

Vedanta

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Integral Yoga in Swami Vivekananda
Swami Paratparananda

The Science of the Self
Swami Premeshananda





WHAT THE WORLD MAKES OF MEN

As a boy, at Kamarpukur, I loved Ram Mallick dearly. But afterwards, when he came here, I couldn't touch him. Ram Mallick and I were great friends during our boyhood. We were together day and night; we slept together. People used to say, "If one of them were a woman they would marry each other." Both of us used to play at his house I remember those days very well. His relatives used to come riding in palanquins. Now he has a shop at Chanak. I sent for him many a time; he came here the other day and spent two days. Ram said he had no children; he brought up his nephew, but the boy died. He told me this with a sigh; his eyes were filled with tears; he was grief stricken for his nephew. He said further that since they had no children of their own, all his wife's affection had been turned to the

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Mantra Japa or Repetition of the Holy Name – 9

A *Devata*, i.e., a Divine manifestation, is the real content of the *Mantra* that is used for *Japa* or invocation of the *Devata*. Just as we see a *Devata* (Deity) or Divinity or the Supreme Reality, or what we call God in general, in a *Yantra* (diagrammatic representation), or in a *Ghata* (pot filled with water) or in a *Pratima* (a stone/metal/clay image), in fact anywhere the Divinity is invoked, so is the *Mantra* the embodiment of a *Devata*. The ideas that flow in our mind, that is, thought movement, is the substance of our speech in general, but the substance of a *Mantra* is 'Chit', or Pure Consciousness. This is the difference between any word and the *Mantra*. The *Mantra* is thus a *living* force, a *conscious* Power. Thoughts are the result of our interaction with the world and are our reactions to the external world, whereas a *Mantra* generates interaction with and commune with the inner Spirit or Divinity, or the Reality that is beyond our bodily physical existence and beyond the universe or Cosmic existence.

Interaction with the external world brings pain and pleasure, whereas communion with the Spirit/Divinity brings everlasting Peace and Bliss. Interaction with the external world binds us to the world, whereas communion with the Spirit gives release from all bondages. All thoughts of the world originating from attachments and aversions (*Raga, Dvesha*) cause bondage and suffering. Thought-currents that eventually release our bondage, such as discrimination (*Viveka*), or those that generate dispassion (*Vairagya*), sanctify life and help to recognise Divinity, or those that rouse feelings of compassion for other beings, and so forth, are no doubt great and invaluable, but their point of reference still rests in the world, even though they aim at Divinity. Although the *Mantra* holds its point of reference in Divinity, its entire focus is on Divinity, its aim and culmination is in Divinity, God, the Supreme Reality that is Eternal

Immutable Bliss Absolute. Religious life is to shift our attention to a spiritual world that exists beyond our sense perceptions and hence beyond the reach of mind and intellect.

Thus, God or Nature has provided man with a *heart* which can awaken within itself a higher intellect (*Dhi*) that can infer and catch an inkling of that 'Beyond' and cause it to search for a path or course that leads to its realisation. This is the very 'heart' where love is generated, pangs of separation from the beloved are felt, or loneliness is experienced. It is the direct expression of the Self, the *Atman*. Almost all people invest it on the world and worldly affairs and get lost. We must be wise to protect it from being captured by the world. We must develop spiritual sensitivity in order to feel the Divine. Our heart must learn to love the Eternal and eschew seeking the temporal; love God intensely and intimately and serve mankind, especially those beings that are indifferent to their blames and praises. The love of God at this early stage is merely *working-love*.

Hearing the names and glories of God man develops love and attraction towards the Spirit and Spiritual; God and the godly. The love after realisation of God is the Love-Absolute, the Love-Eternal. Sri Ramakrishna says: while living in the world — (i) sing the names and glories of God, (ii) seek the company of holy men, (iii) enter into solitude as often as one can, and (iv) practice intense prayer — these four generate love of God in the heart of a devotee.

Religious life is a preliminary for the practice of this love divine, but spiritual life is the outcome of a devoted religious life. Some may spontaneously arrive at it often early in life by merit or good karma they carry with them from their previous lives. In either case, it is the matured state of man's existence wherein the Spirit and Spiritual world have become a constant part of his awareness and are fully accepted as the *achievable realities* beyond all doubts. At this stage, man comes out of his religious moorings and tries to establish a direct relationship with that Spiritual ultimate, the Supreme

Reality, or God. Here the real meaning of God flashes into the human mind as innermost treasure—eternal, infinite and inexhaustible, so real, so intimate—heart of the heart, and the ocean of Bliss beyond all bondage and misery. God attains a new status, being perceived in a new background independent of this cosmic existence and worldly set-up. It is here, in this lead-up setting, that one clearly perceives the *Mantra* as one with and inseparable from the *Devata* (Deity).

Therefore, before we chant the *Mantra* we have to dislodge the Divinity/Deity from the worldly set-up and place it in the background of the Eternal Immutable Reality, Existence-Consciousness-Bliss-Absolute, and repeat the *Mantra* with love and dedication. It is then that the *Mantra* becomes the spiritual awakener within us. Let us look at some concrete examples, for instance Sri Ramakrishna, or Buddha or Christ. When we think of Sri Ramakrishna, we are reminded of his wonderful life, from his birth at Kamarpukur to his ending of the Divine play at Cossipore, his glory, his supremacy, his realisations, his love and compassion for others, his message for mankind of one world of 'love and purity dipped in the Divinity' and the ideal of God realisation and service to mankind. Similarly, Buddha's name reminds us of his birth at Lumbini in the Himalayan ranges, his dispassion and renunciation, his determination and his illumination, his message to mankind, his eightfold path and his doctrines. Likewise, thoughts of Christ remind us of his birth at Bethlehem, his realisations, his love and compassion for the suffering of mankind, his assurances, and his greatest sacrifice and culmination on the cross. Thus we find, for man to feel, accept, follow and lift himself, every divine scene has been set and presented in a world-background; and to set it as an ideal, goal or support, a bit of supernatural touch too is imparted.

Once the Divinity is accepted, the message is carried forward and followers throng. Blending with culture, traditions are forged

and thus Religions form. Three elements contribute to the survival and extension of a religion: literature, rituals, and a band of renunciates entirely given to the realisation of the Ideal and its propagation. However, Man's natural tendency and course is to veer away from divine ideals, so a constant reminder *at a glance* becomes inevitable. This necessitates symbolisation, and symbolisation is also part of human psychology and is perfectly logical and indicative of man's evolved intellectual status. Symbolisation and codifications used in our ancient Indian systems were exclusively for human evolution to divine-hood and never for selfish purposes or to serve secular purposes. In contrast, modern science has been using it exclusively for its own purposes in the physical realm of the material world. Its utilization of natural forces to invent and build machinery is at a critical level and could lead to the extinction of the human race if not brought under control. But man has lost self-control, he has become a puppet in the hands of the scientific world he himself has created; and now in the twentieth century machines are controlling man.

In a reflexive way, symbols work instantly to bring the symbolised object or objectives into cognition. This helps man to be aware of the spiritual ideals amidst his purely secular pursuits in the world. Thus, the Cross reminds us of Christ, his holy life, and is a reassurance of a way out from human bondage and suffering. The wheel of *Dharma* or Buddha's image or idol reminds us of Buddha, his supreme life, his noble teachings, and the path to transcend human suffering in its entirety forever, with the promise of an illumined state of *Nirvana*, the supreme Blessedness. Ramakrishna's picture or idol reminds us of his divine life centred in God, the supreme ideal of renunciation and service, and the supreme goal of God-realisation. It also reminds us of all paths, all religions, all aspects of Divinity and all objects as manifestations of Divinity; and vice-versa. Every picture of Ramakrishna keeps on

reminding man that the only purpose of human life is to realise God, and through it guarantees the attainment of Everlasting peace and unending Bliss and eternal Freedom. These and such other Divine personalities provoke religious sentiments in us, and make us walk on the path of righteousness and protect us from frequent falls from the higher ideals and higher human values.

In religious settings we find the Divine Personalities in the background of the world and in relation to mankind receiving worship, honour and admiration by their followers. Thus, these Divine personalities occupy the place of a Deity. Man, in offering his devotion and dedication to that Deity, feels himself to be safe and secure. The Eastern mind, however, does not find itself satisfied being safe and secure within the prison house of Nature, be it on earth or in heaven. It wants to transcend Nature and attain absolute Freedom. The potentiality and capability to transcend Nature are inherent in man—intense desire to attain immortality and eternal Freedom awakens them. But the religious setting of a world background limits our unfoldment to attainment of purity, perfection, nobility, goodness, righteousness, piety, and so on—all at a physical level and within Nature. Therefore, we fail to transcend the physical existence and go beyond to the spiritual realm as long as the object of our dedication and love, our adoration and worship, the Deity, remains limited to a world setting (from Bethlehem to the Cross; from Lumbini to the abandoned jungles of Kusinara; from Kamarpukur to Cossipore). To transcend Nature, we have to dislodge the Divine personality/Deity from the world-background and place the Deity in a pure Spiritual background wherein we can have personal relationship independent of this world and the cosmos.

The best place thought of by our ancient sages is man's heart, the core of his being, beyond the body and mind, and where man's pure Spiritual existence is located. Herein, the devotee can have an

intimate personal relationship with the Deity that transcends all human seeking and is an expression of unearthly divine love rooted in self-offering. This is the very purpose of the *Mantra*, that is, to shift the Deity to the background of the transcendental Spiritual realm and make this divine love more intimate. Thus, the main content of the *Mantra* is *Om*, which represents the Absolute, the ultimate Reality, the Eternal Existence, of which the Deity is a manifestation and against which background the Deity is adored. Therefore, all *Mantras* invariably begin with *Om* and all *Mantras*, when repeated with intense passionate love for God and utter dispassion towards the world, invariably merge in *Om*; one's own bodily existence, so dear to man and the world that looks so real—both disappear without a trace and one experiences directly Existence-Consciousness-Bliss-Absolute, or *Sacchidānanda*, the *Om*. Sri Ramakrishna used to say *Sandhya* (the ritualistic observances) merges in *Gayatri Mantra* and *Gayatri* merges in *Om*.

Sri Ramkrishna also used to say that love of God is the essence of human life and its existence. It makes man immortal, since the object of love where the heart is centred is the Eternal and Infinite Reality, the God. Further he used to say: the means to achieve it is renunciation of the temporal, which he used to describe as "*Jagate virag* and *Bhagavane Anurag*" (dispassion towards the world and passionate attachment to God.)

It is like a river merging into an ocean, losing its name and form and becoming the ocean itself. But before one experiences *Sacchidananda*, the Absolute, the Ultimate Reality, one gets the vision of the Deity. The intense sacrificing love of the devotee forces the Absolute, the Pure Consciousness (*Shuddha chaitanya*), to condense into a form and appear as the Deity in the same way as conceived by the devotee. Sri Ramakrishna compares this to the formation of small blocks of ice here and there in an infinite ocean of water because of the cooling effect of the love of the devotee. To enforce

this manifestation and to invoke the form of the Deity, and as a loving call to whom the devotee has offered his/her heart and soul, a seed-letter, usually a single syllable ending with "m", known as a *Bija Mantra*, is used along with and following the *Om*. It is called a Seed *Mantra* or seed-letter (*Bija Mantra* or *Bijakshara*) because, like a plant having come out of a seed makes flower or fruit to manifest, so does the *Bija Mantra* make the *Devata* manifest from the Absolute.

There can be more than one *Bija mantra* in a *Mantra*. By altering the *Bija mantra*, different aspects of the *Devata* are obtained. Just think of a nuclear bomb: an iota of matter releasing such a vast destructive energy. Stand before an ocean and look at its roaring and onrushing waves, look at the vast galaxies, erupting volcanoes and the burning Sun; imagine, if you can, the power within this Creation; the Power to manifest, sustain and retract this universe; the power of attraction and repulsion in beings; the energies of subtle existence; energies in the different dimensions and different planes of existence; the power that generates *Jivas*, binds and releases them—all these powers within and beyond the Creation and as the created universe together are represented by the *Bija*.

Om is the Absolute and *Bija* is the entire Relative Existence. It originates from and merges in *Om*. We may consider *Om* as the *Vaidika Bija*, but it is the source of and culminating point of all other Tantric *Bijas*. Although the meaning of a *Bija mantra* is not taken at face value, the initiate gets to know that its meaning is the own form (*Svarupa*) of a particular *Devata* to whom the *Mantra* belongs. All *Bija mantras* are monosyllabic, containing one or more letters. A *Bija* is used in the *Mantra* of the *Devata* with which it is associated, and is used in the *Japa* and in the worship of the *Devata*.

(To be continued)

Integral Yoga in Swami Vivekananda

Swami Paratparananda

To understand the profundity of the life of a spiritual luminary of many facets like Swami Vivekananda is extremely difficult and requires years of deep study. Every time one engages in such an attempt, a new horizon, as it were, reveals itself, and one finds really how little one can comprehend about this great life. Again, no human being is born with a mind like *tabula rasa*. A child comes into this world with a store of impressions of past experience and knowledge. So the spiritual grandeur that we see in Swami Vivekananda was there in its seed form from his very birth. Therefore, to have a comprehensive idea of how the yogas are combined harmoniously in him, we will have to begin from the very start, from his boyhood. Also, we will be compelled to refer to the estimation of him by his Master, Sri Ramakrishna, to have a true picture of his spiritual magnitude, for, as the Master used to say, only a jeweller can evaluate correctly the price of a diamond. And who else in this age could be a better jeweller in the religious field than Sri Ramakrishna?

In the biography of Swami Vivekananda, by his Eastern and Western Disciples, we come across three incidents of his boyhood days, which show with what ease he could lose himself in a given idea, totally unaware of the surroundings. Hearing the tales from the Ramayana and the Mahabharata from his mother, as a boy, he was captivated by the life of Rama to such a great extent that one day he bought an image of Sita-Rama and, installing it in a room on the terrace of the house, he, along with a little brahmin boy, sat for meditation in front of the image after securing the door from inside. Soon the people in the house missed Naren (as Swami Vivekananda was called in those days) and a search was begun

which at last led to the little attic. "The searchers", say the biographers, "knocked and shouted, but there was no response. In great fright, fearing that something had happened to Naren, they forced the door and found the two boys seated in deep meditation before the flower-decked image." He was then perhaps five or six years of age. This playing at meditation aroused in him deep spiritual emotions and in this pastime the boys of the neighbourhood sometimes joined him. One day when they had sat for meditation there appeared a cobra, on seeing which the other boys, shouting a warning to Naren, ran away from the place. But Naren remained where he was. The serpent stayed about for a while and then slowly crawled away and disappeared. When his parents later on asked him why he too had not left the place, he seems to have replied, "I knew nothing of the snake, or anything else. I was feeling inexpressible bliss."¹

The third incident took place at a much later period, when he was fourteen. In the year 1877 his father went to Raipur and arranged that his family follow him under the charge of Naren later on. The journey was long and a stretch of it was through dense forests, to be done in bullock-carts on unfrequented roads. The party had been travelling several days in this manner and Naren was charmed with the beauty and grace the Almighty had bestowed on the rugged earth. An indescribable bliss filled Naren's heart on one particular day when he contemplated the "lofty hills on either side of the road, the verdant trees and creepers laden with flowers and joyous with the warbling of birds of variegated colours. Suddenly his eyes alighted on a very large hive in a cleft in one of the hills. His mind in thinking of that colony of bees was soon lost in wonder at the majesty and power of the Divine Providence. Lost to all outward consciousness he lay in the bullock-cart—how long he could not remember."²

These three incidents show his inherent capacity to concentrate the mind on one single theme to the exclusion of all other thoughts. And this is the very power that enables man to reach God, realize Him. All our efforts are to reach this stage of concentration, for without it, it is impossible to attain the Highest.

There was another peculiar phenomenon which was natural in Naren. Every night brought him a singular type of vision. Strange was the manner in which he was ushered into sleep. As soon as he lay down and closed his eyes there appeared between his brows a wonderful light that changed its colour and which went on expanding until it burst and bathed his whole body with its brilliance, and as the mind occupied itself in contemplating this phenomenon, the body fell asleep. The boy Naren thought that it was a common feature with all human beings and to satisfy himself regarding this, he asked one of his friends if he had such an experience. When the friend replied that he did not have, Naren asked him to observe well just before he fell asleep. This phenomenon remained with Naren until his last days, though in the latter part of his life, it was neither so frequent nor so intense. All these things show us to what deep a state of meditation had the soul of Naren attained even as a boy and how natural it had become with him. Later on, when Naren, in his search of a man who had seen God, approached Sri Ramakrishna, the Master once asked him: "My boy, do you see a light when you go to sleep?" Naren said: "Yes, Sir." Sri Ramakrishna exclaimed: "Ah! It is true. This one is a Dhyana Siddha—an adept in meditation even from his very birth." ³

Meditation is an important limb of spiritual life. All the three yogas, viz., Jnana, Raja and Bhakti yogas, include it in their discipline. It consists in directing the mind uninterruptedly to one single object. Narada in his Bhakti Sutras, referring to the spiritual

practices which lead one to attain devotion, mentions *avyavarta bhajana*, uninterrupted loving service, as one of the means, and what this loving service signifies he makes clear in the subsequent sutra: "By hearing and singing the glory of the Lord, even while engaged in the ordinary activities of life.⁴ An aspirant following Bhakti yoga tries to remember the Lord by engaging himself in the repetition of the *mantra*, His name, and at the same time trying to keep before his mind's eye the form of his Chosen Deity." When the mind flows, as it were, like a stream, without a break, towards the object of its adoration, there develops in man a special power of concentration and subsequently of meditation. To the follower of Jnana yoga, meditation forms the chief discipline once he has acquired the power of discrimination between the Real and the unreal and a spirit of renunciation of enjoyment here and hereafter. For example, in the Upanishads we read "Atman is to be seen", and then immediately the means to attain this goal are mentioned, "Should be heard, cogitated upon and then meditated."⁵ Also we come across a number of passages in the same Scriptures which recommend "Upasana", which means worship, or meditation. In Raja yoga it is the penultimate step, the next being Samadhi, or union with the Ideal, or the Absolute. Without this power to concentrate the mind with one-pointed devotion to God, realization is not possible. An ordinary human being requires a lifetime or several lives to gain this power, even if it be in a small measure. On the contrary, we have seen how abundantly endowed was Swami Vivekananda with this capacity from his very boyhood. We are reminded here of the words of Sri Ramakrishna regarding some of his young disciples: "Devotees like Rakhai and Narendra may be called nityasiddhas. Their spiritual consciousness has been awake since their very birth. They assume human bodies only to impart spiritual illumination to others."⁶ And the Master never

erred in his judgment, for having attained Nirvikalpa Samadhi, he had the power to identify himself with the cosmic mind, which is the source of all creation, and thus could read the past, present and the future of the devotees who came to him, as if from an open book.

A description of Narendra by Sri Ramakrishna himself further explains the inherent nature of the former. "Narendra entered this room," says the Master, "by the western door. He seemed careless about his body and dress, and unlike other people, unmindful of the external world. His eyes bespoke an introspective mind, as if some part of it were always concentrated upon something within. I was surprised to find such a spiritual soul coming from the material atmosphere of Calcutta. The friends with whom he had come appeared to be ordinary young men with the usual tendencies towards enjoyment. He sang a few Bengali songs at my request. One of them was a common song of the Brahmo Samaj, which begins—'O my mind, go to your own abode. In the foreign land of this world, why roam uselessly like a stranger!' He sang the song with his whole heart and put such pathos in it that I could no longer control myself, but fell into an ecstatic mood."⁷ This description speaks volumes for Narendra's disregard for the things of the world, a quality of prime necessity for a life of renunciation.

In his very first meeting, Sri Ramakrishna recognised Narendra as one who would spread his message in the world, as one whom he had seen in a vision. However, to reassure himself, the Master, by his divine touch, induced Narendra on his second and third visits to dive deep into his soul and obtained all the information regarding the antecedents, as well as the future of the disciple. When he got answers that corroborated his visions, Sri Ramakrishna started training Narendra in a manner totally

different from that of the other disciples. During the visits Naren paid to the Master, the latter would ask the disciple to read to him from the *Ashtavakra Samhita* or some such treatise on Advaita, with a view to familiarize him with its philosophy. For, Sri Ramakrishna had come to know through his visions and through the tests to which he submitted Narendra, that the path of this disciple of his was that of Knowledge. However, to Narendra, then a firm adherent of the Brahmo Samaj, which advocated worship of God without Form but with attributes, the philosophy of Advaita seemed to be nothing but heresy and he would argue: "It is blasphemous, for there is no difference between such philosophy and atheism. There is no greater sin in the world than to think of myself as identical with the Creator. I am God, you are God, these created things are God—what can be more absurd than this! The sages who wrote such things must have been insane." The Master would be amused at this bluntness but would only remark, "You may not accept the views of these seers. But how can you abuse them or limit God's infinitude? Go on praying to the God of Truth and believe in any aspect of His which He reveals to you."⁸ But Narendra did not accept these concepts easily. Whatever did not conform with the reason he considered as false, and it was his nature to oppose falsehood. Consequently, he never lost an opportunity to ridicule the Advaita philosophy.

Notwithstanding his resistance, Sri Ramakrishna persisted in speaking to Narendra about Advaita. One day, the Master tried to convince the disciple about the idea that the individual soul, Atman, was identical with Brahman, but without success. Narendra left the room and approaching Hazra began to ridicule and laugh at the idea, saying, "How can this be? This jug is God, this cup is God and we too are God: Nothing can be more preposterous!" Hearing Narendra's laughter Sri Ramakrishna

came out of his room in a semiconscious state and asking with a smile, "Hello! what are you talking about?" touched Narendra and entered into Samadhi. The effect of the touch was amazing. Narendra himself describes: "The magic touch of the Master that day immediately brought about a wonderful change over my mind. I was stupefied to find that really there was nothing in the universe but God! I saw it clearly but kept silent, to see if the idea would last. But the impression did not abate in the course of the day. I returned home, but there too, everything I saw appeared to be Brahman...This state of things continued for some days. When I became normal again, I realized that I must have had a glimpse of the Advaita state. Then it struck me that the words of the scriptures were not false. Thenceforth I could not deny the conclusions of the Advaita philosophy."⁹ In this way gradually he was led from doubt to certainty, from all objective concepts of the Divinity to the awareness of the subjective nature of the Reality, beyond form, beyond thought, beyond the senses and beyond all relative good and evil.

Thus was Narendra being trained by Sri Ramakrishna in the method of Jnana yoga. Narendra, who was until then accustomed to pray and meditate according to the teachings of the Brahmo Samaj, had to give these up and take to a new method of meditation. For any other aspirant the task would have been formidable, but Narendra, having the necessary capacity to isolate his mind from all thoughts which were not conducive to his mode of meditation, began with all his heart to pray, "O God, be gracious and reveal to me Thy real nature which is the embodiment of Truth!" and then merge himself in deep meditation during the nights into the depths of his being to such an extent that he would feel a sort of intoxication, which would make it difficult for him

to leave his seat. Sri Ramakrishna too taught him various types of meditation.

Though he respected the Master and held him in high esteem as a person of the greatest spiritual attainments, Narendra could not accept Sri Ramakrishna's view regarding God with form, a fundamental conception in the path of devotion, Bhakti yoga. But the Master, the first-rate physician that he was in matters concerning spirituality, after minutely observing the physical features of the disciple, once remarked: "Your eyes show that you are not a dry jnani. In you are blended tender devotion and deep knowledge."¹⁰ And having recognized this fact, Sri Ramakrishna was not going to allow this faculty to go uncultivated, nor permit that the spiritual unfoldment of his favourite disciple be one-sided. Narendra once referred to the visions the Master had had of the Personal Deity as hallucinations and Sri Ramakrishna felt greatly disturbed by this. He approached the Divine Mother and placed the matter before Her and set his mind at rest only when She assured him that before long Naren would accept his visions as true. One day Sri Ramakrishna, tired of trying to convince his disciple about the efficacy of image-worship, said, "Why do you come here if you won't acknowledge my Mother?" To this Naren replied without the least hesitation, "Must I accept Her simply because I come here?" "Alright," said Sri Ramakrishna, "ere long you shall not only acknowledge my Blessed Mother, but weep in Her name."¹¹

And not much long after this, the day arrived. Narendra's father died suddenly, leaving the family in straitened circumstances. Not only was the family not provided with the means of sustenance, but there were also debts to be paid. Narendra tried to get an employment to feed his starving mother and brothers. To this end he did all that was honestly possible, but fortune did not smile on

him. At last he thought of the Master, the one and only person who had not refused him any favour as yet. He went to Dakshineswar and entreated Sri Ramakrishna to pray to the Divine Mother for the removal of the sufferings of his family. The Master replied: "My boy, I cannot ask such things. Why don't you yourself go and ask the Mother? All your hardships are due to your disregard for Her." Narendra said: "I do not know the Mother, please plead with Her for me." Sri Ramakrishna answered with great tenderness, "My boy, I have told Her again and again, but as you do not accept Her, She does not listen to my prayer. Very well, today is Tuesday—go to the Kali temple tonight, prostrate yourself before the Mother and ask Her any boon you like. It shall be granted. She is Knowledge Absolute, the Inscrutable Power of Brahman, and by Her mere will has given birth to this world. Everything is in Her power to give."¹²

These instructions imparted at the proper moment filled Narendra with faith and devotion, as he himself acknowledges. He anxiously waited for the night and when at nine o'clock the Master asked him to go to the temple, he was overpowered with emotion and felt his legs unsteady. "My heart was leaping"—related Swami Vivekananda later on—"in anticipation of the joy of beholding the living Goddess and hearing Her words. I was full of the idea. Reaching the temple, as I cast my eyes upon the image, I actually found that the Divine Mother was living and conscious, the Perennial Fountain of Divine love and Beauty."¹³ He was caught in a surging wave of devotion and forgetting all about the trials and tribulations and the penury of the family, he prayed to the Mother for discrimination, knowledge and devotion. As Narada describes, "Devotion is devoid of all attributes and free from all characteristic tendencies to selfish action,"¹⁴ and as he also affirms, "Attaining that, one does not desire anything, neither

grieves, nor hates.”¹⁵ Swami Vivekananda, when he felt the living presence of the Divine Mother, forgot all about the mundane things. That night Sri Ramakrishna sent him thrice to the temple to ask for the removal of the poverty of his family, but Narendra could not force himself to ask of the Mother these things. Thus was Narendra introduced to the path of devotion.

Later, in Cossipore, Sri Ramakrishna one day initiated him with the name of Rama, informing him that he himself had received it from his Guru. Consequently, waves of emotion welled up in Narendra to such heights that towards the evening he started going round and round the house repeating the Lord’s name in an excited voice. He had lost all outward consciousness and was in a highly ecstatic mood.

In those days, Cossipore garden house was a place of intense *sadhana*, spiritual practices: Sri Ramakrishna sometimes would send the young disciple to meditate, sometimes would ask Naren to sing devotional songs, and Narendra also would urge his brother disciples to redouble their efforts to realize God, before the departure of the Master, for, he told them, that the disease of the Master was a serious one and that he might soon lay down the body. And he himself set the example. Once after spending several days at Cossipore, Narendra went home. The people there scolded him severely for neglecting his studies. He was then preparing to sit for the Law examination. Heeding their words he tried, but a terrible fear invaded his heart, as if to read was a horrible thing to do. He left the books and all but ran to Cossipore and did not stop until he reached the place. That night Sri Ramakrishna, though he could not talk due to the worsening of the disease, referring to the exalted state in which Narendra found himself, said in a whisper, “There was a time when he did not believe in the Personal aspect of God. Now see how he pines for realization.” Those who have

read the biography of Swami Vivekananda are well aware with what devotion he visited the cave of Amarnath and the temple of Kshirbhavani in Kashmir and what tremendous emotional effect these visits had on him. Sri Ramakrishna also had once remarked: "Naren is all jnana without and bhakti within." And every word of it proved to be true. Towards the end of his life, Swamiji spoke mostly of the Divine Mother.

Now we come to the most glorious moments of Narendra's life. It was in Cossipore that almost every disciple of the Master was blessed with one or other type of spiritual experience. Narendra, who was hankering after the highest form of realization, one day complained to Sri Ramakrishna, "All have been blessed by some class of experience. Let me, too, have something. When all have got it, shall I alone be left out?" Sri Ramakrishna said: "Make some arrangements for your family, and you shall have all. What do you want?" Narendra replied: "I wish to remain immersed in Samadhi for three or four days at a stretch—breaking it just to take food." The Master remarked, "You are a fool. There is a state even higher than that. Do you not sing, 'Thou art all that there is?' Come here after making some provision for your family, and you shall realize a state even higher than Samadhi."¹⁶ As days passed Narendra's desire for realization increased a hundredfold. He began to spend more and more hours in meditation. One evening unexpectedly this vehement desire of his came to be fulfilled. He was meditating, when all of a sudden he felt a light behind his head, as if a bright torch were placed there. Gradually the light increased in luminosity and grew and finally appeared to burst. Then Narendra's mind merged in the light; what happened afterwards cannot be expressed in words, for this state was Nirvikalpa Samadhi, where all distinctions such as the meditator, the object of meditation and the process of meditation disappear, and the

Atman, as it were, merges in itself, or unites with the Paramatman or Brahman. The Upanishads say "Wherefrom the word along with the mind returns without comprehending, experiencing that bliss of Brahman, man fears nothing."¹⁷ Again, "By what can you know the Knower?"¹⁸

At the time in the room there were only Narendra and Gopal the elder meditating; all was perfect silence. Suddenly, the latter heard Narendra cry out, "Gopalda, where is my body?" Partially gaining consciousness, Narendra was only aware of his head. The brother disciple, taken aback, replied, "There it is," and then looking at Narendra's rigid body ran to Sri Ramakrishna for help. He found the Master intensely calm but his countenance deeply serious, as though he knew what was passing in the adjacent room. In response to his request for help, Sri Ramakrishna said: "Let him remain in that state for some time. He has teased me a long time for it."¹⁹ When Narendra regained normal consciousness, he saw himself surrounded by his anxious brother disciples. He felt as if bathed in an ineffable bliss. His heart overflowed with ecstasy. Later, when he presented himself before the Master, the latter looked deep into his eyes and said, "Well, the Mother has showed you everything. Now, as they keep the treasure in a box under lock and key, similarly, the realization you have had just now shall remain locked, and the key shall remain with me. You have work to do. When you have finished the work, it will open again and you will once again know, as you have just now known." Then he asked him to take care of his body for a few days and be selective as regards food and companions, accepting only the most pure.

Thus did Swami Vivekananda's natural tendency towards introversion assist him in attaining the highest of the spiritual realizations, Nirvikalpa Samadhi, the final goal of Jnana yoga. No progress in this path is possible unless one transcends the body

idea. Sri Sankara says in the Vivekachudamani: "He who engaging himself only in taking care of the body aspires to realize the Atman, is like the person who tries to cross a river grasping a crocodile, mistaking it for a log of wood."²⁰ To go beyond body consciousness is the *sine qua non* of this yoga, and we have seen to what a great degree this power was developed in Swami Vivekananda, from his very childhood, and because of this he was able to realize the goal of Jnana yoga in such a short time.

We have referred earlier to the ease with which Narendra could lose himself in meditation. We also said that it is the penultimate step, according to Patanjali, of Raja yoga. We saw the Cossipore garden house transform itself into a place of great yajna, that of *sadhana*, service to the Guru and of spiritual experiences. Here it was, a few months before the event mentioned above occurred, that one day while meditating, Narendra, all of a sudden, felt a peculiar sensation in his heart. 'M.', to whom Narendra was relating the incident, said, "It was the awakening of the Kundalini." "Probably it was," replied Narendra, and added, "I clearly perceived the Ida and Pingala nerves. I asked Hazra to feel my chest. Yesterday I saw the Master and told him about it."²¹ Thus we see that Narendra, guided by the Master, was rapidly progressing in the disciplines of all yogas.

After Narendra realized Nirvikalpa Samadhi, Sri Ramakrishna had told him that that experience would remain hidden, as long as Narendra had not finished the Mother's work. The work was to spread the message of the Master not only in India but also outside it. It was an all-comprehensive message and would rejuvenate the religion in all parts of the globe. For this purpose Sri Ramakrishna himself had banded the young men together and bound them with the cord of love. He specially charged Narendra to see that these boys did not go back to the world, but became

instruments in spreading the life-giving message of the eternal religion. These were tremendous tasks, but Narendra faithfully carried them out in spite of the fact that he had to fight against heavy odds and encounter much opposition.

In all these efforts the idea of personal gain, in the shape of riches, or name and fame never for a day entered his mind. Even as a wandering monk, soon after the passing away of the Master, he had tried many a time to retire to a secluded place and immerse in spiritual practices. But every time some one or other of the brother disciples whom the Master had left to his charge would fall ill and he would be compelled to give up his project and attend to their needs.

To do the work that would benefit mankind as a whole and be not attached to the results thereof is what Sri Krishna in the Bhagavad Gita terms as Karma yoga. He also says, "He whose enjoyment is in the Atman, who is satisfied with the Atman and who is content in the Atman alone, has no duty. For such a man there is nothing to gain by action nor lose by inaction. Therefore, be unattached and do all the duties."²² Here is the path of Karma yoga, but then Sri Krishna gives an example of one established in God, united with Him. He declares: "O Partha, I have no duties whatsoever to perform in the three worlds, nor have I to attain anything that I have not got, yet I engage myself in action."²³ Only the Incarnations of God and their apostles can really do work without any motive, not even of attaining liberation. Swami Vivekananda was a true karma yogi; he did not care even for his personal liberation if he could be of service to humanity. He expressed as much in some of his letters to and talks with his disciples.

Thus we see in Swami Vivekananda a harmonious combination of all the yogas beautifully expressing themselves.

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The Science of the Self

Swami Premeshananda

First Deliberation

I have cast the net of the body into the ocean of the world. With the help of this net, I catch the five fish of form, taste, smell, touch, and sound, and the housewife of the mind spends the whole day and night preparing various kinds of dishes with them: spicy, soupy, sour, fried, and so on.

While awake, I remain constantly engaged in eating them. In dream I enjoy the taste of these dishes. Only in deep sleep do I get some respite from eating, and enjoy a little rest. From beginningless time, I have busied myself with the enjoyment of these dishes of the senses. That is why I consider this net of the body, which catches all these items of enjoyment, dearer than life itself. We live our lives through this net alone. In how many ways do we serve this body day and night—as if nourishing and pleasing it were our only goal in life! We cannot even imagine that “I am not this body”. If someone says that, it sounds ridiculous to us. “Tell me, sir”, we might reply, “if my body did not exist, how then could I exist? Is there some thing independent of the body?” And yet, when I am engrossed in reading a detective novel, mosquitoes may be sitting on my back and sucking my blood, and I won’t even notice. While watching a football game in the terrible heat of summer, my body may be covered with sweat, and I won’t even be aware of it. In addition, when a hatha yogi withdraws his mind from his body and induces a sleep-like state, he remains oblivious to the physical needs of the body for a long time. I may have a severe pain in my hand, but if a burning charcoal falls on my foot, I become completely oblivious to the pain in my hand. And when I fall asleep each night, I have no idea what happens to my body. I have

observed this much alone: Wherever I place the stethoscope of the mind I receive information. We see all these things day and night and nevertheless somehow still refer to the body as "I"!

Pranamaya Kosa (the vital sheath)

When we compress the lungs, air comes out, and when we expand the lungs, air enters from outside and causes the blood to circulate within the body. These activities of *prana* (inhalation) and *apana* (exhalation) are constantly at work, but how aware are we of them? The meaning of the root 'an' (which forms the basis for the words *prana*, *apana*, etc.) is "life force". *Prana* means "vital energy", not "air". *Pra* ("forward") and *aniti* ("moves"): the life force that moves forward is *prana*. *Apana* comes from 'apa' ("downward") and 'aniti': that which moves in a downward direction. *Udana* comes from *ut* ("upward") and *aniti*: that which moves upward. The vital energy which pushes the mind upward in the state of deep sleep is the *udana vayu*. *Vyana* comes from *vi* plus *a* and *aniti*: that which brings the vital energy from all sides to one spot. *Samana* comes from *sam* and *aniti*: that which transports the essential part of food throughout the body. We are ceaselessly eating many kinds of food, all of which get digested and nourish the body, but we have no knowledge of that fact. As soon as something harmful enters the body, *prana* becomes terribly angry and mounts an attack against it. The area that is attacked becomes hot and a fierce battle ensues. The mind sends a telegram to inform us, and that is how we come to know of it. But we do not get to know what the exact problem is. I wound my clock before leaving for Calcutta, and the clock continued to run automatically. Similarly, we have left *prana* in charge of the body. Now, even if the mind enters the realm of deep sleep or becomes unconscious through the effect of some drug, *prana* continues to function without any difficulty.

So, if you look carefully, you will clearly see that prana behaves just like one of our salaried servants. If there were no prana, the drama which is performed on the stage of the body would come to a halt. But even then, I would remain just as I was before. Through the practice of yoga, we can gain the power to completely control prana, as if it were our slave. Even ordinary yogis are capable of controlling prana to a certain extent. So, how can I say that I am not distinct from prana!

Manomaya Kosa (the mental sheath)

A spiritual aspirant who desires to develop his inner life takes refuge in his mind, as if it were a great friend. But no sooner does he take a step or two forward than he realizes that the mind which poses as his considerate well-wisher actually stands guard at the door of the kingdom of the spirit so that no one may enter within. That is why, after seeing the opposition of the mind to the practice of yoga, such a great hero as Arjuna willingly admitted that "the mind is restless and difficult to control", that is, "*man ah dumigraham calam*" [Gita VI.35]. I sat down to read a detective novel and was completely oblivious as to where the time flew that night. The next night I again lit my lamp and sat down to read the Gita. No sooner had I read two or three *slokas* than I found my rascal mind riding on the back of a recalcitrant horse, and I did not even notice when my eyes closed in sleep.

For millions of years I have wandered about the marketplace of form, sound, taste, smell, and touch with this ungrateful mind and given it whatever it wanted whenever it wanted it. Nobody told me that one day I would have to restrain the mind. We cannot always meet its demands; that is why we are in this sorry state today. From time immemorial, it has put on the dress of a dancer and has performed many dances on the stage of the body. Can I suddenly make it behave now in whichever way I please? For the

time being I should neither praise nor criticize the mind even a little, but only observe its activities. Then I shall have to resort to various schemes and tricks to turn it around. That is why Sri Krishna told the helpless Arjuna, "The mind can be controlled, O Kaunteya, through practice and renunciation" ("*Abhyasena tu kaunteya vairagyena ca grhyate*" [Gita VI.35]).

If we consider all these things, what doubt can there be that we are the witness, controller, master, and enjoyer of the dancer of the mind? We are not the mind. The mother cannot put anything in her mouth until her child has eaten. For ages I have supplied my mind with food, looking upon it as dearer than a child. Today I cannot dream of letting it go without food. But if I want to get some information regarding the kingdom of the spirit, I must first send the outgoing mind inward. Unless it brings news from there, I shall not be able to enter. That is why I must make the mind turn within by engaging it in work. I must immerse the mind in the beautiful play of Saguna Brahman and make the current of the mind flow in that direction. I have lived with another for so long that it is now impossible for me to return home without its help. You see, that is why in the beginning of all spiritual practices we simply engage in a tug of war with the mind. But if we are able to understand, with the help of keen discrimination and insight, that the mind is our worst enemy, then by practicing non-cooperation with the mind, or going on a "hunger strike" like a hatha yogi, we can arrange to bid a final farewell to the mind. If we fight and quarrel with the mind in this way for some time, we can clearly understand that we are not the mind. It is simply because the mind helps us to enjoy the objects of the senses that we have allowed it to dance about in our hearts for so long.

Whenever we want to enjoy anything in the external world, we place the stethoscope of the mind on the sense organ through which

the objects of enjoyment enter. If the mind is not placed in contact with the eye, then even if the celestial dancers Rambha and Tilottomma are standing directly in front of our eyes, we won't be aware of them. If we look a little carefully, we can clearly see how the mind travels throughout the body day and night keeping us constantly absorbed in the senses. Swamiji observed this with his own eyes and wrote that the mind is just like electricity. It roams all over the body and gives us all our information regarding contact with the external world.

It is written in the Upanishads that a certain rishi said to his disciple, "My child, the mind is verily composed of food" (*"Annamayam hi saumya manah"* [Chandogya U. VI.5.4]). That is to say, the mind is the energy which is extracted from the essential portion of food. The student was astonished to hear this and could not believe that the same food which ultimately takes the form of excreta could produce this subtle, powerful mind. So the teacher said to the disciple, "Fast for a few days." The disciple did as he was told and became very weak. The guru then asked him to recite a few passages from the Vedas that the student had memorized earlier. But the student was unable to remember anything. Later, after eating for a few days, the disciple began to remember everything from the Vedas. Then the student believed that just as physical strength comes from food, so does mental strength also come from food.

I can never accept the fact that this mind, which is made up of food, is my very Self. Just as my hands and feet are instruments for the performance of work, so is the mind a force enabling me to perform work. Just as my sense of "I" remains the same even if one of my hands is cut off, so does the sense of "I" remain the same even when the mind ceases to exist—for we know that the mind ceases to exist every night during the hours of dreamless sleep.

We directly perceive the workings of the mind and the various states of the mind both night and day. Unless there is a stationary object, we are unable to perceive motion. Similarly, we can understand everything about the mind solely because the eternal, all-pervading, firm, and immovable "I" stands before the mind. There is therefore no doubt that the mind is a fully distinct entity from my "I". I have forgotten the true nature of this "I", covered as it is by a veil of ignorance, and that is why I think of myself as the mind. By constantly reflecting on our own true nature, that is to say, on God, our delusion will disappear and we shall clearly see that we are distinct from the mind.

Vijnanamaya Kosa (the sheath of the intellect)

It is written in the scriptures that our real "I" is static and unchangeable. But we see that there is no limit to the number of transformations our "I" goes through from our childhood onward. In childhood I used to wander about naked without a second thought. But no sooner had I gotten a little older than that "I" vanished into thin air, and that quality which we call "modesty" came and enveloped me. Though I was a brahmin boy, I used to play and mix freely with one and all until someone placed the sacred thread around my neck and told me that I belonged to the *Sandilya Gotra* of the Sama Veda [a particular community of brahmins]. From that day forth my "I" was enveloped by numerous limitations such as, "I cannot touch him", "I cannot take food from his hand", and so on. And what a drastic change takes place in one's life when he is converted to another religion – we find the ultimate illustration of this in the life of Kala Pahar.

Where do these transformations come from? Is it due to the multifaceted nature of the mind? But we see at every moment that someone is always standing there behind the mind, making it function. The mind wants to play. But someone from behind calls

out, "Don't play now. Your studies will suffer. Your father will get angry." The mind immediately stops. In this way we are controlling the movements of the mind day and night. The mind craves so many things, but its controller stands behind it and regulates all its functions—its activity, food, dress, and so on. Who is this controller?

It is the buddhi, or intellect. Buddhi, i.e., that which dwells within the body and performs acts of cognition. The mind does not distinguish between good and bad, that is to say, it does not understand; it simply wants to run about in all directions. But the mind does not realize that if someone runs in the wrong direction, the results may be disastrous. The mind of a sannyasi may run toward a beautiful woman, but the intellect will immediately grab it by the neck and forcibly bring it back. By repeatedly restraining the mind in this way, the unconscious mind no longer runs towards a beautiful woman. This truth has been stated by the Lord: "The mind can be controlled, O Kaunteya, through practice and renunciation" ("*Abhyasena tu kaunteya vairagyena ca grhyate*" [Gita VI.35]). This means that the intellect should restrain the mind from whatever it understands to be detrimental to its well-being; it should not feel any attachment to such things. By repeatedly acting in this way, the mind becomes firm. It is the intellect which possesses the feelings of attachment and detachment. By constantly coming into contact with external objects over a long period of time, the intellect gains experience and is able to understand what is conducive to one's well-being and what is not.

To refine the intellect is the primary duty of mankind. It is the development of this intellect that distinguishes man from other living beings. Furthermore, those individuals who are respected by all have raised themselves up with the help of a refined intellect. The structure of the human mind and senses is the same for all. We

see a distinction between the mind and senses of individuals based solely on the relative refinement of the intellects they possess. If you beat a drum, the villager will come running, but the gentlemen will all flee. However, if you play the violin, the uncultured and uneducated people will start to fall asleep if you force them to listen. They won't be able to appreciate the subtleties of the various ragas. Even if the music is sweet to their ears, it will all sound the same. Unless the intellect is developed, one cannot fully appreciate the beauty of form, taste, smell, touch, and sound.

We see variety in different human beings in accordance with the development of their intellects. Take, for example, students who are studying in colleges and schools. Those who understand only the gross things of the world try to learn practical subjects by means of which they may earn money. Those whose intellectual powers include an appreciation for beauty are eager to study inspiring subjects, such as poetry and literature. Those who have developed an even finer intellect want to explore the inner life and study religion. And those whose intellect has reached the finest level seek to discover whether there is any reality which can confer on them permanent peace.

So we see that the intellect alone is our guide in life. The intellect lies at the back of the numberless living beings in the world and guides them all in infinite ways. But in order to observe this diverse and multifaceted operation, there must exist some permanent reality. Who would be able to comprehend this variety within the intellect unless there was someone standing behind it that was eternal, all-pervading, and unchanging? Furthermore, unless the intellect had some other object as its goal, there would be no real explanation as to why the intellect ascends upward from such a base condition. Why does the intellect feel such a sense of discontent and unfulfillment? Why does it run about life after life

and suffer terrible agitation trying to enjoy all the objects of the world? What is its ultimate goal?

And if the intellect seeks something other than this, then it cannot represent my real true nature, that is to say, it cannot be my true Self. Therefore, taking the form of the witness of this body, mind and intellect and observing again and again the events of the body and mind, sometimes pleasant and sometimes unpleasant, from beginningless time, I become disinterested and long to dwell in peace. Then I turn my gaze away from the world and strive to abide within myself—this is called spiritual practice. When I no longer have the slightest desire for anything other than my real "I", then I shall be able to comprehend my own true nature and attain eternal peace. This is what is called *mukti*, *Brahma-nirvana*.

Through constant discrimination I must first understand that I am distinct from the gross and subtle bodies. But even after understanding this, nothing will be gained so long as I have not directly realized it by means of meditation. Therefore, once there are no longer any doubts concerning this and the mind becomes firmly established in this idea, one must merge the mind in the "I" which is distinct from the gross and subtle bodies. "Fix the mind on the Self and don't think of anything at all" ("*Atma-samstham manah krtoa na kincit api cintayet*" [Gita VI.25]). If one can remain in this state for a long time, he becomes what is known as "Purusha", the Self—that is to say, he realizes that what he thought of as "I" for so long was only a false notion. "I am not the master of the body and mind; I am only their witness, their observer." This is the first stage in knowledge. Once one reaches this stage, one will find no further obstacles on the path to complete liberation. But those who consider this to be the final stage sometimes become spellbound, seeing in themselves the manifestation of various kinds of occult powers.

However, if one has a clear conception regarding the nature of liberation and keeps himself engaged in spiritual practices in a spirit of renunciation, then ultimately the "ripe I" will also merge with Brahman, "beyond the realm of speech and mind". This is verily Brahma-nirvana.

Second Deliberation

(1)

When I was a child, if someone asked me, "Who are you?", I would reply, "I am so and so". That is to say, the name given to me by my parents was the only way I knew of introducing myself. Since then I have roamed about my entire lifetime in this marketplace of the five senses and have piled numberless identifications, *upadhis*, on my shoulders.

Our activities and thoughts determine this mass of *upadhis* of ours which has grown to the size of a mountain. Yet we know beyond the shadow of a doubt that the "I" which carries about this mass of *upadhis* is the real "I".

(2)

When we fall asleep each night, our wakeful "I" completely vanishes. Then we cover ourselves with different dresses from our collection of past impressions and become a new person, the witness of the dream world. Had the dream world not been so impermanent, and had we been able to witness it for a longer period of time, then upon waking we would have questioned which "I" was the real "I". As the farmer in the story from the Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna said, "I do not know if I should weep for our son Haru of this waking world or for my seven sons of the dream world." We remain so preoccupied day and night with the waking state of life that we are unable to attach any importance whatsoever to the "I" of the dream world. But the farmer was a jnani. With his

sharp discriminating vision, he had realized the truth that one and the same "I" plays two different roles on two different stages.

If we don't get a good night's sleep one day, we feel miserable. But we don't consider what an amazing phenomenon sleep is. When we remain enveloped in deep sleep, we lose all awareness of the waking state. Our knowledge of dreams is also completely absent, and the mountain-like burden of upadhis which we carry on our shoulders and for which we work ourselves to death is lifted from our backs. Even this "I" of our desires, for which we have toiled like slaves from time immemorial, and for which we are happy to labour even now, vanishes into thin air without leaving the slightest trace.

Whether we are passing our time in the midst of great activity in the waking state, sometimes laughing and sometimes weeping in the dream state, or experiencing the complete annihilation of the self in deep sleep, it is one and the same "I" that is witnessing these three different scenes. And yet, we are completely incapable of comprehending the fact that we are simply the witness. If we were really and truly the "I" of the waking state, then why does that "I" disappear in the dream state? And who is there that does not understand that the dream state is unreal?

Why does the grief that one experiences even at the death of a hundred sons vanish at the time of deep sleep? We are such fools that we cannot comprehend even such an ordinary fact! I am distinct from these three different states; I am simply the witness of these three states. There is no reason why we shouldn't be able to understand this simple truth.

It is our belief that the Yoga Sutras teach us to reflect on the experience of the dream and deep sleep states so that we may withdraw the mind from the various sense objects and make it firm. If we meditate upon our real nature as the witness of the states of

dream and deep sleep and as devoid of all upadhis, we can effortlessly attain Self-knowledge.

Third Deliberation

(1)

We do not find many healthy and strong people like Ram Babu. He has not suffered from illness his entire life. He can run twenty miles at a stretch. There is no food known to man that he cannot digest without an iota of difficulty. How few people like him do we find in this world!

Seeing automobiles in every home, Ram Babu formed a desire for a car. No sooner did the thought arise than the deed was done—he bought a car. Ram Babu is no longer ever found at home. Now he spends practically the whole day driving his car and seeing the sights—the sky, fields, forests, jungles, markets, and bazaars. The more he sees, the more his cravings multiply. Now he has a desire to drive his car around the entire world.

He has no wants and no complaints, no worries or concerns—the whole day is spent solely with his car. But no sooner had a few months passed than his car began to break down, and Ram Babu devoted all his attention to repairing it. So Ram Babu was now consumed by driving his car, seeing new places, and his new task—repairing the car.

Eventually things reached such a state that the entire body of the car had to be replaced. After much searching, Ram Babu found a body shop and replaced the old body of his car with a new one. The people of his town no longer call him Ram Babu but Car Babu. Isn't it fitting? All conversations and chats with him have stopped. No one ever gets the chance even to see him anymore. So his new name suits him perfectly.

(2)

Did you get the point of the story? We all are different Car Babus. Our friends and relatives, the Vedas and Upanisads, the

Bible and Koran, sadhus and sannyasis, pirs and fakirs, are all shouting to us, "The jiva is the eternal servant of the Lord." But who listens to them? We are all infatuated with our "cars". We drive the car and repair it. And when the body falls apart, we exchange it for another. Death following birth and birth following death. We have changed bodies millions of times since the beginning of creation and have played the part of Car Babu. And the same state of affairs applies to spiders and bugs as it does to kings and emperors. It is the same for pandits and scholars as it is for fools and outcastes. The only difference is in the model of the cars, whether they are station wagons, jeeps, buses, sedans, and the like.

(3)

Finding no other means available, a certain rishi tried to direct our minds to a new path. There were no motor cars then, so he used the example of a chariot in an attempt to draw our attention to the ultimate thief, the unripe "T". The rishi reflected, "If I ask them to give up this unripe 'T', which they have loved for so long, they will not listen to a word I say. But if I turn their direction to the true character of this 'T', then they may get some understanding that this 'T' is the great enemy of the jiva."

(4)

To give an example: A certain prince fell in love with a princess. The two were joined in marriage, and the prince no longer paid any attention to his father's kingdom, being infatuated with the form, taste, smell, sound, and touch of the princess. The prince became so spellbound that he forgot all about his own valour, strength, wealth, and sweetness, and sacrificed himself totally to the princess. Though the princess was very intelligent and the daughter of a respected family, she had a certain flaw in her understanding. Taking advantage of her husband's weakness, she secretly began

to remove his wealth and possessions. The prince, no longer in contact with his parents and relatives and devoid of strength in his body and mind, was reduced to this dire state.

Though friends of the prince made repeated efforts, they were unable to turn the prince's mind toward his own self-preservation. He was now unable to follow any advice regarding his own well-being. So after conferring among themselves, they said to him, "O Prince, you love the princess so dearly; you are enchanted by the beauty and grace of her body. But have you been able to enjoy the sweetness of her inner treasures as well? You have enjoyed her outer qualities for a long time; now try to appreciate her inner loveliness also. If you focus on the grandeur of her character and her innermost thoughts, you will experience infinite joy."

The prince was happy to hear these words. He thought that the inner splendour of such a dear wife would certainly be far greater than her external beauty. So, from that day forth the prince tried to understand all the intricacies of his wife's character and raised varieties of topics in order to appreciate the workings of her mind.

At first the prince discovered that his friends' advice had increased his happiness a hundredfold. But later he began to have doubts about his wife's character and ideas. The prince was seized with curiosity, and as his curiosity increased, his wife's beauty and sweetness slowly began to taste bitter. As a result of his investigation, she gradually began to appear loathsome to him.

(5)

This great rishi, like the friends of the prince, did not neglect or ignore man with all his egotism and in his sad predicament. He said, "O wise, most excellent men, why are you behaving like this? You are the masters of this marvelous chariot. You have travelled for countless thousands and thousands of years in this chariot, visiting all the three worlds, and have made your Eyes blessed.

Now if you observe the manner in which the chariot functions and is constructed, you will be overjoyed. See with what amazing dexterity the driver of the intellect has attached the reins of the mind to the ten horses of the senses, making them move in whatever direction he pleases. The five horses of the organs of knowledge are illuminating the path with their brilliant white colour, while the five horses of the organs of action are frightening everyone with their dark red hue. Just see how the skillful intellect, with the help of the mind, is making the ten senses dance in various ways for your own enjoyment."

Up until now the master had been engrossed in the beauty of the outer world alone and paid no attention to the operation of his chariot. Now, as he began to watch the movement of his chariot, he could see terrible dangers arise. He noticed that his charioteer had been moving according to his own desires and had taken him to a place from which it was nearly impossible to return home. When he began to experience great pain due to his intense anxiety, a divine voice arose from within—what the jnanis call "discrimination". It seemed as if someone were saying to him, "Stop the chariot and get off at once. Otherwise there will be no end to your suffering." In order to obey this command, the master told the charioteer to stop the chariot. But the charioteer did not pay any heed to his order. Then the master sweetly and humbly entreated him to stop, but the charioteer ignored this request as well.

Then the master got very angry and fell on the charioteer's throat, and the charioteer was compelled to stop the chariot. But now another problem arose. Due to sitting for such a long time, the master had apparently lost the power to stand up. Though he repeatedly tried to stand out of fear of the divine voice, he was unsuccessful and his heart was filled with terrible remorse. Then

suddenly, out of desperation, he took a great leap and jumped off the chariot.

The master then felt as if he had awakened from a horrible nightmare, and his heart was filled with infinite bliss. The chariot, his wanderings, the different sights, all vanished from his memory. There are no words to express the limitless, imperishable bliss which he felt in his heart—and there is no one to hear them either.

Om. Peace, peace, peace!

Conclusion

The jnanis said to the jiva, "That thou art." The jiva laughed so hard he rolled on the ground. "I, a mere mortal, subject to the demands of the body, I am that Brahman! Shame on you. Don't ever say such a thing!"

Then the devotees came and said, "O jiva, you are the child of the infinite, glorious Lord." The jiva smilingly replied, "Sir, you have spoken very encouraging words. But I have heard that the Lord dwells in Vaikuntha, Vrindavan, and various other heavens. Dear sir, I don't have the money even to go to Calcutta; how can I travel such a great distance? The other day I was involved in a lawsuit and promised to offer a goat to Mother Kali if I won. But Mother did not allow me to win. I cannot keep going back and forth, crying and shouting, weeping and wailing. If He is really my father, then He doesn't have to send someone to see how I'm doing. If I am His son, why doesn't He even write a letter to see how I am? I do not care about all this; whatever is meant to be will be."

Then came a yogi. He gave the man great hope by telling him that he would make him all-knowing and all-powerful. Tantalized by his words, the man was prepared to follow his command. Then the yogi took out a long list and said, "Come, follow all these and all your desires will be fulfilled: *yama* (control of the outer senses), *niyama* (control of the inner senses), *pranayama* (control of the vital

energy), *pratyahara* (withdrawal of the mind from the senses), *dharana* (focusing the mind on a specific object), *dhyana* (meditation), and *samadhi* (merging the mind in the object of meditation)." As soon as he heard this, the man sat down trembling and said, "My dear sir, I cannot do all these difficult, troublesome things! I can purchase three bowlfuls of *siddhi* for two paisa; I have no need for your overpriced *siddhi*!" And this is the condition of man!

Great sages have tried various types of inducements to make beings turn within. If we look at it this way, then requesting the master of the chariot to turn his gaze on the chariot, that is, on himself, is really an attempt to awaken discrimination in man. One must first observe the functions of the body and mind and then reflect on the characteristics of the five sheaths, the nature of pure awareness, and the ever-conscious witness of the three states. If he does that, there is every possibility that he will be able to turn his mind inward.

If one properly understands these three "deliberations" regarding the path of knowledge, he will be greatly aided in all other spiritual paths as well. It is therefore essential for aspirants to study these three subjects before attempting anything else.

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The Spiritual Problem of Modern Man - 2

Carl G. Jung

At the same time, I see in the fact of our having a psychology a symptom indicating a deep-seated disturbance of the collective soul. For it is with the soul of the people as with the individual's soul, that is, as long as all is well and all psychical energies find regulated and satisfying application, nothing disturbing comes to us from within. No uncertainty and no doubts assail us, and we cannot be at war with ourselves. But as soon as some of the channels of psychical activity are destroyed, phenomena betokening a damming-up process begin, the springs overflow so to speak, the inner side wills something different from the outer, and the result is that we become at odds with ourselves. Only in this situation, that is, in this state of need, does one discover the soul as being contrary-minded, something strange and even hostile and disunited. The discovery of Freudian analysis shows this process in the clearest possible way. What was first discovered was the existence of perverse sexual and criminal phantasies, which, taken literally, cannot be assimilated by a cultivated consciousness. If anyone tried to maintain such a standpoint, he would unquestionably be a revolutionist, a madman, or a criminal.

It is not to be assumed that only in modern times has the background of the mind or the unconscious developed this aspect. Apparently, it has always been true and in all cultures. Every culture had its destructive counter-tendency. But no culture heretofore has found itself forced to take this psychic background seriously. The soul was always merely part of a metaphysical system. But modern consciousness can no longer ward off recognition of the soul despite the most strenuous and dogged

defence against it. This differentiates our time from all earlier ones. We can no longer deny that the mysterious things of the unconscious are effective powers, that psychical forces exist which can no longer be fitted into our rational world order, at least not for the present. We even build up a science on these things—one more proof of the seriousness with which we take them. Previous centuries could throw them to the jackals unrewarded, but to us they are a shirt of Nessus of which we cannot get rid ourselves.

A Great Upheaval of Faith

The upheaval of modern consciousness by the immense catastrophe of the World War is accompanied within by the moral upheaval of our faith in ourselves and in our virtues. Formerly, we could take foreigners politically and morally as scoundrels, but the modern man is forced to recognize that politically and morally he is just like everyone else. If formerly I believed it my God-given duty to set others in order, I know now that I myself am just as much in need of the call to order. I need it all the more in that I realize only too clearly the wavering of my faith in the possibility of a rational organization of the world, that old dream of the kingdom eternal where peace and harmony rule. The scepticism of modern consciousness in this respect permits no more political or world-reforming enthusiasm. In fact, it makes the most unfavourable imaginable basis for an easy out-flowing of psychical energies into the world. By reason of this scepticism, modern consciousness is thrown back upon itself, and the counter-thrust following this backward flooding makes conscious subjective psychical contents that were always present, but which lay in deep shadow as long as everything could stream outward without any friction.

How totally different did the world of the medieval man appear! Then the earth lay in the middle of the universe, forever fixed and at rest, circled about by a careful, heat-spending sun; while men, all children of God, were lovingly cared for by the Most High and educated for eternal happiness, and all knew exactly what ought to be done, and how one ought to behave, in order to pass from an earthly mortality to an eternal joyous existence.

Of such a reality we can no longer even dream. Natural science has long ago torn this veil of innocence. That time lies behind us like infancy, when one's own father was still the most beautiful and the mightiest of men. All the metaphysical certainties of the medieval man have vanished for the modern, and the latter has exchanged for them the ideal of material security, universal welfare, and humanitarianism. But whoever retains this ideal unshaken has at his command a more than usual amount of optimism.

Moreover, the security vanishes as the modern man begins to realize that every advance in external things brings about an ever-increasing possibility for a yet greater catastrophe. Expectation and phantasy turn aside from this possibility in terror. What does it mean, for example, that big cities today already prepared defences against attacks of poison gas, or actually mimic such attacks? It means nothing other than—following the proverb *si vis pacem para bellum*—that these gas attacks have already been planned and prepared. Let man heap up the necessary materials, and the latter will unquestionably take advantage of what is devilish in humanity and set it in motion like an avalanche. Weapons, it is well known, go off by themselves whenever enough of them are gathered together.

The dawning intuition of that law regulating all blind happenings, for which Heraclitus formed the concept of

enantiodromia, fills the background of modern consciousness with a chilling horror and lames all belief in the possibility of meeting this monster effectively and permanently by social and political means.

Dreary Shadows in the Background of the Mind

If, after this terrifying glance at a blind world in which construction and destruction eternally balance each other, consciousness turns back to the subjective man and looks within at its own background, it discovers dreary shadows, the sight of which everyone would gladly avoid. Here also science has destroyed a last refuge, and has made a place of horror out of what promised to be a protecting cave.

Yet one is almost relieved to find so much evil in the depths of his own soul. Here at least, we believe, is to be discovered the cause of all the evil in mankind in general. Although we are at first shocked and disappointed, yet we have the feeling that just because these mental facts are part of our own psyche, we can have them more in hand and therefore place them properly, or at least repress them effectually. If this could succeed, one gladly assumes, at least a part of the evil in the external world would be eradicated. With a general spread of knowledge of the unconscious, practically everyone could see if, for instance, a statesman was being guided by unconscious evil motives, and the newspapers could then shout him down with: 'Please have yourself analysed, you are suffering from a repressed father complex.'

I have purposely chosen this grotesque example in order to show to what absurd consequences we are led by the illusion that, because something is psychical, it is therefore under our control. It is certainly true that a great part of the evil in the world comes from the boundless unconsciousness of mankind, and certainly it

is also true that through increased insight we are able to do something against the psychical sources of evil—just as science has enabled us to resist external injuries adequately.

Man Turns to Inner Life

The immense, world-wide increase of psychological interest in the last two centuries shows unmistakably that modern consciousness—or let us say more modestly, curiosity—has withdrawn somewhat from material externals and has turned instead to the subjective, inner life. Expressionist art foretold this change prophetically, just as art always intuitively grasps in advance the coming changes in the general consciousness.

The psychological interest of our time expects something from the soul, something the outer world has not given, something without doubt which our religions ought to contain but do not or do not for the modern man. To the modern, religions no longer seem to come from within, from the soul, but to have become inventory-lists of the external world. No transcendental spirit seizes him with inner revelation, but he tries instead to select religions and convictions, putting them on like a Sunday-dress, only to take them off again finally as discarded clothes.

However, the dark, seemingly almost pathological subconscious phenomena of the soul fascinate the interest in some way or other, although we can scarcely explain why it is that something all previous ages have thrown aside, now suddenly becomes interesting. But, that these phenomena are generally interesting is a fact not to be denied, although not readily reconciled with good taste. By this psychological interest I do not mean merely the interest in psychology as a science, nor that still narrower interest in Freud's psychoanalysis, but the quite widespread increase of interest for psychical phenomena, spiritism,

astrology, theosophy, para-psychology, and so forth. Since the end of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the world has not seen anything like it.

For a comparable phenomenon we must turn to the flowering of the Gnosis in the first and second centuries after Christ. It is with this latter period that the modern spiritual currents have the deepest connection. There is actually today an *Eglise gnostique* in France, and in Germany I know two Gnostic schools that explicitly declare themselves as such. Numerically, the most important of these movements is without doubt theosophy and its continental sister, anthroposophy, a Hindu revision of Gnosis of the purest sort. By comparison, the interest in scientific psychology is negligible. But Gnosis is built exclusively on subconscious phenomena, and morally also it penetrates dark depths, as, for example, is witnessed by the Hindu Kundalini Yoga, even in its European form. The same is true of the phenomena of para-psychology, as every person informed on the subject will testify.

The passion invested in pursuit of these interests is without doubt psychical energy that has been turned back from obsolete religious forms. Therefore, these things have inwardly a truly religious character, even when externally they have a scientific hall-mark. If Dr. Steiner explained his anthroposophy as 'spiritual science', and Mrs. Baker Eddy discovered a 'Christian Science', such efforts at concealment only show in what bad repute religion has become, as much suspect in fact as politics and world-reform.

New Outlook of Religion

I have not gone too far when I assert that modern consciousness, in contrast to the nineteenth century, now turns with its most treasured and deepest expectations to the soul, and not in any recognized traditional way of faith, but in the Gnostic sense. That

all these movements give themselves a scientific character is not merely grotesque, nor just a mask as I indicated above, but a positive sign that they mean 'science', that is, knowledge, and mean it in strict contrast to the essence of Western forms of religion, namely faith. Modern consciousness has a horror of faith in dogmatic postulates, and also of religions based on them. It accepts them only in so far as their knowledge-content apparently harmonizes with the subconscious phenomena that have been experienced. It wants to know, that is, to have basic experience. As you have perhaps read, Dean Inge of St. Paul's has called attention to a similar movement in the Anglican Church.

The age of discoveries, whose close we have perhaps reached with the complete investigation of the earth, no longer wants to believe that the Hyperboreans dwell in a happy land of sunshine, or something of the sort, but it wants to know and to have seen for itself what existed beyond the boundaries of the known world. Apparently, our age sets itself the task of discovering what are the psychical facts beyond consciousness. The question of every spiritistic circle is: What takes place when the medium has lost consciousness? The question put by every theosophist is: What will I become on higher levels of consciousness, that is, beyond my present consciousness? The question of every astrologer is: What are the effective forces and determinants of my fate over and beyond my conscious view? The question of every psycho-analyst is: What are the unconscious mainsprings of the neurosis?

The age wants to experience the soul itself. It seeks original experience and therefore sets aside all pre-suppositions, and at the same time makes use of all existing suppositions as a means to the end, and thus it uses recognized religions and science. Formerly, a slight shudder ran down a European's back if he looked a little more deeply into these pursuits. For, not only did the objects of

this so-called investigation seem dark and uncanny to him, but the methods appeared to him as a shocking misuse of his finest spiritual achievements. What does the technical astronomer say, for example, to the fact that today at least thousands more horoscopes are made than three hundred years ago? What does the philosophical interpreter and teacher say to the fact that the modern world, in comparison to the antique, is not poorer by one superstition? Even Freud, the founder of psycho-analysis, has taken the utmost pains to bring out into garish light the dirt and darkness and evil of the subconscious mind, and to show that the world should give up any pleasure in seeking there anything other than nonsense and trash. He has failed in the attempt, and it has even happened that the warning has had the opposite effect, and has caused wonderment at the filth, a phenomenon in, and for itself, perverse and inexplicable, were it not that for these people too the secret fascination of the soul lies behind it all.

There can be no doubt but that since the beginning of the nineteenth century, since the memorable period of the French Revolution, things pertaining to the psyche have gradually, and with ever-increasing power of attraction, pressed to the foreground of the general consciousness. That symbolical gesture of the enthronement of the goddess Reason in Notre-Dame seems to have meant to the Western world something similar to the hewing down of Wotan's oak by the missionaries, for then as now, no avenging lightning struck down the transgressor.

(To be continued)

nephew. She was completely overwhelmed with grief. Ram said to her: "You are crazy. What will you gain by grieving? Do you want to go to Benares?" You see, he called his wife crazy. Grief for the boy totally 'diluted' him. I found he had no stuff within him. I couldn't touch him.

If it is happiness to enjoy the consciousness of this small body, it must be greater happiness to enjoy the consciousness of two bodies, the measure of happiness increasing with the consciousness of an increasing number of bodies, the aim, the ultimate of happiness being reached when it would become a universal consciousness. Therefore, to gain this infinite universal individuality, this miserable little prison-individuality must go. Then alone can death cease when I am alone with life, then alone can misery cease when I am one with happiness itself, then alone can all errors cease when I am one with knowledge itself; and this is the necessary scientific conclusion. Science has proved to me that physical individuality is a delusion, that really my body is one little continuously changing body in an unbroken ocean of matter; and Advaita (unity) is the necessary conclusion with my other counterpart, soul.

Swami Vivekananda

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Science is nothing but the finding of unity. As soon as science would reach perfect unity, it would stop from further progress, because it would reach the goal. Thus Chemistry could not progress farther when it would discover one element out of which all other could be made. Physics would stop when it would be able to fulfill its services in discovering one energy of which all others are but manifestations, and the science of religion become perfect when it would discover Him who is the one life in a universe of death, Him who is the constant basis of an ever-changing world. One who is the only Soul of which all souls are but delusive manifestations. Thus is it, through multiplicity and duality, that the ultimate unity is reached. Religion can go no farther. This is the goal of all science. All science is bound to come to this conclusion in the long run. Manifestation, and not creation, is the word of science today, and the Hindu is only glad that what he has been cherishing in his bosom for ages is going to be taught in more forcible language, and with further light from the latest conclusions of science.

Swami Vivekananda



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