

it as a self-centred light that is neither here nor there and can be neither more nor less. If he succeeds in the attempt, he experiences an unalloyed joy the like of which cannot be found in any other state in empirical existence. It arises out of the absence of all longings and efforts and is intimately related to the subtle principle of pure self-consciousness. The Yogin lives immersed in it and apart, therefore, from the distraction and uneasiness that are inseparable from ordinary experience. Pain, dislike and fear vanish altogether from his mind, as the objects which might cause them are no longer within his ken. Hence it is unqualified bliss that he enjoys; and if ever anything likely to disturb or impair it obtrudes on his consciousness, it is transformed at once into a new source of delight by the dominant mood of his mind. Contemplation of this sort is known by the significant name of Viśokā, which means untainted by the slightest measure of pain.

It is possible in its perfection only to those who have not skipped over the earlier forms of concentration. And even they may require at first a verbal symbol like the sacred OM to prevent the mind from flitting to other things, though, as in previous exercises, the mechanical aid of this verbal accompaniment must be dispensed with as soon as practice has confirmed the habit of resting on the object contemplated to the exclusion of all other things. This, however, is not the acme of Yogic achievement, for the horizon widens as it is reached, the pure Ego being itself recognised now as an object in spite of its surpassing excellence. A subject, therefore, which is never an object, a Self that never lapses from its intrinsic virtue to be a part of the not-self or an item of experience, has to be sought, for of such an immaculate and changeless Self, the Ego or self of experience is at this stage felt to be a reflection. But feeling is not enough; analytical enquiry of the highest order is needed for realising the subtle difference between the two with all the certitude and distinctness of perception so that it may be never lost sight of. This is the final stage of Jñāna-yoga, and it may be roughly said to consist of the reflection that what appears as mine like the body or the senses is not the genuine Self, nor what poses as the recipient of experience but is all the same determined by it, nor again the pure Ego which in spite of the simplicity is yet an appearance. The perfection of this discriminating knowledge has the complete cessation of physical and psychical activity as its natural and necessary outcome on the practical side. And it is in this wise that perpetual cessation of effort and suffering, or the isolation of the Puruṣa is effected.