

SELF KNOWLEDGE IS UNITY

Yog (commonly pronounced as yoga) is the one unifying reality. Yog is all-permeating, unchanging and indestructible. Unity or oneness is often presumed to be the union of two objects, or the union of opposing views in order to evolve one view. One may also have the understanding that unity is to be united within oneself, as if there is an outer you and an inner you. This still conveys duality, because there are not two you's – a you within and a you without.

Yog means one You, one Self, like the sky that cannot be torn into separate pieces. The inseparable Self cannot be found in thought knowledge. Thought knowledge is relative knowledge, physical knowledge, learned knowledge, scientific knowledge, psychological knowledge.

A person's quest for unity is in fact a search to know him/herself. Consciously or unconsciously, all people are on a quest to know themselves, and they feel frustrated that the search never ends. The journey of thought knowledge ultimately leads to a sense of feeling involved in some problem or another, leaving a person feeling doubtful, confused and insecure about themselves. This is because they are looking in the field of changing thoughts for unity and resolution. But they will never find themselves in thought knowledge.

An infant has no sense of differences, which is why, when you look into a baby's eyes, you never feel judged; rather, you feel only joy and love. Now observe the development of a child, who begins like pure, clear, untainted water. If you drip red dye into the water, it turns pink. Add yellow dye and the water turns orange. Then add blue and you have brown. Thus the development of the young mind begins: you are taught your name and to recognize that this is your mother, this is your father, these are your friends. Then the child learns, "What is my placement among my family and friends?" The child is graded in school and learns, "Where is my placement in school? Am I above or below the grade?" And so a person's development continues: "Where is my placement in society? How accomplished am I? How rich am I? How attractive am I? How lovable am I? How popular am I?" Race, religion and nationality are all learned, and then he says, "These are my social, political, cultural, and religious views. This is who I am."

This is how the human identity is trained in relation to thought knowledge. Each person has developed a sense of himself in relation to his world. He now defends his identity, thinking it to be his individuality. He calls his individual identity the truth and thereby seeks 'another' to be united with his truth. Yet his search is inexhaustible, as no two people share the same truth. What appears initially to be harmonious, turns into disharmony as he gets involved in the issues of the coloured water and loses the awareness of the pure, clear, spring water of Being, the awareness of Yog.

According to Vedic wisdom, truth is pristine, clear water, but the mind focuses on the different colours, and feels helpless, not knowing how to relate to a state of no-colour when he is fixated on what is seen with physical eyes. This is the distinction between thought knowledge and Self knowledge. Self knowledge is the awareness that you are already pure and unaffected by the changing forms. Therefore you don't have to find yourself. You only need to realise that you are free from the built-up identity, just as the molecule H₂O remains unchanged by infused colours.

The human identity is sensitive to being judged negatively, always striving to secure a good image in the eyes of others. But as long as he identifies himself as a separate individual, he will live a life feeling under threat, and work hard to protect and fortify himself, using all kinds of earthly means.

Remaining limited by thought knowledge, you will round in a world of problems. Each situation will appear to call for a new solution. However, there is but one antidote: Return to Self knowledge and realise that all thoughts, all variegated personalities, and all actions arise from Unity (Yog). It is through meditation – in which one cultivates the power to allow the parade of many thoughts and feelings to simply pass by – that one gets in touch with Unity.

It is so elegantly simple: Thoughts are just thoughts, they come and go. Awareness unchanging is not bound by the thoughts, which means that awareness is not bound in the mind that tells only the story of one's fragile, temporary identity.

The child is so clear and pure, living free from the sense of judgment or shame. You are still that same child! All children are born pure, but as they grow up they go through the training process of praise and reprimands, and the pressures to conform to society, developing layer upon layer of complexes, insecurities and deep-seated feelings of wrong.

As children grow up, one way they learn to cope with these complexes is to project their attention outward – to judge, to blame and to criticize others in order to conceal the smallness they feel inside. But this outward projection builds a wall, within which one will live in a small and rigid mental world. Other children grow up and remain open and aware, but due to their sensitivity they feel suffering more acutely. They forget their original purity and find fault with themselves, simply due to being more sensitive and aware.

All inner struggles spring from the heart's craving to be truly seen, truly loved, truly known as the real You. No person wants to be judged and criticized. We observe how we close down in the company of body conscious persons, who see our value only in what is achieved on the outside. On the other hand, we

open and flourish in the company of those who recognise the inner being, valuing the inner qualities of awareness, empathy, kindness, and generosity.

Our sensitivities indicate an opening into Self knowledge, which is the awareness that You cannot be packaged in a small box with a fixed label of identification. Feeling confined, an inner rebellion bubbles up from within to push beyond the boundaries of the attributes of the body and personality. Being aware of the limitations, you can start to observe them, and through meditation – union with your true Self – to be free from the awkwardness of body consciousness and mental doubt.

Meditation unfolds the knowledge of your unlimited, pure and free Self. With Self awareness you will keenly observe the play of human interaction and the mechanics of the human mind that seeks to be great through achievements. Seeing the whole design, the complete picture from the vastness of your free and ever-present Self, you will giggle inside at how small the mind endeavours to make you.

Like the fairytale of the ugly duckling, your sensitivity must feel vulnerable in the realm of thought knowledge and body consciousness, but through the immeasurably valuable gift of meditation our subtle awareness – our birth right – is brought forth to shine as a beacon of light, radiating pure intelligence, inner strength, and oneness with all beings.