

# The Glory of Integral Yoga

By Swami  
Jyotirmayananda

**I**NTEGRAL YOGA implies a balanced and harmonious practice of the four main aspects of Yoga: the Yoga of Wisdom (Jnana Yoga), the Yoga of Devotion (Bhakti Yoga), the Yoga of Meditation (Raja Yoga), and the Yoga of Action (Karma Yoga). These four are not actually four different Yogas, but four aspects of one integral Yogic process, four interdependent movements on the path of mysticism.

The general outline in the practice of Integral Yoga begins with Karma Yoga or the performance of action with insight. A Karma

Yogi endeavors to see that whatever they do is done with the inward attitude of surrender and detachment—they do not expect any fruit of their action. Enjoying this inward attitude, they outwardly perform righteous actions that allow them to be serviceable to others. This Yoga, then, removes gross impurities such as hatred, greed and vanity, thereby bringing about *chitta shuddhi* (a high degree of purity in the heart). Such purity allows the aspirant to unlock the higher mystic movements of devotion and meditation. A spiritual aspirant begins to experience higher forms of love, a

love that is Divine. This experience, in turn, makes their Karma Yoga more intensive. Though they began practicing Karma Yoga with a certain amount of effort, the moment they develop this insight into Divine Love, they discover great joy and spontaneity in their activity.

Along with devotion, a Karma Yogi also gains a footing into true mental concentration—an insight into the fact that the world is not meant to distract their mind but lead them to the source of creation. In addition to concentration, a Yogi gains an insight into the mystic art of balancing the mind, even during daily duties and activities. Thus, their active life, at the same time, becomes more dynamic and is further enhanced by their meditative life. And finally, as devotion and meditation further purify the unconscious, there emerges intuitive vision—the Yogi is led to Jnana Yoga. They enquire into the nature of “Who am I?” and ultimately attain Enlightenment.

This is the simple plan of Integral Yoga. The practice of action leads to mental purity; mental purity unfolds devotion; devotion leads to success in meditation; and success in meditation renders the intellect sharp and subtle. And ultimately, that subtle intellect penetrates the veil of ignorance, thereby leading to Enlightenment.

**T**HE IMPORTANCE of Integral Yoga is apparent, but yet it must be deeply understood. If you are practicing a one-sided Yoga (only Bhakti or only Karma Yoga), it may seem easier at first, but it will not effectively lead you to the goal. Balance is the secret of success in every field of life. If, for example, you are carrying a load on a bicycle—there is a bundle in front, a bundle behind and perhaps a passenger or two—a balance has to be kept. If it is slightly upset, the results could be rather

painful to say the least. Much in the same way, it is most important for a Yogi to follow a balanced plan—it is not how intensive your practice is, but how balanced it is. Rhythm is the most important aspect of Integral Yoga.

An Integral Yogi practices the different Yogas and their disciplines daily in a happy and balanced proportion. Simply put, in your day-to-day life, there must be a little meditation, a little study of scriptures, a little repetition of mantra, a little Yoga exercise, a little inward reflection, a little action and a little entertainment or diversion. If all these are artistically blended day by day, you will continue to advance, though apparently in a slow measure, yet in a process that is definite and complete.

Consider, for example, how two different people might plan a trip. One person is so excited and hasty. He has so many things that need to be taken, but in his excitement, leaves some of them behind. He drives his car off like a jet. Then halfway there, he suddenly remembers something that was left behind. He goes back and repeats the same process. To make matters worse, in this mad rush he occasionally trips and falls. On the other hand, his neighbor is meticulous. He sees everything he needs, calmly gets everything together and starts out. He knows he does not have to come back.

Similarly, although an Integral Yogi starts slowly, they continue to gather momentum until their speed is unimaginable. And after a certain stage of development, they arrive at their destination of Self-realization. The power of such a balanced spiritual movement is the emphasis of all the great teachers of the present time. Swami Sivananda especially emphasized this balance and called it the “Yoga of Synthesis.” Swami Vivekananda also emphasized this need.

However, Integral Yoga has its roots in ancient times. The Bhagavad Gita is a most

ancient scripture and presents a condensed version of the Upanishads. The Upanishads intend to teach Integral Yoga, but because of the limitation of the human mind, the four aspects were interpreted as distinct systems of Yoga, each one different from the others. Yet with deep insight one realizes that the basic teachings of the Upanishads are Integral. They deal with life; and life cannot be segmented, cannot be fragmented. Human personality has its particular aspects—reason, emotion, will and action—and all must grow together.

**T**HE ILLUSTRATION of tuning a veena is used to emphasize the necessity of balance. Melodious music cannot proceed from the veena unless its strings are well tuned—if they are too tight, they will break; if they are too loose, there will not be a clear tone. Only when they are neither too tight nor too loose will there be sweet music.

Integral Yoga, therefore, is a constant process of attuning the different strings of the personality in daily life. Sage Swami Sivana-nda often sang the following simple teaching to his disciples:

*“Eat a little, drink a little, do japa (repetition of mantra) a little, do satsanga (association with the wise) a little, study a little, meditate a little, do vichara (enquiry) a little. . . .”*

The song implies not making Yoga a tremendous problem for your mind—“How am I to practice Yoga when I have so many things to do? I have no time.” All you are asked to do is just commence little by little. Worm your way.

See that every aspect of your life, even your food, is questioned. “What type of food will I give my body today? Real nervous strength and more power for the mind is important, and therefore, I will eat accordingly.” So, you see,

eating itself is Integral Yoga. How can you balance your diet? Find out, work at it, and achieve balance.

**A** WORD OF CAUTION: Never develop the idea of going to extremes in order to be recognized as a good Yogi. “I must show my friends and people around me that I have done something great. Therefore, let me do something extraordinary and fast for seven days!” This is a great error because you upset the balance if you try to do something extreme. Furthermore, having done something intensive, you develop an egocentricity. Unless those who do not follow Integral Yoga are under strict guidance, they will go through all sorts of toil and turmoil to succeed. And even those who are under guidance must go through a great share of trouble in order to succeed.

The majority of people who follow a one-sided approach in Yoga end up under great illusion. A person who has read some books on Yoga develops the idea, “I am not mediocre. Why should I practice Hatha Yoga? That is only for the dull-wits who think they are but mere physical bodies. I am not the body. I am a Yogi. And therefore, I will go to the Himalayas where I will practice intense meditation.” If this type of person does go to the Himalayas, he will probably spend six months of his time doing nothing but sitting in a cave and adjusting to life in that environment.

During that time, due to his immense illusion, he has not introspected a bit. He has not realized that he has carried with him the same attachments, the same illusions. But instead of being attached to humans, he now becomes attached to squirrels; instead of fighting with people, he now fights with monkeys. Further, he has brought along his old memories, his sorrows, his grief. So, all alone in a cave, he

keeps company with his dullness. And after six months, without having an insight into all this, he comes out with a tremendous air of vanity. He wants to be recognized as a Sage. It then becomes more difficult for him to begin Integral Yoga than it is for those who began more humbly. Although such an extreme movement seems easier, in actuality it is more difficult. So, an extreme movement must be avoided and, since the mind is ever tempted to move to extremes, vigilance must be adopted.

**I**F YOU ARE following the path of Integral Yoga, what are the symptoms of success? Increasingly, you develop confidence, intense faith that the path you have adopted is bound to lead you higher and higher. You become more patient. You become increasingly more cheerful, more concentrated and more balanced in mind. But more importantly, you see old defects in your personality begin to disappear. The defects of anger, hatred and jealousy that have always been a part of your personality are now spontaneously thrown off by Integral Yoga without any tension. In this way, you gradually develop a different type of personality, different type of senses, different type of intellect. And all this is possible through Integral Yoga.

But the most important feature of Integral Yoga is that it is a joyous movement. You find that life is a thrill, for day by day there are new dimensions to realize, new visions to acquire, new challenges to encounter. Do not deprive yourself of the joyous experiences and freedom that are yours in Integral Yoga. Move on with heroism. You are bound to succeed.

May you progress rapidly on the path of Integral Yoga and achieve the Goal in this very life!



## FROM SWAMIJI'S KITCHEN

### RAITA

- 1 large container Lowfat Yogurt
- 1/2 to 1 cup 2% milk
- 1 tablespoon oil
- 1/2 teaspoon Chaat masala
- 1/4 teaspoon Cumin (roasted and crushed)
- 1 pinch black salt
- 1 pinch crushed black pepper
- 1/2 teaspoon black mustard seeds
- salt to taste
- 1/2 tablespoons chopped fresh parsley or coriander
- 1 teaspoon grated fresh ginger
- 1 cucumber (peeled and grated)
- 1 tomato (diced)
- 1 cup Haldiram's Masala Boondi

Whisk yogurt until smooth; add a little milk until desired consistency.

Add the grated cucumber, ginger and tomato.

In a sauce pan heat the oil and fry the mustard seeds with the cover on the pan until the seeds stop sputtering. Pour this oil along with the mustard seeds and other spices into the yogurt mixture. Add salt to taste.

Add the crunchy Boondi.

Top with additional roasted cumin powder.

Serve cold. This is a delicious salad to be eaten along with your meal.