

Discourses/Articles

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A PICTORIAL PHILOSOPHY OF YOGA

Imagine for a moment that the whole space is a large radiant and blazing splendour. Imagine at the same time that this blazing splendour which is filling all space and which is the space itself, is getting transmitted to everything which is within it, inside as well as outside. Stretch your imagination a little to consider the position of the little bits of things in this vast space which is brilliant, comparable with the sun, even more brilliant, and imagine that the little things in this vast space are electrical transforming stations. A transforming station receives the energy that is pumped from the powerhouse and transmutes this energy into a particular measure of voltage either increasing it or decreasing it as the case might be. And, imagine at the same time that this transforming station is of the shape of a prism. Don't think that the station is made up of iron, steel, etc. It is a luminous body, and it is looking like a crystalline prism. So, you have to imagine many things at the same time. A great, inconceivable, all-pervading space – not the space that you see with your eyes – but a novel type of space which is all radiance and nothing but that. This radiance has its impact upon the transformer station which is of the structure of a prism. And you know what happens to light when it is projected through a prism; it gets deflected in various directions. But it is not merely a prism, it is also a powerhouse in a small way because it is a transformer station. Because it is a transformer, it pumps energy outward from its own container. Imagine at the same time, once again, that this transformer set has the power to throw the energy received by it outward with a great force, as water passing through a conduit pipe jets forth with an amount of pressure. Imagine that the pressure exerted by the transformer is varying in its nature, so that there are many such stations. You know the powerhouse can emit energy and the same can be connected to various types of transformer sets, with different forces in them to diffuse the energy received into a new type of voltage of a different intensity altogether. Now, I mentioned to you that it is not merely a station that transforms the energy into a new voltage of a higher or lower category, but that which deflects it in various directions, casts it into rays which ramify themselves even as the rays of the sun are seen to project themselves into a thousand different directions. There is a new set of energy producer, a dynamo, inside the power station, which throws the energy out with a capacity equivalent to the productive capacity of the dynamo that is placed in the transformer set. What happens? A lot of change takes place. Firstly, the vast light that is the radiance of the indivisible space has been conducted through the transformer unit which deflects it in a different way altogether. It does not merely deflect, it pumps out with a jetting energy in the direction given according to the structure or the make up of the transformer set. It is something like a person being pushed by another in one direction continuously, so that the person that is pushed is forced to move in that direction, especially if the direction is a type of a lane where one cannot move to the right or to the left and has to rush forward through the blinkers of the limitations on both sides, so that what is ahead alone is seen and what is behind

cannot be seen because it is a narrow passage and what is felt is only the push given by something which cannot be seen by that which is being pushed.

This illustration which I am placing before you is to some extent comparable to the image of the "case" that you find in the *Republic* of Plato where he gives a similar analogy which is familiar to many of you. Imagine that people are thrown into a dark dungeon where it is all pitch invisibility and these captives who have been thrown into this dungeon are tied hand and foot with chains, tightly, so that they can see only the walls of the cave and not what is behind them, namely the passage through which they were driven into the cave. What do they see? They see a dark wall in front of them, the wall of the cave. Imagine, so goes Plato's illustration, that these captives are thrown there for years and years. They are born and bred, as it were, in that cave itself, so that their generation does not know what is normal life in the world. They have never seen light with their eyes. They have been living for centuries in the dark dungeon, in the cave, and they can see only the wall, and that in one position only, because they are tied hands and feet with chains, as captives in the prison house, the dungeon. Imagine, says Plato, that people are walking on the road in the sunlight and the shadows of the people walking in the sun, are cast on the wall of the cave in which the captives are tied. What do they see? They see movement of shadows. They cannot imagine who casts these shadows because they have been tied very tightly in one position, so that they can see only the wall and not what is behind, and we are also to imagine that they are there for centuries and they have never seen what is light and what is normal life in the world: They would be imagining that, that is the world of activity and that the shadows are the reality. But they do not know what casts the shadows or where they originate or the originals of the shadows.

I will give you another – a third example. Imagine there is a Parliament House; and near the House there is a pond where there are many frogs. The frogs are great scientists. They observe the movement of people around the Parliament House with powerful telescopes. The frog scientist has a microscope and also a telescope. What the scientist sees he makes a note of. And the frog scientists also make observations and note them down in their scientific study: "This building (the Parliament House) has the power of attracting people and people keep entering it." Then they observe that the people leave the building. This second observation is also noted down: "This building not only has the power of attracting people into it, it also ejects people out of it. It has, therefore, the power of attracting and repelling people." In like manner, our actions are attributed to the stimuli externally from the objects outside, like the frog scientist attributing to the building the quality of the entrance of people to and their exit from the Parliament House. The source of these actions is blotted out of perception by the disintegrated sense-perception. This is also the way in which scientists interpret the behaviour of objects by casting everything and every event in the mould of cause-and-effect relationship, under the impression that such a law operates in the universe, as an objective fact.

The impulses that we see acting within us outwardly are the action of the dynamo that is working within us which has received the energy of the powerhouse, whose presence is completely blotted out from the vision by the streaming rays of light, which are projected externally from the transformer set. Each one of us is a transformer set and also a prism deflecting rays of light in five different directions through the five sense

organs, the eyes, the ears, etc. The senses are the rays which are deflected through the personality of ours which is a radiant transformer set but structurally patterned like a prism. Because there is a dynamo inside that pumps energy externally, we are impelled outwardly with a capacity equal to the capacity of the dynamo that is within ourselves. So different individuals that we are, we have different types of impulsion towards external contacts and we run outwardly whether we want it or not. All movements are external because of the force with which the dynamo ejects them externally into space and time. We do not merely carry this dynamo within ourselves; we, ourselves, are that. The so-called 'Me', 'You', or 'He', 'She', 'It' is nothing but this transforming dynamo which throws the energy out with a tremendous force, externally, so that, it can neither be aware of itself, nor can it be aware of the large source of light which is the infinite space from where this little jet passes through this dynamo, a little bit placed in some corner of this infinite space. So what can we say about our own selves? We cannot say anything about ourselves or about anything else. Our mouths will be shut if we are given this sharp injection, awakening us into the circumstances in which we are placed in this world of correlative actions and reactions. Hence, being buffeted from every side, inwardly and outwardly, we behave in our moods and in the actions of our psyche in different manners at different times of the day and during different days in the span of our life here and in different incarnations through which we pass. In one incarnation, we live as one species of living being, in another incarnation, we may be in another species with a sociology of its own, with a political argument and philosophical disposition applicable to the outlook available to that species. You cannot imagine what you yourself were in the series of physical existences you had had in your earlier births. But there is a connecting thread running through these recurrences of the species, though nobody can see it anywhere. But it has to exist and it exists everywhere. Either an organic connection in creation exists everywhere through the species or it (creation) does not exist at all, for creation is evolution of an organic whole, not segmented parts. But the frog-scientist has made his observation that the building, the Parliament House, has the power of attraction and repulsion. Only this much of information is available to the frog-scientist. The mind makes the same mistake and we think and act as if only human beings were the whole of creation. This peculiar situation arises on account of the organic past that has gone before us. The mind is very defective and misses the point. The mind misses the point, again, on account of its peculiar structure.

Here we are not going to tackle the problem of the first step towards God or God-Realisation, but we have to be even more cautious about the problem before us, the disease that humanity has construed as social philosophy. It is not a frog philosophy or a snake philosophy or a tiger philosophy or a honey-bee philosophy or a crow philosophy, it is only man's philosophy and it cannot be anything else because we are men, we are humans. So this peculiar pattern of the prism, that we are, can deflect the rays in one mode only. If you want, you can imagine colour prisms and also broken prisms or prisms with concave or convex effect. You can imagine what you like to pattern in your own mind the variety of species that can be possible in this infinite panorama of experience you call creation, you call experience, you call existence, you call the universe. We are running after Yoga practice with great enthusiasm with little knowledge of the difficulties in which we might be placed. The conditions which limit us in a hundred and a thousand ways are so atrocious and harrowing in their nature that a little misconstrued aspiration would be a defeat of the purpose, because this is like preparing oneself for a kind of protracted warfare which can prolong itself for any length

of time and which can be fought in battlefields of different areas on earth unknown to the imagination, under conditions which cannot be explained now before the beginning of the war. Such complications are before us.

We have a principal and primary problem before us, viz., that we are our own troublemakers essentially, because through the analogy of the dynamo which is the transformer set, I mentioned to you that we are ejecting ourselves externally so that the force with which we eject ourselves outwardly compels us to be aware only of other things, other people, other conditions, and not of ourselves which are responsible for the perception of these other things, other people and other conditions. The nature of the perceptions which we regard as a totality of experience depends entirely upon the structure of this dynamo which we are. And so, in different species of incarnations, we have different worlds before us. You might have been angels, you might have been a Gabriel or a Michael, you might have been an Indra or a Brihaspati, you might have been a *Gana* of Rudra or in Vaikuntha, a *Parshada* of Lord Visnu; you might have been a Siddha in Indraloka or Tapoloka; you might have been any blessed thing in any realm of being. And those experiences of those types of beings, of individuals placed under those circumstances, were due to their being constituted in that manner, in that individuality. And now we are human beings for whom only humanity exists and nothing else can exist. The thought of any other thing is meaningless for us. We laugh at anything that is not human. We have a condescending and, what can you say? – a poor opinion of anything that is subhuman and we laugh at anything that is superhuman. How can you imagine that there can be anything else other than what your own species can contain in itself? Now, if Yoga is the power that bombards the very structure of individuality and breaks it open, so that it can connect itself to the original principle from where it receives sustenance, existence, and intelligence, naturally Yoga must be a really hard job. It cannot be an easy joke and the difficulty about it can be imagined by us, though we cannot actually pass through it at once, at least imagine in our minds, if we can place ourselves philosophically under a state of analysis of circumstances which is the legacy that we have received from great masters of yore, which legacy has come down to us in the form of the scriptures, in the form of the texts written by or spoken by these adepts, or even by messages that have been conveyed to us by word of mouth through the chain of Gurus and disciples. Various other means of communication are there, and through these means, we come to know this, the great vista that is before us, the project or enterprise of Yoga. To enter the field of Yoga is, therefore, to become a member of the comity of the whole of Creation. When you sign a membership form of the government of the universe, the law that operates there acts upon you instantaneously and they, having the power to act in multitudinous ways, have also the power to act upon you in a similar manner. We do not enter into the field of Yoga as Indians, Hindus, Brahmins or nationals of a country, or people with an affiliation to a creed or a faith. The principle of Yoga is the principle which can best be described today as wholly scientific, in the sense that it states facts for facts. With all this panoramic projection of the vista of the Light that is Yoga before us, we have to take the first step, because even if you are going to enter the ocean itself you have to place your first step on the beach, in the first waters of the ocean, and you do not place your foot in the centre of the sea. Whatever may be the distance that you may have to cover, you have to take one step at a time. Nobody takes more than one step at a time. That is impracticable. The question is, where to go and what step to take, in which direction, under the circumstances mentioned, i.e., when we are being pushed and pulled in various ways by

the powers that are ahead of us and the powers that are behind us, like a person caught in the movement of a flooded river, pushed by the waters from behind and pulled also by the waters that are in front, thus being forced to move only in one direction. What solace has that person? What independence can that person have in the circumstances of the push and pull in both directions?

The ancient technique, therefore, has always been of a very cautious communication of this knowledge from the Guru to the disciples, and that to selected ones only. It was never a mass teaching, because it is of such subtlety that one has to tread it with such dexterity and with such a manipulating capacity that a generalised prescription or recipe may not have the effect desired, even as a public lecture on a particular recipe of medicine by a doctor to a large audience of sick people may prove to be of no effect at all. These days, things are different. We are living in a different century, under conditions that are quite different from the ancient conditions of the Upanisadic times. Taking for granted all these difficulties, inwardly and outwardly, that we are facing, the tradition cannot be left out. The mountain that we have to scale is very high, but it was high centuries back and has not become less high because centuries have passed. Mount Everest is not going to become smaller after two hundred years. You cannot say, "Now times have changed, the mountain has to come down." Man has to gird up his energy in a different way, yet he may prepare himself according to the prevailing conditions. The prevailing conditions of the time – political, social, personal, etc. – are to be taken into consideration, even one's own physical condition. But with all these preparations, one has finally to tread the very same path that the ancient masters trod. There is only one way and no two ways. It is a part of an atom, yet spread out everywhere, says the great scripture – atomic in size but spread out everywhere. It is atomic, because invisible to the eyes. One cannot know actually what one is supposed to do at a given moment of time because when troubles come, they come like floods. You won't have only one trouble, troubles will come from all sides. You will have every blessed difficulty, inwardly and outwardly, the Adhyatmika, the Adhibhautika and the Adhidaivika troubles. It will appear that everything is unfriendly from top to bottom. People are unfriendly, the sky is unfriendly, even the stomach is unfriendly, nothing is co-operating! These problems everyone has to face, but these are the incidental encounters and we have to bear in mind when we tread the path of Yoga, that the disciplines that we are following are capable of yielding the fruit that is desired. This is the reason why a continuous and constant vigilant observation by a Guru becomes necessary when one takes to yoga very seriously and not merely in a purely religious or social manner. Inward impulses clash with social laws. They can clash with political conditions, and your means may be something prohibited in the world. So you have clash and confrontation and rub and skirmish and a problem. Here, nobody can help you, because those who are supposed to be your helpers, become your opponents at a time when you take a step above the purely social or the conforming level of your personality.

At present we are all living at a conforming level. We have to conform to various norms of life and we look around and see who is there around us and naturally we have to conduct ourselves according to those people who are around us, – are they policemen, are they thieves, are they friends, are they men, are they women, are they children, are they what, accordingly you conduct yourself. But a time comes when you may have to brace yourself in the atmosphere of your own psychical forces which remain at present invisible to the eye. But the time may come when they alone may be visible, and nobody

else outside; they will become realities. You will become the perceiver of them. You will see them as if they are objects outside. At present, they are the wire-pullers inside. They operate through the individualities of people. So, when you confront people, positively or negatively, or have to deal with things in some way, you imagine that you are dealing with persons or things, not knowing that you are forced to do that by the impulses deep within you, and you are guided along a stereotyped path. But a time comes when these dacoits will show their faces. When the mind withdraws itself in deeper concentration into the realms of the psyche, the wires which are pulling the individuals along will be seen; and they are the reality. Then it is that you are seized with dread and a fear takes possession of you. You do not know where you are standing. This problem you will not face when you are only telling the beads or chanting the mantra only a few minutes, or performing Yoga Asanas for only half an hour every day. Religion has not touched your skin and therefore these difficulties are not felt by you. But those of you who at least believe that they are students of Yoga, will have one day or other to face the realities and not merely the shadows on the walls. You have to see the sources which cast these shadows, and these shadows are cast by powers which are inside us, which are manipulated by our individualities according to the nature of the species into which we are born. But we have to be rid of this species-consciousness. One day we may have to stop thinking like human beings, because human beings are not the only things that are created in the world. We have other forms of life than the human, and that is why you will have to forget all things that are human – every law, every regulation, everything that is human will have to be transcended, broken through. And there, God is your help, and perhaps the Guru is your help. The subject is very deep. I shall hope to touch upon it another time.