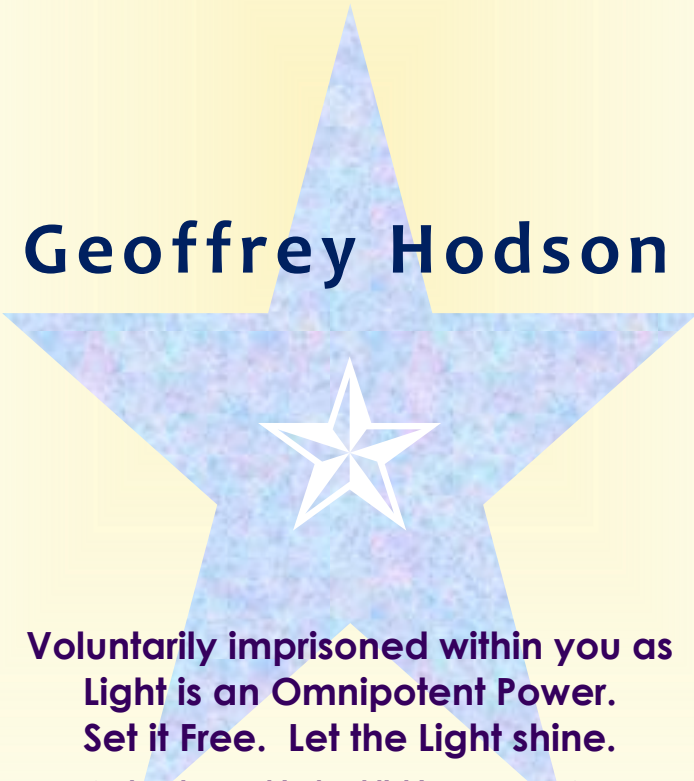


# A Yoga of Light

**Geoffrey Hodson**



**Voluntarily imprisoned within you as  
Light is an Omnipotent Power.  
Set it Free. Let the Light shine.**

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(Slightly modernised for gender neutrality)

## INTRODUCTION

At the heart of the Cosmos there is ONE. That One has Its sanctuary and shrine in the heart of every human being. One's first major spiritual discovery in consciousness is of this Divine Presence within oneself, "the Inner Ruler Immortal seated in the hearts of all beings." (*The Bhagavad Gītā*) Thereafter, identity with the One Alone, fully conscious absorption "like water in water, space in space, light in light" (*Ātma-Bodha*, Shankarāchārya) for ever-more in the eternal, self-existent All, is achieved. This is the human being's ultimate goal. Regular, wisely directed meditation can hasten its attainment.

The first objective in meditation is to discover one's own Spiritual Selfhood as distinct from the personal vehicles, physical, emotional and mental, and the consciousness active within them. Devotees of a certain temperament – others might not be helped by this method – begin, therefore, with an exercise in disassociation, seeking both to realise the distinction between the Immortal Ego (Higher Manas) and its mortal, personal vehicles and to know the Spiritual Self. To know the knower may appear impossible to the analytical mind. The seeming paradox is, however, resolved at the level of the synthesising and intuitive intelligence in the human being, their prophetic mind, to which in meditation the centre of consciousness is deliberately raised.

The second objective is to realise that the Spiritual Self of the human being is forever an integral part of the Spiritual Self of the universe, the All-Pervading Supreme Lord, the Solar Logos. Every human being is one with God and through THAT with all that lives. Human-Spirit and God-Spirit are one Spirit, and to know this truth of truths transforms life.

The discovery of the Godhead within one and its unity with the Godhead in all, these two discoveries are experiences in consciousness and the positive use of the creative imagination in meditation can help one to gain those experiences.

The disassociation practice is therefore followed by affirmations of the unity of one with God. These affirmations can lead the devotee into silent contemplation and deepening experience of unity with the all-pervading and transcendent Deity, the nameless, selfless, One Alone.

Spiritual achievement by one man or woman makes easier and brings nearer the same achievement by all people. Realisation of this fact provides part of the motive in yoga. The would-be yogi is, however, also insistently inwardly impelled; for him or her “there is no other Path at all to go”. (*Shvetāshvatara Upanishad*, VI, 15.)

This booklet is offered as preliminary guidance—eventually each finds their own way—to

those thus moved who seek systematic procedure  
in consciousness by a well-ried and safe method.



# **A METHOD OF PERSONAL AND GROUP MEDITATION**

**GROUP MEDITATION IS DIRECTED  
WITH SUITABLE PAUSES  
BY A LEADER AS FOLLOWS**

## **Preparation**

Body relaxed.

Emotions harmonised.

Mind alert and charged with will.

Centre of awareness established in  
the Higher Self,  
the Spiritual Soul,  
the Immortal Ego.

## **Dissociation**

Mentally affirm and realise:

I am not the Physical Body.  
I am the Spiritual Self.

I am not the Emotions.  
I am the Spiritual Self.

I am not the Mind.  
I am the Spiritual Self.

## **Meditation**

I am the Divine Self. (Think of the Monad)

Immortal.

Eternal.

Radiant with Spiritual Light.

I am that Self of Light, that Self am I.

The Self in me, the Ātma,<sup>(1)</sup>

is one with the Self in All, the Paramātma<sup>(2)</sup>

I am that Self in All; that Self am I.

The Ātma and the Paramātma are One.

I am That. That am I.

(Silence) -----

## Closing

Bring the centre of awareness:

Into the formal mind,  
illuminated and responsive to the intuition.

Into the Emotions,  
irradiated by Spiritual Light.

Into the body,  
empowered by Spiritual Will,  
inwardly vitalised,  
and Self-recollected throughout the day,

remembering the Divine Presence in the heart,  
the Inner Ruler Immortal,  
seated in the hearts of all beings.

Relax the mind and permit the uplifting effect of  
the meditation to extend into all the other activities  
of the day.

The same procedure should be followed in private,  
self-directed meditation.

Notes: (1) Ātma, Sk: The Spirit-Essence of the human  
being.

(2) Paramātmā, Sk: The Spirit-Essence of the  
universe, its presiding Intelligence, the Solar  
Logos (Word, Reason), Our Lord the Sun.

## COMMENTARY ON THE MEDITATION

Two objectives are sought in meditation:

- I. Egoic consciousness.
- II. Realisation of oneness with the Supreme Lord and Life of the Universe.

This achievement is governed by certain fixed laws which must be obeyed, if full success is to be obtained.

1. Physically they are:
  - (i) Privacy and freedom from intrusion.
  - (ii) Complete bodily relaxation, without which the consciousness cannot wholly free itself from entanglement in the physical brain and body. So, deliberately, as a regular practice and an art, every nerve and every muscle should be comfortable and at ease.
  - (iii) Relaxation is to meditation what the engagement of the first two hooks of the zipper is to its closure. If the first two hooks engage, it will zip. If they do not engage, it will never zip. Similarly, physical relaxation is essential to the flight of the Soul.
  - (iv) Breathing should be slowed down to about one third or one half of the normal rate. This generally becomes automatic as the meditation proceeds.



- (v) Posture during meditation should permit added measures of *kundalini*<sup>(1)</sup> and *prana*<sup>(2)</sup> to flow from the sacrum along the spinal cord into the brain. The spine, therefore, should be kept straight and, *except* in eastern *yoga* postures, neither legs nor arms should be crossed. The Egyptian position is very suitable for westerners. *Head pain is one warning of error in technique which should be corrected before continuing.*

Notes: (1) *Kundalini*, Sk: The electric, creative Life-Force resident in the Sacrum.

(2) *Prāna*, Sk: The Life-Breath of the universe.

2. The astral nature needs to be harmonious and calm. Friction, tension and discordant emotions can also prevent the flight of the Soul and inhibit the freedom of consciousness.
3. The mind must be alert, the will must be positive, otherwise a kind of dreamy imaginativeness can be mistaken for spiritual experience, of which it is the antithesis.

By these means the triple, personal nature is brought to a condition in which its imprisonment of consciousness is reduced to a minimum. This is not sufficient, however, and consciousness must deliberately free itself. The practice of dissociation from them therefore follows the preparation of the bodies.

This is directed as follows:

“CENTRE OF AWARENESS ESTABLISHED IN THE HIGHER  
SELF, THE SPIRITUAL SOUL, THE IMMORTAL EGO.

MENTALLY AFFIRM AND REALISE:

I AM NOT THE PHYSICAL BODY.

I AM THE SPIRITUAL SELF.

I AM NOT THE EMOTIONS.

I AM THE SPIRITUAL SELF.

I AM NOT THE MIND.

I AM THE SPIRITUAL SELF.”

At this point in creative imagination the centre of observation, awareness, I-ness, is withdrawn from the physical brain and centred in the Ego <sup>(1)</sup>. Similarly, also, the consciousness is withdrawn from the emotional and mental bodies and centred in the Causal Body <sup>(2)</sup>.

Notes: (1) Ego. The unfolding, spiritual individuality.

(2) Causal Body (*Karana Sarira*). The vehicle of consciousness at the level of abstract thought.

This procedure may later become unnecessary.

Regular practice with full intent and determination, allowing the positive imagination to have full play, will transfer the whole concentration of awareness and existence from the mortal to the immortal human being, to the Ego in the Causal Body.

There then follows an attempted ascent towards the Monad, aspiring to reach *Ātmic* consciousness.

THE LEADER CONTINUES:

“I AM THE DIVINE SELF, (*Manas*)  
IMMORTAL, (*Buddhi*) <sup>(1)</sup>  
ETERNAL.” (*Ātmā*)

Notes: (1) *Buddhi*, Sk: The Spirit-Life of universe and human being. Vehicle of *Ātmā*. Intuitive wisdom.

Realisation of the Self as pure Spiritual Will (*Ātmā*) is here the objective.

“RADIANT WITH SPIRITUAL LIGHT.” <sup>(1)</sup>

Notes: (1) The Light of the Logos, *Daivī-Prakriti*.

It is helpful to think of oneself as a centre of pure, white light, radiating throughout the universe. Identifying oneself fully in consciousness with that light, the devotee affirms:

“I AM THAT SELF OF LIGHT.  
THAT SELF AM I.”

Regular practice by this method eventually enables one to achieve this transference of consciousness from physical, emotional and mental levels to higher mental, intuitional and purely spiritual states of awareness.

The Self is then realised as a radiant centre of universal, spiritual light, concentrated into a point of burning intensity, much as sunlight may be focussed by a lens into a point of brilliant light.

Movement in consciousness towards the second objective in meditation then follows. This culminates in realisation of the unity of the Spiritual Self as Light with the One Light, with the Supreme, All-Pervading Spirit of the Universe.

Concentration and meditation upon the *Ātmic* Self (Higher Self) merges into absorbed contemplation of union with the *Paramātmā*, the Transcendent and Immanent *Ātmic* Self of All.

THE LEADER THEREFORE CONTINUES:

“THE SELF IN ME, THE *ĀTMĀ*, IS ONE  
WITH THE SELF IN ALL, THE *PARAMĀTMĀ*.”

Here, according to temperament, consciousness is directed towards realisation of the identity of the *Ātmā*, the Spirit-Self in the human being, with the *PARAMĀTMĀ*, the Spirit-Self in all Nature. The manifested Supreme Deity of our Universe, the Solar Logos, may here be thought of, with ardent aspiration to realise oneness with That. One may visualise the spiritual heart of the Sun and oneself as in union there with.

The words “THE *ĀTMĀ* AND THE *PARAMĀTMĀ* ARE ONE”, constitute a somewhat *mantric* <sup>(1)</sup> phrase despite the mixture of English and *Sanskrit*. It is a sentence of power which defines the summit of human attainment in consciousness, which is full realisation of unity and identity with the One Self in All.

Notes: (1) *Mantra*, Sk: Word or sentence of power.

In consequence, the final affirmation is:

“I AM THAT. THAT AM I.”

The sense of separated selfhood eventually vanishes. Prolonged, thought-free realisation of identity with God ultimately alone remains.

After the preliminary stages of *yoga*, the formal mind is stilled and is there-after maintained in “that fixity of mind in which no breeze can waft an earthly thought within”. Thought ceases. Stillness pervades the whole nature, which can become steeped in peace, even though immense expansion and dynamic power are being experienced at the highest, most spiritual levels of human awareness.

As much time as can be spared should then be spent in mind-free contemplation of unity with God, and through It or THAT with the Spirit-Self in all that lives.

## THE RETURN TO PHYSICAL AWARENESS:

When, at last, meditation must cease, it is important to return to the brain consciousness by the same route followed on the upward journey. One reason for this is that channels between the lower self and the Higher Self are being opened by concentrated effort, and should be used in both the ascent and the return of consciousness; for by this means they are both widened and kept opened.

Another reason for returning through the mental and emotional bodies is that it is eminently desirable to bring the full fruits of spiritual experience into the personal vehicles, thereby enlightening and purifying them and quickening their evolution. This is a third objective in meditation, to quicken the evolution of the bodies of mind emotion and flesh by a powerful “descent”<sup>(1)</sup> of spiritual force and experience.

Notes: (1) Diagrammatically only; actually an emergence from within outwards occurs.

## THE CENTRE OF AWARENESS:

It is important to discover one's centre of awareness and the level at which it is operating, as also to be able to place it in any one of the vehicles at will. If a piece of work demands operation from the mental level, one must be able to function there. If one's actual presence in the astral plane and body is needed, then one must be able to focus oneself there. We generally do this last unconsciously. Intellectual interests place the centre of awareness in the mind and the brain. Cultural, artistic and pleasure-giving pursuits focus it automatically in the emotions and the heart.

Success in meditation demands good control of this movement of one's centre of life and consciousness. The process, therefore, is deliberately practised and forms part of this method of meditation. When closing the *yoga* practice, awareness is strongly centred in the mental body, into which the light from the higher worlds is powerfully brought, and the mind is thrown open to the intuition. This is possible because thoughts are things. We powerfully quicken the evolution of our personal vehicles by thus infusing and interpenetrating them with Spirit-Power from those levels to which we have sought to ascend.

## THE LEADER THEREFORE SAYS:

“BRING THE CENTRE OF AWARENESS:  
INTO THE FORMAL MIND,  
ILLUMINED, AND RESPONSIVE TO INTUITION.”

After a suitable pause, the instruction then is:

“INTO THE EMOTIONS, IRRADIATED BY SPIRITUAL  
LIGHT.”

By a strong effort of will a shaft of pure white Ātmic fire is brought down from above, to transfix the astral body as by a spear. Such spiritualisation of the astral body causes the courser material and the undesirable emotional states to be driven out by the more powerful, spiritual forces. This is the meaning of such glyphs as St. George slaying the Dragon with his spear, and Shri Krishna overcoming Kālīya, the black serpent, and then dancing upon its hood, as also of all other victories by Saviours and heroes over reptiles referred to in other world scriptures. These stories partly represent phases of *yoga* dramatised and pictorially described.

Then, finally, awareness is focussed in the physical body. This should be done quite deliberately, placing the centre of consciousness in the middle of the head, where it normally abides. The powers of the triple Self are then brought down into the body, the leader saying:

“INTO THE BODY, EMPOWERED BY SPIRITUAL WILL.”



The fire of the Ātmā is thus established in the body as an irresistible Will-Force, available in waking consciousness.

“INWARDLY VITALISED.”

At these words, the *Buddhic* Life, the One Life, the spiritual Prāna, is visualised as flooding and filling the whole physical body, which may then be thought of as charged with its golden life and light, vividly alive, often with much benefit to health.

The Higher Mind then applies control to the lower mind, to the emotions and to the body. These are to be:

“SELF-RECOLLECTED THROUGHOUT THE DAY”,

Meaning calm, poised, mindful, rooted in the Eternal. To bring this about, the closing words and thought are:

“REMEMBERING THE DIVINE PRESENCE IN THE HEART, THE INNER RULER IMMORTAL, SEATED IN THE HEARTS OF ALL BEINGS.”

This Presence is the Monad-Ego, the Spirit-Self, present in the heart, not only to oneself, but of all beings. In itself, this practice of self-recollection is quietening and peace-giving; it keeps the

consciousness centred in interior reality and never wholly absorbed in the external, transitory world.

One should not break or emerge from meditation suddenly, lest there be a shock to the nervous system and a quick casting aside and partial loss of the inner experience. This should always be avoided, and one should withdraw gradually from the meditative state before taking up the duties of the day. In their fulfilment, the daily life should conform as closely as possible to the accepted spiritual ideals.



## THE MIND IN MEDITATION

Hodson, Geoffrey

### From “The Yogic Ascent To Spiritual Heights”

First published 1991. © Sandra Hodson. First published by Stellar Books, a Division of Philippine Theosophical Foundation, Inc. Manila, Philippines (p120).

Very little progress can be made in entering the higher consciousness, remaining there, and developing the faculty of entering it at will, until the mind has been brought under a reasonable measure of control. There is no easy way over this stile, though some people have greater natural facility for it than others.

Several conditions of the mind are passed through when using such a form of yoga as in *A Yoga of Light*. At the beginning of meditation the mind must be clearly and unwaveringly focused on the preliminary procedure. At that time, concentration is very important. The mind must not be allowed to wander during the affirmations of dissociation and true identity. When we affirm, “I am not the body”, we should positively divest ourselves of the body in concentrated thought. The three affirmed dissociations from the three personal vehicles and self-identification with the Inner Self by the words, “I am the Spiritual Self”, should have been made without a break in thought. At each of these, an ascent is made in consciousness, as if by an unbroken straight vertical line into the Ego in the

Causal body. Something interesting and objective is then being attempted, and the mind should not wander during that procedure. There should be an increasingly real dissociation and fulfillment of the affirmation

The control of mind that is necessary must be developed by practice and the exercise of the will. All the powers of the will and mind must be brought to bear in order to achieve the required capacity. If the mind does wander, it is a good plan to bring it back forcibly along the pathway by which it went forth. This will eventually bring it under control and stabilize it, and there is no substitute for this preliminary concentration. We must practice it until it is mastered; otherwise the meditative condition will continue to elude us.

Interest is the key to successful concentration. The mind does not wander when reading an interesting book or watching a movie. Indeed, there is little or no conscious effort at all. One may usefully practice concentrating the mind upon something deeply interesting. Then let the subject become more and more abstract as mental skill is developed. Eventually, the power will be attained to hold it upon an idea, rather than a form.

## THE USE OF CREATIVE IMAGINATION

More radiant than the sun,  
purer than the snow,  
subtler than the ether is the Self,  
the Spirit within my heart.  
I am that Self, that self am I

One reason why aspirants may not get the desired results from their yoga discipline is lack of persistence and faith, or of imagination. With the best will in the world, they permit their minds to come between them and their Ego. It might be useful to take the sentences of affirmation and describe the corresponding mental and supramental actions appropriate to each of them. For example, at the words “more brilliant than the sun within”, the centre of observation might well be placed in imagination in the heart of the sun itself and after a time in the heart of the spiritual Sun and held there. This in itself can produce illumination.

The term “whiter than the unblemished snow” refers to the unstained and unstainable *Atma*, the pure white and radiant Spirit-Self of the Universe and man. “More rare than the Ether” refers to the immanent Logos, the all-pervading, all-interpenetrating divine Principle and Presence in Nature and in man. The final affirmation should be mentally repeated a number of times and then the mind allowed to fall into silence, so that the higher consciousness may supervene.

A waiting and even expectant mental attitude, but not activity, is advisable. Again, the

inability to imagine and to enter creatively into the significance of these affirmations is the great barrier for Western aspirants. Positive, creative imagination in contradistinction to mere fantasy is an important factor in success in yoga, particularly in the preliminary phases.



**“Voluntarily imprisoned within you as Light is an Omnipotent Power. Set it Free. Let the Light shine.”**

**Hodson, Geoffrey**

**From “*Light Of The Sanctuary,*  
*The Occult Diary of Geoffrey Hodson*”**

1988. © The Theosophical Publishers, Inc. Manila, Philippines (p26).

“INDIA . . . Farther southwards more beauty at Tiruvannamalai (notice the prefix *Tiru*, holy) a very ancient and sacred temple centre at the foot of the famous hill called Arunachala, brought to western knowledge by Paul Brunton in his book *In Search of Secret India*, where he tells about it and his contact with the Maharishi, Shri Ramana Maharishi, of whom I will speak a little. The hill itself is supposed to be one of the oldest mountain-masses in India, and has been regarded as a very sacred hill from long ago. The word “Arunachala” means “vision of light” or “beacon of light”, and is dedicated to and thought to be a centre of the power of the Third Aspect of the *Trimurti*, which simply means “three powers”, and is the Indian or *Sanskrit* word for “Trinity”. At the foot of it there is a very ancient temple, one of the gates or *gopurams* being older than all the rest.

On the other side of the hill remains the *ashram* of Shri Ramana Maharishi whose story is very illuminating . . . He used to teach in a large room where he would lie upon a couch with the people on the floor all around him. From all over the world people like Brunton came to him to sit at

his feet and ask him questions, listening to his learned addresses on the spiritual life. I have heard many who knew him, testify to one peculiarity of the sage. You did not have to ask your questions, merely sit with him and the proper answer to them sooner or later arose in your mind without any verbal question and answer. He was very deeply revered by large numbers of people, and came to be called “Maharishi”, which means “great *Rishi*”.

I was granted the privilege of going into the room in which Shri Ramana Maharishi lived. The little room was regarded as particularly sanctified, and I sat there where all his things were: his crutch and a few bowls, an incense holder for *pujas*. All seemed to have been kept as it was when they took the body away. I then thought I would try to see if his influence was still there as I felt it was, and would ask a question mentally. So I meditated for quite a time till I felt myself definitely in touch with him and seemed to see him in higher worlds. I held in my mind the request to please enunciate a principle of spiritual development. After a time the following words effortlessly formed themselves in my mind:

**“Voluntarily imprisoned within you as light is an omnipotent power. Set it free. Let the light shine.”**

Those words may not seem so very much to some people, but they produced a most profound and illuminating effect upon me. I used them as an



introductory sentence to my little book on meditation, *A Yoga of Light*, which was written shortly after that experience.

While I was being driven around Arunachala after I had visited Maharishi's *ashram*, I turned to my Indian friends, one of whom was an advocate living in Tiruvannamalai, and asked if this hill did not shelter other holy men. He answered that it sheltered even greater than the Maharishi. When I asked eagerly where they were, he said that they did not reveal themselves, but were known to be up in the heights of the hill. Some shepherds and village people sometimes saw them, and even took them food. Then I urged for information as to there being one known to be available to interview. My friends looked at each other for a few moments, and answered that there was one called Shiva who they felt sure would receive me. We decided to go at once.

Circling the hill, we turned off the main road along a narrow lane between the trees, closer towards Arunachala Hill itself. Eventually we came to a beautiful clearing in the forest where there was a tank, a stone or concrete-lined pool. As we got out of our car, one of my friends exclaimed that there was Shiva over to the right, and I saw an almost naked man who rose as we approached. He was elderly, erect, very well in health, his skin seeming to glow with vitality. He was slender, with long white hair nicely combed down onto his shoulders,

with longish moustache and beard, also white. But his eyes were alight with humour and affection, and again that same inner light of which I spoke; indeed, more than that. The whole bearing of the man demonstrated that he had conquered the weaknesses of man and was self-ruled, a kind of king. His very walk showed the most perfect freedom from any weakness, limitation, or fear of anything whatever.

He received us near his own hut under a thatched roof open at the sides. We sat down on the concrete flooring and he on a curved concrete seat. He had made the hut and the lining of the pool by his own hands. He smiled upon us, and my friends introduced me and asked if I could have a conference with him. He smiled radiantly, assenting. So we began to talk about spiritual matters, yoga, philosophy, and the things I love to discuss. He was very friendly, and when I came again on another occasion he seemed to show a warm liking for me. Finally I ventured my most important question. If a person had learned to meditate and could hold his consciousness for a reasonable length of time in a sense of unity with the One Supreme Spirit, the essence of the universe, the *Atma*, what was the next step? How does one lose the consciousness of the body as he and others were able to do, and become absorbed in the *Paramatma*?

He laughed out loud at me, and said he could not tell me that. I must learn that and be shown, not merely told. Then he was silent again. Of course he had talked through interpreters because he only spoke the local language, Tamil. Suddenly he turned to look at me, and asked how long I could give him. I thought a moment, then realized that I could come the hundred and fifty miles from Madras for a weekend by car, if friends were available to drive me each way. So I said that I could come only for twenty-four hours. He said that it was not enough time, but to come.

To cut a long story short, I came. A good English-speaking disciple of his was there on that next visit, a man who had been in the civil service and had had similar yearnings. He had given up that life to become an ascetic. A very beautiful looking man he was, too. He called himself Asanga Maya (not bound by *maya*). We became quite close friends in that twenty-four hours.

The Shiva, as he is called, admitted me into his own sanctum which simply was this concrete hut where he slept. There he gave me certain instructions. They were not about getting into *samadhi*, I must admit, or else I failed to understand them. But it was a certain knowledge and combination of actions which I am not at liberty to describe, for sinking into deeper meditation, and for the arousing of *Kundalini*. As I had already achieved some of that, the effect upon me was very striking.

The *Kundalini* almost shot up and my whole body was electrified by it in his presence. The disciple sat by me and, when our hands or arms touched, would exclaim that I was electrified, for he felt the electric power shooting from me.

Well, Shiva went to bed and to sleep in his hut, while Asangha Maya and I spent the night outside. I had brought a bed and mosquito curtain. He lay down on the concrete seat, having acquired the faculty of sleeping anywhere, he said. But we did not sleep. I went on practicing under his guidance the procedure which had been shown me, until I was reasonably adept in it, though it is nothing difficult. I plied him with questions and we talked about the spiritual life all night long in that warm Indian summer night. It was a wonderful and unforgettable experience, all within the aura of Shiva whom I felt to be a very great man. I developed a very close affection for him and he for me, as it was seen to be expressed. He has written to me through an interpreter, and I to him. When my friends go to see him, he asks after me. His other followers in different parts of the world similarly have had these privileges. I have spiritual mental contact with him more or less all the time. Here was a person who had actually done the things about which we read, and it was a wonderful thing to be in his beautiful presence.

On another occasion, having heard that another holy man was visiting Conjeeveram, I sent

a request through a local Theosophist, to know whether he would receive the students of the School of the Wisdom. That was none other than the reigning Shri Shankaracharya, administrative and spiritual head of the whole monastic centre, or mutt as it is called, of the ancient temple centre at Conjeeveram. The office has been held in an unbroken line since the days of Shri Shankaracharya Himself, twenty-three or four hundred years ago, according to Subba Row, one of the early Theosophists and occultists connected with our Society. The Lord Shri Shankaracharya is regarded occultly as a voluntary incarnation of one of the Lords of the Flame following the Lord Buddha to correct certain misconceptions, using some of the Lord Buddha's subtle vehicles. Amongst other things, He established four such temple centres and ordained, as we would say in Christianity, the first of an unbroken series of representatives of Him to bear His Name and preside over these centres continuously down the ages. As far as I know, this has been kept up, and the finest human beings available are called to occupy these positions, regarded as amongst the highest in India.

Our request for audience was granted. We arrived on a Sunday morning, and in due time were led into his presence. He had chosen a walled garden a mile or so outside the city of Conjeeveram. It was a sacred place, because for long years a holy man had lived and died there. We went in through

the garden gate. Nobody seemed to be there at first, until, over on one side, right across the garden, we saw a figure sitting on a mat under a tree. He was in a yellow robe with a chaplet of leaves around his head. In front of him was spread Japanese matting to which we were led. The Europeans saluted him in the usual fashion, and the Indians prostrated themselves before him.

We sat down and, as the leader, I expressed gratitude to him for granting us this audience, addressing him as "Your Holiness", which is his title among his people, and told him who we were. He spoke very good English, but an interpreter helped, and he began to ask all the students questions in turn. Interestingly enough, these questions were about their Lodges and how many members, what they did, and what they taught.

All of us bore testimony afterwards to being bathed in an atmosphere of peace in the presence of this slight figure. Looking at him you would never have thought that he held one of the highest positions in ecclesiastical India, so humble was he, but he did. Towards the end I asked him if he would give us all a message to take back to the world for ourselves. He had a peculiar habit of closing his eyes and being silent for quite a time after every question, clearly allowing his consciousness to slip back to where it seemed to be normally living, in a higher realm. That was very marked with him, it appeared to me. The eyelids were half-closed much

of the time until his full attention was arrested. Then the eyes were open and alive. He said,

**“Fix your mind upon God. Keep it there always, and whenever it tends to move away from the thought of God, bring it back instantly, until at last it becomes a habit always to keep one part of your mind contemplating God.”**

He also spoke of universal truths that other holy men had stressed. For example, that you can do nothing in the spiritual life until you have purity of heart. Shiva said the same several times. Purity of heart is of the utmost importance, meaning that there must be no thought of personal gain or personal reward whatever from any attainment spiritually that may be reached. Finally, this successor in office to the great original Shri Shankaracharya held up his right hand and said, “This is the blessing.” And certainly some of the members of the School, next morning, when we went over it all, bore testimony to having felt a descent of blessing.

As we withdrew from this unforgettable experience, one of the men attendants came to me before we left the garden, and said that His Holiness would see me alone for a few minutes if I wished. I felt very highly honoured, of course, and went back, knowing that it was only because I was the Director of Studies of the School of the Wisdom. He asked if there were any questions that I, personally, would like to ask. He made me feel completely at home

with him, never any embarrassment at all. I did ask a number of questions, but I wish I had been more prepared for the opportunity. One felt that one did not have any questions in his presence. As a result of Theosophical studies, one's mind isn't really filled with questions. I did ask him whether the Rishi Agastya was still in India, guarding it, fulfilling His Office, still reachable by men, and could be seen. He went off into silence, and then asked if I meant in the physical body. I answered that that was said to be the belief. He went off again for some time before answering. Then he said that the Rishi Agastya was still in His physical body, but not here; that He lived in the Himalayas. Then again he held up his hand and said, "This is the blessing." I further thanked him on behalf of us all and withdrew.

I have been asked if I looked at his aura. I had not. I forbore to try to look at him in any kind of a research method, because I felt it would be unfitting and perhaps an impertinence. I was only aware that the slight figure was surrounded by a great light and that he was a highly advanced person . . . Such were the rich extra-curricular activities of our school."

