

Indian Yoga in Relation to the Christian Rosicrucian Path

WE TRIED YESTERDAY* to place before us the ideal, the “goal,” of meditative work. Here the essential thing is to achieve through this work an equilibrium

between spirit, soul, and body in such a way that the spirit inclines downward, the soul is extended, and the body is raised to the dignity of the soul. By this means the three members of the human being, each according to its own nature, begin to speak and work together—so that a kind of alliance comes into being between them, while at the same time each follows its own inner nature. The result is inner harmony, which means true happiness for the human being.

This bringing of the three members of the human being into harmony is exactly what the term *Goetheanism* may be said to designate. When we consider Goethe’s [eighteenth century polymath] significance, it is actually not at all a matter of what he created in the way of a world outlook, nor what he created in the artistic realm, nor the works he achieved in the field of science; instead, what is especially significant about Goethe is that through him a quite definite sort of striving was placed before humankind, a striving



Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, 1749-1832, “is undoubtedly one of the most universally accomplished men in history,” of whom Napoleon said: *Voilà un homme!* (“There is a man!”), and Max Heindel calls an initiate. *Goethe characterizes the principle underlying all life (and the essence of Christian evolution) as “dying and becoming.”*

which to a certain degree also bore fruit. Goethe exemplified the realization of a relationship between body, soul, and spirit in such a way that each of these three members, out of its own freedom, could create in harmony with the Divine.

Goethe’s own words characterize his relationship to the Trinity: “As a man of science, I cannot be any other than a pantheist; as an artist, it is impossible for me to be other than a polytheist; as for being human—that is also taken care of.” That is to say, Goethe had no system or dogma before his inner eye. What Goethe had was a threefold inner attitude towards existence. He was *wholly* a scientist and had thus to see in the whole of nature the revelation of the Deity. He was *wholly* an artist and had to recognize the individual qualities of the Divine. And he was *wholly* human—this comes to expression in his novel *Wilhelm Meister*. Although not directly mentioned, the third element in his spiritual makeup was the ideal of Christ.

We can say, then, that in Goethe we are presented not with a teaching about the Trinity, but with a trinitarian attitude of the soul. Goethe was threefold in his entire being, and each of these three sides of his being led him to a definite inner comprehension of, and meeting with, the Divine. At the same time one can say that if, on the one hand, Goethe’s striving bore fruit in all three of these directions, on the other hand there was also a great deal that was lacking. We cannot speak of Goethe as a perfect representative of humanity. And yet we can speak of him as one who clearly, and to a quite high

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degree, strove toward the ideal of a harmonious human being, and even partially realized that ideal. We have in Goethe, therefore, a striving after a high ideal within a person still burdened with a number of imperfections.

If, however, we turn aside from Goethe and direct our attention to the East, particularly to India, we find human beings who are perfect from the everyday point of view; at least, they are regarded and revered as perfect. At the present moment [1938], Meher Baba lives there. He is called "his divine Majesty" and is much revered. This is because his pupils—and there are a large number of them—are convinced that they have before them a perfect human being. In the East, in India, Meher Baba is regarded as being the epitome of perfection in terms of human development—which is not the case with Goethe, who is much honored, but more honored than understood. Goethe is revered, not because of his perfections, but rather from other points of view, which we will speak of later. For now we will direct our attention to the remarkable fact that there are perfect individuals in India, individuals at least regarded and revered as being perfect. This state of highest perfection, the Mahatma state, which is attained in India by single personalities, is reached by the path of Yoga.

Let us attempt to draw a picture of the essence of Indian Yoga. It is fundamental to Indian Yoga that a force called the "Fire of the Serpent" or the "Fire of Kundalini" slumbers in the human subconscious. This slumbering force is to be awakened. If awakened, it is channeled upward into consciousness and superconsciousness, thereby creating a current that, rising out of the region of the abdomen, ascends as far as the top of the skull, whence it escapes into the outer world. This is a condition of ecstasy in which the soul rises to the greatest heights of the Divine and becomes a Mahatma. The process can be schematically represented (see Figure 1). Imagine the figure of a human being. If the slumbering power of fire (a) would be awakened, it would ascend in serpentine movements and then leave the body. It is what the Indians designate as the thousand-petalled lotus flower, the crown center of the head, that is here (b) brought into movement, producing a mul-

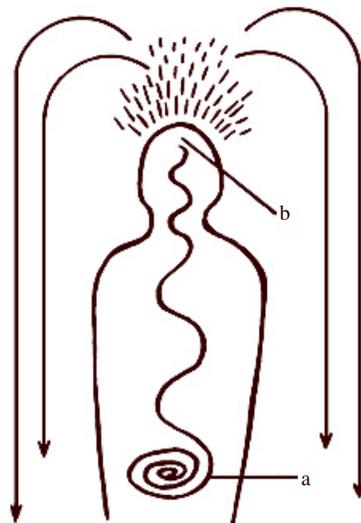


Figure 1

titude of upward-flowing streams leaving the body. From this the experiences result that belong to Indian occultism.

But in fact what really happens later is as follows. The higher the expelled soul life ascends upward, the lower it falls later on—like rain—into the sphere of the Ahrimanic.* The physical, natural phenomenon of rain has this process as its spiritual archetype. If an individual ascends, like a cloud, to dwell in the heights, then there occurs after a certain time a fall into the region of Ahriman. Thus Ahriman captures the Luciferic. That is karma. But the impulse lying hidden in this Yoga is not so simple that one can merely say: human beings wish only to be freed from life's vale of tears. We do wish it, but this is not the essential thing. Let us try to understand what inner motives really lie behind the pursuit of Yoga.

When in the life after death one has passed through the cosmic midnight hour, the midpoint in the soul's path after death, then one stands before the possibility of a definite temptation. One says to oneself: "I live in the spiritual, spiritual light surrounds me. It would be possible for me to incorporate into this spiritual light everything that I bear within myself, to unite with it so that everything in me that is imperfect would be transformed into perfection." This is the Luciferic temptation. It means inwardly to break away from, and refuse, the whole further development of *humanity*....The point is that a temptation can be so great that a human soul cannot withstand it. Such a temptation is therefore concealed by the gods, but nevertheless it is effectively present in the world. The element of temptation here does not consist in one's being offered the possibility of, say, dominion, or of realizing evil intentions, or the temptation of egoism in the worldly sense; no, the possibility offered is that of remaining pure and holy in the spiritual world. But in that case what is imperfect—and yet, as potential perfection, is still present in human nature—will not be developed, even if what is already developed in human nature were to remain forever in the light of purity and holiness. The temptation, then, is to renounce the great ideal of the future. In return, one can attain to a high degree of beauty and light in one's being, insofar as this is now developed.

Thus every human soul stands at one time before the choice of becoming wonderfully holy or else at some

*All that prompts humanity to believe that material creation is the only reality ultimately derives from the influence of Ahriman. This spirit has a contracting, rigidifying effect on the vital body and promotes cold, abstract, earth-bound logic.

time in the future—by working through many, many imperfections—of attaining a far-off ideal, wherein all undeveloped faculties implanted in human nature by the gods will come to fruition.

Rudolf Steiner speaks of the “temple” of humanity’s future as the image of the ideal human being. In the state after death, the soul sees this “temple” and is so inspired by the temple’s light that it enthusiastically makes decisions that lead it to return to Earth—in order to attain perfection in a far distant future.

And if a few persons of depth admire Goethe, they do not admire in him the ideal human being, since he is not that at all; rather, they admire the inner power of his striving after the realization of the gods’ ideal, his striving towards the temple of which Rudolf Steiner speaks—the ideal of a future humanity whose realization has to occur through the transformation of our many imperfections. On the other hand, in India perfect holiness is admired, and behind this lies a striving that would look upon the present state of humanity as its final state and to renounce all further development of humankind.

Humanity—not human beings as they are, but as they are to become—is the object of the religion of the gods. They have intended a lofty future for humanity. This temple is their great hope, great faith, and great love. The realization of this temple of the ideal human being is the religion of the gods.

Let us now try to understand what kind of temple this is. How can we understand the construction of this temple, which is the archetype of all temples on Earth? In our attempt to understand it, we shall begin from above—that is to say, in trivial language, we shall begin with the roof or dome. The highest idea that human beings at present have is the idea of the Divine Trinity. This has to do not only with the idea of the unity of the three in one, but of three inwardly distinct fundamental feelings. In the case of human beings this can be a matter of three different regions of activity. We should not rest content with having three concepts in a unity; rather we ought to be able to bring three sorts of *activity* into relation with the triune divinity in our lives. This is how it is on Earth.

In the future it will one day be different. Indeed, on Jupiter, humanity will have realized the *trinity* as far as the will; that is to say, human beings themselves will be a trinity. Thinking, feeling, and willing will be separate, but shaped into unity by the I. Then, on the future Venus, there will not be a trinity, but rather a *duality*, for the Holy Spirit will be *within* us. We will look only to the Father and the Son. Finally, on Vulcan, we will be at one with the Son. Christ will be in us. We will look up to the

Father God only. The future is as follows: if today we have a trinity as our ideal, which to a certain degree will be realized (this is the Manas [Human Spirit] conscious-

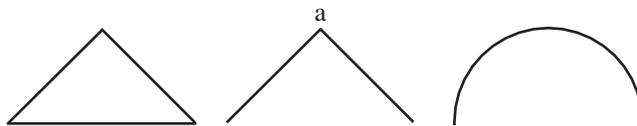


Figure 2

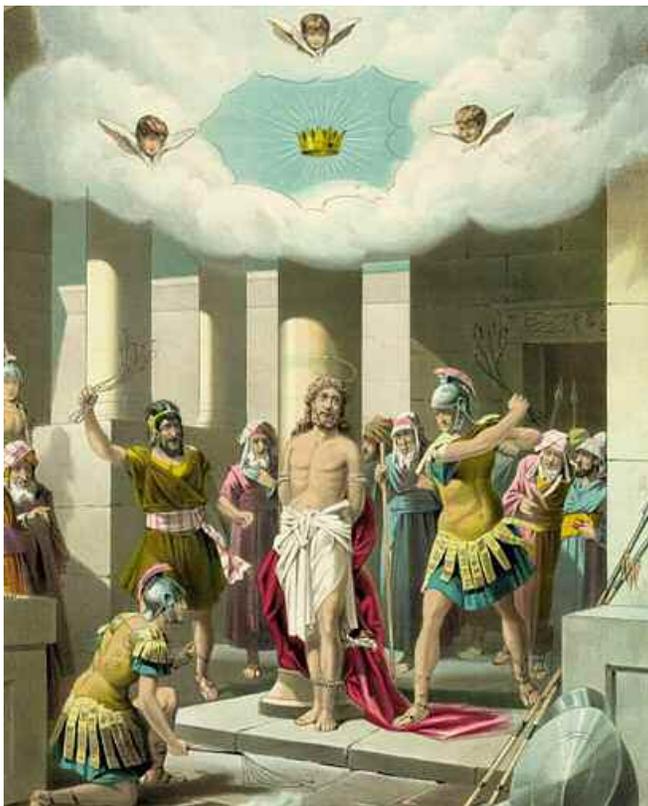
ness), then on Venus there will be a duality, and on Vulcan there will be a unity. That is to say, this angle of differentiation, the angle (a) (see Figure 2) will disappear; the vault of Heaven will be filled solely with the Father God. This consciousness of standing only before the Father God, who is the highest ideal in the human being, will be the upper element of the human temple of the future.

Now, the temple roof is supported by seven pillars. These are the paths humanity will have to tread in order to raise itself to this unified consciousness of God. And these paths are in fact nothing other than the stages of the path which Christ Jesus trod on Earth; they are the seven stages of the Passion. In my *Anthroposophical Studies of the New Testament*, I tried to depict the seven stages of the Passion as stages of the esoteric Christian spiritual life.

Today, we shall try to consider these stages from the cosmic perspective—for the whole world is the macrocosmic temple which represents the archetype of the microcosmic temple of future humanity....As we now have the task of knowing the ideal of the future human being, the microcosmic temple, let us consider the macrocosm and try to understand the temple of the future from this perspective.

The macrocosm, within which we live, began with the old Saturn condition. What, in essence, was this? Its basis was the streaming forth of the will of the Thrones. And this will, which had a sublime origin, streamed downward, forming the lower beings of this world. The beginning of humanity was created. And what was the essential nature of this whole event?...This streaming forth of the will of the Thrones was the macrocosmic deed of the washing of the feet. Old Saturn is the place of the washing of the feet. This is expressed in the sign for Saturn—♄. Above we have the cross, which represents self-sacrificial union with the element of passive receptivity, the moon.

If we look next to the old Sun, which followed old Saturn, we find that the Spirits of Wisdom sent forth from themselves the substance of wisdom. This produced the beginning of the life body and of life. What does *wisdom* mean? What does the word really express?



Lithograph by Lehman & Bolton, 1888, Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division

The Scourging

“The ability to be centered in oneself—to stand, out of the power of one’s own inner being, in spite of all assaults from without—this is the power that is developed through scourging.”

We must deepen our understanding of this word. Wisdom is not a condition of being open to what is *outside* us. Wisdom is the power that streams out from the *interior* of a being in many directions. It is what dwells, actively present, in the interior of the being itself, comprehending its surroundings not in a one-sided way, but *many-sidedly*.

If we wish to represent this schematically, we draw a point—for wisdom is contained within the human being. Out of the point, wisdom issues forth in many-sided form. Thus we have the sign of the Sun—☉. This is the expression of wisdom—which is inner and, at the same time, comprises everything. It radiates forth equally in all directions—it is universal. The life force is in fact this striving of the inner being outward toward universality, And the struggle that wisdom, as well as life, must endure in existence consists precisely in the fact that a power must be developed out of wisdom that can put up resistance to one-sidedness, to impact from without, from right and from left. For wisdom is the condition of a being that is capable of relying upon itself, of not needing any point of support, whether from right or from left, of relying upon nothing save its own inner strength of

being, and of not being drawn into one-sidedness. This is the power that lives in the principle of wisdom. It was shown in the Gospels in deeply moving portrayal when Christ Jesus was scourged by his fellow human beings. The ability to be centered in oneself—to stand, out of the power of one’s own inner being, in spite of all assaults from without—this is the power that is developed through scourging. What constituted the essential heart of the old Sun, what caused the planet to shine forth, was the same power that manifests and endures in the scourging. The planet of the scourging was the old Sun.

And if we now move on to the old Moon, we find the astral element being poured out into existence through the Spirits of Movement. At the same time, this astral element was taken hold of by Lucifer, and a battle then took place in the heavens. *Human karma* began on the Earth, but *cosmic karma* began on the old Moon. We can also put it this way: If the human fall into sin took place on *Earth*, then the cosmic fall into sin took place on the *old Moon*. And as a guardian was placed on Earth to guard the threshold, so also—when the spirits fell—a guardian was placed on the old Moon, one who took



Etching, Marvin Hayes, courtesy Oxmoor House

The Crowning with Thorns

“The power that reveals itself in being crowned with thorns is that of being obliged to judge while experiencing an inward pity that must, however, be constantly controlled and overcome.”

karma onto himself. This guardian was the realizer of *spiritual karma*. By remaining true to themselves, spirits received the dignity of the guardian of the divine intentions. The dignity of the guardian is what is expressed by the crown of thorns. The crown of thorns symbolizes a dignity that indeed corresponds to a state of being crowned, but at the same time it wounds the one who is crowned. For the power that the guardian, the represen-



Oil on Canvas, 1565. Titian (Vecellio di Gregorio Tiziano). Prado Museum, Madrid, Spain

Christ and the Cyrenian

By taking the Cross borne by Christ Jesus (Matthew 27:32; Mark 15:21), Simon of Cyrene established the prototype for a stage of Christian initiation.

tative of karmic necessity, must unfold from within is the power of *inexorableness*. It is the principle of taking a moral stand so that the Truth and the Law will be fulfilled. Pity must be overcome by the being who assumes the guardian's mission. And so the spiritual beings who had to represent the karma of the worlds needed, on the one hand, to look upon the Luciferic being with the greatest pity, and on the other hand they had to repeatedly overcome this pity in order to stand unshakably on the *cosmic threshold*. The power that reveals itself in being crowned with thorns is that of being obliged to judge while experiencing an inward pity that must, however, be constantly controlled and overcome. Thus this crown pricks the wearer himself. And that is what happened in the cosmos during the time of the old Moon. It is the special drama of the old Moon that during this time the crown of thorns came into being in the cosmos.

If we now pass on further to the development of the Earth, we find earthly existence represented by the cross. The carrying of the cross is the fundamental note, the fundamental motif, of earthly existence, and every being connected with the Earth has to experience it in some form or other. During the development of the Earth, humanity must, on the whole, reach the stage of the carrying of the cross; again and again individuals will have to take the cross upon themselves and learn to

bear it through the whole cycle, the whole circle, of their experiences. The symbol of the Earth itself expresses this—⊕. The symbol of the circle bearing the cross is the bringing to fulfillment of the carrying of the cross.

During the future Jupiter existence, humanity will have to undergo the experience of the crucifixion. At this stage, humanity will go through those stages of immobility that were originally lived through and suffered by Christ Jesus himself. Human destiny will then essentially consist in the fact that humanity will be bound to the karma of the planet Jupiter and will have to develop a new power out of this middle point, where the lines of the cross intersect each other—a power that will mean the redemption of the Luciferic. And during Jupiter existence the words will cosmically resound that resounded on Golgotha through the good thief. And these words will find the same answer that Christ gave: “Verily I say unto thee, today wilt thou be in

Paradise with me.” This will happen for Lucifer during Jupiter existence, as humanity itself goes through the crucifixion and loosens the bonds holding Lucifer to the karma of humanity.

And on the future Venus, humanity will have to experience the entombment. This will consist in the fact that the whole of karma, all the realms of nature that are lower than humanity, will be taken up by human beings into themselves, not in the sense of a devouring, but in the sense of a projecting of themselves into an alien (unknown) destiny in the hope that a cosmic miracle will accompany this sacrifice and that a resurrection of all that is human, which has been laid in the grave, will follow upon this entombment.

This resurrection of all that is human will be experienced by the whole of humankind during the future Vulcan existence. Then humanity will have created and formed the resurrection body which appeared to the Disciples after the death of Christ. This resurrection body will then be the body that human beings will manifest during the seventh stage of planetary evolution.

These seven stages then are the seven pillars of the temple of humanity, the temple of the ideal human being. And to these pillars lead steps that actually represent the states of consciousness in which the seven fundamental tones of existence can be experienced. For existence is a sympho-



Watercolor. J. James Tissot (1833-1902). Brooklyn Museum of Art

The Soul of the Good Thief

Having shown contrition for his misdeeds, the good thief is redeemed. The unrepentant thief still has this opportunity.

ny consisting of these seven fundamental, or archetypal, tones. They are the tones of the washing of the feet, the scourging, the crowning with thorns, the carrying of the cross, the crucifixion, the entombment, and the resurrection. These are the pillars upon which divine unity rests and to which four states of consciousness lead—objective consciousness, imagination, inspiration, and intuition.* We can experience all seven pillars (the washing of the feet, the scourging, and so forth) in all four realms of these states of consciousness.

Thus we have the picture, which could be diagrammatically represented in this manner (see Figure 3). At

****PERIODS AND CORRESPONDING CONSCIOUSNESS:***

- Earth.....Waking, objective consciousness*
- Jupiter.....Imagination or Self-conscious picture consciousness*
- Venus.....Inspiration or objective, Self-conscious, creative consciousness*
- Vulcan.....Intuition or highest spiritual consciousness*

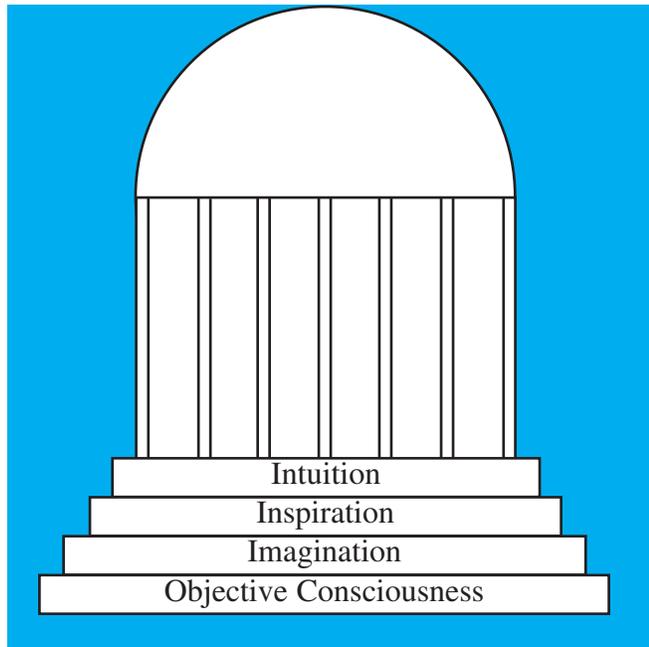


Figure 3

the top, we have the human being’s spiritual consciousness, which becomes a unity. In the spiritual world we will no longer have *trinity*, but will instead have *unity*. Below this we can imagine seven columns, and these seven columns will rest on four steps leading to the temple. This is the simplest diagram possible, but it represents the fundamental idea of the Temple of the Ideal Human: the ideal state of the human spirit, soul, and body.

This ideal is disregarded by those who follow the impulse that comes to expression in present-day Yoga. For Yoga has the aim of turning all that is not yet perfected in the human being into head—of transfiguring all that is not yet perfected in the same way as the head is transfigured—and then of allowing this head to soar away on angelic wings. One who frees oneself in this way would thus be no representative of the resurrection: such a person would not have experienced resurrection, but rather deathlessness.

Thus there stand before us two possibilities. One possibility is that of deathlessness and holiness in the present—a holiness that consists in everything undeveloped in a human being becoming head. The other possibility is the ideal of going through the resurrection. It is the ideal of the future, resurrected human being; that is, the ideal image of humanity, of the temple—an ideal that every soul sees after death. Through this vision the soul is fired with enthusiasm to return to Earth to learn the washing of the feet, to experience the power of the scourging, to experience the crowning with thorns; in order, scourged, to carry the cross, to be crucified and entombed and in the end to rise again. □