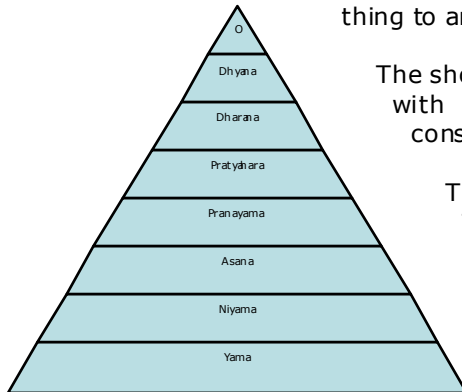


# The Raja Yoga

excerpts from the Teachings of Eugene Halliday

The word 'Yoga' has practically the same meaning as the English word 'yoke'. To yoke is to join one thing to another. What is it that is being joined in Yoga? and to what?



The short answer to this is that Yoga is the joining together of the finite with the infinite, that is, the joining together of the individual consciousness of man with the absolute consciousness of his source.

The term Raja is synonymous with the English word 'royal', from the Sanskrit raj = 'to reign, to rule'.

Raja Yoga, said to be the Yoga of rulership, or the kingly Yoga, is wholly based upon the Philosophy of Samkhya, one of the oldest and most original philosophies in India. The classic handbook of Raja Yoga is The Yoga Aphorisms of Patanjali.

Because Raja Yoga is a practice, it must have a rationale. The idea of 'practice' is the idea of a rational activity aimed at some goal. Everything in Yoga practice has its reason. Knowledge of the rationale of Raja Yoga, or any Yoga, allows us to make sure that we are taking the correct steps toward the attainment of the goal. Raja Yoga as a practice is divided into 8 limbs or stages.

Patanjali in his Yoga classic defines Yoga as "the suppression of mental modifications". This short definition covers a multitude of pre-suppositions. Most important of these pre-suppositions is that the modifications of the mind are impedances to a much higher kind of activity.

The turning outwards of the attention through the sense organs pluralises our mental content. Each sense percept adds a finite form to the mind, an idea or motion-pattern derived from the energy of the incoming stimulus and the reactive energy of the mind itself. The accumulation of such motion-patterns within the mind make it increasingly difficult to bring them into proper relation with each other. From this difficulty arises the major part of the mental problems which confront modern psychiatry.

The true direction of Yoga is, therefore, inwards. Here is an illustration of dialectical principle. In order to release our consciousness from the limitations imposed upon it by the five senses and the ideas derived from them, we have to go, not outwards, but inwards. Going outwards will merely increase the number of finite distractions. Even if we go out beyond the earth, beyond all the planets of the solar system, to the furthest stars, we shall not become better Yogis. To direct our attention outwards through our five senses is merely to pluralise the problem, and to impose ever more limitations upon the mind.

When Yoga is defined as "the suppression of mental modifications", suppression does not mean "forcing down into the depths of the unconscious mind". Quite the contrary. It means the conscious seeing through these modifications as of no use whatever for the purpose of Yoga.

When a modification of the mind is clearly seen to be an impedance to the reuniting of man's self with its absolute origin, it is put down by a conscious act of will. This conscious 'putting down' of the useless is the meaning of yogic suppression of mental modifications.

The removal of impedances or limitations from the mind naturally results in an increase of capacity to deal with events, an increase of power. Because of this a warning is given to all aspirants of Yoga, a warning against the pursuit of power for individual ends. - EH

The rulership of Raja Yoga is 'self-rulership'. As the sage says; 'Great is he who conquers a city. Greater still is he who conquers himself.'

