

YOGA: THE UNION OF SUBJECT AND OBJECT

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Our subject will be what is known as the System of Yoga. As you are all aware, the word 'yoga' has been exercising a kind of mesmerising effect on the minds of people, and everyone seems to be attracted to it, whatever the reason for it be. There is an unknown enigmatic power exerted by the very word 'yoga', due to which everyone wants to know what it is, under the impression that it is apparently going to shower upon a person immense blessings of an unknown character. It is something wonderful, very necessary, and a must for everyone; this is the feeling in almost all the people who want to learn yoga.

This word 'yoga' comes from the Sanskrit root *yug*, meaning 'uniting', or 'the union itself'. Yoga is the attainment of union. It also means the process of achieving this union. It is the end, as well as the methodology involved in the achieving of the end known as union. But union with what? What is to be united with what?

This question is perhaps not easily answered. There is a nebulous feeling about the nature of this union, and a clear-

cut answer will not be easily available from any quarter which seems to be concerned with the teaching of yoga. Hundreds of definitions will be provided, all which look perfectly sensible and logical; yet, you may not feel that you have obtained anything. You will be still searching, moving from one Guru to another Guru, one institution to another institution, and trying every blessed method of practising yoga.

The answer to this great question of what this union is about will take us deep down into the very nature and structure of existence itself. Very profound is this science; it goes deep into the very nature of what we call existence itself.

The meaning of the word 'existence' is clear to you all because of the fact that everyone exists, everything exists. Existing is a common denominator, a factor that is at the back of the very meaning of the life of anything. There is no meaning in anything unless it exists. That which does not exist has no value. Inasmuch as existence is a common background of every person and every thing in the world, it has to be considered as covering the whole structure of life. Everywhere is existence, but in our day-to-day life we seem to be psychologically creating a sort of rift in this otherwise generalised definition of existence. For instance, everyone feels "I exist; you also exist." Here, when you conceive your existence as a 'myself' you will automatically distinguish this existence of 'myself' from the existence of what you call 'yourself'. My existence is not actually identical with your existence. If it were identical, there would be no 'you'. For every 'myself' there is a counter-correlative known as the 'yourself'.

Who is this 'myself'? Every person in the world is a 'myself' because every person refers to oneself as 'me'. Now, who is 'yourself' or 'itself'? Anything that is not 'myself' is 'yourself', or 'itself'. Please remember this peculiar subtle enigma before you. Anything that is not 'myself' is 'yourself' or 'itself'.

This 'yourself' is also a 'myself' from its own point of view. While I may regard you as 'yourself' from the point of view of my feeling of myself as a subjective existence, you are also in a position to consider yourself as a 'myself' and consider me as a 'yourself'.

Now, is there a distinction between myself and yourself? You will find that here we are in a strange difficulty which eludes ordinary understanding. Who is this 'myself', and who is the 'yourself'? Everyone seems to be 'myself', and at the same time everyone is a 'yourself'. These two terms are totally contradictory, so why do they seem to be existing in one person simultaneously? I am 'yourself' and 'myself' at the same time, though the characteristics of the existence of 'myself' and 'yourself' are two different things altogether, because the existence of 'myself' cannot get identified with your existence; else, there will be no difference between people.

Are you able to recognise the great problem before you? Are you justified in regarding anyone as a 'yourself'? Why do you call somebody as 'yourself' or call something as 'itself' when that 'itself' is also a 'myself' from its own point of view?

If we are going to live in the world with this kind of contradiction in our own way of thinking, we should think thrice before saying anything, thinking anything, or doing

anything. It is a tremendous mystery that we are actually facing in our day-to-day life, and we have taken it for granted, as if it is perfectly clear. Why do you regard another person as a 'yourself' if you are able to concede that person called 'yourself' to be a 'myself' from its own point of view? So, the basic philosophical question is: Is there an object in the world, apart from the subject?

The 'yourself' is an object; the 'myself' is a subject. The 'myself' observes the 'yourself' as an externally, independently existing something. Are you justified in coming to this conclusion that there is someone who is not at all a subjective 'me' or 'I', but totally an object? Can you say that there is anything called an object at all, really speaking, inasmuch as every person and every thing cannot be regarded as an object from their own point of view? But do you not make this distinction between the subjective perceiving consciousness and the object outside? Put a question to your own self: Why do you make this distinction? In what way can you consider yourself justified in calling yourself a determining factor in foisting a definition on someone else whom you regard as an object?

There is a secret hidden behind all these things. How do you know that you are existing? What makes you feel that you are really there, in some place? Have you any proof? Don't you ask for proof nowadays, for anything to be accepted? Now, bring a syllogistic deduction, a logical argument to establish that you are existing. You may be wondering, "The question is ridiculous. I am existing, it is very clear, and you want a proof for it?"

There is a clarity which is a hundred percent illumination that confirms the existence of oneself. But you

will not grant this concession that you are, which you give to your own self, to others. For any other thing you want a proof in order that you may establish their existence.

You cannot know the nature of even an atom. You want laboratories, equipments, by means of which you can know the nature of the existence of a little thing called a material substance, an atom. If everyone and everything had a substantive characteristic and not an objective characteristic, there would be some fallacy in your asking for instruments to enable you to know the nature, existence or structure of something which you call an object. Why don't you apply the same logic to your own self? Why don't you subject yourself to a laboratory test of observation and experimentation to know that you are really existing? You will say, "It is meaningless. You want me to subject myself to an experimental technology in a laboratory so that I may know that I am existing?" But then, why should you apply this logic to another which you regard as something different from you, though wrongly?

There is a psychological rift between the operation taking place within ourselves and the same operation that is taking place in regard to something that we regard as not ourselves. The mind of a person divides itself into two segments of activity, moving in a subjective way on the one side, and characterising another thing in an objective way on the other side. We do not deal with another in the same way as we deal with our own selves. Is it possible for you to deal with another thing or any other person in the same way as you are likely to deal with your own self? Inasmuch as you will not be able to do this, and you would not like to do it for your own personal reasons, you are unjustly

parading your competency in knowing all things perfectly while in fact your knowledge of things is imperfect. An unjustifiable dissection of the types of existence attributed to yourself and to others has been created by you. Yoga, as I mentioned, is an act of union; now I am coming to the point as to what it is that is going to be united.

Two realities cannot be united because a reality is something which is valid by its own existence as a total independence. An independent thing cannot come in contact with another independent thing because there is a total subjectivity characterising the independence of a particular person or a thing, which differs from the same nature that we can attribute to another person or thing. Two 'reals' cannot join and become one, because both are 'reals'; if two reals can join together and become one, there must be some mistake in the assumption that there are two reals at all.

In this sense, in the practice of yoga, in the attempt to achieve a union known as yoga, you are dealing with vast existence itself which stands before you as an object, from which you distinguish yourself as an observer. The world stands before you as something that is observed, and you are standing apart from it as an observing subject.

But don't you know that you are also a similar type of object that can be observed by other substantives, who have also the prerogative of judging you? Have you heard the famous saying, "Judge not, lest ye be judged"? In the way you are judging another, you will be judged correspondingly. You will receive what you are meting out to another, the reason being that there is an undercurrent of uniformity between the subjective side and the objective

side which is missed in ordinary sensory perception. The consciousness that is what makes you feel a 'myself' or 'me' in regard to your own self cannot be observed as operating in another person. You can experience the consciousness in you, but you cannot experience the consciousness in another person. You only concede the fact of there being consciousness in another person by the behaviour of that person, which indicates the presence of consciousness in that person also. Thus, the conceding of the fact of there being consciousness in another person is a conclusion drawn by inference; but in the case of yourself, it is a direct experience.

You cannot know that there is consciousness in another person, because consciousness is pure subjectivity. The nature of consciousness is nothing but the capacity to know. That which knows cannot become what is known. That is to say, consciousness cannot become an object of itself. This is the reason why you are only inferring consciousness in other people by a deductive process of reasoning, but in your case it is a direct experience.

If it is possible for you to adopt some method by which you can enter into the consciousness of another person, that person will immediately cease to be an object to yourself. There will be a commingling of consciousness, which is supposed to be the pure subject in you, with the consciousness which also is a pure subject in another person. But practically, this is not possible as an achievement. By any amount of effort on your part, you cannot enter into the consciousness of another person. The other person always stands as an object to be dealt with, while you do not want to deal with yourself.

Here is a basic fundamental error in the process of perception and experience, in which we are daily involved, and no one wants to go deep into this difficulty because they are under the impression that everything is clear and all things are going on well.

Action and reaction, with which process you are well accustomed, arises on account of this bifurcation of your existence as differentiated from another's existence. There is something in the existence of another which resents your characterisation of its existence. It resents your definition of that existence because it is not possible to dissect two segments of existence, which otherwise is uniformly present in all people.

Now, the Yoga System takes up this question in right earnest: How would you be able to solve this psychological malady that has crept into everyone, due to which you cannot truly know what is outside you? Even your knowledge of your own self is a perfunctory psychological appreciation, and not a true knowledge of yourself. If you cannot have a true knowledge of your own in-depth essence, you cannot know the in-depth essence of anybody else. So, all knowledge is make-believe in the sense of what we are instructed about in our modern educational career. We are given the characterisation, the 'how' and the behaviour of a particular person or thing; the 'why' of it is not known. We can know how a thing behaves, but we cannot know why a thing behaves in that manner. But in your case, you know why you are behaving in a particular manner. So, that 'why' which you are applying to yourself as something very clear should also be equally applied to

the other, which stands on equal footing in the process of perception.

The philosophical definition of this subjectivity in oneself standing as opposed to the existence of another is the co-relation of the seer and the seen. How do you come to know that something is there in front of you? You will have a very easy answer: "Because I see that there is something in front of me." What do you mean by 'seeing'? It is allowing the retina of your eyes to bring the light rays in contact with your own optical apparatus, which casts on your eye a reflection of what is in front of you. Opticians say that in the beginning it is a topsy-turvy reflection that is cast on the retina; later, internally it is rectified into a vertical object.

Yet the primary question of how you have come to the conclusion that you know this object is not answered. Knowledge cannot be identified with rays of light because no one believes that a light ray is conscious. It is a physical phenomenon. An object which is far away from you, like a mountain, becomes an object of your knowledge. You are, of course, aware that the mountain cannot enter into your eyes. It is distant from your visual organ; yet, you come to know that the object called a mountain exists. The knowing process is actually the function of consciousness. Your consciousness establishes the existence of something in front which is called a mountain. It brings about a conscious relationship between the mountain and itself in the perception of this object called a mountain.

Do you attribute consciousness to a mountain? Does it think in the manner you think? You say, "The mountain is a material substance." If you cannot attribute matter with

an element of consciousness, matter stands always as an object of consciousness. If that is the case, and if there is always a difference between consciousness and matter, then there is a difference between the consciousness that knows the object known as the mountain, and the mountain itself. If there is such a difference between the material object called the mountain and the consciousness which is supposed to know the existence of that object, how do you come to know that it exists? The only connection that apparently seems to be between your consciousness and the object which is known as the mountain is light rays, air and space. Neither light rays, nor the air, nor the space intervening between yourself and the mountain can be regarded as conscious elements. They are all one-hundred-percent material.

If that which intervenes between your consciousness and the object outside is material in its nature, this consciousness which knows the object cannot be connected with that object, because the connection is made of material substance. What is the relation between this material connection existing between your consciousness and the object, and the knowing self? There is no possible intelligible answer to this question. A material connection cannot bring about a conscious apprehension of the object existing. We have to conclude that there is some other mysterious element operating between your so-called subjective consciousness and the object outside because the object, such as the mountain, is material, as is well known; and matter and consciousness cannot come together, as they are of dissimilar characters. Similar things unite; dissimilar things divide.

Now, the mountain, being dissimilar to the nature of consciousness, cannot be known under any circumstance, unless you appreciate that there is something of the nature of consciousness itself interlinking your subjective consciousness with the object outside. What is the conclusion? The conclusion is that your consciousness that knows the object is not connected to the object by any material content; it has to be, by an in-depth analysis of the situation, a conscious link only – which means to say, your mind has to exceed the limit of this bodily frame.

The mind cannot go as far as the mountain outside if you believe the mind is only inside the body. Don't you think that the mind is inside you? Do you believe your mind is going outside into the marketplace? If the mind is locked up within the framework of your physical being, there is no way of knowing that there is an object outside unless, by a logical deduction of the fact, you have to infer that this mind, which apparently seems to be locked up within the body, is really not so locked up. It has a wider connotation which permits its existence outside the body also. There is a larger mind than the individual mind, which is the reason why your so-called objectivity is able to apprehend the object outside. Your mind is touching the object because of the fact that it is not really confined to the location of your physical body.

I will give you an example to illustrate this point. Suppose there is a broadcasting station; it is in Delhi, or anywhere. Somebody speaks or sings in the broadcasting station. That sound wave is carried through ether, or space, to a receiving set somewhere far away, and the receiving set hears the voice of the person who speaks or sings in the

broadcasting station. Do you think that the sound is travelling through space? The sound does not travel through space; otherwise, we would all be hearing the sound here of anybody talking in the broadcasting station.

The audio structure of the speech or the song of the person gets converted into a vibration, an energy which is ubiquitous, existing everywhere; and the medium of that energy which is everywhere is contacted by the process of the conversion of the sound into that very energy which communicates that vibrating force to the receiving set, which re-transforms that energy into the sound that you are listening to.

So, between the sound in the broadcasting station and the sound that you are hearing through the receiving set, there is something that is not seen at all by any person and which cannot be contacted, but without which the connection between that sound and this sound is unintelligible. In a similar manner is this question of the perception of an object. There has to be a super mind, a wider mind, a more comprehensive mind, we may call it the Universal Mind, which operates in an impersonal manner between your individualised mind, which is apparently locked up in your body, and the so-called object, which is apparently external to you.

Now, here again the question arises: What is it that this extra-physical mind is doing when this individual mind vibrates in a manner contactable with this Universal Mind? What actually takes place? The mental faculty which is superior to the individual mental faculty, the wider mind, comes in contact with the object which is called the mountain. You can see even the stars, which are several

light years away. How do you see them, when they are not entering your eyes? The same process takes place. There is a larger, wider universalised mind through which the individual mind comes in contact, without knowing that there is this transparent intermediary operation taking place between the knowing mind and the object that is known.

Another question automatically follows from this conclusion. The fact that the mountain is a material substance cannot be overlooked. Even the Universal Mind, which knows itself, which reflects consciousness, cannot identify itself with something which is totally material in its nature. Mind cannot contact matter unless the matter also has some characteristics similar to the mind. If you cannot concede this fact, the reason why you are able to know an object outside cannot be explained.

The conclusion, therefore, philosophically arrived at, is that there is some over mind operating everywhere, even inside the structural pattern of an object called matter, such as a mountain. There is a universal operative mind taking place. It is hiddenly present even in a so-called material object called the mountain, and it reacts in a conscious manner in respect of the conscious mind which is seeing the object outside, and a commingling of two centres of mind takes place.

There has to be something of a similar character between the medium that broadcasts the sound in the station and the receiving set. If they are totally dissimilar, they cannot come in contact with each other; there would be no hearing of the sound at all. There is, therefore, for all practical purposes, a hidden content as a mystery of

existence which operates universally and ubiquitously everywhere, which, being unknown as an existing factor to the individual mind, creates the so-called bifurcation between the subject and the object.

What does yoga do, then? It is a very subtle and adroit method adopted in the disciplining of the individual mind, by which it can directly come in contact with the Universal Mind intervening between itself and the so-called object outside. That is to say, you will directly come in contact with that object. The objectiveness, the 'yourself-ness', of the object ceases. It becomes a 'myself' in a different sense, and this 'myself' which is the observing factor unites with the 'myself' of that object. There is a larger 'me', a large 'I', which transcends the individual 'I', an experience which will include whatever you know about yourself and whatever you seem to be knowing about another. There is, therefore, an enhancement of perceptive capacity in this process, and when the attainment of this kind of union is becoming an actual experience, you will find yourself in a flood of experience which inundates your total personality, and you will feel that which is outside you is not really outside you.

The problems of life arise on account of this 'yourself' existing as contradicting 'my existence'. That contradiction has to be resolved by adopting such subtle means of self-discipline by which the otherness of an object gets melted down to the true 'myself' aspect of what that object is about. That is to say, yoga is a union between the true subject with the true subjectivity of another thing which you erroneously, wrongly, call the object.

So, what is the union you are talking about in yoga? It is the union of the subject with the object. But in another sense it looks that the two cannot be united at all, so I have to explain why in one sense the subject and the object stand apart and cannot be united, and in what sense they can be united.

You will find the Yoga System of Patanjali practically mentioning that the problem of life arises in the contradiction between the subjectivity and the objectivity of a thing, and the separation of the subjective and objective characters in an object. In its technical language, this is the *prakriti* aspect being separated from the *purusha* aspect in the perceiving consciousness. In that sense there is a separation, but in a deeper sense there is a union, as I have indicated to you briefly in this introductory remark on this great subject, to which we have to revert later on in greater detail.