SATURDAY, DECEMBER 16, 1967

THE SEVEN PATHS OF

YOGA TO REALIZE THE DIVINE SELF WITHIN

Today's thought during the contemplation was that 'Paths unto the self are seven.' Second thought is: 'They are known to saints and sages who are ascending' and the third aspect of the same thought is that 'the path unto God is known to the Masters alone'. Now these are three aspects of the thought that came in contemplation today.

Let us deal with the first aspect. That itself is a very comprehensive thought. This thought indicates that there are seven known paths leading to the Divine Self within us and many permutations and combinations of these seven paths made into systems by subsequent teachers and Masters for the benefit of their followers and they have been given different names. In our 'Hindu Shastras' we call these paths 'yogas'. Yoga means linking. Yoga is to link. Link the human mind with the Divine Mind and ultimately through the linking; integrate the human mind with the Divine Mind. So, according to the known scriptures that have come down to us in our country, as well as from outside the country, all these paths of different types can be classified into seven main paths, which may be called seven yogas.

Now let us take them up one by one and gradually go into the details of these seven yogas in subsequent lectures. The other two parts of the thought, we will keep them for some future lectures.

The first yoga is Karma Yoga, which is possible for everyone to grow through as the beginning. Though it is not considered to be the lowest yoga from the scriptural or spiritual point of view, it is the most common yoga possible for most people to grow through. We will take it up in detail after we enumerate all these seven yogas.

The second is the Bhakti Yoga or the Bhakti Marg (road or way). This has to do more with our emotions, with our feeling life and through the feeling life to grow into the liberation. Liberation from the finite consciousness into the Divine, which is within us, the atmic consciousness, the soul consciousness.

The third can be called Mantra Yoga. It can also be called by other names. Some call it the Sound Current Yoga. Some call it the Shabd (word) Yoga, but essentially, it is Mantra Yoga, which means a spiritual teacher, if not a Master gives a mantra, which may be a common mantra known to scriptures or it may be quite a different mantra coming through

the Master's mind or the teacher's mind. Even if it comes through the teacher's mind, it has its value. Whereas the same mantra, if one reads in any book or scriptures and adopts it, it will not have the same value. Its only when it comes through the spiritual Master's mind, it has the best value. It is because when the Master gives the mantra at the proper time, then, at that time in the invisible dimensions of life, certain conditions get created there where actually there are High Souls who witness it and these High Souls help the one who has been accepted by the Master to grow towards the goal. A Master does not necessarily give only one mantra for all time. There are, according to what we have seen in our previous talk, seven types of the minds of the seekers and as the minds go on changing from one state into another, the Master can also change these mantras if found necessary for the growth of the disciple. What are known as, mahamantras need not change. But quite often, when the mahamantra is given to an initiate it will be having a certain value in the beginning according to the initiate's mind which may limit the mahamantra into a subjective mantra of his own. So, there may be necessity to change that mantra given by even a spiritual Master, as the initiate grows from one state of consciousness or one level in the human consciousness into another. So, one mantra is not enough. At every state of evolution in the human level of consciousness, mantras may be changed by the Master. So, in one sense there are seven initiations and there may be more than one mantra. It can even be seven mantras or more.

Then the fourth path or yoga is Hatha Yoga. Hatha Yoga from spiritual point of view is considered to be the lowest, because it has to deal with the gross matter that is the human body. It has more to do with the human body which is matter and gross matter at that, not the human mind so much as the human body, though human mind is also matter. The human mind is a finer matter, much much finer than the human body. Mind and brain are two different aspects. Brain is grosser than the human mind. It is the fine matter that is human mind which manifests through the human brain. So, though the human brain is of a very high order of matter in the human personality which is body, yet it is grosser than the human mind and in this Hatha Yoga, the principle emphasis is on what is known as asanas – the different types of physical postures. But before that, certain other principles connected with the asanas also have to be adopted and are properly followed by the seeker in order to see that the subsequent development happens as intended by the teacher or Master. These other principles are known as Yamas and the Niyamas in the Patanjali Yoga. These are principles. Principles like the Sheelas and the biblical Ten Commandments and their offshoots in manifestation. So, this is the other aspect of the Hatha Yoga.. The principle aspect linked to the physical postures called asanas.

But Hatha Yoga also has what is known as pranayama. That means the principle, which governs the prana. Prana does not mean merely breath but the Life Principle, which goes in us through the breath. Not only through the breath, but, also through other matter like the food and the water. It is the Life Principle which sustains the air, the water and the food and this, has a certain significance in our body. Just as the air passes through the lungs and from the lungs is absorbed in the blood and it circulates in all parts of our body, likewise the prana entering the body through the air and the lungs, has a locale in different parts of the body, not in the lungs, nor in the blood. That locale is in the nervous system. It is at the base of the spine, which is a chakra, and is called the Mooladhara Chakra.

Now, here comes in the other yoga – the fifth yoga, what is called Kundalini Yoga or what is also known as Laya Yoga. This yoga is a very important yoga. It is very important in the sense that if your consciousness is linked with the prana that goes in, then this yoga has its effect. If your consciousness is not linked with the prana that goes in, it automatically goes on getting collected or centered in the particular locale and then according to the growth or otherwise of the consciousness of the individual, the higher centers may open or may not open. However, if one is very conscious of the prana, as it circulates through the air particularly, then, at that time, the higher centers begin to open much more rapidly. But, when they open more rapidly, there is also a danger. The danger being that if you do not know how to manage the opening of the higher centers, which must have its effect upon the whole physical body and the mental consciousness, including our emotions, feeling, sense perception and thinking, then, through that, anti-divine forces can take us away from the path. That's why this Kundalini Yoga has got two aspects. The right one leading to God and the wrong one leading us away from God. It can even lead to disintegration. . So, Kundalini Yoga is an important yoga but it requires the help of the Master.

Quite often teachers are not able to manage the Kundalini Yoga. It is possible for them to manage up to the Hatha Yoga because when pranayama is done in Hatha Yoga, that Pranayama has more to do with the air that goes in and up to the point of the prana flowing into different parts of the body, but, not with the chakras. The chakras are not so much emphasized in Hatha Yoga, until it grows into what is called Kundalini Yoga or Laya Yoga or it is also called Kriya Yoga. All these are very important aspects. Though derived from the Hatha Yoga it is a much deeper aspect. It is derived from Hatha Yoga because it still has more to do with the body, but finer and finer aspect of the body, not even the brain, but deeper than that.

Kundalini Yoga deals with that which sustains the brain and all parts of the body including the mind. So, here it requires the help of a Master, or a teacher who has transcended through this path. Many have not grown through this path. It becomes an automatic path, but they don't know how to manage the opening of the chakras. The chakras just open and then they leave it at that. It is just as the mental faculties develop in anyone engaged in ordinary studies in schools and colleges.Their reasoning, judgment, intellect etc., develop. They don't know how these faculties develop but they develop. So, that way it is possible for people to take to other types of yogas and these particular chakras develop, but they don't know how and to the extent which they do not know, they limit their knowledge about the how of these chakras developing and evolving into higher consciousness. So, only those who know it are able to show it.

Then comes the sixth yoga, what is known as Raj Yoga, also known as Patanjali Yoga. The Raj Yoga is principally the contemplation leading to concentration. Contemplation leading to concentration on what? On all these aspects of the yoga. It is a combination of all these previous yogas. Though we can contemplate and concentrate even during our ordinary spiritual practice, whether it is prayer or whether it is surrender, these other aspects of all these yogas, most people do not know. Still, it is not impossible for them to

know. Through Right Surrender they can grow into Right Mindfulness and through Rght Mindfulness, they can know about the other aspects of the other yogas also. But, in real Raj Yoga, it's a combination of all these previous yogas and contemplation on various aspects of these previous yogas and concentration on them will lead to growing towards the goal of knowing the Divine Self within us. This is the sixth yoga or the sixth path.

And the seventh is what is known as Gyan Yoga. Gyan Yoga is knowing the Divine Wisdom by direct knowledge. Gyan does not mean absorbing merely from scriptures and books. That can help us but that does not lead us to gyan. The gyan is the beginning of the knowing of our Divine Self or our atma, which will go on increasing its manifestations through our human mind, when we practice one or the other of these above mentioned yogas, which we have already mentioned. It is not necessary for any seeker to go through all these yogas. You can take to any one of them and through the one, it can lead to the same goal. But those Masters who have descended from the highest of the high or who have even grown and ascended from the usual human state of consciousness up to a point where they become Masters or who are accepted as Masters they have to know all these paths.

Although all these paths lead to the same goal of liberation unto the Divine Self within us, it does not mean that it will lead you to know the Divine which is the source of the Divine Self. That makes the difference. Everyone of us has a right, a birthright, to know the Divine Self within and for that, one or the other of these yogas will lead us towards that goal, but the Master leads us to the very source of the Divine Self and whosoever knows about all these seven yogas, seven principal yogas and their combinations and permutations, they alone can be called Masters. All others are teachers. That's why in the name of yoga, so many people claim many things, that, they are the great yogis. But ultimately when you come down to the brass tacks and find out to what extent they are yogis, you find that they are fitting in, in one or the other of these yogas and that also parts of it. The yogas they teach are useful, definitely useful, but that does not mean that it will lead you towards the goal even to know the Divine Self within us. But, to teach how to know the source of our Divine Self, it is only known to the Masters, descending or ascending ones. So, this is the general idea of the seven paths leading to the goal of knowing the Divine Self within us, the atma, the soul. Now it is good in our interest to take up one by one each of these paths more in detail, if not exhaustively, at least to as much extent as our human mind can understand about them.