CHAPTER-VI

FUNDAMENTAL CONCEPTS OF SWAMI VIVEKANANDA
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6.1 MYSTICISM OF SWAMI VIVEKANANDA:

Swami Vivekananda is basically a mystical experience changed his personality overall. His horizon of vision was broadened; his mind was stabilized and he ultimately obtained spiritual knowledge. There were instances of mystical experience of Swami Vivekananda in the company of his spiritual master, Ramakrishna, rising above bodily awareness. The core of mysticism is experience, a human potential to be found in all men. As Sisirkumar Ghose puts it, "Essentially and expansion of awareness, costing not less than everything – 'No one I am, I who am all that is' – Mysticism is best seen as the target of evolution, the Ascent of man."¹

There is a low type of mysticism, based on the magical view of life. Although it is known that the powers exist, but the true mystic is not interested in being a miracle man. It is an experience of going beyond this phenomenal world, where it crosses the boundary of sense experience. Man’s denial of the Beyond is a denial of himself. The highest forms of mysticism are distinguished by a loss of reparative consciousness: "Thou art that,”, “The knower and the known are one God and I are one in knowledge”. We may call it a third knowledge, the two other being sense knowledge and knowledge by inference.

Man of mystical experience is a bridge between the two worlds—one visible and the other invisible. This visible would prepare us for the experience of invisible world. The one is means another is its end. Thus there is feeling of completeness with both the worlds and mysticism relates to the science of total man. Totally unmystical world would be a world totally blind and inane. Not merely a matter of feeling, mysticism is a knowledge, rather wisdom not opposed to science. The supera-rational is not irrational. The mystics have known and proved this at all times. Today’s world with much knowledge of science and technology, but meagre knowledge, relating to super-mental knowledge, is an imbalance to be cared only by the knowledge of mysticism.

Mysticism, thus, is not only the proper study, but the meaning of man, the goal of human aspiration. The mystic is the mature person. The is the bridge between the two worlds—one visible, the other invisible. It is the combination both of materialism and spiritualism. As Sisir Kumar Ghose puts it, "The time-spirit demands a happier accommodation between what Sri Aurobindo called the materialist denial and the refusal of the Ascetic." 2

Obviously mystical experience has a wide spectrum. The Indian classification of knowledge (Jnana), works (Karma) and devotion (Bhakti) is simple but basic. Each has its own field of operation and effectiveness; also each tends to be exclusive. They are classified so to suit the different temperament of the practitioner. They are not inimical to one another, they are mutually helpful, if

2 Ghose, 10.
synthesized. With this background of Indian classification of four fold path of yoga, we will arrive at mystical experiences of Swami Vivekananda.

Vivekananda, by temperament was man of rationalistic bent of mind. People of such temperament will naturally prefer Jnana Yoga, philosophical system of Advaita. Ramakrishna, the preceptor of Swami Vivekananda, had the mystical experience of transcendental reality. With the mystical experience, Ramakrishna was convinced of the religious truth of all religions. He had practiced the grand truths of Christianity and Islam, and had the same spiritual experience. Ramakrishna had initiated this mysterious experience to Vivekananda; and therefore, Vivekananda had the experience of going beyond body consciousness.

The transcendental experience forms backdrop for the advaita philosophy of Swami Vivekananda. All seminal ideas of Vivekananda originate from this grand philosophy of advaita. Now, a close look at Advaita philosophy of Swami Vivekananda will help us in understanding mystical aspect of his writings. Advaita Vedanta was not new to India. Vivekananda inherited it in its concrete form from Adi Shankaracharya and saw its practical demonstration in the Life of his Guru. Shri Ramakrishna. Though the system of Vedanta was given a concrete form and shape by its architect Adi Shankaracharya, it has its origin in the Vedas, the Upanishads and the Bhagavad Gita. Vivekananda relied on all these sources. At the very outset, it may be mentioned here the most of his concepts are derived from Vedanta philosophy.
Vedanta comes at the ending portions of Vedas, and therefore, it is termed as Vedanta. The central idea of the Vedanta is the ideal of oneness of all life. Based on the Philosophy of Vedanta, Vivekananda interprets religions of the World as, “Truth has always been universal. if I alone were to have six fingers on my hand while all of you had only five you would not think that my hand was the true intent of nature, but rather that it was abnormal and diseased. Just so with religion. If one creed alone were to be true and all the others must be true. Thus the Hindu religion is your property as well as mine.”

Speech delivered at the Parliament of Religions by Vivekananda, speaks the philosophy of universal brotherhood. The address “Sisters and brothers of America” tie the audience with the tone of familiarity. The veil of strangerness is torn at the very outset of his speech. The different religions are like different paths leading to one God as their goal. As a proof to it he quotes a hymn from Hindu religion as, ‘As the different streams having their sources in different places all mingle their water in the sea, so O Lord, the different paths which man take through different tendencies, various though they appear, crooked as straight, all lead to Thee’. Thus flow the advaitic stream of Swami Vivekananda’s speech.

Vivekananda was able to detect the gradational facility amidst multiple variety. To him as he said, “Unity in variety is the plan of nature, and the Hindu has recognized it.” The very process of science is discovering of unity amidst variety. For instance it so happens with chemistry and physics. Chemistry when it

4 Vivekananda Vol.1 17.
is able to find one element, out of which others are made, it would stop in its search. Similarly when physics stops at there and does not move further. Science of religion also comes to its end when it makes search of Him.

In other words, all religions will reach their state of perfection when all of them discover him, the almighty, who is unchanging amidst changing. Vivekananda puts it as, “Thus is it, through multiplicity and quality that the ultimate unity is reached. Religion can go no further. Thus is the goal of all science.”

Although Vivekananda relies on Advaita philosophy derived from Shankara, his consideration for graded reality that of dvaita and Vishistadvaita gives him comprehensive look. Vivekananda studied Vedanta deeply and was able to discover the well-spring of men’s moral sensibility. R.K. Das Gupta puts it, “And it was a philosophical task of great magnitude and complexity and he accomplished that task in a heroic endeavour to make room for morality in monistic metaphysics.” This advaitic ethics was within the confinement of Advaita Vedanta; it was not brought from any other source.

Vivekananda’s Vedanta was practical in its aspect, mere theorizing was chastised by him. This practical Vedanta was rooted in his philosophy of liberation or spiritual freedom through right action as he found it in the Bhagavadgita. And the liberated one works spontaneously without any obligation for the solidarity of the world. Vivekananda has explained this elaborately in his

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5 Vivekananda, Vol.1 15.
three lectures on the Gita delivered at San Francisco in May 19000. Briefly to say about these lectures, is that the reality in nature is spirit; and the spirit is the cause of all our thoughts and body-action and everything, but it is untouched by good or evil, pleasure or pain, heat or cold and all the dualism of nature, although it lends its light to everything. The essence of Vivekananda’s Advaita is that one cannot run away from the Absolute which pervades the universe and the ideal of our individual soul is to pursue the absolute in thought and action.

Vivekananda’s Vedanta is both positive and dynamic. In his own words, “Man-making is my mission of life. You try to translate this mission of mine into action and reality.” He disliked dry theoretical Vedanta; Vedanta, he wanted to be practical and true to life.

Vedanta, as expounded by Shankara is abstruse, but Vivekananda explains it in simplicity on scientific lines. As C.D. Narasimhaiah puts it, “No man of religion in this country, in modern times set out to demonstrate religious experience in scientific terms with the knowledge and courage which he displayed.” It is primarily this spirit in Vivekananda that makes him the most modern preacher, relevant to our age.

The most striking feature of Swami Vivekananda’s philosophical thought is that it embraces synthesis of Head and heart. Although he imbibed Shankara’s Vedanta, but his heart inclined towards Buddha’s philosophy. In the words of S.S.

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Mital, "Though an Advaita, he leans more towards the gospel of the Buddha..."

The implication of the above quotation is that the knowledge and service go together. The separation of the two has its adverse effect in society. Therefore the impassioned cry of Vivekananda:

Hinduism cannot live without Buddhism, nor Buddhism without Hinduism. Then realize what the separation has shown to us, that the Buddhism cannot stand without the brain. And philosophy of the Brahmins, nor the Brahmin without the heart of the Buddhist. This separation between the Buddhists and the Brahmins is the cause of the downfall of India. That is why India is populated by three hundred millions of beggars, and that is why India has been the slave at conquerors for the last thousand years. Let us then join the wonderful intellect of the Brahmins with the heart, the noble soul, the wonderful harmonizing power of the great master.¹⁰

The four systems of yoga, as expounded by Swami Vivekananda, will throw more light on the mystical debt attained by him. We will also see the different faculties of an individual are in play with respective yoga system. These different yogas are suited according to the different temperament of an individual. Hence, the different practice in action. Therefore we shall have a brief look at the major yogas. These different yogas are: Jnana yoga, Karma yoga, Raja yoga and Bhakti yoga.

¹⁰ Vivekananda Vol.1 23.
Therefore a brief look at the major yogas will facilitate our understanding of Vivekananda’s mysticism. The major yogas are – Jnana yoga, Karma yoga, Raja yoga and Bhakti yoga. Before we begin with the explanation of these Yogas, we shall look at the observation made by C.D. Narasimhaiah as about effective way of presenting them. He puts it as:

It as the same intelligence, imagination and literary sensibility that stand him in good steal in his exposition of the four systems of yoga. Even those of us who are rather allergic to philosophy and repelled by the congealed titles of Raja yoga, Bhakti yoga, Jnana yoga, Karma yoga, will find their efforts most rewarding if they can overcome the initial resistance and get to read them with the help of Vivekananda’s criticism. Indeed, I cannot think where else one can get treatment of the four systems of yoga expounded with such clarity, intellectual sophistication and awareness of their immediate relevance to the contemporary situation.11

As the path of Jnana Yoga, namely, Vedanta, has been dealt with. So the next will be the other three yogas. Vivekananda’s religion comprises Karma, Bhakti, Jnana and Raja yoga. Yoga means union of man with God and the means to attain it. Vivekananda categorically explains yogas: “To become harmoniously balanced in all these four directions is my ideal of religion. And this religion is attained by what we, in India, call yog-union to the worker, it is union between man and the whole of humanity; to the mystic, between his lower and higher self;

11 Narasimhaiah 84.
to the lower, the union between himself and the God of love; and to the philosopher, it is the union of all existence. This is what is meant by yoga.  

The above quotation of Swami Vivekananda sums up, the essence of the four yogas. The Karma yoga can be called the path of the body. Because bodily actions are rightly directed, although mental attitudes are taken into account. The practitioner of Karma yoga should work without expectation of fruit to his Karma. This is called disinterested Karma. It is to work incessantly for work no, sake without being attached to it, without even desiring anything. Work done with expectation is attended by painful experience, which will upset mental poise of the doers. Karma yoga teaches us that we must be grateful to a man who gives us opportunity to serve him.

Now we shall see various observations made by Swami Vivekananda in respect of this Karma-Yoga. Karmas are collective waves that shape personality of man. Thousands of Karmas done in the past have resulted in the shape of present personality; Karma means work. The goal of mankind is knowledge or salvation. Therefore pleasure cannot be the goal of man, but only knowledge. Pleasure and happiness come to and end. After a time man realises that he is in search of real happiness not the passing pleasure. The whole miseries start when one thinks that pleasure is the goal of life. This idea of Swami Vivekananda comments that man is unconsciously striver of knowledge which is real happiness.

12 Vivekananda Vol. 2 388.
Thus says Swami Vivekananda: "Pleasure is not the goal of man but knowledge." 13

This view is so humanistic that it appeals to all alike - the entire community of human beings. It is everybody’s experience of the sad tale that they can catch hold of lasting happiness. But it is like a mirage that has deluded us. Some gratification has resulted in pain. The soul constantly thirsts for happiness unmixed with pain. The source of real bliss or happiness, therefore can be had only in knowledge. The unconscious passion is lurking in all happenings, therefore they cannot for a while give up their struggle for happiness. Every act of human beings is directed only in attaining happiness. Happiness is what all aspire for. This clearly suggests every body’s goal is knowledge, and the forgetfulness of the goal has led to all sorts of misery.

Knowledge emanates from man himself. It is not found anywhere outside. The source of knowledge is within man himself. There is an ocean of knowledge in him. The need is to look within oneself. Knowledge consists in lifting of the veil of the soul. This is the process of learning. Learning does not come from outside. Real meaning of education is the development from the within, expression of the self which is knowledge, power and bliss. Newton discovered gravitation. This theory was not outside. External world supplied stimulus to his mind, his mind made arrangement and the result was expression of knowledge of gravitation. That is why Swami Vivekananda says it is not knowledge sitting some where outside: it is: “Like fire in a piece of flint, knowledge exists in the

13 Vivekananda. Vol. 1 27.
mind: suggestion is the friction which brings it out.”¹⁴ This is consuming logic. Therefore all knowledge secular or spiritual is in the human mind only.

Our totality of mental attitude is generated within our mind due to various blows as action struck us at various times; consequently the present personality has emerged. All through these blows of action man has developed his power and knowledge. All totality of actions bearing upon our personality is Karma in the widest sense. Thus our life consists of sum total of all actions. Hence, Swami Vivekananda says: “Thus we are all doing Karma. You are listening, that is Karma. We breathe, that is Karma. We walk, that is Karma. Everything we do, physical or mental is Karma and it leaves its marks on us.”¹⁵

Gita has its words to say no man can remain without doing action. Our entire life is action oriented, the end of which lies in where all Karmas cease, that is, our end and aim of life. We do action to get rid of action. Action itself is not a goal. The real goal is where all actions cease, that is the state of perfection, or freedom.

Man is not judged how great he is by his great actions. The smaller actions also speak his greatness. If the same greatness is not found in smaller things, that man is a hypocrite. Positional greatness is no greatness; by chance a fool can also become a hero at one time or another. This is the common sense view of Swami Vivekananda to identify worth of man. There are many instances in lives of saints

or mystics who could be poised in all their positional changes and keep up their dignity of labour all the way.

Vivekananda explains the fact that all actions are not free from motivation; motivation compels man to work. Peculiar customs are dealt with humour by Swami Vivekananda. When he relates the life of Chinese, who do not get their titles until they die. And in some cases of others tombs are erected well in advance at their birth; bigger and the more beautiful the tomb they have, they are well off with it. This humorous idea, expresses the folly of the people working with strange motivation. Some others work as doing penance for all their sins done. Such people want to sell their sins, if the priests are ready to buy them. These all petty motivation in one’s work won’t help man in any way. One has to work for work’s sake., not caring for fruits like name, fame and comfort. There is a class of people who work for others for their good and for the love of doing good. Swami Vivekananda pin points: “Such class-points one’s unselfishness is more paying. Only people have not the patience to practice it. It is more paying form the point of health also.”

The above remark of Swami Vivekananda aims at double benefits, the earthly and spiritual at the same time. Selfless man enjoys good standard of health and peace at the same time. The very health of man is dependent on the mental health or peace and cheerful outlook of man. This unruffled state of mind of Karma-Yoga is a good sign of good health. This view certainly moves man to be selfless in order to gain all the lowest of low benefits and higher benefits as well.

16 Vivekananda Vol. 1 32.
A little act of love. truth and selflessness have tremendous power over one's own personality. A few days experience will convince beyond any shadow of doubt the efficacy of good actions. Only we have no patience to practice. While doing good one has to exercise one's power of self-control. This self-control will tend to produce mighty will.

This self-control is more rewarding. It blesses man with mighty will, through which one can do and undo the things. Christ and Buddha are examples. Foolish people having no self-control in themselves want to rule others. Man who can conquer his inner self can conquer all forces in nature. But swami Vivekananda regrets that people have no patience to practice it and look beyond. That is why he says: "We have not the patience to look beyond and thus become immoral and wicked. This is one weakness, our powerlessness."\(^\text{17}\)

Man should evolve with lower motives to higher motives of work. Work of lower kind should not be despised on the ground they are mean. Man working with his selfish motive should rise above the unselfishness. To work and not its fruit should be the only motive behind our work. One should always retain calm, unruffled state of mind in all circumstances. Swami Vivekananda speaks of such state in the following words: "The ideal man is he who, in the midst of greatness silence and solitude, finds the intensive activity, and in the midst of the intense activity finds the silence and solitude of the desert. He has learnt the secret of restraint, he has controlled himself... That is the ideal of Karma-Yoga and if you

\(^{17}\) Vivekananda Vol. 1 33.
have attained that you have really learnt the secret of work." Swami Vivekananda advises man of selfish nature to work slowly towards unselfishness. A time will come when he has searched that perfectly unselfish state. Swami Vivekananda says to this effect as: "... the moment we attain to that, all our powers will be concentrated and the knowledge which is ours will be manifest."

The concept of duty is a puzzling one. The brilliant wit of Swami Vivekananda comes to our aid. Many people are confused of their duties. It is only the wise or mystic will enlighten the confusing things. Arjuna, a great valorous soldier, who was called as the hero of the three worlds had to shrink in the idea of duty as to what do in the battle field of Kurukshetra. Mistakenly, he thinks to show mercy as an ideal duty at the moment. Lord Krishna, charioteer of Arjuna had to call Arjuna as hypocrite for not taking decisive step in the battlefield. The duty assigned to Arjuna was to fight against his kith and kin. They were his enemies representing Adharma (unmightious deed). They should be slain without mercy, otherwise the world would have to face untold agony with them. Arjuna’s duty was sacred to defend his men and fight against antagonistic or evil forces in the world. Lord Krishna inculcates the concept of duty, Arjuna then stands up to fight with more conviction having cleared of his doubts.

In the matter of duty and dharma, Swami Sivananda says: "Dharma depends upon time. Circumstances, age, desire of evolution and the community to

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18 Vivekananda Vol.1 34.
19 Vivekananda Vol.1 35.
which one belongs. The Dharma of this century is different from that of the tenth century.\textsuperscript{20}

The problem of the above in the life of Arjuna was not to resist evil. Non-resistance is an ideal. But this varies according to person to person, place to place and time to time. Thus it is relative. Swami Vivekananda likes active kind of life, he hates inertia as canker which eats vital parts of men. He resolves this point in emphatic way. Unless a person has developed in him power of resistance he cannot think of non-resistance. It would be the pretext of the weak and pertains to the nature of hypocrite. V. Brodov observes as "Thus, although in his heart of hearts Swami Vivekananda felt the truth of the doctrine of non-resistance, he understood fully well that this doctrine could not be used as a guide in social practices. He noted that only when he [man V.B.] has gained the power to resist, will non-resistance be a virtue\textsuperscript{21} Here we will recollect the words of Swami Vivekananda how he feels about weak and inactive people. For instance, he says: "I once met a man in my country whom I had known before as very stupid, dull person, who knew nothing and had not the desire to know anything, and was living the life of a brute. He asked me what he should do to know god, how he was to get free. ‘Can you tell a lie?’ I asked him. ‘No’, he replied. ‘then you must learn to do so. It is better to tell lie than to be brute, or a log of wood. You are inactive; you have not certainly reached the highest state which is beyond all actions, clam and serene; you are too dull even to do something wicked.’ That was an extreme

case, of course, and I was joking with him, but what I meant was that a man must be active in order to pass through activity to perfect calmness.”

Swami Vivekananda wants man to rise up from inertia, which is the quality of Tama (passivity) to activity which is the quality of Rajas (activity) and finally they should acquire the calm and non-resisting nature which is of Sattwam (purity). This idea of Swami Vivekananda shows graded development in the individual’s frame of mind, a kind of gradual evolution towards the perfect state of calmness. In such a calm mind divine reflection can be seen or its is an attainment of final beatitude. Swami Vivekananda considers the calm non-resistance is safe phenomenon, because he nowhere has encountered at least twenty people in the half of the world which he has traveled extensively. Therefore he demands first the quality of activity, vigour in man and particularly this in his own countrymen. Swami Ranganathananda writes about this attitude in Swami Vivekananda as:

“Lest people be awakened. Swami said, let them get quickened by the energy of rajas, and then manifest dynamism, strength and vigour. When that happens, that strength and energy may sometimes express as crime and violence also, but it is a sign of the awakening from the inertia of tamas, and there is nothing to be frightened at them... ‘Arise and Awake!’ It is after that awakening only that energy will begin to flow through the mind and the body – energy for work, energy for human love and service, energy for resistance to oppression and exploitation, as well as energy for crime and evil.”

22 Vivekananda Vol. I 39–40
Swami Vivekananda encourages people of different ideals according to their capacities and position. He does not want to judge one man’s ideal in the ideal of some one. Thus he says: “Nor is it right that I should be judged by your standard or you by mine. The apple three should not be judged by the standard of the oak nor the oak by that of apple. To judge the apple tree you must take the apple standard and for the oak its own standard.”

In the following observation Vivekananda highlights unity in diversity. Unity in diversity is the plan of creation. All men with their respective ideals should be backed up. World needs sympathy. This lack of sympathy will breed hatred among people. A worst kind of hatred could be seen among various cults and people of the different nations. Swami Vivekananda himself encountered such a bitter experience when his turban was pulled by the American and asked why swami Vivekananda was wearing such a turban. Sympathy will broaden one’s understanding. Therefore it is necessary to encourage all in their ideals and help them to see they reach their ideal at least nearer.

Hindu system has laid down different ideals according to the stages of human life. They are meant for the four stages of life. They are the stage of student, the stage of householder, the stage of retired and the stage of recluse. Each stage has its bounden duty and the conscious person has to discharge it implicitly. Here we cannot make any discrimination as to which is simple or inferior or which one is great. Swami Vivekananda, thus says: “It is useless to say that the man who lives out of the world is a greater man than he who lives in the

24 Vivekananda Vol.1 p.41.
world; it is much more difficult to live in the world and worship God then to give it up and live a free and easy life.”

Reflecting on the duties of a householder, laid down by Hindu system, he glorifies the life of a householder. It is like swimming against the current of water. Further he therefore, illustrates a beautiful story whether the life of a householder is great or the life of an ascetic. Through the sacrifice of the little bird and its family and through the dispassionate attitude of the ascetic, it is made clear that each one is great in his own place.

Spiritual knowledge is the only thing that can destroy one’s miseries forever. So Swami Vivekananda eulogizes highly these help to mankind. He remarks: “He who gives man spiritual knowledge is the greatest benefactor of mankind... Thus one has to work incessantly for the welfare of the mankind.”

No work is absolutely good or bad; they are composed of both. One should be intent in doing maximum good and minimum bad. Work should be done with highest sacrifice and that alone will carry the weight of sacrifice. Swami Vivekananda illustrated this through a story of a mongoose, which had half body of gold. To complete the other half it had participated in the great sacrifice performed by Yudhishtira. But there it could not succeed because the sacrifice done by the poor Brahmin family was greater in relation to the pompous sacrifice of Yudhishtira. Yudhista’s sacrifice could not be compared to the sacrifice of the Brahmins. Moreover, there was an egoistic feeling in Yudhishtira. That is why the

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25 Vivekananda Vol.1 42.
26 Vivekananda Vol.1 45.
work done with utmost sacrifice and egoless will have tremendous efficacy. Swami Vivekananda values this kind of sacrifice. This is the real secret of work.

If one discharges one’s duty with the spirit of worship of God, it will be converted into Karma-Yoga. Duty minded householders will have more power in comparison with ascetics. Such Karma-Yoga involves self-abnegation. But when one works for others, it is just as working for one’s own good and therefore one should feel that he has got an opportunity to serve; that will purify his heart. And that will make his heart respective to divine light.

Swami Vivekananda highly praised the service of Gautama Buddha. Buddha becomes highest ideal of Karma-Yoga and thus Swami Vivekananda refers now and then this great personality as an inspiration and model to those who want to tread the spiritual path of work. Therefore sister Nivedita told of Swami Vivekananda’s recognition of Buddha as a great wise man of Aryan race. “Buddha was to him not only the greatest of Aryans but also the one absolutely sane man that the world had ever seen.”

Theory of Karma-Yoga as expounded by Swami Vivekananda have beneficial points for humanity. By knowing clear cut theory of Karma-Yoga as explained by Swami Vivekananda one will model one’s life according to the spirit of Karma-Yoga by being good and doing good to humanity and thereby earning one’s salvation. He used this Yoga as an effective means for the masses to work out their salvation. Spirit of Karma-Yoga was intense in nature in swami Vivekananda. This Yoga is taken as great help to mankind.

Bhakti Yoga:

The term Bhakti comes from the root ‘Bhaj’ which means ‘to be attached to God’. Bhajan, Worship, Bhakthi, Anurag, Prem, Priti are synonymous forms. Bhakti is love for love’s sake. The devotee wants God and God alone. There is not selfish expectation here. There is no fear also. Therefore it is called ‘Parama Prem Rupa’. The devotee feels, believes, conceives and imagines that his Ishtama is an ocean of love or prem. Bhakti is the slender thread of prem or love that binds the heart of a devotee with the lotus feet of Lord. Bhakti is intense devotion and supreme attachment to God. Bhakti is supreme love for God. It is the spontaneous out pouring of prem towards the Beloved. It is pure, unselfish, divine love or suddh prem. There is not a bit of bargaining or expectation of anything here. This higher feeling is indescribable in words. It has to be sincerely experienced by the devotee. Bhakti is a sacred, higher emotion with sublime sentiments that unites the devotee with the Lord. Or it will mean according to S. Radhakrishnan as: “Devotion implies obedience to the will of the Supreme in all our activities. It brings deliverance from anxiety about the necessities of life.”

Love develops in process. First arises faith, then follows attraction and after that adoration. Adoration leads to suppression of mundane desires. The result is single minded supreme love towards God. In this type of highest Bhakti all attraction and attachment which one has for objects of enjoyment are transferred to the only dearest object viz., God. This leads the devotee to an eternal union with his Beloved and culminates in oneness. Thus, love too has its means to the end i.e., union with God or Moksha (freedom).

Next in order is Bhakti-Yoga, thought there is no such order is maintained. Man doing Karma-Yoga in doing good to the society of his fellow beings, will have purified heart and he will become virtuous. Virtuous nature in man invokes spirit of Divinity. It is by the blessing or grace of Divinity that man will come to know about the Divine Lila (playful creating of world). Then an idea will dawn about the existence of God as a creator of this World. If there is a pot, it follows that there should be its maker. Likewise, the world implies the almighty creator behind this mayasic world. All saints or mystics have felt it as very difficult to cross the ocean of ‘Maya’ unless one has devotion to Lord of creation. It is how a man doing crores of meritorious deeds in his crores of birth will come to know divine Leela.

That is why the virtuous have all the possibility of having the blessing of the Divine ruler (Ishwara). There are exceptions to this merit of virtue, where a man intensely feels the demand of God. So it can be said God as the demand of supply. By virtue of devotion such blessed soul will become noblest of mankind. A mystic of Karnataka Shri Nijaguni Shivayogi, in his book called Kaivalya Podathi says: “There is not virtue higher than devotion. Devotion is essence of all religions, and of all scriptures of the world.”

Swami Vivekananda begins Bhakti-Yoga with prayer from Shvetashhvatara Upanishad and with some definition of Bhakti. Bhakti-Yoga is the search for Lord and Ultimately ends in love. Love is the thread that binds devotee to God without adverse effects of the Love. Because the love for God is

29 Swami Shankaranad, Kaivalya Podata (Hubli Jadasiddhamath, nd.) p.
supreme love whereas all other love are transitory, changing and backed up with selfish motive behind it. That love without any expectation for God is pure state of love. Such a devotee is closer to God. He is not far away from Lord nor the Lord is far away from him. Romain Rolland observes. "The man (Bhakta) has passed along the whole path, through all its stages: he has been son, friend, lover, husband, father and mother and is now one with his Beloved."

Swami Vivekananda uses the definition of Bhakti of some exponents here. Narada means, Bhakthi intense love for God. This kind of love roots out all hatred in heart and begins to love all. In this context Swami Vivekananda speaks highly of Bhakti as far superior to Karma and Yoga. The reason for that is there is some expectation in the respective attempts of Yogas.

Men of knowledge like Shandilya or Narada too have spoken of Bhakti and the treatment of Bhakti assumes such a charm in delineation that mere knowledge looks dry. Vyasa too had such experience after lengthy commentaries on scriptures. His mind was not peaceful. He was advised to write about Lord Hari. And by writing Bhagavata, Vyasa resumed his peace. So the charm of Bhakti is seen here.

Even Swami Vivekananda also do not lag behind in expressing his taste for Bhakti. He says there is not any difference between Jnana and Bhakti. Even if there is any such distinction it is only slight. Even Raja-Yoga too pursued sincerely leads to that state of Bhakti. Swami Vivekananda deplores that the charlatans misuse the Raja-Yoga and thus they loose sight of the divine light.

Bhakti, says Swami Vivekananda, is the easiest way to God-realization. The only disadvantage is lower form of Bhakti which is fanatic. This fanaticism of lower Bhakti is well known fact with Hindus, Mohammedans and Christians. This single kind of Bhakti is liable to the cause of hating the other worshipers of other religions. Here Swami Vivekananda refers a humourous point that of a dog's loyalty. A dog can recognize its master in any attire whereas the fanatic will not. Still further he says even the closest brotherly relations if they stand against one's faith will also incur vilest deeds from the fanatic. Such is the trend of fanaticism in Bhakti.

The above sort of Bhakti is found in preparatory kind of Bhakti which is called Gauni. Swami Vivekananda speaks here simultaneously the noblest kind of Bhakti in which knowledge – action – and yoga are fused. They are like bird's wings and a tail. Bhakti and Jnana are two wings whereas yoga is the tail of a bird. They all together help in the spiritual journey of life to soar the height of divinity. Two wings lift above and the tail, the yoga, balances the movements.

Swami Vivekananda draws slight difference in Bhakti and Jnana. Jnanis think Bhakti as an instrument for liberation, the Bhaktas hold Bhakti both as an instrument and the end. The distinction is temporary one. When lower worship culminates in higher worship of Para Bhakti, the so called difference between the two will vanish. Ramakrishna Paramahamsa himself was an ideal of this kind of Bhakti. He saw in an image of Goddess Kali the living entity. There was not any difference in the idol of worship and meditative worship. Both were fused. Swami Vivekananda revealed this. Aldous Huxley also senses the value in image worship. therefore he says: "The religious experience of Sacramentalists image
worshipers may be perfectly genuine and objective;... All that need be said here is that the iconoclast's contempt for sacraments and symbols as being nothing but mummerly with stocks and stones, is quite unjustified."

Swami Vivekananda takes definition of Shankara with reference to the commentary on Avrittirasakridupadeshat made by Shankara. It is either devotion to master or Guru or loving wife mediating on her husband. These are all forms of devotion. Here the running thread is constant remembrance. Meditation is also constant remembrance. Scriptures speak this constant remembrance as Bhakti and a means to liberation.

When Swami Vivekananda speaks of liberation meant only for favorites of God, he means to say even that also a devotion to God. The dry approach to liberation without heart filled with devotion to Lord is of much difficult task. Thus the explanation of Swami Vivekananda: "Whomsoever this Atman desires, by him is the Atman attained, unto him this Atman discovers himself". The words of Lord Krishna in the Gita also throw light as 'those who are constantly attached to me and worship me with love. I give that direction to their will by which they come to me.'

Bhagawan Ramanuja also in his commentary on Athato Brahma-Jijnasa says of constant remembrance as Bhakti. Self surrender advocated by Patanjali as Ishvara Pranidhanadva says it is also one kind of Bhakti, when all works thus dedicated to Lord will fetch grace of Lord. This grace will fulfill the desires of the

32 Vivekananda Vol.3 p.35.
dedicated one. Finally Swami Vivekananda quotes definition of Prahlada as 'deathless love' that does not slip from heart. All objects in nature are perishable except Lord. Therefore the teachers of Bhakti say that deathless God should be worshiped for liberation. Shandilya's definition ends in Anu-as after and Bhakti as attachment. It is attachment after God. When one attaches to God all shackles of worldly life will be loosened.

The theory of existence of Ishwara is taken up. Swami Vivekananda establishes the existence of Ishwara as much real as the world and reality. Ishwara is one from whom the all creation emanates in whom all are dissolved. The power of creation and destruction goes with him. This one special power is excluded from all other liberated souls. The liberated souls enjoy all privilege of Ishwara except in the matter of creation and destruction of the universe. Here Swami Vivekananda refers scripture and various commentaries in relation to Ishwara as the Supreme God, "the repository of an infinite number of blessed qualities." In this connection Basant Kumar Lal comments on the above humanistic view of Swami Vivekananda. He says: "Vivekananda does not consciously enter into the controversy regarding the persons or impersonal nature of God... Swami Vivekananda is trying to bring religion within the easy reach of the common man, and he feels that the common man is more inclined towards the personal character of God."33

Those who have not yet reached the state of immersion in the Supreme self, they will have threefold experience. They feel undifferentiated Brahman as nature, soul and the all-pervading sustainer of the both namely Ishvara. Prahlada

and Gopis have such triumph of vision. They saw one Lord as their own self and saw him as an object of worship with their individuality. Therefore Ishvara is as much reality as of all things, he cannot be regarded merely as an anthropomorphic entity. Thus Swami Vivekananda proves existence of Ishvara. Raja-Yogins believe in the existence of such Ishvara. In regard to the idealism worship of Ishvara Ripusdan Prasad Srivatsava has put it. Here he, like his master Sri Ramakrishna, tries to reconcile the non-dualist view with the dualist. Sri Ramakrishna teaches that it is the same reality that is the nameless and formless Brahman for Jnani; or the man of philosophic insight, the Atman or the pure self for the yogin absorbed in meditation and Bhagavan or personal God for the Bhakta absorbed in devotion.\(^{34}\)

All creations have been created by one Lord of the Universe because before creation he alone existed. And after all dissolution he alone remains. Creation is at his will, destruction too is at his will. By establishing existence of Ishvara, Swami Vivekananda helps the dualistic school and the common mass to worship god in all faith so that they will attain liberation or all blessedness.

Realism of God is the aim of Bhakti-Yoga. The Bhakta does not depend upon dry theories. He with mercy of God goes far beyond the pedantic and reaches existence of God face to face. Now no more he reasons or believes, he sees God and feels him. To such Bhaktas moksha is secondary matter. Their prime object is love of God. Those who are immersed in the sensual pleasure God is far beyond of reach. They go series of incarnation with various suffering till they feel the necessity of God. Thus God is demand of supply.

Swami Vivekananda says the mythological and ritualistically background have helped to grow in devotion. Those who maintain them as superficial are rebuked. There are instances of births of spiritual giants where there is rich mythological and ritualistic background. Those who have shorn of all these forms are deluded souls. They are one with materialists. So Swami Vivekananda pronounces, “let them join the atheists”. To come in their true colours. Ignorance and fanaticism have become their parts. Therefore he advises these deluded souls as: “Show us one, but one gigantic spiritual genius growing out of all this dry dust of ignorance and fanaticism; if you cannot close your mouths, open the windows of your hearts... sit like children at the feet of those who know what they are talking about, the sages of India. Let us listen to what they say.”35

Man is master of his own destiny, man moves constantly towards the state of perfection by his own efforts. Here Swami Vivekananda speaks of receiving help from others. Such help is necessary in the large majority of cases. Such help will enhance rapid progress on the path of spiritual evolution. The quickening of impulse cannot be derived from books. it is only through those who have impulse to convey. Any amount of study of books will not help in the matter of impulse. Thus says Swami Vivekananda: “To quicken the spirit the impulse must come from another soul.”36 The soul that has impulse is Guru- the teacher. The receiver of impulse is Shishya – the student. But the Shishya should be a fit aspirant else the seed of impulse will not sprout. Both Guru and disciple should react on the same level. Where there is qualified Guru and qualified disciple, the result is

36 Vivekananda Vol.3 45.
spiritual illumination instantly. Many a time aspirants will have genuine thirst of liberation. Their dispassion is temporary. Sometimes Gurus are pseudo gurus who simply deceive others taking the lead as guide. Swami Vivekananda makes the point clear that the guru as well as disciples should be of genuine type, else the salvation is matter of jugglery.

Further Swami Vivekananda elaborates the qualification for the Guru and the aspirants. True teacher does not need any testimony as before the Sun flowers will automatically blossoms. In the case of secondary type of teacher a test has to be applied. The following tests have been discussed and the real Guru and the aspirants are pointed out. This explanation truly helps a lot the beginners on the spiritual path. Because there are more number of pseudo Gurus. Purity, knowledge of scripture, good nature, good motives are the requirements for the Guru. The possession of them will qualify the Guru. And at the same time the aspirant should be receptive, otherwise stone and bricks cannot teach or preach any lesson to him. As blind man cannot be profited by the visit to museum, so, the aspirant who has not opened his heart to the divine influence. Therefore Swami Vivekananda says: "... you will not find it (moksha) anywhere until you heart is ready for receiving it and your teacher has come."

Even relationship of reverence and service should be maintained in the company of Guru. This violation does not lead to the desired end.

Swami Vivekananda sides the view of incarnate worship. Incarnate teachers are teachers of teachers. They, with their presence and touch will

37 Vivekananda Vol.3 52.
transform any creature in the Universe. They have such a power. He is in human form and in that human form they should be worshipped. Man cannot worship God directly, because he cannot rise higher above the human conceptions. A fish can imagine God as a big fish and buffalo, as a big buffalo. Since the concept of God being transcendental aspect, incarnate teacher should be taken as God to guide. They are God themselves without any shadow of doubt. These avatars according to S. Radhakrishnan: "The avatars are born not only to put down evil but to teach us mortals Great souls appear for the well-being and spiritual enlightenment of creatures." Therefore Swami Vivekananda quotes from Bhaghwad Gita the words of Lord Krishna who assumes various avatars whenever dharma declines. Swami Vivekananda is against those who advocate that all such worship of incarnate teachers should be shunned. He says in regard to such people as most irresponsible people in the world. They do not know what the abstract entity of God stands for. Finally he says either the human brute cannot worship God because he is ignorant whereas the Jivanmukta cannot because he has realized God in himself. While all others are entitled to worship God incarnate form. Here Swami Vivekananda suggests best suitable method to worship God. In this regard S. Radhakrishnan has words to say about the incarnate worship:” Sankara, the great teacher of non-dualism manifests a spirit of Devotion to the different aspects of the Godhead. There are devotional hymns ascribed to him to Bhavani; to Vishnu, to Siva. Madhusudana Sarasvati, a great teacher of Advaita, says: ‘I know

38 Medermott ed. Basic writings of S. Radhakrishna 238.
not what truth there is beyond Krishna.’ The Maharashtrian saint-poet Eknath identifies Vithoba of Pandharpur with the Buddha.9

Swami Vivekananda relates the importance of the syllable ‘OM’. All mantras have come out of this one mantra ‘OM’. A teacher uses the mantra for the spiritual transmission. Every object has names and forms, and names stand simplistically for all objects. Om is the symbolic representation of name for the entire manifestation of the world. It is called Sphota. Om is the first manifestation out of which entire creation has come out. It stands for the beginning, the middle and the end. All other names and forms are of that ‘OM’. Thus, the word ‘OM’ is symbolic and God and Brahman.

Now, Swami Vivekananda deals with worship of Pratikas and Pratimas. But they stand for substitute for Brahman and God. If they do not stand for as representative of the Brahman adn God, they do not lead to moksha. Worshiping Ishvara alone is Bhakti. Worship of pitri and deva worship is not Bhakti. therefore the practitioner should also stand for one God then it is called Bhakti. Some religions make use of image worships. In this case of image worships Swami Vivekananda says that they too are idolatry and are not sinful but lead to further progrss. S. Radhakrishnan’s view also correspond to Swami Vivekananda as follows: “There is such a thing as pratikopasana or symbol worship. This is an aid to worship. The symbolic is not imaginary. Slowly we get beyond the symbol to the object symbolized.”10

9 Vivekananda Vol.3 235.
10 Vivekananda Vol.3 237.
Swami Vivekananda then speaks about one’s chosen ideal. One should stick to ideals which all religions impose upon men. But Vedanta, says Swami Vivekananda, offers wide range of ideals like pearl oyster one should be occupied with one’s ideals and develop Eka-Nishtha. Along with this some requisite qualifications are mentioned. As mind is made up of food, so the purity of food should be taken care of. But the discrimination of God is secondary importance; so the fanatical attitude has to be given up. Controlling of passion is another qualification that is required, when indriyas are turbulent, and when mind cannot concentrate on God. Purity and non-violence are the some virtues that a Bhakta should cultivate. Lastly the strength, without which no spiritual attainment can be achieved. Excessive mirth is avoided. These are the requisite qualifications of a Bhakta and Swami Vivekananda propounds them minutely in order to cultivate the needed qualification. Thus Bhakti-Yoga propounded by Swami Vivekananda stands for the common mass. At the same time higher conception is also attributed to the Bhakti –Yoga as far superior means among all. This yoga speaks more of human sympathy, tolerance and virtues. Brodov speaks about the natural kind of renunciation in Bhakti-Yoga as: "The most natural, in his (Swami Vivekananda) words, is the renunciation of the Bhakti-Yogin, for there is no violence here... it is like a strong light in the presence of which the less intense ones becomes dimmer and dimmer until they vanish completely."\(^{41}\) If this ideal Bhakti is practiced one certainly will achieve one’s salvation.

\(^{41}\) V. Brodov, Indian Philosophy in Modern Times (Moscow: Progress, Publishers. 1984), p.254.
Raja-Yoga:

Swami Vivekananda deals with Raja-Yoga in humanistic way. As we know human beings rely invariably on reason. Without the support of reason they cannot have belief in anything. Swami Vivekananda doesn’t demand any such blind faith in knowing the secrets of Raja-Yoga. He says, “The science of Raja-Yoga proposes to put before humanity a practical and scientifically worked out method of reaching this truth.”⁴²

Raja-Yoga is as scientific as modern sciences in one way. In another way it transcends all human limitation, the reason is intuitionalised. In this introductory part, Swami Vivekananda expresses his most humanistic views and all of them appeal to one and all equally.

Raja-Yoga is not anybody’s religion. It is the science of the self that belongs to the mankind in uniformity. Raja-Yoga can not put religious bar to any human being. Its principles are humanistic. We all possess body, mind and soul. The science to know their secret and with the secret to gain the knowledge and through knowledge to workout one’s salvation is the only aim of Raja-Yoga. Therefore it is most humane in form. It is ancient and modern too, because it appeals to all alike. We cannot find any obsolete elements in its nature. It is the science that exists with human beings to show way out of all misery.

All religions are based on their respective pet theories and dogmas. That is why there is a much quarrelling and bloodshed among them in the name of

⁴² Vivekananda. Vol.1 128.
religion. Swami Vivekananda points out here the one unifying link in all religions. That unifying link is nothing but the direct experience (or knowledge) of all religions. To quote Swami Vivekananda: . it is clear that all the religions of the world have been built upon that one universal and adamantine foundation of all our knowledge-direct experience."^43

It is this direct experience, the religious teachers saw and preached them. And their experience became the part of the religion. Swami Vivekananda denies that such experiences are obsolete and the same experiences can not be had in the modern times. He says that what is done by others, will be done by all, if one takes interest and a little trouble. In this context he says, "Yoga is the science which teaches us how to get those perceptions."^44

That is why Swami Vivekananda asks others to be religious in the sense to have one experience of God or the Truth. Or else the position of an atheist is better than the position of a religious mind.

Swami Vivekananda confronts ideas of learned men and semi-educated of modern period. It is natural, says Swami Vivekananda that these people assume religion on a futile activity and making people moral on the ground of false belief of God. This he attributes to those religious men who asks others to believe on their rigmarole of words.

Swami Vivekananda wants truths in all religions. If the truth is revealed men will realize to say in the words of Swami Vivekananda: "Man wants truth,

wants of experience truth for himself; when he has grasped it, realized it, felt it within his heart or hearts, then alone, declare the Vedas, would all doubts vanish, all darkness be scattered, and all crookedness be made straight. Ye children of immorality, even those who live in the highest sphere, the way is found: there is a way out of all this darkness, and that is by perceiving him who is beyond all darkness; there is no other way.45

In order to show Raja-Yoga as most practical and methodological, he explains the method of Raja-Yoga. He at the same time tells that all sciences are based on method of investigation. With the observation of these facts a theory will be built upon it. Swami Vivekananda does not like mere theorizing with analytical observation. He makes it clear by the Raja-Yoga as: “The science of Raja-Yoga, in the first place, proposes to give us such a means of observing the internal states.”46

Then the method of Raja-Yoga is to gather the dissipated rays of the mind and to direct it on the inner recess of the mind. This will reveal inner secret of the mind. This theory of concentration is used in acquiring knowledge of any field. Romain Rolland adds, “Vivekananda called it ‘the psychological yoga’ since its field of action is the control and absolute mastery of the mind – the first condition of all knowledge. It achieves its end by concentration.47

All science aim at unity. Raja-Yoga attempts to have control over internal and external nature of things. This knowledge of yoga though special to India has

45 Vivekananda Vol.1 128.
46 Vivekananda Vol.1 129.
47 Rolland 221.
been practiced by other nations. But in west it is degraded merely as mysticism in a narrow sense.

Swami Vivekananda is against all sorts of mystery-mongering. He says that this mystery-mongering has degenerated or weakened the minds of the practitioner. Therefore he says in the religious matter all weakness should be rooted out.

Raja-Yoga as Swami Vivekananda says should be taught in broader daylight and no mystery can be added to it. He says there is neither mystery nor danger in practice of it. Here Swami Vivekananda simplifies the Raja-Yoga which could be practiced by one and all without any fear of danger. This signifies his humanistic approach to the subject.

Next Swami Vivekananda explains inner working through Sankhya Philosophy. The external sensations carried within to the mind. This same concentration is used to obtain knowledge of the self. If the mind’s rays are directed inside, we will know inner workings of the mind. In the matter of Raja-Yoga one need not have faith or belief, because it reveals everything in orderly manner. Swami Vivekananda says in this respect: “Believe nothing until you find it out for yourself: that is what it teaches us.”

Raja-Yoga to some extent depends on the physical practice and the major portion is depended on mental practice. Mind and body are intimately connected: one affects the other. Here Swami Vivekananda deplores the fact that the human beings have not had the control over their minds. Their power of control is little more than animals. As S. Radhakrishnan says: “A rigorous discipline of mind,

8 Vivekananda Vol. 1 131-132.
heart and evil is necessary. Our vision becomes obscure if it is dimmed by vice or wickedness. The Mahabharat says the Supreme is visible only to those who have overcome anger and mastered their senses.  

Mind is controlled by certain physical helps. Swami Vivekananda harmonizes extremist theory of mind control. Mind can be controlled solely through physical effort or it can be controlled safely by mental effort also. Because matter and the mind are the same except differences in degree. Therefore Swami Vivekananda harmonizes the views of both the extremists.

Mind is made up of subtle matter called Tanmatras. Purusha is immaterial and the mind is its instrument. Without the mind, perception does not take place. Mind can be attached to an organ and can be attached to all organs. It is called reflexive power of the mind if it attaches to all organs. Through this reflexive power of the mind, one will be able to look at the inner happenings. Lastly Swami Vivekananda lays emphasis on the food item. Food, according to him, should be pure. He cites the example of ferocious animals, which live on flesh. Purity of food is needed in the first instance for pure substance of the mind. In that pure state, mind is less disturbed. The importance of purity of food is well explained scientifically by Swami Vivekanandadas. This necessary practice should be maintained in the preliminary stage. Later when one grows in strength, such rules of rigidity in the matter of food may be slackened. Finally, he quotes from Gita as to avoid extremity of luxury and austerity. The full meaning of yoga is balance or moderation. These are helpful hints to the practitioner of Raja-Yoga. Gita speaks of this balance as, “Verily, yoga is not for him who eats too much or abstains too much.”

49 McDermott ed. Basic Writings of S. Radhakrishnan 239.
much from eating. It is not for him, O’Arjuna, who sleeps too much or keeps awake too much”.

After the introduction chapter to Raja-Yoga Swami Vivekananda begins teaching and explaining the practice of Raja-Yoga. Raja-Yoga is divided in eight steps. The first is Yama, non-killing, truthfulness, non-stealing, confidence, non-receiving of any gifts. Next is Niyama—cleanliness, contentment, austerity, steady and self-surrender to God.

Then comes Asana or Posture; Pranayama or control of prana; Pratyahara or restrain of the senses from their objects; Dharana, or fixing the mind on a spot; Dhayana or meditation and Samadhi or super consciousness.

These are the steps of Raja-Yoga, if practiced diligently will yield the benefits of super conscious state. The state of wisdom. Swami Vivekananda makes moralistic point very clear at the beginning of the practice. He says Yama and Niyama are basic requisites to the practice of raja-Yoga. The Yama and Niyama aim at ethical perfection of the practitioner. That is why it is a timely advice given to aspirants in the beginning. The wise will always think of the essentials rather than inessentials. Swami Vivekananda also stresses the essential moral aspect of the practice of Yoga. The following words of Swami Vivekananda emphasize the moral side of the man as: “A Yogi must not think of injuring anyone, by thought, word, or deed. Mercy shall not be for men alone, but shall go beyond, and embrace the whole world”.

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51 Vivekananda Vol.1 137.
In the next step Swami Vivekananda speaks about the importance of the steady pose. For this purpose one should train oneself in a easy pose for sitting hours together firmly. This practice belongs to Hatha-Yoga practice. Hatha-Yoga, according to Swami Vivekananda is not an end in itself. The main purpose of the Hatha-Yoga is to have control over body; that control renders the body to be healthy. Swami Vivekananda gives due consideration to health, but he says that the health should not become criterion of the spiritual evolution. Yet he does not neglect the part of health, instead he suggests to adopt ‘Christian science’ to keep the body strong. For keeping the body cool and healthy, he suggests drawing of water through nostrils in pump action.

Before practicing Raja-Yoga Swami Vivekananda feels that the cleansing of nerve currents is essential. To that effect he gives the authoritative quotation of Shankaracharya from Shvetashvatar Upanishad: “The mind whose dross has been cleared away by pranayama becomes fixed in Brahman; therefore Pranayama is declared.” Therefore practice of Pranayama is suggested. Swami Vivekananda at the same time stresses the regular practice of pranayama. Any amount of theory being listened would not lead anywhere. Therefore Swami Vivekananda asks the practitioner to be regular in their practice.

Unhealth and doubts are the other impediments, so he advises to take light kind of food and drink. As for the doubt that will be removed with constant practice where one will get some glimpses of spirituality. Some physical powers will come to a Yogi, powers like clairvoyant and other things. But he convinces

\[2\] Vivekananda Vol. 1 139.
that these siddhis are not the end and aim of the practice. The real goal is liberation. He clears the misconception of Raja-Yoga and takes the practitioner to higher realization. According to him, body should be subjugated but the attachment to the body should be given up. He illustrates a story in which body was given importance owing to misunderstanding. The demonic party adopted body worship. An angel carefully thought over and arrived at realization that he is the self beyond body and mind. This led the angel towards liberation from body, whereas the demonic were engrossed in bodily pleasure.

Self control, says Swami Vivekananda is an unpleasant task. Thousands will take to practice if any pleasurable activities could be added. That is why, he says, very few are the practitioners in the matter of austerity or body control. Body is series of changes yet Swami Vivekananda says it should be kept strong and healthy. It is the best instrument of man.

From the above view of Swami Vivekananda it becomes clear that Swami Vivekananda stresses the importance of human body as far superior to animals and angels. He takes the reference from Christian, Mohammedan mythologies in which man is said to be saluted by angels. Even angels cannot directly attain liberation. They have to take human birth for their salvation. Thus, the supremacy of the human birth is established here. This revelation will suddenly make human beings to make worthy of their existence or to make the best use of this instrument for higher purpose.

Fly-wheel example is sued to control the outer breath, which leads to controlling internal prana or mind. This is illustrated through the story of a
disgraced minister, who was shut up in tower and made his escape intelligently
Thus one starts from grosser prana to be controlled and later controls inner
working of body machinery Inner working of the mind is possible by regular
practice Perception of inner movements of nerve currents and mind will give us
knowledge to have control over body and mind

Again Swami Vivekananda gives emphasis on practice. It should be
practiced twice at least and time suggested is morning and evening, which is very
conductive atmosphere for the practitioners

Another point worth noticing is his advice for conquest of hunger for
removal of lethargy. Lastly he suggests to consecrate a separate room for the
practice if one could afford but that should be kept holy like temple and churches

The non-availability of such facilities, he tells them, any convenient open
space should be selected before one embarks on practicing this Yoga. Swami
Vivekananda prescribes prayer for universal peace. This is the most important
factor in consideration of Swami Vivekananda’s universal humanism. He says,
“Mentally repeat, Let all beings be happy, let all beings be peaceful, let all beings
be blissful, so do to the east, south, north and west.”

Through the control of prana one can wield tremendous power in nature. In
this regard Swami Vivekananda says “He would be able to move the sun and stars
out of their places, to control everything in the universe, from the atoms to the
biggest suns, because he would control Prana”.

53 Vivekananda Vol. 1 145-146
54 Vivekananda Vol. 1 148
Hindu mind lays stress over the essentials of things and detail is left for later consideration. In the case of the absolute that forms the general principle out of which the entire creation has come out. Thus of all forces in nature the generalised and abstract principle is Prana. Whoever has controlled Prana has controlled all forces in nature. It is controlling of all minds and one’s own mind and all bodies together. This power is the privilege of a yogi. The Prana that is working our mind and body is the nearest to us of all the Prana in the Universe. Control of this little wave of Prana leads to the conquest of Universal Prana. The so called mind healers faith healers, spiritualists, Christian scientists, hypnotists have all made use of this Prana by stumbling upon it.

Prana in the very subtle form is thought vibration. There is another phase to Prana that is instinctive in which unconsciously automatic action takes place. Reflex action emanate from the instinctive plane. Another plane of thought is conscious one in which one judges reasons out. Lastly there is rush of flashes from beyond circle of reason. That can be called as super-conscious thoughts or intuitional thoughts. This shows that mind can exist at such higher level. This higher plane of mind is called samadhi. Various manifestation of Prana controlled in the body leads to give push to mind to super conscious state. All prana all force and matter in nature are in flux. It is like flowing current of water moving constantly and the water being never the same. In other words it is all unbroken mass of matter and energy. Here Swami Vivekananda cites example of Sir Humphrey Davy who in the intoxicated state felt all universe as mass of ideas. Modern science as physics has shown them that there is only some mass of energy throughout the nature.
In the next process Swami Vivekananda detects the location of prana. Prana is that which moves the lungs. Through the nerve currents muscles are moved, and muscles move lungs. Thus lungs are engaged drawing in breath and sending it out. Control of prana means control of muscular power which moves the lungs. This one control leads to power and the power can be used in manipulating any part of the body. There is nothing impossible to Yoga.

Now Swami Vivekananda speaks about the efficacy of Pranayama in the matters of health. Through pranayama diseases of the body can be cured. The technique is rousing prana in the diseased through rousing of one’s prana. Disease is imbalance of prana in the body. If the imbalance is tackled by filling up of prana in the required portion of the body, then there is health. If this technique is practiced consciously unlike faith healers, the effect is quickest and distance healing can also be practiced. The pure man will handle this technique safely.

All world movers have made use of this prana control. With this high state of vibration of prana, they are able to command all forces, all creatures in the universe. These are the examples in the lives of saints and prophets.

From the lowest manifestation of energy to the highest manifestation, all are linked with cosmic energy. Like the waves of the ocean all energies little or big are linked to the oceanic energy. In the gradual evolution everytime the energy is given new shape till the energy becomes one with God. This state of evolution might take across of time. But with intensity of struggle the time will be reduced. All saints and sages have lived their life intensively and have reached
their goal easily. The delay would be to prolong one’s misery and the saints have acted promptly and have overcame their bondage of matter.

Next Swami Vivekananda proves spiritualism in relation to existence of spirits. All spirits exist in their respective planes. With the corresponding vibration of Prana one will be in contract with various planes of spirits. For away from the centre of universal spirit, the various manifestations of prana on different planes varies that is from grosser to subtler. Nearer to the centre there is a greater form of vibration. Thus, there is various changes of vibration. Equally manifesting one’s prana vibration, one will contact spirits of the other various planes. This is all possible through pranayama. The higher state of vibration is tantamount to Samadhi. Thus, the Pranayama included all that of spiritualism. Extra ordinary use of power of mystics and occultism is attributed to the control of prana. Control of physical manifestation of Prana is domain of physics. And the control of mental manifestation of prana is domain of Raja-Yoga. Thus, Swami Vivekananda fuses secular science the physics with spiritual scene of Raja-Yoga.

In the third chapter Swami Vivekananda elaborates the theory of Prana. Generally breath is thought to be as prana, but Swami Vivekananda eradicates this essential misconception of prana. Breath is simply a preliminary part through which we reach control of prana. According to the philosophers the entire universe is comprised of prana and akasha. Akasha is the matter whereas the prana is the force acting upon. Both together works, in the various forms of manifestation.
These two elements have wide range of subtle manifestation from the subtler to the grosser manifestation called this physical universe. Vivekananda has elaborated in the following way, “At the end of the cycle the akasha go back to its subtler manifestation and prana becomes calmed down or potential. When this potential prana rises or vibrates and it, as it were, strikes upon akasha, then start various forms of manifestation and this physical universe emerges out of it. Here Swami Vivekananda points out to us the real form of prana which has to be controlled in the practice of pranayama. Therefore he says: “The knowledge and control of this prana is really what is meant by pranayama”

In the chapter of psychic prana, Swami Vivekananda explains the whole range of psychic prana. Various nerve currents in the body are various channels for the movement of prana. Among all the nerve currents the Ida and Pingal are two important nerve currents. Ida is on the left side and pingala on the right side. The breath from Ida is from the left nostril and the breath from the right nostril is from Pingala. Here Swami Vivekananda points out another important channel of nerve current i.e., sushumna. It is in the middle of Ida and Pingala. These three nerve currents start from sacral plexus i.e., Muladhara chakra and ends in brain sphere. Those three are situated in the spinal cord. The structure of the spinal cord is shown in graphic way i.e., placing figure eight horizontally and piling on it other same figure. Thus, it forms the structure of spinal cord. The left is Ida and the right is Pingal. In between the two is sushumna. These are the very important nerve channels for the pranic movement.

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All sensations are carried to the brain centre and from the brain centre to other parts of the body reactions are conveyed. All sensations are carried from sensory nerves to the brain centre and motor nerves carries reactionary motions to the respective parts of the body. Thus, there are afferent and efferent nerves; Centrifugal and centripetal nerves; sensory and motor nerves. All of them carry sensations and motions to the brain and from the brain they carry to the various parts of the body. This process of working is going on in the body at grosser and subtler level.

Along with these nerve channels Swami Vivekananda mentions plexus of Chakras called in Sanskrit (Lotuses). They are ranging from sacra plexus to the brain centre. Muladhara chakra is at the sacra plexus where mother shakti is coiled up. At the topmost part in the brain is situated Sahasrara Chakra, the centre for super sensuous experience. There are three important chakras namely Muladhara (the basic), Manipusa (the lotus of navel), Sahasrara (the thousand petalled lotus of the brain).

After the explanation of this structure of nerve currents and various centres of chakras, Swami Vivekananda now proceeds to the exposition of the yogic functions. Sensation from outside strike the centres and the reaction is various perceptions and motions which happen in our body system. Dream experience, memory, imagination and ultimately super sensuous expression i.e., all result from the reciprocal reactions caused in the centres from the outside sensations. Swami Vivekananda does not dwell upon what is common reachnoary activities of the psychic and grosser body in general. He takes us to the yogic activity.
In most cases sushumna is closed; no activity takes place through this channel. If any one opens the sushumna, and makes the nerve current move through it, there is the experience of the tremendous power and the various celestial visions. The different chakras give different power experiences and visions. Finally when one reaches the sushumna there one experiences infinite power and divine wisdom, which is supersensous state.

At this juncture Swami Vivekananda concentrates on how to make a rhythmic movement in the body. The rhythmic movement regulates all prana manifestation in body. Through this rhythmic control of prana, he aims at the control of various centres. In this practice nerve currents are made to flow through sushumna. Through this channel going higher and higher to the last chakra namely Sahassara. Sahasrara is the last chakra where one reaches state of perfection. Here Swami Vivekananda mentions three spaces ordinary space, mental space and knowledge space. Ordinary space is everybody's experience, when a yogi reads others thoughts he is in the mental space. In the Sahasrara yogi experiences knowledge space the objectless experience. This confers moksha on the ardent practitioner.

Swami Vivekananda here reveals another strange theory of transmission. He says a yogi can transmit his message to any corner of the world if only he makes his message flow through sushumna. The sushumna passage rises above all barriers of nature and thereby things are done instantly. Whatever extraordinary happenings in the universe from prophets and sages is through the manipulation of this sushumna. Thus the power of Kundalini is used. In this context Swami
Vivekananda says: “Whenever there was any manifestation of what is ordinarily called supernatural power or wisdom. There is a little current of kundalini must have found its way into sushumna”\(^{56}\)

Answer to one’s prayers are from this source of energy only. Therefore Swami Vivekananda says: “And Raja-Yoga is the science of religion the rationale of all worship, all prayers, forms, ceremonies and miracles.”\(^{57}\)

The next step is the process of psychic prana control. Swami Vivekananda says that our mind has been externalized and there is no awareness of fine motions that are going in our body. To internalize our gaze is control of mind. Yogi feels that control of lungs for protracted periods which will enhance control over the finer motions. Therefore, the next explanation is of science of Pranayama. This is the process of rhythmic breathing which will exercise control over Prana as well as mind.

Swami Vivekananda now, explains the practice of pranayama. Here gives importance to the straight and steady posture of the body. With this straight and steady pose the spinal cord is not disturbed. Normal breathing is not rhythmic, therefore, Swami Vivekananda recommends measured breathing. This act of Pranayama is closing one of the nostrils and holding for a while and then letting the breath flow. This is the process of breathing exercise. Here he has mentioned a ratio according to which the practice should be continued. Along with breathing exercises he asks the practitioner to join sacred syllable ‘OM’ for the more rapid progress. This rhythmic breathing will enhance great comfort to body, no other

\(^{56}\) Vivekananda Vol. 165.

\(^{57}\) Vivekananda Vol. 165.
rest can be compared with it. This will also change one’s facial expression which results in cheerful countenance. Mind will become calm and beautiful voice comes naturally. These experiences will come in a few months of practice.

Now Swami Vivekananda suggests another technique aiming at quick rousing of Kundalini. With the holding in breath and directing it to the place of Kundalini at sacral plexus with imaginative effort. That is why he says: “The imagination can help you a great deal”.

In the beginning the exercise should be practiced four times in the morning and in the evening and gradually and cautiously the duration should be increased. The hard practice of pranayama takes to rousing of kundalini. When kundalini is aroused there is experience of infinite knowledge and power. Thus Swami Vivekananda says: “No more will you need to go to books for knowledge; your mind will have become your book, containing infinite knowledge.”

All creatures owning spinal cord have flow of Ida and Pingala on the either side of the spinal cord. In the case of ordinary man the sushumna is not working. To awake and open and make it active is the prime object of the yogi.

All energy has to be taken up from the lowest chakra called Muladhara. There is a gradation from Muladhara to Sadhishthana, Manipura, Annata, Vishuddha, Ajna and Last in the brain Sahasrara or the “thousand petalled.” Yogis convert all energy in the body and take it to the brain for the fusion in Sahasrara. The highest form of energy is ‘Ojas’. External energy and thoughts if

58 Vivekananda Vol.1 168.
59 Vivekananda Vol.1 169.
prevented are converted into ‘Ojas’. That is why Swami Vivekananda eulogizes sublimation of sex energy in the case of celibates. They are magnetic personality, their words have transforming power. So, the other’s flowery speech and intellectual feats would not be equal to the personality having ‘Ojas’.

That is why the sages and saints or yogis remained chaste for their higher attainment. Without chastle life, says Swami Vivekananda the task is dangerous. Here he has exposed the importance of ‘Ojas’ and chaste life which is conducive to the practice.

Swami Vivekananda is indignant of the way that others use in controlling others’ mind. If others allow themselves to be controlled by others, their minds will be in the passive morbid state to them lunatic asylum is the only result. Therefore the best advice of Swami Vivekananda is not to fall victim to any kind of influence of others. There are howling and jumping sects; they do great harm to humanity. Therefore Swami Vivekananda says: “Ay, it is healthier for the individual or the race to remain wicked than be made apparently good by such morbid extraneous control.”\[^{60}\] Thus Swami Vivekananda warns all to keep away themselves from such influences.

Pranayama means withdrawal of the mind from its various centres, just like tortoise draws its limbs inside its shell. Swami Vivekananda does not like the way or the method of telling others to do good. Instead of telling what to do, one should tell the right way of doing good things. Knowledge is power, Swami Vivekananda says that knowledge should be utilized in the control of mind and

\[^{60}\] Vivekananda Vol.1 173.
directing it to our desired end. Most of the times our minds are dragged from external things. We are helpless and unwilling and some foolish acts are committed, with the result, we suffer untold agony. The result of controlling would have sway over feelings and willingness so called faith healer’s technique of denial of pain and suffering is based on this pratyahara; Hyphotists also do the same.

In regard to the control of mind Swami Vivekananda observes: “he who has succeeded in attaching or detaching his mind or from the centres at will has succeeded in Pratyahara, which means ‘gathering towards’ checking the outgoing powers of the mind, freeing it from the thralldom of the senses.”61 This is the only way to remain as human being. Otherwise we are simply machines in the devil’s hands.

In the next step Swami Vivekananda shows the way how to control the mind. He shows very sane ways to that the turbulent mind can be controlled more intelligently rather than by mere force. Mind is compared to maddened monkey which is drunk and has been bitten by a scorpion and at the same time a devil has taken possession of the monkey. This is really worst condition of the turbulent mind. Pitiable is the position.

Swami Vivekananda suggests intelligent method in controlling mind. First mind should be allowed to run as much as it likes. Here one should calmly watch the mind. Unless one knows the mind what the mind is, it is very difficult task to control the mind. Therefore Swami Vivekananda says: “Until you know what the

61 Vivekananda Vol.1 173.
mind is doing, you cannot control it." In the gradual practice mind’s wandering thoughts will be reduced, and mind will tend to be calmer. But it requires patient practice everyday. Withdrawal of the mind from its centres is control of the mind.

Next is Dhyana. Dhyana is focusing mind’s attention on a particular point either external or internal. Swami Vivekananda suggests easiest point of concentration in the heart. Heart should be imagined as lotus with full of light. This certainly facilitates concentration with its visual image. There are some observances, which have to be practiced in arduous concentration. First not mixing up with undesirable people who have no faith in the practice. Therefore Swami Vivekananda says, “Mixing with worldly minded persons is highly disastrous to an aspirant. The two currents are diametrically opposite.” Too much work and too much mixing should also be avoided to prevent all sorts of distraction. But the incalculable benefits are derived in the constant practice. Sound health, peace of mind and beautiful voice are some of the effects in the practice of yoga. Some subtle musical notes are heard. They all give inspiration to the practitioners.

Strict diet is also another important factor in the suggestions of Swami Vivekananda. Little violation in the strict observance in the beginning will upset the balance. Afterwards when one gains sufficient power in the practice one may not keep up the rigidity of diet. Mind in the yoga practice has become very sensitive. A little noise like that of a pin will be like thunderbolt from the sky.

\[^2\] Vivekananda Vol.1 174.
Next Swami Vivekananda illustrates beautiful analogy that of a pearl oyster. This illustration sums up the complete preoccupation of the mind or the whole hearted devotion to the practice. Oyster waits for rain drop when the star Swati is in ascendancy. When the oyster gets the rain drop it will dive own to the bottom of the sea. It broods over in dark recess of the sea for protracted period. Finally there will emerge beautiful pearl that cannot be melted in the water. Such is the miracle of the preoccupation of the mind entirely on a single idea. Therefore Swami Vivekananda does not like nibbling at the things. Man should be adamant in his practice, death may come at any time. Such resolute will and perseverance will take the long way in the practice concentration. Therefore he says in his tremendous voice as: “I will drink the ocean” says the preserving soul, at my will mountains will crumble up. Have that sort of energy that sort of will, work hard and you will reach the goal.”

Why there should be unselfishness. Reason cannot explain it better. All religious man in the state of inspiration have received messages from beyond the realm of reason. This experience alone has answered the above questions.

Swami Vivekananda speaks against those who are inspired as if they stumbled upon that inspiration. Because much of superstition is built upon the genuine experience. Sometimes, this inspiration might damage the mind of the receptionist. That is why he says in the inspiration of Mohammed there is much superstition that has caused much bloodshed with it’s fanatical views. Therefore Swami Vivekananda argues here that one should scientifically strive for the super

\footnote{Vivekananda Vol.1 178.}
conscious state i.e., through this science of yoga. That is through systematic practice of concentration and meditation. Here Swami Vivekananda attributes much of scientific procedures in the experience of super conscious state. What is felt by others can be equally felt by all. The only thing that one should practice and experience it oneself. Here Swami Vivekananda eradicates any specialty in the religious experience. Religious experience is everybody’s birthright. One of the other day all will have to come to that state experience.

In the final analysis Swami Vivekananda comes to the field of Dyana (meditation) and Samadhi. After the two developed exercises of the preceding exercises namely Pratyahara and Dharana. Dyana is constant flow of concentration on an object. Samadhi results when this constant flow of concentration merges with the object and loses all external perception. It is objectless experience, a super conscious state. Here Swami Vivekananda analyses conscious, unconscious and super conscious planes. Conscious plane is accompanied with egoism whereas unconscious is not accompanied with egoism. There is similarity in the unconscious and super conscious state wherein egoistic activities are not found. But one has wisdom and changes the state of existence, another has nothing sort of change in it. Swami Vivekananda has used the example of sleep states. Man goes into sleep and comes out of it as he is, whereas in the super conscious state if one goes as a fool will come back as wise, as a changed being. Such is the transforming power of super conscious state, man becomes God in that state. This super conscious state is called Samadhi.
Reason is little circle, it cannot know of what is beyond. All ethical principles religious experiences have based on super conscious state. Otherwise there is no any better reason for why one should do good to others.

Thus having dealt with various methods of acquiring this religious experience Swami Vivekananda says: “...when faithfully practiced, will surely lead us to the desired end. Then will all sorrows cease, all miseries vanish; the seeds for actions will be burnt and soul will be free for ever.”

Vivekananda Vol.1.188.