

Swami Yatiswarananda

THE IDEAL OF SUPERCONSCIOUS EXPERIENCE

(MEDITATION AND SPIRITUAL LIFE
CHAPTER 2)

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Swami Yatiswarananda

THE IDEAL OF SUPERCONSCIOUS EXPERIENCE

(Meditation and Spiritual Life, Chapter 2)

Why do we need spiritual experience?

When we look deeply within, we are surprised to find that we are greatly dissatisfied with ourselves, with the world we live in, and the persons we associate with. This dissatisfaction creates conflict and tension which seem to be increasing in our contemporary world. Abnormal conflicts and tension make the mind and the body ill. Whatever its cause, dissatisfaction with the pattern of one's outer life produces conflict and consequent illness of mind and body. Our lives are then seen to be useless and without a goal. Moreover, when we feel dissatisfied with ourselves we tend to create restlessness instead of peace in others. As is the case with physical illness, mental illness can also be infectious.

We may have got the right work but perhaps we are bringing the wrong spirit to bear upon it. In that case we should develop a new attitude towards the job. Or perhaps we are doing something that fails to use our particular talents. Then we feel frustrated, and frustration causes strange and often harmful behaviour. Perhaps we lean too much on others. Or we may imagine hostility around us and waste our energies fighting imaginary enemies. Or perhaps we isolate ourselves from others, build up an idealized image of ourselves, and live in a fool's paradise. The worst symptom of mental illness comes when we begin to hate ourselves; and then life becomes doubly miserable.

What is the remedy? What can we do about all this? The wise psychologist tells us that before we can find an ideal for which to live effectively, we must have a deep understanding of our own nature. By changing our opinion of ourselves we can change ourselves; and this new attitude necessarily precedes the finding of a proper outlet for our energies. How to change our opinion about ourselves? The psychologist says that this can be done through psychoanalysis. We must allow ourselves to be examined by a psychologist. He tries to sound the depths of our personality through intelligent questions, unearths our hidden complexes, and tells what is actually wrong with

us. Theoretically, this method appears to be all right, and many people have really got some benefit from psychoanalysis. But its limitation lies in the fact that the psychologist's knowledge of others depends on his own knowledge of himself which is usually shallow.

Western psychologists with all their research have not succeeded in understanding man in depth. They have no doubt discovered that the conscious mind of man is under the control of a vast unconscious mind, and that the conscious and the unconscious minds are often incompatible in their movements. The conscious mind may have higher aspirations but the unconscious mind may be full of baser passions. Unconscious motivations work against conscious actions and thinking. But what Western psychology has failed to achieve is to discover a satisfactory means of integrating the unconscious and the conscious minds of man. What most psychologists ask their patients to do is to yield to the demands of the unconscious. In some cases this may release the inner tensions. But this may not be permanent and may even be more harmful.

It is here that Hindu yoga steps in. Yoga begins with purifying the unconscious first and making it compatible with the conscious. This purification is not something artificial. Purity is our real nature. It is the true nature of the Self of man. Hinduism long ago discovered a higher dimension to the personality of man, viz. the superconscious. It is the superconscious that gives us knowledge about our true higher Self. It reflects the light of the Self. This light must be brought to bear on the dark unconscious chambers of the mind. Then the unconscious is purified. It cooperates with the conscious mind and its aspirations. Inner division, conflicts and tensions then vanish. So the discovery of the superconscious is the most important point in the attainment of inner peace and harmony. The discovery of the superconscious is the first spiritual experience. That integrates the unconscious with the conscious. We regain our whole personality, our whole self.

Spiritual experience not only brings to us knowledge of the superconscious, but also solves the problems of the unconscious mind. Some of our problems are due to complexes hidden in the unconscious. Sex may be the cause of conflicts in many people, especially, early in their youth. But it is certainly wrong to exaggerate its role in man's life out of all proportion, as Freud did. The aggressive tendency of man to dominate others may be the cause of conflicts in

some people. But it is certainly wrong to exaggerate its role and make it responsible for all the ills of man, as Dr. Adler has done in his school of psychology. In the course of my long stay in the so-called materialistic West I came across a number of people who were spiritually hungry. Their problems were mostly of a spiritual nature. Many of them were dissatisfied with the joys of ordinary life and even in the conventional ways of institutional religion. They were seeking a higher experience, a higher existence.

The psychologist Dr. Carl Jung was one of the earliest to understand the spiritual need of man. He has pointed out that modern man is in search of his soul. But it is clear from his writings that Dr. Jung himself does not seem to have found out his true self. I met him in Switzerland and presented him some of my books.¹ He spoke to me about the unconscious. He said that the superconscious of the Hindus was included in the unconscious. This is a strange doctrine. It is actually just the other way round. We generally think that the body is the outermost, mind is inner to it, and the soul is the innermost layer. We have to reverse the order. Atman or the Self is the infinite, all pervading consciousness. The mind is contained within it. Still inner is the physical body which is limited and is the least pervasive.

The superconscious is at present unknown to us, but that does not mean that it is the same as the unconscious mind of the psychologists. It can be attained through spiritual disciplines. It is the source of supreme peace and bliss. More than all, it gives man the feeling of wholeness, the feeling of supreme fulfilment.

Dr. Jung is famous for his classification of human types into extroverts and introverts. The introvert is given to brooding and self-criticism, lives largely in a subjective world within his own mind. The extrovert is outgoing, busies himself with the outside world of affairs; his reality is the objective world of action. These types are not mutually exclusive. We can find them both in ourselves. In Vedanta we speak of the *karma-yogi* (the work-oriented man), the *bhakta* (the devotional man) and the *jñāni* (the intellectual man). But these types are not like watertight compartments. In everyone of us some elements of all these types are present. We must try to bring about proper harmony between the different tendencies. Through training we can combine and integrate the various tendencies within our na-

1 Swami Yatiswarananda met Dr Jung twice. See Addendum at end. Ed.

ture and finally even transcend them all. Thus we can work with enthusiasm, have intense devotion to a higher ideal, and also be rational in our thinking and work. But for this there must be intense spiritual aspiration as the uniting force.

In a book called *Release from Nervous Tension* the author, Dr. Fink, gives a positive suggestion for the practice of relaxation. First, he says, learn to relax head and neck, then knees and legs, chest, arms, eyelids, and so on throughout the body.² Such piece-meal release of tension, if properly practised, has certainly a beneficial effect, but our teachers tell us that through self-analysis and meditation we can learn to get control of our entire personality. This is a far more effective and lasting means of removing tension than the effort to release our members one at a time.

Why should we liberate ourselves painfully limb by limb, when by proper training we can take hold of the mind and attain the spiritual experience that will release us all at once? I am reminded of the story of a miser. He was on the death-bed and the priest came to 'save' him. Being greedy, the priest decided to save him limb by limb and charge a certain fee for every part saved. When he finally came to the right leg, the priest thought: Now I am going to charge him a lot as he is escaping us.' So he said aloud to the miser: 'Now, I am going to ask a large sum for your right leg.' The dying man, who had a very calculating mind, summoned all his strength and said: 'But, father, that is a wooden leg.' Whatever theologians may say about saving a man limb by limb, real spiritual teachers have a more effective means of salvation. This is the ideal of liberation of the self through direct perception of the higher Self. Spiritual experience transforms the whole personality. Intense peace and bliss fill the soul and bring about complete relaxation of mind and body.

Perception — direct and indirect:

The correct Sanskrit word for religion is *darśana*. This word *darśana* has a two-fold meaning. It means seeing or realization. It also means the path or discipline leading to this realization. By religion we mean both. The word *darśana* is also used to mean philosophy. In Hinduism we have six systems of philosophy, and all these are called *darśanas*.

2 1. David Harold Fink, *Release front Nervous Tension* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1943) pp. 67-72,

In Hinduism religion and philosophy have been inseparable and even synonymous. The common aim of both being the intuitive vision of Truth, they fulfil each other. As Prof. Max Müller has very truly observed, the two have worked together harmoniously in India alone, where religion derives its breadth of vision from philosophy, and philosophy its spirituality from religion. Religion is the practical form of philosophy, and philosophy the rational form of religion. The Hindu philosophers were primarily men of spiritual realization. And therefore their systems, based as they are on transcendental experience, lead to the same goal, if followed with sincerity and devotion.

Life is a constant interaction between personality and environment. Personality has different levels, so also has environment. The physical body is in touch with the physical world. The mental body is in touch with the mental world. The spiritual body or soul is in touch with the Universal Spirit or God. The personality can get experience at all these various levels. At whatever level we remain, we take the experiences of that particular level to be true. In our waking state we see many things which engage our attention completely. In our dreams also we perceive many things which are real to us as long as we dream. All this is perception, *darśana*, but not necessarily true. So the problem is to distinguish right perception from the false. In Indian philosophy there is a great deal of discussion about the criterion for valid perception. The scientist wants to know the truth of physical objects. He too has his experimental verification of the facts he perceives. The psychologist has his *darśana* too. He discovers with the help of his insight the laws of thought. The spiritual aspirant wants to have direct experience of God or Ultimate Reality. This is what is called *aparokṣānubhūti* [immediate experience].

We think too much of our sense-perceptions. We think we are perceiving the outside things directly. Never. The stimulus comes from outside objects to the eye. From there the message is carried to the mind, and then to the Self which is the knower. What an indirect process! And we are accustomed to calling it direct perception. Real direct perception or *aparokṣānubhūti* is that in which truth is directly revealed by the light of Self or Atman. This inner light shines through the mind and the senses. It can also shine by itself. This is **super-consciousness**. It is sometimes called *turīya*. Our experience generally covers three states of consciousness — *jāgrat* or waking, *svapna* or dreaming, and *suṣupti* or deep sleep. As distinct from

these three, there is the fourth state, the *turīya*. It is not exactly a 'state' like the other three. It is a form of transcendental consciousness of which the other three states are partial manifestations. In that state the soul realizes that it is a part of the infinite Spirit.

Inadequacy of book-knowledge

No spiritual practice is to be attempted by reading about it from books. One may, of course, read books by way of information, but we should know which ideas to take up and which ones to leave to themselves. We may read about various kinds of spiritual practice, but we should not try to follow them without first knowing which ones are good for us. We may know of many approaches, and this expands our mental outlook. But we should know which is the right approach for us. During the early stages in our spiritual life, which is usually a period of experiments, we should proceed slowly, noticing the physical and mental changes that take place in us and adjusting ourselves accordingly.

The right method followed by the wrong person brings about bad results. Hence the aspirant is expected to be properly qualified. But in modern times anyone may get any book, read about some practice, follow it, and also come to grief. Instructions always differ with individuals. One man's meat may prove to be poison to another. Each one must follow the law of one's being, and adjust oneself securely to one's mental and physical environment. If the superstructure is built on the right foundation, it stands all right. Otherwise, it tumbles down.

Generally it is not the Truth that we love, but we just love ourselves in something. We are in love with an idea because it is our idea, not because it represents the Truth at all. And little knowledge is always most dangerous.

*God is known to him who really knows Him to be unknown.
And He is unknown to him who thinks He is known.*

—Kena Upaniṣad II. 3

To a true and steady devotee the Lord reveals His glory. And the devotee's task is to be in tune with the Divine, with the Infinite. And then the Lord manifests His glory to him. Just as man tries to approach God, God is ever ready to approach man.

An intellectual enquiry into the mysteries of nature made by scientists and philosophers cannot reveal Truth. If you go on trying to find

the root-cause of things with your intellect you find it to be an impossible task. A finer and subtler instrument is needed to cut through the phenomena and realize the Truth. It is really very funny—all this phenomenal world including our body, thoughts and all. There is no sense, at least it so appears to us. What is the reason for the Formless assuming form? It all seems to be without rhyme or reason because it transcends reason. There is no explanation for this diversified and multiform play of Māyā, and none has ever been able to explain it in terms of the relative. On the relative plane there is absolutely no explanation, whether you call it God's will as the Christian does, or God's *līla* or sport or play as the Hindu does. It can never be explained, but it can be transcended.

The only ultimate proof for everything is direct perception. If there is a God at all, He must be seen, He must be felt. Mere theorizing will never do. We have to believe in the words of those who have seen Him, we have to follow in their footsteps, and then verify their experience in our own lives. Mere faith won't do, although it is necessary in the beginning. And as Swami Vivekananda observes in the introduction to his book on Raja Yoga:

*If there has been one experience in this world in any particular branch of knowledge, it absolutely follows that that experience has been possible millions of times before, and will be repeated eternally. The teachers of the science of Yoga, therefore, declare that religion is not only based upon the experience of ancient times, but that no man can be religious until he has the same perceptions himself.*³

This is the ideal of divine realization we must for ever hold on to.

States of superconscious realization

The joy that comes to us through sense pleasures brings in its train no end of misery. At first it may be like nectar, but later on it leads to frustration and disappointment.⁴ Intellectual pleasures are, no doubt, higher than this but they do not give us ultimate satisfaction or fulfilment. When we are in meditation, or when we sing the glory of the Lord, we feel an inner joy. This happiness is very good but it may not last long. But the joy that comes to the seeker in the

3 Swami Vivekananda, 'Raja Yoga', Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda, Vol. I (Calcutta : Advaita Ashrama, 1970) p. 127.

4 *Bhagavad Gita*, XVIII. 8.

transcendental state of consciousness abides with him for ever. It is the real happiness of which the other forms of happiness are but shadows. Even if that higher spiritual experience is not complete, even if one has only reached the threshold of superconsciousness, the memory of the joy once realized lingers, and forces the aspirant to struggle to reach the highest state and enjoy everlasting bliss.

All religions have their origin in superconscious realization. The experience of the superconscious made Jesus, a carpenter's son, the Christ adored by millions of people. It made Mohammed, a poor camel-driver, the Prophet of Islam. It made Nimai Pandit, a great scholar fond of intellectual gymnastics, Sri Krishna Caitanya, the messenger of divine love. Coming to modern times, we find Gaddhar Chattopadhyaya, a poor temple priest in Calcutta, transformed by superconscious realization into Sri Ramakrishna, the prophet of harmony of all religions. Of course, these men were not ordinary men.

Many of us have heard of God but we do not really know what that term means. Through spiritual practice some may get glimpses of divinity. And there are others who are not satisfied with these fleeting glimpses. They dive deep into themselves and discover God as the Soul of all souls. Just as the soul exists in the body, so God exists in all souls unattached but controlling all.

God is both immanent and transcendent. The devotee assumes various relationships with the Divine, and enjoys supreme bliss of communion with Him. When we say that the devotee looks upon God as the Master, the Friend, the Mother, or the Beloved, it should not be understood in a gross sense. Religion is, as Swami Vivekananda says, *'the eternal relation between the eternal soul and the eternal God'*.⁵ This idea is conveyed in terms of human relationships.

But there are others who transcend even this state. They discover the unity of all existence in Brahman. The soul is lost in the Supreme Spirit and there remains the One without a second. Sri Ramakrishna illustrates this through a beautiful parable. Once a salt doll went to measure the depth of the ocean. In the process of measuring, it itself got dissolved and became one with the ocean out of which it had originally come.⁶

5 . Complete Works, Op. cit., Vol. III, p. 4

One who attains to direct superconscious experience is called a *r̥ṣi* [*rishi*] or seer. Everybody is a seer of a sort. One who perceives sense objects is a seer. One who perceives distant stars and planets is a seer. One who can know the thoughts of others is a seer. One who discovers the laws of thought and workings of human mind is also a seer. But, as distinct from these, the word *r̥ṣi* is used in the case of one who has intuitively experienced the transcendental Truth. This power of intuition, called *divya cakṣu* or 'divine eye' in the *Bhagavad Gīta*,⁷ is latent in all men.

Ignorance and its conquest

What prevents us from developing this 'divine eye' forthwith? Vedantic teachers say it is ignorance. Patañjali also speaks about ignorance as that which clouds the vision of puruṣa, the Self. In the *Yoga Sūtras* we read : '*Ignorance is taking the non-eternal, the impure, the painful, and the non-Self for the eternal, the pure, the happy, and the Atman or Self, respectively*'.⁸ Under the intoxication of ignorance truth becomes worse than fiction.

There is the story of a drunkard who was seen frantically climbing a lamp-post shouting all the while. The police naturally caught him and dragged him to the magistrate, who asked him, 'What is the matter with you?' The man replied: 'What could I do, Sir? I was pursued by three crocodiles. I had to save myself by climbing the lamp-post.' Crocodiles on the road of a city! And yet that was what he saw under the influence of drink. Under the influence of ignorance we too see many things which do not have ultimate reality.

How to overcome this ignorance and attain superconscious realization is the next question. Ignorance is not known as such. It manifests itself in various ways. First of all comes egoism. This eclipses the real Self or Atman. Then comes desire or attachment. When these are checked or thwarted, they give rise to anger and fear. Man is bound to the world by ignorance, egoism and the instincts. Modern psychologists speak of complexes. According to one classification, there are three types of complexes: the sex-complex, the ego-complex, and the herd-complex. Spiritual life does not even begin unless

6 *The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna*, trans. Swami Nikhilanande (Sri Ramakrishna Math, Madras, 1974), p. 29.

7 *The Bhagavad Gīta*, XI. 8..

8 *Yoga Sūtra*, 11. 5 (The translation is Swami Vivekananda's).

one learns to go beyond the hold of these complexes. This is the meaning of spiritual struggle. It is not possible to overcome the hold of instincts in a day. We are our own obstacles; external obstacles are nothing compared to those we create within. Our whole personality must be overhauled. How to do this? Here the mystics of the world religions have discovered for us several paths.

The path of mystics

A mystic is one who has the direct intuitive experience of the ultimate Reality, whether It is called God or the Self. In sanskrit we call him a *ṛṣi*. Every great religion in the world has produced numerous mystics. But all religions have not recognized their greatness. That is because in some of the religions like Christianity, Islam and Judaism, the main emphasis is on faith and morality as the means for salvation. The followers of these religions are expected to have absolute faith in the prophets who founded their religions. Each religion claims the superiority of its own founding prophet, and all those who do not accept this will be denied salvation, which means all these latter have to go to hell. In spite of such ideas these religions have produced outstanding saints who had direct experience of God. Mysticism has never been recognized as a valid and necessary part of Christianity and Islam. Many Christian mystics had to face persecution by the Church. In the seventeenth century the so-called quietist movement was put down with an iron hand. During the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries anti-mystical movements within and without the Church were so strong that Christianity had all but forgotten its great mystical traditions by the beginning of the present century. The mystic movement in Islam is called Sufism. In spite of the resistance of the orthodox and the violence of fanatics, which caused the death or persecution of a number of earnest seekers of God, Islam too has produced an astonishingly large number of mystics, some of whom attained the pinnacles of spiritual experience.

It is only when we come to India, and especially Hinduism, that we find religious freedom and mystical luxuriance. According to Hinduism direct intuitive experience of the Supreme Spirit is essential for one's salvation. Salvation in Hinduism means total freedom from sorrow and ignorance. As long as a man has not attained this highest freedom called *mukti* or 'liberation', he has to be born again and again, and experience the bitter-sweet fruits of life. It is in Hinduism that the paths to spiritual perfection were studied in depth and made

into a science. Hinduism opens four main paths for the attainment of higher direct intuitive experience. These are called the yogas. We shall discuss these briefly one by one.

Karma Yoga

First of all comes Karma Yoga. Here the main emphasis is on detaching the will from the result of action. This is what is called working without motive. This is not as easy as many people imagine. It requires tremendous will-power. But there is an easier way of detaching oneself from the fruit of one's actions. This is to surrender the fruit at the feet of the Lord. You know the most sublime line at the very beginning of the *Īśāvāsya Upaniṣad*, 'All that is changeful in this world is to be covered by God.' The whole world belongs to God. Realizing this, one should give up every form of desire. 'The Lord gave and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord,' said Job, a Hebrew sage of the Old Testament when he was subjected to severe trials and sufferings.⁹ When the mind gets purified through detachment and self-surrender, the Atman within slowly begins to shine forth.¹⁰

Raja Yoga

Then comes the path of meditation or Raja Yoga. Here the main struggle is to prevent thoughts about sense objects from arising in the mind, and make the mind flow along higher channels. For the vast majority of people this is simply an impossible feat. To attempt it without previous preparation may bring tremendous reactions. Hence Patañjali, the chief exponent of this path, has made it a graded series. First of all come *yama* and *niyama*, that is, moral disciplines—general and individual. One should practise at all times non-injury, truthfulness, chastity, non-covetousness, and non-dependence on others. Learn to stand on your own feet. Practise cleanliness and contentment. Read and think deeply and assimilate the ideas. Surrender everything to God, the Teacher of all teachers. After attaining success in all these, one may practise sitting in a particular posture and learn to control one's breath, which means control of the flow of cosmic energy in the body and the mind. This is what is called *praṇāyāma*. Some people give excessive importance

9 The Old Testament, 'The Book of Job,' 1.21.

10 Vide Swami Vivekananda. *Complete Works.*, op. cit., Vol. VII, pp. 179, 198, 222.

to this but are often unable to handle the forces playing within them. The result may be temporary or permanent unsettlement of the brain. Patañjali gives only a minor role to *praṇāyāma* in his scheme of spiritual life. The next two steps in Raja Yoga are withdrawal of the senses from the external objects and fixing the mind on some spiritual idea. When this inner concentration deepens, one realizes oneself as the *puruṣa* or Self.

Bhakti Yoga

The third path is Bhakti Yoga. Here also there is need for discipline, but the main emphasis is in giving a Godward turn to one's impulses. Attachment to the world should be changed to love for God. Hatred should be replaced by renunciation. Fear should be replaced by self-surrender to the Divine. Along with that, one should constantly remember the Lord. For this the devotee takes the help of sound-symbols called *mantras*. Mantras are short mystic formulas. Then there are the hymns and devotional songs which are longer. With the help of all this the devotee must think of the Lord constantly. Then, through His grace, one overcomes all the obstacles in spiritual life and gets His vision.

Jñāna Yoga

When we come to Jñāna Yoga, we find that a higher standard of morality, a higher qualification, is demanded of the aspirant to embark on the spiritual adventure called Self-realization. He should be self-controlled, must have infinite patience and faith, and must be able to practise concentration. He should be able to discriminate between the real and the unreal and should be able to give up all desires for enjoyment here and hereafter. Finally, he must have *mumukṣutvam*, that is, tremendous longing to be free from all limitations. It is not very easy to have all this.

Jñāna is not book knowledge. The Upaniṣads speak of two kinds of *vidyā* or knowledge. One is *aparā* or lower and the other is *parā* or superior. *Aparā-vidyā* is that which one gets through sense perception and inference. Reading comes under this. *Parā-vidyā* is direct intuitive experience of the Ultimate Reality. The whole aim of Jñāna Yoga is to gain this superconscious experience, and not to indulge in hair-splitting arguments about philosophical points as it often becomes.

One begins with *śravaṇa*, that is, reading or hearing from a Guru about spiritual truths. These truths have been aphoristically expressed in the four great *mahāvākyaś* [great statements] of the Upaniṣads. But one should not stop with hearing alone, but should think deeply on what one hears until a deep conviction about the nature of the Truth and the possibility of attaining it is gained. This is called *manana*. Very often people never do this, even about the ordinary things they read. I am reminded of a story. A teenage girl was invited to dinner and she was sitting by the side of an eminent astronomer. His prepossessing appearance attracted the girl a little, and so she asked him, 'What is the profession you are following?' In a humble way he said, 'I study astronomy.' The girl was disappointed. She thought the venerable looking gentleman would give a better answer. She said, 'What, at this age you are still studying astronomy? I finished my astronomy last year.' Her knowledge of astronomy had ended with the reading of a few books. After *manana* comes *nididhyāsana*. By this is meant a higher form of meditation which is a direct enquiry into the nature of the Self. It is actually a deep inner search for the Reality by the process of *neti, neti*, 'not this', 'not this'.

The goal of Yoga

Every human soul is an eternal portion of the Supreme Spirit. Sri Krishna says in the *Gītā*:

An eternal portion of Myself, the Supreme Spirit, having become a living soul in the world of life, draws the five senses and the mind. When the individual being obtains a body or leaves it, it is as though a wind were taking away fragrance from a flower.—Bhagavad Gita, XV. 7, 8

So long as there is ignorance, so long as there is desire, a man must pass through repeated births and deaths. This cycle comes to an end as soon as the individual soul becomes united with the Oversoul, *jīvātman* with *Paramātman*.

The goal of all the yogas is the attainment of consciousness of this unity, not intellectually but through a **realization of identity**. Then only can the highest spiritual experience of the supreme Truth become a reality. It is the ignorance inherent in all human life that identifies the soul with the ego, the mind and the senses. Even if the individual realizes that his true nature is different from his mind and body, he finds it hard to get rid of his ego. Sri Ramakrishna used to

compare it to the *aśvattha* tree; even if the tree is cut down, it will sprout again.¹¹

The false ego must be purified and spiritualized. In all the paths of yoga this is the paramount aim. Karma Yoga teaches us to offer the fruits of work to the Supreme Spirit, and try, through service, to put the individual will in tune with the Cosmic Will. In the same spirit, RajaYoga invests all its disciplines with a sense of transcendence and dedication, with constant emphasis on strengthening the inner sublime awareness through meditation and *Japa*. Bhakti Yoga inculcates the attitude of loving devotion and service as an instrument of God. The 'I' is thus spiritualized one way or other. There is no harm in thinking of God at first as Father or Friend; but it is only when the sense of separate personality is lost in the perception of the Absolute that we begin to know the bliss of the undivided Self. Jñāna Yoga aims at experiencing the **identity** of the soul and the Supreme Spirit, through self-analysis and meditation on the meaning of Upaniṣadic passages like *tat tvam asi* ('That thou art') etc.

What is basic to all these yogas is *tapas* [discipline]. In the *Bhagavad Gītā* Sri Krishna speaks about three-fold *tapas*, the discipline of the body, of the mind and of speech. *Tapas* of the body signifies cleanliness, uprightness and continence. Speaking words that never give offence but are truthful and beneficial, and also recitation of scriptural texts, form austerity of speech. If we follow this rule we must examine our habits of speech and forgo useless and harmful words. Serenity, gentleness, silence, sense-control and purity of heart these constitute *tapas* of the mind. All these disciplines are to be practised with steadfast faith and intensity. Moreover, there must be breadth of vision too. In spiritual life we need Sri Krishna's system of renouncing the fruits of one's actions. Sankara's path of direct self-analysis, Caitanya's way of ecstatic love for God. We can also derive benefit from Buddha's Eightfold Path. Christ's Sermon on the Mount, and Mohammed's concept of universal brotherhood. All these are steps that prepare the soul to realize its true divine nature, and they have been stressed by the mystics of all religions.

The individual is inseparable from the Universal. This is the truth revealed by that higher intuition which follows purification of mind. In all paths of yoga, spiritual practice stems from love, and the sense of

11 The *Gospel*, op.cit., p. 313

unity with the Supreme Spirit leads inevitably to the realization of unity with all humanity. With the repetition of the divine Name, and constant remembrance of divine Spirit dwelling in the hearts of all, the devotee sweetens his life and learns to merge his ego with the divine Consciousness. His individual consciousness becomes merged with the universal as a wave merges with the ocean. He realizes, 'In my essential nature I am Brahman. I am none other than the Supreme Spirit.' This realization is the source of the joy that we find in every truly illumined man. As a man comes to realize his unity with the eternal Existence, as the soul becomes united with the blissful Spirit, it realizes this oneness with all mankind. Everyone can at least get a glimpse of the divine grace and love that is reflected in all hearts. Dissatisfaction with life is then replaced by a sense of peace that makes it a heaven on earth. The spiritual path may begin with misery, but as the unity of the Spirit is experienced as actual reality, we may be able to bring light to those who sit in darkness. Thus spiritual experience is needed not only for one's own happiness and peace but also for those of others.



Addendum re Dr. Carl Jung

Extract from Swami Yatiswarananda's report of 24.10.34

It was a source of great delight to me to meet, at Ascona, also **Dr. Jung**—the eminent psychoanalyst and doctor of Zürich. His studies and researches have led him to appreciate spiritual culture and also the wisdom of the East which, as he says, the Eastern people *have not the slightest justification for undervaluing*. In his conception of the 'collective unconscious' that lies at the back of the 'personal unconscious' I found a common point for discussion as to the relation between the collective and the individual consciousness. I had only an hour's highly interesting talks with him, but I hope to see more of him in the near future and acquaint myself with the psychology with which he tries to understand and evaluate Eastern Truths. Very rightly he holds that the people of the West should not unthinkingly attempt to appropriate the spiritual possessions of the East, but must assimilate the Eastern spiritual knowledge, being true to the foundations of their own culture. I presented him a few of our English publications including the *Spiritual Teachings*¹² which, as he said, he would read carefully during the quiet hours at his disposal.

At Ascona I spoke on Hindu Religious Symbology¹³ in its relation to spiritual practice and evolution, avoiding all philosophical subtleties and technicalities. The lecture has been translated into German and is going to be printed in the *Eranos Year-book* (You will get an idea of it from the summary I am sending.)

Extract from Swami Yatiswarananda's Report of 30.1.36

At Zürich I stayed for seven weeks and came to know quite a number of persons in various walks of life. I met some intellectuals including a few professors of the University and had interesting discussions with them on comparative religion and the universal message of Vedanta. I was fortunate in establishing points of contact also with some devotees who have become interested in our ideas

¹² Now translated into Greek, together with some explanations on them from Swami Yatiswarananda's classes at Wiesbaden, Gemrany from 1933. The book ΟΙ ΠΝΕΥΜΑΤΙΚΕΣ ΔΙΔΑΣΚΑΛΙΕΣ του Σουάμι Μπραχμάναντα (μετάφραση Γιάννη Μανέττα) can be obtained from Εκδόσεις Κονιδάρη, Αθήνα.

¹³ This will have been the nucleus of the opening article entitled 'A glimpse into Hindu Religious Symbology' contributed by the Swami to *Cultural Heritage of India* Vol.II (1st Edition), originally published in three volumes for the 1936 Ramakrishna Centenary. The article is in Volume IV of the 2nd Edition.

and ideals through literature. Many of them want to learn of the methods of mind-control and meditation for which they are coming to have an increasing interest, but which, as they complained, were practically unknown alike to the teachers and followers of institutional religions. In the near future it is proposed to start study-circles with these spiritually-minded souls at Zürich and elsewhere.

Along with my attempts at sharing my ideas with the spiritual aspirants in Europe, I am also trying to study comparative mysticism and also analytical psychology in the light of Yoga. At Zürich I availed myself of the opportunity of listening to the renowned **Prof. Dr. Jung**. I have been reading some of his works in English and had the pleasure of meeting him more than a year back in Switzerland. He has read some of our literature, and felt, as he said, particularly interested in my paper on 'Hindu Symbology'. We had prolonged talks and discussions on Hindu spiritual topics — on the relationship between religion and philosophy, the different systems of Vedanta and the practical application of the Vedantic ideals as embodied in the life and teachings of Sri Ramakrishna-Vivekananda and the movement founded by them.

I was filled with admiration to see how the great doctor keeps himself open to Truth and is ready to receive it from all sources through which it may come. It is a great lesson that all true seekers should always bear in mind and try to practice in actual life. There should of course be, as Prof. Dr. Jung very rightly advocates, a sympathetic and yet critical and intelligent understanding of an idea before it can be accepted and assimilated in the truest sense.



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