

AN INTRODUCTION TO THE ORIGINAL SYSTEM OF RAJA YOGA

FROM THE WRITINGS OF H. P. BLAVATSKY



Definition

"**Yoga** (*Sk.*). (1) One of the six Darshanas or schools of India; a school of philosophy founded by Patanjali, though the real Yoga doctrine, the one that is said to have helped to prepare the world for the preaching of Buddha, is attributed with good reasons to the more ancient sage Yajñawalkya, the writer of the *Shatapatha Brahmana*, of *Yajur Veda*, the *Brihad Aranyaka*, and other famous works. (2) The practice of meditation as a means of leading to spiritual liberation. Psycho-spiritual powers are obtained thereby, and induced ecstatic states lead to the clear and correct perception of the eternal truths, in both the visible and invisible universe."

Entry for "Yoga in "The Theosophical Glossary" p. 380-381

"**Raja-Yoga** (*Sk.*). The true system of developing psychic and spiritual powers and union with one's Higher Self - or the Supreme Spirit, as the profane express it. **The exercise, regulation and concentration of thought.** Raja-Yoga is opposed to Hatha-Yoga, the physical or psycho-physiological training in asceticism." *Entry for "Raja Yoga" in "The Theosophical Glossary" p. 275*

Raja Yoga and its *Theosophical keys*

"Read Patanjali's *Yoga Philosophy*; but with *caution*, for it is **very apt to mislead, being written in symbolic language.**"

"Correspondence", Lucifer Magazine, April 1888

"The Occult claim that there are seven senses in man, as in nature, as there are seven states of consciousness, is corroborated in... *Anugita* chapter vii., on **Pratyahara (the restraint and regulation of the senses...)**"

(cf dangers of Pranayama, restraining the "vital winds" or breath.)

"The Secret Doctrine" i 95-96

the educational role of Theosophical reform

“[society] comprises two distinct parties, one, that of the free-thinkers, all-denying, sceptical, and wholly materialistic... the **“modern school of thought”**; the other, orthodox, bigoted, full of the **unreasoning superstitions of the Brahmanical schools**... a few honourable exceptions.

“The Theosophical Society... knew why it was wanted in India, and came just in time **to place itself between the above-named parties.**”

Comments on a Treatise on the Yoga Philosophy, The Theosophist, Sept 1880, p 312-315

“Most of the thousands of fakirs, gosâins, bairâgîs and others of the mendicant order, who throng the villages and religious fairs of India in our present age... are worthless and idle vagabonds, modern clowns, imitating the great students of the philosophic ages of the past... they ape the postures and servilely copy the traditional customs of their nobler brethren.”

Comments on a Treatise on the Yoga Philosophy, The Theosophist, Sept 1880, p 312-315

the Transcendental spiritual Ego & its perception of Mind

"For, in the act of self-analysis, the *Mind* becomes in its turn an object to the spiritual consciousness. It is the overshadowing of the Mind by *Buddhi* which results in **the ultimate realization of existence - i.e., self-consciousness in its purest form**. But it must at the same time be borne in mind that the *full* realization of the spiritual Self is impossible for an incarnated 4th Rounder. The Spiritual ego reflects no varying states of consciousness; is independent of all sensation (experience); it does not *think* - it KNOWS, by an intuitive process only faintly conceivable by the average man.

“**“The subject that perceives” Mind**, as an attribute of itself, is this Transcendental or spiritual Ego (*Buddhi*).

“He who would know more, **let him study Vedanta and Patanjali's Yoga Philosophy - esoterically.**”

“Modern Idealism, Worse than Materialism”

Raja Yoga comprises both the astral and the spiritual Siddhis

““The Yogi,” says Patañjali, “will hear celestial sounds, the songs and conversations of celestial choirs. He will have the perception of their touch in their passage through the air,”— which translated into a more sober language means that the ascetic is enabled to see with the spiritual eye in the Astral Light, hear with the spiritual ear subjective sounds inaudible to others, and live and feel, so to say, in the Unseen Universe.

““The Yogi is able to enter a dead or a living body by the path of the senses, and in this body to act as though it were his own.” The “path of the senses”—our physical senses supposed to originate in the astral body, the ethereal counterpart of man, or the *jiv-atma* [prana?], which dies with the body—the senses are here meant in their spiritual sense—volition of the higher principle in man. The true Raja-Yogi is a Stoic; and Kapila, who deals but with the latter—utterly rejecting the claim of the Hatha-Yogis to converse during Samadhi with the Infinite *Íswar*...”

Comments on a Treatise on the Yoga Philosophy, The Theosophist, Jan 1881, p 72-75

Hatha Yoga, magic, and the dangers of restraining the breath

"[commentaries were written by HPB to silence]... the malicious accusation that our Society is no better than a school of "magic" ... the ridiculous superstition and belief in *supernaturalism*."
Comments on a Treatise on the Yoga Philosophy, The Theosophist, Sept 1880, p 312-315

"This chapter of *Anugita* explains, says Arjuna Misra, Pranayama, or regulation of the breath in Yoga practices. This mode, however, without the previous acquisition of, or at least full understanding of the two higher senses, of which there are seven, as will be shown, pertains rather to the lower Yoga.

"The Hatha so called was and still is discountenanced by the Arhats. It is injurious to the health and **alone can never develop into Raj Yoga.** . . .

"The Secret Doctrine" i 95

"Q. What are the "Life-Winds" in the commentary? "A. The Life-winds are the various modes of out-breathing and in-breathing, changing thereby the polarity of the body and states of consciousness. It is Yoga practice, but beware of taking the exoteric works on Yoga literally. They all require a key."

"Transactions of the Blavatsky Lodge" p 141

"An unmistakable error... confounds the *Raja* with the *Hatha* Yogins, whereas the former have nothing to do with the physical training of the *Hatha* nor with any other of the innumerable sects who have now adopted the name and emblems of Yogins. . . . the true *Raja Yogins* who have no more to do with *Shiva* than with *Vishnu* or any other deity. . . . What we say is simply this: **the Raja Yogin trains but his mental and intellectual powers**, leaving the physical alone, and making but little of the exercise of phenomena simply of a physical character."

Notes from "The Theosophist" in "Theosophical Articles and Notes" p 116, 117

voluntary trance & "divine visions"

"That the ancients of all countries were intimately acquainted with what is termed in our days.. self-mesmerisation, the production, in a word, of voluntary trance... One of many proofs is found in the fact that the same method, described here, is known as a tradition and practiced by the Christian monks at Mount Athos even to this very day."

ethics and the Raja Yogi

"the Raja-Yogin trains but **his mental and intellectual powers**, leaving the physical alone, and making but little of the exercise of phenomena simply of a physical character. Hence it is the rarest thing in the world to find a real Yogi boasting of being one, or willing to exhibit such powers [*production of phenomena*] —though he does acquire them as well as the one practicing Hatha Yoga, but through another and far more intellectual system. **Generally, they deny these powers point blank, for reasons but too well-grounded.**"

Comments on a Treatise on the Yoga Philosophy, The Theosophist, Nov 1880, p 29-32

“Raja Yogis” in Egypt; and Greece and Rome

“Ammonius Saccas, Porphyry, Proclus and others practiced it in Egypt; and Greece and Rome did not shrink at all even in their time of philosophical glory to follow suit. Pythagoras speaks of the celestial music of the spheres that one hears in hours of ecstasy; Zeno finds a wise man who having conquered all passions, feels happiness and emotion, but in the midst of torture; Plato advocates the man of meditation and likens his powers to those of the divinity; and we see the Christian ascetics themselves through a mere life of contemplation and self-torture acquire powers of levitation or aethrobacy, which, though attributed to the miraculous intervention of a personal God, are nevertheless real and the result of physiological changes in the human body.

Comments on a Treatise on the Yoga Philosophy, The Theosophist, Jan 1881, p 72-75

