



## Raja Yoga: Good Sense in Approaching a Mystery



Swami Vivekananda (1863-1902)

The fact is well-known that special techniques of Raja Yoga quickly develop some higher potentialities present in human consciousness.

Such a course of study, however, cannot be pursued in the magnetic atmosphere of a materialistic civilization. From a practical perspective, it is both harmful and unnecessary in present-day nations. It will only lead naïve students to self-deception and defeat.

Raja Yoga, in its essence, is among the highest and most sacred sources of learning for well-meaning pilgrims. Raja Yoga is the supreme or “royal” yoga. It transcends narrow, harmful aims like “individual” power. In fact it does not include the idea of “personal” power. Psychic or occult potentialities can only be properly developed by those who have transcended personal life. The phrase “Raja Yogi” is often used as a synonym to “Mahatma” in theosophical circles.

Writing to a theosophist who wanted the esoteric movement to help people develop occult powers, a Master of Eastern Wisdom said:

“... Such an organization (...) is unthinkable among Europeans; and, it has become next to impossible even in India - unless you are prepared to climb to a height of 18,000 to 20,000 amidst the glaciers of the Himalayas.”

That is to say, one would have to live among the regular disciples of the Mahatmas, in secret places and secluded ashrams, in order to be able to learn some specific aspects of Raja Yoga. It would have to take place at a safe distance from the “zeitgeist”, the “spirit of the times”, the collective karma and aura of materialistic delusion.

In his letter, written by the end of 1880, the Master goes on:

“The greatest as well as most promising of such [*occult*] schools in Europe, the last attempt in this direction, - failed most signally some 20 years ago in London. It was the secret school for the practical teaching of magick, founded under the name of a club, by a dozen of enthusiasts under the leadership of Lord Lytton’s father. He had collected together for the purpose, the most ardent and enterprising as well as some of the most advanced scholars in mesmerism and ‘ceremonial magick’, such as Eliphas Levi, Regazzoni, and the Kopt Zergvan-Bey. And yet in the pestilent London atmosphere the ‘Club’ came to an untimely end. I visited it about half a dozen of times, and perceived from the first that there was and could be nothing in it. And this is also the reason why, the British T.S. does not progress one step practically. They are of the Universal Brotherhood *but in name*, and gravitate at best towards *Quietism* - that utter paralysis of the Soul. They are intensely selfish in their aspirations and will get but the reward of their selfishness.” [1]

One of the reasons why Raja Yoga - if seen as a technical, occult process of learning - is impossible to pursue in our civilization is indicated by Swami Vivekananda in his book “Raja Yoga”. The restriction includes Asia as well, as we have seen in the above quotation from a Mahatma.

Vivekananda writes:

“There must be perfect chastity in thought, word and deed; without it the practice of Raja-Yoga is dangerous, and may lead to insanity.” [2]

Although such a requirement is difficult enough in materialistic civilizations, the rule of “absolute chastity” in thought, word and deed does not refer to sex only.

Chastity is purity in one’s viewpoint. It means liberty from one-sidedness and any blind personal desire. Such an emotional independence is inseparable from a firm and spontaneous unwillingness to look at any aspect of reality from a selfish point of view - a despicable inclination which leads to the distortion of truth.

Although having no personal life in the field of emotions is an essential condition to the development of psychic powers, it is not enough. The so-called “pure life” on the physical level is often associated to selfishness and personal pride, two factors which block every progress along the path. Helena Blavatsky’s Master himself clarifies the point in the well-known Prayag Letter. [3]

The search for “powers” must be dethroned.

In the 21st century as in any other time, a *personal* goal in the direction of “developing psychic powers” is selfish and despicable in itself. It is also trivial and superficial. True Raja Yoga is not limited to the development of “psychic powers” in the conventional sense of the phrase. Far from it. [4]

Every pilgrim seeking for universal truth has to come to terms with the need of self-knowledge, self-control, and renunciation to illusory images of oneself and others. Understanding the process of self-delusion provokes a gradual alchemy of liberation from ignorance, starting after one dedicates his whole life to a transcendent, long-standing goal.

He who wants to learn from the Mahatmas must face the probationary challenges belonging to Raja Yoga. Referring to the candidate to discipleship, a Master of Wisdom wrote:

“His course of testing - in Europe and India - is that of Raja Yoga and its result is - as frequently explained - to develop every germ good and bad in him in his temperament. The rule is inflexible, and not one escapes whether he but writes to us a letter, or in the privacy of his own heart's thought formulates a strong desire for occult communication and knowledge.”[5]

Raja Yoga teaches freedom from ignorance, from distortion of facts and from narrow-mindedness. It aims at the inner liberty and discernment necessary to work for the good of all beings. True Yoga is that by which one qualifies himself to better help mankind.

By benefiting others in their soul-development, one helps oneself.

In the Rules of the Esoteric School that Helena Blavatsky created in 1888, she included “Patanjali's Yoga Philosophy” as one of the four books recommended, and which students should “especially attend to”. She did not mention any specific edition or approach to Patanjali. [6]

There is, it seems, no single book or author whose text is enough to understand Raja Yoga from a theosophical perspective in the 21st century conditions.

Each student must collect by self-devised efforts the fragments of Raja Yoga teachings that are most useful to him, among the books available about this science. The versions of the Yoga Sutras of Patanjali are many and they transmit lessons of fundamental importance. Decisive information about Raja Yoga will be found in the Mahatma Letters and the writings of Helena Blavatsky.

While collecting and studying the tenets most suitable to the actual reality of our lives, we can interact with these teachings in meaningful ways. Thus we create an intelligent, effective, flexible discipline in daily life that will endure for more than one lifetime.

(CCA)

## NOTES:

[1] See Letter 28, pages 209-210 in the 1926 edition of “[The Mahatma Letters](#)”, published by T. Fisher Unwin Ltd., in London, UK, with 493 pages and Index. Number of page is the same in the TUP edition. The letter was initially thought as having been received in 1881. The Chronological edition indicates December 1880. It is letter 11 in the Chronological edition.

[2] “Raja Yoga, Conquering the Internal Nature”, Swami Vivekananda, Advaita Ashram, Calcutta, India, 1996, 287 pp., see p. 68 (by the end of chapter V).

[3] Read “[Prayag Letter - Faith in God is a Superstition](#)”.

[4] Regarding psychic powers, see in our websites the article “[How to Develop Occult Powers](#)”.

[5] “[The Mahatma Letters](#)”, Letter LXV, pages 365-366.

[6] “Collected Writings”, Helena Blavatsky, TPH, USA, 1980, volume XII, p. 497.

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E-Theosophy e-group offers a regular study of the classic, intercultural theosophy taught by Helena P. Blavatsky. Those who want to join E-Theosophy e-group at YahooGroups can do that by visiting <https://groups.yahoo.com/neo/groups/E-Theosophy/info>.

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## The Magic Side of Things



Simplicity allows us to keep connected to our true feelings and makes it possible not to suppress them while developing specific actions.

However, living a simple life is a harder thing to do than appears at first sight. It may be tempting to follow the path of complications, for illusion presents itself as something nice and easy.

Having a knowledge of the tragic side of life enables one to recognize the true value of “ordinary” situations. The love of simplicity is connected to authentic things. It does not reject changes, and does not get attached to them.

There is nothing entirely new in our solar system. All things extraordinary belong to the inner dimension of life, and intimately resonate with the immortal soul.

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Superior virtue appears like a hollow (valley);  
 Sheer white appears like tarnished;  
 Great character appears like insufficient;  
 Solid character appears like infirm;  
 Pure worth appears like contaminated.  
 Great space has no corners;  
 Great talent takes long to mature;  
 Great music is faintly heard;  
 Great Form has no contour;  
 And Tao is hidden without a name.  
 It is this Tao that is adept at lending (its power) and bringing fulfilment.

#### NOTES:

[1] Actively ignorant individuals must necessarily reject truth and wisdom: if they didn't reject them, they would not be spiritually ignorant, or what they reject would not be true wisdom. (CCA)

[2] In the New Testament, Matthew 20: 16 says: "So the last will be first, and the first will be last." (CCA)

### **Chapter Forty-Two:** **THE VIOLENT MAN**

Out of Tao, One is born;  
 Out of One, Two;  
 Out of Two, Three;  
 Out of Three, the created universe. [1]  
 The created universe carries the *yin* at his back and the *yang* in front;  
 Through the union of the pervading principles it reaches harmony.

To be "orphaned", "lonely" and "unworthy" is what men hate most.  
 Yet the kings and dukes call themselves by such names.[2]  
 For sometimes things are benefited by being taken away from,  
 And suffer by being added to.  
 Others have taught this maxim,  
 Which I shall teach you also:  
 "The violent man shall die a violent death." [3]  
 This I shall regard as my spiritual teacher.

#### NOTES:

[1] The creation of the universe through numbers is a central topic in Pythagoras, in Plato, in Blavatsky and the Jewish Kabbalah. See part I of Volume I in "The Secret Doctrine", by Helena Blavatsky. (CCA)

[2] See chapter 39. (CCA)

[3] The law of Karma. In the Christian New Testament, which is much more recent than the Tao Teh Ching, Jesus says according to Matthew 26.52: "... All they who take the sword will perish with the sword". (CCA)

### **Chapter Forty-Three:** **THE SOFTEST SUBSTANCE**

The softest substance of the world  
Goes through the hardest.  
That-which-is-without-form penetrates that-which- has-no-crevice;  
Through this I know the benefit of taking no action. [1]  
The teaching without words  
And the benefit of taking no action  
Are without compare in the universe. [2]

#### NOTES:

[1] Pervading influence of the spirit reaches everywhere, in contrast with superficial activities which create obstacles of their own. "That-which-is-without-form", etc. is further developed by Chuangtse (Ch. III). (Lin Yutang)

[2] On the principle of *wu-wei*, or invisible action, see chapter 37, among others. (CCA)

### **Chapter Forty-Four:** **BE CONTENT**

Fame or one's own self, which does one love more?  
One's own self or material goods, which has more worth?  
Loss (of self) or possession (of goods) which is the greater evil?

Therefore: he who loves most spends most,  
He who hoards much loses much.  
The contented man meets no disgrace;  
Who knows when to stop runs into no danger -  
He can long endure.

### **Chapter Forty-Five:** **CALM QUIETUDE**

The highest perfection is like imperfection, [1]  
And its use is never impaired.  
The greatest abundance seems meagre,  
And its use will never fail.  
What is most straight appears devious;  
The greatest cleverness appears like stupidity;  
The greatest eloquence seems like stuttering.  
Movement overcomes cold,  
(But) keeping still overcomes heat.

Who is calm and quiet becomes the guide for the universe.

NOTE:

[1] Because it assumes fluid form according to circumstances. (Lin Yutang)

### **Chapter Forty-Six:** **RACING HORSES**

When the world lives in accord with Tao,  
Racing horses are turned back to haul refuse carts.  
When the world lives not in accord with Tao,  
Cavalry abounds in the countryside. [1]

There is no greater curse than the lack of contentment.  
No greater sin than the desire for possession.  
Therefore he who is contented with contentment shall be always content.

NOTE:

[1] Stanislas Julien has it thus: “When the Tao ruled the world, the horses were used to cultivate the soil. Since the Tao stopped ruling the world, combat horses appear on the borders.” (CCA)

### **Chapter Forty-Seven:** **PURSUIT OF KNOWLEDGE**

Without stepping outside one’s doors,  
One can know what is happening in the world,  
Without looking out of one’s windows,  
One can see the Tao of Heaven.  
  
The farther one pursues knowledge,  
The less one knows.  
Therefore the Sage knows without running about,  
Understands without seeing,  
Accomplishes without doing. [1]

NOTE:

[1] “Understands without seeing, accomplishes without doing”: *Wu-wei*, occult action, invisible research. The study and work done from higher levels of consciousness looks like doing nothing. (CCA)

### **Chapter Forty-Eight:** **CONQUERING THE WORLD BY INACTION**

The student of knowledge (aims at) learning day by day;  
The student of Tao (aims at) losing day by day.  
By continual losing,  
One reaches doing nothing (*laissez-faire*).

By doing nothing everything is done.  
 He who conquers the world often does so by doing nothing. [1]  
 When one is compelled to do something, [2]  
 The world is already beyond his conquering.

#### NOTES:

[1] By moral influence. (Lin Yutang)

[2] By ordering people about. (Lin Yutang)

### **Chapter Forty-Nine:** **THE PEOPLE'S HEARTS**

**T**he Sage has no decided opinions and feelings, [1]  
 But regards the people's opinions and feelings as his own.

The good ones I declare good;  
 The bad ones I also declare good.  
 That is the goodness of Virtue.  
 The honest ones I believe;  
 The liars I also believe;  
 That is the faith of Virtue. [2]

The Sage dwells in the world peacefully, harmoniously. [3]  
 The people of the world are brought into a community of heart [4],  
 And the Sage regards them all as his own children.

#### NOTES:

[1] *Hsin*, literally "heart". Both thinking and feeling are denoted by this word. It is impossible to say a "decided heart". (Lin Yutang)

[2] A large portion of the Tao Teh Ching is dedicated to the description and study of the long-term work of the Adepts, Mahatmas, and high Initiates for mankind. The Sage who is an Immortal does not create Karma on a personal level. His Karma or Action is impersonal and takes place on the level of the higher self. Such a Sage stimulates the spiritual awakening of all, but does not get involved in personal issues or individual short-term choices. He works for mankind as a whole. (CCA)

[3] The Buddhist "Dhammapada" says: "Let us, then, free from hate, live happily among those who hate; among men who hate let us dwell free from hate." (Chapter Fifteen, "The Dhammapada", Theosophy Co., Los Angeles, 1955, p. 47.) The Sage is severe with himself, rather being harsh with the others. He improves the world mainly by irradiating wisdom, secondarily by showing mistakes to be corrected. (CCA)

[4] "Community of heart" - universal brotherhood. See also, in our associated websites, the article "[All Life Is Good](#)". (CCA)

## **Chapter Fifty:** **THE PRESERVING OF LIFE**

**O**ut of life, death enters.

The organs of life are thirteen; [1]

The organs of death are (also) thirteen.

What send man to death in this life are also (these) thirteen.

How is it so?

Because of the intense activity of multiplying life.

It has been said that he who is a good preserver of his life

Meets no tigers or wild buffaloes on land,

Is not vulnerable to weapons in the field of battle.

The horns of the wild buffalo are powerless against him;

The paws of the tiger are useless against him;

The weapons of the soldier cannot avail against him.[2]

How is it so?

Because he is beyond death. [3]

### NOTES:

[1] According to Han Fei, the four limbs and nine external cavities. Another orthodox reading is “three-tenths”, but this makes less sense. (Lin Yutang)

[2] This passage enumerates some of the powers of an Adept-Initiate. (CCA)

[3] Lit., “deathless”. (Lin Yutang)

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Previous chapters of “Tao Teh Ching” have been published in earlier editions of “The Aquarian Theosophist”.

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# **Profile of the Independent Lodge**

## **The Ten Basic Points that Define the ILT**

**T**he Independent Lodge of Theosophists has some specific characteristics which make it distinct from other organizations.

**[Click to See the Complete Article](#)**

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# The Writings of an Eastern Master - 18

## A Compilation of the Letters of Blavatsky's Teacher

### Editorial Note:

Number eighteen of the series of articles reproducing letters written by the master of Helena Blavatsky consists of the texts CVIII (108) and CIX (109) of "The Mahatma Letters". The Chronological edition indicates that both letters were sent in January 1882.

This is the commentary about letter CVIII included in the Chronological edition:

"This letter has to do with membership in the [*Theosophical*] Society. It would seem that someone (no hint of who it was) had been expelled from the Society. The last sentence indicates that Sinnett had not approached the Mahatma on this matter but that the Mahatma himself was aware of events."

As to Letter CIX, the Chronological edition comments:

"In Josephine Ransom's *Short History of the Theosophical Society*, p. 165, she relates that 'During January and February the Master M. appeared often and was seen by many ... One evening, when a group had gathered at the house, the Master M. appeared and was distinctly seen by Ross Scott, Bhavani Shanker, Damodar and others.' She does not mention S. Ramaswamier, but it appears from this letter that he was present, since the Mahatma mentions him along with Scott. Ramaswamier was from Tinevelly and had been accepted by the Mahatma M. as a chela."

"There is reference to the anniversary celebration in Bombay in what appears to be a note of regret that Sinnett did not attend. It is not clear what the reference to 'personal risk' could mean. It *may* mean that the Mahatmas knew that the honesty of the founders was to be called in question and felt that Sinnett would have to take some 'personal risk' in defending them."

(CCA)

### Letter No. CVIII (108) [1]

The man sent by me last night was a Ladakee chela and had nothing to do with you. What you just said about "initiation" is true. Any Fellow who truly and sincerely repents ought to be taken back. As you see I am with you *constantly*.

NOTE:

[1] This fragment is in M.'s handwriting. (Editor of the first edition)

### Letter No. CIX (109)

I cannot make a miracle, or I would have shown myself fully to Mrs. Sinnett at least in spite of the matches [1] of the French woman [2] and to yourself in spite of the physical and psychical conditions. Kindly realize that my sense of justice is so strong that I would not deny you a satisfaction I gave Ramaswami and Scott. If you have not seen me it is simply because

it was an impossibility. If you had gratified K.H. by attending the meeting no harm would as a matter of fact have been done to you for K.H. had foreseen and prepared all, and the very effort you made to be firm even at supposed personal risk, would have totally changed your condition. Now let us see what the future has in store.

M.

NOTES:

[1] Query machinations. (Note from the Chronological Edition)

[2] Madame Coulomb, housekeeper at the Theosophical Society's headquarters in Bombay, who later conspired with missionaries to blacken the reputation of H.P.B. (Note from the Chronological Edition)

[The above text transcribes Letters CVIII (108) and CIX (109) in "The Mahatma Letters", edited by A. Trevor Barker, 1926 edition, published by T. Fisher Unwin Ltd., in London, UK, 493 pages, see p. 444. These are letters respectively 40 and 41 in the Chronological edition, TPH, the Philippines. The whole book "**The Mahatma Letters**", 1926 edition, is available in PDF [at our websites](#). The pages are the same in the TUP edition, Pasadena, CA.]

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## Real Priorities in Theosophy

Question:

Did Blavatsky write about astral projection?

Answer:

She rarely mentions this unimportant, generally harmful topic, by which many get deluded. Theosophy considers topics like this a sad futility.

The real goals are: to attain self-knowledge, to help mankind by developing ethics and spiritual discernment, and to understand the laws of the universe as a transcendent process.

Thanks for following our work. Questions are always welcome.

(Independent Lodge of Theosophists)

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**The Work of Theosophists**  
**He Who Wants to Truly Live Can**  
**Always Do That By Acting in Responsible Ways**  
**--- Click to See the Article ---**

# The Balance of the Ocean

## The Cosmic Dialogue Between Pisces, Virgo and Libra, in September



Each time the sign of Pisces is to be considered, one must remember that this is a metaphysical sign which has a transcendent influence on human nature. Presided by Neptune, co-ruled by Jupiter, its cosmic energy does not quite belong to our solar system.

Looking at Pisces from a materialistic perspective leads to self-deception. The Piscean life is the life of an unlimited, formless, all-including, all-transcending Ocean of unity in diversity. Yet there is a way to understand it from a practical point of view.

The Piscean universe is opposite and complementary to the world of Virgo. One of them culminates in March; the other, in September. They both reveal and teach one another. By developing the Virgo qualities of good will, vigilance, realism, critical sense and discernment, one can better navigate in the infinite sea of unfathomable union.

In the second half of September, once the Sun energy finds a natural balance between the whole and the parts, between the mystic feeling and the necessary realism - between Pisces and Virgo - life finally enters Libra, the sign of the scales, the seventh sign, the Master of Harmony and of *moderate solidarity*, the door to Autumn in the Northern Hemisphere, the starting point of springtime in the Southern part of the planet. Libra opens the door to a sense of inclusion, which will culminate during the next yearly lesson from Neptune.

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On Pisces, see "[Neptune, a Mystery In Front of Us](#)". On Virgo and the theosophical movement, read the article "[New York, September 7th, 1875](#)". The moon was in Pisces on 23 September 2018. Neptune has been in Pisces since 2011 and will leave its sign, entering Aries, in 2026.

