Psychicisation in the Integral Yoga – Active Surrender

What is the *psyche*?

There are many meanings ascribed to that word, but in Integral Yoga it has a very specific meaning. It is the inmost being, the divine spark in the individual, the nodus and essence of his spiritual existence, the conduit of connection with the higher planes of consciousness (the superconscient), and the vehicle of continuity across lives. Although the psychic presence is in every human being, not everyone is aware of it or in touch with it, or consciously alive to its profound significance. Integral Yoga requires a conscious connection with that psychic presence or spark, and willed effort to allow it to come into the forefront and take charge of the instrumental personality, the mind-life-body complex nucleated around the ego (which is misunderstood as the real person). Without this psychicisation, the spiritual journey of the Integral Yoga, and hence the integral transformation of the nature, does not really begin. Everything else, every other pursuit or experience in the aspirant's conscious turn to the spiritual life is only a preparation (which can take many years or lifetimes depending on the nature) but not the Integral Yoga proper.

Let us examine 4 key themes of experience in the psychicisation journey, and four practices, initiatives, hallmarks and stepping stones within the 4 themes, respectively. These will be easily relatable points for those who have definitively received the call. For beginner aspirants, these will serve as useful reference points in the future. The thematic structure of this presentation-paper is as follows:

1. **The Process of No-Process** with 4 practices
    a. Innerisation of the self – radical subjectivity
    b. The witness poise and active vigilance
    c. Horizontal to vertical flip of referentiality – self/other to Self/All
    d. Regular communion with the Mother

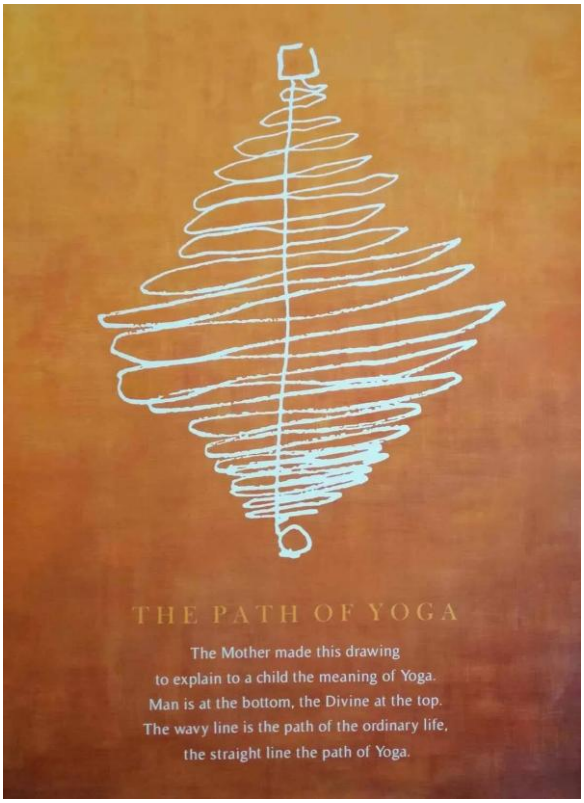
2. **The immixture issue** with 4 initiatives
    a. Psychic distillation
    b. *Nivritti* over *Pravritti*
    c. Road-testing
    d. Nature's consent

3. **The Psychic Imperience** with 4 hallmarks
    a. Fire
    b. Tenderness/ Sensitivity
    c. Veil-drop and Lid-break
    d. The Personal Divine

4. **Psychicisation to Spiritualisation**, with 4 stepping stones.
    a. The onset of descent
    b. The reduction of effort
    c. Sadhana as a Way of Life
    d. Equilibrium at the Summit

1. Let us first deal with the theme of 'Process of No-Process'.

We often hear that the emergence of the psychic being happens through Grace, and cannot be forced out or templatized. While that is correct, it also true that every individual has the choice to prepare for that emergence and invite the Grace. Someone once said 'Enlightenment is an accident, meditation makes you more accident-prone.' In our context we can say 'The Integral Yoga is a matter of Grace, but aspiration, rejection and surrender makes you Grace-worthy'.



To that end there are at least four practices that can help in psychic preparation.

Innerisation of the self is the first practice – This entails the switching of our attention from outer things to our inner experience of things, and approaching our innermost being. Setting aside time for silent reflection (such as the end of day before bed on the experiences of the day) is a good start. On that foundation, a regular habit of self-observation has to be cultivated (why did I do or behave as I did, where can I detect the impulsion of the ego-knot, can I segregate the mental, vital and physical aspects of my consciousness, am I in denial about some aspects of my persona which others have pointed out to me). From that habit, the phenomenological quest within, for that which is neither body, nor emotion, not thought, becomes possible – it is the experience of the personal key or centre.

The innerisation practice builds the 'muscles' for the second practice – **the witness poise and active vigilance**. The Witness poise is the capacity to stand back from the movements of nature as if these movements are a superficial aspect on the surface. This becomes easier as the self is anchored and held from the innermost personal key mentioned above. These movements of nature can be in one's own mind-emotion-body or in that of others- eventually understood as the play of universal nature. Active vigilance is the capacity to refuse to be sucked in by the gravitational pull of the lower nature (in oneself or others) early enough by detecting the incoming vibration and rejecting it summarily. It also means the immediate action to correct (or try to correct) the defect in one's own nature that invites or provides the opening to

these adverse vibrations –this leads to purification. Purification is not about forceful suppression of one's nature but the willed aspiration for transformation.

The third practice is what we can call the **referentiality flip**. We normally benchmark ourselves with our own mental ideals, role-models in conventional society, our parents, colleagues, friends etc. While this is useful in initial stages of our development, Integral Yoga demands that we shift our referential linkage and guidance from the horizontal (self and others) to the vertical (the divine). That is because horizontal referentiality is a quagmire of ignorance (in various shades) and cannot effect any step-change. The finding of the innermost personal key helps in establishing the vertical referential linkage and making it a permanent attribute/feature of our nature. In terms of a meditation practice, one has to find the zone of silence above the head and try to stay there for some time.

The fourth practice is **regular communion** with the Mother, indeed the mother of all preparatory practices. It means to remember her, think about her, look at her pictures, read her, read about her, listen to her organ music, watch her videos, and look at the flowers symbolic of the psychic. It is to keep her in awareness, in the foreground or background, and meditate on her presence in the heart-center every day. It is to establish her as the main and only companion in one's inner life. This practice creates the opening and receptivity required for the yoga; but the opening is only to her Supreme power, not to anyone or anything else.





2. The second theme is what we call the 'Immixture Issue'. This arises only after the Sadhana has begun and can only be dealt with after the effort described in the earlier theme. Immixture means a medley, a confusion, a contamination of the aspired higher nature with the lower nature, the intrusion of the outer nature during the Sadhak's innerisation journey. Four willed initiatives help resolve the immixture towards greater purification and establishment of psychic control over the outer instruments.

Psychic distillation is the first willed initiative, it is making the active vigilance practice a permanent way of life on a moment-to-moment basis. Distillation means a progressive extrication of one's nature from the amalgamated impurities of the lower triplicity and switch of the operating gravitational attractor from below to above. This is an excellent opportunity for the Sadhak to integrate the yoga of knowledge, love and will. Knowledge in terms of the intuitive discernment of separating truth from the tangled skein of falsehood; love in terms of inviting the Mother's presence and guidance in everything, and will in terms of an unwavering commitment to self-perfection for the divine work, even as it entails the searing pain of cauterization.

In the initial stages of the Sadhana, for enacting distillation one needs to adopt ***Nivritti* over *Pravritti*** as a general rule. *Nivritti* means to desist from acting on impulsions, *Pravritti* means giving in to various impulsions. This is because the usual propellant of the lower nature is desire, not aspiration. Desire is ego-centric, aspiration is divine-centric. *Nivritti* allows the exercise and strengthening of the soul-power and its eventual sovereignty over nature. However, since this is not a path of renunciation as an end, but transformation, one cannot step back from action totally either. *Pravritti* cannot be written off as a way of life, but conducted from the inner and higher nature. Which leads us to the third willed initiative.

The quagmire of the double soul, the surface and the subliminal, requires the willed initiative of **personal road-tests**. This is because it is not always easy to distinguish between fire of aspiration and the operative propensity of the ego-desire knot in day-to-day exigencies and situations. In general, anything compulsive is usually desire-driven, though one cannot always be sure of what to do when. One may have to act to respond to life situations/opportunities/ threats. Road-testing can be a walk on the razor's edge – because it entails trials of strength, perseverance and effort under dangerous and potentially catastrophic circumstances. The intrepid Sadhak has to embark on these road-tests with the Name of the Mother on his lips to protect him from the menacing attacks of the Hostile forces. This may not be required for everyone, or required to different extents based on the nature, though one cannot avoid it entirely if the transformation has to be consummated.

The consummation can be said to have reached an advanced stage when the aspirations of the inner and the outer being are convergent rather than divergent (which is the case up till now). The willed initiative of **nature's consent** transforms the tussle between soul and nature into an aligned cooperation, from aspiration to conversion. *Nigraha* (I cannot help desiring but I will not satisfy my desire) becomes *Samyama* (I refuse the desire as well as its satisfaction). From a three *gunas* standpoint, the resistance of *tamas* becomes the asset of *samata*, *rajas* is upgraded to *Tapas*, and *Sattva* from a mental stature to *Jyotih* - illumined insights and revelations from above.

3. In the third theme we examine four key experiential hallmarks of psychicisation. These experiences are useful to the Sadhak to calibrate his aspiration as well as progress in the journey. The term Imperience refers to inner experience in the immediacy of one's subjectivity.

The active vigilance and personal road-tests inflame and purify the psychic **fire** in the sadhak's experience till the fire of aspiration becomes a permanent and settled attribute of the nature. The aspiration-grace spiral is self-reinforcing – which means initial aspiration invites the grace which then enables a progressively greater scale and scope of aspiration towards the divine. For the more intrepid, the Sadhana offers the experience of tearing out desire from its bleeding roots and offering the vacant place to the Mother. 'On the body's longings grew heaven's rapture-flower and made desire a pure celestial flame.' When concentrating on the heart-center one can feel the inner flame, and a velvety softness.

The fire of tapasya is accompanied by the gifts of **psychic tenderness and sensitivity**. Initially there a fair bit of psychic sorrow from the shock of observing the pervasive ignorance and perversion in universal nature (*adhogati*) – in oneself and others. This is different from vital sorrow which is self-centered; psychic sorrow fuels aspiration for transformation whereas vital sorrow impels egoistic gratification or self-deprecation. Psychic tenderness comes from a direct encounter with and understanding of the roots of suffering, as also the receipt of afflatus during communion with the divine. This influence gradually softens and subtilizes the grosser propensities of one' nature and prepares the nature for psychic love. Psychic sensitivity demands and attunes to all that is good, true and beautiful.

The third hallmark is what is called **lifting of the veil and the breaking of the lid**. The veil keeps the being locked out from the concentric-horizontal inner fire and guidance from the heart-cave, the lid blocks the being from the vertically higher planes above the mind. The veil-lifting results in the abiding connection between the inner with the outer being that enables the increasing psychic influence on the nature and the resolution of the immixture issue, though initially there is discomfort and chaos in the field of universal forces and occult movements perceptibly impinging on the nature. The lid-breaking can be experienced by an effortless access to the overhead zone of silence, and the movement of the operating center of gravity of the being upwards from the vital knot in the lower chakras. The lid-breaking begins the second of the triple transformation processes, called spiritualisation. More about that in the next theme.

The fourth hallmark is the flowering of a relationship with the divine in a unique and personal way – as parent, teacher, friend, co-adventurer and lover. While appreciation of the impersonal divine is necessary for universalization and enlargement of the mental nature from egotistic self-absorption into cosmicity, Bhakti necessarily entails the rich connection and intoxicating sweetness of the **personal divine** approached through the heart; this also assuages the hardness and arduous intensity of the tapasya. This connection graduates from fear and apprehensive regard to a warm and affectionate communion and eventually an ecstatic union that surpasses all other relationships and bonds. Only then does the Sadhak realize how immeasurably superior psychic love is, to vital love.

The four hallmarks can appear in any sequence or combination of sequences with the earlier experiences, not necessarily in the order mentioned here.

4. In the fourth and final theme we touch upon the spiritualization of the nature, the 2nd in the triple transformation, which usually commences (not always) after psychicisation is underway, and is required to complete it. There are four characteristics or stepping stones worth mentioning here.

The lid-breaking discussed earlier brings about a conscious perception of the **descent** of the spiritual force. The first indication is usually the experience of a 'solid block of peace', peace not just in the sense of detachment from nature but a positive presence to face the cosmic turbulence with equanimity without sacrificing sensitivity. Peace is followed by the descent of the light of knowledge and intuitive apperception of truth, an increasing power, purity, and finally Bliss. No limit can be defined for this process because it is literally an invasion by the Infinite. The vast consciousness above has to establish itself and for that it has to come down below the head and take full possession of the navel and two lower centres and pervade the body down to the feet and even below.

The onset of descent signals an important milestone in the Sadhana – the handover of the baton of **effort** from the Sadhak to the divine. Paradoxically the Sadhana intensifies as if on its own, and the Sadhak now becomes like a passive follower of continuous guidance and does not interfere or fret even during glitches, attacks or lean periods. The mind becomes almost completely silent as a suitable receptacle to whatever comes without any demand or expectation. This silent passivity should not be conflated with Tamas of the lower nature which is susceptible to all sorts of unsavory influences.

Hereafter Sadhana becomes a **way of life** – the sadhak now lives up to the phrase 'All life is Yoga.' Every objective event outside and subjective experience inside becomes a pathway for closer understanding, greater synthesis, finer value-judgments, surer decision-making, quicker course-corrections and vaster dwelling of the being. The aspiration for self-perfection is now firmly established for and towards the *Sapta-Chatusthaya.*

The realization dawns that the **equilibrium is only at the summit**, the various attractions of intermediate zones begin to lose their grip, and the straight and direct path acquires the sharp and unidirectional momentum like an arrow directly commanded by the *Param-Purusha* and directly powered by the Divine Shakti.

Earth must transform herself and equal Heaven
Or Heaven descend into earth's mortal state.
But for such vast spiritual change to be
Out of the mystic cavern in man's heart
The heavenly Psyche must put off her veil
And step into common nature's crowded rooms
And stand uncovered in that nature's front
And rule its thoughts and fill the body and life.

— Savitri, Book Seven, Canto II