stage, in fact, consists in realising practically what the first steps have placed within one’s comprehension. In short, contemplation, in its true sense, is to recognise the truth of Éliphas Lévi’s saying:

To believe without knowing is weakness; to believe, because one knows, is power.

Or, in other words, to see that “KNOWLEDGE IS POWER.” The *Elixir of Life* not only gives the preliminary steps in the ladder of *contemplation* but also tells the reader how to *realise* the higher conceptions. It traces, by the process of contemplation as it were, the relation of man, “the known,” the manifested, the phenomenon, to “the unknown,” the unmanifested, the noumenon. It shows to the student what ideal he should contemplate and how to rise up to it. It places before him the nature of the inner capacities of man and how to develop them. To a superficial reader, this may, perhaps, appear as the acme of selfishness. Reflection or contemplation will, however, show the contrary to be the case. For it teaches the student that to comprehend the noumenal, he must identify himself with Nature. Instead of looking upon himself as an isolated being, he must learn to look upon himself as a part of the INTEGRAL

WHOLE. For, in the unmanifested world, it can be clearly perceived that all is controlled by the “Law of Affinity,” the attraction of one to the other. There, all is Infinite Love, understood in its true sense.

It may now be not out of place to recapitulate what has already been said. The first thing to be done is to study the axioms of Occultism and work upon them by the deductive and inductive methods, which is real contemplation. To turn this to a useful purpose, what is theoretically comprehended must be practically realised. It is to be hoped that this explanation may make the meaning of the former article on this subject clearer.



Addendum 1

Additional notes on the philosophy and science of Raja Yoga.

Dāmodar K. Māvalankar, “The Philosophy and Science of Vedantic Raja Yoga.” First published in *The Theosophist*, Vol. V (6), March 1884, p. 146. Republished in Sven Eek (*Comp. & Annot.*) *Damodar and the Pioneers of the Theosophical Movement*. Adyar: Theosophical Publishing House, 1965; pp. 406-9. Edited by Babu Siris Chandra Vasu, B.A., F.T.S.

I feel really obliged to my friend and brother, Babu Siris Chandra Vasu, B.A., for the presentation of a copy of a Treatise on “The Philosophy and Science of Vedāntic Raja Yoga,” edited by him. It is the reprint of a book which was first published about four years ago,¹ and a notice of which will be found on page 147 of Vol. I of *The Theosophist*. At the time the curious autobiography of the author was published in these columns, his book was passing through the press; and although the account of the Swami’s [the author’s] life looked rather odd, and a trifle too fantastic, the Editor of *The Theosophist* naturally enough abstained from hazarding an opinion upon the merits of a work as yet unpublished. The neutral attitude has since been unfortunately misunderstood, one way or another; therefore, a few remarks on the book in its present form will not be uncalled for.

A careful and attentive perusal of the Treatise forces the earnest student of Philosophy to the conclusion that a large portion of it is either allegorical or that it is a mystification. But the latter is an untenable supposition. Would, it is asked, the highly educated Editor have undertaken the publication of a work, apparently so full of impossibilities — nay absurdities, had it no hidden merits? The alternative, therefore, to which one is reduced is, that the work is a parable, that it is purposely veiled, like so many other treatises on Occultism — in short an allegory. It is needless here to repeat the impracticability of certain occurrences given out by the author as his personal experiences; and it must be said that the Editor has, to some extent, in a special footnote hastened to extricate his hero and himself out of a really perilous situation. Turning, however, to the philosophical portion of the work, two or three important points must not be omitted to be noticed.

① The author begins by taking Paramātma as the Guru, and *Jivātma* the disciple. The latter at the same time is defined to be “the reflected light or ray” of the former, i.e., the *Jivātma* referred to in the work under notice is identical with the seventh principle of the Occultist.² And yet a passage on page 2, reads:

The *Jivātma* having reached the sublimest height of knowledge, both theoretical and practical, by perfectly understanding all the principles of righteousness and virtue in all the religions of this as well as of the world above, and having enjoyed all the worldly pleasures with great avidity, the pleasures of a kingly life for a short space of time in a corner of this vast universe of the Almighty, at whose call the royal heads even lie prostrate, the pleasures resulting from the voluptuous beauty of the fair sex and all other sensual pleasures, and strived hard for the accumulation of wealth, and giving himself to all kinds of whims

¹ [1880]

² [Consult “Jiva and Jivatman,” in our Confusing Words Series. — ED. PHIL.]

and caprices of his unsteady and changeful mind, in short, after enjoying all the pleasures, both intellectual and sensual, of this world, and finding them worthless and vain, comes to the conclusion that no worldly pleasure is lasting and eternal. Being thus disgusted with all worldly enjoyments, the *Jivātma* feels deep remorse and begins to repent sincerely.

An occultist who will have the patience to master this interminable sentence, need not be long in finding out that the author has used the word *Jivātma* in three different senses, namely, the animal soul, the human soul and the spiritual soul, or, the fourth, the fifth, and the sixth (which is the vehicle of the seventh) principle. Ātma — the seventh principle — is *alīpta*,¹ and can neither enjoy nor suffer. It is the fourth principle which generates the desire for material enjoyment and the human soul which takes delight in sensual pleasures, but at the same time its upper strata, in which is reflected the light of the sixth, try through its own inherent powers to bring the lower principles under subjection. Otherwise, it is inconceivable how a principle, or substance, which has been immersed in one sort of enjoyment or suffering, can of itself turn its course into another channel. It may be argued that, after all, these principles are but different manifestations of the same *Paramātma*, and hence might be all included under the heading of *Jivātma*. A little reflection will, however, show that position to be indefensible. For the variety in the manifestation of the same essence must be due to the difference in the vehicles of manifestation. If these *vehicles* be different, how can they be called by one common name? Nor does it require a very deep thinking to find out that it is the *vehicles* of manifestation that are named, for *the manifested* being one, is absolute existence and shows no different attributes. It is therefore a matter of great regret that all throughout the book the word *Jivātma* is used to denote so many different principles, and thus is sure to mislead the unwary reader.

② The second important point to be noticed is the fact that *Asans*,² &c., are enjoined for the practice of *Vedāntic Raj Yoga*. To an occultist it is of course evident that the author has adopted the technical terms of *Hatha Yoga*, which will disclose the real *Raj Yoga* system, only when esoterically interpreted. In one place a process is described for subjugating the twelve kingdoms, beginning with the lowest one, which is situated in the *Kundalini*. A student of psychology knows that the method refers to the imperfections of the flesh which are to be conquered one by one, beginning with the grossest. It is a matter, however, of great concern as to how many of the readers will feel disposed to give that attention to the work, which alone may, under favourable circumstances, lead them to a correct understanding of the underlying esoteric meaning — I still persist in giving the author the benefit of the doubt, and feel ready to admit such a meaning in his work.

③ Thirdly, the language put into the mouth of the Guru is such as to confuse the reader greatly before he can find out whether by “preceptor” the *Paramātma* is meant, or the author himself. These are among the chief peculiarities that permeate

¹ [Unevolved, uncontaminated by matter. Cf. “*Avyakta* (Sanskrit). The unrevealed cause; indiscrete or undifferentiated; the opposite of *Vyakta*, the differentiated. The former is used of the unmanifested, and the latter of the manifested Deity, or of Brahma and Brahmā.” — *Theosophical Glossary*.]

² [Posture for hatha yoga]

almost the whole of the Treatise; and hence it is very doubtful whether its perusal will do any good to the general public. For only those can understand it who have studied esoteric philosophy up to a certain point; and for them the work contains very little they do not know: while the ordinary reader will be misled by the exoteric phraseology adopted, and consequently find the Treatise positively misleading and harmful. However, the motives of the author and the editor being no doubt perfectly benevolent, it is hoped that these remarks may help to remove all grounds of apprehension in the future. The editorial notes and appendices added to the second edition are of a certain importance, and if properly understood, are calculated to throw light upon some of the most obscure passages in the text. They also help to a clearer understanding of the Advaita Doctrine as propounded by Srimat Shankaracharya, which, unfortunately, the author puts in a very misleading form. The Editor is deserving of all praise and thanks for having, by his notes, attempted to rescue his reader, who, otherwise, would have been left hopelessly floundering in a sea of misconceptions. We would recommend the little Treatise to our students on account of its Appendix. We hope that they will carefully peruse it, for it does an infinite credit to the Editor.



Addendum 2

Those who pray silently and intensely gain their object, while those who merely mumble some formula get no answer to their prayers.

Dāmodar K. Māvalankar, "On Prayer." First published in *The Theosophist*, Vol. V (6) March 1884, p. 142. Republished in Sven Eek (*Comp. & Annot.*) *Damodar and the Pioneers of the Theosophical Movement*. Adyar: Theosophical Publishing House, 1965; pp. 405-6.

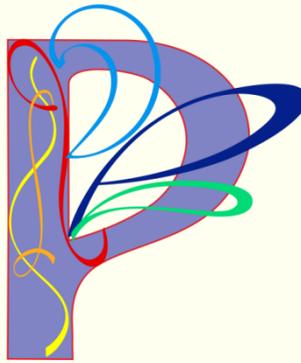
[*Note by Sven Eek:* The following is a reply to a letter from K.C.M., who asks what is the real meaning of prayer, and if there is any harm in the various forms or methods of approaching the "Great-self" in prayer. He says:

. . . I find that prayer is allowed in all the known religions of the world. There must have been some strong grounds for enjoining the practice. Was it because the Teachers thought it advisable not to meddle with the natural feelings of their followers?]

We act upon the principle that what is meat for one is death for another. While, therefore, some people may not be able to develop their latent psychic capacities without prayer, there are others who can. We set no value upon the words uttered. For, if the words had any effect, how is it that different religionists, although using different forms of expression, obtain the same result? Again, those who pray silently and intensely gain their object, while those who merely mumble some formula without understanding the meaning, get no answers to their prayers. As has been said in *Isis Unveiled*, we believe prayer is the giving of expression to the desire, which generates Will. And this WILL is all-powerful; its effect depending, of course, upon all the

surrounding conditions. Philosophers can be but few. They need no external ceremony or object for the purpose of concentrating their Will-force. We cannot expect the ordinary mortals, whose sensuous perceptions and avocations do not permit them to penetrate behind the mask, to do without the help of some external process. What we regret is the degeneration of this real prayer — the outward expression of the inward feeling — into a meaningless jumble of words. The prayer of the philosopher is his contemplation, an article on which subject will be found in the last number of *The Theosophist*.¹

DAMODAR K. MAVALANKAR



¹ [Please refer to Contemplation Parts 1 to 3, above.]

Suggested reading for students.



From our Living the Life Series.

- ATTUNE YOUR SELF WITH THE SELF IN ALL
- BLAVATSKY ON BUDDHISM
- BRAHMANISM IS THE ELDER SISTER OF BUDDHISM
- CAN THERE BE JOY WITHOUT LOVE?
- CHARITY EMPTIES HER PURSE WITH AN INVISIBLE HAND
- DELIGHT IN THE BEAUTY OF THE SOUL
- DENUNCIATION IS NOT A DUTY
- DISCORD IS THE HARMONY OF THE UNIVERSE
- EMERSON ON LOVE
- EVIL OMENS AND MYSTERIOUS DISEASES
- GODLESS BUDDHISM IS PHILOSOPHICAL AGNOSTICISM
- GOETHE'S MAXIMS AND REFLECTIONS
- HAPPINESS IS BUT A DREAM
- HARTMANN ON CHASTITY
- HYPOCRISY, DIAGNOSES AND PALLIATIVES
- IMPRISONED IN THE NARROW VASE OF DOGMATISM
- JUDGE ON THE UNIVERSAL APPLICATIONS OF DOCTRINE
- JUDGE ON THE UNIVERSAL BROTHERHOOD
- LET EVERY MAN PROVE HIS OWN WORKS
- LET YOUR DAILY LIFE BE YOUR TEMPLE AND GOD
- LÉVI ON THE POWER OF MIND, UNRUFFLED BY DESIRE - TR. WAITE
- LODGES OF MAGIC
- MARCUS AURELIUS' MEDITATIONS - TR. CASAUBON
- MEDICINE OF THE MIND
- OCCULT LAWS AND PARADOXES

LIVING THE LIFE SERIES
SUGGESTED READING FOR STUDENTS

- OCCULT LAWS CAN BE ENTRUSTED ONLY TO THOSE WHO LIVE THE LIFE DIRECTED BY THEOSOPHY
- OPPOSITE AND OPPOSING FORCES ARE CONVERTIBLE
- PARADOX IS THE LANGUAGE OF OCCULTISM
- PHILOSOPHERS AND PHILOSOPHICULES
- PLUTARCH ON HOW WE MAY PROFIT FROM OUR ENEMIES - TR. HARTCLIFFE
- PLUTARCH ON HOW WE MAY SHOW OFF WITHOUT BEING ENVIED – TR. LANCASTER
- PLUTARCH ON LOVE - TR. PHILIPS
- PLUTARCH ON MAN’S PROGRESS IN VIRTUE – TR. TOD
- PLUTARCH ON MORAL VIRTUE
- PLUTARCH ON WHETHER VICE IS SUFFICIENT TO RENDER A MAN UNHAPPY
- PROCLUS ON THE GOOD, THE JUST, AND THE BEAUTIFUL
- PROVERBIAL WISDOM FROM THE HITOPADESHA
- PYTHAGOREAN ETHICS AFTER STOBÆUS
- PYTHAGOREAN SYMBOLS - TR. BRIDGMAN
- SENTENCES BY SECTUS THE PYTHAGOREAN - TR. TAYLOR
- SERJEANT COX ON THE NEGATORS OF SPIRITUAL EVOLUTION
- SEVEN OCCULT TAMIL PROVERBS
- SPIRITUALITY IS NOT A VIRTUE
- THE ENNOBLING POWER OF THORACIC EXPANSION
- THE FIRST STEP TOWARDS THE TEMPLE OF TRUTH
- THE KINGDOM OF GOD IS WITHIN YOU BY TOLSTOY
- THE KREUTZER SONATA
- THE NELLORE YANADIS
- THE NILGIRI SANNYASIS
- THE NOBLE AIM OF EDUCATION IS TO AWAKEN THE DIVINITY WITHIN
- THE POWER TO HEAL
- THE SAYINGS OF LAO TZU - TR. GILES
- THE SCIENCE OF LIFE BY BLAVATSKY AND TOLSTOY
- THE STRUGGLE FOR EXISTENCE
- THEAGES ON VIRTUE
- THEOSOPHICAL JEWELS - LIVE IN THE IDEAL
- THEOSOPHICAL JEWELS - THE RAINBOW OF HOPE
- THOU SHALT CROUCH AT MY FEET

- TRUTH DESCENDS LIKE DEW FROM HEAVEN
- WHAT SHALL WE DO FOR OUR FELLOW-MEN?



On meditation proper.

- MARCUS AURELIUS' MEDITATIONS - TR. CASAUBON
— *in our Living the Life Series.*
- BROTHERHOOD RANKS ABOVE MEDITATION
- MEDITATION - AN INVOCATION
- MEDITATION - DANGERS, PART 1 OF 2
- MEDITATION - DANGERS, PART 2 OF 2
- MEDITATION - PRACTICALITIES AND PITFALLS
- MEDITATION - PROCLUS ON PLATO - TR. TAYLOR
- MEDITATION - TEACHINGS BY JUDGE
- MEDITATION PROPER IS SPIRITUAL SEERSHIP
— *in our Down to Earth Series.*

On true prayer versus vain prayer.

- ALEXANDER POPE'S UNIVERSAL PRAYER
- CHAITANYA'S DEVOTIONAL PRAYER
— *in our Mystic Verse and Insights Series.*
- THE VOICE OF THE WILL IS THE ATOMIC POINT, THE LOGOS OF THE SILENT ALL
— *in our Constitution of Man Series.*
- TRUE PRAYER IS MENTAL UTTERANCE IN SECRET
— *in our Higher Ethics and Devotion Series.*

On self-adoration and greed.

- DOES YOUR MIND ELATE WITH SELF-ADORATION?
- INSTEAD OF BLACK AND WHITE MAGIC, READ SELFISH AND UNSELFISH MOTIVE
- SELFISHNESS IS THE CAUSE OF ALL SIN AND SUFFERING
- SELFISHNESS IS THE HALLMARK OF FAKIRS, HERMITS, AND YOGINS
— *in our Black versus White Magic Series.*
- POVERTY BREEDS GENEROSITY, WEALTH GREED AND SELFISHNESS
— *in our Down to Earth Series.*
- WHAT SHALL WE DO WITH OUR VICTORY?
— *in our Hellenic and Hellenistic Papers Series.*

