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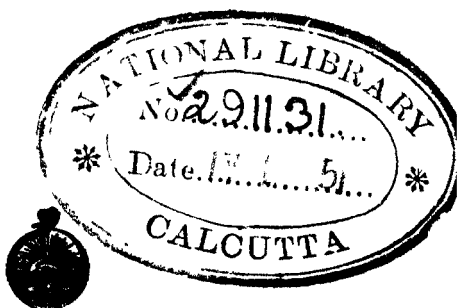
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**SADHANAS**  
**OR**  
**PREPARATIONS FOR HIGHER LIFE**

**BY**  
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**ADVAITA ASHRAMA**  
**MATAVATI, ALMORA, HIMALAYAS**

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# **SADHANAS**

**OR**

## **PREPARATIONS FOR HIGHER LIFE**

If atavism gains, you go down ; if evolution gains, you go on. Therefore we must not allow atavism to take place. Here, in my own body, is the first work of the study. We are too busy trying to mend the ways of our neighbours, that is the difficulty. We must begin with our own bodies. The heart, the liver, etc., are all atavistic ; bring them back into consciousness, control them, so that they will obey your commands and act up to your wishes. There was a time when we had control of the liver ; we could shake the whole skin, as can the cow. I have seen many people bring the control back by sheer hard practice. Once an impress is made, it is there. Bring back all the submerged activities—the vast ocean of action. This is the first part of the great study, and it is absolutely necessary for our social well-being. On the other

hand, only the consciousness need not be studied all the time.

Then there is the other part of the study, not so necessary in our social life, which tend to liberation. Its direct action is to free the soul, to take the torch into the gloom, to clean out what is behind, to shake it up or even defy it, and to make us march onward piercing the gloom. That is the goal—the superconscious. Then, when that state is reached, this very man becomes divine, becomes free. And to the mind thus trained to transcend all, gradually this universe will begin to give up its secrets ; the book of Nature will be read, chapter after chapter, till the goal is attained, and we pass from this valley of life and death to that One, where death and life do not exist, and we know the Real and become the Real.

The first thing necessary is a quiet and peaceable life. If I have to go about the world the whole day to make a living, it is hard for me to attain to anything very high in this life. Perhaps in another life I shall be born under more propitious circumstances. But if I am

earnest enough, these very circumstances will change even in this birth. Was there anything you did not get which you really wanted ? It could not be. For it is the want that creates the body. It is the light that has bored the holes, as it were, in your head, called the eyes. If the light had not existed you would have had no eyes. It is sound that has made the ears. The object of perception existed first, before you made the organ. In a few hundred thousand years, or earlier, we may have other organs to perceive electricity and other things. There is no desire for a peaceful mind. Desire will not come unless there is something outside to fulfil it. The outside something just bores a hole in the body, as it were, and tries to get into the mind. So, when the desire shall arise to have a peaceful, quiet life, where everything shall be propitious for the development of the mind, that *shall come*—you may take that as my experience. It may come in thousands of lives, but it must come. Hold on to that, the desire. You cannot have the strong desire if its object was not outside for you already. Of course, you must

understand, there is a difference between desire and desire. The master said, "My child, if you desire after God, God shall come to you." The disciple did not understand his master fully. One day both went to bathe in a river, and the master said, "Plunge in," and the boy did so. In a moment the master was upon him, holding him down. He would not let the boy come up. When the boy struggled and was exhausted, he let him go. "Yes, my child, how did you feel there?" "Oh, the desire for a breath of air!" "Do you have that kind of desire for God?" "No, sir." "Have that kind of desire for God, and you shall have God."

That, without which we cannot live, must come to us. If it did not come to us, life could not go on.

If you want to be a Yogi, you must be free, and place yourself in circumstances where you are alone and free from all anxiety. He who desires for a comfortable and nice life and at the same time wants to realise the Self is like the fool who, wanting to cross the river, caught hold of a crocodile mistaking it for a log of

wood. "Seek ye first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you." / Unto him comes everything who does not care for anything. Fortune is like a flirt ; she cares not for him who wants her, but she is at the feet of him who does not care for her. Money comes and showers itself upon one who does not care for it ; so does fame come in abundance, until it is a trouble and a burden. They always come to the Master. The slave never gets anything. The Master is he who can live in spite of them, whose life does not depend upon the little, foolish things of the world. Live for an ideal, and that one ideal alone. Let it be so great, so strong, that there may be nothing else left in the mind ; no place for anything else, no time for anything else.

How some people give all their energies, time, brain, body, and everything, to become rich ! They have no time for breakfast ! Early in the morning they are out and at work ! They die in the attempt—ninety per cent of them—and the rest when they make money, cannot enjoy



it. That is grand ! I do not say it is bad to try to be rich. It is marvellous, wonderful. Why, what does it show ? It shows that one can have the same amount of energy and struggle for freedom as one has for money. We know we have to give up money and all other things when we die, and yet, see the amount of energy we can put forth for them. But we, the same human beings, should we not put forth a thousandfold more strength and energy to acquire that which never fades, but which remains to us for ever ? For this is the one great friend, our own good deeds, our own spiritual excellence, that follows us beyond the grave. Everything else is left behind here with the body.

That is the one great first step—the real desire for the ideal. Everything comes easy after that. That the Indian mind found out ; there, in India, men go to any length to find truth. But here, in the West, the difficulty is that everything is made so easy. It is not truth, but development, that is the great aim. The struggle is the great lesson. Mind you, the great benefit

in this life is struggle. It is through that we pass—if there is any road to Heaven, it is through Hell. Through Hell to Heaven is always the way. When the soul has wrestled with circumstance and has met death, a thousand times death on the way, but nothing daunted has struggled forward again and again and yet again—then the soul comes out as a giant and laughs at the ideal he has been struggling for, because he finds how much greater is he than the ideal. I am the end, my own Self, and nothing else, for what is there to compare to my own Self? Can a bag of gold be the ideal of my Soul? Certainly not! My Soul is the highest ideal that I can have. Realising my own real nature is the one goal of my life.

There is nothing that is absolutely evil. The devil has a place here as well as God, else he would not be here. Just as I told you, it is through Hell that we pass to Heaven. Our mistakes have places here. Go on! Do not look back if you think you have done something that is not right. Now, do you believe you could be what you are to-day had you not made

those mistakes before ? Bless your mistakes, then. They have been angels unawares. Blessed be torture ! Blessed be happiness ! Do not care what be your lot. Hold on to the ideal. March on ! Do not look back upon little mistakes and things. In this battlefield of ours, the dust of mistakes must be raised. Those who are so thin-skinned that they cannot bear the dust, let them get out of the ranks.

So, then, this tremendous determination to struggle, a hundredfold more determination than that which you put forth to gain anything which belongs to this life, is the first great preparation.

And then along with it, there must be meditation. Meditation is the one thing. Meditate ! The greatest thing is meditation. It is the nearest approach to spiritual life—the mind meditating. It is the one moment in our daily life that we are not at all material—the Soul thinking of Itself, free from all matter—this marvellous touch of the Soul !

The body is our enemy, and yet is our friend. Which of you can bear the sight of misery ?

And which of you cannot do so when you see it only as a painting ? Because it is unreal, we do not identify ourselves with it ; we know it is only a painting ; it cannot bless us, it cannot hurt us. The most terrible misery painted upon a piece of canvas, we may even enjoy ; we praise the technique of the artist, we wonder at his marvellous genius, even though the scene he paints is most horrible. That is the secret ; that non-attachment. Be the Witness.

No breathing, no physical training of Yoga, nothing is of any use until you reach to the idea, "I am the Witness." Say, when the tyrant hand is on your neck, "I am the Witness ! I am the Witness !" Say, "I am the Spirit ! Nothing external can touch me." When evil thoughts arise, repeat that, give that sledge-hammer blow on their heads, "I am the Spirit ! I am the Witness, the Ever-Blessed ! I have no reason to do, no reason to suffer. I have finished with everything, I am the Witness. I am in my picture gallery—this universe is my museum, I am looking at these successive paintings. They are all beautiful, whether good or evil. I see

the marvellous skill, but it is all one. Infinite flames of the Great Painter !” Really speaking, there is naught—neither volition, nor desire. He is all. He—She—the Mother, is playing, and we are like dolls, Her helpers in this play. Here, She puts one now in the garb of a beggar, another moment, in the garb of a king, the next moment, in the garb of a saint, and again, in the garb of a devil. We are putting on different garbs, to help the Mother Spirit in Her play.

When the baby is at play, she will not come even if called by her mother. But when she finishes her play, she will rush to her mother, and will have no nay. So there come moments in our life, when we feel our play is finished, and we want to rush to the Mother. Then all our toil here will be of no value ; men, women and children—death, name and fame, joys and glories of life—punishments and successes—will be no more, and the whole life will seem like a show. We shall see only the infinite rhythm going on, endless and purposeless, going we do not know where. Only this much shall we say : our play is done.

## THE GOAL AND METHODS OF REALISATION

The greatest misfortune to befall the world would be if all mankind were to recognise and accept but one religion, one universal form of worship, one standard of morality. This would be the deathblow to all religious and spiritual progress. Instead of trying to hasten this disastrous event by inducing persons, through good or evil methods, to conform to our own highest ideal of truth, we ought rather to endeavour to remove all obstacles which prevent men from developing in accordance with their own highest ideals, and thus make their attempt vain to establish one universal religion.

The ultimate goal of all mankind, the aim and end of all religions, is but one re-union with God, or, what amounts to the same, with the divinity which is every man's true nature. But while the aim is one, the method of attaining may vary with the different temperaments of men.

## 12 THE GOAL AND METHODS OF REALISATION

Both the goal and the methods employed for reaching it are called Yoga, a word derived from the same Sanskrit root as the English "yoke," meaning "to join," to join us to our reality, God. There are various such Yogas, or methods of union—but the chief ones are—Karma-Yoga, Bhakti-Yoga, Raja-Yoga, and Jnana-Yoga.

Every man must develop according to his own nature. As every science has its methods, so has every religion. The methods of attaining the end of religion are called Yoga by us, and the different forms of Yoga that we teach, are adapted to the different natures and temperaments of men. We classify them in the following way, under four heads :

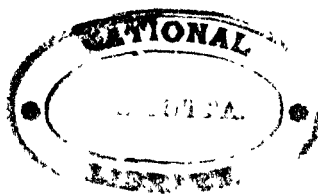
(1) Karma-Yoga—The manner in which a man realises his own divinity through works and duty.

(2) Bhakti-Yoga—The realisation of the divinity through devotion to, and love of, a Personal God.

(3) Raja-Yoga—The realisation of the divinity through the control of mind.

(4) Jnana-Yoga—The realisation of a man's own divinity through knowledge.

These are all different roads leading to the same centre—God. Indeed, the varieties of religious belief are an advantage, since all faiths are good, so far as they encourage man to lead a religious life. The more sects there are, the more opportunities there are for making successful appeals to the divine instinct in all men.





BOOKS ON YOGA

*By the same author*

Jnana-Yoga

Discourses on Jnana-Yoga

Raja-Yoga

Six Lessons on Raja-Yoga

Bhakti-Yoga