

PANDIPEDDI CHENCHIAH
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THE THEOLOGY OF CHENCHIAH

with

Selections from his Writings

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the transmission of religious experiences and referred to the 'Old Man of Himalayas' as one who opened his vision. The autobiography of the late Mr Appasamy (father of Dr A. J. Appasamy) reveals how this desire for higher religious experience persists in a convert and how it can be satisfied by Yoga.

Christo Samaj, by its sympathetic study of Hinduism, has drawn the attention of Christians to this still unexplored region of Hinduism. I had the privilege of engaging the interest of A. C. Paul Nadar, Advocate, Tuticorin, in the practice of Yoga and he has been an ardent preacher of Yoga since. The other day I received a letter from a clergyman requesting me to initiate him into Yoga practice. We may take it that the interest of Indian Christians in Yoga is not a passing mood motivated in curiosity but an abiding yearning arising from a deep spiritual urge. Vague and inaccurate ideas of Yoga are prevalent in Missionary and Christian circles. Out of ignorance arises exaggerated fear of and attraction to Yoga—some regarding it pagan and incompatible with Christianity and others offering it as a certain cure for our spiritual malady. It is, therefore, necessary that Indian Christians should have accurate information as to the nature, object and method of Yoga before they can decide to what extent it may help them in their spiritual endeavour. That Yoga could be of tremendous attraction to the spiritual mind is borne out by the fact that Islam—in many respects a stern and uncompromising child of Judaism—has come under its spell in Sufism and has to a large measure enriched itself spiritually.

Yoga has always been the child of applied religion. Doctrinal and credal religions do not require Yoga on the intellectual level of their faith. The need for Yoga is felt in religion only when we try to embody religious ideas and ideals in practice. Christian worship may be regarded as Yoga, though of a

II. CHRISTIANS AND YOGA

A Study of the Technique of Realisation in Relation to the Aims and Objects of Christianity

Yoga has attracted the attention of the West of late and is now attracting the attention of the Indian Christians. The orientalists were engaged with the antiquities of Hinduism and the missionaries with the popular Hinduism—of temples and the priests. The aspiration of Hinduism to become a world faith demanded a presentation of the Message of Hinduism from a universal standpoint and this was undertaken by the Theosophical Society and by the Ramakrishna Mission. With the establishment of groups of Western followers of Hinduism came the necessity of commanding a means of practice and action. Temple worship involving mythology and idolatry was obviously unsuited. Yoga with its profound psychological insight was exactly the instrument suited for the times. Of late the interest in Yoga has spread to England. Col. Yeats of 'Bengal Lancers' fame and Young-husband of 'Federation of Religions' fame have both written on the subject. Woodroffe, a High Court Judge of Calcutta, brought his ponderous Sanskrit erudition to bear upon Yoga in his *Serpent Power*.

The recent interest of Indian Christians in Yoga arises from an altogether different cause. The dreary dullness of the religious worship of the churches coupled with the utter paucity of higher religious experience within its orbit turned many earnest Christian seekers towards the rich pastures of Hinduism. Sadhu Sundar Singh was the first Christian who opened our eyes to the wealth of higher spiritual experiences in Christianity. He was a Yogi. One does not admire a Yogi without being attracted to Yoga. Sadhu Sundar Singh bore testimony to

superficial type. Monasteries and Brotherhoods which practised Christianity always evolved a defined goal, and it became necessary to prescribe a means of reaching the goal. Judaism looked at religion as essentially promulgated law to be obeyed, not a goal or objective to be attained. Hence there was no development of Yoga. The 'sacrifice' was too mystical a thing to be treated as amenable to discipline. Yoga in India has always been an instrument of spiritual education. It presupposes powers in man to attain the goal. God's grace may still be necessary but it operates without in the last instance pairing the capacity of man to work out his destiny with the apparatus endowed on him by nature. Grace does not displace effort of Yoga but inspires it. Yoga belongs to the realm of the 'achieved' as opposed to 'the given'—the 'alterable and changeable' as opposed to the firm and immovable foundations and boundaries of life.

Yoga Defined

Sanakrit writers derive Yoga from 'Yuj'—to join. The yoke which unites the two bulls used for ploughing comes from the same root. The word indicates the great aim of Yoga—union with God the reality, and the consequent bliss that comes from the union—*Kaivalya*. The meaning of Yoga stands out prominently if we contrast it with *Viyoga*—separation. Lovers who have parted with each other are in a *viyoga* condition. *Viyoga* to them is the source and origin of *vishada*—grief and suffering. *Viyoga*—separation from God—causes sorrow and suffering; Yoga—union, with Him—gives *ananda* and *kaivalya*. In some schools of thought it is said that creation which involves separation from God is purposely devised so that the desire for union may emerge and the consequent union may be all the more blissful, by reason of separation. While the root 'Yuj' in Yoga indicated the objective,

curiously enough, the classical definitions of yoga do not define it in relation to the end but in terms of the means. Patanjali defines yoga as *Chittavritti nirodha*—getting rid of the modification of mind. Mind in its outward motion towards objects casts itself into their mould and such changes of the mind are technically called *vrittis*. To suspend the *vrittis* of mind and turn it inwardly to self is yoga. Gita defines Yoga as *Karmasu kausalam* (dexterity in action) in such a way that we are not affected by it. In its widest connotation Yoga may be defined as psycho-physical discipline and technique for attaining the spiritual end of union or communion with God.

Yoga and Religious Ends

Yoga as a generic name covers many spiritual techniques. The Christian when he speaks of Yoga falls into the error of regarding it as simple and single. Yoga is means to an end. I use the word 'means' in the plural advisedly—for here we touch a radical feature of difference in outlook between the Indian and the Jew. Both have come to the conclusion that the ultimate end to be attained is God and He is one. To the Jew one goal or end necessarily meant one way, only one way of reaching it. But to the Hindu, the end or goal may always be reached by many roads. He does not subscribe to the dogma 'One Lord, one faith, one baptism'—Ephesians 3:4. In India one God may be reached by diverse ways. The paths always are determined by the attributes of personality—the mind, will and emotions—*manas*, *karma* and *bhakti*; the yoga of *gnana* for the path of intellect, yoga of action for the path of will, yoga of *bhakti* for the path of emotion. While the emphasis with the Jew was on 'one' with the Hindu the stress was on 'oneness' or 'becoming one'. Of course, there were attempts to synthesise and standardise the means. But

these attempts could be understood only after we study each method separately. As such a study happens to be chronological as well, we may start with a study of the same in the order of their appearance in history. The Christian will then understand that in Yoga he has a wide range with considerable freedom of choice.

Karma Yoga

To attempt to trace the development of the idea of *Karma* is to undertake to write a history of Hinduism—a task which does not come within the province of this article. Restricting myself to the bare minimum necessary to grasp the aim of *Karma yoga*, I may begin with the sacrificial system of Rig-Veda. *Yagna*, the sacrifice in Rig Veda, was essentially an invitation to Gods Indra and Varuna to come and dine. How are the gods to be brought to the altar? The answer was by *mantra*. The intoned hymns have by their inherent power attracted gods to the altar. Thus invocatory words became the essence of the sacrificial ideology. In Rig Vedic times they sang to bring the gods to the overthrow of Vedic gods. Curiously enough the growing devotion to Vedic gods did not mean growing faith in the power of gods. On the other hand, it implied growing faith in *mantra*. The *Purva Mimamsa* school attributed the prosperity of the devotee to the efficiency of hymns and not to the power or goodwill of gods. Even after it ceased to believe in Vedic gods it continued in Vedic worship attributing to *mantras* a magic power to bestow prosperity. This sacrifice in which *mantras* played an important part retained its hold even after the Vedic cult disappeared. Later still *mantras* found a champion in the *Tantric* school as the cause of vibration, mighty and powerful. *Mantra* survives in *Tantra* primarily for its supposed efficiency in starting vibrations and thus developing the powers resident

in the several centres (*chakras*) of the body. *OM* was originally the mystic word to which potency was attributed but the *Tantric* school discovered several syllables like *Hrim*, *Hraim*, which are said to possess similar efficacy.

Another school attributed efficacy of Vedic ritual to the indomitable will and concentration of energies in compelling gods to yield to the devotee. *Tapas* which preceded yoga was based on the supremacy of will. This led to the tendency of attributing exaggerated importance to will. The Hindu mythology contains stories that speak of *tapas* as the power that holds gods captive to the will of the worshipper. With the intelligent section of seekers these claims ceased to have any influence and the will functions in yoga as the power of prolonged and persistent concentration essential for all successful spiritual effort.

The *Karma* doctrine found a surprising and revolutionary end in Gita, which does not set much store on Vedic rituals and *mantras*. Gita may be said to discard the sacrificial ideology and replace it with a new doctrine of *Karma*—*Niskama Karma*—action without attachment to fruit. This kind of action requires on the one hand *Brakthi* and on the other dexterity in cultivating a peculiar attitude of mind towards action—an attitude of mind between attachment and renunciation or detachment. This is why the Gita defines yoga as dexterity in action. In Patanjali, *mantra* is an element in *niyama*.

Jnana Yoga

The Upanishadic revolution brought in its wake new ideas, new goals and techniques. *Yagna* and *Tapas* lost their hold with the passing away of personal and external gods. *Atman*, inmost reality in man, became the goal of religious search. Union with *atman* was the *summum bonum*. Yoga

strictly so called was born in the spacious days of the Upanishads, when intellectual illumination came to play a part in the technique of realising Brahman. *Jnana Marga* is a pathway of discrimination at one end and a pathway of contemplation at the other. The line of thought, which ultimately found final expression in Sankara, regarded variety of life as limitations on the irrefragable homogeneity of Brahman. The dualism of subject and object, the plurality of creation, have their roots in *Avidya* and error. Brahman is the truth, Brama is the fallacy of life. Now one does not drive any darkness by hammer and axe, or by effort and labour. As we dispel darkness by light, so we remove error by reminding ourselves of the truth. You banish dreams not by chasing them but by awakening.

The technique of *Jnana Yoga* is essentially psycho-analytical. 'Soham'—I am God—is not, as outsiders have misunderstood it, an arrogant claim of the creature in blasphemy of God. The *Jnani* who repeated was humble enough. He was practising Coueism—that is all. *Jnana Yoga* argued itself into the truth, convincing the ego that variety, mode, change, do not exist. We think it exists. We may as well think it does not. In standard Yoga, the technique of *Jnana* was not adopted but the concepts of *Nirguna* and *Saguna* Brahman were acknowledged. The idea that we attain reality by transcending consciousness was also incorporated. Thus it will be seen that standard Yoga did not accept *Jnana Yoga*. It was the other way about. The *Jnani* accepted the standard Yoga as suitable to the end in view and yoga returned the compliment by according to *asamprajnata Samadhi* the highest place in Yogic experience.

Bhakthi Yoga

Hindu theism passed through two distinct stages—one immediately after Upanishadic era when Brahman was

worshipped and the aim of religious endeavour was to become one with Him. It was at this stage that Patanjali produced the classic of Yoga. Yoga Sutras which were intended for those who believed in *Iswara*, a personal God, was a theistic yoga. Then came *Siva* and *Vishnu* and with them the temple worship. This gave rise to Bhakthi or emotion directed towards visible gods with earthly careers. *Bhakthi Yoga* was a discipline of emotion. It sought spiritual satisfaction in emotional experience of rapture, ritual, self-forgetfulness, in pilgrimages and festivals, etc. Theism, which retained the main impulses of the Upanishadic age, conceived progress in four stages—*Salokya*, *Samipya*, *Sarōpya* and *Sayujya*—and adopted Patanjali Yoga with emphasis on *japa* (prayers). Vaishnavites developed a technique of drama. This prevails among followers of Krishna and to some extent of Rama and goes by the name of 'discipline of Bhavas'. The Bhakta acted the part of Sita or Radha or Lakshmanan or Hanuman. The realism of the drama exalted them.

Theism also explored the possibilities of surrender as contrasted with concentration. Concentration and surrender run parallel in theistic yoga. I mention this because Yoga of surrender may suit the normal Christian mood better than Yoga of concentration. *Prema Yoga* is another technique which deserves the attention of Christians. Jesus made Love of God and Love of man the crux of religion, his religion. Behind the birth, life, Cross and Resurrection is the love of Jesus, supreme and saving. Chaitanya pursued this path successfully. We may not take over the system in all its details. But a study of it may be of great help. This love acts as a tremendous motive power, and requires all the imagination we possess to realise it. The Lord must become to us as real as he was when in the flesh. In the development of Christian yoga, we may derive considerable aid from the Bhakthi

movement. The *Prema Yoga* has recourse to human love, especially love between man and woman in expounding its ideology. No doubt there has been a tendency to degrade love to carnality, but it must be admitted that the most divine thing in man is love and the attitude of lovers in the higher plane may afford a stepping stone to *Prema Yoga*.

The Yoga, which Christians adopt all over, is *Bhakti Yoga*—in the church and *Prema Yoga* outside the church. Both will benefit by excursions into bhakti experience. Hindu bhaktas have stressed the importance of (1) *Parayana*—reading of the scripture, (2) *Sravana*—hearing the word, (3) *Manana*—constant contemplation of the word of God, (4) *Bhajana*—worship, (5) *Vidheyata*—obedience. All these are emphasised from the pulpit. It may be that *Prema Yoga* will more and more take the form of bringing social and political institutions under the law of love. All the same, we need for this purpose bhaktas, individuals who have surrendered to love. In the education of individuals in bhakti, our ancestral faith has much to teach us. Compared to Hindu bhakti which ploughs up tremendous emotional powers Christian worship is tame and lacking in abandon and glow. It is too cautious and calculating. Intense bhakti can be seen any day in Hinduism, and affords a model which, with modifications demanded by the genius of Christianity, may well be copied.

The First Synthesis—Ashtangayoga of Patanjali

By the time the six *darsans* came to be formulated, all the main religious trends in Hinduism had developed and the time was propitious for systematic exposition of Yoga. It is significant that such a formulation should have taken place in the theistic system of yoga rather than in the atheistic system of *Samkhya* though *Samkhya* science and psychology are adopted in Yoga. The Christian should understand that

Yoga was enunciated in a theistic *Darsana* and he need not have any qualms of conscience in adopting it. The avowed object of Yoga is communion in a real sense with *Ishvara*—to become one with Him. Patanjali inherited from *Samkhya* tradition an objective and scientific mind methodology. So he asked the question, how to become one with any object? And his technique applies to becoming one with a physical object as much as to becoming one with persons. The technique developed by Patanjali is accepted by Hindus in later ages as useful to all sects of Hinduism.

The Yoga of Patanjali contains eight limbs. These are:

(1) *Yama*—practice of *Ahimsa*, non-stealing, *brahmacharya* and non-possession. These form the moral preparation for yoga. Christians may note that pursuit and accumulation of wealth and non-contenance are disqualifications barring a candidate from practising yoga, (2) *Niyama*—purity, contentment, willingness to suffer pain, self-renunciation, surrender to God, (3) *Asanas*—certain postures especially *siddhasana*, *padmasana* (lotus posture), (4) *Pranayama*—regulation of breath, (5) *Pratyahara*—diversion of mind from its onward motions, (6) *Dharana*—directing the mind towards a fixed object in concentration, (7) *Dhyana*—contemplation of the object for prolonged periods, (8) *Samadhi*—losing the consciousness of self by merging it in the object of contemplation.

It will be seen that the first four steps relate to the body, the fifth partly to the body and partly to mind. The last three steps—*Dharana*, *Dhyana*, *Samadhi*—are purely mental and psychic, Patanjali combines these three elements into one process which he calls *Samyama* as the key to becoming one with an object whether that object happens to be a star, man or *Ishvara*. *Samyama* requires that we should so concentrate the mind on an object as to merge self in it. Then you become it or him, and get inward contact with it. The bulk of Sutra

in Patanjali consists in stating the objects and results of *Samyama*. Missionaries who feel the agony of learning the vernaculars will note that, according to Patanjali, you understand an idea if you perform *samyama* with it, whether you understand the words or not. Physicists will note that to understand the inner constitution of an atom, we need only to make *samyama* with it. Patanjali does not attach much importance to *asanas* and *pranayama*—he dismisses them in a few words. *Jnana Marga* receives recognition in the emphasis on *dhyana*. God is treated as an object to be worshipped. *Karma Yoga* had to be content with *yama* and *niyama* in the preparatory stages.

Nevertheless, Patanjali Yoga had become the standard accepted by all schools. The reason lies in the nature of *Samadhi*—the consummation of yoga. The *Advaitin* found in it the complete elimination of consciousness; the Buddhist and the Jain—the *Nirvana* he sought after. *Karma Yogis* realised that *Samadhi* brings the power they generally attained through *mantra*. The Theist and Bhakta entered into ecstasy and rapture in *Samadhi*. Henceforward all yoga was a means to *Samadhi*. It was the goal and not the path by which one reaches it that mattered. Patanjali became the skeleton key that opened every door and was useful for every sect. Patanjali Yoga is called *Raja Yoga* because it emphasises the mental aspect as opposed to physical which forms the basis of *Hatha* or *Laya yoga*.

Tantra Yoga—The Final Synthesis

Patanjali Yoga, the first synthesis, stands at the beginning of what we may call the youthful Hinduism. At the close of its maturity Hinduism made a second synthesis which guards it at the other end. The new synthesis was demanded by two momentous discoveries: one not peculiar to Hinduism,

the other decidedly peculiar to it. The first discovery relates to man as the microcosm. We do not know when this discovery was made but its effect on yoga was tremendous. Henceforth the dimensions of the problem of human destiny shrink to the limits of the body. The body was the key of the whole universe. The sun and the moon, the stars, the five elements, the gods, the supreme Brahman, are all within this body—the conquest of nature can be achieved only through conquest of self. Patanjali advocated *Samyama* with objects to conquer nature. But in the theory of microcosm, man controls nature by operating upon some centre within him. Man carried the whole universe within the orbit of his body. Siva, Vishnu, Brahman are within you. So also the universe, sun, moon, planets, fire, air, earth and water. *Sakti*, the consort of *Siva*, resides in you. The whole problem of existence can be solved from within. The microcosm theory simplified yoga and diverted the mind from the exploration of nature into an investigation of self.

The next event, equally momentous, was the discovery of *Kundalini*—the creative power within the body. Hence the new synthetic yoga was called *Kundalini Yoga*. *Kundalini*, (the coiled one) is the latent divinity in man, regarded more as a power than as a personality. *Hatha Yoga Pradipika*, an authority on *Kundalini Yoga*, describes it thus: 'In the centre known as *Muladhara* lies asleep the spiritual power *Kundalini*, the supreme Deity in the shape of a serpent, forming three coils and a half'. Around *Kundalini* has grown a new physiology. The spinal column (*merudanda*) constitutes the central pillar of the structure of the body. On two sides of it are two *nadis*—*Ida* (left) and *Pingala* (right). The breath through the nostril flows over them. Within the spinal column lies the spinal cord, in the centre of which through the whole length runs a passage known by the name *sushumna*. The spinal

cord is made up of three subtler *nadis*: *brahma vajra*, and *chitrini*. The spinal column is punctuated by *chakras*—(plexes) *viz. muladhara* (in the coccyx region), *swadhistana* (a span below navel), *manipuraka* (region of navel), *anahata* (region of heart), *visuddha* (throat region), *ajna* (between the eyebrows) *sahasrara* (in the brain).

Now the object of *Kundalini Yoga* is to awaken the sleeping serpent *Kundalini* and lead it up the *sushumna* along *chitrini* through the *chakras* till it reaches *sahasrara*. In the poetic language *Siva* in *muladhara* moved up to *sakti* in *sahasrara* and as *Kundalini* mounts up, eight miraculous powers called *Asta siddhis* are said to accrue.

With the union of *Siva* and *Sakti*, *Karma* is burnt up and *Kaivalyam*—supreme Bliss—attained. *Kundalini* does not like to be roused and one has to move it by force, just as a serpent charmer irritates the coiled serpent in his basket in order to make it spring up. *Pranayama* (regulation of breath) and *mudras* (complicated combination of posture and breath) have the effect of rousing *Kundalini*.

It will be seen that the *Tantra Yoga* accepts the eight-limbed yoga of Patanjali including *samadhi*; only it emphasises the physical aspect more than the mental. In a sense *Kundalini Yoga* is completely physical, the circuit being complete with *asanas*, *pranayama* and *mudras*. These are enough to reach *samadhi*.

It should not be forgotten that the destruction of *Karma* and the prevention of birth form the main object of *Kundalini yoga*. *Kundalini* is the reservoir of the life energy which *jeeva* draws upon at every birth. So long as it exists birth takes place and every birth expends a portion of *Kundalini* patrimony. In the natural course, *jeeva* exhausts *Kundalini* only in thousands and thousands of births. *Hatha Yoga*, like a spendthrift, strives to expend this great patrimony in a short

and exciting span of life. This prodigal exhaustion cuts life at its root; otherwise, as long as the root exists the tree of birth flourishes.

Another interesting point may be noted. The Tantric system, unlike that of Sankara, does not find a short cut to *Brahma* by discrimination. It constructs a staircase. It attains Nirvana not by negation but by development. Thus it satisfied to a certain extent a desire for an opulent life of power and grandeur. South Indian Advaitism advocates burning up the shrivelled life of Maya. Saktism blows into the balloon of life till it expands to its utmost capacity and then explodes. Whatever the way the end is the same—that is, to end creation—the cycle is *Raja Yoga* of ultimate extinction.

Tantric synthesis satisfies the exclusive demands of the earlier three yogas far better than Patanjali. *Jnana Yoga* was formally recognised by allotting a definite place to the *mantra*, 'Soham'; *Mantra Yoga*, by locating various bijaksharas to various chakras and by holding that by the use of various syllables like OM, etc., the latent powers at each *chakra* are roused and the sounds so roused themselves help towards the lifting up of *Kundalini* towards *sahasra*. Bhakthi was satisfied by making each *chakra* the seat and abode of one of the gods, *Raja Yoga* by insisting on *dhyanas* of each *chakra*. Tantric system takes up Patanjali and expands it. It takes *Hatha Yoga* and works into it the elements of Raja yoga. Thus it has displaced Patanjali. The Yoga practised by all yogis now is *Tantric Yoga* above described.

To complete the story of Yoga in Hinduism we may profitably refer to two allied topics of some importance to Christians in search of a Yoga. Different divisions of man's personality prevail in religions of the east and west. The Jews divided man into body and psyche. St Paul added, as we have shown in the article 'Who is Jesus?', the spirit—thus making a threefold

division of body, soul and spirit. Yoga was satisfied with the dual division of body and mind. Many people now hold that nadis and chakras are to be located in the astral and not in the physical body. This yielded a threefold division of body—Physical (*sthula*), Astral (*subhna*), and Mental (*manas*). A sevenfold division also obtains in Kumbakonam and Theosophical schools. For this the reader may refer to Dr Besant's Pedigree of Man. The theory speaks of seven sheaths of man. Some call them levels. They are *Sthula* (Physical), *Sukshma* (Astral), *Manas* (Mental), *Buddhic*, *Nirvanic*, *Paranirvanic*, *Mahaparanirvanic*. We do not find a study of the seven levels in their learning on yoga anywhere except in the Kumbakonam school. It holds that each level is separated from the others by adamantine walls and each level opens inwards and outwards—i.e., man cannot open them from outside—from physical to astral or from *Buddhic* to *Nirvanic*. They open to God from inside. He alone can open them from within. It may be that some Yogis were able to reach up to *Manas* level, but none have gone beyond. *Yôga* takes the kingdom of God by force. There are dangers in the process. It injures the taker and the taken. You cannot break open a box without damaging it. A full knowledge of seven levels, and the part they play will be known only when man is clothed with immortality. In a special Number on *Yoga of Kalyana Kalpatharu*, covering about 330 pages, there is no reference to seven levels. The subject awaits investigation.

The Guru

Hinduism has reached a new idea of *yogic Sadhana* in the great conception of a *Guru*. The *guru* idea should be firmly grasped by the Christian by reason of its intimate bearing on Christian yoga. Every book on yoga warns the entrant on the

difficult and sometimes dangerous nature of the pursuit. Neither *asanas* nor *pranayama* nor *dhyana* are within limits dangerous. But in the further stages they have to be pushed to extremes along a razor edge path where every slip has to be paid for with some injury to delicate internal organs or to mind. Moreover, Yoga calls for purity and persistence beyond the reach of most. The aspirant is also advised not to proceed without the guidance of an expert teacher. But even with these aids yoga, at crucial points, means a violent investment or siege of life, forcing the seals with considerable violence. Therefore the Hindu has been searching for a safe and natural way of obtaining the object of yoga. He has discovered the answer in the *Guru* and in the transmission of spiritual power. He discovered that there are developed souls who have the rare gift or awakening *Kundalini* by direct contact and this dispensed with arduous and dangerous practices. That such *gurus* exist has been the experience of Hinduism. These gifted men operate as it were on the sources of life—which is not merely power but intelligence as well. They implant in you a guiding spirit who with unerring sight takes you along the path of Yoga. *Kundalini* awakens at their touch and mounts up at their bidding with infinite sympathy. There may be one guru in a hundred teachers. When you get one, your spiritual problems are as good as solved. For centuries, spiritual aspirants held to the belief that the first and the last step of the adventure lies in getting a guru.

I do not know whether the Western Churches have similar experience. St Paul had not only got the Holy Spirit but could transmit it to others. Some, if not all, the disciples of Jesus had a similar gift. Church historians may tell us when the power of transmitting Holy Spirit by laying hands ceased to be a fact and became a shadowy faith. Even now, the shell of the belief persists in the Bishop laying hands at the

ordination. The *gurus* as transmitters of Holy Spirit will be one of the main objects of research among Indian Christians. Such a *guru* may even be outside the Christian fold and yet be able to transmit the Holy Spirit or awaken it. Saivites believe that Siva Himself comes as a *guru* to His favoured children.

Critique of Traditional Yoga

I have shown in the three preceding articles how the systems of Christo Samaj, Aurobindo and Master C.V.V. stand out of the tradition and expound an outlook on life and with it a radically new philosophy and theology of religion. It naturally follows that the technique of Yoga they advocate should involve a wide departure from the Yoga adopted in Hinduism and Christianity. I can speak with some knowledge of the Kumbakonam School and the Christo Samaj Group. From what I have read of Sri Aurobindo's teachings, they agree with these two schools of thought. I shall therefore state the reasons why Kumbakonam school rejects traditional Yoga. It may be taken that all the three schools above mentioned discard traditional yoga for more or less the same reasons.

(1) The Yoga of Hinduism is primarily directed towards the destruction of creation or merging it in the creation. Hence the importance of *Samadhi*, especially *Asampragnata Samadhi*—*Samadhi* that cuts off all retreat back to life. The *Tantra Yoga* for this reason gets the name of *Laya Yoga*—Yoga of destruction—a name which may be taken to apply to all Yogas. Even in the theistic Yoga in the highest stage of *Sayuga*—God absorbs the Jiva. Yoga turns the tide of life back to its source. Sri Aurobindo and Master C.V.V. as well as Christo Samaj view of religion demand that religion should minister unto life, making it perpetual and immortal.

Life should flow on, broadening as it flows forwards. Necessarily, the new movements could hardly accept the old Yoga. A Yoga of destruction or Yoga that merges *jivatma* in *Paramatma* cannot be a fitting instrument of religion which seeks to establish immortal life. The Kumbakonam School is decidedly against pranayama and samadhi.

(2) Traditional yoga demands effort and even violence. It attempts to open the pathways and doors that lead back towards the origin or God before creation. These doors, according to the Kumbakonam school, are hermetically sealed, and open only to the Lord. He alone can open them for new powers to flow into man. The attempt to open them from the side of Man, can hardly be successful as such efforts counter the declared object of evolution and to the extent possible involve violence, that injures the fine texture of personality. The adventure may be sublime, but being against the grain of nature is foredoomed. The new schools of thought do not subscribe to the postulate of modern science or of ancient Yoga that the Atom or Man have infinite possibilities of development within themselves. They believe that within Man are only limited possibilities and for any vital and new development, new powers from outside the process should enter. God dwells both outside and inside the process—inside, for sustaining and developing what is manifest in creation; outside, as waiting to enter the process in due time, to advance it. The Kundalini in man is not the whole of Siva. There are powers above Kundalini—new Kundalinis more powerful than the human Kundalini. The exhaustion of human Kundalini serves the purpose of Nirvana. For eternal or immortal life new Kundalinis have to be introduced into the structure of man. The Kumbakonam school believes that the power called Merchery will be sent to control Kundalini of man. Hence old Yoga can only serve the negative purpose,

of *Nirvana*—ending the process—not the purpose of eternal life—of perpetuating the process. Old Yoga develops what is in man. It does not help where new powers have to be brought in.

3. The new schools believe in *gurus* and in the transmission of spiritual power. A teacher can educate, guide. Where new creation is intended. God or Holy Spirit alone can take the initiative. The task is so great that it requires an omniscience beyond the powers of earthly teachers however eminent. Either an incarnate one, Christ, comes into the world for the purpose of saving man by transforming him into a new creation or those whom God may select among men for this purpose alone can guide us. The Yoga, therefore, is not due to human effort. It is one of pure grace. It must originate from above.

4. The old yoga stresses concentration as suitable to developing latent powers. New Yoga emphasises surrender as suitable for the reception of new powers. In the old Yoga concentration and will play a central part while surrender is included as an element in *Niyama*. In the new Yoga surrender is the essence, and concentration comes in incidentally. Sri Aurobindo recommends opening up of the whole being for the reception of supernatural powers, though in the preliminary stages concentration on *ajna*, i.e., between eyebrows or above heads as the new life descends from above, are prescribed. The Kumbakonam School advocates a passive observance of what takes place inside and not a concentration on any point.

5. The Kumbakonam School specifically objects to a technique that takes you away from the conscious to the unconscious. In the new life there will be no sleep or unconsciousness. All the submerged powers of personality will be illuminated by an intense consciousness. *Samadhi* and

pranayama trance which tend towards sleep are prohibited. In Yoga, *Yoga Nidra* (sleep that follows yogic effort), is encouraged. Any activity of the old Yoga will be useful only to the extent it promotes the powers of consciousness and not when and where it operates as a factor inducing hypnotic or trance condition. Vigilance and wakefulness guard the portals of the new Yoga.

Christians and Yoga

We are now in a position to determine to what extent and for what purposes Yoga as spiritual technique of realisation in Hinduism could be adopted by Christians. Whether we adopt Yoga at all and, if we adopt, to what extent, will depend upon our conception of the fundamental purpose and aim of Christianity about which traditional and non-traditional views differ. It also depends on what the Christian seeks in his devotional life—whether he has any aim to attain or any goal to reach. Here also, unfortunately, cleavage of opinion exists. To add to this complexity, new ideas of Christianising society are clamouring for recognition. The variety of opinion will be found to turn upon the place and status of our earthly life in the scheme of Christianity. We have to emphasise this point as it affords a reason for adopting or rejecting Yoga, of the type prevailing in Hinduism.

There has always been an element in Christianity thrown into undue prominence in medieval times which holds that the world is an unmitigated evil and the primary objective of the Christian, should be to escape from it unscathed. Passages from the Scripture condemning the world as unmitigated evil, which inspired Christian asceticism and monasticism, indicate the otherworldly outlook in religion. In some periods, the tension between the evil world, the world of man, and heaven, the world of God, becomes so great that the Christian

prays for the release from the bonds of life. St Paul puts the situation in Philipians, Ch. 1:23 thus: 'I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart and to be with Christ which is far better. Nevertheless, to abide in the flesh is more needful for you'. Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress works out the idea for Protestants. For such, *Haikha* or *Laya Yoga* and long spells of *Samadhi* may be recommended. It speeds the parting guest and hastens him to the other world. I am afraid that the Church in modern times has no attraction for this attitude. It finds the world not only tolerable but also desirable and few there be even among the pious and the orthodox who are leaving the world in a hurry to the presence of Jesus in heaven. They would rather abide in this vale of tears a little longer.

(2) The generality of Christians in the Church take life in this world as a probation for the other world. They are pilgrims and travellers on their way to Heaven, but they want to put this life to a proper use and make this life a preparation for the next. While they hold that their stay in this world is for a short duration and they are bound for the other world, they believe they are stationed in this life for a purpose. Most of them are satisfied with instruments of grace, prayers, hymns and *samskaras*. For such who possess no spiritual ambition, Hindu Yoga may prove to be a stimulant and a tonic, at least.

The Yoga current in the churches is an attenuated type of *bhakti yoga*. I call it attenuated because it lacks the depth of emotion and abandon so characteristic of Hindu bhakti. To those who are of the household of God, devotion and worship are some of the forms of Christian activity though by no means the chief. This is the case with the ordinary Hindu as well. But when bhakti lays its hand seriously on a Hindu, devotion and worship become the all engrossing preoccupation

of life, setting up tidal waves of emotion, and demanding dramatic action of the highest type. God conjured up in imagination becomes intensely real. As real as life and more attractive than the world. Indeed the true test of the bhakta has been whether God has become more attractive than the fascination of the world.

Christian bhakti may gain in depth and reality by the use of *Bhakti Yoga*. *Asanas* make for a healthy body. They do not develop muscles but purify nerves, and nerves play a great part in healthy religious life. *Pranayama* calms the mind and stills it. ('Commune with your heart . . . and be still', Psalm 4:4. 'They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength', Isaiah 40:31). The discipline of being still and waiting on the Lord becomes possible only for those who can sit quiet and calm for a long period. This, the *shira asana* (firm posture), *pranayama* (even breathing) enable you to do. Generally most Christians are incapable of 'staying put' in one posture. They fidget and jump about like a cat on hot bricks. *Dhyana* is essential for spiritual life. It moves you to the borders of life when God becomes real. The shallowness of our spiritual life is due to God being either an idea or a memory and not a reality. *Samadhi*—absorption in God—may be useful within limits. *Sabija Samadhi*—that is *samadhi* with consciousness or *samadhi* from which one reverts to consciousness—may give us the ecstasy of union with God. Yoga, I say, if adopted with discrimination may bring to some Christians higher experience of Christ for the lack of which they languish. The Christian will die of inanition and starvation in the church where the tide of life is so low, if we do not intensify and deepen the spiritual life, to use the language of the Y.M.C.A. Yoga can be used to dredge the shallows of spiritual life with some effect. We need abandon, transport, and rapture in some bhaktas at least, if the church

and its stale atmosphere are to be freshened and made invigorating.

To this extent orthodox Christianity may draw on the traditional system of Yoga in Hinduism in furthering her spiritual interests. But the view advocated in my first article 'Who is Jesus?' aligns my conception of Christianity with the two schools of thought—that of Pondicherry and Kumbakonam—and this necessarily involves an attitude towards traditional yoga such as they adopt (1) Jesus, to sum up the position I have taken in that article, is neither God nor man, but son of God or son of Man, son indicating that he marks the embodiment of the consummation of our conception of God, and Man in perfect harmony and union. (2) Jesus represents the final stage or consummation of the evolution of man by the entry into the human constitution of a new power from God, hitherto not existent in it. (3) That Christianity heralds a new creation of man and nature—of new earth, new heaven, new man, new society. (4) The Holy Spirit descends on humanity and begets the sons of God, thus making an entry into human beings permanently as a new order in evolution (5) That the Holy Spirit presides over the new creation and lives in the sons of God as their atman. (6) That salvation is not translation into the kingdom of heaven after death but transportation of God into earth so that He may find perfect expression in creation and history. (7) That the permanent contribution of Judaism lies exactly here, in the clear perception that history is the terrain of God's *vila*, and that the Kingdom of God forms a chapter in the history of the world, and that redemption is the clothing of the spirit within immortal body and not merely the negative escape from sin or sins. (8) That incarnation constitutes an order of nature where God becomes the inner spirit of a species—not merely an indweller in a single man. (9) This conception of Jesus as a

prototype of a new biological order of beings—sons of Man, demands a new Yoga.

If we understand Jesus and his purpose in this light we have to reject the traditional yoga for exactly the same reasons assigned by Kumbakonam theology. We are in search of eternal life and seek an immortal body as the abode of God in creation. A yoga of annihilation of creation does not suit the aspiration to perfect creation. We do not desire to move backwards into the origin. We march onwards to an end which is a consummation and perfection.

I have been asked by earnest Christians whether I cannot give them a yoga suited to this conception of Christianity—a yoga concrete enough to be followed by the experimenters in the full confidence that it meets the approval of Jesus, and is not in any way against His will and spirit. They require a Christian yoga practiceable without danger to body and soul, and which will bring us the higher spiritual experiences of Christianity. I have taken thought and persevered in prayer for enlightenment. But for the confirmation and illumination I have received from the two schools I have set as co-travellers with us, I should not have ventured to offer a yoga for the acceptance of Christians.

Amrita Yoga or Christian Yoga

In considering Christian yoga we have to take certain facts into consideration—facts which no Christians will deny. These facts are essential for the formulation of a Christian Yoga.

We differ from the other two schools in the belief that the New Man, Son of God, has come in Jesus while others are expecting the appearance of the sons of God. We realise that evolution was perfected in Jesus.

Since Jesus is still in body we have in him a *guru*, not merely

a teacher. He can transmit energies of new life to us, not as spirit or God can transmit, but as a father can transmit life to children. He is not like Siva, a *guru* who has to come to us in vision to initiate us. Jesus is a New Man. He reversed in one sense the process of incarnation. In incarnation God comes to earth and takes a body. Jesus with the body has gone into the abode of spirits. Jesus can therefore be a *guru* to us or send to us anyone whom he has clothed with powers to be a *guru*. Such a person need not be within the confessional church. When on earth, Jesus found remarkable faith among non-Jews and responded to them though they did not profess Him. He can send *gurus* to us from among Hindus and Muslims as much as from Christians. Early Church history presents us with the indisputable fact that he was transmitted to Christians by servants of God. Therefore the new yoga comes within this province of *guru*-transmission conception adopted by Kumbakonam school.

Yoga of Holy Spirit

I call Christian Yoga Amrita Yoga—yoga of everlasting life, yoga which abolished death. We may also call it *parisuddha atma yoga*—yoga of Holy Spirit.

To be initiated into it we need a guru. This initiation may be given to us by Jesus or by his apostles, a term which I use for those Christians and non-Christians who are endowed with the Holy Spirit and are commissioned or enabled to transmit him to others. We have to receive the Spirit. Our yoga will be a discipline for his reception.

Ekagratha is the first step in *Amrita Yoga*. The discipline it advocated is not concentration but surrender or opening up or yielding. Surrender need not necessarily be passivity though it should mean elimination of counter exertion, of resistance, the tendency to close up channels of spiritual inflow.

Surrender may exist with what is known in Sanskrit as *Ekagratha*, one-pointedness. All the energies of mind, will, passion, and longing are converged to one focus where it bursts into a constant flame. Our Lord expressed the gist of the idea in the words.... 'with all thy heart, mind, soul'. The desire for becoming sons of God, the yearning to meet Jesus as *guru*, the longing to possess Holy Spirit—should become the all engrossing preoccupation of mind, heart and soul. Church life with its shallows can give us no idea what this grand passion could be. Hindu bhakti sometimes reveals its depths. Hindu religious experiences give the Hindu the firm belief that God comes as a *guru* or sends a *guru* if only we passionately desire for it. *Ekagratha* is the heart of spiritual life. This desire must underlie all our mental occupation and in the midst of life activities we must constantly fall back on it.

Prayer

Along with this, two other practices may be suggested in relation to the reception of the Holy Spirit (1) a new conception of prayer (2) a constant observation of what takes place in the body and mind within you. Our prayer, mostly if not exclusively, is pestering God with our talk. We speak to God, we besiege Him with our needs. This prayer that revolves round me and my need is really fervent, even if it be not effective. In *Amrita Yoga* you replace your talk with listening in to God. We don't hear God, because we surround him with the perpetual din of music in temples, of the prayers and praises in churches. Even when you draw within yourselves, the buzz of ideas dispels all other sounds. I have profound sympathy with my Muslim brethren in their desire to banish music near temples. Silence, absolute silence, stillness is an essential pre-requisite for listening in to God:

we must cease wagging the tongue and begin straining our ears. At first you may hear sounds and noises of men talking and moving. Next you may be involved in noise of your ideas—a stream of perpetual and pattering flow that smothers the still small voice. The still small voice—as Elijah found in his great vision at Mount Horeb—cannot be heard amidst storms, tempests and raging violence. These distractions of passions, these agitations of mind have to be calmed and stilled before you hear the voice of God. I used to wonder how prophets heard the voice of God. Few of them heard it in the din of temple worship. It was people who were still that heard it in the hush of midday as they minded cattle, or even in the temple in the silence of midnight when the priest and the worshipper deserted its precincts and gave God a little peace. *Amrita Yoga* prescribed the prayer of listening in to God.

God not only speaks but acts in you. We have almost forgotten this great truth. Undue prominence to prayer is due to a false exaltation of words over acts. To the Jew God was always external and God had to appear and speak. Action followed command. But the Holy Spirit resides in you like your own life. It operates as prompting illumination, inner motion, guidance. The technique of guidance of the Oxford Group is highly superficial. The Kumbakonam school attaches much importance to this witnessing of what takes place within you. Sit in a relaxed mood and be a spectator of what takes place within you for half an hour each day. At first you hear the dub dub of your heart and the creak of your bones if you are old and rickety. Then as observation improves, you hear blood coursing in the arteries. Then come the subtle flashes—gentle promptings, tender beckoning of the spirit within you when you allow it to do so by withdrawing your fussing about. The Geeta expounds the truth,

the significance of which may not be apparent to the Christian, namely the doctrine of *Kshetragna*. Normally *jeeva* regards itself the initiator, the Lord of the field of action. The active ego shadows the atman within and eclipses it. But this ego can surrender to the spirit without extinguishing itself. Then the Lord becomes *Kshetragna*—works and acts through the ego which becomes purified and sanctified by becoming the mouthpiece of the spirit. 'I live, yet not I but Christ liveth in me' (Gal. 2:20). We might as well say 'through me.' This practice of inner surrender, of allowing the spirit to work in you, is essential to *Amrita Yoga*. It serves two purposes. (1) If you have not the Holy Spirit in you yet, it creates the proper mood and temper for its reception. (2) If you have, it allows the spirit to be the Saradhi, the pilot of your life.

I attach much importance to this practice because 'body' has a great purpose and meaning in this discipline. Though the sons of gods are to possess a new body, yet the Holy Spirit has to begin in this body before it peels it off and creates the 'resurrection body' for you. By the by, the Kumbakonam school has some light to throw on the Resurrection or incorruptible body. With St Paul they agree that the new body is not our body transformed. We have to put off this body and put on a new body. This body is not of the spirit. The spirit borrows it from nature, composes it from the five elements. We describe death as 'Paying our debt to nature'. We have borrowed this body and like honest debtors must return it. The new body is the outer coating of the spirit. It is a condensed spirit but that body should be created within this body. Hence the importance of what happens within the temple of our body. God does great things there, but we have no eyes for them. We rush to the church where the priest is more in evidence than God.

Amrita Yoga, Taraka Yoga, Integral Yoga are linked together by similar ideologies, aims and purposes. The Christian has to act and react, compare notes, give and take, co-operate with his co-travellers outside. We have to march arm in arm, for here the voice of India as of Palestine urges us to the same goal. We are with them in the household of faith. We are with them in the search for the Holy Spirit, the overruling Lord of the New Man and New Society which is in reality—and not merely in name and aspiration—Christian.

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The Secular Mission of Christianity

I. CHRISTIANITY AND THE SOCIAL ORDER

(i) 'Atrophy of the Conception of the Kingdom of God'

By far the greatest factor that contributed to the shrinking of the Christian outlook was the persecution of the Christian. In the case of our Lord and the early disciples, there was always present an undernote of consciousness of power and a feeling of the conquest of the world. The Cross was tragic enough. But it was redeemed by a conviction in Jesus that he would rise. The world was cruelly harsh to the disciples. Yet they felt sooner or later that they would change the world by the powers placed in their hands by Jesus into the image of the Kingdom of God. But when the Holy Spirit ceased to function as it did in the early days, we find this note of victory recedes from a present conviction into a future hope. The world was felt to be hostile and the conviction that the Christian would prove too much for the world ceased to exist. On the other hand the feeling began to grow in the minds of the Christians that the world would prove too much for them. Thus the 'escape psychology', so characteristic of other religions, developed among the Christians themselves. The world belonged to the devil and the Christian should escape from it and he escaped into what he called the Church. The real ancestor of our modern Church was the catacomb and the Church is an asylum, a house of refuge from the world which showed no mercy to the Christian.

This idea of the Church persisted throughout the history of Christendom in the West. We find it emphasised in Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*. Barthian theology strikes this note strongly. The Barthians also hold that the world is beyond redemption and history beyond hope. They look to the