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The Fourfold Yoga-An Introduction

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Yoga is derived from the word "Yuj" which means to unite. Union with Cosmic Creative Intelligence is the aim of Yoga.

The Fourfold Yoga has been prescribed for Cosmic Union in Oriental Philosophies.

They are:

1. Union via Action (Karma Yoga)
2. Union via Psychic Control (Raja Yoga)
3. Union via Universal Love (Bhakthi Yoga)
4. Union via Wisdom (Jnana Yoga)

Union via Action is for the person of active temperament.

Union via Psychic Control is for the person of adventurous temperament.

Union via Universal Love is for the person of emotional temperament.

Union via Wisdom is for the person of intellectual temperament.

These four paths are not different from one another. They are all part of the Fourfold Yoga.

Certain qualities are to be inculcated in the seeker if he or she is to achieve the Ultimate Goal.

Prajna has been defined as the discriminative intellect- when the intellect discriminates between the Real and the Unreal. This intellect discriminates between Being and Non-Being. This quality should be incorporated by the Intellectual Person in order to progress along the path of Jnana Yoga.

Love is defined as the greatest of all the positive qualities of humankind. This quality is to be incorporated by the Emotional Person in order to progress along the field of Bhakthi Yoga.

Control of Mind or Psychic Control through Raja Yoga should be incorporated by the Adventurous Person in order to progress along the field of Raja Yoga.

Selfless Service should be incorporated by the Active Person in order to progress along the field of Karma Yoga.

In other words, since the Fourfold Yoga has been prescribed for humankind, all these four great qualities - Selfless service, love, psychic control and the discriminative intellect should be incorporated by the spiritual aspirant to develop in the field of Yoga.

Yoga was defined by Aurobindo as a methodic process towards self-perfection through a development of the latent potential at the five levels of Being - physical, vital, mental, intellectual and spiritual. Normal people live only in the first three sheaths - physical, vital and mental. Only when we use our hidden spiritual potential - the intellectual and the bliss sheaths - can we unfold our full mental potential.

The Seven States of Consciousness

We primarily live in the three relative states of Consciousness- waking, dreaming and dreamless sleep known in Sanskrit as *Jagrata*, *Swapna* and *Sushupti*. There is also a Transcendental state of Consciousness known as the Fourth (*Tureeya*) and there are still yet higher states of Consciousness.

These are the seven states:

1. Waking
2. Dreaming (REM sleep)
3. Dreamless Sleep (non- REM)
4. Transcendental Consciousness (TC)
5. Cosmic Consciousness (CC)
6. Glorified State of Cosmic Consciousness (GC)
7. Unified State of Cosmic Consciousness (UC)

In his Ph.D. dissertation "The Physiological Effects of Transcendental Meditation: A Proposed Fourth Major State of Consciousness, " Dr. Robert Keith Wallace attempts to prove the existence of a fourth major state of consciousness known as Transcendental Consciousness (TC).

Cosmic Consciousness is a state where (TC) and the three relative states coexist.

The way to achieving Higher States of Consciousness- The Triune Meditation

Meditation is threefold:

1. Physical Meditation
2. Verbal Meditation
3. Mental Meditation

Reverence to preceptors and Yogis, worship of one's Tutelary Deity, observance of continence, nonviolence - all of these constitute Physical Meditation.

Speaking kind words and not hurting anyone, observance of Truth, Self-Study (serious study of the Self) - all of these constitute Verbal Meditation.

Mental Meditation - mental cheerfulness, humility, observance of Silence, mastery of the sense organs, purity of heart - all of these constitute Mental Meditation.

Medi- means to remove. Medication means the removal of disease and Meditation means the removal of thoughts.

The aim of Nature is to effect Super-Nature and the aim of Yoga is Self-Actualization. The Goal of Life is Self-Realisation, and in order to unfold our true potential, we have to follow the Fourfold Path.

*He still keeps to the high & difficult road
That sole leads to the Eternal's peaks!
Without Knowledge, without service, without psychic control & finally Love,
who have ever realized his Self?
And what is prerequisite for this Self-Realization? Sacrifice!
Only by hard sacrifice is high heaven earned.
Sri Aurobindo*

Attachment to the sensory world is Bondage. Sacrifice alone can give us Liberation or Self-Actualization and the Ultimate Bliss.

*Earth's pains are the ransom of its prisoned delights
For Joy and not for sorrow was earth made
Sri Aurobindo*

By sacrifice, we become the Self-Actualizing person described by Abraham Maslow living in the widest possible frame of reference.

*He who to none and nowhere overbound
By ties of flesh, takes evil things and good
Neither desponding nor exulting such
Bears Wisdom's plainest mark!
The Song Celestial*

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