

An Introduction to the Study of Yoga

Aphorisms of Patanjali

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THEOSOPHY does, in point of fact, preach a new gospel. It has been required to advance a valid reason why the world should discard its accepted rules of living and take up this new one, and the requirement has been fully met. There is in Theosophy a new gospel, a new rule of conduct, a new hope for humanity.

This new thing is not a new code of morals; were that all Theosophy could offer, it could offer nothing, for the moral law of Jesus Christ cannot be improved upon. It is not the gospel of the brotherhood of man; that doctrine has been the dream of the world for ages — Theosophy cannot make it any less a dream. It is not even, as many have supposed and asserted, the cultivation of the psychical powers in man — how many, think you, of the weary plodders through this vale of tears could be given new courage by this very vague and ungraspable proposition of the psychical powers in man? One here and one there may be found who understands, and understanding, desires to possess, but in proportion to the great humanity, they are as four-leaved clovers in a field of grass. No, it is not this; it is none of these that furnishes the hope and the inspiration. It is a new doctrine — a **[Page 2]** new gospel, for which the world is only now, for the first time, prepared: it is the gospel of individual self-development.

Theosophy teaches that man is his own creator — absolutely his own creator. There is no God who will stretch out an omnipotent arm in his behalf. There is no fate save such as he himself decrees. There is no chosen people. Whatever we desire to be that we can be if we will — nothing can hinder. Theosophy says to every man: “Place your mark upon any peak of human greatness — the loftiest — and, if you will but climb, you shall surely reach the goal”. No empty figure of speech is the expression: “He aims too low who aims beneath the stars”. The ethereal nebulae of infinite wisdom can be explored by everyone of us; it but requires that we should learn how to approach the fight. In that most poetical of all things in the English language — the fifth act of *The Merchant of Venice*, Lorenzo exclaims to his sweetheart Jessica:

“ Look, how the floor of heaven
Is thick inlaid with patines of bright gold;
There's not the smallest orb which thou behold'st
But, in its motion like an angel sings;

* * * *

Such harmony is in immortal souls;
But whilst this muddy vesture of decay
Doth grossly close it in, we cannot hear it.” **[Page 3]**

Aye, there vibrates in each human soul a mighty paeon of immortal wisdom and immortal power, could we but listen to its voice — and we can.

It is in the peculiarity of this doctrine of self-development that Theosophy differs from all creeds. Other systems of thought say: "Be virtuous, be good, and an omnipotent judge will reward you therefor". Theosophy says: "*Wisdom* is the all essential thing; be virtuous, be good, because virtue and goodness assist you to become wise; but remember, that no one ever becomes wise simply by being good". Other systems say: "Rely upon prayer; rely upon the grace of a higher power". Theosophy says: "In the gathering of wisdom you must rely upon yourself alone"; it says, that not only can you not gather wisdom from the outside, but that such outside assistance, if attempted, would of itself, defeat the very object sought to be obtained. It is not knowledge that is required; it is wisdom. A man may pack his head with all that lies between the covers of all the encyclopedias, and yet be incapable of a single intellectual thought. The graduate, fresh from the University of California, has an immensely greater store of knowledge than had Leonardo Da Vinci, but how vast is the difference between them in the quality of mind! The one has choked his memory with a little uncertain information; the other had wisdom. Do not misunderstand me as saying that one should not obtain knowledge; **[Page 4]** knowledge is a necessary thing, nay, the road to wisdom is through the gateway of knowledge, but knowledge alone is of no greater use to a man's true development than an assortment of pigments would be to an embryo painter who, as yet, has never handled a brush. The colours are there, the brush is there, the canvas is there, but the soul of the painter has not been trained to create the images of beauty.

What, after all, is the meat of this vast system of philosophy ? It is, in brief, this: Theosophy teaches that the mind functions through three distinct states. First, there is that condition of the mind in which it is presided over and controlled by the emotions. As we desire, as we hope, as we love, as we hate, as we suffer, as we enjoy, so do our minds respond. These emotions are the only inspiration for the only beginnings of our thoughts. Our thoughts take their rise in them; are controlled by them; are obscured by them. Creatures of impulse and of sensation, we are manacled to error as Andromeda was chained to the rock, and, like Andromeda, we are at the mercy of the dragon.

The second and higher state is that in which the mind is not controlled by the emotions. In this state the mind reasons always from cause to effect, from proposition to proof, from premises to conclusion. Such a mind approaches every subject of contemplation absolutely uncoloured, uncontrolled and unobscured by any emotion. With such a **[Page 5]** mind, the wish is never father to the thought, but the thought is always directed solely to the discovery of truth, let that truth be what it may. Such is the mind of the true philosopher and of the true scientist. How vast is the difference between this sort of mind and one that is a slave to the emotions! How great an advantage it has in the search after truth! The one is the mind of a Huxley or a Spencer; the other is that of the hod-carrier, content with his treadmill life, or that of him who devotes all his time and all his energy to the pleasures of sense.

But, although a mind governed by reason is greater than a mind governed by emotion, it is yet far from being a perfect mind. It is still chained to the senses. Sight, hearing, touch, taste and smell are still the gateways to such a mind. It has no other avenues through which to obtain information or by which to receive inspiration. It may reason ever so clearly from premises to conclusion; but suppose the blundering senses have given it a wrong premise upon which to base its reasoning ? What will it do in case the senses do not give it any premises at all ? Such a mind is still incomplete. It is still subject to limitations. It needs a further liberation, and that liberty is found in the third and highest state.

In this highest state the mind is not only not obscured by the emotions, nor made subject to the senses, but it, in addition, is not compelled to **[Page 6]** reason out conclusions. It knows directly. It concludes by intuition. It is almost impossible for such as we to understand such a mind. The only men that I can recall in history who had reached this high mental state were Gautama Buddha, Jesus Christ, and William Shakespeare. These three minds were not limited by time nor obscured by error.

The whole scheme of Theosophy, then, is to elevate the mind from this first condition of emotional and sensational servitude in which nearly all of us are bound, to the third unobscured, untrammelled condition of God-like power. This is the scheme of the present system; when mankind has reached that stage, it will then find still further heights to climb; there is, perhaps, no end to progress. But we have no present concern with such distant speculations.

Although Theosophy insists that each man shall achieve his own salvation, it does not leave mankind in a trackless wilderness without a guide. It points out the way so clearly that none can go astray. It merely insists that each one shall walk over the road for himself. It says: "See! yonder mountain top is the goal of your present ambition. The trail is there; it winds plainly to the summit. Here are charts showing all the difficult places and how to surmount them. Here are full descriptions of all the sights and sounds and sensations that might lure you from the path. Go. Start upon **[Page 7]** the road. When you grow so weary that you can no longer climb, the sweet and merciful Angel of Death will come and give you rest for ten thousand years; and when you awaken from that long sleep you will have a new and greater power to climb. You need never be in one moment's doubt as to the way, you will always have the strength to move onward, but you cannot ride the journey upon a sumpter mule; your own feet must carry you every step and every mile".

Theosophy advances two broad doctrines which show the possibility and the practicability of this high degree of individual development. The first of these is the doctrine of reincarnation; the second is the doctrine of the septenary constitution of man.

That this single life is wholly inadequate to our full development, and also that there are within our souls higher and still higher powers awaiting that full development, are beliefs inherent in the breast of every man, did he but permit himself to look with candour at his own heart. Theosophy teaches that we have not only one, but thousands of lives; that each life is an advance upon the preceding one; that where we leave off in our self-development in one life, we begin the next to that extent already developed; that death is, in very truth, only a larger sleep — a sleep stretched from a single night into some thousands of years, and that the only purpose of these many lives and **[Page 8]** these many deaths is advancement. Theosophy teaches that mankind is composed not only of the physical — the matter which we can see and touch, but also of six other substances besides; that man is, in fact, a very complex being, and contains latent within him powers of the most stupendous sort. It is the purpose of the scheme of life to bring these powers out.

What could be more inspiring than these doctrines? What greater than the thought that within us are the potentialities of the highest self-development, and that we shall be given the opportunities and the time to make these potentialities living facts? What more inspiring than the thought that some day we shall become as one for whom the mists of ignorance have been wholly rolled aside; and that we shall have gained such wisdom as to know the truth; that for us there shall be no error; nay, that we shall be

incapable of error, as a God.

The whole of theosophical literature, and the whole of occultism, is designed to assist in this self progress. There is a perfect mass of instruction. The mind of the neophyte is stupefied with the sea of it. There are all sorts and conditions of philosophers expounding it in all languages and all ages. Out of the whole of them there is one who strikes the keynote of the work of self-development. His name is Patanjali.

Patanjali was a Hindu sage who lived some hundred or two hundred years before Christ. His **[Page 9]** philosophy is one of the most remarkable outputs of the human mind, for he shows how a man can, by taking thought, find out God. Patanjali points out how one may, by individual, unaided, positive effort, lift the mind from its debased servitude to the emotions and the senses, to that almost omnipotent power of knowing truth by intuition. His system is very simple; but, like all exalted and simple truth, immensely difficult to grasp.

Patanjali taught that by, concentrating the mind upon a single thought, to the exclusion of all other thoughts, and by holding the mind upon that thought, you compelled these higher qualities of the mind — the occult, lofty, hidden qualities of the mind, to come to the rescue, so to speak, and illumine the understanding. He taught that when one acquired this faculty of mental concentration in perfection, it was only necessary to concentrate the mind upon any problem to comprehend it at once.

To concentrate the mind upon a single thought to the total exclusion of all other thoughts seems, at first glance, a very simple and a very easy thing to do, and yet, I am morally certain, there is not a single reader of this article equal to the task. It is a mental operation of the most titanic proportions. Experiment and see. Shut yourself up in your room and endeavour to hold your mind to a single thought for half an hour without permitting any other thought to come into your consciousness. You will simply fail. **[Page 10]**

I presume that I ought to go more into detail and explain more fully what this extraordinary mental process of concentration actually is. But really, when I have said that it is the fastening of the mind upon a single thought to the exclusion of all other thoughts I have, in point of fact, told the whole story. To such as have not given this process a careful study, I can merely say that to understand this thing you must attempt to do it, and you must give to the analysis of the process, long and careful attention. I will merely add that it is, by long odds, the most difficult of all the tasks to which the human mind can be put.

But it will accomplish the desired result; this is beyond all question. It will elevate the mind to a state of tremendous power. And it is possible to do it. It merely requires a great deal of self discipline and a great deal of time in which that self discipline may be applied. This time is supplied by reincarnation.

What sort of discipline is required ? I will tell you. It is a discipline calculated to develop to the full a certain peculiar power of the mind itself. The mind is the monarch of mankind, but there is a power behind the throne that is the monarch of the mind. This power is the human will.

What is the will ? Did you ever seek to analyse, to grasp, to dissect, to understand the human will ? It is of the mind, and yet it is apart from the mind. It is obedient to the mind, and yet it is the **[Page 11]** master of the mind. The more I seek to understand the human will, the further it recedes from my comprehension. I only know that it exists, and I know that it is capable of such a marvelous development as to set it up as master over all the world.

The peculiar great quality of the will, which enables it to perform these wonders, is its steadfastness — its ability to hold the mind to one thing unmoved. Persistence is the greatest power in nature. You can fiddle down a bridge if you but fiddle long enough upon a single proper note. A constant dropping of water will wear away a stone. Nature and mankind alike yield obedience to the unchanging mind. Mobility cannot resist immobility. It is in recognition of this truth that the maxim was coined: “Everything comes to him who waits”.

This sublime mastery of the human will over the human mind is described by Shakespeare better than anyone else has succeeded in describing it. Shakespeare always describes things better than any other thinker. In the third act of Julius Caesar, in the scene where the Roman Senate headed by Brutus, asks that the decree of banishment against Cimber be revoked, Caesar replies:

“ I am constant as the northern star,
Of whose true fix'd and resting quality
There is no fellow in the firmament.
The skies are painted with unnumber'd sparks **[Page 12]**
They all are fire, and everyone doth shine;
But there's but one in all doth hold his place;
So in the world; 'tis furnished well with men,
And men are flesh and blood, and apprehensive
Yet, in the number, I do know but one,
That unassailable holds on his rank,
Unshaked of motion; and, that I am he,
Let me a little show it — even in this;
That I was constant Cimber should be banish'd,
And constant do remain to keep him so.”

The scheme of life, then, is self-development. The time for this self-development is given by repeated incarnations. The development itself consists simply in calling into play those tremendous inner powers latent in every man. These great powers are called into life by the positive effort of mental concentration; and mental concentration, in turn, is only rendered possible by an exalted development of the human will. How, then, shall the will be developed ? Ah! this is the root of the whole problem. It is the question of questions. It is upon this rock that all the philosophers have split.

The Hindus, after Patanjali had passed away, adopted a negative sort of development. They said: “Since the emotions obscure the mind and prevent concentration, we will kill out the emotions”. They did not rise to the sublime truth that the emotions were meant to be at once the trainers and the servants of the **[Page 13]** will, but they said: we will kill the emotions that the mind may be unobscured. They adopted a system of living calculated to kill the emotions and they succeeded in killing — themselves. For, in all

truth, what the Hindu system of Yoga practices has succeeded in killing, is the will power — the quality of force; and the absence of this will power has caused the decay of the Hindu people.

In seeking to explain this decadence a great deal has been said about the law of cycles. I do not agree with this explanation. The simple truth has been that the returning Egos, seeking a further advancement along the lines of a developed will, did not find congenial soil among the Hindu people, and turned aside to newer and more heroic nations. I believe, to the bottom of my soul, that it is possible for the American people, if they but pursue the proper course of national living, to progress and ever progress while the solid earth holds this nation here. To the winds with your fatalistic law of cycles! There are no cycles that can resist the power of the human soul.

How can the will be developed ? How does the oak grow strong ? By warring with the rough winds. It is the unresisting grass that the whole world tramples under foot. If you wish to develop the will, go out into the world and fight it. Do you wish to be master of yourself ? Arouse, to the very full, all the emotions and **[Page 14]** all the desires that could master you, and then subdue them. (Love, hate, hope, enjoy, be ambitious; but cultivate the strength to put these emotions aside with a wave of the hand. Seek out the most beautiful temptations — and turn your back upon them. Plunge into the wildest dissipations, and suddenly drop them. Set for yourself a certain goal — seek to do or to be something: place the mark high up — far off, the higher and the farther the better; then set yourself towards reaching it. Never turn aside; never falter; never lose courage; but moving always resolutely on, keep up the struggle until you grasp success.

Never permit another will to override your own. Listen to reason; be open to conviction — for stubbornness, which is an attribute of the emotions and not of the reason, is not will-power — but never permit what another may think, or do or threaten, to have force enough to change your mind. Never yield to that mysterious thing called mental force. Whatever you do and whatever you think, do it and think it because it is your own judgment to do and to think in that particular way. I do not mean that you shall combat everything blindly, as a bull would. The strong oak bends before the storm. But when the strain is over the oak springs erect again. So you, appearing to give way, should hold in your heart the unconquerable will which yields not **[Page 15]** at all. Hold to one purpose and to one resolve through years, when all the horizon shows not a beam of hope that, that purpose and that resolve may come to fruition. Do all of this, not for the sake of the results of each particular doing, but as a training for the will. Do it all as an exercise, as the pianist plays the scales to make the fingers limber.

Out of all this will come marvelous powers of will. And of it all will come a marvelous self- control. Then, indeed, will you be able to force up out of their hidden caverns the latent powers of the mind. Then, indeed, will you begin to feel rushing through your soul the first thrillings of that mighty wisdom that shall make you as a God. **[Page 17]**

AN INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY OF YOGA APHORISMS OF PATANJALI

ONE of the most extraordinary books in the world is *The Yoga Aphorisms of Patanjali*. Patanjali was a Hindu Sage, whose birth and death are indefinitely fixed as occurring some time between one hundred

and five hundred years before Christ. The original manuscript of this little volume is, therefore, more than two thousand years old.

This is one of the most remarkable books in the world, because it points out, with infallible directness, the means by which a man may transform himself into a god. I use the word "God" in this connection for the reason that it conveys to our Western mind, accustomed to the idea of the Jewish Jehovah, a better conception of the powers acquired through this knowledge, than could any other word in the English language, for he who masters the wisdom contained in this little book contacts the heart of all knowledge and obtains control over the hidden forces of nature. Such **[Page 18]** powers we have been accustomed to believe to be possessed by God alone.

The volume is small. About one-third of the space between the covers is occupied by an introduction and an appendix. Of the four chapters into which the book proper is divided, one is, in my opinion, unmistakably an interpolation. Chapter two, or Book two as it is here designated, presents so sharp a contrast to the first, the third and the fourth chapters — is so plainly the output of a feebler mind, conscious of its own weakness and seeking a way to reach the altitude, of the majestic sweep of thought of the first and master mind — that this chapter could not have come from the same godlike mental power as did the other three.

Much of the space devoted to the three genuine chapters is taken up with foot-notes, and the type of the text proper is large; so that, in reality, less than half of the contents is the work of Patanjali himself — not more than enough to fill half a column of an ordinary newspaper; and yet, small as the space occupied by the printed record of this far-reaching wisdom, it might be still further condensed. It might be compressed into a single word — "Concentration".

There are two processes of the human mind about which the majority of people have the most erroneous conception. One of these is mental concentration. The other is the faculty of dramatic **[Page 19]** construction. The reason for this is that both are occult faculties. The mind of the true Yogi, and the mind of the true dramatist, perform operations, so unlike the operations of the ordinary mind, that ordinary minds are unable to conceive of the existence of such processes, let alone understanding them. Before explaining the nature of concentration, I must first disabuse the reader's mind of the idea commonly held, as to what concentration is. In the first place the English word "concentration", as we understand it, does not describe the mental process expressed by the Sanskrit word "sanyama". We choose the word "concentration" only because it is the best English word to use. The word "restraint" has also been used; but "restraint" is even a worse translation.

Mental concentration, then, does not mean putting thoughts into the mind, it means putting thoughts out of the mind. In both ordinary and philosophical language it means single-pointedness, but the process of obtaining that single-pointedness, or rather the sort of single-pointedness obtained, is wholly different when considered from the two standpoints. If we permit the wings of an army to represent thoughts, we would say in ordinary language, that a man concentrated his thoughts, as a general concentrates his army, by bringing all the wings together. In occultism, we would say, that concentration is obtained when the wings are marched off, one by one, until but a single wing **[Page 20]** remained. To carry the simile further, the subdivisions of the thought — the brigades, the regiments, the corporal's guards of this wing (for upon a close analysis it will be found that thoughts have subdivisions) should be dispersed until the

indivisible — the single private, remains, before perfect concentration is obtainable. If, in ordinary language, we say that we concentrate our minds upon a certain problem, we are understood as taking under consideration all the aspects of that problem. In occult language we are understood as taking under consideration a single aspect only. Application is not concentration. To have concentration one must have application: but one may have abundance of application without the slightest trace of concentration. One may be able to apply the mind to a problem for hours consecutively, and yet not be able to concentrate it upon a problem for a single moment of time.

Patanjali defines concentration as “hindering the modifications of the thinking principle”. Probably everyone has heard or read the expression “thought forms”; doubtless by many this has been supposed to be a mere figure of speech — a flowery turned sentence, designed to give grace to an otherwise bald statement: but, indeed, such is not the case. There are thought-forms, as real and as definite, and occupying space just as truly as the physical forms we see and touch; although, **[Page 21]** to be sure, they are not so fixed and heavy of motion. When we dream, do we not create thought forms? Are the things the dreamer sees mere nothings? Assuredly not. They are real. They occupy space. They are matter; of an ethereal and attenuated sort, but matter nevertheless. They are matter of the same consistency as the matter composing the mind — not the brain, but the mind — and they are called into being and dispersed by the busy mind itself.

It is a doctrine of occult science that the mind *takes on the form of anything it contemplates*. It, in fact, makes itself into a counterpart of the thing. For the time being, it is the thing on another plane of existence. When you think of a thing, therefore your mind shapes itself into the form of that thing. When you change your thought your mind changes its shape. No matter how rapidly your thoughts change, your mind changes just as rapidly. It is being continually modified. Continually and rapidly indeed, with tremendous rapidity — with the rapidity of thought. Every moment of waking life, the mind is continually creating hundreds of these thought-forms and continually dispersing them again, never holding one long enough to get acquainted with it, so to speak, but instantly supplanting it by another, and yet another and so on while life lasts. These are the modifications of the thinking principle. It is for the purpose of hindering these modifications that **[Page 22]** concentration is practised. Concentration is holding the mind to one form.

Suppose the mind instead of constantly creating these millions upon millions of thought-forms, instead of flitting from thought to thought and never resting on anyone, instead of dissipating and scattering its energies upon a multitude of things, instead of never halting long enough to really grasp the meaning of what it is that it is contemplating; suppose, instead, it should hold one thought-form firmly before it, unconfused by any other, not only an instant, not only a second, not only a minute, but an hour, a day. Suppose the mind was so trained by years, by lives of systematic and intelligent direction, as to enable it to do this, what would happen then? Suppose the mind could shape itself into one shape and keep that shape for hours together, what would be the grand result? Ah! assuredly, we are now approaching the very mysteries of Occultism.

In order that the reader may easily understand what follows, I shall be obliged to recall to his mind certain basic philosophic teachings and shall assume that he believes them to be true, or rather that they have become a part of his conscious experience. It will be necessary for me to make a bald statement of each one of these doctrines so that they may be fresh in the reader's memory as we proceed to further examine this marvelous process of the human mind, set forth by Patanjali, **[Page 23]** for, as yet, I have

given no adequate conception of his meaning and can only do so by the light of these principles. I shall do no more than merely state them. There is not a single individual reader who may not, in time, by mastering and applying the knowledge contained in this little book, elevate his intellect to the level of a Webster, a Shakespeare, a Mahatma, aye, a God. I take it, that none are so devoid of ambition that they would not devote many a long hour, if finally they could be shown the way to acquire this tremendous power. That way is surely set forth here. The first of these doctrines is the doctrine of reincarnation. Patanjali assumes that his pupils accept this law, just as a modern astronomer assumes that his pupils accept the law of gravitation. The feature to which I wish to specially call attention is the way in which the law of mental progress operates through successive reincarnations. To whatever extent a man develops his mind in one life, to just that extent does he begin the next with a mind already developed. His mental training in one life is shown in the next in the shape of results. What are the “born” musicians and orators and painters and poets ? Merely the results of hard work in former incarnations. Not a single effort at mental development is thrown away. If you do not see the results in this incarnation you surely will in some following one. **[Page 24]**

Another doctrine which Patanjali assumes to be thoroughly understood and accepted by his pupils is the doctrine of the universality of consciousness. Some time ago, Thomas A. Edison, the eminent inventor, surprised the world by announcing as his belief that every molecule of matter possessed a consciousness of its own. The world hailed this announcement as a new theory set forth for the first time by the wizard of the phonograph; but indeed, Mr. Edison merely repeated a truth so old that two thousand years ago, Patanjali took it for granted that all his pupils knew all about it, and hence he did not go to the trouble of restating the doctrine. Study the flame in a gas jet. What is it that makes the atoms of carbon and the atoms of oxygen rush together with so fierce a love as to burst into aflame ? Examine a piece of ebony. What is it that makes the molecules of matter composing it hang together with so firm a grip, that the blows of an axe or the ripping of a saw are necessary to tear them asunder ? It is consciousness. The same consciousness which in man in another form makes of him an intelligent and a sentient being. I will merely call the reader's attention to certain phases of this doctrine; assuming that he accepts them, as did the pupils of Patanjali.

The consciousness of the individual man is not the sum of the consciousness of all the molecules composing his body. The individual man has an **[Page 25]** individual consciousness. Each molecule in a man's body has a consciousness of its own, man, the individual, has a consciousness of his own, yet the one is not the sum of all the others, but is a distinct thing. Carry the same thought higher. A community of men has a consciousness of its own, and yet this consciousness is not the sum of the *individual* consciousness of all men in that community, but is distinct in itself. So a nation has a consciousness which is not a sum of all communal consciousnesses, but is a distinct national consciousness. So a race has a consciousness of its own, the universe has a consciousness of its own, and above the consciousness of the universe — but let us stop.

Let us frame this thought in other terms. Let us call consciousness, soul. Thus, then, there is an atomic soul, an individual soul, a national soul, a race soul, a soul of the world, a soul of the universe — and here we pause.

Suppose there could be devised a process of development which should so expand the individual human consciousness that it would take in all the rest? Suppose that the individual man should be able to be conscious not only of that which is telegraphed to him by his individual senses — his eye, his ear — but

that he should be conscious of all that the atom is conscious of, of all that every other individual is conscious of, of all that the community is conscious of, of all that the **[Page 26]** nation is conscious of, the race, the world, the universe ? Suppose that there was a way to so expand the mind — and there surely is — suppose there was such a way, what sort of men would such developed ones become ? Where is the knowledge that could be withheld from such a mind ? And yet this is precisely what Patanjali places within the reach of you and me. It is precisely an expansion of this sort that is obtained by the dramatist, though to a limited extent. He expands his consciousness until it is one with the consciousness of an audience.

A third doctrine which Patanjali assumes his pupils understand and accept is the doctrine of the septenary constitution of man. I, also, shall assume that you understand and accept this doctrine. It is necessary, however, to freshly call to mind the attributes of three of man's seven principles. These three are the fourth, the fifth and the sixth. They are called in Sanskrit the Kama Rupa, the Manas and the Buddhi principles. In English they are termed the animal soul, the human soul and the spiritual soul. These three principles constitute the mind. It is through these three principles that man's individual consciousness functions. The entire purpose of Theosophy — the whole scheme of this occult wisdom — this knowledge, jealously guarded through the centuries by the few, from all but the few — the absolute object of this secret doctrine is to elevate the functioning **[Page 27]** of the individual consciousness from the fourth principle, where it now functions in the majority of mankind, to the sixth, from the animal soul to the spiritual soul. This is the thing which will enable the individual consciousness to expand into the universal consciousness, and this is the thing which Patanjali teaches us how to do.

The fourth principle — or animal soul — is the seat of the desires, of the emotions, of love and hate, of pleasure, of pain. When consciousness functions through this principle it is obscured by these emotions. How often do we hear the expression "The wish is father to the thought ?" With the majority of mankind the wish is always father to the thought, and hence the thought is never un-obscured. It is never a thought dealing with abstract truth.

It is upon this fourth principle that the dramatist plays. He appeals to consciousness through the emotions. A play is not addressed to the head, but to the heart. There is this essential point about a play, however, which distinguishes it from all other things. It is addressed to the emotional consciousness, not of an individual, but of an audience; which is a very different thing.

The fifth principle. Manas — the human soul — is the seat of the thinker. It is that in us which reasons, which argues from cause to effect, from premise to conclusion. With an individual who has elevated the functioning of his consciousness **[Page 28]** from the fourth to the fifth principle the wish is never father to the thought. He approaches all subjects of contemplation with a mind wholly free from prejudice or desire. He seeks merely to know the truth, regardless of what the truth may be; in seeking the truth his mind is unobscured. What are our Huxleys and our Spencers ? Merely men who have elevated their consciousness from the fourth to the fifth principle. Each one can do the same.

The sixth principle — the spiritual soul — has been called the "knower". When the consciousness functions through this principle the mind is no longer obscured by the emotions and the senses, nor is it obliged to obtain knowledge by the slow and painful process of reasoning from cause to effect. *It knows direct*. This process is best expressed by the word "intuition". I have heard intuition defined as the

recalling to the mind of knowledge acquired by experiences in former incarnations. This definition is manifestly incorrect. Such a mental process is not intuition, it is memory. It is a recollection of things stored in the memory before this life began, but it is none the less an effort of the memory. Intuition is the obtaining a truth without the aid of the senses, the reasoning powers or of the memory. It is direct knowledge. How can such a thing be ? The answer is very plain. By expanding the individual consciousness until it takes in all consciousness. **[Page 29]** When this is done one does not think *of* the universe, one thinks *with* the universe. This is what results from elevating the functioning of consciousness to the sixth principle and this is precisely what Patanjali shows us how to do. A dramatist is a man who has succeeded in so elevating his consciousness in respect to one subject, namely, that of dramatic construction. Shakespeare was unmistakably born with his consciousness so elevated. Sardou and our own Bronson Howard have succeeded in so elevating their consciousness during this life-time. This mental operation which a dramatist does in fact perform, is to know intuitively what effect the lines he is now writing will have, when acted, upon the emotional consciousness of an audience not yet in existence. This knowledge must be absolutely true. It must be truth itself: for if he makes a single genuine mistake in playing upon the emotional consciousness of this audience not yet assembled, his play is a failure. This is the reason so few people succeed in writing plays.

The system of philosophy the Theosophical Society is now engaged in spreading before the world is called "occult" largely because the race of Sages, or perhaps I might say Mahatmas, who are the custodians of this splendid wisdom, have been in the habit of giving out only half truths to their pupils, always reserving the key to the knowledge they imparted, until the chela or pupil was **[Page 30]** surely fitted to receive the full and exalted truth. The really occult part of this knowledge is occult, because it cannot be understood except by the developed inner man. It is, in very truth, hidden to the ordinary mind; but the term "occult" has been given to the whole scheme of this philosophy for the reason I have mentioned. The epithet might well be applied to the information contained in this book. Patanjali has, indeed, followed the custom of his fellow Sages; and while his aphorisms speak fully of concentration and of what concentration will do, they are absolutely silent as to how to call into being the tremendous mental power necessary to the practice of concentration. Patanjali has shown his pupils a certain complicated maze in the centre of which is placed everything the most ambitious could desire to dream of possessing, and has said to them: "Behold! In the very middle of this labyrinth are all things necessary to make men great, rich, powerful, immortal and happy. It can be entered only by a certain path called Concentration. The plan of this pathway you must discover for yourself. Go, find the key to this labyrinth and all within is yours; but if you find it not, and if you attempt this passage without the key, you shall be lost in the endless maze".

"The Hindu people have been trying for centuries to find a short and easy way through this labyrinth and they have failed. They have made as great a **[Page 31]** failure of it, as our churches have made of the teachings of Christ. The practice of the modern Indian Yogi comes about as near the practice of Patanjali, as the Spanish Inquisition comes to Christ healing the sick.

Imagine a man preparing himself to be transformed into a god by sitting in a certain position on a bunch of a certain kind of grass, drawing the air into his lungs through the left nostril, retaining it in his lungs for a certain time and then letting it out through the right nostril; being careful all the while to mentally repeat the letter "A" sixteen times while drawing in the breath through the left nostril, the letter "U" forty times while holding the breath in the body, and the letter "M" thirty-two times while exhaling the breath through the right nostril! This is called practicing "Prânâyâma", and is supposed to be indispensable to

concentration. Patanjali did not teach these things, neither did Christ invent the thumb-screws of the Spanish Inquisition. They are the product of feebler minds, the gropings of a degraded people — a people hopelessly lost in labyrinthine error.....

The key to this labyrinth — the open sesame which unlocks all these powers and exaltations of the human mind — is the power of the human will. To describe how the will may be developed, until it reaches that titanic power necessary to the practice of concentration, would require too much **[Page 32]** space. But it can be so developed both by you and by me, not in one life perhaps, but in the course of several incarnations, each of high endeavour. Let me assume the will to be so developed, and hasten on to a description of precisely what takes place when concentration is practised in the manner set forth by Patanjali. Let us, in fact, take up a subject for concentration; one that necessitates calling into play the higher powers of the mind. Let us take one of the subjects set by Patanjali himself. In Aphorism 33, Book 3, Patanjali says: "By concentrating his mind upon the 'light in the head', the ascetic acquires the power of seeing divine beings".

I select this Aphorism because the occult part of concentration can best be illustrated by it. To see divine beings, one must know what the "light in the head" is. This is precisely what we do not know, and it is because we cannot find out in the ordinary way that it furnishes the best subject for concentration. In a foot-note beneath this aphorism the translator has endeavoured, in a sort of a way, to explain what the Hindus believe the light in the head to be. It is unnecessary for me to trouble you with this explanation..... My own opinion is that this aphorism is another of those half revealed truths of which the ancient Sages were so fond, and that the "light in the head" is not a material thing nor a place, but an occult — a hidden power of the soul. How, then, **[Page 33]** shall we find out the meaning of this expression ? How discover that which cannot be discovered by search among manuscripts, nor laid bare by logic and mathematics ? How, indeed, but by concentration itself ? If concentration will develop the power of direct knowledge, then must concentration reveal to us the meaning of everything, whether esoteric or exoteric. It must reveal the meaning of the "light in the head".

Let us concentrate upon "the light in the head". We find that this thought — as well as all other thoughts — has three subdivisions. There is the title — the words, the "light in the head". Next there is the relative quality of the thought, *i.e.* what relation does the light in the head bear to all other things ? What part does it take in the whole scheme of the universe ? How is it affected by, and how does it affect other things, as for instance, the celestial beings it enables us to see. The third division is the abstract thought itself, the abstract thing, "the light in the head". We take our mind then, and fasten it upon this thought to the total exclusion of all other thoughts. And here begins our first difficulty; for, scarcely has the mind settled, so to speak, well upon thought, than its immediate tendency, engendered by the habits of thousands of lives, is to fly off to some other thought — to permit a modification of the thinking principle. But we are supposed to have developed our will to the highest degree of power and to have **[Page 34]** had years of training in this work of concentration; so our mind does not respond to this first weak impulse, but is held by the will, without difficulty, to the single thought-form until it has grown steady at the work.

Then comes the first great struggle of the will. The mind has been firmly held to this thought-form until it has identified itself with it. We are thinking intensely of the "light in the head". We know its title. We are seeking to grasp what relation it bears to other things, and we strive to obtain a conception of the abstract thing itself. There is one subdivision of this thought for which we have no further use — the title,

the words, "The Light in the Head". The will now gathers all its force and pushes this useless subdivision from the mind so that these words no longer remain in it. The mind is now thinking of a thing without a name. It has gone beyond the powers of the ordinary mind. It is thinking without words. It speaks to consciousness without a language. Ah! now surely do we need our powers of will! Tremendous is the struggle to hold the mind to its work. Every affliction that man can feel or know comes thronging to modify the fixed mind. Did we ever love ? Then will that love come beating against the barriers of the mind. Did we ever hate ? Did we ever feel pleasure, or pain, or joy, or sorrow ? Do we love music, or art, or romantic story ? Has poetry moved our soul ? Have we **[Page 35]** friends; have we father, mother, lover, sister, brother, for whom we are concerned? Is there anything on earth or in the air that interests us ? Is there anything in our past lives or in our lives to come that interests us? If there be — if these things have life in our breasts, then will they and the memory of them beat with frightful blows upon the barriers of the mind, shrieking for recognition. But great as has been the combat, a greater is now before the splendid undaunted will. The mind begins to see that it has no need for the second subdivision of the thought — the relativity of the thing. What it needs to know is the thing itself. Again the wonderful will makes a supreme effort; this second subdivision like the first is pushed from the mind, and the last subdivision, the absolutely indivisible thought-form remains. Now, indeed, is perfect concentration had. Now indeed is the mind performing a work heretofore undreamed of by man. Not only is it thinking without a language, but also it is thinking without a base, without a starting point, without a beginning, without a premise, without preposition, without a reasoning from a cause. It is direct thought. Now, in very truth, does the majestic will need all its highest power. The struggles heretofore have been but pastime compared to this. The strain is enormous. The clamour and the onslaught of the things which anchor man to earth — the emotions, the senses, the loves, the **[Page 36]** hates, the pleasures, the pains — these things are reinforced by the invisible beings into whose realm the ambitious mind is about to force its way. How can I describe their terrible onslaught ? How can I put in mere finite language things which cannot be even thought in words ? How convey through the senses, things which cannot be perceived by the senses ? The task is beyond my powers. The intuition latent in the soul of the reader can best understand the terrible strain now bearing upon this mind and will. But the end is near. The reward comes like a flash of light. All at once a strange power leaps into the mind. Time and space are annihilated. Limitations are unknown. Clouds banish from before the eyes of the soul; celestial harmonies thrill the inner senses; the mind sees all, hears all, understands all. "The light in the head" is known.