



CAN YOGA PAVE THE WAY FOR WORLD UNITY ?

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The poser—Can Yoga Pave the Way for World Unity ?—requires a general appraisal of Yoga both as culture and science, the two chief indices of the evolutive attainments of Man, applicable either individually or on a mass scale. In fact, both as culture and science, Yoga is as old as civilization itself, for it challenges what is ignoble or uncontrollable in Nature and through its annihilation or control proves the superiority of Man in achieving the ultimate.

Ancient scriptures like the Vedas and even the recent findings with regard to Mohenjodaro and the Indus civilization indicate that certain primitive efforts towards man's physical, mental, moral and spiritual achievements existed in some form of secretly guarded practices of an archaic culture, (*purātana yoga*) even before the Aryans reached India. This represented the efforts, the paths, the stages of progress and the consummation of self-culture later refined added to and systematised and compiled in a metaphysical whole synthetically known as Yoga.

There are over one hundred different definitions of Yoga according to the systems of thought and the paths associated with it. What is important is their synthetic unity as the practical sum and total of all cultural endeavours of Man in his upward progress unto the Absolute, which to science must remain the maxim in the evolution of Man.

Culturally, Yoga thus is no more and no less than a scientific process of cultural evolution individually applied for elevating what is ignoble in Man to the noble and unto the realisation of the highest, the purest and the absolute in all planes of consciousness. No wonder therefore that the authorities on Yoga maintain that even the gods could not achieve Godhood except through Yoga (*vinā yogen devopi nā mukti labhate*).

Scientifically, Yoga contributes to, and rests on, the fundamentals of such positive sciences as physical education, hygiene, therapeutics, psychology, ethics, sociology, mental hygiene, eugenics and such others, besides being a constant source of inspiration to such cultural arts as music, dancing, painting, sculpture, literature and others.

Since Yoga consists not in precept but in practice, it is really not necessary that the whole of Yoga—especially the subjective endeavours in the higher planes of the conscious and the subconscious mind leading to the Absolute (*kaivalya*)—be applied to pave the way for world unity. In fact, in the lofty sublimable process of Yoga, world unity, except in the plane of divinity, assumes a minor socio-political and mundane aspect which even the preliminary training it affords in the cultivation of such social virtues as universal brotherhood (*maitrī*), universal sympathy (*karuṇā*), etc., and the habituation (*abhyāsa*) to its catholic (*sārvabhaumaḥ*), vows (*yama-niyama*) could easily guarantee.

For one thing, Yoga has recognised and concentrated on the individual as the constant unit for all practical purposes for the solution of world problems. For another, Yoga qualifies the individual as inheriting many impure traits, tendencies and instincts of animality along with



his accumulated potency-desire complexes (*samskāra-vāsanā*) which necessitate his personal reformation.

Yoga further holds that the synchronal reformation of the masses because of their divergent qualifications remains problematical, and to wait for such a miracle to happen is equally suicidal. Consequently, the only rational alternative being the subjective element of self education, Yoga insists on all such practical efforts as regenerative and regalanize mental purity so that the personal attainments in moral life of the individual will produce elevating reaction in the society in which he lives and thereby in the world.

To begin with, Yoga paves the way for world unity through its immaculate moral activism which constitutes the first step in its practice. It provides for the moral emphasis of man through its emphasis on the cultivation of and habituation to vital social virtues which are to be developed and perfected through both objective and subjective processes of self-culture.

This consists in the regulation of will, thought and action to absolute purity not only in relation to oneself but also in relation to all others. Its negative approach analyses the main elements which prevent world unity and by gradual practice ends up in their total elimination, while its positive counterpart continually aids all such efforts as contribute to world unity.

Accordingly Yoga recognises that the biological instincts of self-preservation, self-propagation, self-aggrandizement, self-assertion and self-love which really keep individuals apart, and thus continually disturb world unity, need man's habituation to strong physical and mental restraints (*yama*) in the form of non-violence (*ahimsā*), truth (*satya*), abstinence from theft (*asteya*), sexual sublimation (*brahmacharya*) and non-covetousness (*aparigraha*).

To reinforce such moral efforts, Yoga suggests that advantage should be taken to the fullest measure of such compelling virtues as universal brotherhood (*maitrī*), universal sympathy (*karuṇā*), complacency (*muditā*), and non-violent non-cooperation (*upekṣā*) with evil.

These broad-based social virtues demand varying degrees of effort at self-control throughout life and are indispensable to Yoga for the purification and steadying of the mind. They have therefore been enjoined as the very first lesson in yoga education—a worthy prerequisite to yoga life and the most reliable basis for world unity.

Progressively, its positive counterpart testifies to the distinct growth of the individual mind to yoga behaviour (*yogācara*) edified with more virtues as follow the natural sequence in reciprocal ratio to his own moral elevation. These are contentment (*santoṣa*), absolute purity (*saucha*), enduring indifference to the opposites (*tapa*), self-education (*svādhyāya*) and renunciation to the fruits of all actions (*īśvarāprāñidhāna*).

Thus, purged of all moral and mental impurities, when the individual rises above his ego (*ahamkāra*), his will, thought and action become self-denying and in conformity with the commonweal, and the road for world unity is thus paved.

This scientific moral activism of Yoga may be summed up for all practical purposes in daily life in a few ethical maxims. They contain the essence of yoga behaviour—some of the negative aspects representing the subjective and the positive aspects representing the objective side of human conduct.

Being universal in their conception and application, they are in complete harmony with the vital teachings and injunctions of known religions and schools of thought, but with this difference that the mere knowledge of these teachings of Yoga is not Yoga—in fact, the actual practice of Yoga is Yoga.

1. (a) Avoid any tendency to violence not only in action and speech but also in thought; (b) disapprove all forms of violence.
2. (a) Think, speak and act nothing but truth; (b) dissociate yourself from all that is untrue.
3. (a) Put into practice the spirit of 'live and let live'; (b) resist exploitation of others.

4. (a) Regulate your sex life to conform the marital obligations ; (b) refuse to submit to the force of passion.
5. (a) Accept your dues but accept no more ; (b) disclaim all forms of social injustice.
6. (a) Keep your body and mind pure ; (b) avoid close contact with those who are physically or mentally contaminated.
7. (a) Be content with what you have ; (b) discredit the enjoyment of immoral gains.
8. (a) Cultivate indifference to both pleasure and pain ; (b) sacrifice no moral principles whatever the risk.
9. (a) Pursue knowledge for the sake of self-realization ; (b) censure prostitution of intelligence to iniquitous ends.
10. (a) Discharge your duties honourably and leave the rest to the Absolute ; (b) oppose all forms of self-aggrandizement.
11. (a) Uphold world fellowship and the commonweal by your catholic thoughts, speech and actions ; (b) deprecate all attempts to divide humanity.
12. (a) Keep out immoral thoughts ; (b) annihilate evil wherever found.

When put into practice the above yoga moral code is enough to assure world unity. What is more according to Yoga, their constant practice leads to greater heights such as immunity from unbalanced emotionalism conducive to physical and mental good health, development of character and personality, bestowing upon the individual the necessary strength and grip over life, adaptation of universal love to behaviour generating selfless social service, freedom from egocentric complexes augmenting an immaculate sense of duty to oneself and society, the acquisition of a highly developed moral conscience, sensitiveness to social justice, purity of the mind concentrated on the higher pursuits of life, evolution of psychic equipoise progressively favourable to self-realization, and, thus, the uninterrupted enjoyment of the blessings of absolute holiness.

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That Śramaṇa, who has fivefold carefulness, who is controlled in three ways, who has curbed his five senses, who has subdued his passions and who is completely endowed with faith and knowledge, is called self-disciplined.

—Kundakunda

