

X. Overview of the Eight Means of Raja Yoga

1. The 8 Means are concise, brief but full.
Each Sanskrit word means far more than meets the eye. The Means use the occult method: the appearance is deceiving, and is a misrepresentation of that which lies behind the words.
2. These are methods for lifetimes, not just one life, or a few year course. What is seemingly begun here was probably begun in a lifetime past. If not, that which is begun now will be with your evolving consciousness until you are released through the processes of initiation and liberation.
3. The science of the soul is incremental. It will not and does not pour out in full completeness in one insight. But measuredly, so the mind can assimilate.
4. Soul is revealed breath by breath (pranayama), detail by detail (pratyahara and dharana). In cycles and in rhythm (pranayama).
5. The 8 Means are simple, surprisingly so. Thus they are profound and multi-leveled, multi-dimensional, and will be useful through the next root race.
6. Each Mean is built out of the foundational work done in the Mean before. Yet each of the first 5 Means can be engaged singularly with limited results. The last 3 cannot be engaged without the substructure built in character and decentralization of the first 5 Means.
7. Each of the Means is designed to bring the individual closer to soul, to seeing the meaning behind appearances, and to right relationship with Life in all its many manifestations.

Raja Yoga is proven. Some of the greatest teachers of humanity were raja yogis and taught the practices.

- Buddha - the Eightfold Path streams out of the 8 Means to yoga. The Four Noble Truths are inherent within the 8 Means and the Yoga Sutras.
- Jesus the Christ - utilized the 8 Means as methods whereby people could arrive at clarity of their innate divinity, and the fact of the One Life of which we are all a part.
- Lao Tsu - taking the teachings of raja yoga and the Buddha, Lao Tse condensed and abstracted the Middle Way, which we will see is a blend of Asana, Pratyahara, and Dhyana, and gave us The Tao.

8. Raja Yoga and the 8 Means employ the *heart of the mind*, yet require the personal critical mind. Through this aspect of the mind we are able to look at:

- emotions and their movements
- thoughts and their activity and appropriateness

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- physical habits, and our routines upon the physical plane, looking at their spiritual healthiness
 - and what touches us, pulls at us, and pushes our buttons, and why.
9. Through the use of Raja Yoga, we learn to see Soul, the divine flame, through the many veils it employs.

10. Raja Yoga is not a short cut. It is the fine art of concentrated application.

a. The EIGHT Means outlined briefly

1. The eight Means have many levels of interpretation and application. We will work with the primary three, corresponding to the three aspects of divinity, and the basic triplicity of: *appearance or form, meaning or consciousness, life or spirit.*
2. 8 - is one of the numbers of the Christ - the conscious light within. The 8 Means reveal that conscious light.

YAMA

Means **command** or **commandment** – It is:

- Harmlessness, truthfulness, and abstinence from greed, avarice, and incontinence (lack of emotional control).
- This Means deals with character and character building.
- This Means is basic to the understanding of and correcting of karma.
- It teaches us to look at hate, desire, and attachment.
- *"Yama constitutes the universal duty. It is irrespective of race, place, time, or emergency."*
II, 31
- *"In the presence of him who has perfected harmlessness, all enmity ceases."*
II, 35
- *"When truth to all beings is perfected, effectiveness of words and actions is immediately seen."* II, 36
- *"Pain which is yet to come can still be warded off."* II, 16 (relating to karma and suffering)

NIYAMA (NIJAMA)

is:

- Internal and external purification, contentment, fiery aspiration, spiritual reading, and devotion to Ishvara (which is soul, essence, God in the heart, your heart, your brother's heart, the heart of any creature, or form)
- Niyama deals with ignorance, knowledge, and ability.

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- Ignorance is the confusing of the temporal and the permanent, Self with the not-self, etc.
- Niyama also is about aspiration, interpretation, and purification.
- The chitta (mind-stuff) is stabilized through purification.
- Niyama pertains to action, devotion, and dedication.
- The aim of niyama is to Understand, and see that which stands under.
"All that exists is for the sake of the soul." II, 21
- spiritual reading (all parts of these Means will be discussed at length later. This is just a quick orientation to the Means in general)
"The seer is pure knowledge, but looks upon everything through the window of the mind."
II, 20
- Ishvara - is the soul,
is limitless
is free from karma and worldly desire I, 24
it is the germ of all knowledge, and expands to infinity
I, 25

Both YAMA and NIYAMA begin the earnest training of the mind through:

"Sympathy, tenderness, steadiness of purpose, and dispassion to pain/pleasure, good/evil". I, 33

This is contentment as understood through raja yoga.

ASANA

is:

- position
physically, emotionally, mentally, as a personality, as soul, or soul-infusing personality, in the world, in our family, all the ways that one could consider the fact of position. Where do you stand?
- posture — composure, posturing. Inner posture.
- attitude
- stance; How do you stand?
- right place, right time
- orientation
- Asana has to do with the Middle Way, the Noble Eightfold Path, and the Way of the Christ. (more later)
- *"When this is attained, opposites no longer limit." II, 48*

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- **PRANAYAMA (Prana / yama)**

literally means command of the breath or life forces.

- pertains to all interpretations of:

- breath
 - cycles
 - rhythm

- pranayama is the study of the process of
liberation -- involution -- evolution -- dissolution -- silence

Liberation is the freedom from form, being one with the Breath.

Involution is the movement into matter. The breath, the Word becomes "involved", thus imprisoned if unilluminated or in service if awakened.

Evolution is the "tireless endeavor" of the Word, the Soul, to be reborn out of the thralls of matter and to become at-oned again with the Breathing One, the spirit, the OverSoul.

Dissolution is the release from the three worlds of men and from the causal body of soul's own creation. The fourth degree initiation.

Silence is Spirit, the Sounding Breath, the Voiceless Word. Liberated.

- *"Sounding the Word, reflecting on the sound, the way is found."* I. 28
- leads to the realization of the Self. I, 29
- *"The peace of the chitta is also brought about by the regulation of the prana or the life breath."* I, 34

PRATYAHARA

is:

- right withdrawal
- abstraction
- it is the tool used to determine and recognize the *extent* of all things (not just forms), objective and subjective
- the knower, knowledge, and the field of knowledge
- repulse

DHARANA

is:

- attention
- tension (occultly understood and applied)
- positively receptive
- positive receptivity

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DHYANA

is:

- meditation or sustained concentration, yogically understood

• **SAMADHI**

is:

- contemplation
- literally, “absorption”. The meditator is absorbed into a state of meditation such that non-duality is experienced.
- Union is a beginner level of absorption but still has dualistic reference points. This is not a true samadhi, though is a vital step in maturing meditative skill.
- liberation from the pairs of opposites