



THE COSMIC KALEIDOSCOPE

An Introduction to
Shrii Shrii Anandamurti's
Science of Mind

2nd edition

Prabhákar T. Överland

ANANDA MARGA GURUKULA

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What is this? What is this? “It is a flower.” How could you say that it is a flower? Because particular light waves come and touch your eyes, and a similar flower is created within your mind. And actually, you are not seeing this flower; you are seeing that mental image of the flower created within. ... When you see something or you touch something, the corresponding sympathetic vibration is created, which touches your mind through nerves and a sympathetic vibration is created within your mind. And at that time, you feel that you are seeing this flower, or you feel that you are hearing some song, or you feel that you are touching something hot or cold.

Actually, you never come in physical contact with anything. Your contact with anything and everything is through your mind, through your nerve fibres, through your nerve cells. And the entire objective mind, when you feel, you see, it is an internal projection with the help of your nerves.

What a mystery! It is a great mystery, that whatever you perceive or whatever you conceive—everything is within you, nothing without you.¹

- Shrii Shrii Anandamurti

*The Cosmic Kaleidoscope,
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Prabhakar T. Överland

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Foreword

This book presents an unorthodox approach to the subject of mind. It attempts to relate ancient eastern metaphysical systems of thought with contemporary schools, which are mostly based on empiricism, neurological research and emerging theories of cognitive science. In particular, the author has chosen to focus on Shrii Shrii Anandamurti's perspectives on this important subject, which paints a broader canvas to understand the mystery surrounding the mental domain.

Ancient rishis like Kanada, Patanjali, Astavakra and modern rishis like Watson, James, Freud, Thorndyke, Jung, Maslow, and Rhine have helped us to understand various aspects of the mental domain. However, they all fall short of connecting us to the source of mental potentialities. Shrii Shrii Anandamurtijii has filled that vacuum by bringing us in touch with ways to unite with the cosmic reality. His teachings comprise cosmology, evolution, ontology, epistemology, and other subjects that have to do with existential legacy, its exploration, and its realisation.

It is easier to understand the cosmos in which we reside through the prism of mind and its thought power, but to understand the origin and aspiration of microcosmic and macrocosmic mind requires an intuitive approach. The blending of analytical and synthetic approaches provides us with a roadmap towards a fuller understanding about the mysteries of the science of mind.

This treatise takes us on a fascinating journey through myriad aspects of the mental world. Further, it enlightens and inspires us to expand our mind and unfold its fullest potential.

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Note to the 2nd Edition

Several chapters were thoroughly revised and numerous amendments made throughout the book. The main structure and content remain the same as that of the first edition. Due to the changes and rearrangements, the pagination in this edition differs from that of the first.

Preface to the 1st Edition

I have several reasons for writing this book, and would like to share two of them here. In my teens, a friend became mentally ill. When I visited him in a mental hospital, it was difficult for me to recognise him, his face and body were so swollen and otherwise he appeared to be heavily drugged. It was shocking to see him in such bad shape. Coincidentally, an acquaintance of mine was working in the same hospital and he suggested I should give yoga classes to the workers there. “We all need it,” he said. On the first night, some of them wanted to do a bit of sharing after exercises and relaxation, and this became a staple part of our weekly classes. Listening to them talking about themselves and their work made it clear to me that they were all being badly affected by the disturbed mental condition and suffering of their clientele. They were also quite open talking about their feelings of helplessness and frustration caused by working within a system that just seemed to be focussed on suppressing symptoms rather than healing the person. This is my first reason for writing; the present psychiatric system where patients are reduced to mere mental diagnoses and medicated by professionals who may have little knowledge about the mind itself and its potentialities.

The second reason has to do with self-discovery. After having learnt meditation in high school, I was curious about its effects on the mind itself. I came to understand that the ability to concentrate and enjoy meditation varies not only from person to person but even from day to day in most practitioners’ lives. One day meditation is great, the next day more difficult. This is my second reason;

emphasizing the fact that the mind is a living entity with a body, health, environment, interests, goals, developmental phases, and other characteristics of its own. It is my experience that knowledge about these facts helps practitioners with their inner and external struggles on the path of self-realisation. I therefore wanted the essence of the book to be that the vast potentialities of the mind are just waiting to be explored, and there are excellent tools available. Proper information and personal guidance may enable anyone to re-focus their mind to continue on the natural course of evolution and fulfilment. Also, I have found meditation to be of great help for mental health workers, and even for a good number of patients when techniques and methods are adjusted properly to their individual needs and state of being.

Writing this small book has been quite an undertaking. Not only does the science of mind of Shrii Shrii Anandamurti relate to many academic sciences, but is also placed within the cosmos of his far-reaching physical, metaphysical, psychic, and spiritual ideas, groundbreaking theories, and an astounding array of works on all types of subjects and matters. More than 260 books have been published, some under the spiritual name Shrii Shrii Anandamurti, others under his civil name Shrii Prabhat Rainjan Sarkar (170 works are at present available in the English digital edition, eledit9.appspot.com). Throughout this book, both names have been referenced, respectively. It may be noted that the “science of mind”, *manovijñana*, was detailed in a work published under the name Shrii Shrii Anandamurti, a fact reflected in the title of the present book.

Acarya Shambhushivananda generously drew from his interaction with Shrii Shrii Anandamurti to clarify, enhance, and add to ideas put forth. I am in particular gratitude for his time and patience. Warm thanks to brother Krsnadeva of Stockholm who in spite of other demanding assignments provided inestimable support by reviewing the English and addressing content. Dr. Steve Richheimer (Chemistry) and Dr. Richard Gauthier (Physics) kindly responded to parts of the manuscript at an intermediate stage. None of them is responsible for any remaining lapses on my part.

Wishing you a rewarding read.



Shrii Shrii Anandamurti, also known by his civil name Shrii Prabhat Rainjan Sarkar (1922-1990), is the founder of Ananda Marga, a voluntary socio-spiritual organisation running social projects and teaching meditation free of charge all over the world. As a spiritual and social preceptor, he expounded on deep philosophical topics and taught the way to attain the highest stance of spiritual realisation. Among his contributions is a science of mind with a synthesis of “the intuitional science of the Vedas” and Vidya Tantra resulting in the practical system of Sahaj Yoga. Throughout his life, he continued to evolve this science to serve the physical, psychic and spiritual needs of developed humanity. He added many new theoretical and practical dimensions to it, some of which are the philosophy of Neohumanism, the theory and practice of microvita, the science of all-round dynamic balance (*Prama*), the socio-economic Progressive Utilisation Theory (PROUT), and over 5000 song compositions called Prabhat Samgiit.

*To the One,
Who is both here and beyond,
Within and without,
Knowable and incomprehensible,
Let us move together towards It.*

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Introduction

This book tells the greatest story there is, of how an immense imaginative force has arranged perfectly for our coming into the world. The creation evolves in the cosmic mind, and cosmic consciousness continues to support all living beings after they have been created. Its abiding assistance ensures that we may complete our long evolutionary journey successfully against all odds to realise our greatest potentiality and quench our thirst for limitlessness. Ours is not an easy journey though, but one full of ups and downs, and of challenges hardly manageable. This dramatic storyline, of the existential quest of all living beings, is the essence of all epics and fairy tales—and it is quite real!

Worldly existence is twofold and relative: whatever mundane reality we perceive of is physical or mental. The absolute reality of the cosmic mind is also twofold: mental and spiritual. As explained in the first chapter, when cosmic cognition imagines something, that imagination is internal to it; nothing is external to the cosmos. And since its imagination of the continuous creation remains unbroken, the fundamental cosmic reality is spiritual.* With such a spiritual creator, our entire potentiality and existence is threefold: physical, mental, and spiritual.²

* The meaning of the term spiritual is that an endless breath, *Spirit*, flows through all of creation.

Kaleidoscopic Reality

Many know what a kaleidoscope is; a toy for kids and adults alike. One peeps into a tube to see colourful symmetrical designs blend into each other. The front end is transparent to allow light to pass through, as in cameras, binoculars and telescopes. The revolving front part contains loose pieces of coloured bits of foil or glass. Alongside the inner walls, mirrors are angled against each other. The gliding effect from one pattern to the other results from the front part being turned so that the coloured bits moving about are reflected in the angled mirrors.³

Imagine you are watching patterns falling into each other inside such a toy kaleidoscope. After some time, you lower the tube and look around. Now you are experiencing the natural world of sound, touch, form, colour, smell and taste. This is a greater and more immersive world than the one inside the tube, is it not?

Here is some news for you. That greater, more immersive world outside of your little toy, filled by the wonders of nature, is kaleidoscopic, too. Everything of the creation reproduces itself; sprouts, and grows out of something that is already in existence. A bough of a tree branches off, plants propagate by seed dispersal, animals carefully pass on their genes, one generation of humans turning into the next. The basic rule of evolution is indeed kaleidoscopic: one thing leading to the other in successive resemblance but never exactly the same.⁴

The kaleidoscopic reality is equally apparent in our mental realities. Trains of feelings, thoughts, and memories merge



into each other and express themselves as our ideas, actions, intentions, and so forth.⁵ Societies, cultures, and history evolve in the same fashion.⁶

Both our outer and the inner actions grow out of what we already have experienced and done. This truth is universal; we feel we know the people, places and times we live in because they replicate themselves in recognisable ways. Yet, this is the interesting thing about our existential kaleidoscope: nothing is ever quite the same and in the long run everything changes a lot. If you would have the opportunity to meet your forefathers of, say, a hundred generations ago, you would probably think that they and their children had a lot in common whereas our ways of living, interests, ideas, etc. today are very different from theirs. This fact provokes our curiosity about the likely developments of future generations as well.⁷ The kaleidoscopic evolution changes incrementally but surely, and the longer the time gap the more striking the changes.

Now that we are aware of the fact that both our outer and inner worlds are kaleidoscopic, we naturally begin to wonder about the mechanisms inside the great, cosmic tube that create these kaleidoscopic realities:

- What sort of light is pouring in that makes us see our inner and outer worlds?
- What are the magnificently coloured bits made of?
- What sort of mirrors are they reflected by so that patterns arise?
- What twists this kaleidoscope so that those patterns of our existence continue to transform into each other?
- Is there anything to experience even beyond this astonishing cosmic kaleidoscopic creation?

The Science of Mind

Shrii Shrii Anandamurti's science of mind delineates the origin and development of both the cosmic mind and our own; its kaleidoscopic actions and reactions, its influences, its consummation, etc. The

microcosmic mind of living beings has evolved out of matter through clash and cohesion, a matter that is itself an expression of cosmic mind and therefore of cosmic consciousness. This limited mind relates to the objects of the outside world by way of perceiving via the sensory organs their vibrational inferences: sound, touch, form, taste and smell.

In order to explain the realities of our sensory and mental worlds, this science states that mind-stuff, ego and intuition are the mind's three functional chambers relating to the four mental states of wakeful, dream, sleep, and the transcendental. The mind-stuff forms into five mental layers, which somehow relates to the concept of conscious, subconscious and unconscious mind—the unconscious becoming superconscious when the self realises its supramental, sublime and causal layers beyond the crude mental and subconscious layers. In this subtilising process, the subjective portion of our mind transforms progressively from crude ego states into subtler intuitive, psycho-spiritual states until it merges with cosmic consciousness.

The above, along with Shrii Sarkar's seminal insights into biopsychology and the science of microvita, constitute, in short, the main reasons for a serious consideration of his science of mind.

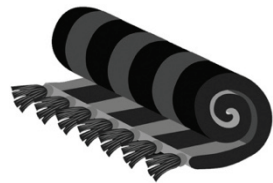
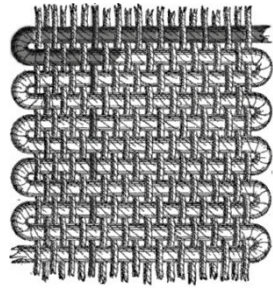
Terms

You may already have come across words, terms or concepts that are somehow unfamiliar or unclear to you. In the book some such words will be explained then and there, others will be listed in the glossary at the back of the book.

Take for instance the word *subtle*, which appears numerous times throughout this book. What does subtle actually mean? An underlying reality or cause is termed as subtle. For instance, people smile and frown for all sorts of reasons, and those reasons are the subtle causes of their facial expressions. This particular term, subtle, has old Latin roots: *sub* means “under” or “underlying”, *tela* means “woven”. *Subtela* refers to the warp, the vertical threads on the loom on which the fabric is being woven across: “that which is fundamental to a woven fabric”.

What is the subtle foundation of all existence? What are the patterns of our lives woven from and on? According to the science of mind, consciousness is the underlying, subtle reality as elucidated in the following chapter. The physical reality is a densely woven, compact reality. Consciousness is the fundamental reality.

A carpet may serve as an illustration. It is a woven textile with fringes at its ends. When we admire a carpet, we usually look at the fabric and not at the fringes. If you point out the fringes to someone who do not know how a carpet is woven, he or she may simply guess that they are for decoration purposes. Your uninformed friend may need some explanation to understand the significance of those fringes.



For some, birth and death provide the only contact points experienced with the eternal mystery of existence. Others fail to register even that much. The reason for this common existential ignorance is that the fabric of life, that is being woven continuously right in front of us, so consumes our attention that many of us have little perceptual power left for exploring a subtler reality.

Because we have not availed ourselves sufficiently of our potential for developing perceptual powers, we may have been tending more towards the limited, confined existence of our individual fabric, and less to the one all-pervasive reality in which all lives are intertwined. The science of mind, as applied in numerous mind-expanding methodologies and practices, is geared towards bringing that potential to fruition.

Today people everywhere are waking up to increasingly subtler facts. In touch with the warp of life—that eternal, all-knowing, all-pervading consciousness—human beings get fresh insight and can direct their lives more purposefully individually and collectively.

Unfolding the Mystery

For the convenience of the reader, the book is divided into five parts:

Part 1 **The Inanimate Creation** looks at how the cosmic mind and the physical universe come into being, and the twin forces behind it. This part also looks at why the creation is set in motion.

Part 2 **The Animate Creation** surveys the rise of the living world. It is maintained that microvita play a fundamental role in the generation and evolution of microcosmic life and mind. We examine the fundamental causes of psychic evolution and their driving forces, and how these lead to higher states of intellectual and intuitional being. Reverse, regressive evolution is also explored.

Part 3 **Mind Dynamics** explores our mental layers, the sources of which are found on cosmic planes fundamental to our existence. We look into the mind's cognitive structure, its four regular states, its basic functions and various psychic potentialities, the main mechanics of "karma", and the transformative power of ideation.

Part 4 **Human Fulfilment** looks at what we may actually undertake and practise in order to work properly with the science of mind. Three keywords here are love, devotion, and a sincere effort for practising spirituality regularly. This part concludes by taking renewed stock of the bare bones of our kaleidoscopic existence.

Part 5 **Search for Truth** explores the roots of ancient and modern cognitive science, and argues for a synthesis of eastern introversial and western extroversial scientific approaches.

Reading a book like this is perhaps easy; realising its content is more challenging. Yet, as the saying goes, "A journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step."⁸ Shrii Shrii Anandamurti offered:

Each and every being which has been created in this universe has to complete its journey. Every ion, every cell, every being which is born will have to complete its journey, because there is an ever-increasing attraction between the unit and the Cosmic, between the living being and God. This continuous journey has been going on since the creation of this universe. Whether you like it or not, still you have to continue the journey. To continue this journey is known as proper spiritual effort (dharma sādhanā).⁹

Part 1:
The Inanimate Creation



1

How the Cosmos Is Created

Whenever something is created certain factors are fundamental to the creative process:

1. An **original substance** must exist out of which the new creation is created.
2. **The means** by which that original substance is transformed into the new must be available.
3. **The style** of transforming the original into the new must be defined.
4. There must be **a place** for the creation to happen.
5. And there must be **a reason** for it all to take place.

This first short part of the book deals with these rudiments of the cosmic creation. The first four are complied with in the present chapter, while Chapter 2 is wedded to the fifth.

The Unmanifest Great

According to both ancient and modern cosmology, cosmic consciousness is the original substance of which the cosmos is made. The many-thousand-year-old hymn Rigveda Purusasuktam states:

*Consciousness has been creating this vast universe with the help of its mental power and the limitless possibilities of its mind-stuff. It is true that its mental creations are not infinite, but its mental possibilities are infinite. Consciousness utilises its immense possibilities just as the spider uses its thread to create innumerable types of webs.*¹⁰

British philosopher Philip Goff is representative of modern science's recognition of foundational consciousness:

*Physical science describes matter from the outside in terms of its behaviour. But matter from the “inside”—that is, in terms of its intrinsic nature—is constituted of forms of consciousness.*¹¹

Goff proposes that even though the fact that we are conscious beings is the most certain thing in the world, we have so far been unable to incorporate this fact into our scientific understanding of the world.¹²

The Original Substance

Ancient cosmologists termed cosmic consciousness as the Great, *Brahma*, “which is great and makes others great”.¹³ This original entity consists of two principles, the cognitive and the operative.

In the original, unmanifest state cognition is unexpressed and the operative principle is dormant. In the expressed state, the operative principle is active and cognition functions as a substantiating witness to all that is expressed. In Sanskrit, the cognitive principle is termed as *purusa*: “the entity that lies quiescent in all other entities”, “who is not involved directly”.¹⁴ It is the original substance out of which everything is created. Now, if supreme cognition, the essence of all, is not involved directly in the creation, then who or what is?

The Manifest Great

In the unmanifest state the entire potentiality of cognition is unexpressed and unrealised, and the operative principle is dormant. What makes that original eternally blissful consciousness wish to start to manifest itself and allow its manifesting principle to go into worldly action? How does it happen? In the many-thousand-year-old scripture Chandogya Upanishad we get to know:

*I was one and decided to become many.*¹⁵

Who or what is this “I” who was one and decided to become many, and how did it happen?

The Force of Creation

The one who manifests the potentialities of pure consciousness and creates the universe out of them is the cosmic operative principle.¹⁶ The ancient Sanskrit term for it is *prakṛti*, “the force that creates objects”.¹⁷ Creation commences when the cognitive principle imagines it and the operative principle begins to manifest that imagination into innumerable diverse objects and entities.

Those two, the cognitive and the operative principles, are the subtle perennial forces of existence. In fact, they are the fundamental states, functions and aspects of one and the same entity—cosmic consciousness. Shrii Shrii Anandamurti expounds that cosmic cognition and its manifesting power are inextricable, existing together like two sides of a piece of paper.¹⁸ If we choose to write something on a sheet of a paper, there is always the reverse side of it—the one behind imaginative, the other in front manifesting.

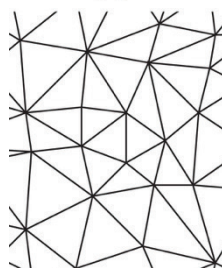
When unmanifest, this original entity is called non-qualified Great, *Nirguna* (“unbound”) *Brahma* in Sanskrit, and when manifest it is the qualified, bound Great, *Saguna Brahma*. This is the cosmic dynamic: cognition is the subtle noumenal cause of all expressions and the operative principle is the phenomenal, apparent cause.

The Style

Unmanifest, transcendental consciousness is an infinite, endless entity.¹⁹ In its boundless state countless linear waves are emanating in flows of three primordial tendencies: sentient, mutative and static. Those tendencies are the qualities or styles of the operative principle. In the unmanifest state, those potentialities for creative manifestation remain dormant.²⁰

At the dormant stage, the three fundamental creative tendencies run parallel and no figure is formed. That is, as long as consciousness has no urge to manifest itself nothing occurs. At the point where consciousness starts to awaken from its dormant stage, those potential waves of tendencies start to lose their parallelism and begin to form polygonal diagrams. This polygonal state is the first of two intermediate states where there is still no outward manifestation.²¹

Polygons



At the following intermediate stage, the polygonal diagrams gradually transform into separate, stable triangles of the three tendencies: the sentient, the mutative, and the static form stable triangles. This second intermediate stage is termed as homomorphic evolution, where the three fundamental cosmic tendencies flow into each other maintaining status quo; the sentient flows into the mutative, the mutative into the static, and the static into the sentient.²² At this pre-manifest stage, the stable triangles of the three creative tendencies are endless and are flowing eternally.

The reason for the formation of triangular figures is that when more than two forces act in a place, the figure of forces tends to become triangular in shape.²³ The multi-conical figures have been transformed into a triangle of forces, but there is no further result, because the tendencies continue to adjust properly with each other.

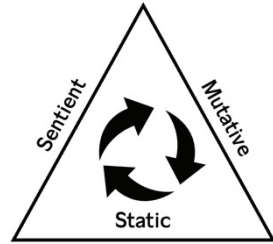
This triangle of forces is what is known as the causal matrix, the premise for all creation.²⁴

As the second, pregnant stage matures, an actual transformation into creative expression becomes imminent. The three tendencies are about to lose their equipoise and burst out through one of the vertices of triangle to start the creation.²⁵ Here we are at the threshold of

the heteromorphic, kaleidoscopic evolution where nothing is absolute and everything is dissimilar and unique in its limitedness.²⁶

Shrii Shrii Anandamurti emphasises that the three manifesting forces are incessantly tending towards each other. This is what they did in the unmanifest state where they formed balanced triangles, and that is what they continue to do everywhere in the unstable manifest creation. Anything and everyone are always changing by the force of those three tendencies, which constitute the fundamentals of the style of the cosmic creation.

The Causal Matrix



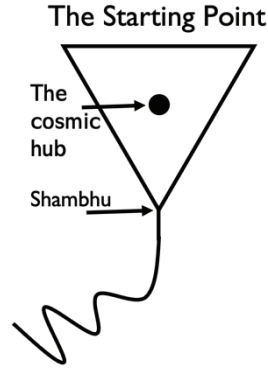
The Interplay

Owing to its innately shifting nature, the mutative tendency may be seen more as a transitional energy and less as a quality or state in itself. The two others, the sentient and the static tendencies, practically appear to us as more clearly defined qualities and states. They keep trending towards their respective edges of the existential spectrum, subtle and crude, while the mutative tendency in between keeps shifting from one to the other.

All of existence is a continuous struggle between the two extremes: the sentient and the static. Mutative energy is the essence of the clashes between them. We should never shun or be afraid of mutative clashes, but be concerned about the direction they may take. Sometimes the sentient tendency carries the day, at other times the static. The constructiveness of our life consists of conducting and transforming mutative energy towards purposeful states.

The Starting Point

The very first point of that cosmic dissemination or creation is not physical but spirituo-psychic. The cosmos is created out of pure cognition. As we shall see, most of the manifest cosmos itself is psychic, supra-psychic, intuitional, and spirituo-psychic. Only a small dimension of it is physical and constitutes our planetary universe. In Sanskrit, the first cosmic spirituo-psychic point is termed as *shambhu*, “self-created controller”.²⁷ It is the point where the unmanifest One starts to manifest itself into many. That starting point is the controlling point of the creation, its nucleus.



Whereas the controlling point of the expressed cosmos emerges from one of the vertexes of the cosmic causal matrix, the subjectivated consciousness is found at the centre of the very matrix itself. The term “subjectivated consciousness” indicates that supreme consciousness is no longer non-attributional and non-functional, and in its very first manifest state it emerges as the cosmic witnessing entity. This all-knowing, all-pervading entity is the cosmic hub, the nucleus around which everything else circles, and is called “utmost consciousness”, *Puruṣottama* in Sanskrit.

In cognitive terms, the creative movement, which starts from the cosmic hub, is moving away from that cosmic nucleus as it constantly changes from the subtle to the crude. Saincara, “extroversive movement,” is the term for it. This external movement leading to creation comes out of the causal matrix in a never-ending flow.²⁸ That is, the creation, though limited in scope, is an eternal affair that will never come to a halt.

Here we are at the point referred to by current physicists as “the Big Bang”, a current theory of an ever-expanding universe that provides a matter-oriented view of the creation: “The entire mass of the universe came out of nowhere with extreme physical intensity.”²⁹

But is that possible, everything coming out of nothing and all at once? According to Isaac Newton (1642-1727) an object at rest will remain at rest unless acted on by an unbalanced force. Here Newton informs us that there must be a cause to any beginning, even to that of the physical universe.

More than a thousand years before Newton, the Indian scientist Maharṣi Kanada formulated the earliest known theory of causation: “Where there is no cause, there is no effect.”³⁰ In his *Vaeshesika Sūtras*, Kanada explained that the countless atoms of the manifested universe all must have a cause—they are the manifestations of the cosmic mind, and the entity which controls the association of all those particles is that first controlling point.³¹

The question that hangs over the Big Bang theory is “Who did it?”, and the existence of a causal factor renders the theory of Big Bang incorrect both at the start, the middle, and in the end. There is no purely material or physical creation. There never was a sudden bang. The operative principle creates the cosmos at the continuous bidding of the cognitive principle. They are the two partners in this joint timeless venture, the two primordial powers of the same ultimate supreme cosmic entity.

The Force of Consciousness

When cosmic consciousness decides to get expressed, cognition itself emerges as its imaginative force, termed as *citishakti* in Sanskrit. This force of pure consciousness flows endlessly through the manifest and the unmanifest alike. It is the fundamental, straight proto-vibration that all other vibrations emerge from and are substantiated by.³² Gradually, the first straight vibration begins to curve, increasingly turning into a range of subtly undulating vibrations. Those first vibrations are the original divinities, *devatā* in Sanskrit. They are cardinal sacred waves flowing from the cosmic nucleus throughout all of its creation, filling it with sacred presence, mysterious creativity, and boundless beauty.³³ Those fundamental vibrations define and uphold the eternal Dharma of existence. They

are the basis of spiritual practices, of the longing for the Great cultivated by intuitionally developed minds.

Because the use of Sanskrit mantras has the power to evolve the human mind to a state where the realities of those divine vibrations are unfolded, Sanskrit has been called the language of those devatas, *Devabhāṣā*. Here lies also the seeds of the science of evocation of divinities as well as of the various commonplace worships of divinities personifying higher human expressions.

The Cosmic Mind

The cosmic creation comes about as consciousness begins to imagine its own existence. Something that has consciousness and imagines something, is called mind.* The great mind that imagines the cosmic creation is called cosmic mind. We will now survey the coming into being of that infinite mind.

Knower-I

The first stage of the transformation of unmanifest cosmic consciousness into manifest cosmos is cosmic I-feeling. Prior to this, consciousness has no expressed state of being. The feeling of being a self is a matchless state: “I exist”, the most subtle state of expressed being. This state enables the cosmic to experience its further manifestation. Cosmic consciousness has become a substantiating entity witnessing its own manifestation.

The verb exist does not indicate action but a state of being. In this fundamental manifest state, there is no difference—no verb, object, comparative adjective, etc.—only the subjective “I am” and the non-comparable “cosmic”. The cosmic self simply is: “I am cosmic”. This core of the cosmic self is an aware entity, and its cosmic subjective knowledge sustains all other expressions of the cosmos.

* The word mind originates from the Vedic *menos*, later Sanskrit *manas*, Latin *mens*; see page 215.

Doer-I

When the cosmic knower-I develops the urge to generate action, it creates the doer-I out of itself. This is a major shift in the cosmic kaleidoscopic evolution. Until this doer-I gets into action, the created cosmos remains a singular entity with one purpose only: existential oneness. With the doer-I arrives the potential scenario of a diverse world. The cosmic doer-I thinks: “I create the cosmos”.

Everything is done by the operative principle, which acts on the imagination of the cosmic cognitive principle. Neither of them is, however, attached to any of those actions and their results. Even in the form of the doer-I, who is directly involved with creating, maintaining and dissolving everything in the creation, the identification of the operative principle is one of cosmic love, of oneness with every action. The cosmic doer-I is not egoistic or selfish like an individual’s personal ego. Rather, the actional faculty of cosmic consciousness is generous and caring in the extreme—beyond relativity and equanimous in its outlook.

Done-I

The cosmic knower-I is dominated by the sentient tendency, and the doer-I by the mutative.³⁴ With continuous cosmic crudification, the static tendency of the operative principle grows in prominence. The static is what gives definite shape to the results of the actions. Manifest creation is therefore termed as done-I: “I am the manifest cosmos”.³⁵ It is in the done-I that we find the universe and the basis for our physical, psychic, and psycho-spiritual evolution.

When a potter makes vases, cups, etc. he or she makes them out of clay or any other material that may be burnt so that they become firm and usable. The material used by the cosmic mind for fashioning the items of our microcosmic existence is called mind-stuff. The entire universe is formed and shaped by this cosmic “clay”. From where does the cosmic mind get this sort of material in such enormous quantities? The doer-I provides it by a process of crudification where malleable mind-stuff is generated out of cosmic knower-I to be further processed as detailed in Part 2.

Seven Cosmic Worlds

Are the three states of cosmic mind—knower, doer, and done—different or one and the same? They all exist because of the procreative urge of pure consciousness, and have come out of cosmic consciousness in a gradual, kaleidoscopic process of crudification by force of the three cosmic tendencies.³⁶ They are successive states of cosmic reality evolving away from its original state towards increasing crudeness of expression. In this external development, the preceding subtler state can be found, or realised, in the next cruder state, in the same way as an ocean can be found in its innumerable waves, a tree in its many branches, parents in their children.

The macrocosmic creation we live in consists of seven planes or worlds defined by their subtlety. They are formed successively in the foundational process of cosmic evolution starting with pure cosmic consciousness moving to knower-I, doer-I, and ending in done-I.³⁷

1. The cosmic physical world (*Bhúrloka*) is made up of the five fundamental elements (solid, liquid, light, air, and space). The physical body of the unit creature finds its base in this world. Here the static tendency is dominant, the mutative is less so, and the elevating is insignificant.
2. The crude cosmic mental world (*Bhuvarloka*) has to do with crude tendencies like appetite, greed, sleep, and laziness related to the physical body. Their potentialities pulsate or vibrate on this plane of consciousness. The base of the unit's sensuous, desirous, conscious mind is created on this particular cosmic plane. Here the static tendency is very noticeable, the mutative inconspicuous, and the elevating tendency in between.
3. The purely mental cosmic world (*Svarloka* or *Manomaya loka*)³⁸ corresponds to the purely mental, subconscious layer/layer of the individual mind (see the chapter on the five layers of the human mind). In this stratum one experiences comfort and discomfort, pleasure and pain, enjoyment and sadness. Here one's inherent unserved

reactive driving forces are becoming fully expressed, resulting in new ones being created, as will be explained later in the book. The static tendency is in between, the mutative is prominent, and the elevating inconspicuous.

4. In the cosmic supramental world (*Maharloka* or *Atimánasa loka*)³⁹ the static is recessive, the mutative tendency dominant, and the elevating tendency in between. It is in this stratum that reactive momenta first make themselves known, resulting in rudimental intuition (when the driving forces are perceived before expressing fully). This is the crudest of the three cosmic intuitive, psycho-spiritual planes.
5. The sublime sphere of the cosmic mind (*Janarloka* or *Vijīnanamaya loka*)⁴⁰ yields inspiring intuition. On this plane, true knowledge, wisdom and sacrifice reigns. The static tendency is medium, the mutative inconspicuous, and the elevating most prominent.
6. The subtle causal sphere (*Tāparloka* or *Hirañmaya loka*)⁴¹ corresponds to the golden, most subtle layer of the unit mind. As the feeling of self is only latent and not clearly manifested, worldly knowledge is not clearly defined here. It is the most subtle cosmic psycho-spiritual plane. Here the static is recessive, the mutative in between, and the elevating is prominent.
7. In the pure cosmic state (*Satyaloka*) the three tendencies of the force of creation exist but they are not manifest. Here, consciousness dominates and only consciousness is manifest. This is the state of the non-qualified Great beyond the cosmic mind. The six other states manifest in the cosmic mind-stuff, whereas the knower-I and doer-I are subjective reflections of pure cosmic consciousness in the cosmic mind.

A central part of this book is the exploration of how each of the existential layers of our own existence (see table on page 103) is linked with a corresponding cosmic plane, and how we may develop our existential layers in order to realise our cosmic existence.

The Planetary Universe

The cosmic doer-I produces the physical universe in the crudest portion of the cosmic mind-stuff. It means that the planetary universe that we see all around us and which we are part of is an imagination, or psychic projection of cosmic mind, just like the remaining subtler planes of cosmic existence. For this reason the universe has been likened to an iceberg in a vast ocean; a solidified body of consciousness whose five fundamental building blocks are space, air, light, liquid and solid matter.

Space

Many seem to think that the four elements of air, fire, water and earth constitute the elements of creation, but where to place it all? The need for space is foremost to the creative principle—a space where to create and where to keep the created objects. Therefore, the first element created is space. With the creation of space, the cosmic knower-I feels that “I exist throughout this enormity” whereas the doer-I feels: “This space in me is mine, now let me fill it up.”

Empty space is something abstract. Shrii Shrii Anandamurti commented that even just to perceive of the early stages of space requires a highly developed human intellect and continuous scientific pursuit.⁴² He explained further that as no perceivable crude substance can be found in pure space, we can only recognise that stage by its implication, namely that sound can travel through it. “Because sound can travel in it, space is something more than just a subtle idea.”⁴³

How may sound travel through space? At present, everybody seems to know that sound propagates through air and other cruder media. We may therefore assume that the part of the spatial factor where sound can travel is not immediately available to crude physical receptors such as our hearing or mechanical devices such as radio telescopes. Spiritual science establishes that “aum” travels through the ethereal. Aum is the aggregate sound of all creation, including the subtlest of sounds generated by those first cosmic divine vibrations outlined earlier.

Shrii Shrii Anandamurti defined this most subtle of sounds, aum, as “the primordial phase of the manifest Supreme”.⁴⁴ Earlier we established that the cosmic creation operates on the principle of nested realities, where a subtler reality will be found in a cruder. An insightful person can perceive of the ocean both in the roaring of its waves and by the sound of running water in the kitchen.

In the same way the aum may be heard anywhere and by anyone who has the capacity to hear it, whereas one who can hear only crude, limited sounds can only detect clatter from a very narrow part of the entire existential spectrum. The intermediate state where the doer-I evolves into done-I—the initial phase of the creation of matter—is not accessible to the physical organs of crude minds. It is a stage beyond ordinary physical perception and is part of subtle science.

Shrii Sarkar pointed out⁴⁵ that most of the atomic research done so far has been done by guessing “compelled by the fact that different stages of the atom, and its constituent parts, do not come under direct perception, but within the arena of human concept”.⁴⁶ That is, a correct grasp of the atomic is more a matter of evolved comprehension rather than learning and intellectual analysis.

From Air to Solid Matter

The ancient Taittiriya Upanishad scripture informs us:

*Out of this consciousness ether is made, and from ether air is made, and from air the luminous and liquid factors are made, and out of the liquid factor the solid factor is made.*⁴⁷

With further crudification, the other four elements are created. The aerial factor is formed from ethereal, spatial factor, and by further condensation air turns into gaseous substances, which by further crudification become luminous substances that begin to spark and glow. Luminous substances in turn becomes liquid substances, which condense further and harden into solid substances.

Technically speaking, those crudifying processes reduce inter-molecular space. A simple example may illustrate this physical reality. As long as we keep inflating a tyre, the air inside the tyre is

being compressed. Air here on Earth consists of approximately 78% nitrogen, 20% oxygen, and lesser amounts of other gases. As we go on pumping in air, the molecules of those constituent elements are progressively being crowded. Consequently, the air temperature inside the tyre goes up. If we wish to apply the same principle to light a fire we may take the help of a fire piston, the use of which densifies air molecules suddenly and extremely, resulting in a spark being lit.

The more the operative principle applies its static strength, the more packed the atoms and molecules become, and the cruder the creation—denser and more static with distinct, noticeable forms and qualities. At the crudest stage we find stones and metals. At the centre of dying stars the pressure is tremendous and the density far higher than in solids on Earth. One cubic metre of mass there may weigh one million billion tons.⁴⁸ Shri Shrii Anandamurti suggested:

*If the ethereal, aerial, luminous, liquid and solid factors that form the physical structure of a six-foot-tall human being are condensed to such a degree that the inter-protoplasmic gap becomes completely non-existent, that healthy gentleman will be a billion times smaller than a poppy seed!*⁴⁹

You may take this as a warning to stay at safe distance from black holes, weighed down as they are by the static tendency! Celestial bodies reaching maximum density will disintegrate. Enormous energy is released when their structural disintegration takes the form of spectacular explosions. Shrii Sarkar conveys that such events are nothing but the recoiling of the cosmic waves—negative creation. The waves of crude structures are densely curved. When celestial bodies explode their waves straighten, i.e., they regress from the cruder states towards the previous subtler physical states.

The five fundamental factors, with their respective sensations: sound, touch, form, taste, and smell, are constituent of the physical creation. As the universe is made up of those five fundamentals, the science of mind labels it as *quinquelemental*, “collection of five”.⁵⁰

Oval

In the first chapter we learnt that out of the seven planes of consciousness that make up the cosmos, the physical creation constitute the crudest plane. The other six planes are psychic, psycho-spiritual, and spiritual—all subtler and more comprehensive than anything of the physical creation. From this we understand that the psychic and spiritual dimensions of the cosmos are vast and the planetary universe relatively small in comparison. We may imagine a very large dome of the size of the entire sky and place a grain of sand under it. It can serve as an illustration of the physical creation in relation to the rest of cosmos. In reality, the cosmos is infinitely greater than that.

The form of the material universe is described as oval by Shrii Sarkar, who comments that of all forms the ellipse is the most sustainable, and that all celestial bodies are of that shape.⁵¹ Since ancient times, the universe has been called “the great egg” (*Brahmanda*). One of the oldest scriptures, *Brahmanda Upanishad*, considers this matter of the oval in detail.

Finite

We have established that “the cosmic extroversive movement leading to creation comes out of the cosmic matrix in a never-ending flow.”⁵² It is never-ending because it is the expression of infinite cognition. The physical universe itself consists of nebulae, galaxies, solar systems, gas clouds, living beings, etc. As it contains only limited things, the universe is limited in size although of endless purpose. If the universe had contained so much as a single infinite thing, it would have been unlimited, too, but there is no such unbounded thing in it. The observable universe has been measured to be approximately 93 billion light years in diameter.⁵³ Still, many scientists hold that the universe may be infinite in size although they think it began around 13.8 billion years ago with the Big Bang.⁵⁴ The science of mind puts it the other way around, establishing that as space is bound by the static it is not infinite although it is certainly vast and subtle to the point of fading into the infinite cosmic mind.⁵⁵

Some may think of this as funny: scientists with no actual experience of infinity deem space to be infinite, whereas the science of mind, embedded in eternal consciousness, states that it is finite.

Never-ending

How can the limited universe be “of endless purpose”? As described, the cosmos is an open system. At the starting point of the creation, the operative principle continues to supply fresh manifesting force, and at the end point highly developed unit beings are transformed back into pure consciousness.

Shrii Shrii Anandamurti points out⁵⁶ that even within the existing universe there is sufficient scope for the creation to continue indefinitely. Due to the ever-increasing progress of the crudifying cosmic creative process, the intensity of the mutative vibration increases. With its growing dominance, diversity becomes increasingly manifest. Under such circumstances, it is not possible for all parts of creation to maintain a uniform temperature or live and die simultaneously.

With a maximum exertion of the static tendency, the energy of some material structure gets concentrated in its centre, and structural disintegration occurs. Such cataclysmic events, termed as *jadasphota* in Sanskrit, release vast amounts of energy within the universe, thus maintaining universal thermal disparity and the continued flow of the cosmic imagination. Partial thermal death may occur in part of the universe but never throughout the entire universe.



2

Why Everything Is Created

Here is an allegory. Do you know any exceptionally gifted person? Let me share with you a few things that you may not know about them. First, they are few in number. It is generally thought that the extraordinarily gifted among us amount to 1 to 2 out of 100. If you join a party of, say, 25 people, the chance of meeting someone that much gifted is 0,25 to 0,5 per cent. Even the chances of meeting a somewhat gifted or highly gifted person would be slim at only 3 to 4%. That would be maximum one person at the same party. About 95% of us are average or below—those few gifted persons outweigh us completely in terms of quality!

In a packed 50,000 capacity stadium we will probably not find many extraordinarily gifted persons, as they, like everybody else, prefer an environment favourable to their chosen activities. Understandably, this natural urge has brought many extraordinarily gifted into seclusion and isolation. This leads us to the fact that exceptional people are up to hardships and challenges not really experienced by the rest of humanity.

The following expert statement may serve to give an idea about what being extraordinarily gifted, or being around them on a regular basis, may do to one's social and mental life:

We recognize three gradients within the gifted range: gifted, from 130 to 145 IQ; highly gifted, from 140 to 160 IQ; and exceptionally gifted, above 160 IQ. Parents of highly and exceptionally gifted persons have found it useful to retain a family psychologist or counsellor to develop relationships in a preventive function.⁵⁷

Nobody likes to be alone for a long time and the extension of it may be absolutely maddening. Psychologists agree on this: the pain of being alone over time may negatively affect mental health and shorten one's life span.⁵⁸

Ordinarily a state of loneliness can be mended by finding somebody to celebrate life with. For the phenomenally gifted, however, finding a suitable person is a challenge as they experience life in ways different to what most others do. The way out then, the key to a good life for the exceptionally gifted, is for them to express their creativity fully. They need to create a new world—new and better solutions, higher and more beautiful expressions. The rest of us may gradually digest and embrace their new, daring creations as we begin to grasp the possibilities, joy and greatness of that which those extra gifted enrich our lives with. Actually, we may or may not acknowledge their genius. Indeed, the rule seems to be that exceptional persons are properly appreciated only after they have left this world, if ever. It is the irony of the time factor: we, the ordinary 95 per cent, never quite understand the actions and movements of the extraordinary few among us.

Our Cosmically Gifted Creator

Exceptionally gifted people are found in many areas of life where they distinguish themselves by being unusually insightful, creative and futuristic. And the maker of the entire Creation is the most amazingly gifted, visionary, intimate companion of all. In the first chapter we heard the Chandogya Upanishad quoting the Creator: "I was one and decided to become many." In the ancient Brhadaranyaka Upanishad scripture we find: "The unmanifest Supreme was not happy alone and therefore manifested itself."⁵⁹ That creator finds loneliness as burdensome as we do! Shrii Shrii Anandamurti commented:

The spiritual aspirant, or the devotee, will say ...: "Before the creation, my Supreme Father was alone in this universe. There was nothing, and for want of the quinquemental factors, there was nothing to see, nothing to do. He was alone. Suppose you are

*alone in a particular village or in a particular house. What will be your position? What will be your mental condition? You will be just like—what? An insane person, a madman. So, in this vast cosmos my Father was alone. Just try to feel what His condition was, what His mental condition was. So just to save Himself from the monotony of singularity, He created this universe. Just to play with His children. This is the only reason. I know no other philosophy.” This will be the reply of the devotee.*⁶⁰

In a discourse entitled “The means to save oneself from sorrow”,⁶¹ Shrii Shrii Anandamurti observed that the Supreme has created cosmos in order to impart bliss to itself. The created beings are born out of this bliss. Hence, our coming into this created world has not been done to throw us into trouble. Still, at the human stage, living beings cause certain diseases to develop in their minds and in the grip of such ailments they suffer and make others suffer. This suffering, in spite of existing in infinite bliss, is the play of the creator with the created world. When the living beings become tired of this suffering, supreme consciousness liberates them by guiding them on the path of proper internal and external practice. All of the cosmic play from beginning to end is for the sake of bliss.

The 19th Century Bengali guru Ramakrishna Paramahansa said:

*It is His will that we should run about a little. Then it is great fun. God has created the world in play, as it were. This is called Mahamaya, the Great Illusion.*⁶²

The main disciple of Shri Ramakrishna was Swami Vivekananda, who travelled to the West and propagated yoga and the ancient philosophy of the Supreme One. As he was a man of determined action, Vivekananda stated:

*This world is the great gymnasium where we come to make ourselves strong.*⁶³

In several instances this book investigates the actual nature of clashes and cohesions and their importance for all-round growth.

Part 2: *The Animate Creation*

In the beginning, the Supreme Consciousness was one. In the course of the extroversial movement of the Cosmic Cycle, we find the emergence of five fundamental factors—the ethereal, aerial, luminous, liquid and solid—and in the introversial movement we find the creation of innumerable living entities with their respective bodies, minds, lives, consciousnesses, etc. Thus arose the kaleidoscopic creation with the Supreme Consciousness as the Supreme Progenitor.⁶⁴



3

How Life and Mind Are Created

As long as the first, crudifying phase of cosmic creation proceeds, the static tendency of the operative principle increasingly expresses itself. This process of escalating crudification does not know when to stop, and at the far end things get drastic. Old matter wears out and disintegrates. Celestial bodies may actually explode. At that stage of dissolution and outright destruction, the operative principle may appear to some as more of a cosmic runaway train and less as a loving force of nature. Still, as proposed, everything in the creation is meaningful, nothing is meaningless.

Pressure and Friction

Have you ever tried to squeeze something really dense, like a stone? When we attempt to press a hard material, we come up against resistance. The denser the material, the more our own pressure causes counter-pressure from within the structure. If we turn up our external pressure, the pressure from within increases, too. Now the question is who will break first; the hand against the stone or the stone against the hand? The opposing force from within increases proportionally to the applied pressure until the foundation of one of the two threatens to collapse; either our hand will give up or the stone will cave in or shatter.

According to conventional physics, this mechanist prospect is the last word in the matter: “Stones under pressure remain intact or break.” The evolutionary reality is different. Where the resultant force is interial, or centre-seeking, where neither pressure nor counterpressure causes disintegration of the material body, and that process takes place in a balanced environment; i.e., where the mix of the five elements—space, air, light, liquid and solid matter—favours life, vital energy is generated.

We will run that in slow motion: The static tendency continues to crudify solid matter to the point where it threatens to disintegrate due to lack of inter-molecular space. In cases where the structure reaches a balancing point instead of breaking up—where the external force and the counter-force result in a particular nuclear force, a synthesis—vital energy emerges out of that extreme friction provided it all happens in a balanced physical environment.

The First Life

A main thesis of conventional biology is that all life on Earth, which arose many billion years ago,⁶⁵ may be sourced back to a “common ancestor”. This approach is a bit like the Big Bang (page 22). Scientists seem to think that the creation started only once, whereas in reality it is an eternal event. According to the science of mind, once the environmental requirements were in place, life was created on this planet, and the same life-creating process is still going on

here today. This does not mean that the first micro-organisms and plants of billions of years ago are still here today. On the contrary, as everything changes all the time, those first life forms on Earth may or may not exist anymore.

As long as the Earth is a life-giving planet life will be created continually. Conventional biologists do not, however, synthesise the facts that life-forms have 1) a physical body, 2) a vital energy, and 3) a mind. So, when they state that new life is not created anymore on Earth, they actually mean to say that those first life forms may not exist here anymore, which would be only natural, and from that they draw the erroneous conclusion that other primitive organisms present today cannot be containers of new life.

The Birth of Vital Energy	
1. The pressurising energy from outside must prevail over the counterpressure from inside, synthesising the two opposing forces into a centre-seeking force.	
2. The physical environment must be balanced—suitable for life. ⁶⁶	

In 1979 in Switzerland, Shrii Shrii Anandamurti suggested that two of the factors of a properly balanced environment for new life to occur is zero-degree temperature and water.⁶⁷ His science of mind states that new life may be created on planets or moons where the environment and circumstances are favourable. He added that in his opinion, planet Mars is a dying planet.

The Hard Problem

What exactly is it that makes vital energy vital? What makes animation come out of matter as a result of physical pressure to produce cognisant beings? The key to this puzzle lies within the atom and its constituents—electrons, protons and neutrons. What are they made of, what do they carry inside?

Microvita, the Vital Essence

While explaining the process of crudification of consciousness into physical matter in the first phase of cosmic creation, we used the examples of pumping up a tyre and the use of a fire piston to generate heat. In the creation of life, something similar happens. On New Year's Eve 1986, Shrii Sarkar introduced the theory of microvita, “micro-life”, which he went on to develop and give numerous practical demonstrations of. Microvita play an essential role in the science of mind. A microvita is a basic building block of animated existence, partly physical and partly psychic. The cruder varieties tend towards matter, and the subtler towards mind. They are infinitesimal; billions of them make up a single carbon atom.⁶⁸

In the same way as oil is extracted from seeds, vitality and cognition in the form of microvita are released from atoms when atoms are sufficiently activated in adequate environmental conditions, as indicated in our discussion on the generation of primal vital energy. It is as if the creation uses a ready-made product similar to instant food preparations. All it takes is to mix in water, turn on the heat, stir briskly, and hey presto—action in the kitchen! The manifesting principle has in fact prepared for the coming into being of life and mind. The required concentrated ingredients are available in ample supply in the physical atoms, billions of microvita in each one of them, ensuring that each new creation will be unique.

A microvita may be physical, psychic, and even supra-psychic, much subtler than the electrons, protons, and neutrons of the first, crudifying phase of inanimate creation. They can be even subtler

than the microcosmic mind-stuff and its subjective coverage of the second, animate phase of creation.* That is, they may be as subtle as intuition, and roam in ideas and higher psychic processes.

Microvita travel throughout the universe by way of any of the five elements according to their choice and suitability.⁶⁹ Microvita may affect living beings physically, psychically, or psycho-spiritually in various ways, and are termed as positive (“friend”), negative (“enemy”) or neutral with reference to the quality of their relation to us. They may be put to use constructively, and may also be misused.

Shrii Sarkar discoursed on and demonstrated microvita numerous times to show that this new theory and science has enormous potentiality. Although microvita are subtle, they are living beings with a natural life span between their birth and death. The cruder variety of microvita may be researched in chemical laboratories and medicinal as well as medical laboratories where they may be observed through highly developed microscopes.

Earlier, we acknowledged that an atom has both crude and subtle dimensions. Shrii Sarkar explained⁷⁰ that both atoms and microvita have subtler and cruder portions. Atoms are of this dual nature as they consist of large quantities of microvita whose subtler portion is closer to idea, and the cruder nature closer to matter. While the cruder aspects of microvita may be studied in physical laboratories their subtler aspects may only be realised by spiritual practices. The subtler kind of microvita is not directly observable but the effects of their actions may be detected physically. The subtlest kind are only conceptually observable; highly evolved minds can conceive of their activities.

Regarding atoms, Shrii Sarkar explained that some of them do not come within the physical arena or even within the realm of physical perception. Therefore, atomic research needs to take place in all three spheres—physical, psychological and spiritual. If we want to utilize a certain subtle state of an atom, the subtler portion, we

* For an explanation of ectoplasmic mind-stuff and its endoplasmic coverage, see page 59.

shall have to do spiritual practices, and if we want to know about the cruder portion, we shall have to do laboratory research.

The theory of microvita points toward a new era of scientific development where researchers will work in both physical and mental laboratories to explore the psychic-physical and psycho-spiritual properties and potentialities of microvita. This new fascinating science of microlife spans the entire spectrum of human energetic existence. Its bottom line seems to be that knowledge itself is an energy that should be properly directed.

Microvita are like the essential ingredients of instant food products that only require water and temperature to be prepared and served. The animate creation comes to life due to the activation of microvita inherent in the inanimate creation. The above observations on microvita and atoms are only a few and relative to the present subject. Interested readers are advised to turn to the compilation of Shrii Sarkar's discourses on the subject, *Microvita in a Nutshell*, and later publications and ongoing work by others.

The Emergence of Mind

Let us now see how the mind of living beings is created. In the process of the coming into being of vital energy just described, part of dense matter is transformed into a still finer substance, microcosmic mind-stuff.⁷¹ This unit proto-mind marks the birth of the individual mind, of our self. It grows and evolves when impressions of life experiences—sensory and actional activities—are stored as imprints in the mind-stuff.⁷²

The Great Reflected in the Small

Shrii Sarkar is not the only one who maintains that mind comes out of matter. Even some materialistic philosophers and scientists hold this view. One metaphysical school, physicalism, considers mind to be a product of the brain and maintains that mind is activity in the physical nerve cells.⁷³ But physicalism offers no explanation as to the

origins of matter, and it simply considers life to be a manifestation of certain dynamic activities in organized matter. As science author Steve Richheimer reminds us, physicalism maintains that mind and consciousness are epiphenomenal to matter, while Shrii Shrii Anandamurti and other spiritual teachers maintain that mind and matter are epiphenomena of consciousness. Richheimer refers to these two opposing approaches as “bottom-up” vs. “top-down”.⁷⁴ That is, the bottom-up approach views things in a materialistic perspective, whereas the top-down approach is spiritual.

The theory and practice of microvita liberates evolution and its attending sciences from their limiting materialistic cage. Matter is the crudest form of consciousness created towards the end of the first phase of creation. Mind arises out of matter at the beginning of the second phase of creation, and is a far subtler stuff than matter. Microvita are the most subtle fundament of and essential to all physical and psychic processes of the animate world including our mind.

Both vital energy and mind-stuff are much finer than physical matter. It follows that in the creation of vital energy and mind, the cause is cruder and the effect subtler. It is a transformation of crude effect (matter) into its subtler cause (cognition), the opposite of what is going on in the first, crudifying phase of the cosmic creation. The birth of the microcosmic mind, then, is the start of the second phase of the creation; the animate phase that will take the microcosm all the way from fundamental crudity to fundamental subtlety and the final merger with supreme consciousness.

The created living being is a reflection of the cosmic being. All its resources and potentialities are embedded in various planes of cosmic existence.

Parallelism

Let us now look at how vital energy and mind cooperate. At first, the primeval mind has not yet developed any ego or sense of self. It consists only of mind-stuff. Still, primal vital energy and proto-mind-stuff both transmit their own wavelengths. The parallelism of

these wavelengths, the cohesiveness of those two entities, results in a coordinating functioning, vital energy. This vital energy—parallelism between body and mind—is the force by which the living being begins its evolutionary journey.⁷⁵

In Sanskrit, the term for vital energy, *prāñāh*, is in the plural, whereas the term for vital energy is in the singular, *prāñā*. Physical bodies are composed of five fundamental factors—ethereal, aerial, luminous, liquid and solid—and each of those factors has a controlling nucleus. These elemental nuclei of the physical body contribute to the composite entity called vital energy which has its own controlling point, located in the vital energy organ.⁷⁶ The further plurality of vital energy is explained in the section on the vital energy organ (*prāñendriya*) in the chapter on spiritual practice.

Parallelism between body and mind makes for continued life in the present body. Critical loss of parallelism results in some form of deterioration or the other, or even death. Decreasing parallelism between body and mind may be due to the waning of any of the two, wear and tear as a consequence of aging or disease, or the mind's emerging needs for new opportunities and potentialities that the present body may not be able to offer. Correspondence between body and mind is fundamental to unit life.

Rebirth

At the other end of the life-death cycle, parallelism is the single criterion when the bodiless mind, between two lives, searches for a new body aided by the operative principle. The mind evolves by living in a succession of bodies that are being born and die one after the other. In order to start a new life, the mind adopts a new physical body in a physical, psychic, social, etc. environment better suited to the mind's present evolutionary state than was the previous body. That is, a bodiless mind is looking for a rebirth that matches its inherent driving forces (*samskaras*, explained in Chapter 16). How the mind leaves the body to enter the next, is described on page 112.

The process of rebirth is not yet scientifically proven. Nonetheless, the idea of rebirth has strong roots in both eastern and

western ancient culture. Polling show that one third of Americans⁷⁷ believe in rebirth, whereas in Asia it is a main traditional belief.

There is an abundance of solid and in many cases irrefutable documentation of little children who have been able to inform in detail about their earlier adult existences. On the basis of such documentation, in many cases it has been possible to find the places and persons still alive with whom the recently born lived in their previous life. For most children, memories of living in a previous body begin to fade before the age of 4-5. Shrii Sarkar commented that until puberty a few may remember their previous life, after which further biological and social development make it impossible for the mind to retain clear memories of the earlier existence, other than in cases of spiritual geniuses and the mad.

This subject of linking up with previous lives is the domain of para-psychology, which is part of the science of mind. We will return shortly to this subject when surveying extra-cerebral memory. We will however not be investigating this subject exhaustively as this is a book of science and rebirth is not yet scientifically proven, which it eventually will be some time in future with the further exploration of our hereditary material.

The Synthesis of Life

In this chapter we have learnt that the birth of life and mind in the cosmos is the result of synthesis. Analysis carves up an organism into bits and pieces, sets up one against another, and causes wars. Peace is the result of synthesis. Life and mind are therefore harbingers of peace within a creation resulting from material clashes through increasing crudification. Initially, the budding life and mind will reflect those clashes. With time, we learn to appreciate and also generate peace. Ultimate peace is found in the attainment of the One, which is only possible in individual life and not in collective life. Individuals may inspire peace in the collective, but like anything else in the creation that peace will be of relative nature. Absolute peace is an internal, spiritual matter; if it came to all simultaneously the whole world would come to a stop!⁷⁸



4

Mind-stuff

These days we hardly pass an hour without staring at some screen or the other—on the mobile, workstation, tv-set, etc. What most people are unaware of is that we all have an internal display as well that conveys physical and psychic information to us. As the quotation up front in the book informs us, nobody has ever taken any outer physical thing directly into their brain and mind. A grain of sand, a drop of water, a whale, or sunlight are all conveyed via the sensory apparatus and the brain to the mind-stuff.

Why would this be significant? Does it matter how we experience our world as long as we manage somehow? In the preceding chapter we learnt how mind-stuff comes about with its own wave-length linking up with a living being's vital energy. The main significance of the mind-stuff lies in its plasticity. It is both pliable and transformable, and may assume any form and reproduce any kind of physical and psychic information. This high degree plasticity means that we can either transform the mind-stuff into subtler mind or allow it to run along with the crude and generate more of that. According to the ancient Yogabhashya,⁷⁹ “the river called mind flows in two directions”; towards the world of desire and toward the world of spiritual peace (*kalyāṇā*).⁸⁰ Shrii Shrii Anandamurti commented:

*The mind-stuff can be concentrated on anything—on crude matter or on a subtle idea. It may flow towards the Supreme One or it may move towards the mundane world. ... When the mind flows towards the Supreme One it is called flowing towards benevolence, and when it runs towards matter it is called flowing towards malevolence.*⁸¹

The mindstuff's tremendous workability has immense implications for our individual and collective progress. In the same way as crude petroleum may be drilled and refined, we have great reserves of crude energies stored in our mind-stuff that may be transformed into subtler energies. Or, we have the option to transform the subtler part of our mind, our I-feeling, into cruder and even physical states. We will examine these dynamics with regards to conscious evolution in the chapter on the animated evolution.

Similar to the cosmic mind-stuff manifesting the imaginings of cosmic cognition, our microcosmic mind-stuff manifests the experiences we conceive of. Why "conceive of"? Do we not all have authentic, empirical experiences? Think about it. On one hand, we do not experience the actual physical world, but only that which we manage to register in our mind-stuff via our senses and the brain. In addition, we view or interpret that information against the background of our stored memories and entire life history. In all cases will our experiences be different from what is actually going on out there as well as from those of others. No living being experiences what is actually going on in the cosmos, everybody lives in their own microcosmic mind-stuff-universe.

Because the relativity of the physical world and the limitations of our sensory apparatus prevent us from taking in all of what is happening, and our own inner programming makes us interpret whatever little we are able to take in instead of actually experiencing it as is, our perception suffers from both sensorial and cognitive restraints. If we all had the same frame of reference, say by sharing a common mind-stuff and not having one each, we would all be the same. But we all have one paradigm each, and therefore not two of us think and act identically.

Diversity is a fundamental law of nature.⁸² When a researcher looks at two bacteria, the two single-celled organisms are having different life experiences. Dr. Pamela Lyon, a bio-cognitive philosopher at Flinders University, writes:

Extensive experimental evidence shows that microbial behaviour is guided by processes that, in other contexts, are readily regarded as part of biological cognition, capacities which together

encompass an organism's ability to navigate, become familiar with, value, learn from and solve critical existential problems within its world of experience, including coordinating action with conspecifics. This may explain why, for the past several decades, microbial researchers increasingly have helped themselves to cognitive terminology (i.e., 'decide,' 'talk,' 'listen,' 'cheat,' 'eavesdrop,' 'lure,' 'vote') to describe complex bacterial behaviour
 ...⁸³

Our mind-stuff works as the most wonderful hard-disk and display, able to convey absolutely everything: crude sensory information, memories, behavioural patterns, the most subtle supramundane realities, you name it. By monitoring those, we interpret what is going on in the outer as well as in our inner world. All incoming sensory information is conveyed to us via our mind-stuff, which is where we register our impressions so that they become memories to be retrieved later.

Absolute Objectivity

The first thing that happens to a new life is that it experiences something, such as being in water; movement, flow, temperature, etc. With these first experiences, the nascent mind of the new living being starts to develop and function. Those experiences are registered in its mind-stuff. That is, every living being has a mind. In the case of the simplest organisms, their mind consists only of mind-stuff. No ego or intuition there.

The impressions stored in the primal mind-stuff allow living beings to perform informed actions. That is, something in the mind-stuff may influence something else stored there. A memory may for instance influence sensory input, a feeling may alter a thought, and vice versa. This is one of the reasons why attitudes, morals, habits, etc. keep changing all the time; change is both an internal and external matter.

The mind-stuff is in itself devoid of subjectivity—it has no feeling of I or ego. Those microbes, bacteria, etc., with most simple bodies and minds, do not perceive of themselves as individual beings. They

experience “hot” and not “I feel it is hot”, “crowded” and not “The atmosphere here is getting a bit congested for my taste, how about going somewhere else?”. Instead of thinking in complex cognitive terms, a slime mould simply registers “dry” and “light” and then moves somewhere to a life “moist” and “shaded”. In other words, the cognitive modus of a primitive physical being is objective—everything is perceived as “it” or “that”, and not in connection to “I”, “me” or “mine”. For many human beings this is probably hard to grasp—being without a feeling of subjective self, having no “I”—and this may be the reason many believe that simple organisms do not have minds at all. But they do, and their minds are as simple as their bodies, just as our minds are as complex as our bodies.

Being without “I” does not mean that primitive beings are devoid of a sense or function of self. Cosmic cognition substantiates the existence of all beings according to their needs.⁸⁴ In the case of most primitive beings, who are devoid even of ego, the cosmic doer-I provides them with a sense of existential self. When a bacterium takes some initiative and carries out some action, it is by the force of cosmic doer-I, and not of their own ego because they have none. Similarly, when living beings with evolved egos but without much intuition happen to take a subtle approach, it is done by the force of the cosmic knower-I who guides such beings directly. Thus, in the evolution of living beings, any type of living beings may go beyond their limitations and initiate some new development due to their existential proximity with cosmic cognition.

In the case of evolved human beings, who have developed all three parts of the mind—mind-stuff, ego and intuition—our existence is substantiated by the soul, which is not part of the mind but is a reflection of the cosmic soul on the unit mind. In fact, even inanimate entities, such as sand and stone have soul. Shrii Shrii Anandamurti observed: “The one that you see to be an animal or an inanimate object by your superficial sight, is really a sentient entity, if you apply your internal sight.”⁸⁵

Cosmic cognition substantiates the entire creation all the way down to microvita. Thus, the purely objective mind of primitive beings is able to act and evolve even if they have not evolved much

of an ego themselves. They do so unconsciously; without an active subjective self they cannot reflect on themselves or on their surroundings and circumstances.

In the first part of the book, we learnt that the cosmic mind first evolves a self, consisting of knower-I and doer-I. Following those two forms of cosmic subjectivity comes the cosmic mind-stuff, where we find our universe. The opposite is the case with the evolution of living beings in the second, subtilising part of the creation. Here, the mind-stuff evolves first and only later ego and at last intuition and spirituality. This is the evolutionary schedule of our microcosmic mind, proceeding from crude to subtle in the opposite direction of the first phase of the cosmic creation. The details of that schedule are tabled at the end of the chapter on the animated evolution.

Primitive Life, Primitive Mind

The new-born mind straight out of matter is most simple. Its existential slate is quite blank; nothing is written in its memory, and whatever is being written in it is at first not the object of an own self. In the absence of all this, primitive organisms are quite dominated by whatever is happening to them at the moment. How do such hardly conscious beings cope in their everyday life?

As indicated, the newly arrived minds of simple organisms take in uncomplicated impressions, such as temperature and other variables of the environment, and respond and react to them. Every one of those experiences is stored in the mind-stuff. Gradually the steadily accumulating stored impressions bid those simple organisms to act in increasingly more complex ways, such as choosing what foods to eat and, seeing to the continuation of the species, where to find shelter, etc.

A few years ago, a French-Australian research team found that unicellular slime mould can make complex nutritional decisions despite lacking a physical coordination centre such as a nerve plexus or a brain. The researchers found that the slime mould was able to develop to contact patches of different nutrient quality in the precise proportions necessary to compose an optimal diet.⁸⁶

40 years earlier, Shrii Shrii Anandamurti had explained that in the early development of the organism “the first streak of consciousness finds its way through the crudest portion of the mind-entity; the few propensities it may have are for protection against environmental pressures and for procreation.”⁸⁷ Generally, this state or level of mind prevails throughout the plant world. In animals, the expressions of propensities become diverse and distinct. The chapter on animated evolution explores such courses in some detail.

The Interface

An interface is a connecting plane between two systems functioning together, for instance where we touch or click on a device in order to use it. The physical side of the human interface consists of the brain with its five sensory and five motor organs. The mind-stuff is the psychic part of it. As the mind is psychic, the mind-stuff remains invisible to the physical eye. When medics scan your brain with a physical device, they cannot see your mind-stuff. It takes a highly trained mind to actually view the mind-stuff of another person.

Unicellular organisms do have the ability to sense temperature changes, chemical gradients, and some can sense light and dark. Yet, they do not have a brain, which is the main component of the physical side of the human bio-psychological interface.⁸⁸ It is anybody’s guess where the mind is situated exactly in undeveloped beings, but it is there, as is evident from the facts mentioned just above. The rule of the thumb is to look for the head or anything that looks like a central decision-making centre.

Apperceptive Plate

The mind-stuff registers information received from sensory organs and communicates with the outer world via the motor organs. Essential to these activities is the focal area of the mind-stuff, termed as the apperceptive plate;⁸⁹ *sthirabhúmi* in Sanskrit (“calm area”, “state of stability” “terra firma”). Apperception is Latin and hails

from the suffix *ad* (“to”) + the verb *percipere* (“perceive”) = “the process of relating incoming stimuli to information already stored in the mind-stuff”.

The apperceptive plate is the area of the mind-stuff which is sufficiently stable to register and relay current vibrations from the outer and the inner world. This catchment-cum-disseminative area varies in scope and extent with the condition of the mind. That is, it is larger in some and lesser in others, and will also vary with the state of mind at any given time. The reason for such variations may be physical or psychic, and elucidated in the analysis of the vital energy organ (page 254).

This core of the extroversive mind functions like an antenna receiving and transmitting objective signals between the brain and the mind. Its function is fundamental to the perceptual-notional compass of living beings; the state and scope of it determine the degree of one’s conceptual powers. If this coordinating centre is in disarray or for any reason is not properly connected, the quality of information received or sent will be accordingly disturbed. For instance, a student who daydreams during class will not pick up much of what is being taught by the teacher. Neither will a mind that is easily led astray by inner distractions be able to enjoy deep contemplation. The trick is to develop this apperceptive plate systematically, the basic yogic methods for which are:

1. Regular practice of purposeful withdrawal of mind (*pratyahara*), and
2. Regulating one’s vital energy (*pranayama*).

A stable mind-stuff increases attention, sharpens learning ability, increases the capacity to make relevant decisions, and ensures excellent execution. Terms such as perceptiveness, comprehension, and faculty of understanding are used to describe the results of our apperceptive coordinating centre when it works well.

Inferences

As established, we experience physical things and phenomena of the outer world without ever bringing them into the brain and the mind. For instance, the experience of a meal takes place separately from the physical intake of food. The physical food goes via the mouth and the gullet into the digestive system while our experience of eating goes to the mind via the brain. Our body assimilate the physical food according to capacity, while we enjoy the process of eating via the mind-stuff screen! Those are two quite different processes running in parallel to each other. As soon as the physical food is past the mouth, we no more taste it physically. The process of enjoying the meal then continues in our mind, while the physical food is on its way through our digestive system.

As noted, without the mind being fully present on any occasion there will be less of an experience. We may eat and at the same time think about something else and thereby fully or partially miss the opportunity to enjoy our meal. That is why people who are concerned about our well-being may inquire whether we enjoy the food they have served us, if there is enough salt, etc. They want us to be one with the eating of the food they lovingly prepared for us instead of us thinking about something else. The mind is the real experiencer of physical experiences. Without its presence, there will be no experience even if the organs, nerves and brain are functioning perfectly.

Interpretable Vibrations

Everything in existence vibrates. Even inanimate matter gives off vibrations. A granite boulder reflects grey colour which hits our retina. This happens by transmission of minute vibrations of the form and colour of the stone. Such vibrations, emanating from physical objects, are called inferences. The Latin *inferre* means to “bring in” or “carry in” (from the old Sanskrit *bher*, “to bear”). Inferences are something we may assume something from, conclude from. In developed Sanskrit, inferences are called *tanmātra*,

“minutest fraction of that”; *that* meaning “an aspect of something”. For instance, this is how we hear the sound of someone talking; their vocal cords broadcast sound vibrations and we receive inferences of those vibrations on our body, mainly by the ears. Any sensory input from the outer world is communicated to our sensory organs in the form of such minute vibrations. A green apple gives off inferences of the colour green, of form, smell, taste, etc. Those micro-vibrations are the reason why we are able to pick up sensory information.

In the case of touching a stone, the inferences of touch travel via cells and nerves to a particular place in our brain, the touch area, from where they are transferred onto the mind-stuff. Whatever it is we experience require that no part of the organ of touch—the skin, the tactile nerve, the nerve pathway, the actual organ in the brain with its cells, and the mind-stuff—is damaged, disturbed or defective.⁹⁰ We may conclude that no one has ever experienced fully a stone or any other thing out there as they were originally created. What we experience is our own “homemade” psychic impressions, and that is how things of the physical world become things of our microcosmic universe.

The German philosopher Immanuel Kant (1724–1804) is known among other things for his cognitive orientation towards the inner world. He maintained that we create our inner world and do not experience the original reality.⁹¹ Kant differentiated between things as they appear to us (“immanent”) and their real forms (“transcendent”).

“What do human beings enjoy?” Shrii Shrii Anandamurti would ask, “the original object, its shadow or its shadow’s shadow?”⁹² He would elucidate that for our mind, the material creation is real, and for the physical body whatever we enjoy physically also appears as real. Yet, our mind does not enjoy objects in their physical forms. Instead, it enjoys the inferences of the things around us received through the sensory or motor organs. In this perspective one may say that the mind does not enjoy the original object, but the “shadow” (inference) of the object. And, even though the world composed of the five fundamental factors appears to be real, in reality it is the imagination or thought process of the cosmic mind, manifested in

its mind-stuff. To this vast mind the universe is but a shadow of reality. One may therefore conclude that the mind enjoys the shadow (inference) of an object, and that the creation of the five fundamental factors too is a shadow—a thought projection of the subjective cosmic mind into its mind-stuff. Consequently, if we look at it in the cosmic perspective, whatever we enjoy is neither the original object itself, nor a shadow of the object, but rather a shadow of the shadow of the object—the inferences of what is manifested in the cosmic mind-stuff, and not the original cosmic imagination. This reality is the divide between the cosmic and the microcosmic.

Bound Consciousness

Earlier, we learnt that the static tendency of the operative principle gives finality to the created world. This tendency of the static is working not only in the outer but in our inner world, too. By shaping the results of our feelings, thoughts, and actions, the static makes those results distinct and noticeable to us. As such, the static tendency is the dominating tendency of the mind-stuff.⁹³ How can the static tendency dominate the mind-stuff when mutative and sentient energies are clearly expressed there? The mutative and the sentient have so many qualities that outshine the static, right? If the static would replicate those qualities and states it would transform into those; static would be replaced by mutative and sentient, right?

That would be a misunderstanding. Let us make a simple illustration of it. Assume you want to do house-cleaning. The idea of it may be infused with the sentient tendency: “I want our guests tonight to experience a dignified and pleasing atmosphere.” When you set out to manifest this idea, your actions are full of mutative energy: you clean left and right, top and bottom with the goal of transforming what was perhaps a rather messy place into something gracious and inspirational. In the end you enjoy the fact that all your mutative input has paid off: elevated vibrations of the sentient tendency are clearly evident in this better, much cleaner and tidier version of your home. Still, the final result, in the above case a nice home, is made seen, smelled, felt, etc. by way of the static tendency.

Wonderful aromas, spell-binding panoramas, and feelings of awe are all conveyed by static force. Without the static, physical and psychic things would not have finality. The entire manifest cosmos with the physical universe is experiential because the static tendency dominates the cosmic mind-stuff. Whatever comes through our sensory apparatus is dominated by the static regardless of how good it may taste, its wonderful smell, etc. If it were not predominantly static it would not be physically recognisable.

When we experience mainly the mutative or the sentient, it is due to our evolved mind beyond the crude mental. Inherent reactive driving forces play the main role in this regard. Two persons may face the same reality and have very different experiences—one mostly static, the other mostly sentient. Symbolism is a case in point where ideas and energies may flow from a symbol. Fine art is another example where artists create visual shapes and forms that convey realities—feelings, ideas—subtler than the static physical. The science of the supramundane centres on this reality, and its dynamics are explained in the chapter on the five layers of the mind.

Inherent driving forces are also the reason why some tackle life crisis in one way and others in other ways. In order for us to give way to proper mutative and sentient energies in any demanding situation, two moral principles of spiritual discipline are 1) to always maintain a composure of satisfaction (*santosa*), and 2) to cultivate the idea of personal sacrifice in order to reach one's goal (*tapah*), as detailed at the beginning of Chapter 19.

States and Qualities of the Mind-stuff

Earlier in this chapter it was explained how the qualities placed at the centre of the mind-stuff's apperceptive plate determine one's manner of perceiving and assimilating inferences and also one's acting on them. The science of mind advises us to establish a decidedly constructive concept at the core of ourselves in order to progress efficiently from any state of uncertainty or unease to positivity.

What is at centre influences the qualities of our internal and external responses in general, such as thinking and relations with the external world. For instance, if hopelessness were allowed to take centre stage, states of depression and anxiety may set in. Swelling hopelessness would place itself squarely on top of other more constructive energies pressing them down and away from our conscious awareness. The result could be: “I feel exhausted, no energy, cannot do anything, depressed...”

If the body-mind parallelism is significantly impacted by some centrally placed negative or obstructing factor, the mind-stuff's perception-centre will be affected accordingly and may even become unhinged. This is what happens when people otherwise known to be knowledgeable and informative suddenly expresses that they “just don't know.” It is also the cause when normal body consciousness becomes suspended and the person faints or goes unconscious. It is also what happens to people intoxicated by drugs. Their sensory information gets distorted or partly or fully suspended. A “doped” nervous system does not function normally. Such a disturbed state may result in emotional glitches, and even surreal and hallucinatory states of the bewildered apperceptive plate. In weird and sometimes wonderful ways something which is not may become that which is, and what is may appear as nonsense. As such, much drug abuse is linked with states of psychosis⁹⁴ and outright stupidity—mistaking this for that, and that for this.

When a person's subjectivity is weakened, misunderstandings, conspiracy theories, phobias, and psychoses soon queue up for unbridled expression. Early stages of psychosis may be easily cured by appropriate measures such as proper life style, meaningful influences, helpful socialisation, work discipline, and regular constructive activities. The main point is to give proper direction to the mind-stuff's apperceptive plate. It is a bane of modern society that social, medical and other authorities seem to have neither the time nor the resources to detect early tendencies of mental illnesses to avert them by such simple forms of human care. When allowed to take hold, psychosis may be beyond even specialist care except for suppressing its symptoms with chemical substances.

Self-discipline

The virtues of keeping one's mind-stuff in order are myriad. The way to do it is two-fold: by self-discipline or by following imposed discipline. The latter is practised in the military and in most structured organisations. It is however often seen that people who are able to follow some discipline imposed by others are bereft of discipline as soon as they are on their own.

Most people follow some measure of discipline themselves. They readily follow the traffic signs of life, take care of their body and other assets, and thereby achieve their life goals.

A disciplined life affects the mind-stuff in tremendously positive ways. Hence, disciplined people may be left to their own devices to a great extent. Those lacking basic personal discipline may be in need of constant physical, emotional and cognitive support as their chaotic, unstructured mind-stuff often leads them astray at the cost of the collective—family, locality, society.

A many thousand-year-old saying, from the Amrtabindu Upanishad, states that “the mind is both that which liberates and that which binds”.⁹⁵ The secret lies in constructive change and transformation. By self-discipline even despicable, negative tendencies may be transformed into something positive and valuable. The Great Kṛṣṇa established that the mind may be one's arch enemy or closest ally depending on whether one is able to control it or not:

*For those who have conquered the mind, it is their friend. For those who have failed to do so, the mind works like an enemy.*⁹⁶

Śrīī Śrīī Anandamurti reciprocated:

*The mind is one's best friend if it moves towards subtlety, but if it degenerates and becomes crude it is one's worst enemy.*⁹⁷

Yoga philosopher Patanjali (see page 319) began his Yoga Sūtras with the aphorism “Now I am going to explain yoga as a school of self-discipline.”⁹⁸ Spiritual practice is the proven short-cut to self-discipline and all its rich rewards. Chapters 14 and 19 explore factors that contribute to the state and quality of the mind-stuff, suggesting various means of self-discipline.



5 Ego

As long as the mind evolves, it develops new qualities and capabilities and its actional scope grows manifold and diverse. The basic feeling of the mind-stuff is that it itself is “something”, an object. With further development the mind develops a subjective feeling, too. The mutative tendency of the cosmic operative principle dominates such transformational processes towards greater diversity.⁹⁹ Unlike the static, the mutative does not strive for conservation, nor does it imagine, envision and inspire upliftment like the sentient tendency does. As long as mutative energies dominate, transformations continue without conclusive result.

From Object to Subject

Let us venture somewhere nice for a breath of fresh air and enjoy a field of developing sunflowers:

Growing sunflowers turn with the sunlight. An entire field of packed young sunflowers turn together as one from east towards west, and back from west towards east through the night. Like the minds of other underdeveloped creatures, the sunflower mind is dominated by mind-stuff. That means they live mainly by the environment, without having a great deal to say themselves. Still, if a sunflower no longer follows this dance of twisting and turning it is most probably because it has grown up. Fully grown sunflowers feel they no longer need to follow the sun light, and stop turning. Their inner voice tells them: “Bees are needed for

pollination and they mostly arrive from the east, so, do not turn with the sun—stay facing the east!” (Research indicates that flowers facing east attract the most bees as such flowers are the first to heat up in the morning.)¹⁰⁰

The mind’s emerging mutative subjectivity is a sense of ego: “These imprints in my mind-stuff exist because of me, they are mine. I am concerned about them; I involve myself and care about what happens to them, about the results of my activities.” Before the coming into being of the ego, the mind laboured mostly under physical instincts. Primitive organisms are oriented solely towards the fulfilment of physical needs and are thereby dominated by the static tendency. Ego grows out of the mind-stuff when mutative energies begin to take hold. This new part of the mind evolves to be an analytical, intellectual force that makes the mind-stuff work according to its whims and subjective notions.¹⁰¹

We may perhaps call an underdeveloped mind, with a sprouting ego, “sunflower mind”. Objectivity is still the world-view of the sunflower’s mind. What little ego it has is subordinate to the mind-stuff. Sunflowers may be floral titans but certainly not intellectual giants as they do not yet have an ego to match their mind-stuff.

Subjective Membrane

The increasingly diversified, mutative-influenced mind-stuff develops an enclosing sheet, an enveloping membrane.¹⁰² The main role of this enclosing sheet is to hold the inner matter. As the mind-stuff is a mental entity, its covering and holding are also mental, and so the covering provides the bits and pieces of the mind-stuff with a coherent feeling, with a unitary feeling. This outer coverage gives the mind the sense of self, of constituting somebody, and that somebody is interpreted as oneself; “I do”, “I enjoy the results of my actions”.

The mind-stuff, which gives objective mental faculty, is termed as *ectoplasm*.¹⁰³ Its emerging enveloping sheet is termed as

endoplasm.* The terms in Sanskrit are *cittanu* for ectoplasm, *abhicittanu* for endoplasm,¹⁰⁴ and *citta* for mind-stuff.

The Ego-state

The mind-stuff functions via the sensory and motor organs, and the ego gets its work done via the mind-stuff. Dominated by the mutative tendency, the ego busies itself with organising its favourite imprints in the mind-stuff near the mind-stuff's apperceptive plate. Objects of interest to the ego become essential to the apperceptive plate. This is why a person becomes immediately interested, concentrated or absorbed when coming in contact with objects dear to him or her, and may go ballistic when perceiving that such cherished objects are threatened, and vice versa. Case officers and other interviewers would know how to put their knowledge of this mechanism to good use when popping questions of various nature and observing both reaction time and type of reaction.

The emerging ego-feeling gradually begins to express itself through the mind-stuff. In time, it emerges as the master of the mind-stuff, which materialises the ego's actions both within the mind in the form of psychic activities such as thinking and remembering, and via the motor organs in the outer world in the form of deliberate physical actions. In comparison, the objectivated mind-stuff works like a computer with no intelligence, artificial or other, of its own. The computer-like mind-stuff awaits the input of the subjective self:

* The science of mind uses *endo-* ("intro-") about the outer membrane of mind-stuff,* as it is introvert in character, and *ecto-* ("extro-") about the mind-stuff's content, which is extrovert in character. Conventional microbiology uses the same Greek terms the other way around in purely physical terms: ectoplasm is used for cell membranes ("the outer") and endoplasm about the cell plasma ("the inner"). We may say that Shrii Sarkar uses these terms as regard psychic realities, while conventional microbiology uses them with reference to physical realities.

MIND-STUFF VS. EGO

Mind-stuff	Ego
Cool ... hot ... cool ... hot ...	I generally prefer cool to hot, but sometimes hot is better.
Strong ... weak ... strong ... weak ...	I am stronger than you!
Love ... hate ... love ... hate ...	I used to love you, now I hate you—and you made it happen!

Analytical Ego

As clarified, when the ego begins to dominate the mind-stuff, it comes to control not only physical but also mental actions.¹⁰⁵ At this stage, the psychic surplus surpassing the mind-stuff is called intellect.¹⁰⁶ Intellect is the human stage, where the living being queries, analyses, assesses, and increasingly manages its own development.

The human being excels in exploring and taking decisions of its own and independent of its immediate environment. Indeed, the word *premeditated* entered history with us. Shrii Shrii Anandamurti tells an amusing story about a human and a goat entering a market where fresh cabbages and cauliflowers were on offer. What would the goat do? It would stick out its neck and nibble at the cabbages and the cauliflowers. The same instinct may trigger human beings when entering an area where some nice food is being prepared. That instinct is an inborn instinct. But a human being would never approach to procure anything in a food market without first having established that he or she can actually pay for it. “As a rule, no goat of any country would ever check its pockets first whereas people from all over the world certainly would. Those who fail to do so are

branded as thieves and dacoits by the society.”¹⁰⁷ Shrii Shrii Anandamurti concluded that human beings control their inborn instincts with the help of their intellect, and that this ability makes them worthy to be called human beings.

Developed animals have significant ego, too. A dog may eagerly serve its owner family, and a cat is usually anxious to go its own way. Yet, intellectual dignity is not discernible in such developed animals. If they happen to be somehow badly treated, they return as soon as there is something to eat or for some other rewarding activity. An offended human being, however, will not be satisfied easily no matter how hard one tries to placate that person afterwards.¹⁰⁸ Animals’ sorrows, pleasures, need for being alone, celebrating together, etc. are all expressions of their evolved mind. Monkeys differentiate between themselves and live in developed social systems with hierarchies and distinct roles. Discriminations among monkeys are overt and sometimes brutal between the strong and the weak, he and she, high and low, etc.

The main difference between the ego of developed animals and that of human beings is that the human intellectual ego provides for rational reflection.¹⁰⁹ A human being may consider: “What would I be doing if the world was a perfect place, and how can I do some of that even now when the world is still far from perfect? What are my potentialities?” The ability to think like this is rooted in the mind’s purely mental, subtle, subconscious layer (page 105). The ego of animals is rooted in the carnal layer (page 104) where physical needs, urges and desires prevail. A mental mind free to reason sensibly is not developed in animals.

Progress Or Regress

Earlier it was indicated how creatures who develop ego gradually become co-creators of their own evolution. The nature of the creation is to progress unceasingly onwards in evolution. By involving themselves actively with their accumulated reactive driving forces (samskaras), living beings begin to relate more individually to their inner and outer worlds, and their self-image evolves. Here is

the thing: those creatures, in whom ego is growing, remain on course in the evolution from crude to subtle; they keep progressing towards higher states of being even though they individualise. They do so because the cosmic operative principle continues to arrange for their progress from crude towards subtle.¹¹⁰

In this regard, human beings are deviant. Humans have developed sufficient intellectual ability to oppose the natural will of cosmic evolution and cross it by their own free will. The considerable intellectual power of human beings may take them and society onwards further into evolution or revolution, or backwards into counter-evolution or even counter-revolution. Shrii Shrii Anandamurti clarified that the cosmic will guides all of the animate and inanimate creation, but due to the influence of ego, humans are directly controlled by ego and indirectly by the cosmic mind. “When humans move according to the will of the Cosmic Mind, their speed is accelerated.”¹¹¹

Free Will

Will is an old European idea. The concept of free will hails from Greek philosophy; “the ability to choose between several courses of action”. Asian philosophy does not promote the ideal of individual will. Traditional Asian society is orientated towards the collective—family, society—rather than celebrating individual liberty. Its discourse runs more towards directing propensities to provide common quality than expressing individuality.

Purposive mental energy is termed as *iccha shakti* in Sanskrit, “desirous, intentional power”. As deliberated earlier, the potential for it forms in evolution when living beings develop sufficient mental force to be able to identify with their own unserved reactive driving forces (samskaras; momenta from previous action). Such identification allows a living being to consciously connect inner energy with internal and external goals. Shrii Shrii Anandamurti advised:

Just as human beings have a certain advantage because of their independent minds they have a disadvantage also. The disadvantage is that if they do not move towards cosmic consciousness consciously, then their movement may be towards crude physicality, towards animality. And the advantage they enjoy because of their independent will is that if they so desire, they can move towards their goal with greater momentum. To make the best use of this advantage is an act of wisdom on the part of human beings.¹¹²

Egotism

The mind grows big and complex. In the animal kingdom we see that the ability to survive in the environment, such as by camouflage and other sorts of trappings, and the ability to shape and design the environment according to one's needs, such as setting up house, develop tremendously with the growth of mind. Human beings have taken these trends much further than any animal, in the form of numerous complex mechanisms for adjusting in the psychic environment, such as boasting, deceiving, denial as well as many types of internal repressive and defensive mechanisms.

Fear of Death

Why is the ego such a self-inflicting control freak? It is a bit of a sad tale. You see, the ego nurtures a difficult secret, a fear of existential death. The ego cultivates its own greatness while at the same time fearing too much of it. It senses that in the developmental process towards higher self, it will lose its importance. "Perhaps," the ego thinks, "if I go down that road, in the end I will cease to exist ... I will be dead and others will have a party." This mortal fear of the ego conflicts absolutely with the fundamental desire of the living being, which is to keep evolving towards limitlessness. As the saying goes: "Your ego is your worst enemy."

Inflation

At first, a budding ego will be more expressed in certain contexts but not in situations where the mind-stuff continues to dominate. A more developed ego would exhibit some distinct subjective attitudes and individualistic behaviour, as it would be cultivating an increasingly participative attitude towards at least some of its own reactive driving forces (samskaras). Some people may for instance be constrained in matters of which they know little, and more forward when it comes to things they actually know about. It is somehow like a small child who first learns to crawl, then walk, then talk, etc. Its capacity builds to become more manifold, varied, and self-assured.

People with huge egos, on the other hand, will either dismiss anything that seem to be of no interest to them, or pretend they know anyway. Their ego towers above everything else. When more of the mind-stuff evolves into subjectivity, so that the subjective portion keeps growing beyond the objectivated mind-stuff, the ego will not only influence, but come to dominate the existence of that living being. "I am more important than anything and everybody else!"

When one allows one's I-feeling to take a predominant role, it keeps inflating on its own.¹¹³ When ego comes to dominate a developed human mind, actions and states are being reasoned and justified on the ego's terms: "If you can be quiet, I will be able to think!" Such hypocrisy happens when the ego is disturbed by something in its own mind-stuff and attempts to blame others for it in order to save its prestige. "I did it because they forced me." In psychology it is called rationalisation.*

The ego does not view the various content of its mind-stuff as states of consciousness. Rather, the ego treats them as physical and psychic objects of the world subordinate to itself. A full-blown, mighty ego sees itself as the sovereign subject; everything and everybody else are objects to be ruled:

* In practical life, rationalisation has to do with commendable initiatives such as clever resources allocation leading to increased efficiency. There is also constructive mental rationalisation, as discussed in Chapter 14.

I am the state! - French Emperor Louis XIV (1638-1715)

Since I was there, I was able to control the situation. But I wonder what would have happened in my absence. I'm sure that had I not been there the world would have met its final destruction.
- Indian Emperor Aurangzeb (1618-1707).¹¹⁴

Splitting

A blind man called Ego met an elephant. First Ego bumped into one of the tusks and yelled that an elephant resembles a spear. Then he felt the trunk and declared that elephants are like huge snakes. When he got hold of an ear Ego stated that an elephant is like a huge fan, and when he came up against the elephant's side, he promptly declared an elephant is like a living wall. Next, Ego embraced one of the elephant's legs and concluded that these elephants are like voluminous logs, and in the end, he held the tail and started a rumour that elephants are like pieces of rope. People who had met the same elephant and later talked to Ego, soon realised that Ego was just blind.

As explained earlier, the mind-stuff experiences existence as sequences of more or less comfortable and uncomfortable objectivated states passing mechanically one after another. The specialty of the ego is to colour those bits of existence with subjective identifications: "I like this", "but not that", "I can do this", "but not that", "I am afraid of it", "not of this", etc. To the ego, this never-ending analytical splintering is both a joy and a curse.

On one side, the ego feels in charge and masterful by ordering its world into positives and negatives. On the other side, a greater wholeness is never achieved, and thereby peace and fulfilment remain a far cry off. Not that analysis necessarily is bad, but in the case of the ego its incessant analysing never arrives at a stable meaningful reality. The ego keeps dividing everything of its own world into smaller and smaller parts that naturally end up in conflict with one another.

Coordination

The truth is that analysis does far better when coordinated with synthesis. Without the integrity and wholeness of the synthesis, analyses fall short of achieving fundamental conclusions. By one-sided analysis, the subjectivity of the ego remains split, and in the end this ongoing egoistical splitting causes all sorts of disasters in this world, the ego's own serious psychic ailments included. Shrii Shrii Anandamurti opined:

*One can never reach the Supreme by following the path of analysis. This path causes one to believe that one's mother, father, and even the limbs of one's own body are all separate entities. The path of spirituality is the path of synthesis. It is the path which synthesises the many into one, and helps one to discover the Supreme unity in the midst of diversity. The one who treads the path of synthesis ultimately discovers that what was once multiplicity has been transformed into the supreme singularity.*¹¹⁵

The path of righteousness (dharma or spirituality) is the path of synthesis. It is the path which helps one to discover the Supreme unity in the midst of diversity. "The one who treads the path of synthesis ultimately discovers that what was once multiplicity has been transformed into the supreme singularity."¹¹⁶

It is the ego's misfortune that it cannot conceive of the value of synthesis and instead clings to analysis. In order to appreciate and evolve synthesis, a greater subjectivity is needed; i.e., intuition. The reason for it is that the ego goes by known things, by the imprints already stored in the mind-stuff, whereas intuition goes for the greater unknown as far as the mind-stuff is concerned.

An ego may covertly reflect that it would be good to maintain and develop good relations to the mind's higher subjectivity, the intuitive self. Such introvert reflection may occur at the stage where the sense of intuitive self is about to assume the volume of the ego. As long as the intuitional part is decidedly smaller than the ego, the latter will continue to check the former. Even if the ego comprehends some of the significance of intuition, and even if it avails itself of it, it

instinctively holds back from giving intuition the upper hand, due to its “mortal fear” indicated above.

Worst-case Scenario

An ego ensnared with another ego is the ultimate goodnight to all human reason. For instance, criticising others is a common pastime; people who meet commenting adversely on their neighbours, friends, celebrities, etc. Many professional politicians indulge openly in it. As the objects of their criticism are not present, no constructive criticism by proper dialogue will take place. Instead, criticism of absent people takes root in the mind-stuff of those present—in the critics themselves. Egos engaged with other egos continue together to dig their own mental graves, gradually turning their intermingling into a breeding ground of hypocrisy, hate, etc. This is one of the reasons why Shrii Shrii Anandamurti introduced conduct rules to be followed by the members of the social-spiritual organisation he founded. Here are a few examples of those rules relevant to our treatise:

- Setting an example by individual conduct before asking anybody to do the same.
- Even while dealing with a person of inimical nature, one must keep oneself free from hatred, anger and vanity.¹¹⁷
- When talking, always use respectful words about someone who is absent.
- When talking, do not hit anyone with harsh or pinching words: say what you want to say indirectly.
- When in conversation, give scope to others to express their views.
- If you must convey something negative to someone, you should use the words “Excuse me” and then start your talk.¹¹⁸

Life Imprisonment Due to “Karma”

The ego attempts to get whatever it desires as fast as possible. Blunt egos may always try to get things done immediately while more skilful egos may sometimes take a roundabout route to obtain the maximum. Invariably, they all try to take the shortest route available to the greatest pleasure. Incessantly busy with its gains, egos end up being attached both to their favourite objects and their consequences. After some time, results of an action in the form of reactions will become the ego's focus rather than the original intention.

The ego is prisoner for life of “karma”. Say, you wanted to do something good. Soon you met with some resistance, and now you are upset with somebody whom you have identified as the source of that opposition. Now your good intention is no longer in focus, instead your own irritation may have come to your attention. Or you wanted to build a wonderful existence for your family and after a while got caught up in practical details about your new house, which became a source of tension at home. Such developments are in fact the normal course of development for the ego. In this way, developed egos often proceed from the mutative towards the static by contemplating and enjoying the results of their actions, which naturally are in a cruder, physical state than the contemplation of original, mental actions. By this, egos make an extroversive entity of the mind, fighting impossible battles and ending up responsible for much strife and suffering not intended in the first place. The mechanisms of “karma” are explained in Chapter 16.

Necessary and Useful

Why then for God's sake do we have ego? Only so that we may live selfishly and make the Earth the worst example in the universe? What benefit can we possibly have from something that makes us appear loud, comical, and stupid, and mostly causes trouble for others? Can we not just leave our ego and be elevated selves?

No, we cannot just leave our ego by the roadside, and an ego is never only good or bad. As with everything else, there are advantages

and disadvantages to the ego, too. Ego is the part of us that reacts and responds. Through analysis, the ego discovers and explores the physical and psychic universe in ways that benefit people and humanity. The ego deliberates, decides and implements, and is thus attached to the experiences of those processes. “This is me; that is how I did that, now let me see here ...” In this way, an ego gets numerous opportunities to learn by failing.

We see egos rising to the occasion in numerous demanding life situations and against all odds. Egos can be noble, helpful, and even decent! As already suggested, it is when the ego gets into the “ego for ego’s sake” mode that things get messy. If instead the pure, intuitive I may direct the ego, our self would function quite magnificently. The ego has this potential to transform into higher self, into intuition and spirituality.

*It is up to you to select which path you want to go. The selection depends completely on you; but this is not the case for animals. Animals do not have the developed ego, whereas you have the total ego. You know what you should do; still, you do not always do it. Your dharma, your nature is to know that Supreme Entity. That is the nature of human beings.*¹¹⁹

Allowing elements of the mind-stuff to become conscious and opening the ego to acceptance are essential first steps in the evolution of our human mind and existence. The following is a verse from Dada Shambhushivananda’s *Wisdom and Mystical Verses of Sānor*¹²⁰:

The Inquisitive Ego

*Ego asks her Master, “O my Lord,
why did you give birth to me?”*

The Master replies,

*“My little one, you have arisen from my bosom with the love of my
early dawn. You are the first streak of my creative manifestations.*

*“Play as long as you wish, but remember:
At the sunset of your life, you must return to the depthless ocean of
my infinite being.”*



6

Intuition

As the ectoplasmic mind-stuff and its endoplasmic coverage keep expanding, the human mind comes to refract and reflect more advanced feelings, ideas and states. The reason for it is that the expanding endoplasmic coverage works as an antenna for receiving the pure consciousness of the soul, which is refracted within and reflected off the mind-stuff of so many propensities. Naturally, this is the stage where the sentient tendency of the operative principle begins to take hold in the microcosmic mind.

Intuition evolves when the pure self, the sense of which is born out of the endoplasmic coverage, exceeds the ego-feeling.¹²¹ The ego is the microcosmic doer-I, and intuition the knower-I. This most subtle part of our subjectivity does not itself do anything but remains associated with everything by force of its pervasive sense of self.¹²² It is the part of us that gives existential sense to all that we are and do. In any feeling of “I do” there is also the deeper sense of “I am”. Without such existential confirmation there would be no action or thought. At the intuitional level, this sense of deep existence becomes evident to the person who has now become a candidate for further spiritual development.

Self-identification

Our higher, intuitional self does not generate an analytical attitude, as the ego does. It emanates synthesis, unification and oneness, and develops in us a sense of universal identification. Any matter that may solve individual and collective suffering, challenges, etc. takes on meaning; everything and everybody share that common

existential value—dignified existence. Utility value, social value, political value and all other relative values vary with the make-up and resourcefulness of the individual, whereas the fundamental existential value remains the same for all.

That blessed feeling of oneness is experienced both physically and psychically. The inner portion of physical cells (protoplasm) in primitive beings lacks endoplasmic support, while the physical cells of human beings have such collective support.¹²³ The reason for it is that the endoplasmic coverage of smaller or less developed minds does not have the same refractive and reflective strength as that of larger minds. This means that human beings are capable of acting selflessly.

Selfless actions emanate from a state or inspiration beyond the ego state, and is not a request for getting something in return. From this fact we may deduce that even a big ego may not be such a bad thing if only the subtler subjectivity of the intuitional self is even more developed. Actions require ego and good actions are guided by higher intentions, and not by crude instincts, sentiments, or even just mechanical reason.

The ego keeps busy with identifying itself with the results of its actions. The pure, intuitive I has a larger sense of self, providing it with a comprehensive sense of greater being. In Sanskrit, this pure I is termed as *mahat*, “great in the psychic sense”.¹²⁴ Greatness in the human sense is not dependent on physical size, but on the size of one’s higher mind reflecting in the magnanimity of one’s actions. It is the dominance of the serene, sentient tendency, which gives a pervasive sense of contentment. This intuitive part of our individual self feels at one with the entire creation.

What is it actually, this pure “I-feeling” of ours? Early on, in 1955, Shrii Shrii Anandamurti proposed that the pure feeling of “I” is an abstract idea that comes about as a result of thinking.¹²⁵ I-feeling can arise only from consciousness, and consciousness is what enables us to take an idea and think, plan, and perform some action. Our I-feeling is a mental projection of consciousness. Soul is consciousness reflected in the mind of a living being, and it is due to the qualifying influence of the sentient tendency of the cosmic

operative principle that the soul acquires the knowledge of existence and I-feeling comes into being. When soul consciousness appears in our higher mind, it is a bit crudified by the sentient tendency and appears to us as “I”—pure I-feeling. This idea of our existence is the basis of our I-feeling, and with that the individual’s identity—“I”—is nothing but this idea. That is how Shrii Shrii Anandamurti explains the relationship and difference between our sense of existing and soul. The I-feeling of human beings is entirely dependent on consciousness, “just as the existence of a plank of wood is dependent on a tree.”¹²⁶ So, we see that even our I-feeling, having grown out of soul by the effect of the sentient tendency on soul consciousness, is a part and stage of the great kaleidoscopic process of creation.

Elevation

As stated at the beginning of the chapter, the state of pure I, our intuitional self, is dominated by the sentient tendency of the cosmic operative principle and is therefore brimming with elevating energies and qualities. Shrii Shrii Anandamurti used to tell a parable about those three tendencies: the sentient, the mutative and the static:

Three thieves lived in a jungle. Once they met a man who had lost his way and strayed into the jungle. One thief bound up the man. “Who are you?” asked the man. “I am the static tendency,” replied the thief. The second thief approached the man and found him writhing in pain. He untied his bonds. The gentleman asked him who he was. He said he was the mutative principle. The third thief, the sentient tendency, met the gentleman and was moved by his plight. “If you go in that direction, you will reach the city, the city of light, of divine human dharma. We are thieves and cannot go to the city of light, of divine human dharma, as we will only be caught there.”¹²⁷

The three tendencies bind consciousness according to their binding capacity. Even the most subtle, the sentient tendency, cannot take the human being all the way unto the cherished goal of liberation, but only so far.

Liberating Will

To the ego, free will is an opportunity to do more of what it fancies without thinking about long-term mental and subtler consequences. In the psycho-spiritual perspective of the intuitional self, will embraces all-round progress. The difference between a human being and an ape is that somewhere in us we have a will to get off the mundane carousel to embrace the freedom of a larger existential world where freedom without attachments exist. An old story goes:

Some monkey catchers placed a bamboo cage in the forest. The opening was just big enough for a monkey to put its hand inside. Inside the catchers had placed a ripe, fragrant fruit. Quite soon a monkey was trapped. The monkey wanted to have the fruit, but the narrow opening required that the hand needed to let the fruit go in order to come out. The monkey's instincts said no; because of the fruit it had stuck the hand inside and it was not to come out without the fruit. Soon the catchers arrived to take the hapless monkey away.¹²⁸

Free will does not mean a will to do anything and everything in the outer world. It is the ability of an evolved mind to take well-directed approaches from the centre of one's being. A more precise term would be liberating will.

Our will-power is our potentiality to direct the mind in an elevating direction. Continued subservience to crude inherent driving forces, such as instincts and narrow sentiments, are not liberating.

Psycho-spiritual liberating will-power is essential to making progress especially in the higher stages of spiritual practices, when one has become somewhat established in the psychic world and need to move on towards the goal and not remain comfortable with or focussed on psychic powers.

Mysticism

If the apperceptive plate (page 50) is the interface and coordinating centre of incoming sensory and outgoing motor data, and the ego is the busy manager of that information, then the mind's endoplasmic coverage is the antenna receiving information from the superconscious mind.

The pure I is naturally intuitive. At first, it may develop various forms of mundane clairvoyance. Gradually, the more spiritually-oriented, intuitional powers of the higher self emerge.

Shrii Shrii Anandamurti termed Vedic wisdom as “intuitional science”¹²⁹ as it seeks to explain and activate that subtler part of our self to take our existence towards the supreme state. How can someone of limited means become something outside of its present scope of conceptualisation? The way is to go through transformation from intellectual to intuitional subjectivity and beyond.

Still, spiritual realisation appears as enigmatic to us because it involves the transformation of our finite being into infinite. As suggested earlier, intuitional-spiritual transformation is unknown territory for our busy-body ego, and therefore appears as something mysterious to it. Shrii Shrii Anandamurti defined mysticism as “the never-ending endeavour to find the link between finite and infinite” and gave it a prominent place in the science of mind.¹³⁰

How long does it take to achieve the supreme state, some people wonder. The fact is that time itself is perhaps the one factor that most keep us away from attaining perfection. Time, place and person are the causal matrix of our world of relativities. We rotate and circulate through those relative factors endlessly. Time is quite possibly the trickiest of the three.

A follower once asked Shrii Shrii Anandamurti what time is. “Time is a human perception and conception of relative movement,” he answered, before he went silent for a short while, and then added: “That is why, in absolute stillness, there is no time.”¹³¹

Refraction and Reflection

The minds of highly evolved living beings are expanded because their subjectivity—the endoplasmic membrane—has been tremendously stretched out by a great mass of accumulated and further developed mind-stuff. That expanded membrane refracts and reflects higher consciousness. Shrii Sarkar commented:

*In the end, as a result of proper spiritual practice, the ectoplasm is at the bursting point thick with intellect, intelligence, wisdom, and spiritual refulgence. When the overstretched endoplasmic coverage finally cannot hold out anymore and breaks, the individual I merges in cosmic consciousness.*¹³²

What does “refract and reflect” mean in this regard? When something breaks into something else, its waves refract into that receiving structure. Take the example of the arms of a swimmer in water. The moment an arm cleaves into the water, its movement is impacted by the waves of the water. The swimmer has to force the arms into the water, and with each stroke some energy is expended, making it harder and harder for the swimmer to repeat the movement. When sun rays enter water, they are bent a bit at the surface before they vanish into the deep because of the greater density of the water as compared to the air. This bending or breaking is what is called refraction.

This is also what happens to meditators when they practice, such as when applying a mantra with ideation to the mind. The mantra has some spiritual meaning, which when ideated upon allows spiritual consciousness to enter into the meditator’s mind. When higher consciousness enters the mind, it meets with elements of the mindstuff—feelings, instincts, thoughts, memories, etc.

Whatever is near the mind-stuff’s apperceptive plate gets affected by the powerful waves of that incoming spiritual consciousness. Reciprocally, the incoming consciousness refracts each time it encounters an element of the mind-stuff, and that bending or breaking will be proportional to the crudity of that element. Let’s say the meditator was contemplating a subtle idea, in which case the

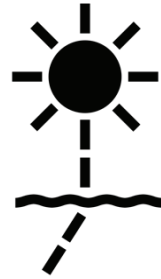
refraction would be mild, possibly hardly at one or two degrees, resulting in abiding inspiration. Whereas if he or she was absorbed in the thought of hating someone intensely, a most crude sentiment, the refraction of the inspiration would possibly be very angled.

When waves break at sharp angles, their dynamics dissipate. Perhaps you are walking along a road and somebody just stops you forcibly. This is somewhat what happens to spiritual waves when confronted by crude resistance in the mind. This is also why light in water wanes in stages as it encounters wave upon wave and possibly organic material in the water, resulting in repeated refraction of varying intensity. In very polluted water sunlight may only penetrate a short distance, whereas divers in crystal clear water may enjoy the scenery even at some depth without having to bring dive light with them.

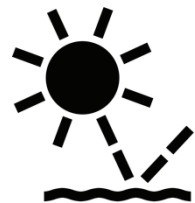
By refraction, both the receiving element and the incoming waves change; the receiving elements of a mind-stuff are getting subtler and the incoming spiritual waves are waning correspondingly. This is why meditators are instructed to repeat their mantra with ideation in rhythm with their breathing continuously. In this way a single meditation sitting can effect great positive change in the mind-stuff.

Reflection is what happens when you look into a mirror and see yourself. Your waves are reflected by the mirror. Genuine spiritual practice results in the practitioner reflecting higher consciousness out into the world. It happens when the mind has been expanded so that its endoplasmic coverage attracts much higher consciousness, some of which is transformed into outer presence. The concept of selfless service translates this spirituo-psycho-physical idea into reality.

Refraction



Reflection





7

The Animated Evolution

Humans have developed for quite some time. A million years ago or so we may have started away from the relatively safe existence of living on trees to explore life on the ground. A terrifying prospect! The Earth's harsh environment would make life very hard. The present era, the Pleistocene ("most recent"), spans numerous ice ages and environmental crises. Yet, we prevailed over merciless nature and ferocious animals, and in those processes of conflicts and peace, troubles and ease, we evolved.

The beginnings of human civilisation may easily be traced from about the ending of the most recent ice age when the natural world became more manageable for us. Shrii Shrii Anandamurti states that around this time, some fifteen thousand years ago, the Vedic language, old Sanskrit, evolved considerably and the first compositions of the Rigveda commenced, an event he marks as a starting point of human civilisation.¹³³

*Where does the thought which causes evolutionary change originate? It originates in the nerve cells. The human mind thinks and memorises. The more the thinking capacity increases the more the power of memory develops. The nerve cells also change, leading to a corresponding change in the nerve fibres. These changes create a stir and a revolution in the world of thought. Human beings started thinking, "Who am I? Where have I come from? Where shall I go hereafter?" No other creature thinks like this—only humans have the power of contemplation ... This sort of human contemplation was reflected gradually in literature, art, etc.*¹³⁴

Three Main Evolutionary Forces

We were examining the fact that living beings progress through conflicts and cooperation, troubles and ease, wear and tear versus a consolidated state, and in the process, they experience pain and pleasure. The science of mind terms these cyclic or alternating developmental dynamics as clash and cohesion. These terms are used in the meaning of analysis, challenges, and problems on the one hand (clash) and synthesis, solidarity, and solution on the other (cohesion).

A clash is a conflict of two or more forces, energies, tendencies, states of being, interests, urges, desires, etc. Cohesion is the constructive resulting state of clash—fresh and greater affinity, integrity, and other forms of constructive mutuality following on from clashes. The cohesive structure is a new and more capable form than the previous clashing elements.

Obstacles Are the Way Forward

Processes move through phases of clashes and cohesions. The living being and its mind navigate alternations of troubles and ease, pain and pleasure, conflicts and solutions. These are the dialectics that propel the microcosmic entity forward in evolution.

“Obstacles are not in the way, they are the way,” is a popular saying. In his major philosophical opus *Ananda Sutram*, Shrii Shrii Anandamurti resonates with this saying, stating pointedly: “Obstacles are the helping forces that establish one in the goal.”¹³⁵ It follows that transformation of negative energies—hindrances—into positive, constructive ones is the way, whereas hedging against such obstacles is self-defeating. Confronting and solving difficulties is self-developmental and purposeful both for oneself and others.

Let us look at the three main forces of evolution: physical clash, psychic clash, and longing for the Great.

1. Physical Clash

*Both physical clash and psychic clash accelerate psychic progress. The rat which escapes from the trap never makes the mistake of getting caught again; the fish which frees itself from the fisherman's hook never bites the bait again. Physical clash develops the crude mental mind and, as a consequence, the instinct to survive.*¹³⁶

As stated, physical clash and cohesion are the fundamental evolutionary process of primitive creatures and their minds. What is physical clash, and how does it affect psychic development? Shrii Shrii Anandamurti defines physical clash as a mutual conflict between the physical components of the body, which follow the laws of the first phase of cosmic creation, and the mind, which follows the laws of the second, introversial phase.¹³⁷ The movement of the first phase is towards the crude whereas the movement of the second phase tend towards the subtle, therefore the two clash.

Take for instance an architect under contract to draw a multipurpose building. There are thousand and one physical circumstances and conditions to take into account when working out the plans. Numerous serious problems may present themselves—environmental, material, collegial, budget, supply chain, deadlines, etc. A spectacular struggle between the architect's sentient visionary power, and the static of the material world, and the mutative of the actional world ensues. As the architect continue to come up against all sorts of challenges, his or her cognitive limits are tested. In the process, his or her mind grows and develops. This is psychic expansion by physical clashes; the friction between mental demands and physical capacity and vice versa.

Evolutionary and Revolutionary Transformations

What is the most severe form of physical clash? Environmental crisis is probably a candidate. It tests the limitations of minds and their physical bodies to the utmost, and even beyond. While discoursing on the double vowel *á* in his 26 volumes Collection of Words

(*Shabda Cayanikā*), Shrii Sarkar shared a small anecdote to this effect:

In the opinion of some scholars, there was an amphibious creature by the name of aproposthiumas who, after spending some time moving about on wet, warm land, would afterwards dive back into the cool water, lift its head above the water and make the sound á, á, á as an expression of its sense of relaxation. This was, perhaps, the first sound made by a living creature, the first á sound. Even today we say “uh”, “oh”, or “eeh” to express some hardship, but when we relax, we make the sound á.¹³⁸

Most people regularly experience some sort of environmental crisis in their everyday life, physically or mentally, in the family, at work, in society, etc. Such environmental crises occur naturally and more or less as expected. Still, such normal individual and collective life crises may be tough enough and sometimes hard to manage. At best, everybody learns from the crisis and can continue in new and better ways.

Once in a while, the cosmic operative principle arranges for quite a bit more than just familiar evolution. Revolutionary environmental changes are brought on by tremendous force. Such “galloping jumps”,^{*139} when life gets out of the usual trot and takes on the form of an epoch-making forward-lunging movement, put living beings under tremendous pressure. For instance, the sudden disappearance of all dinosaurs about 65 million years ago has made scientists wondering whether an asteroid or a comet may have crashed on Earth and killed 75% of all life. It is guessed that the 180-kilometre-wide Chicxulub impact crater beneath the Gulf of Mexico would be it. In 1989, Shrii Shrii Anandamurti suggested there may be another cause for it: climate change.¹⁴⁰ He maintained that during ice ages, animals go into hibernation, and that those who survive undergo physical changes as well as psycho-physical and bio-psychic changes.

* The term refers to situations where riders get their horse into a racing gallop in order to jump over a fence or a hedge, or over a cliff or a precipice; “onward to something else”.

“The complexity of their cells increased and their bodies gradually became smaller, and eventually their mental power also increased.” He exemplified by detailing how huge reptiles, who had come onto this planet millions of years ago, gradually became lizards, crocodiles, alligators and salamanders. Also, the mammoth evolved into an elephant; “but did not become an elephant overnight; there was an intermediary stage between the mammoth and the elephant. Thus, big animals became extinct, and in their place small animals appeared.”

In May 1986, Shrii Sarkar identified pole shifts as a main cause of major environmental changes, and mentioned that a new pole shift has just begun on Earth.¹⁴¹ Completed pole shifts are cataclysmic events that take place regularly after some hundred thousand of years. Scientists are able to trace these events by studying changes in the direction of layers of metallic tracks in rock. Shrii Sarkar’s observation is in keeping with the findings of research satellites concluding that the Earth’s magnetic poles are moving, and that the speed with which they are moving has been increasing since the mid-1980s,¹⁴² indicating that “the Earth’s magnetic field might be in the process of reversing, which could have serious consequences for land-based biological life.”¹⁴³

Shrii Sarkar noted that if the poles change their positions, the time taken by the Earth to move around itself will certainly be either lessened or increased. Correspondingly, the time taken by the Earth in moving around the sun will either increase or decrease. That is why, he ventured, at present the seasonal orders are at times not maintaining proper adjustment with the months: this shows that the shifting is taking place fast. As result of this change, not only the adjustment between the months and the seasons will be lost, but the environmental order as well as the ecological order of the Earth will be disrupted. The consequences of this disruption will be physical and biological changes in the structures of all living bodies, all living creatures, including plants. Shrii Sarkar exemplified that the plants of Tertiary Age could not be found in the Cretaceous Age. The plants and animals of the Cretaceous Age could not be found in later ages, such as the Pliocene, Miocene, Oligocene, Mesozoic and

Cenozoic Ages, because the existence of living beings depend on ecological balance.

When the magnetic structure of the Earth will change, other planets and satellites of our solar system will undergo certain remarkable metamorphosis, too. “And if the magnetic order is disrupted, then certain remarkable changes, certain remarkable metamorphoses in the electromagnetic vibrations of this Earth and also of the entire solar system, will occur. As a result of this type of change in the electromagnetic vibrations, human thought waves will certainly be affected.”

In this regard, Shrii Sarkar detailed that since human existence is physico-psycho-spiritual the emanations and perceptions of nerve cells and nerve fibres will be changed, and disrupted if the physical waves change and climatic conditions undergo a certain gigantic metamorphosis. He concluded that such change will take place in all spheres of the existence of living beings. Irrespective of the direction of the movement of human minds—progressive or regressive—their respective movement will accelerate and mutate in the direction they have taken. That is, developed humanity will be more spiritual-minded than it is at present.¹⁴⁴

In his analyses of the causes and results of climate change, Shrii Sarkar draws a unique picture of all-round evolution, taking into account every type of physical, psychic, and spiritual development, bathed in the cosmic. Organic evolution and revolution are not only something physical. They are the great physical, psychic, and psycho-spiritual march of the individual and collective both, as envisioned by the supreme cognitive principle and directed by its manifesting principle.

The Psychic Evolution of a Worm

Let us give ourselves a bit of playtime, and devote ourselves to imagining how primitive creatures evolve psychically. At the high tide of the dinosaurs and the early mammals, the earthworm in its present form was already a senior in the evolutionary race. This meandering distant relative of ours is mainly instinctive, spontaneous

to the demands made on it by its own primitive driving forces and external circumstances. It is a spineless, crawling animal with mostly mind-stuff and a bit of ego. The earthworm's measure of self-awareness is due to its being alive to its reactive driving forces, but since that ego is smaller than its mind-stuff, it has no idea of what being an earthworm is like. That is, it does not have the capacity to consider the actual form and content of itself and its life; it reflects on its surroundings but not on itself¹⁴⁵

The earthworm ego is significant in that it has begun to develop the next higher state of mind following the mind-stuff: the subjective, the sense of "I". Yet, as mind-stuff still dominates, this humble creature is subordinate to sensory and motor information of the mind-stuff and the instinctive driving forces prevailing there. "Dry, downwards" in the earthworm language may be translated into human language as: "It hasn't rained in a while around here; I had better crawl downwards before I dry up completely." The difference between the two statements or languages may not seem like much to some, but are significant. Devoid of a personal self the first, wormish statement is military-like. The second, human-like is full of self-consciousness—"I", "me", "mine".

The relatively undeveloped earthworm navigates its surroundings without sufficient mental resources to have an opinion about its circumstances or reflecting on life in general. When we examine the earthworm's brain, at the size of a pinhead and very sparsely equipped, we will readily conclude that it is a rather undeveloped animal. But a brain is after all a brain, and the earthworm brain is the beginning of our human brain. The earthworm, like any other creature, is not an insignificant being.

If an earthworm is divided in the middle (behind the short thicker part to the side of the mouth), the head part will ordinarily live on and grow a new tail, whereas the tail part will perish. This happens because the worm's sense of self is centred in the front part, in its brain, and not in the tail part. As indicated earlier, this is common to all self-aware beings: the developing cognitive self has its seat in the head. This is why humans may survive numerous bisections as long as their head is intact. Our mind, the definite centre of

ourselves, lives inside our physical brain and cannot have its centre anywhere else in our body. Once the head is gone, everything is gone.

When more primitive beings, such as plants, are cut apart, such as for further planting, all the new cut parts may go on to live as growing, blooming fully developed, healthy specimens. As long as there is no sense of individuality in any part of the plant, none of the cut parts will be stunted or die.¹⁴⁶ Both the original and the new crop continue as the same specimen. These organisms seem not to care if they are being cut into parts as long as they get to propagate and see the species live on. Such plants are self-pollinating. More developed plants with some subjectivity may require assistance from wind or insects to bring pollen from male flowers to females, usually on the same plant or in the form of separate male and female plants as in the cases of nettles and Maidens Tears.

Seeing Light

Earthworms are hermaphrodites, male and female in the same body, who may either self-fertilise or mate with each other. Let us imagine the evolutionary career of one of them. Here are the facts: The earthworm remains predominantly an instinctual being. As explained, instinctual energies may be transformed into intellectual force when going through physical clashes to arrive at fresh constructive solutions. Instinct is the force of the mind-stuff, intellect is the power of the ego, and intuition is the domain of the pure self.

Suppose one beautiful day the worm gets a glimpse of shining light, which is being stored as an imprint in its mind-stuff, thereby becoming an inherent reactive driving force: “Experience of shining light”. With that, the mind that once lived in a soil-seeking earthworm’s body would be reborn in a more evolved physical body living in or yearning for light.

The evolving ego is at first subordinate to the mind-stuff. With further growth, the ego gets on an equal footing with the mind-stuff. Thus, the further developed and reborn earthworm mind is perhaps now a snake mind, who will possibly reflect: “I am a snake who likes

quite a bit of light and warmth actually. I do not fancy very cold or wet weather, which actually robs me of my sleep.” This is a more pronounced ego than the mostly clueless objectivity of the earthworm. Creatures with this much ego relates actively to their own driving forces and thus has a degree of individuality, i.e., some expressed subjectivity of mind. In a more ego-driven being such as a snake, the subjective self contributes to the accumulation of reactive driving forces and runs them side by side with instinctive forces.¹⁴⁷ Inherent reacting driving forces (samskaras) pile up wherever ego dominates.

The Next Step

With increasing subjectivity arrives the ability to dominate one’s own and others’ driving forces. A snake may think: “I will strike you if you push me, I have poison and I will use if I must, so now I make a frightful appearance to you as I would rather avoid the whole process of filling up with poison again!” At this stage the ego has become a manager, a director of actions. Here, the mind is no more a passive receiver of fresh reactive driving forces generated by its instinctive interactions with the environment. Instead, a mind with the ego of a poisonous snake actively generates reactive driving forces itself, the unspent amount of which will be transferred to future activities. Thus, from here on not only do the circumstances direct further evolution but ego participates in it as well.

We may picture a snake who has bitten many a time, and even more often been persecuted and driven away from the habitat of its choice, as happens to many venomous snakes, to end up with the feeling: “More harmony and less poisonous atmosphere, please?” And then the snake is reborn as (to be filled in by you) perhaps a cat or a dog before it is monkey-time and then human?

The power of self-expression remains confined to the instinctive desires of self-preservation and procreation in the most underdeveloped organisms. But with the widening of the psychic horizon, this power goes on increasing and finally finds the highest expression in the form of human beings. Lower

*organisms are slaves to matter —they can make adjustments in the environment but cannot mould it. According to the degree of freedom, their existential consciousness has formed the body-feeling; their power of doership increases; and accordingly, they become competent to turn the environment to their advantage. ... Animal consciousness identifies body-consciousness with the existential consciousness, but human consciousness tries to investigate on the synthetic plane.*¹⁴⁸

2. Psychic Clash

Extreme physical clash can only mature or perfect the physical body and the crude mental mind.¹⁴⁹ For the development of higher mind, psychic clash and longing for the Great is necessary.

According to the science of mind, struggle on the intellectual plane is psychic clash.¹⁵⁰ In this type of clash, people strive exclusively to satisfy psychic longings unrelated to the physical body. They seek psychic matters such as name, fame, etc. Shrii Shrii Anandamurti opined that even this sort of psychic clash cannot lead the mind towards subtlety.¹⁵¹ Rather, it yields only crude mental expansion, first mutative and then static. On the one hand, mind-stuff is powdered down due to clash and the mind expands, but on the other hand, under the domination of mundane propensities, the mind gradually moves towards greater crudity by way of generating fresh reactive momentum (samskaras).

As revealed earlier, intellect develops when the ego outgrows the mind-stuff. The more developed the creature, the higher the self-awareness of the mind, and thus the entity connects with its own driving forces and generates and accumulates many more of them. In this way the living being becomes a co-creator of its own destiny and its individuality increases. Chapter 16 is devoted to explaining the dynamics of this self-perpetuation.

The psyche of the humans of today spans a tremendous amount of mental stuff. Through our history we have tackled an enormous number of physical and psychic adversities. In the process, our

structure and resources have grown complex and sophisticated. All this evolution has actually made us more delicate than we used to be; weaker physically and more psychologically sensitive.

As they say, development comes at a price, and that is why terms like “mental balance”, “relaxation”, and “serenity” are such catchphrases today. Intellectual beings are both sensitive and crass, curious and aloof, friendly and quarrelsome, gregarious and restrained—in short, most complicated beings. It is not easy to be with such beings or to be one!

Whenever individual and collective minds* rally their respective psychic momenta are mobilised. Their respective hopes and aspirations, pains and pleasures become interrelated and interdependent. Such mutual psychic dynamics result in a kind of psychic clash. And, Shrii Sarkar observed, even greater psychic clash occurs when people try to derive mutual benefit through rational intellectual pursuit:

Those who want to avoid the cultivation of knowledge hardly get any opportunity for psychic clash, and hence the higher layers of their minds do not get any scope for development. It is through psychic clash that the psychic field gets properly tilled, thereby increasing its fertility. All living beings evolving in the second phase of creation benefit from this psychic clash.¹⁵²

The Psychic Process

Good work invariably meets with opposition. When we make an effort and work actively for some positive development we invariably meet with opposition, disapproval and hostility, either from ours or from within ourselves. It may be that we harbour personal feelings of distrust, low self-esteem, and other self-sabotaging forces that now direct themselves against ourselves. In the struggle to overcome such

* “The average psychic momentum derived from the unit psychic momenta is the momentum of the collective psychology, whose manifestations are the new events on the pages of history.” - “Questions and Answers on Society-4”, Question 16, Prout in a Nutshell 18.

outer or inner opposition, a constructive transformation takes place provided our goal and motivation remain noble. "Positive eats up negative."

Conflicts between vibrational waves of the creation result in dense, sharp waves and vibrations being transformed into more expanded, longer, softer waves. That way, hate, disgust, and other forms of misunderstanding are transformed into constructive energies; mutual understanding, confidence, affection. The more than two thousand years old Tantric Buddhist collection of poetry Caryácarya Vinischaya says:

*When cotton is spun, its fibres become more subtle. As a result of further spinning, that is, further physical clash, its fibres become so subtle that they are almost invisible to the eye.*¹⁵³

In the expert hands of the operative force, in the second, subtilising phase of creation solid matter is metamorphosed into mind and mind into consciousness.

Bursts

In the first part, we learnt that cosmic consciousness, the Great Brahma, is transformed into cosmic mind. With further crudification the physical universe is manifested in the cosmic mind-stuff. We then learnt that the minds of living beings come into existence as a result of extreme physical processes out of solid matter, at the point of maximum crudification of the cosmic mind-stuff. At that point, if the conflicting forces in that most crude matter cannot fuse in a centre-seeking internal force to create life and mind, their stalemate results in disintegration or even explosion of the crude structure.

In February 1985 in Kolkata, Shrii Shrii Anandamurti explained that bursting or explosive releases of energy may take place not only on the physical plane, but also on the mental and even on the psycho-spiritual.¹⁵⁴ The initial transformation of cosmic consciousness into manifest conscious force and the first stage of cosmic mind is perhaps

the mother of all such bursts (*jadasphota*). As suggested earlier, the Big Bang theory is a materialistic construal of it.

In the development of the human mind there may be many instances of such momentous mental bursts, termed as *manasphota*. The ultimate transformation of individual consciousness into soul and cosmic soul is termed as *cetanasphota*, “burst or explosion of consciousness”. Manas-sphota, mental burst, and cetanasphota, burst of consciousness, are essential in the transformation of crude being into universal human being. Such bursts or explosions are due to particularly strong clashes between opposing physical, mental, and psycho-spiritual forces and may take place anywhere—within families, societies, organisations, nations, etc., throughout the world.

Naturally, bursts of mental and spiritual energy may appear more as revolutions than part of ordinary evolutionary development to the individual and the collective. Thus, they may require subsequent existential integration and proper adjustment with others, society, etc. According to the science of the mind, the principle of subjective approach through objective adjustment (see page 123) should be applied in all cases. If needed, society should provide requisite consultation. In the Ananda Marga system qualified spiritual teachers offer guidance in spiritual, personal and social matters.

The Response

Throughout evolution, simple organisms, plants, and animals advance by virtue of their instincts and by the grace of the cosmic operative principle. In spite of their meagre conceptual understanding, the minds of plants and animals evolve continually from one existence to the next. As argued in the chapter on the ego, the human story is different. We are the only species mentally equipped to decide for ourselves where we would like to go next in evolution. But do we decide, or are we just randomly driven by our “karma”. The Nobel Laureate Rabindranath Tagore (1861-1941) wrote:

I asked the Lord of my life, "Who is pulling me from behind with such irresistible force?" He told me to look back. I did, and found that my own mental reactive momenta were pulling me back.¹⁵⁵

I am tied to so many bondages. I want to get rid of them; When I try to do so, those bondages affect me. When I approach You with the prayer of liberation from those bondages, I feel extremely ashamed.¹⁵⁶

"Prisoner, tell me, who was it that bound you?"

"It was my master," said the prisoner. "I thought I could outdo everybody in the world in wealth and power, and I amassed in my own treasure-house the money due to my king. When sleep overcame me, I lay upon the bed that was for my lord, and on waking up I found I was a prisoner in my own treasure-house."

"Prisoner, tell me, who was it that wrought this unbreakable chain?"

"It was I," said the prisoner, "who forged this chain very carefully. I thought my invincible power would hold the world captive leaving me in a freedom undisturbed. Thus, night and day I worked at the chain with huge fires and cruel hard strokes. When at last the work was done and the links were complete and unbreakable, I found that it held me in its grip."¹⁵⁷

Running only after the physical is fundamentally disturbing to the human mind. Deep inside we have come to know that we are something more than just physical, limited beings. Our mind will definitely continue to react if we do not respond properly to this profound awareness of ours. As long as the greater, subtler reality remains suppressed in us, we continue to suffer life crises individually and collectively. This developed mind of ours is not only more conscious than plants and animals but also much more complex and far-reaching than the mind of any other species. If this human mental and physical complexity is not properly managed and directed it may end up confused and in disturbed conflicts with itself and its environment.

3. Longing for the Great

It is the ego in us that let us know that we have a physical body and environment at our disposal. The intuition in us allows us to deal with that ego. That is, the ego is the substantiating factor of our physical life, while intuition substantiates the ego. The subtlest substantiating factor is the soul.

Our omniscient, ever-present soul is what substantiates our intuition. The individual soul is the reflection of the Supreme Soul. It knows the ins and outs of our entire life journey—past, present and future—in the same way as the Supreme Soul knows the entire journey of the cosmos and all its inhabitants from timelessness to timelessness.

Highly developed beings, with growing intuition, are brought forward by a longing for the Great. Such longing does not provide propulsion, or pushing, like the physical and psychic reactive forces. Instead, it pulls. Our longing for the Great is our response to the grandeur of the Supreme and our deep wish to evolve our potentialities for higher development. This particular longing takes the form of intuitional or spiritual effort in response to the call of the Divine.¹⁵⁸

Physical and psychic clash and cohesion continue side by side with our particular psycho-spiritual efforts to achieve the Great. The more living beings evolve spiritually, the more physical and psychic clashes are being transformed into longing for the Great, that is, into living spirituality.

These three: physical and psychic clash and cohesion, and longing for the Great, are the three fundamental forces of evolution according to the science of mind.

*Each and every living being has got the longing for the Great. Each and every human being wants to do something noble, something lasting. But the life of each and every person is not crowned with success, because the thing that a person requires most is proper guidance.*¹⁵⁹

Conscious Evolution

As we know by now, everything is of, by, and for consciousness. Sound and wind move and express in various ways because the consciousness in them expresses itself like that.

Crude matter, like stones and metals, are made up of consciousness, too. They are resplendent with cosmic refulgence and are not static; the atoms in them brim with life! It is only because they exist without expressing vital energy and a mind of their own that we term them as inanimate. They have neither a brain, a nervous system nor organs. As they do not move about on their own or show obvious signs of sentient life, some categorise them as “dead matter” but it is not a correct term. The elementary beings of the creation—space, air, planets, mountains, sand, plains, rivers, oceans, etc.—have never died. They were created before us out of cosmic consciousness and are still around awaiting their further development, as explained in the book’s initial chapters.

Dead bodies putrefy and decompose quickly, while any inanimate entity or creature is on course to animated evolution and awaits its birth as a living being. If a person would like to call inanimate objects dead because they do not walk or talk, it would be quite an insult to his or her own intellect. The inanimate express themselves mechanically in response to changes in the environment and their circumstances. When the temperature rises, the space between their molecules increases, and when the temperature goes down that inter-molecular space diminishes.* Not much of a performance perhaps in comparison to animate beings, but it is a start.

Inferences are emanating from the inanimate so that we may sense them. Their emanations, or inferences, are of five kinds: sound, touch, form, taste and smell. “These inferences are actually the expressions of material objects,” Shrii Shrii Anandamurti expounded. The inferences—minute physical vibrations emanating

* This is the general rule, to which there are exceptions, such as water cooling below 4°C and ultimately freezing into ice, resulting in crystallisation which takes up more space.

from physical things—come in contact with the mind through the five sensory organs. “The mind establishes its link with external objects through the inferences.”¹⁶⁰

This is how the consciousness of inanimate things are in constant physical communication with us. In addition to such physical communication, we may communicate psychically and spiritually with any being of the cosmos as per our ability. As explored, many underdeveloped living beings have not developed ego, while others lack only intuition. In order to communicate properly with them, we would need to go via the cosmic doer-I and knower-I, respectively. This is the reason why researchers and scientists should make efforts in their inner laboratory as well and not only work in physical laboratories. For instance, in order to study microvita closely, we would need to develop the supramental and subliminal layers of our mind (see page 108 onwards) to become capable of surveying and exploring the creative and evolutionary realities of those cosmic planes or worlds. This kind of deeper research is also part of our longing for the Great.

Cellular Mind

Animated beings evolve in the second, introversial phase of creation. They have their own mind, a unit mind. Even single-celled organisms have a mind. If they did not, they could not experience and learn anything. The animated part of evolution would not have been in motion then.

The human body is made up of cells, so how many minds are there in a human body? Researchers at the University of Bologna in Italy have established that a human body contains 370 billion living cells,¹⁶¹ each one with a mind. Calculating that a hand makes up one per cent of the body, we may assume that only a single hand contains more than 3 billion cells divided among the fingers, palm, etc. All the unit minds of a finger joint together form a finger joint mind, the joint minds along with the nail mind¹⁶² and all other constituent minds of the finger form the finger mind, the various part minds of the entire hand form the hand mind, etc. The total body mind

includes all the various minds of all limbs, organs, etc. down to each of the 370 billion cell minds. This collective body mind constitutes our physical existential layer, termed as “the food layer”, *annamaya kosa* in Sanskrit as it is made of and nourished by food (*anna* means food). In most primitive beings the food layer, their physical body, dominates their mentality. Their crude mental mind subordinate to their physical body is everything to them. In developed human beings, the physical body and the physically oriented layer of the mind is subordinate to more subtle mind, as unveiled in the chapter on the five layers of the mind.

While on the subject of food, it is reckoned that the number of microbes in our intestines are ten times that of our body cells.¹⁶³ They are also living beings each with their own mind ... altogether just over 4000 billion tiny and bigger minds in each of us then.

Human Extraordinary Capabilities

In the chapter on ego, we considered evolutionary progress versus regress. As animals and plants are more instinctive and less intellectually evolved, they do not possess subtler subjective, psychic capabilities and powers. The endoplasmic membrane of their mind-stuff has yet to expand sufficiently to be able to refract and reflect higher consciousness properly. They possess plenty of body consciousness and crude mental consciousness, but lack in purely mental and subtler realisations and insights. The instincts of an animal may tell it to take care of its offspring at one point, at another point not. Whatever it does it will still move on in the evolution, carrying its accumulating reactive driving forces with it by the force and grace of the cosmic operative principle and not largely by its own admission like we human beings do.

If a human being neglects his or her natural responsibilities it will affect his or her evolutionary dynamics significantly. Here, the difference between human beings and lesser developed beings lies in the mass of consciousness. A human mind refracts and reflects cardinal human values such as compassion and conscience. By disregarding the dharma of those values, a human being sets itself up

for evolutionary regress by force of the adverse reactive driving forces (samskaras, “karma”) generated by such unnatural behaviour. This would not happen to a lesser developed being, such as an earthworm, and only to a lesser degree to a snake or say a monkey, because their mind does not relate properly to higher values. They have no idea that such values exist. Cardinal human values are divine vibrations of the cosmos refracted and reflected in human existence. According to Shrii Sarkar, the cardinal human values are the silver lining between the psycho-spiritual world and the spiritual world.¹⁶⁴ “They are at the meeting-point of these two strata—the spiritual stratum on one side and the psycho-spiritual stratum on the other.”

Because of our enhanced, value-oriented human process the operative principle has entrusted some of its routines and resources to us. These days we are about to learn how to take care of our planet together. In future we may get more and higher responsibilities for running this cosmic world of seven spheres and wonders. The cosmic mind wants us to be self-reliant and sufficiently mature to approach the state of pure consciousness on our own terms. Already, we are no more “little babies in diapers” always to be cuddled by the operative principle and helped all along. By now we should have learnt to walk purposefully by ourselves and not be carried all the time. The inner intention is that we should conceive of the grace of the Supreme in everything that happens to us. It is by only by devoting ourselves entirely to the Supreme that we may be able to serve all of the creation properly.

Human life is in fact payback time. We have to work out our inherent reactive driving forces accumulated over all those previous animal and even more primitive existences of ours. As previously exemplified, those reactive driving forces are like crude natural energy reserves, waiting to be detected, refined and employed for worthy purposes. For instance, as a consequence of some such energies we may decide to take responsibility for our life or not; we may avail ourselves of constructive opportunities that life has in store for us or not. On the basis of such decisions our evolutionary course will work itself out.

The long and short of it is that crude driving forces can be dealt with constructively only in subtle ways. If dealt with crudely they will crudify us further. Therefore, human beings should act according to their conscience and never ignore their inner resources. We should always heed helpful propensities such as conscience, proper effort, and intuition, and never ignore them, not even once.

In human society there are many people whose mentality is somewhere between that of forest primates and that of humans. Some have just evolved from animal life to that point, in the process of introversial evolution; while others have reverted to that point from a more developed human level, due to their mean thoughts. If they continue to allow mean thoughts to dominate their minds, they will degenerate to the even cruder stage of inert matter, becoming bricks, stone or wood. Just as animals have no scope to elevate their thoughts or practise spirituality, similarly human beings who make their minds animal-like through animalistic thinking are unable to pursue spiritual practices. Even after receiving spiritual initiation or receiving an education, they behave like ignorant fools. But those who are by mentality undeveloped human beings, but not animals, will if they receive initiation carry on spiritual practices, and will if they receive education behave like intelligent people.¹⁶⁵

The Cosmic and the Microcosmic

Earlier, we read that there are similarities between the cosmic mind and our human mind, such as their basic structure consisting of mind-stuff, doer-I (ego), and knower-I (intuitive self) formed due to the influences of the three tendencies of the operative principle. There are, however, also fundamental differences between the cosmic and the unit mind.¹⁶⁶ First, the cosmic mind is infinite and all the time creates something new in its imaginary world. The unit mind is limited and never creates anything original. The unit mind creates physical mixtures and chemical compounds¹⁶⁷ of what is

already at its disposal by grace of the cosmic mind, but the unit never creates anything original. We may use microvita, but are unable to create it.

Second, the cosmic mind is eternal, while we live in and relate to relative time. Third, the cosmic mind does everything simultaneously with a single purpose: to bring the creation via maximum diversity back to its fundamental unity. The unit mind can only do one thing at the time, but still wants to do so many things.

Shrii Shrii Anandamurti gracefully concluded that the microcosm is multi-purposive in motive but unilateral in action, whereas the macrocosm is uni-purposive in motive but multilateral in function.¹⁶⁸ A human being may think it is doing several things simultaneously but in reality, things are done one at a time although sometimes at such a speed that it may seem to be manifold and not a single flow of action. Fourth, because everything is internal to it the cosmic mind operates without a brain and nervous system. The unit mind requires a brain and a nervous system serving the sensory and motor organs of a body, as all of physical existence is external to it.

Non-dualism and Dualism

We are not original creators but created beings. What we do on our part is to combine and blend stuff that is already in the creation. Everything has been prepared for us. Our job is to adjust as best as we can with the creation, help in evolving it further, and realise its essence, its inherent spirit. All of our actions are relative to something else of the creation: time, place, and person, who, like us, change incessantly. Thus, we find ourselves in a *single-dual-single* existence:

- 1: In the first phase, the cosmos is one.
- 2: As soon as created beings come about, everything becomes two: “me” versus “the rest.”
- 1: In the end, when human consciousness merges with cosmic consciousness, everything becomes one again.

This spiritual teaching concerning our existence may be termed as “1-2-1 philosophy”, *Advaetaadvaetádvaetaváda* in Sanskrit (pronounced: advaita-dvaita-advaita-vada).¹⁶⁹ If you have half a minute, you may learn a bit of Sanskrit here. In Sanskrit, “two” is called *dvi* and “duality” *dvaeta*. An *a* before a word in Sanskrit acts as a negation; *advaeta* means “not dual”, “unitary”, “one”. The “vada” at the end of the long word means “teaching”, “doctrine”. If you now wonder if there are other terms for “one” as well, there are a few,* but not in this particular existential context. The Supreme One we talk about here is indescribable and therefore best expressed by stating what it is not.

Everything Came First

Was the material universe first completed after which living beings came into being? Or do they run in parallel with each other—does everything happen at once? The answer is both yes and no. The fundamentals of life, inward resultant force and a balanced environment, must exist in order for life to arise. The stage for it is set in the first phase of creation. Yet, that first phase of the creation, the making of the inanimate universe, continues indefinitely as we learnt in the first part of the book. Thus, two distinct cosmic phases—one extroversial and crudifying, the other introversial and elevating—each run their characteristic course side by side. When we see a stone eroding while at the same time green algae or moss grow on it, we witness both phases at play. The first, inanimate one is moving away from the cosmic nucleus; the other, animated, is returning back to the same nucleus.

* Some words for “one” in Sanskrit are *eka* (“one”), *ayoga* (“unitary”, “not joined”), *kevala* (“single”, “only”, “one”), and *samana* (“uniform”, “one”).

The Return

The cosmic ocean of consciousness proceeds from unmanifest to manifest and back to unmanifest. Thus, the cosmos goes full circle, and the starting and end point of its creation is one and the same.

In simple words, what we have to do is to return home from where we came. We have all come from the Supreme Entity, and from the nucleus of the universe. We have to return to the same place. It is like a child who has played throughout the day away in the fields, and now that evening comes, returns home. Spiritual practice is the process of returning home. The child has played outside for the whole day. As evening approaches, it may think: "Father must have returned home. Let me also return home and sit next to him." When one is tired of this world and worldliness, one yearns to go back to spirituality, that is, to one's home.¹⁷⁰

The ancient scripture Svetasvatara Upanishad describes this cosmic process as a great wheel:

All unit entities, all unit structures, revolve around the nucleus consciousness in the cosmic cycle of creation. This rotation of theirs will continue as long as they think that they are separate from their creator. When they become one with the nucleus, they will attain immortality.¹⁷¹

The Cosmic Evolutionary Schedule

- Pure cosmic consciousness awakens to the idea of manifesting itself.
- Cosmic mind emerges as cosmic consciousness develops a sense of cosmic existence: "I exist," I am Cosmos".
- Through further crudification cosmic doer-I (ego) and done-I (mind-stuff) emerges.
- The physical universe evolves in the cosmic mind-stuff.
- Life is born when intense pressure and friction in matter in a balanced environment generate vital energy and unit mind.

- Microcosmic mind evolves when ectoplasmic particles form structures in unit beings.
- Ego evolves out of mind-stuff when the mutative tendency begins to dominate the living being. An endoplasmic coverage is formed around the mind-stuff giving the manifold mind-stuff a unified experience in the form of ego.
- When ego grows beyond mind-stuff, intellect evolves.
- In more subtly developed beings a pure, intuitive self evolves out of the ego.
- When pure, intuitive self grows beyond the ego the surplus portion is called intuition.
- With further psychic dilution, the extended enveloping endoplasmic coverage bursts so that the microcosmic self merges in cosmic self.
- When the microcosm merges in the Macrocosmos it is called conditional cosmic state or attributional fulfilment.
- When the soul of the unit mind merges in the Supreme Soul, pure consciousness, it is called unconditional state or non-attributional, meta-cosmic fulfilment.
- The state of microcosmic liberation in Macrocosmos is beyond the unit mind and can only be confirmed by the long-lasting bliss that follows this state of meta-existential inexpression.¹⁷²

As the first phase of the cosmic creation proceeds away from the pure state of the unmanifest towards increasingly cruder manifest states, it is termed “outward movement”, *saincara* in Sanskrit. The longer this process goes, the farther away from the original state of pure consciousness are those created material objects of the non-living world. The second phase begins in physical matter. There, vital energy and mind come into being to evolve in increasing consciousness, and in the end returns back to the source of all. This subtilising phase is an inward movement, *pratisaincara*; moving from the outer crude to the innermost core of cognition. The same consciousness that was being transformed from subtle to crude in the first phase is transformed from crude to subtle in the second phase.

Part 3: *Mind Dynamics*



8

The Layers of the Mind

As detailed in the first chapter, the cosmic creation is distributed into seven planes from the crudest to the subtlest. Only the physical plane has geographical positions, atmospheric pressure and other material phenomena. The remaining six planes are potentially everywhere and manifest according to the state of the living being. In fact, all living beings are carving out an existence for themselves somewhere in the physical, psychic and spiritual cosmos according to their inherent reactive driving forces.¹⁷³ That is, we may enter any cosmic plane via any living being irrespective of the person's background, tradition, education, gender, etc.

The way the mind works through sensory and motor organs has been explained. In this chapter we shall see how our existential state, crude or subtle, and with it the nature—depth or shallowness—of our relationship with the Cosmos, depends on how the layers of our existence play out.

The Cosmic Umbilical Cord

In the introversial phase of creation, the living beings explore and enjoy the cosmos via their existential layers. The five layers of the human mind work like mirrors in which cosmic reality is reflected

according to the state or nature of the individual mind. Whatever human beings detect and understand in life depend on the development of their mental layers. The physical body and the five mental layers develop as we advance on the path of evolution.

The five mental layers of the microcosmic mind and their physical vehicle (our body) with their corresponding cosmic planes may be tabled as follows (referring to the list on page 26):

Cosmic Plane	Corresponding Layer of Human Existence
Physical plane (<i>Bhurloka</i>)	Physical body (<i>Annamaya kośa</i>)
Crude mental plane (<i>Bhuvārloka</i>)	Crude mental mind (<i>Kāmaṁmaya kośa</i>)
Purely mental plane (<i>Svarloka</i>)	Purely mental mind (<i>Manomaya kośa</i>)
Supramental plane (<i>Mahārloka</i>)	Supramental mind (<i>Ātīmānasa kośa</i>)
Sublime plane (<i>Janārloka</i>)	Subliminal mind (<i>Vijñānamaya kośa</i>)
Subtle causal plane (<i>Tapārloka</i>)	Subtle causal mind (<i>Hiraṇmaya kośa</i>)
Pure cosmic plane (<i>Turiya</i>)	-None-

As the human mind continues to evolve, its layers are realised as increasingly subtler and greater realities. It is as if a river runs from each of the macrocosmic planes of existence to its corresponding layer of the human mind. The greater the development of a layer, the greater the flow from its corresponding cosmic plane.

The five layers of our mind-stuff are experienced by our ego and pure self, the mind's subjective faculties. Ego and pure self are mental refractions of our soul, which itself is a reflection of Cosmic Soul. The more we evolve subjectively the more intuitional and soulful we become. In the end there is only subjectivity and the supreme merger of the unit soul with the Supreme Soul takes place. This is what is called yoga,¹⁷⁴ the ultimate union. At that final stage there is no microcosmic layer, only the Supreme Macrocosmic Reality, the seventh cosmic plane beyond relativity, *Turiya* in Sanskrit.

The Means of Expansion of Mind

The evolution and development of the layers of our mind follows the same natural principle as elsewhere in animate existence: something subtle evolves out of something crude. The concepts of clash and cohesion, and longing for the Great have already been explained. The crude and purely mental minds both evolve by physical clashes in the lives of primitive beings. The remaining three increasingly subtle layers evolve through psychic clash and longing for the Great.

Both the microcosmic layers (*kosas*) and the macrocosmic worlds (*lokas*) are explained in detail in the Taittiriya Upanishad¹⁷⁵ and elsewhere. Those teachings are the result of practice. The reality of the five layers of mind is central to the science of mind. They show the way for active mental and spiritual development. The practical means for the development of our existential layers are described in the chapter on spiritual practices.

The Crude Mental Mind

The crudest layer of the mind, the physical, desirous mind (*kamamaya kosa*) controls the actions of the body and is limited to such actions. Eating, resting and procreating are among its functions. This sensual and motorial mind is the most limited of the mind's five layers. It is termed as conscious mind as we experience our sensory and motor activities in this layer.

The Extrovert

The crude, conscious mind is a big thief of awareness. When we attempt to turn off the senses, i.e., when we close our eyes to enter into meditation or contemplation, we begin to realise how small a capacity we have for being only conscious. The psychic cause of this difficulty is our habit of continually sensing and acting. The original cause of this psychic tendency is our accumulated unresolved driving forces (samskaras), which express in this layer of the mind.

As we shall learn in the chapter on states of being, the sense of sight occupies more than 80 per cent of our attention in the ordinary waking state. Therefore, just closing the eyes may pose a great challenge to our mental peace if the body does not go into sleep instantaneously. Thus, it may take some time before a novice meditator gets used to working efficiently in the inner world.

When not less than $\frac{4}{5}$ of our attention is spent in seeing, and this ability is closed down by shutting the eyes, the remaining four senses will then receive much more attention, and be correspondingly energised. This is the reason why novice meditators are easily disturbed by sound, smells, etc. in the outer environment. With their eyes closed they notice such phenomena more acutely than normally. The chapter on spiritual practices looks at how mind withdrawal may be executed in simple, efficient ways.

The Subtle Mental Layer

The mind of unicellular organisms is crude mental mind, as described above. Their primitive mental level, oriented towards the physical world in survival and procreation, is the basic, instinctual mind of all living beings. How do higher mental layers evolve out of such crude mental mind? Let us look at it one stage after the other.

The Subconscious

Physical clashes take the form of mutual conflicts between the physical body (which follows the laws of the first, extroversial phase

of the creation) and the mind (which follows the laws of the second, introversial phase). Such physical clashes form the next, subtler mental layer out of the stuff of the crude mental mind.

Some animals, dominated by the crude mental mind, find pleasure in snatching away morsels of food from others' mouths, and in depriving others of their right to live. As Shrii Shrii Anandamurti observed, "they look upon this world with a narrow body-centred outlook".¹⁷⁶ In human beings, contradictions, frictions and clashes between the fundamental movement of the body (towards crude) and that of the mind (moving towards subtle) result in the evolution of the purely mental mind (*manomaya kosa*). This subtler layer is created out of the crude mental mind and comes to control the latter.

While the crude mental mind is always extroverted in its outlook, the purely mental mind strives to comprehend previous and fresh experience. This feeling, thinking, recollecting mind is where pleasures and sorrows, comforts and sufferings are experienced. It is here that the mind's accumulated reactive driving forces are being experienced or realised clearly and distinctly. In this subconscious mind we remember and reflect on the activities of the conscious crude mental mind.

Why is this purely mental layer termed as subconscious and the sensory layer as conscious? Sensorial and motor activities are connected to the outer world. The desirous, crude mental mind experiences smells and tastes of what one eats, the softness or hardness of physical touch, bodily pleasures and pains, etc. It is all concrete, physical experience. On the other hand, when we think and remember, our awareness is partly oriented towards something outer and partly towards something inner. In this part of our mind, we are constantly searching for something that may connect the outer world with the inner, such as when we compare some sensory perception to previously stored memories. The psychic part of these processes takes place in the subconscious purely mental mind, which works as an interface between our past and present, between conscious and unconscious.

Take the case of a child learning to ride a bicycle. The child needs to concentrate on its sensory information and motor activities in

order to acquire this skill. Such a challenging activity is certainly experienced as “here-and-now”—it is important both not to fall off and hurt oneself as well as getting ahead! But however much the child may be concentrating on what is going at the moment, learning how to cycle is a subconscious process where one makes good use of skills previously acquired: physical coordination, balancing, sense of direction, cooperation with the person who helps out, etc.—without giving any of that a single thought.

It all happens subconsciously. As soon as the cycling is mastered, the child does not need to concentrate consciously on those newly acquired sensory and motor skills either. Rather, people use their vehicles freely according to their needs and desires without needing to pay much attention to basic motor skills, etc. Later, perhaps after many years of not cycling, getting back on the bike again goes automatically without one having to think for a moment about the technical aspect of riding it. Such skills remain within us, embedded in the subconscious, and therefore we do not have to think about them. This is the case with all kinds of vocations—practising artists, musicians, cooks, craftspersons, etc. Drawing from all that one has experienced and learnt, one uses, more or less subconsciously, that which seems appropriate at the moment. All of this takes place in the purely mental subconscious mind, and the more this part of our mind is able to draw from still subtler unconscious mind, the more powerful and comprehensive our expression.

Vital Energy Control

The purely mental mind, the seat of human intellectual existence, is neither spiritual nor materialistic. It is situated in between the physical world and the intuitional. Its evolution is the result of numerous physical clashes and cohesions, and the mutative is its dominating tendency.

In the same way as the sensual mind is dominated by the mind-stuff, the purely mental mind is dominated by ego. Its further development results in ego transforming into intuition, which may at first be of a worldly nature and later increasingly intuitional and

spiritual. It is in this part of the mind that we reflect, contemplate, and meditate. We therefore have a chronic need for stabilising our purely mental mind and evolve it further. Regulating and directing one's vital energy is the fundamental method of the classical eightfold system of yoga for further development and refinement of this layer of the mind, as elaborated in the chapter on spiritual practice. By a correct method of vital energy control, the mental mind is calmed so that one may evolve subtler mind out of it.

The Supramental Layer

Whereas the crude mental and purely mental minds are given to physical and mental activities, respectively, the three subtler layers are the cradle of our intuitional powers. Intuition is of the psycho-spiritual domain. It is the fruit of the synthesis of the pure self and not of the analysis of the ego. "Synthesis of the pure self" means finding oneself reflected in all areas of existence; not only treating things as objects different from each other but realising them as expressions of one and the same consciousness. Such realisation is a pervasive existential process and not an intellectual matter.

The first of the three subtler mental layers is the supramental layer (*atimanas kosa*). It is the home of creativity and imagination, ethics and higher philosophy—the domain of artists, aesthetes, and profound thinkers.

In this first unconscious layer, seeds of the mind's inherent reactive driving forces (*samskaras*) germinate before they get to bloom in the purely mental mind and express externally via the crude mental mind. It may take the form of an intuitional hunch, of sorts. Shri Sarkar gives the example of a person desirous of visiting a particular place.¹⁷⁷ As he or she prepares for the journey a thought arises in the mind that one may be infected by such and such disease there. Still, the person proceeds to the place and gets infected. The inherent reactive driving force of this person made itself known in the supramental intuitive mind but was ignored by the purely mental intellectual mind, perhaps due to other driving forces already at play.

The first longing for spiritual practice as well as strong inclinations to do new things in general make themselves felt in this layer of the mind. It is here that the inspiration from the soul first makes itself known. And it is here experienced teachers determine the starting point of various aspirants, which has all to do with the perception of inherent driving forces incubating in this layer.

Earlier, we considered the concept of will-power. According to the science of mind, will-power depends on the strength of nerve-cells¹⁷⁸ and the development of the various layers of the mind. As elucidated later in the chapter, a subtler layer of the mind may be brought to dominate a cruder layer. That is, as a consequence of developing the layers of one's mind, the potential of both one's own will-power and influence over others are enhanced.

The supramental mind is the storehouse of all the knowledge a person has—past, present and future.¹⁷⁹ Dreams of real portent originate in this layer. As already indicated, a practitioner with a developed supramental mind will be able to intuit: “If I get into this or that such and such may happen.” Occasionally, an inner voice may advise, warn, inspire, and guide.

Withdrawal of awareness from the outer world, and from the physical body towards the inner psychic world, directed towards the supreme goal is the fundamental method of spiritual yoga. It refines, strengthens and develops this supramental unconscious layer of mind.

Why are the three most subtle layers—the supramental, the sublime and the subtle causal—termed as unconscious? Because they are inaccessible as long as one's consciousness is engulfed by the two cruder layers. Physical and intellectual life have no spirituality of their own but may thrive in spiritual life. That is, we should practise spirituality so that everyday life may become more meaningful and fruitful. By strengthening the subtler layers, even our mundane expressions will shine with intuitional luminosity and spiritual effulgence.

The Subliminal Layer

The particularly insightful layer of the mind (*vijñanamaya kosa*) is the second intuitive, unconscious layer, developing from the supramental. It is here the reactive driving forces of the mind are stored, near the nucleus of our individual existence. True knowledge, wisdom and renunciation dominate in this sublime mental sphere, the seat of the pure I-feeling.¹⁸⁰

Regarding renunciation, Shrii Sarkar proclaims that it does not have to do with giving up everything of mundane life and retreating into seclusion. The science of mind states that everything created is characterised by colour, to which we are attracted. When the mind becomes strong enough not to be affected by any colour, it is called “renunciation”. The Sanskrit term for it is *vaeragya*, “going beyond colour” or “to be uncoloured”.¹⁸¹ Shrii Sarkar compared this state of being with certain fishes “who live in the muddy depths of ponds and yet never get smeared with mud”.¹⁸² The corresponding psychic attitude is called renunciation. The nature of such a psychic feeling is the realisation that the objects who have so far influenced you, are not at all permanent. Here today, gone tomorrow. The essential realisation is that if they are allowed to influence one’s mind today, one will feel acute pain when they disappear in future. “So, in no stage of my life should I allow the colours of those objects to influence my mind.”

*Without its object, the mind cannot maintain its existence. Those who do not do good deeds will surely do some misdeeds. This is the general rule. So, those who don’t allow material objects to colour their minds will have to associate with something non-material. This non-material entity is Supreme Consciousness, who was in the past, who is in the present, and who will remain in the future.*¹⁸³

This second unconscious layer of the mind is where we can access spiritually-oriented knowledge, subtle aesthetics, mystic enchantment, existential discrimination and unboundedness. It is a subtler, sublime intuition. We may say that whereas the supramental

layer is informatively intuitive, often comprising the mundane, the layer of particular insight is inspirationally intuitive and oriented towards the sublime and causal. In it there are deep truths about the great secrets of existence and soulful will.

Dharana—focusing on psycho-spiritual plexi (cakras)—constitute the fundamental method of the eightfold system of yoga for developing and refining the sublime unconscious layer.

The Subtle Causal Layer

There are great spiritual masters who, in addition to conveying their messages by talking and other actions, emit tremendous spirit and elevate their surroundings just by their presence. To be present with such a master is termed as “seeing”, *darshan* in Sanskrit. A person of this calibre is established in the subtle causal layer of the mind.

This is the final stage of individual existence, pure individual being, where the will and psychology of the soul, the subtlest expression of mind, are reflected in individuals. It is called the golden layer, *hiraṇmaya kośa* in Sanskrit. This most subtle layer of the mind is not gilded, but golden, in the same way as the dawn genuinely reddens as the sun is about to rise. The essence of this layer is the ultimate expression of intuition, pure being. The ancient Isa and Mundaka upanishads state the following:

*By a golden vessel is the face of Truth covered. Do Thou, O Lord, uncover it for him who is devoted to Truth, for sight.*¹⁸⁴

*The stainless indivisible Brahman, the pure, the light of all lights is in the innermost sheath of golden hue. That is what the knowers of the Soul know.*¹⁸⁵

Shrii Shrii Anandamurti clarified that establishment in this subtlest layer is attributional liberation (Savikalpa Samadhi).¹⁸⁶ On this plane, if the whole of the I-feeling is merged in consciousness, the practitioner attains total identification with unqualified or objectless consciousness (Nirguna Brahma).¹⁸⁷ Pure, devoted psycho-spiritual meditation (*dhyan*) is the method of the eightfold

system of yoga for developing and refining this subtle causal unconscious layer.

All Are Equally Entitled

How much of human existence is impacted by differences in gender? Regarding such differences, Shrii Shrii Anandamurti noted that many scriptures states clearly that women are not entitled to get salvation. He declared:

I support no distinction between males and females. Our common sense says that among all the layers of human existence, that is, the physical body, the crude mental and the other layers of the mind, the difference between male and female lies in the lower two layers: the physical body and the crude mental mind; the layers which are closely associated with the body. In all other remaining layers, the sex-difference does not arise. And all the subtler tastes, all other subtler experiments and experiences of human existence are in the higher layers and not in the two lower.¹⁸⁸

There is no difference between the pineal and pituitary glands of males and females, but there may be differences in the other glands. This is why those who say that women are not entitled to spiritual salvation are wrong. Men and women are equally entitled to spiritual salvation.¹⁸⁹

Death and the Mind

When death occurs, the mind leaves the body in stages. Shrii Shrii Anandamurti explained that with the death of the physical body the brain stops functioning and thus mind also stops functioning as it no longer has a functional physical base.¹⁹⁰ This inactive mind, called “mind in its seed form” then leaves the body in stages:

1st stage: When the five vital airs (see table page 259) become deranged the physical body ceases to function. Its accumulated

unexpressed reactive driving forces take shelter in the crude mental mind, and the lifeless body decomposes.

2nd stage: The cessation of brain functioning first affects the crude mental mind. The inactive crude mental mind along with its unexpressed reactive driving forces then take shelter in the purely mental mind.

3rd stage: The inactive purely mental mind along with its unexpressed reactive driving forces and those of the crude mental mind take shelter in the supramental mind.

4th stage: The inactive supramental mind along with its accumulated unexpressed reactive driving forces then take shelter in the subliminal mind.

5th stage: The inactive subliminal mind along with its accumulated unexpressed reactive driving forces and the inactive ego take shelter in the subtle causal mind.

6th stage: The inactive subtle causal mind along with the inactive ego and intuition and the unexpressed reactive driving forces leave the body. These reactive driving forces in the inactive or dormant mind become the object of the bodiless soul.

Spiritual Meditation and the Mental Layers

Various parts of spiritual practice with regards to developing each mental layer are detailed in a separate chapter, and are tabled below. A first step, for those who want to achieve realisation, is to harmonise one's physical activities and routines with the mind's need for introversion. For instance, one may choose to eat and work at times that enables the adjustment of regular meditation to those activities. By disciplining activities in this way, the crude mental mind turns out to be not a hindrance but an active team player to the purely mental mind. Together those two cruder layers may work constructively towards exploring and realising their inner being, and not only ramble randomly around in the external world.

The purely mental, subconscious layer is the key to productive inner activity. The crude mental layer is not fit for contemplation as

it is always busy with crude matter. And when the mind leaves the subconscious for the unconscious, it gets absorbed by any of those higher layers in one form of absorption (*samadhi*) or the other, or it falls asleep. The subconscious layer is the link between the crude conscious on one side and the supramental, sublime and subtle causal on the other. By actively using this tool we achieve progress. In one of the primary ancient scriptures, the Katha Upanishad, we learn:

*Wise persons first merge their sense organs into their mind-stuff, then their mind-stuff into ego, then ego into intuition, then intuition into their soul, and finally their soul into supreme consciousness.*¹⁹¹

The physico-psycho-spiritual process of such merger is explored on page 238. Spiritual practice is about establishing unity in all of the mind-stuff and merging that collected objectivity with pure subjectivity. It is a method of enlargement of mind by a process of dilution, or transformation, so that the outer endoplasmic membrane continues to grow and expand until it bursts so that the individual I merges into the cosmic. The techniques and disciplines of spiritual meditation therefore have to do with refining that which obviously is crude into something more subtle. In practice, it is an effort to stabilise the mind-stuff. Progress here means to gradually cleanse every layer of its impurities.

When the crude mental mind is stabilised, the mind-stuff will follow the dictates of the purely mental mind and will not be swayed by the lower, sensual propensities. This is “the merger of mind-stuff with ego”. When the purely mental mind becomes tranquil, the mind-stuff will be free from the influence of crude mental mind. It will then merge its own entity in the supramental mind, which is “the merger of ego with intuition”. In other words, the mind will exhaust its remaining unexpressed reactive driving forces.

In order to keep emptying the mind of reactive driving forces—without forming new ones—the mind must continue the process of yogic mental purification through mental withdrawal. By such continual spiritual practice, one gradually establishes harmony and equilibrium in all the layers one after another. The moment the

subtle causal mind is free of the least hint of impurity, the unification between soul and the Supreme Soul takes place.¹⁹²

The layers of the mind-stuff are connected with the physical body through the plexi (cakras). The crude mental mind is closely related to and in general connected with the vital energy (*prana*) that controls the lowermost plexus (*muladhara cakra*). Likewise, the four remaining layers control the further four plexi up to and including vishuddha cakra, as charted on the next page.

According to the science of mind, a cakra, or plexus, is a collection of glands and sub-glands.¹⁹³ In humans, the cakras are situated at the intersecting points of the ida, susumna and piungala psycho-spiritual channels (see page 260).

Thoughts are constantly emerging and dissolving in the mind. They are caused by propensities (*vrittis*) which are first and foremost related to the inborn mental reactive momenta (*samskaras*) of human beings. Propensities are formed according to one's inherent samskaras, and the expression and control of these propensities are dependent upon the various cakras.

The fifty main propensities (see footnote on page 152) of the human mind are expressed internally or externally through the vibrational expression of the cakras. These vibrations cause hormones to be secreted from the glands, and the natural or unnatural expression of the propensities depends on the degree of normal or abnormal secretion of the hormones.¹⁹⁴ By certain spiritual practices one may purify and strengthen the cakras, thereby gaining control over the propensity and the mind's activities.

The Sanskrit term *mandala* (table next page) represents "circular configuration". A mandala is the larger catchment area of inferences and influences enveloping the corresponding cakra (plexus). For instance, the *naksattra mandala* of the *anahata cakra* or sidereal plexus is influenced by the light from twinkling celestial bodies. Not only is the light reflected or refracted here, but also microvita, both of the positive and negative kind, are moving along the light rays, affecting the body and the twelve sub-glands of this cakra.¹⁹⁵ Similarly, the lunar plexus (*ajina cakra*) controls the effect of moonlight on the body and mind.



Cakra	Plexus	Mandala
Sahasrara	Macro-propensive, pineal	Brahma
Guru	Occult (the inner side of Sahasrára)	Jyotiir
Ajīṇa	Lunar, pituitary	Shashi/Candra
Vishuddha	Solar, physico-psychic	Saora
Anahata	Aerial, sidereal	Naksattra
Manipura,	Igneous	Agni
Svadhithana	Fluidal	Tarala
Muladhara	Terranean, basal	Bhaoma

REFINING THE MIND

Layer	Mental Function	Method
The physical body, annamaya kosa	The mind's purely physical expression	Lifestyle; yoga exercises (asanas), diet
Crude, physical mind, kamamaya kosa	The mind's engagement in the physical world	Ethical lifestyle (Yama and Niyama)
Pure mental mind, manomaya kosa	Thinking, memory, experiencing one's unserved reactive driving forces (samskaras, "karma")	Directing the vital energy (pranayama)
Supramental mind, atimanas kosa	Subtle creativity, supramental intuition	Mental withdrawal (pratyahara)
Especially intuitive, subliminal mind, vijinanamaya kosa	Spiritual mentality, psycho-spiritual intuition	Focused concentration (dharana)
Subtle causal mind, hiranmaya kosa	Soulful state	Spiritual meditation (dhyana)



9

Subject and Object

Many recognise the concepts of “subject” and “object” from language classes where they figure as parts of speech. In most languages, the subject is the doer while the object is the done unto part: “I look at the flower”: “I” is the acting subject whereas “the flower” is the passive part, the object of the subject’s action.

As previously established, at its most primitive stage the mental language of the biological world is purely objective. If underdeveloped creatures could talk, they would say “warm”, “thirsty”, “water”, and not “I am warm and getting increasingly thirsty, is there any water I can drink?” They have no “I”. If asked to characterise such beings devoid of subjectivity, we would perhaps say they seem to be utterly materialistic and devoid of mental reflection.

As implied earlier, the objective is the essential convention of the military, where individuality is not a priority. Exhausted or tired even human beings may collapse into purely objectified phrasing. When completely drained we may utter only “tired” or “thirsty” instead of speaking in complete sentences. Or when someone happens to lose the grip and becomes utterly primitive, shouting: “Stupid car!” or “Bloody unfair world!”. Such angry exclamations indicate that the person has surrendered his or her subjective sense to circumstances in a state of self-objectivisation, if only for a moment. Innumerable court rooms have heard defendants utter: “I did not mean to...” and “I don’t know what came over me...”. This is why most legal systems stipulate harder punishment for deliberate crimes than for those not premeditated. There is a significant difference between having lost one’s humanity momentarily and having done so permanently.

Levels of Subjectivity

Knowledge is subjectivisation of external objectivities.¹⁹⁶ We take in some information from the outer world and make it our own. You must have experienced time and again how somebody who has picked up some new information proceeds to present it as their own: “Listen to me, I heard it on the radio just now!” By getting to know something, we go from “What is that?” to “I know what it is!”.

We appropriate knowledge without taking anyone’s permission first. If we did the same in the physical world we would soon end up in court. Assume you go around collecting other people’s cars. After having brought a few of them into your backyard the police will surely come knocking and you will be reported for theft. Not so in the psychic world where knowledge is freely available. Elements of knowledge are simply objects to our subjectivity with which we identify. We may accumulate as much of it as we like!

As we have come to know by now, there are levels of subjectivity: ego, intuition, soul. How does “knowledge being a state of subjectivity” relate to those? Let us say you have discovered that consulting an intelligent friend before acting is a clever thing to do. Instead of making mistakes on your own again and again you simply seek your friend’s advice. Here you make practical use of a piece of knowledge that you have: your friend is quite smart; whenever you feel like it, you get in contact with your friend (object 1) to get some information (object 2). This is a trivial level of practical knowledge, as it does not really make you any smarter. Rather, you have made yourself dependent on your friend. If you and your friend fall out, your source of intelligence is gone. Similarly, you may know where to buy food. Here, access to a food shop has become your knowledge but how to grow food yourself is not yet your knowledge. So, if the shop runs out of food you are back to square one. Googling on the Internet is another such example. You may search and find a beautiful poem out there, and still be unable to compose anything like that yourself. Much of the dynamics of today’s digital social media follow this pattern of dependency. People just replicate others and don’t know what to do on their own.

What passes as knowledge depends on the quality of both the subject and the object; i.e., of the knower and what is known. According to the science of mind, ordinary subjectivisation of external objectivities is temporary and imperfect. Anything and everything in the world change incessantly, nothing stands still to remain the same even for a second. Therefore, what we know now is bound to be obsolete next.

Only ultimate subjectivity is true for ever; that supreme subjectivity is true knowledge. How to achieve it? Becoming smart yourself is a higher form of subjectivisation than just having a smart friend. It is termed as internalisation in psychology. Here, the ego has decided—consciously, subconsciously or unconsciously—that it is time to move on and become intuitive and even spiritual oneself. Merging one's mind with the cosmic mind is supreme internalisation whereby one comes to know everything there is and beyond.

The Great is thinking of us and of the entire cosmos. Its expressed thought processes are never still. They cause the creation, preservation, and annihilation of all objects and entities. We are the objects of the Great Cosmic Consciousness and It is our subject; It is not our object. A limited living being cannot make the Cosmic Entity its object. How can you or I think of all of that? We do not have that much capacity. By merging with and becoming It may we achieve supreme subjectivity. The practical process of it is detailed in the chapter on spiritual practices.

There are many stages of knowledge. In its simplest form, we may perceive of something physical directly through our senses, or get some information indirectly by hearing of it, reading about it, etc. Then that perception is internalised; we make it our own knowledge. Or we may focus our mind in a particular situation or on some subject, and get a solution or revelation that way, from inside ourselves.

Sometimes we get a hint, we have an inner experience and the knowledge becomes gradually clearer to us. Sometimes we may have great inner experiences, as if deeper realities are revealed to us. When the spiritual state becomes permanent it is called spiritual intuition knowledge.

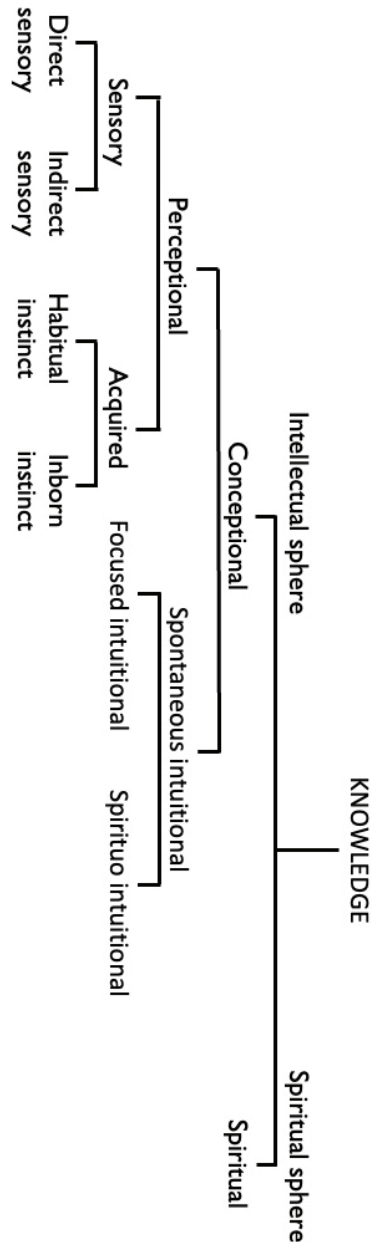
The difference between **conceptual** and **spiritual** knowledge is one of object and subject. Our concepts are objects to our limited mind, whereas the spiritual is the supreme subject of all expressions.

Sensory knowledge either come direct to our sensory organs, or are conveyed in an indirect manner such as when we see a documentary, hear about some place, etc.

Acquired knowledge has come to us either by habituation or already exists in us in the form of inborn instincts such as yearning to survive, seeking pleasure, avoiding suffering, etc.

The **spontaneous intuitional** was explained earlier: Our unconscious, all-knowing mind is the repository of all our inherent driving forces, of our entire evolutionary story. Ordinarily, this unconscious part of the mind is inaccessible to our intellectual mind, but sometimes we may get a glimpse in dream or in a deep state of consciousness. Knowledge about the five layers of the mind and how to practically evolve and realise them help us in this regard.

Spirituo-intuitional knowledge is the state of merger with the expressed Supreme, *savikalpa samadhi*.¹⁹⁷



Twofold Human Subjectivity

The main difference between the two subjectivities of the human mind—ego and pure “I”—is that the self-centred ego identifies with worldly actions and their results, while the intuitive, spiritually-oriented pure “I” identifies with degrees of universal existence found in everything and everybody.

In the process of increasing subjectivisation one attains a greater state of self that encompasses those objects one previously had to collect from outside of the sphere of one’s being. It is a gradual intellectual-intuitional-spiritual process. The highest stance of subjectivity, soul, encompasses every knowledge and state of being there is. There is nothing outside of the being of the soul. Shrii Shrii Anandamurti suggested:

*You have a jewel in your hand, you throw it away and spread your hand in begging before others asking them to give alms.*¹⁹⁸

Psycho-spiritual practice is a continual process of higher subjectivisation. When one gets direct access to the source of ultimate knowledge, the path of infinite subjectivisation has opened. With it the scope of hope versus worry, positive versus negative, etc. decreases until only the state of fundamental positivity remains.¹⁹⁹

The Ultimate Subjectivity

Increasing subjectivity has this characteristic: it expands the area of identification. With further increase through spiritual practices, the finite subjectivity of the unit mind, dwelling on the infiniteness of supreme consciousness, gradually expands to merge with the supreme soul, termed as mental liberation (*mukti* in Sanskrit). Shrii Sarkar formulated this truth as a psycho-philosophic theory: “Oneness in objectivity results in oneness in subjectivity”.²⁰⁰ It means that when the objectivity of the microcosm gets converted into objectivity of the Macrocosm, then the subjective counterpart of the microcosm, its soul, is transformed into the subjective counterpart of the Macrocosm, the cosmic soul, *Purusottama*. This is the Tantric definition of yoga.

Externalisation

Instead of internalising we may externalise something. Externalisation takes place when the subjectivity projects some of its objectivity on someone or something. An example would be to shame someone by projecting one's own shame on something or someone, perhaps by calling them "nexus of evil", "idiot", etc. This is a well-known phenomenon in political circles where professionals routinely degrade opponents to gain currency and strengthen their position.

A more constructive example would be to crown another person a hero when in reality one has done most of the work oneself. Discerning parents and leaders routinely do it in order to empower and encourage their children or employees to become more active ("Very clever!", "You are really doing well!").

Externalisation of one's own negativity is only useful when used positively, such as when one starts to do some constructive work out of frustration with a current situation; "using a pin to take out a pin", etc., and that too only within the larger context of spiritual ideation. Otherwise, it is advised to transform inner negativity internally according to the tenets of spiritual morality and conduct rules.

Subjective Approach Through Objective Adjustment

The Ananda Marga philosophy favours neither one-sided subjectivisation nor objectivisation, but a balanced approach: subjective approach through objective adjustment:

If a person wants proper utilisation of all his or her mind, there must be a proper adjustment, a proper equilibrium, between one's physical movement and physical activities and one's psycho-spiritual movement, psycho-spiritual advancement, and psycho-spiritual progress; and that's why I said in human life there should be—what? Subjective approach through objective adjustment. If only the subjective approach is there and there is no objective

*adjustment, there equilibrium will be lost. The entire human society will become degraded and destroyed. And if there is only physical activity and no spiritual advancement, human existence will be rendered to the status of brutes or plants, which is not at all desirable.*²⁰¹

Subjective approach through objective adjustment is the essence of the human dharma,²⁰² which considers four factors:

1. Expansion of mind
2. Attuning to the Macrocosmic flow
3. Selfless service
4. Attaining the Supreme

This balanced approach leads towards realisation of the supreme subjectivity without falling into the traps of either crude objectivity or subtle ego. In a discourse on the longing for the Great,²⁰³ Shrii Shrii Anandamurti commented that the structure of the mind is determined by the nature of its object. If the psychic object is crude, the mind-stuff grows dense and the mind will ultimately refuse to accept anything but its own crude object. Dogmatism is a particular state of this mental malady. Die-hard supporters of “isms” are incapable of accepting rational ideas, and remain stubbornly narrowminded and fiendish.

Psychic receptivity is the first causality where crude ideas are allowed to dominate. Shrii Shrii Anandamurti commented:²⁰⁴ “They do not feel the need for the force of enlightenment to exceed the force of darkness. They say, ‘Why should I bother about such subtle things. I am quite happy as I am.’” When one’s psychic object is subtle and expansive, one’s mind also becomes subtle and expansive and finally merges with the Macrocosm. This fact is further deliberated in the chapter on ideation.

* Examples of “isms” are nationalism, communalism (collective religious dogmatism), and capitalism.



10

States of Being

Human existence offers four fundamental states where life's mysteries are played out in various ways:

1. Awake
2. Dream
3. Deep sleep
4. Transcendental state

Awake

The first thing we need to negotiate upon waking up is the gap between the state we have left and the one we are entering. Coming out of the stagnancy of deep sleep into the increasingly mutative morning usually takes a moment or more. Many of us start by asking, "What time is it?" because the state we were in just now is timeless. When re-adjusted with the wakeful state, we are ready for expressing our usual good self.

That is anyway what we think we are doing normally. Research shows, however, that most of us are not nearly self-conscious. In a series of surveys,²⁰⁵ a researcher found that 95% of people normally think they're self-aware but only 10-15% truly are. Only rarely do we focus fully and completely on something subtler than the immediate physical activity. The part of us that allows us to think, reflect and remember, is much less involved than we would like to admit, not to speak of any higher form of subjectivity. What we do is to allow the crude mental mind to dominate.

The Domain of the Senses

Conventional science estimates that sight takes up more than 80 per cent of a person's total attention.²⁰⁶ The organ of sight and the inferences of form and colour are dominated by the mutative tendency, hence, we may say that "to be awake is to be restless". In an easy second place, comes the sentient sense of hearing, occupying well over ten per cent of our attention. It was measured that smell (static) engages 3.5%, touch (sentient) 1.5% and taste (static) 0.1% of our attention.²⁰⁷ The results were explained in this way:

*Place yourself in an open field. How far can you see? 80-100 kilometres. What distance can you hear? Perhaps 10 kilometres. And smell? 10-20 meters if there is no wind blowing. And touch? Not more than arm's length. Taste? A few centimetres.*²⁰⁸

The Five States of Being Awake

Shrii Shrii Anandamurti spoke with great authority on the mind. In 1959, he delineated five states of the awake mind,²⁰⁹ based on "the degree of its psychic concentration": mad, blindly attached, scattered, concentrated, and suspended. Each of these states can lead to a particular type of absorption of mind. In the first state, madness, due to the preponderance of propensities such as anger, jealousy, hatred, mine-ness, etc. the mind is withdrawn from all objects and temporarily concentrated on one object. This is what happens to persons locked in bitter argument. They cannot stop hurling abuses at each other, there is little thought for anything else. The reason is they have become focussed on the perceived negativity of the other person, and no longer address the actual issue. Something similar happens in the second state, of blind attachment. The mind becomes so attached to something that it repeatedly thinks about it. A person who is greedy for food becomes totally preoccupied with the thought of eating; a person hankering after power or position nourishes ideas about being an authority, and so on. In these first and second states the mind becomes so obsessed with its crude objects that its forward movement halts, and it ultimately starts to regress.

Most of the time the human mind is totally scattered. Sometimes it calms down, sometimes it becomes absorbed in something, but mostly in jumps uncontrollably from thought to thought. The restless mind which begins the process of meditation can be calmed down through regular practice. Ultimately a state is reached when the mind flows undisturbed in one direction. This state is the state of concentration. As one progresses one eventually attains the state of suspension of mind (nirodha). One must reach the state of mental concentration before attaining the state of absorption in consciousness.²¹⁰

Absorption attained in any of the first three states of mind (mad, blindly attached, scattered) is not real absorption (samadhi), but material absorption, the absorption which occurs when the subjective part of the mind—"I"—merges with the crude object of the mind-stuff. In such absorption, sentient mind-stuff is gradually transformed into mutative, and the mutative into static. Eventually the entire mind is converted into matter.

The fourth state of mind, concentration, is well-known. In this state, the mind sometimes becomes elevated and sometimes becomes "as debased as an infernal creature". As we learnt in the chapter on the ego, the mind is like a river that may flow in either of two directions. In its everyday existence the mind is continuously tossed between good and bad. By regular spiritual meditation one attains the true state of concentration where the mind focuses and ideates successfully on its most subtle goal. In this process waves upon waves of mind-stuff evolve to inspire one to accept the path of benevolence as one's way and goal of life. Patanjali taught:

When absorption intensifies, the now one-pointed mind is no more distracted by fluctuating thoughts.²¹¹

Those who try to concentrate share the same experience: concentration of mind may not always be an easy thing to do! Shrii Shrii Anandamurti was a spiritual master and confirmed this fact:

After repeating the Ista mantra a couple of times, hundreds of undesirable thoughts flood the mind. The newcomer thinks, "I

am unable to attain the One on whom I meditate, and instead am pestered by those objects I do not want.” ... When all the undesirable waves are removed from the mind, one blissful wave begins to flow, and the practitioner attains the state of one-pointedness.²¹²

Yogic Half-bath

Sometimes the mind is sluggish only due to physical reasons. Yogic half-bath is a simple, effective way to become more mentally awake so that subtle work may proceed more smoothly. When there is no time or opportunity for taking a full shower, a simple half-bath will cool down the outer parts of sensory organs, quietening their activities. This calming effect proceeds via the nerve fibres to the brain, creating a sense of calm throughout the entire sensory and motor apparatus. Consequently, the apperceptive plate of the mind-stuff, the mind’s psychic receiver, is then relieved and may be directed towards inner work without being disturbed by its otherwise noisy neighbour—the physical body. Half-bath may be done whenever the need arises; before any activity that requires physical calm, mental clarity and constant awareness; in a tense situation such as before a job interview or leading a meeting, to counter tiredness, lethargy, during an exam, etc. Ananda Marga recommends a yogic half-bath as standard procedure before meditation, meals, yoga exercises and sleep. The procedure involves applying cooling water (lukewarm water in cold weather) as follows:

- Wash your genital organs.
- Wash your hands up to elbows and legs up to knees.
- Taking a mouthful of water, splash water in your eyes and face at least twelve times.
- Wash the ears and the neck.
- Flush the nostrils with water (only if your stomach is empty).²¹³

Dreams

The mind dreamt it passed through halls with walls decorated by paintings, mirrors and fantastic wall decorations with carved frames, painted frames, gilded frames, lacquered frames in all kinds of matt and shiny colours. A host of known and even many more unknown living beings were passing by. There were so many feelings, moods, senses and expectations! Overwhelmed the mind tried to fathom it all. "Who am I, really," it thought to itself after awakening, "who can dream so much?"

Dreams are a wonder. In the course of seconds and minutes they may play out over many scenes and long stretches of time. Everything seems so real and at the same time surreal. In the wakeful state, we live by the laws of gravitation, oxygen, time, and not least those of our own personality. Not so in a dream. When the physical body is disengaged, and the unfettered mind is free to dream whatever, it seems as if everything and anything may be taking place. With the purely mental mind temporarily liberated from incessant activities of sensory and motor organs, previous imprints of physical experiences and states may get a very different dynamic than they have in the normal, wakeful state. For instance, humans know very well that only winged creatures fly, and still many dream of themselves flying.

Because a dreaming mind is not impacted by normal bodily consciousness, the liberated subjectivity of the subconscious may affect the imprints of the mind-stuff to appear as otherworldly both in a positive and negative sense. It is somewhat what happens to the subconscious mind when the body is drugged; it may hallucinate one way or the other because the crude mental mind is not operating normally due to absent or faulty input from the drugged sensory apparatus. It is a safe bet that most such dreams are unrealistic and random.²¹⁴ They may be triggered off by bodily discomfort due to digestive issues or by overheating in the brain itself due to intense mental activity.²¹⁵

The exception is when one awakes from a prophetic dream, which occur far less frequently in most people's lives. In such dreams, deeper layers of consciousness have penetrated into the subconscious

and made themselves known. Such dreams may foretell the future. On the other hand, they may also be difficult to interpret as the information they carry may be distorted by more conscious, crude notions of the mind-stuff that may be opposed to what our unconscious attempts to convey.

The stuff of dreams is collected from already stored imprints of the mind-stuff. These may be fresh sensations and experiences easily recognisable from our daily life, or more deep-seated elements that may not have surfaced previously and therefore are unknown to the dreaming subconscious mind.

Willpower and Dreaming

As revealed, when we dream, the conscious and subconscious parts of our mind have no say in the proceedings. Our cruder subjectivity can just watch as the mind-stuff provides the contents of the dreams in weird and wonderful fashions to the drum of an overworked nervous system or heated brain. The dreamer is normally not in position to intervene actively in the dream, and remains a passive spectator until the dreaming ends and one wakes up, or moves into the unconscious layers of the mind to sleep there, in which case the dream will not be remembered.

Much dreaming is confusing if not upsetting. Many people even have recurrent nightmares and dreams of an unhelpful nature. There are ways to forestall such “bad” dreaming. Abstaining from overeating or eating late at night will be of help to many, as gas otherwise disturbs the nervous system. Conscious relaxation by focusing the mind inside is a further helpful technique, which will calm the bio-psychological system and induce a good night’s sleep.

Third, by strengthening one’s willpower, both unwanted daydreaming and dreaming at night may be regulated. How may one regulate dreaming by strengthening one’s willpower? The first step is to withdraw the relevant part of the mind-stuff from outer activities and merge it with the ego. It means to make the matter clear to the ego. Instead of being “worried about nightmare” or of any other undesirable type of dream, one should face the actual

content head on. This may be done by first reflecting on the essence of a dream, look into similar life experiences, if any, and most importantly juxtapose the dream content with what one really wants. By doing so, one establishes a conscious link between the driving force of dream and one's awake self. In the process, one must make one's determination clear to oneself, both in content and strength, such as "Instead of dreaming like that I want to live like this (one's vision of what life should be), and I want this very much to happen, as I am thoroughly done with dreaming and living like a wreck and now wants to proceed like a free person instead!"

A further step would be to direct that process towards one's higher self. As we have learnt, after having merged the mind-stuff with the ego, the wise proceed to merge that dynamic ego-feeling with the intuitive mind, which again is merged with the soul. By consciously catching the essence of the dream and confirming to oneself one's genuine intent and purpose, and then offer that process to one's higher self, the dream (of the mind-stuff) will no longer control the dreamer as subjectivity has now taken control over objectivity.

So, there are essentially two stages: 1) becoming aware, and 2) offering that awareness to the higher self. If the same type of dream somehow should repeat itself later, it indicates that some of its momentum still lingers on in the mind-stuff, and therefore the whole process of being aware of all of it, followed by thorough confirmation and sublimation as described here, should be repeated until that sort of dreaming, nightmare or otherwise, has vanished for good.

It may so happen that those sleeping in the same room are awakened by the dreamer laughing, talking, walking or otherwise expressing his or her dream state. Shrii Sarkar slips a word of advice to anyone who comes to observe somebody who is obviously going through a nightmare: Carefully lift the person's hand or leg and let it fall gently against the bed. When contact is made with the physical body, the consciousness of the dreamer returns back to the external world in a natural way and the person wakes up.²¹⁶

The Framework of Dreams

Dream is thinking in sleep with regards to:²¹⁷

1. Present environment,
2. Previous environment,
3. No environment, and
4. Fabulising, fantastic.

Suppose a child wants a riding horse now that her friend has got one. While awake, a child may understand that she is imagining a horse, but she will not be aware of the fact that focusing on it transforms part of her own mental body, her mind-stuff, into “horse”, resulting in the creation of a corresponding reactive driving force in her mind-stuff. That newly acquired reactive driving force of the mind-stuff may result in the child dreaming of owning and riding a horse. However, as this particular driving force exists alongside innumerable other driving forces in the vast ocean of the mind-stuff, the unexpected may very well happen as well! Perhaps the dream horse speaks a dialect, or is colossally humorous at the expense of close family members critical to the purchase of a horse. It may also turn out the horse is unnaturally huge or very difficult to mount, or refuses the child to ride unless the horse gets its own riding helmet! Anything may take place in dream depending on the dreamer’s inherent reactive driving forces.

Sensuous Dreams

In a discourse in 1956, Shrii Shrii Anandamurti clarified the basis of dreaming, its crude and subtle forms, and the role of reactive driving forces (samskaras) in it.²¹⁸ When particular imprints in the mind-stuff agitate the crude mental mind, so that sensual or bodily ideas are awakened, the nervous system may stir. Several such impressions may impact the nervous system to various degrees, making for a confluence of nervous vibrations. When asleep, if a person’s nerve tissues get impacted in this way, which may be offset by some physical cause such as flatulence or due to cerebral heat caused by passionate thinking, the nerve-cells get stirred up and disturbed.

Such agitation stimulates the crude mental mind with the vibrations of those impressions accumulated in the nerve cells. Thus, the dreaming subconscious mind accepts as real the stream of thoughts arising from such impressions. As the sensory organs are not functioning in that state, aspirations arising from previously-acquired desires, now embedded in the nervous system and playing out in the crude mental mind, appear to be quite real and material. Such bizarre dreams are unrealistic and disjointed—chance figments of the imagination. Nonetheless, because the ego may experience the content of any sort of dream as real, some people try to avail themselves of the credulity of others by impressing on them interpretations even of such dreams. Shrii Shrii Anandamurti comments that those who have pure thoughts and restraint over their diet are generally less susceptible to such dreams. This type of dream, where the subconscious layer watches the crude mental layer, never arises in deep sleep.

Supramental Visions

Realistic dreams are generally fewer and more seldom than the sensuous kind. One reason for it is that the all-knowing causal or unconscious mind cannot give expression to its omniscience due to the fickleness of the crude mental and purely mental minds. Its sentient voice is distorted and made unintelligent by the mutative nature of the subconscious mind, and not the least of the static of the crude mental mind.

Another reason is its own expressional inability—it is not directly connected with our everyday egoistic expressions and mechanisms, and therefore the conscious and subconscious may have a hard time making sense of it even if they are sufficiently calm and receptive. Still, subtler mind can awaken visions and premonitions of past, present or future events in the calm conscious and subconscious minds of a person in deep slumber. Such dreams may deeply involve or overwhelm the dreamer. Shrii Shrii Anandamurti suggests it may be called supramental vision.

Sometimes, even in the wakeful state, the cognitive flow of the unconscious mind makes its way into the subtle mind. The result is that even when fully awake, with a little concentration, one can grasp and guess events concerning one's near and dear ones who are far away. Shrii Shrii Anandamurti suggests that this sort of daydream, or revelation when awake, may be called telepathic vision. Another variety of supramental vision or daydreaming is telepathic clairvoyance, where one can feel that one is seeing a near and dear person or group of people then and there.

Supramental visions such as these are born out of the unconscious mind, the knower of the universe, in the form of intuitive feelings or inspirations from it. The information revealed in such dreams stem from the supramental mind, the storehouse of all mundane knowledge.²¹⁹ The crystalising of such subtle information into something that is plausible or understandable to the pure mental mind depends on the mind's receptive or conceptual powers. Hence, the superior ability of some to understand the portents of meaningful dreams. In fact, people, who have great faith in dreams and make attempts to get as much as possible out of them, will benefit much from regular meditation, the practice of which will enable them to penetrate more actively into the subtler layers of mind. Such enhanced subtle mental ability will make itself felt both in dream while asleep and in the wakeful state.

Deep Sleep

As sleeplessness generates mental discomfort and even psychological problems, a popular belief has formed that the mind needs to sleep. The reality is that the mind cannot sleep. When the body is tired the mind allows the body to sleep, and when sleep sets in the mind itself retreats into its unconscious layers for the endurance of sleep.

Physically exhausting work—exercise, house work, garden work, etc.—is the natural medicine for sleeplessness. Both physical and psychic labour exhaust the cells of the physical organism and generate a need for sleep. Tired body cells, in the nerve fibre muscles,

tissue and the brain, require the good rest that deep sleep provide.²²⁰ Only a few generations ago physical labour all day long was the rule rather than the exception all over the world, but in our modern society many have been forced to learn how to handle a reduced need for sleep as they now work less physically. In this regard one would be wise to be less dependent on medical preparations and more on natural remedies, such as those mentioned here. Any chemical dependency results in the nervous system building resistance and the realisation that the problem has not gone away but rather multiplied.

Too Much or Too Little ...

It is not correct that sleeping a lot regularly is a guarantee for good health. On the contrary, an excessive need for sleep hampers natural growth and development.²²¹ The habit of sleeping very much increases the need for sleep, while an active lifestyle regulates that need to a healthy, natural level. Shrii Shrii Anandamurti advised to go to bed as soon as one feels sleepy and get up early in the morning to practice spirituality.²²²

*You must have noticed that some people who sleep too much often doze off at work. This has brought much trouble to the society. Suppose a man's lifespan is 80 years but he spends forty of them sleeping; he will not get much time to do anything worthwhile. To be under the spell of sleep is therefore highly deplorable. Those who sleep too much must strive to reduce their sleeping time as far as practical.*²²³

Borderland

Deep sleep is a state of nothingness.²²⁴ We never have any recollection of deep sleep, no perception of that state, other than feeling of being more or less rested when rousing from it. As mentioned earlier, it usually takes a moment or two for us to come out of the passive, dark unconscious of sleep and get back to our wakeful self. One who has just woken up may appear as listless and disoriented; the still awakening person is in a state of transition, in

the borderland between conscious and unconscious. In that state, the sensory and motor functions are not yet operating properly. To some this border area is obviously very wide, and they stay there for longer than others. For them sleep has become a black hole they need to extricate themselves from.²²⁵

Conscious Conquer of the Unconscious

We are rocked to sleep by Mother Nature, the cosmic operative principle. She allows us to rest in her lap without any feeling or thought of all possible and impossible things that our life otherwise consist of. Deep sleep is uncompromising in that it does not permit any conscious or semi-conscious activity on our part. It is a passive state for our body to get complete rest. Those who know how to enter actively into the unconscious, get both benefits—bodily relaxation and psycho-spiritual realisation.

For most people, sleep is a voluntary action where the conscious and the sub-conscious minds take rest. It is a temporary repose and one normally feels better after it. Falling unconscious is an involuntary state brought on by circumstantial pressure due to some external blow or mental shock. Unconsciousness forcibly stops human activity and therefore the body feels weak and limp when one regains consciousness after having fainted or having gone unconscious for some other reason.²²⁶

In dream, the conscious, crude mental mind is suspended, and in sleep both the crude and the purely mental minds are suspended. Therefore, people may ask themselves: “Where are we when we sleep?” The correct answer is that we are in our all-knowing, all-pervading, all-encompassing self, but passively and unconsciously. When we sleep, we are not aware of what takes place in any world. We just sleep to rest our body.

Earlier it was established that for anything to exist it needs to be confirmed, substantiated, witnessed. The state of deep sleep is an example of that reality. It is not that we go somewhere else or do not know anything in sleep, but our conscious and subconscious minds are not present to convey that unconscious state to us. In order to

experience such subtler mind, one needs to bring the conscious and subconscious mind to the unconscious stage, which then ceases to be unconscious and instead becomes superconscious to us. The sphere of sleep is therefore unknown territory to our extroverted mind. The conscious of most people is closely knit to physical everyday life. Spiritually speaking we may call it a state of attachment; our consciousness is limited by apprehensions about the time we live in, and by physical circumstances. Living with such a limited consciousness makes the all-knowing nucleus inaccessible to us.

In order to attain the deepest, or highest if you like, unconscious we need to come through the entire subconscious and unconscious field where all our accumulated reactive driving forces in different stages will be facing us on way. Covering that distance of our existential journey takes time and requires integration. Reaching there in an instant would have exploded the limits and contours of our ordinary everyday consciousness. Whatever we dream on the way is just a foretaste of the dimensions and perspectives of the unconscious realm, the spiritual realm beyond any sensory experience.

The Great cosmic unconscious is quite simply too much for the comparatively infinitesimal consciousness of our microcosmic mind. Therefore, our conscious activity is switched off when we sleep. It is like a circuit breaker going off. In reality, this is a great blessing for us. That way the body may rest in peace without anybody bothering, least of all ourselves who also rest quietly and calmly in the nucleus of our Great self—without being aware of it.

As explained, one will be able to attain the sleeping stage consciously by a proper system of meditation. In that case, what was earlier a passive, static state of unconscious sleeping will be an active, super-conscious, elevated state. The difference between sleep and super-consciousness is conscious presence. Both states require that bodily consciousness is suspended into the supramental state, but only in the super-conscious state are we consciously present, in deep sleep not. This subject was further explored in the chapter on the layers of the mind.

Yogic Sleep

Another state of sleep is what is known as “yogic sleep”, *yoga nidra* in Sanskrit. It is a half-way, semi-conscious state taking place in the border area between the subconscious and the supramental mind. Shrii Shrii Anandamurti categorised such “falling into a relaxed ‘half-sleep’” as a common experience of most practitioners in the early stages of meditation.²²⁷

Biographies of great people often inform us that those notable persons worked much and slept little. Some sources report that Buddha slept as little as one hour, others say a bit more. One thing we know for sure is that there are many enormous statues of Buddha lying in semi-prone position with closed eyes in spiritual fulfilment. (Some of those statues are more than 100 meters long.) There are similar images of the god Vishnu reclining on a large lotus flower in the midst of an endless ocean. Consciousness is that infinite entity that lies quiescent in everything.

The Transcendental

The boundless state beyond the mind is egoless and blissful, externally inactive, entirely self-absorbed and cosmic. In this state is termed as transcendental, *turiya* in Sanskrit. Here the conscious, unconscious and subconscious layers are all passive; only cosmic cognition is active. This is the absolute state of eternal beatitude without any outer, relative expression.²²⁸

The term *transcendental* derives from Latin: *trans* “across from” + *scandere* “crossing (the border/over the ocean), climb, ascend, capture”; “exceeding”. The difference between this state and sleep has already been explained to some extent. In sleep one is passively unconscious, the transcendental state is actively supra-conscious. When one comes out of this state one feels indescribably elevated, blissful, fresh and exalted.

The transcendental state is beyond manifest consciousness and may therefore be termed as supra-conscious. The sleep state is termed as unconscious as it takes place in layers of the created mind

above the conscious and subconscious. The difference between the superconscious and unconscious is the presence of the former and the absence of presence in the latter, otherwise the two represent the same highest layer of the mind.

Why is the transcendental reckoned as a state of living beings, and why is it said that the three layers of mind—conscious, subconscious, and unconscious—are passive there? Because this state beyond may be reached by a human being who still has some reactive driving forces—samskara, “karma”—that need to be worked out. It is possible to attain the highest state of non-attributed, indetermined absorption (nirvikalpa samadhi, nirvana) while having to return to the world to continue one’s process of completing the second phase of creation properly. Unless and until all driving forces of the mind are transformed into pure consciousness, that process will continue.

The Beginningless and Endless

All that is created came into existence at a certain point, is prevailing, and will perish in its present form at another point. So also the states of being awake, dreaming and sleeping. Everything in the mind comes from something, is being maintained and will cease to exist in its present form. The only state that did not come into being is the transcendental state beyond time, space and person. It is our absolute state of being beyond all relativities.

*The fourth state, the Turiya, is the only Truth. The states of wakefulness, dream and sleep are not spiritual entities for they contain in them the semblance of attributes, their existential entities are dependent on the crude, subtle and causal knowables. So, the first three states of the soul are relative truths because they are dependent on other factors whereas the fourth state, the Turiya, being independent of all others, is the spiritual Truth, the whole Truth, the Absolute Truth.*²²⁹



11

Feeling

The original meaning of the word feeling comes from the Old English *fēlan*, “the perception of physical contact”. Basic feelings result from sensory experience:

- We place a hand on a windowpane on a chilly day: “cold”, a physical feeling.

Evolved human beings have gone further beyond the physical to develop various forms of feeling such as:

- We may view our neighbour’s house from a distance: “warm”, “near”; psychic feelings of social contentment and trust.
- We may meet a person who maintains a certain distance: “remote”, even “cold”.
- We may see youngsters of various ethnic backgrounds walk along the road enjoying each other’s company, and we are delighted; a psycho-spiritual feeling.

Bone Age Romance

How did we come to have such a variety of feelings? Envisage a couple of the Bone Age. The Bone Age was the period ahead of the Stone Age, when tools and weapons were made of bone.²³⁰ This was long before matriarchy and patriarchy, when the word “parent” was not yet invented and when the male in most cases would be long gone before the female would discover she was pregnant. Here, in this age of intellectual darkness, we witness historical front-page

news. We do not know how long this lovely twosome have been together, but what we do know is that they recently decided to move down from a tree.

Now she stands near the mouth of their new cave, the youngest one on her hip, watching her man setting out to go hunting. “He is walking farther and farther away, soon he will disappear into the forest, but I know he will be with us again soon—I feel inside of me that he is near however far away he may be.” When he later on returns with the catch, his feelings reciprocate hers: “From here I can only just see our place, it is still at a fair distance, but I feel close to them, inside me it is as if I am already in the cave with them, and I will soon be there.”

This is how physical feelings such as “near” and “far” turn into psychic ones with the same names. From here onwards, “hard”, “soft”, “cold”, “warm”, will no longer only define inanimate physical things but also relations and states of the human environment. Existence becomes more colourful and nuanced, and humans evolve mentally and physically as their mind and bio-psychological structure needs to accommodate their new inner and outer realities. Cells, nerves, glands, the brain, physiognomy—everything keeps changing.

The mind-stuff, which earlier registered only physical, objective feelings, grows into a huge storehouse of psychic feelings such as “mine”, “yours” “ours”, “theirs”, “respected”, “neglected”, “ennobled”, “humbled”, etc. with their numerous social, political and further ramifications. At this stage, groups of human beings, perhaps in the Iron Age, no longer existed only as an instinctive survival group. A psycho-physical structure evolved with collective sentiments, perhaps with a hierarchy emanating from the leader at the top nurturing occupational and other social systems. From such structure strategy, political philosophy, etc. evolve to shape individual and collective intellectual thought further—all taking original physico-psychic feelings as their starting point.

Subtle Feelings

With time, humans develop even feelings without root in physical nature. For instance, a poet may allude to the splendour of solitude while describing a single tree standing in an open field under the vast sky. The term “solitude” was coined from the experience of the existential grandeur of being by oneself, a psycho-spiritual feeling and not the organic outcome of physico-psychic evolution. When applied on a physical entity such as a lone tree it becomes something psycho-physical-spiritual like high grade poetry. In this way, subtle intellect and intuition develop their own vocabulary, with terms that have no direct physical relevance initially, but later may be applied to physical things, such as a tree, a river, etc.

Yogic philosophy has words and expressions for even the most subtle psycho-spiritual realities, such as the various feelings of closeness to the Supreme resulting from a practitioner’s advances through the psycho-spiritual.²³¹ Actually, spirituality is the greatest feeling. As it is in contact with and comprises everything and everyone. Spirituality not only knows and does everything; it *feels* it as its own. That profound feeling is a constant, whereas knowledge and actions are variables. To be is the fundamental feeling of existence. Oriental philosophic theory arose out of physico-psycho-spiritual practice. Occidental philosophy is mainly the result of intellectual analysis and speculation. Thus, there are semantic differences between their terminologies.

Feelings Have the Upper Hand

Feelings are hard currency, the real thing, the result of physical, psychic, or spiritual touch—contact. They are the basic components of our mental repertoire and inform us about our immediate circumstances, where we are, how we really are, and everything in between. All elements of the mind-stuff need to accept the sovereignty of feelings. Thoughts are notions of feelings; philosophical reflections on the scope of the mind’s contact points with its physical, psychic and spiritual realities. Sentiments—feelings attached to various entities—emerge from basic feelings and may or

may not be supported by rational thought.²³² Feelings, therefore, figure as major navigation points in our physical, psychic, and psycho-spiritual life.

Even if a feeling for any reason is misleading, and a conflicting thought is rational and therefore correct, the rogue feeling may still prevail because of its greater persuasive power. This rule of feelings is part of our evolutionary legacy. Their dominating power comes from their contact with actual, concrete facts. Whereas thoughts are intellectual constructs, our emotional wealth is grounded in experiences of the concrete sensory world. That is anyhow what feeling tells us, and thought faces an uphill battle arguing with it.

Emotion

The words feeling and emotion are sometimes mixed up, which only goes to show just how much feelings move us. Emotions are a type of accumulated forceful driving forces (samskaras) whose eventual constructiveness depends on the amount of feeling that motivate them. The term emotion, from the Latin *e-movere*, “move out”, is usually reserved for particularly strong feelings with plenty of felt momentum which will fire actions.

Sentiment

Some mistake sentiment for feeling. The term sentiment is used for mental feelings invested with particular objects, such as one’s family, place of origin, social group, particular values, ideals, etc. Shrii Sarkar argued:

*How is a nation formed? In reality, a kind of sentiment created either directly or indirectly on the basis of one or more factors such as country, language, religion, etc., plays a vital role in forming a nation. The factors themselves are quite insignificant. It is the sentiment and nothing else that creates a nation.*²³³

Human beings nourish sentiments for various objects, hence certain sentiments may group people together in various ways. For example, some become sentimental when watching a game of football. Others become most sentimental on anniversaries or during a marriage ceremony, when singing in a choir, etc. When guided by rationality, i.e., if someone can direct the sentiment of an individual or a group towards a rational goal, that sentiment may drive momentous benevolence. Sentiment-based constructive leadership may be provided by insightful teachers and other social educators.

Running blindly without discrimination between proper and improper behaviour is called “sentiment”. The path of discrimination between proper and improper behaviour is called “rationality”. When human beings discriminate between proper and improper behaviour and select the proper path, it is called “conscience”.²³⁴

Feeling, emotion, and sentiment are natural developments in the evolution of individual and collective minds. They should not be suppressed but be directed constructively and sublimated.

Mundane and Spiritual Sentiments

The cosmic doer-I evolves the universe in the crudest portion of the cosmic mind-stuff. In other words, the physical universe that we live in is an imagination, or psychic projection, of cosmic mind. Nothing is external to the cosmos; everything is internal to it. Its feeling towards the objects of Its creation is therefore not of any degree of intimacy but of absolute unity. As you and I are physically and psychically heterogeneous creatures we experience everything as different from ourselves: you are different from me and I am different from all.

This, in a nutshell, is the difference between mundane and spiritual sentiments. As we keep approaching the cosmic reality our feeling of existential intimacy grows proportional to our proximity with It and eventually reaches the final stage of universality, of oneness with all.



12 Thinking

What is thinking? To say something internally. To think means to speak within. Just try to think something, to speak within your mind. In that case, no one else will hear. And when you speak externally, you use your voice externally, then others may hear.²³⁵

Knowledge, thinking and memory are all closely interrelated:

- Knowledge is the subjectivisation of external objectivity.²³⁶
- Thinking is internal talk about what we perceive, know and remember.
- Memory is the recreation of things already perceived.²³⁷

In this chapter we will look at knowledge and thinking, and in the next memory.

Trends

Knowledge is of two kinds: the internal projection of physicality, and the internal projection of spirituality.²³⁸ For instance, we may initially think of another being, say a dog, as just mindless and inferior. We may appreciate only its physical aspect. As we come to know the dog better, we will discover that this being has a psychic existence as well. This new discovery may gradually reveal many secrets to us about the dog and the potential of our relation to it, which may allow for deeper

communication, further training, many mutual benefits, etc. At a still higher stage, we may realise that the dog, whom we earlier considered to be just inferior to us, is an expression of the Supreme Consciousness. Developed thinking such as this obviously aids us in our intellectual and spiritual pursuits. In fact, without it, spiritual development would not take place.²³⁹

One aspect of our developing thinking is the historical changes. Today we may not be thinking like we used to years ago or even yesterday. Tomorrow our thinking will be changed again, one way or the other. Even, the one you were some time ago may not have appreciated the thinking of the one you are today or of the person you will be tomorrow, and vice versa. Changes in our thinking transform who we are as a person; our thinking is essential to our identity. We ourselves change all the time, from child to youth to adult to ageing, so why not be open to changes in our thinking as well?

Balanced Thinking

Thinking consists of our mind flowing towards what is agreeable to us, to that which is in agreement with our acquired, inherent driving forces (samskaras).²⁴⁰ It is a sympathetic movement; i.e., positive thinking. Negative thinking happens when we become aware of something that our mind is averse to, which is not to our liking, and the mind seeks to shy away from it. In these ways we become prone to overlooking the faults and shortcomings of people and things dear to us, whereas we do not hesitate to harshly judge those whom are even of much better standard than us if they happen to not be in tune with our preferences. This is the way of the world; the good may be wrongly treated and the bad treated like kings. In the mental world we all commit such faulty thinking.

Balanced thinking goes beyond the limited scope of positive versus negative thinking:

Once you realize the truth, you may be on your guard so as not to overdo your expressions of liking or love for someone; and not to be antagonistic to a person not to your liking. In this way you can

*maintain your mental balance. If somebody speaks the slightest ill of a person you do not like, your natural inclination will be to seize upon the idea and exaggerate that out of proportion. On the other hand, you will be at pains to amplify, in hyperbolic terms, even some little praise of a person you like and love; and will hasten to add: "Well, this is not his only virtue, you know. He has so many other remarkable qualities, such as this one and this one." Such is human nature.*²⁴¹

Worry and hope are two major contrasting trends of thought. Egotism and selflessness are two other such trends. According to the science of mind, the thought processes of all creatures flow in four main directions: towards food, sleep, survival, and procreation. In addition, human thought moves in a fifth direction, towards dharma, and this righteous movement has four phases: expansion of mind, universal flow, selfless service, and attainment of the Supreme Consciousness.²⁴²

Developed Knowledge

Knowledge is developed by thinking. Good communicators and educators know how to convey objects of knowledge in ways that aid recipients in subjectivising that knowledge to make it their own. "How does this relate to you?" "What will you get out of it?" etc. They sense how their listeners have been thinking, what concerns them, what their problems and interests are, their needs and visions, and accordingly they present the matter to them. In this way they evolve the thinking of their audiences. Others just talk more or less about themselves and their irrelevant talk falls on deaf ears. Talk should be shaped as a dialogue, even if only one person speaks. Others should be made to feel involved.

Shrii Sarkar advised teachers that "knowledge should not be imparted in a galloping style, because the gaps created by imparting education in such a manner will destroy intellectual continuity."²⁴³ Thinking moves in stages, through pauses and phases of accelerating and decelerating speed. At one point we may be racing through analyses, and in the next moment be engrossed in profound

synthesis. Our focus may change, and various methods may be adopted and discarded as need be. The founder of Psychosynthesis, the Italian psychiatrist Roberto Assagioli (1888-1974), advised a trifocal approach or vision: 1) always focus on the final goal, 2) be ready to enter into the next immediate step, and 3) keep an eye out for any intermediate steps.²⁴⁴

Getting Out of Being Stuck

Thinking is subject to “the law of karma” as much as action is. As probed elsewhere in the book, in life we go through cycles of clash and cohesion again and again to evolve. Stuck means stasis; i.e., the static tendency has taken over. The cause of it is that we are lost in the past so that our thinking is not functioning smoothly here and now. We cling to some result of some previous thinking to the point that it seems we are unable to move any further. Getting stuck like that may feel comfortable enough at first, but will soon turn out to be a dissatisfying and meaningless affair. Being mentally or cognitively stuck obstructs people from achieving their goals, and inhibits the development of that person’s mind and possibly those of others.

What to do when the static tendency has taken over the thinking process? Engage the mutative tendency with some elevating goal in sight. According to the Aitareya Brahmana (of the old Shakala school of the Rigveda) the four stages of going from staticity to profound elevation are termed as existential deep sleep (*kali yuga*), awakening (*dvápar yuga*), rising (*treta yuga*), and moving ahead (*satya yuga*):²⁴⁵

*A person who abstains from work and is unwilling to move, is living in Kali Yuga; one who has just awakened from slumber is in Dvápára Yuga; one who has stood up is in Tretá Yuga; and when one has started moving, then Satya Yuga has come in that person’s life.*²⁴⁶

Thought is the mother of action. Humanity therefore needs to get its thinking up and moving. The well-known Pavamana Mantra of the ancient Brhadāranyaka Upanishad beseeches God to:

*Take me from this ever-changing world to immortality. Lead me from darkness to light, from the world of death to the world of immortality, from the world of despondency to the world of joy, and, O Lord, come and manifest Yourself in me.*²⁴⁷

These are parts of the ancient Vedic lore of imploring and beseeching higher powers. When the Vedic Aryans arrived in India, some of them got acquainted with the practical Tantric methodology of how to actually attain higher states of mind. Those who regularly apply these ancient ideas of awakening, rising, and performing not only in external life, but in their inner life as well—to their way of thinking—achieve exceptional results. They experience constant progress in their life.

Perhaps it is not fruitful to think too much about how we used to think; so because God gave us eyes in front, it is wiser to look forward and not dwell on the past. Still, it is helpful to be conscious of the fact that good thinking leads to still better thinking.

- Is good thinking something inborn, or is it an acquired skill?
- If acquired, do results depend on a lot of thinking (quantity) or on special thinking (quality)?
- Perhaps something altogether other than thinking makes for good thinking?

Durability

Perhaps one of the more awarding lessons of life is the attempt to achieve a certain level of mental sturdiness. Resilience is a mental capability for facing up to necessary changes and adapting well to new realities. In order to develop it, one has to learn to live by the cycle of clash and cohesion.

Psychic clash is the most characteristic clash of being human. It means that mind and thought are moving on in evolution; the

opposite of being held back by static mind-stuff or being held hostage by dogmas in the outer world. By continued practice one learns to love the process of overcoming mental obstacles by way of transformation. The spirit of it is formalised in the ancient yogic moral code called Yama and Niyama (page 227).

Since we became human, we have been thinking. This fact points to a significant source of clashes: the many gaps—technological, social, cultural, etc.—between generations. In the same way as the previous generation stops short of properly understanding and appreciating the next, every one of us now and then stops short of moving into “the next version” of ourselves. Do you dare to conceive of it, of the new you?

The old Sanskrit name for the universe, jagat, means “the entity whose nature is to move”. Our individual and collective life is a continuous process of biological, political, social, cultural, psychic and numerous other changes through their phases and stages. Possibly, the most important aspect of thinking is to be ready for and open to constructive individual and collective change.

What is thought? Thought means to speak within. Thought is closely related to soliloquy. Suppose there is nobody to hear you and you are speaking. What is that? It is just like a thought. When you are speaking to yourself, it is called “soliloquy”. Thought is also like that. Some of your thoughts are of such a nature that, if others hear them, they will say you are insane.²⁴⁸

Smart people are reflective. They prefer to have an inner meaningful conversation before they talk aloud. It is called thinking before speaking. Others seem not to be cultivating that habit. To an egotistical person thinking is a tool of control. The intuitional person leaves the thinking process open to the great unknown.

Focused Thinking

A group of kids were learning archery. The teacher had placed a wooden figure of a bird in a tree. He asked one of them to step forward and take aim. What do you see? asked the teacher.

I see the bird, the child replied.

What more do you see? the teacher wanted to know.

I see the leaves on the tree, its branches, the tree ... The child was asked to step back, and one by one the other children were asked, and they all answered in more or less the same way, I see the bird, the leaves, the branches, the tree, the other children standing here, the teacher, the sky ... In the end one child was left. What do you see? the teacher asked.

I see the eye of the bird, the child replied.

Can you see the tree?

No.

Can you see the branches?

No.

Can you see the bird?

No.

So, what else do you see? the teacher wanted to know.

Nothing, the child replied. Then the teacher instructed the child to release the arrow. It went straight on target and the bird fell down. In recognition, the teacher patted the child on the shoulder and told the others: When you want to achieve something, you need to focus only on that. Close out all distractions and concentrate only on the goal.²⁴⁹

Focused thinking is the opposite of epidemic thinking such as is often the case with analysis and association, as indicated in the chapter on ideation. An epidemic goes everywhere in no time without anybody quite knowing how and where it started or how and where it will end. Being able to contain the epidemic of one's own thinking in meditation and in practical life is both a necessity and a boon.

Propensities

Thoughts are expressions of psychic inclinations and tendencies, of our driving forces, reflected or refracted in the inner and outer environment. They may be instinctual, sentimental, reasonable, benevolent, abstract, practical, or not. The more living beings evolve, the more propensities they acquire and the greater their capacity to direct those propensities one way or the other.

Earlier we looked at instinct—a psychic force coming out of existential needs to roam about in the environment until it is satisfied and returns to its base in our bio-psychological structure. All of us have physical instincts, and we may develop psychic and psycho-spiritual instincts, such as an instinct for learning, an instinct for spiritual inquiry, etc. We may term them as automated standard responses. A propensity is a potentiality for a particular expression of the mind. Our propensities have institutionalised themselves in our mental structure as a result of the long history of clashes and cohesions of the human race.* Propensities may be expressed internally or externally, helpfully or unhelpfully, positively or negatively, etc.

The mind may be more or less in control or under the sway of its propensities, which work in particular through nerves and glands. Propensities are directly related to glands at the various cakras or

* Some of the human fifty to fifty-one propensities are: psycho-spiritual longing, psychic longing, physical longing, spiritual longing, belittlement of others, psychic stupor/lack of common sense, indulgence, lack of confidence, thought of sure annihilation, cruelty, shyness/shame, sadistic tendency, envy, staticity/sleepiness, melancholia, peevishness, yearning for acquisition, infatuation, hatred/revulsion, fear, hope, worry, effort, attachment, vanity, conscience, mental numbness due to fear, ego, avarice, hypocrisy, argumentativeness to the point of wild exaggeration, repentance, being practical, expression of mundane knowledge, welfare in the subtler sphere, performing noble actions, surrender to the Great, repulsive expression, sweet expression. Source: “Glands and Sub-Glands”, Yoga Psychology, P.R. Sarkar, Ananda Marga Publications (1994). (An oral source says Shrii Sarkar commented that because lying is rampant today it may be established as the 51st propensity of the human mind.)

plexi situated along the spine. A significant part of the functioning of yoga exercises (*asanas*) is to harmonise the functioning of propensities, by regulating the secretion from endocrine and lymphatic glands (page 234) and strengthening the nervous system, so that the corresponding propensities may be easily controlled in psychic and spiritual practices.

The Meaning of Priority

According to the ancient Shiva Samhitá scripture, Shiva the yogic master, stated emphatically: “The first key to success is ‘I must succeed!’—firm determination.”²⁵⁰ It is not enough to only try.

After years of ascetic meditation, it was still not really clear to Buddha what it was that he wanted to achieve. This led to some bewilderment on his part and he was exhausted. After taking some simple food, he went back into his meditation pose and uttered: “Until I attain the highest realisation, which is rare even in hundreds of lives, I will not budge an inch from this posture, even if my skin, flesh and bones dry up and my body perishes.”²⁵¹

It is an example to be followed in any situation. A manager of one thousand persons does not have a thousand jobs, but only one: to succeed. Similarly, a performer can engage millions successfully if there is singularity of purpose. The one-pointed approach guarantees success for good and bad people alike. The securely anchored singular subjectivity “I shall succeed” provides all the space in the world for objective problems to be sorted out. It is when the mind, for conscious or subconscious reasons, is split that inner problems set in. Inner problems are like a fifth column,* disastrous to one’s fundamental strength. Outer problems will always be there, but as long as one’s thinking is one and whole, subjective problems will not arise and one will be fine.

* As four army columns moved on Madrid during the Spanish Civil War, a general referred to his militant supporters within the capital as his “fifth column,” intent on undermining the ruling regime from within.

When we are split within ourselves, consciously or subconsciously, problems seep in wherever there is space for them to do so. As long as the thought is one and whole there is no room for problems. "I will succeed" is an undivided idea. "I will succeed if ..." is at best a two-piece idea if not of more parts. Divided thoughts are not really useful. Yes, in life we will have to consider many things. Yet, the difference between a divided consideration and a whole one is decisive. Divided: "I will succeed if ..." Undivided: "In order to succeed, I shall have to put in such and such efforts, and I will do it, and if any other challenges come up along the way I will deal with them, too, as required!" The practical difference between the two is that by the former success is subordinated to chance, which is an abstract, while by the latter concrete effort is subordinated to success.

When thoughts divide and gradually come to pieces, problems will arise in the form of internal conflicts between the different psychic pieces. Such mental problems are many, many times harder to fix than external objective ones. The secret is to remain one and whole within. Shrii Shrii Anandamurti commented that with many priorities, one will not be able to achieve any of them, whereas one will easily achieve a single priority. In his view, the Supreme Subjectivity is the only viable priority towards which all other matters should be directed.²⁵²

*Realised people are never confused at the sight of the endless diversities of nature. Rather, the unity behind this diversity is more discernible to their divine vision. What appears to be many in the outer world is internally one. ... Intelligent people understand the self-contained eternal stance of Supreme Consciousness behind the changing forms and fully establish themselves spiritually. The wise through spiritual practice, ardent devotion and sincerity will move along the path of supreme synthesis and merge in the original stance of Supreme Consciousness. They will realise that they are neither the mind nor the organs, nor the inferences, but an unending flow of consciousness and bliss.*²⁵³

Methodical Thinking

Some methods of meditation have as their goal to stop the flow of thoughts. Being instructed to put all thoughts aside is like placing a pot of potatoes and water on the stove without turning the heat on. Nothing of significance takes place. Sooner or later the mind will react to this vacuum by thinking: “food”, “nourishment”, “sustenance”. This reaction of the mind may take any form—any “food” may be accepted. Mental passivity is in fact a static force.

The mind does not thrive in a vacuum. Rather, it loves an engaging environment. If given a constructive, positive direction the mind will progress, if not it will try to create its own out of its inherent reactive driving forces. Either way, it is the nature of the mind to keep engaged and not be passive. The human heart wants dynamism and rich content, not the abnegation of life. A comprehensive ideology for struggling people should therefore be positive, life-affirming and activating, not escapist. The human heart feels it is the child of universal all-embracing consciousness, and it wants most of all to realise it.

One moves from a crude stage to a more subtle stage by transformation, not by negation or escapism. The reality is that everything in existence is an expression of blissful, pure consciousness and we have not yet realised this truth to its fullest extent. Deep inside, the mind is acutely aware of this fact. Until the mind gets a proper method of contemplation or meditation it will allow its mutative tendency to keep it busy in the outer world, moving from one thing to the next, making one very tired.

Being open to making mental effort is all-important. Little is achieved by becoming passive. It is possible to manoeuvre one's consciousness into a momentary quiet corner by “letting thoughts just pass by”. This is what some insomniacs do to fall asleep, “counting sheep jumping over a wall”. By this dull process, the minds get bored, goes into a lull, and falls asleep. This is also the principle behind singing sweet nonsense lullabies to children to make them sleep. As soon as one gets out of that lull, ordinary thoughts are back with a vengeance. It is like having being off work over the weekend—

come Monday and it is back again to the mill. Pacifying, passive mental processes are not paths to higher states of mind. They are relaxation exercises with just a short-term effect. If not otherwise engaged, some people may generate a dependency on such relaxational fixes instead of getting used to transforming their mind-stuff properly into subtle subjectivity.

Transform and Refine

A method is a comprehensive, systematic procedure for accomplishing or approaching something. Tug of war contests, for instance, are often won by the team with the most coordinated pulling. Even full-blown wars are often not won by superior military machinery but by strategy, local knowledge, and motivation.

Professionals, such as plumbers, engineers, teachers, etc., work according to established methods. If one proceeds to paint a wall without first making an assessment of any need for stabilizing the wall, hole-filling, priming, sanding, etc., the final result may prove largely unsatisfying. Similarly, we may view practical self-development as the last link in a chain.

Spiritual meditation is a comprehensive effort that includes acquiring practical knowledge of the workings of organs and glands, and about their relation to the mechanisms and structure of psycho-spiritual plexi (cakras), coordinating various functions of body and mind. The method even starts well ahead of any attempt at meditative thinking. Preparatory, priming activities include proper diet and exercise, ethical lifestyle, time-management, selecting a suitable place for meditation practice, and more. For instance, some novices are fine with early morning meditation while others find evenings more useful; some find they really need to alter or adjust their diet in order to be able to practice, others are fine with their existing regime, etc. In the course of time, when genuine understanding of the value of self-discipline grows, such initial concerns and differentiations vanish. They all integrate seamlessly into the main method.

Spiritually-oriented work on the mind is a progressive effort. In the process of transforming crude consciousness into one more subtle, the most subtle psychic state will eventually merge into the soul. In order to succeed, one requires techniques that actually work at the various stages of the path. A simple method of merely attempting to be present will not work out neither at the crude, intellectual, supramental and still more subtle planes. What is required for most people is a wholesome, all-round systemic method of managing both clash and cohesion. Most of all a goal of tremendous inspiration is needed, which can serve to transform everything and anything of one's life into the Supreme.

Spiritual Thinking

A man had lost his four dear brothers to a grave forest spirit. This funereal spirit gave the man a choice. If he could answer a few questions correctly he would get his brothers back. But with only a single answer he, too, would lose his life. The man agreed to those stern terms.

One by one the questions were asked, and the man replied satisfactorily to each. At last, only one question was left.

"What is the greatest wonder in the world?" the forest spirit wanted to know.

The man took a minute to think about it before he answered: "Everyday people see the dead being brought to the cremation ground, and yet they continue to live as if they shall never die."

The forest spirit beamed, revealing itself to be the God of Death, blessed the man, and returned his brothers to him.²⁵⁴

From the Crude Known to the Subtle Unknown

A real challenge of seekers is that they often feel overburdened with crude driving forces accrued from previous primitive existences. "Why is there so much dirt when the spiritual path is supposed to be so beautiful and pure?" Also, due to lack of experience there is no

clear impression of any higher life or any constructive understanding of what it takes and how one should act to get there. At the beginning of our spiritual journey not many of us have had higher experiences! We are moving from crude towards subtle, and are therefore severely short of subtle driving forces derived from higher experiences. Due to these reasons our ego is hardly able to link everyday realities with any higher consciousness or remarkable insights. Rather, our primitive instincts and other inherent driving forces (*samskaras*) keep telling us to look outside of ourselves instead of searching inside.

As already noted, it is only when numerous processes of physical and psychic conflicts and cohesions have made the mind-stuff subtler that information from the higher strata starts to flood the mind. At these more mature stages, the mind-stuff gets gradually illuminated, and the person's discriminatory powers and higher consciousness awaken. Until such blessed moments occur frequently, genuine spiritual practices depend largely on continuous self-purification by strict observance of a moral code and a conducive lifestyle, regular daily efforts for inspiration and meditation, and selfless service.

The more advanced stages are obviously both more stimulating and challenging than the ordinary ones. On the one hand, real progress is being made and genuine inspiration is felt. One may even feel exceptionally insightful! On the other, some of the remaining imprints of the now floodlit mind-stuff may appear crude and hard to deal with. Some spiritual aspirants may give up because the good experiences seem to have ended in spite of all the efforts having been made. Put that into perspective! After thousands of crude lives, a few days, months and perhaps years of struggle on one's spiritual path are upsetting...

Patience is indeed a prime virtue of the spiritually minded. Difficult experiences are no reason to give up any effort; rather, they are harbingers of good times to come. Whatever the quality of one's driving forces, the spiritual aspirant will have to spend them in order to get ahead, the goal being the arrival at the destination. The American Buddhist writer Jack Kornfield published a book to that

effect, titled *After the Ecstasy, the Laundry*. Shrii Shrii Anandamurti elucidated this reality:

We often notice that after initiation a sincere practitioner suddenly experiences tremendous pain or pleasure. The initial stage of a spiritual aspirant's life is quite troublesome. Those who suddenly feel tremendous happiness become so absorbed in this blissful state that they completely forget their ideology, and those who suffer immense torture sometimes leave the path due to their inability to face such difficulties. A true practitioner must remain unaffected by both pain and pleasure. It should be understood that only through pain and pleasure can one's reactive momenta be destroyed and a new bundle of driving forces (karmáshaya) dominated by consciousness be created.²⁵⁵

The Shadow

The self-inherited crude driving forces, which humans carry from their own previous existences, need to be spent as fuel in elevating processes. In this way we will be able to transform from crude to subtle. Trying to evade or escape from one's inherent crudity will not only not suffice but may actually send the person to the hell reserved for those who suppress their darker side. Instead, we should embrace it in a transformation of love.

Our reactive driving forces await their moments of expression. The mind is their store-house and therefore knows them well. Our mind whispers to us: "Soon they will express themselves, be ready..."

There was a magnificent riding horse who had developed a difficult temper to the point where it no longer allowed anyone to mount it. Even the most experienced of riders failed to get onto the horse. A young Macedonian prince named Alexander offered to try. First, he studied the horse. He noted that all the other riders had approached the horse from the side towards the spectators so that everybody would see clearly what was taking place. The sun however shone from the other side, and the prince observed that the horse was troubled by the shadows on the

ground. By leading the horse to an area where the neither the shadow of the prince nor of the horse itself would be noticeable to the horse, the young prince was able to mount and ride the horse. The magnificent animal was afraid of its own shadow!

The best way to tackle any fear is to face it head on.²⁵⁶ Leaving fear to itself, or denying it, amounts to repression, suppression and escapism. Such approaches result in a negative version of oneself and of what one really should do in life. This is how the concept of Satan crept into some religions. As there was no practical way of transforming negativity into positivity, there arose a need for placing that evil somewhere, and Satan was introduced. Satan is an objectivation of the extroversial cognitive trend, and represents the opposite of what one should actually be doing.

The Swiss psychologist Carl Gustav Jung (1875-1961) termed the objectivated part of us that is unconscious or mostly subconscious as “the Shadow”. There are many known cases of spiritual aspirants who lost out to their own shadow, which they themselves had nourished as a result of their defective methods and courses of action. Influenced by their own dark driving forces they made use of techniques and methods that did not transform crude into subtle, but ended up in the reverse direction in pursuit of resources, reputation, status, etc. An old North American story tells:

An old woman taught her grandchild about life. “A battle is fought inside me,” she told the girl. “It is a terrible fight between two wolves. One is evil—she is anger, envy, despondency, anguish, greed, arrogance, self-pity, guilt, grudge, inferiority, lies, haughtiness, and ego.”

The old one kept quiet for a moment before she continued: “The other is good—she is joy, peace, love, hope, serenity, humility, goodness, well-intentioned, empathic, generous, true, compassionate, faithful. The same battle goes on in you—and in all other persons, too.”

The grandchild mused for a little while and then asked her grandmother: “Which of the wolves is going to win?”

The old one replied: “The one you nourish.”



13

Memory

Memory follows knowledge like a shadow. As we learnt in the previous chapter, memory is the recreation of things already perceived whereas knowledge is subjectivisation of external objectivity and is of two kinds: internal projection of physicality, and internal projection of spirituality.²⁵⁷ The first definition, of memory, is by Indian philosopher Patanjali who lived about two thousand years ago,²⁵⁸ the second, of knowledge, by Shrii Shrii Anandamurti. Memory may be of any experience that has turned into knowledge.

Physical Memory

Memory may be physical, psychic or spiritual. Any memory triggered in the physical structure may be said to be physical, such as that revived by the residual pain of a broken limb, or by the sensation of tasty food lingering after a happy meal; you continue to experience the meal in your body and it brings back memories.

Cerebral Memory

The physical brain does not have a very large capacity for memory, its storage capacity being severely limited. Even information of a few hours and even minutes ago needs to be disposed of, as the brain all along has its hands full with fresh incoming information.²⁵⁹ The mind, with its unlimited storage capacity, is the main processor of incoming and outgoing information, not the brain. The brain is the

main substation of the mind, allowing the mind to interact with the outside world.²⁶⁰

Regarding memory storage, Shrii Shrii Anandamurti commented that every human feeling cannot be lastingly recorded or outlined in one or the other parts of the brain. "If this were true, the brain would have to be very large and new cells would have to be continually created in order to cope with the progressive demands of feelings and sensibilities every moment."²⁶¹ The lasting abode of feelings is the mind.

When the basis of the memory is physical brain cells, it is called cerebral memory. For instance, if you watch a person turning a corner and are asked a couple of minutes later about the colour of the coat he or she was wearing, you may be able to provide the correct answer. Whereas if this question is asked a week later, you may need some time to reply as you will have to conduct a search in your memory to try to find the answer. As police detectives know well, the difference of opinion among persons who observe the same incident can be challenging. The reason for it is that people mix up the imprint of incoming sensations with imprints already stored in their mind.

Short-term memory is retrieved from brain cells where it is stored along with a limited amount of other such short-term memory.²⁶² Long-term memory, on the other hand, is found only in the mind-stuff along with all the memory of your entire life, most of it stored in the unconscious. As long as the memory of the colour of the coat is still stored in some of your brain cells, you will not waste much time in giving the correct reply. Later, depending on your psychic memory skills, you may or may not be able to sort out the memory of the correct colour in your mind-stuff due to the sheer amount of memory stored there.

A few people manage to get it right most of the time. Many soon develop blurred recollections because they are not very good at differentiating between short- and long-term memory. The short-term cerebral memory of brain cells is constantly pushed back to long-term storage in the mind-stuff. The mind-stuff is our permanent memory bank, whereas the brain works like a very busy front desk. The brain's limited capacity for short-term memory is

due to its physical smallness whereas the mind-stuff due to its mental nature has infinite storage space.

Every organ of the physical body is limited in power and scope, and the brain is no exception to this natural law. The memory in the mind-stuff—psychically stored reactive driving forces—is expressed by our imaginative power working through brain cells.²⁶³ In the absence of a functioning brain the human mind cannot express itself in the outer world. No matter how much memory the mind-stuff may hold, nothing is expressed unless the brain is involved. As already indicated, if all our memory were to be held by the brain, we would require colossally huge brains, which would have made it perhaps impossible for us to stand up and move around physically on our own. Still, whatever expressive capacity the brain has is pivotal on processing the mind's memory. That is, we express just a little bit of our mind's capacity at a time through our limited brain and physical body.

Psychic Memory

The memory found only in the mind-stuff, and not in the brain cells, is termed as psychic memory. Remembering it is a tough job for the purely mental mind, constantly squeezed as it is between two imposing realities:

1. On one hand, the constant infringement of the crude mental mind who desires to take one's awareness towards the physical world, and
2. The vastness of the memory stored in the mind-stuff, on the other.

It may be the memory of anything—physical, psychic or spiritual—but the fact that we need to retrieve it from the mind-stuff means it is psychic. Psychic memory is long-term memory. It is harder for us to retrieve such memory as it is stored only in the mind-stuff where we do not get any help or clue from the body cells or

nerves, as we would receive in the case of lingering taste on the tongue, or a recent touch on the skin.

Both inner and outer devices are available to the purely mental mind for retrieving psychic memory. The outer world may contribute to memory in numerous ways, as when one visits one's childhood home after many years to revive memories from long ago. Music and movies from olden days may be played to activate stored mental imprints from that time, which is regularly done to activate aged people. A physical clock or a calendar be other sources of outer suggestion that may remind us about specific tasks.

The memory of everything that has happened to us are still with us, only not in the short-term memory in the brain. Activating such memory is the same as activating a force, such as when we connect to a source of electricity. In reality, our memories are our inherent driving forces. Exposed to memories from younger days, aged people may experience revitalisation. It is as if the mutative forces of youth return to them, if only for a short while, to stage a battle against the ever-increasing darkness of static tendency that is about to take complete hold. Much old memory may be hard to remember not only because the memory no longer is stored in physical brain cells, but also because physical environments and circumstances change so that even those do not offer much assistance in the process of remembering.

Some people are instinctively and emotionally overly attached to their physical body. With the ageing of the physical organs, including the brain, it becomes increasingly difficult for those people to remember even simple things, such as a recent message or conversation. Older, wilting bodies do not contribute to memory in the same way as they used to, and one is left to depend on the mind-stuff itself, the big memory bank. That memory account may be well lined with innumerable memories of a life well lived, but the physical access to it is deteriorating. That is why older people often remember things from long back, but not recent things. Only those parts of the psychic memory that somehow were kept intact are functioning at that stage. The intelligent and wise, therefore, learn early on to base their memory more on the mind-stuff and less on the physical. That

is, matters that must be remembered should be noted clearly and systematically inside and not only be linked up with the outside. It is a psychic technique. Stuff that really matters should be inscribed methodically in the active mind.

In the preceding chapter, we learnt that that knowledge should be imparted in a methodical way and not in a galloping style, because the gaps created by imparting education at sixes and sevens will destroy intellectual continuity. Memory is strengthened by the same principle. Its continuity is ensured by coherence; not by a mentally rambling approach but by a constructive one. Therefore, be sure to remember properly things that matter to you, and the rest will follow. Memory will grow by leaps and bounds for those who take to building it methodically.

Shaping Memory

As we now know, we live in a world of relativities. This fact reflects naturally on our memory. There is no such thing as two identical recollections of one and the same event. Everybody enjoys or suffers (from) their own memory. Memory is really a propensity.²⁶⁴ In fact, we all shape our memory knowingly or unknowingly. Some remember carefully, others do not. Also, some choose to remember certain things and not other things.

Sometimes people fault others for having a selective memory. “She always remembers X but never Y.” Selective memory may actually serve a person well. Always remembering the bright side of others, and never paying attention to negative points needlessly, is a virtue. On the other hand, selective memory may also be ruinous. For instance, ignoring hard realities may lead to serious problems, such as a habit of spending more than one earns. For this reason, many choose, knowingly or unknowingly, to be the active creators of their own memory. Thus, we see that the memories of some seem to be bathed in eternal sunshine while others end up carrying grudges mostly.

The physical body, with its nervous and glandular complexities, seems to be playing a major part in the shaping of our memory and

indeed our self-esteem. Vicious mental circles may be short-cut and their content transformed by cultivation of a wholesome lifestyle that includes proper diet, suitable exercises, and meaningful activities.

*We forget by night-time what we ate in the morning, simply because we give it little importance. We might enjoy the food while eating, but immediately afterwards it becomes unimportant. Hence it is said that in order to improve your memory, nothing in the world should be slighted. Everything should be given equal value.*²⁶⁵

Ego and Memory

Some enjoy stronger memory than others. You may have experienced persons who love to wallow in their memories. If you ask such a person about the actual meaning of a particular recollection, he or she may give you the background for their remembering something. Perhaps you will come to the conclusion that for such persons remembering something has to do with strengthening or confirming their self-image or their understanding of themselves; i.e., not of their pure self, but of particular elements in their mind-stuff with which they identify strongly.

Memory is a force and therefore has consequences. If the ego wants to avoid a particular memory and its consequences it may lead to arrested or malfunctioning memory. Many, who lie habitually or for some defensive or offensive reason demonstrates crooked, irrational, unrealistic thinking, have a malfunctioning memory. They may remember odd things having to do with their more or less sorry selves, but remember little of common affairs and current news. As most of their mental energy goes into trying to keep track of their own petty complexities, there is little time and energy to keep up with the rest of the world. Needless to say, such self-obsessed people usually do not venture far in academic pursuits or in any constructive endeavour that would require their continuous presence.

Spiritual practitioners are able to transform crude propensities into more subtle, elevating ones. They strengthen their memory in that greater inner existential world that has become theirs. The many

examples of serious criminals and degenerates who turned their lives around and became ardent spiritualists testify to the immense powers of proper selective memory. A single strong, powerful constructive focus may transform all destructive, debilitating driving forces.

Short, Long and No Memory

Various brain cells are involved in various processes: action, sensing, feeling, learning, knowledge, etc. The brain with its cells constitutes a physical organ in itself, the central physical organ. It is a very busy factory; while the brain represents just 2% of a person's total body weight, it accounts for 20% of the body's energy use.²⁶⁶ No wonder then that after 60 years of age, our hardworking brain starts to show clear signs of wear and tear. By that time the brain has already reproduced far fewer brain cells than it did in younger years.²⁶⁷ Its ability to remember and memorise weakens significantly. Those who have made regular attempts through life to strengthen their psychic memory power may enjoy that power throughout life, if health permits, while others may choose to write notes for as long as possible.

As mentioned, memory is prolonged by repetition. Yet, one usually wants to forget whatever one was forced to do under pressure. On the other hand, that which is taken up on an agreeable basis may remain as easily accessible memory for a long time. That is, memory is strengthened by empathic affirmation. For instance, you may have taken a decision to do a particular task. However, several other duties and assignments are already due and you only have so much time every day. In such situations, decisions that are regularly affirmed will have the most chance to be carried out. Thus, your job now is to sort out which of those duties and assignments will be done by autopilot anyway, and which ones will need your active attention. We should always reinforce our priority.

*You must under all circumstances give first priority and primary importance to dharma. Victory is assured to those who put dharma above everything else. Under no circumstances can they be defeated. Never have they been, nor are they now, nor will they be in future.*²⁶⁸

Spiritual Memory

Spiritual memory consists of memories of spiritual states and experiences.²⁶⁹ It is regarded as wise to revive and evolve one's spiritual memory as much as possible, and allow dispiriting moods and irrelevant memories to pass into silence. Due to fickleness, inattentiveness, and distractedness we do not remember much of life anyway. So, why not try to remember that which is really useful to our growth and development, and not that which is patently useless and even detrimental to our progress?

Extra-cerebral Memory

Between one life and the next, the disembodied mind floats somewhere in the universe along with its suspended accumulated reactive driving forces. It is as if the mind is on holiday from evolution. There is neither any forward nor backward movement, nor is there any interaction with any outside or inside environment. In that disembodied state the mind's driving forces have no outlet; without a physical body there is no way the mind can express its body-based reactive driving forces. The disembodied mind between two lives is therefore looking for a suitable body with which it can express itself. Fortunately, the ever-present supreme soul is onto the problem and has already given the job to the qualifying principle, who by her mutative powers is checking everywhere for that suitable embryo and environment. The process may take a minute or could take a very long time depending on availability; the accumulated driving forces must get an opportunity for their proper expression somewhere in the universe.²⁷⁰

Throughout this process, the mind carries the memory of its preceding life as well as of its entire existence back for as long it has existed.²⁷¹ This very long memory keeps accumulating life after life. It is our existential biography down to the minutest detail. However, this comprehensive memory does not penetrate into the conscious mind of most people. Like the rest of the physical body, the brain is restricted to this present life only. It is not able to convey any of the vast unconscious memory of our entire existence since the dawn of our being. Yet, that information exists within us all, and in some a bit of it sometimes appears in or seeps into the subconscious mind.

Infants and little children up to a certain age may remember fragments and even segments of their earlier lives, due to the fact that they are still not fully integrated physically and psychically into their present life. Some children are even able to talk about their previous life and get their stories verified. Often, however, parents misunderstand and dismiss such tales as tittle-tattle and laugh it off, or they may react uneasily to the weird things their child may come up with. When the sun of life has risen a bit higher over the horizon, such extraordinary memories usually vanish like the morning dew. This is a blessing, for if a person were to live a normal life and simultaneously had to live with memories of things that took place previous to his or her birth, it would necessarily spell troubles. By the age of five most children go through such developmental changes and mental socialisation that render any previous life memories inaccessible for good. In the process of further physical and psychic growth, the conscious mind is increasingly carried away by the increasing demands of its present life.

In a very few, past-life memories may last wholly or in part up to the stage of puberty, after which only the insane and the holy remember their earlier lives. Should an ordinary person remember anything of it at all, it would take the form of dreamy visions and strange dreams that are never identified as actual memory. A normal person would become abnormal if burdened with such impossible baggage in his or her present life already challenged by numerous ups and downs.²⁷²



14

Evolving Psychic Potentialities

In whatever we engage ourselves we gather knowledge and experience, the systematic acquisition of which is called education. Shrii Sarkar opined that “educated are those who have learnt much, remembered much and made use of their learning in practical life”.²⁷³

*The real meaning of education is trilateral development—simultaneous development in the physical, mental and spiritual realms of human existence. This development should enhance the integration of the human personality. By this, dormant human potentialities will be awakened and put to proper use.*²⁷⁴

The Visnu Purana text, known for its mythological moral and spiritual inspiration, informs us that true education is liberating:

*Only actions that help in avoiding attachments are true actions, and only knowledge that liberates is true education. Any other action results in exhaustion only, and any other education leads to exhibiting vocational skills.*²⁷⁵

In this chapter we will be looking at essential aspects of the development of our psychic potentialities:

1. Acquiring new skills and knowledge
2. Rationalisation
3. Diversion and transformation
4. Siddhis, occult powers
5. Apexed, pinnacled psychology

1. Acquiring New Skills and Knowledge

The human mind is shifting and changeable, aiming all along at fresh targets and goals. Actually, we always want something new and wonderful, however challenging or remote it may appear at present. In the same way as conflicts are essential to development (page 79), our ongoing search for further progress and the necessary steps we need to take in order to equip ourselves for it, aid us in personal and collective growth. As concluded earlier, struggle and progress are the two sides of the same coin.

Life is improved and made more comfortable by overcoming limitations, hindrances and challenges. The fact that the mind is restless and in continuous change means that it has the potential for disciplining itself to achieving what we want. Our mind may be trained and educated in various ways and in different areas and spheres.

Metaphysical Liberation

Most people are well acquainted with physical bondages. Examples of being in physical bondage are an inability to lift a heavy object and not having sufficient money to purchase something. Metaphysical knowledge delivers us from physical bondages. What is metaphysics? *Meta* (from Greek) means “behind”, “transcending”. In compound words, like metadata and in chemical terms like metabolism, meta means “comprehensive” and “beyond”.

The science of mind uses the term metaphysics about abilities beyond the physical and which relate to something physical, such as the art of cooking, agriculture, architecture, etc. In the same way, the terms metapsychic and metaspiritual are used for still subtler existential resources and potentialities beyond the physical limitations of time, space and person.²⁷⁶

Metaphysical potentialities are developed by practical and academic training.

Psychic Bondage

Not knowing the significance of something is psychic bondage. If we try to know the meaning of a word, or make attempts at setting a relation right without succeeding, we remain in such bondage.²⁷⁷ Psychic bondage is overcome by striving for new understanding. Proper intellectual and intuitional pursuits deliver us from psychic bondage; they are our metapsychic resources and potentialities.

Spiritual Bondage

What is spiritual bondage? Imagine you receive news that you have inherited a very wealthy relative in another country. You become most hopeful. The following day, however, you are informed that certain laws make it impossible to transfer all of the inheritance to you. Either you may receive a small amount without further ado or you must go to that country and settle there in order to receive the entire inheritance. Now you are divided. On one hand, you would very much like to receive that entire inheritance. On the other, you do not feel to live in a remote place that may be very different to the one where you were brought and continue to live. In the end, you decide to take the small amount and stay where you are—and for the rest of your life you cannot but think of all that you have missed. You feel that you inherited so much and never received it.

Spiritual bondage is the state of not having achieved unicity with the Supreme in spite the fact that each and every entity of this observable universe is a part of the cosmic self, of the supreme cognitive principle.²⁷⁸ “When I am one with the Supreme, why don’t I feel oneness with it?” “I know in theory that everything is one, but I don’t feel it in practice!” Such agony is spiritual bondage.

Psycho-spiritual development takes the mind towards a greater dimension. It does away with old prejudices, small-mindedness, etc., without requiring one to leave one’s hearth and home. Gradually it transforms one’s microcosmic existence into the Macrocosmic. Such higher development transforms mind into something bigger than itself—sensuality into ego, ego into intuition, intuition into soul.

The Supreme Consciousness is our metaspiritual essence and core. Because the spiritual is infinite, it is absolutely correct that no one knows the exact size and scope of it. The mind loses itself in the spiritual dimension and becomes one with the existential meaning, greatness, presence and blessedness that it hankers for. As the old story about the salt doll who went to measure the depths of the ocean tells us (page 263), no one is left to tell the story.

Getting to know that infinite spirit is not a matter of calculation. Nobody knows when and where spiritual realisation will happen to him or her. However, when we are in that process, and feel strongly that we have not yet achieved the goal, then we experience spiritual bondage. When we realise that we are in such bondage; devoid of sufficient existential meaning, greatness, presence, and blessedness, we take to striving actively for our spiritual fulfilment. This is the longing for the Great. If we do not heed its call once it sounds out to us, we feel we may drown in worldliness. This fact was realised by the founders of Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) who developed a successful 12-step program towards sobriety centred on surrendering to the Supreme.²⁷⁹ To the one “with a close relative in that other country” there is either one way or no way. All spiritualists feel like that, irrespective of their background and type.

Psychic Limitations

There is immense difference between psychic and psycho-spiritual development. Psychic development is available in infinite amounts but its scope is limited. A sleepless person may count sheep jumping over a fence in large numbers. Others will not feel incapacitated by that, there are enough of such sheep for everyone. In theory there is no end to mental sheep but sooner or later the mind grows tired of them and falls asleep. This is the scope of mental wealth. It makes one satisfied and sleepy as far as spirituality is concerned.

There is an infinite supply of psychic, imaginary wealth. If you have only one chair in your house, you may imagine a hundred others, possibly each with a welcome guest sitting on. By such psychic efforts we may generate a lot of things, infinitely if you say

so, but never attain any degree of infinite peace or eternalness. Psychic wealth may be in unlimited supply but it is still relative—changeable—and therefore unable to still our thirst for the absolute.

Ratios

In the first chapter we came to know that the physical universe is a tiny part of the cosmos. Most of the cosmos is psychic and spirituo-psychic. It means that a matter-oriented mind; i.e., the average consciousness of ordinary living beings, realises only a wee bit of the total cosmic reality. Fortunately, there is a solution to any shortcoming. If someone lives on 100 square meters where only 20 m² are lit up, the potentiality for further illumination is 80 m². In that case there is a lot to gain from further illumination. The ratio of our bright side to the dark side is probably one to a million, and possible a million times more than that. Our job is to transform existential darkness into useful energy or fuel to be spent during our journey towards perfection. Shrii Shrii Anandamurti commented:

It is not enough to read books, scriptures—one will have to be practical, will have to do something in practical life. You need to move from the fundamental negativity to the fundamental positivity.²⁸⁰

The good news is that it is within our capacity to transform and enlighten all of that fundamental individual and collective negativity. Human beings have enormous potentiality, and the mind is about realising that entire potentiality.

Ages

When going over thinking, we numbered four existential stages: fast asleep, awakening, arising, and moving ahead. The struggle at each of those stages is reflected in our bio-psychological life phases. When a little one first starts to crawl, there is conflict between body and environment. The knees hurt and not much is going smoothly. After a few days, crawling is mastered and gets up to speed. This brings a

new cohesion between the child and its environment, a harmony soon to be shattered by new upsets. Thereafter, the child learns to walk and run! All the while, fresh analyses are to be dissected and new syntheses worked out.

From early on we are being fostered and trained. Our parents and guardians are our first teachers. Human development accelerates through childhood and adolescence when our social circle also expands. The young grow at a speed that will not be repeated again later in life. In youth, mental development supersedes and transforms physical growth. From about 40 of years of age, physical decay gradually sets in, while one's mental capacity may remain strong for a couple of decades more. By 70, most people's mental capacity diminishes radically, resulting in memory failure, difficulties in perception, further nerve- and motor decay, etc.²⁸¹ At that stage, it becomes difficult to learn new physical and psychic skills. However, the mind may be kept fresh and agile by continual spiritual practices. How is that possible?

Life Planning

The chapter on memory stated that those who learn early to depend on their psychic memory will enjoy a greater and more long-lasting memory than those who depend on the physical body and material devices for memory. According to longevity and happiness researcher Dan Buettner,²⁸² the five musts of retaining mental vitality in later parts of one's life are:

1. Regular exercises;
2. Constructive mental attitude;
3. Proper diet;
4. Learn new things; and
5. Be social.

All these are included in the eightfold system of spiritual practice. The first lesson of Ananda Marga meditation itself, involving withdrawal through the physical and psychic worlds into the mind's

core to link with its spiritual inspiration, is both a prevention and cure of mental decay and suffering.

Sports people and everybody else, who in the race of life bet on the physical body, invariably experience that their highly priced physical asset gets worn out and decrepit long before their spirit does: “My body is old but I feel young inside.” The same is the case in the psychic arena, although the onset of mental decay is generally felt at least a decade or longer after that of the physical. For sincere spiritual practitioners there is no such thing as spiritual decay. Quite the opposite, in most cases the later part of life is the season of spiritual blossoming and profound realisations—provided the ground work has been laid down during the formative years. Indeed, the early years are foundational followed by later phases of realisation and conclusion. It is therefore advised that a simple daily spiritual practice is integrated into everyday life even as the child begins to attend school.²⁸³ At the age of twelve, when the person is a bit more mature, standard practices and observances should be explained and commenced, including a constructive lifestyle of proper diet, exercises, and discipline as required and desired.

Completing one’s basic education, taking up professional work, fulfilling once social obligations—all with their constant ups and downs—while living a proper mundane life in general, demand a high degree of attention. Entering into prolonged profound states of consciousness at this stage is rather the exception than the rule. In most cases, deeper realisations come in later years when more and more hours may be devoted to self-introspection and spiritual inquiry. The trick is that the ability to do so should be established in the earlier years. To start spiritual meditation at a late stage when one’s body is worn out and the mind is packed with various and even bitter experiences of a long and hard life, is not advised.

Start early! Alluding to this virtue, Shrii Shrii Anandamurti quipped that he would rather work in the morning and rest at night than being left with pending work at a late stage. Still, a life of self-realisation and selfless service never stops, not even when age no longer merely knocks on the door but seems to be threatening to tear

down the entire house. In this regard, he remarked that it is well and good to die while working, but even better to work while dying.²⁸⁴

2. Rationalisation

*The scope of rationality and rationalisation should be increased more and more, and for this, unnecessary waves should be removed from the plane of physicality. From the psychic sphere also, unnecessary waves are to be removed. This will remove many burdens from the mind. "I must not bother about petty things, because that will waste my time"—people should remember this. This removal or rather withdrawal of unnecessary and undesirable thoughts emanated from the mind will help you in rationalizing the major portion of your mental faculty, so this must also be practised. The cult of spirituality is a cult of pinnacle order.*²⁸⁵

Dialectics is the movement of contradictory forces and ideas towards higher states of unified being; clashes and cohesions resulting in constructive development. Dialectical processes through thesis, antithesis and synthesis take place on the physical and psychic levels where clashes lead to physical and psychic development. Through rational dialectics, objectivities merge into subjectivity; externalities transform into a greater sense of psychic self, resulting in greater knowledge.

At the psychic level, increasing subjectivity leads to the mind synthesising into enhanced states of itself.²⁸⁶ At the psycho-spiritual level the mind tends towards merging into spirituality. Due to the straightening of mental waves, there are hardly any dialectics at the psycho-spiritual level. In the end, dialectics cease as one singular flow of spirituality commences. In the spiritual realm there are no dialectics at all,²⁸⁷ just a singular flow of love. Thus, human evolution goes through stages of increased subjectivity or subtlety.

Levels of Rationalisation

Rationalisation involves differentiation; to choose some things and not other things in order to allow opportunities to yield improved results. This may be carried out at the physical level, at the psychic level, and also at the psycho-spiritual level²⁸⁸ At the physical level, rationalisation involves doing things in more efficient, time-saving, fruitful ways. Provided the ideology is spiritually-oriented such rationalisation will lead to time being freed up for more meaningful practices. Everybody involved should feel and experience that their life quality is progressively increased with physical rationalisation.

Shrii Sarkar maintained that industrial rationalisation should not be a cause of unemployment. At present the profit-motivation of privately owned industries is the root cause of unemployment.²⁸⁹ In a neohumanistic economic system, where food and other goods and services are produced for consumption and not for profit, unemployment would not arise. Instead of reducing the number of workers, the number of working hours per worker would be reduced freeing up time for subtler pursuits. Everybody needs to work in order to earn purchasing power, and without such universal purchasing power the economy suffers. But this fact is not taken into serious consideration under capitalism, neither in welfare states nor fascistoid regimes, private capitalism nor state capitalism, because the fundamental trend remains towards centralisation of wealth.

The first part of a process of rationalisation, physical or psychic, may involve clearing mess, clutter and chaos. Sometimes we just have to get rid of something that has grown into too much. We discard it or give it a new place and function. To exchange and send for recycling are sometimes appropriate activities in one's inner life.

In the human perspective more meaning results in increased subjectivity. For instance, you may choose to modify or discard one physical activity for another in order to increase the value of your life. The same may be the case on the inner arena, in our psyche. Shrii Sarkar retells a well-known story from Buddha's life:²⁹⁰

A wealthy youth had become attracted by Buddha's teachings and became his disciple. This youth had a friend, a certain rich

merchant, who was engaged in antisocial activities. After his friend became a disciple of Buddha, this rich merchant found himself alone and missing his companion in crime. Finally, unable to restrain himself, he went to where Buddha was giving his discourses. When he drew near Buddha, he started to use rude language and insult him. Buddha only smiled. Finally, the fellow became tired and said:

“Look, I have abused you so much, yet I have not seen the slightest reaction on your part. All my insults are in vain. You could at least get a little angry. Put up some strong protest, then I’ll be satisfied.”

Buddha chuckled and said: “Look. Let’s say you want to give somebody a large amount of money. If the person accepts the offered money, then who does it belong to?”

The merchant answered: “Why, the person to whom I gave the money.”

“Now let us say he does not accept the money. He says, ‘I don’t accept your gift.’ Then who does the money belong to?”

The rich youth replied: “Then my wealth stays with me.”

Then Buddha smiled and said: “The whole time that you were hurling your abuse I was unwilling to accept it. You can keep it.”

“Good Lord! What will I do with so much hateful abuse?” the man said.

“You can wear it proudly as an ornament or use it for whatever else you like,” Buddha replied; “I have nothing to say about it, no objections one way or the other.”²⁹¹

Buddha made a point of rationalising the abuse hurled at him, and the abuser ended up as the receiver of his own abuse.

Discipline

Rationalisation requires individual and collective self-discipline. As the ego itself is characteristically turbulent, given to the crude mental mind as it is, it needs to be supervised if not overruled. Who or what can control the ego?

On the physical plane, discipline and rationalising may have to do with changing one's diet and lifestyle to the better, leaving bad habits to embrace good ones, cease letting oneself be engrossed by X and instead immerse oneself in Y, performing selflessly instead of acting in egotistical ways, selecting constructive focus points for the near future, such as getting up at proper time in the morning, etc. At the collective level, too, there is always a need for improved structuring and increased participation. The ecology movement displays many instances of focusing on collective self-discipline in processes of rationalisation, which gradually have been taken up by the government and local authorities.

At the psychic level, rationalisation may involve an endeavour to quit overthinking and worrying needlessly, to turn dry analysing into fruitful practice, concentrate on one's goal, etc. It is of course a greater good to be able to concentrate on what is substantial than allowing oneself to be marginalised by trivialities. This may sound like a truism but is still sometimes hard to identify and often still harder to do in practice. By transforming uselessness into usefulness, the mind may proceed more freely on the path of increased subjectivisation.

Some have perhaps come to associate discipline with iron discipline but not all discipline is by the rod. Patanjali started his yoga sutras with "Now I shall describe yoga as a discipline".²⁹² In the Vedic world, discipline was defined as "that which leads to welfare". Shrii Shrii Anandamurti commented:

*The rule of regularity against irregularity, of discipline against indiscipline, of integrity against characterlessness, or moral rectitude against moral degeneration—the injunction of all progressive and synthetic movements against any degrading and analytic momentum—is termed the code of discipline.*²⁹³

Behind Every Dogma Stands a Fundamentalist

Psychic rationalisation transforms superstitious blind belief, and narrowminded traditions and practices into truly humane ones.²⁹⁴ Dogmas are constructs that limit human dynamics in any area—

political, economic, social, cultural, religious, and so on. A dogma does not permit mental movement outside of its rigidly drawn boundaries. It is a mental prison. Not only religions, but all sorts of exploitative and reactionary systems are based on dogmas applied to submit people into servitude and passivity. Dogmas and rationality are incompatible, they leave no room for each other. Psychic rationalisation leads to the defeat of dogmas and their supporters. Rationality and rationalisation provide the scope for physical, psychic and psycho-spiritual evolution.²⁹⁵

Everybody knows that religions are based on dogmas, but not everyone knows that dogmas are rampant everywhere today. Instead, we may say that wherever dogmas turn up the atmosphere turns fundamentalist. “There are good and bad people” is such a dogma. Nobody is only good or bad, and everybody has potentiality for doing good. That is why jail for punishment and not for correction is wrong. Dogmas do not allow for the fact that nothing and no one is only bad or good, that everything and everybody have a bright and a dark side to them. Most importantly, dogmas do not make us see that all have the potential to realise supreme consciousness both within and in society.

Dogma is to the world of the thought what the Iron Curtain was to the communist states of Europe.²⁹⁶ Those caught in the fangs of the dogma are just not supposed to look for something liberating outside, and outsiders are not supposed to find out and reveal the faults of that dogmatic thought construct. By their own deadlocked logic dogmas attempt to bypass natural realities. “Everybody is free to make as much money as they like” may appeal tremendously to those bent on acquisition and the greedy. Yet, they cannot explain away the fact that everything created is limited, even resources and money, and that because of this inherent limitation of the creation, very much for a few results in scarcity and lack of development for many others. Therefore, the rational, undogmatic thing is to create a system where everybody’s needs are met, which would include seeing to it that people who want to go ahead in any sphere are allowed to do just that within the measures of reasonability. But dogmatic people never think like this, they never allow for mental

movement beyond the boundaries of their dogmatic thinking. Here are a some more current dogmas:

- “Capitalism = Prosperity” (as if people did not know how to prosper before capitalism).
- “Socialism = Materialism” (as if humanity does not know how to unite for any other reason than crude matter).
- “Capitalists versus Socialists” (as if human life is only “either or” and cannot be “both and”).

Rationalisation at the psycho-spiritual level clears away all sorts of outdated approaches that do not function anymore. Modern human beings, who base their lifestyle on rapidly advancing science and technology, have no patience for superstition and traditions for traditions’ sake. A spiritual method for today cannot be based on the legacy of civilisations or cultural expressions that since long have lost their intrinsic vitality and now only persist by dogma.

3. Diversion and Transformation

A departure from a standard course of action may be an expression of weakness or strength. In either case, the deviation takes place due to internal urge, pressure of circumstances, or both. This means the deviation may be destructive or constructive, self-defeating or emancipating. As when we trivialise something difficult that was suddenly brought up; we may crack a joke to lighten a heavy atmosphere, explain away things to remove uncomfortable attention from someone or something, or serve up a white lie in order to not make someone unhappy.

Deflection is one of those physical tricks of animal life that we have learnt to put to our own psychic purposes. Diversions invariably pop up in social life, and many find it hard to do without them. Psychic defensive deflection has no long-term benefit, because when we push something aside it lives on in our subconscious and will soon again be at the centre of affairs. Such as when we avoid to confront an immoral affront, an evasion which only diminishes our moral

courage and which will soon enough place us in a similar situation forcing us to consider to take a proper stand again, only this time from a position of reduced moral strength. By bending backwards in this way we did not get rid of anything. Our weakness has only been placed in internal storage where it goes on seething and fermenting, quietly feeding on circumstances and surroundings to resurface stronger than ever as soon as the opportunity arises.

The Inner and the Outer

Genuinely considered diversions, on the other hand, are acts of constructive subjective affirmation. Think of a stumbling block. Sometimes we achieve a lot more by moving around it to get ahead instead of trying to break or penetrate whatever it is that blocks our progress. Psychic diversion and transformation may simply consist of avoiding staring at or hearing something detracting—anything that would possibly give rise to an uncontrollable undesirable reaction—and instead focus on something elevating or inspiring.

The Dhammapada contains sayings of Buddha who clearly was conscious of the need to refine the mind. In verse 369, he addresses the monks: “Drain your boat of unnecessary water and it will be light enough to cross this ocean of existence (*sinca bhikkhu imam navam, sittá te lahu messati*).” How does one make his or her “boat” light? In verses 360-361 we find:

Think once before you speak. If you have the eyes to see, cast a quick glance before you look at anything, otherwise, do not look at all, because whatever you see will influence the mind. Don't listen to anything which is not worth hearing. Only listen to that which purifies and elevates the mind.

*O Sadhu, control your eyes, control your ears, control your sense of smell, control your tongue, control your speech. Control your mind, Sadhu; control everything. Then you will never suffer from sorrows.*²⁹⁷

At this point, we may remind ourselves that the subject at hand is not psychology but the science of mind. Here we do not analyse human behaviour, its causes and results, but look at the movement of the mind and its achievements and how they may be optimised.

The Existential Gap

Roberto Assagioli started off his seminal work on the will²⁹⁸ by pointing out the increasing gap between the inner and outer life of human beings. Assagioli opined that the outer bustle today has become so demanding that humans do not only suffer physically and materially, but emotionally, mentally, socially, culturally, and in all conceivable ways.

Fierce imbalance between our outer and inner life causes such suffering. The human being has become a victim of inner weakness, of a lack of inner strength, and has lapsed into and become blinded by outer things, outer technology, outer pressure and power. In order to restore or re-establish the balance of life, human beings must develop their inner powers. Evil is not found in the outer technological forces themselves, but in the ways they are beings used, and in the fact that we have allowed ourselves to be overpowered and enslaved by them.²⁹⁹

The British historian Arnold Toynbee (1889-1975) expressed the same although in a longer time perspective:

*Since the dawn of civilisation there has been a disparity between man's technological progression and his social performance. The advance of technology, particularly the most recent advance during the two centuries 1773-1973, has vastly increased man's wealth and power, and the "morality gap" between man's physical power for doing evil and his spiritual capacity for coping with this power has yawned as wide open as the mythical jaws of hell. During the last 5000 years, the widening "morality gap" has caused mankind to inflict on itself grievous disasters.*³⁰⁰

British philosopher Bertrand Russell (1872-1970) used the terms extrinsic and intrinsic nature to describe these dimensions of our

existence, and linked them to science and culture, respectively.³⁰¹ Indian research scholar Jahnabi Dekka notes:³⁰²

Russell observes that a tendency to appreciate science as a technique rather than as knowledge has become a practice in the society due to which he regretfully utters: "...the intrinsically valuable aspects of science tend to be sacrificed to the merely useful, and little attempt is made to preserve that leisurely systematic survey by which the finer quality of mind is formed and nourished". What Russell asserts by these words is that the cultural aspect of science is necessarily associated with the formation of finer quality of the mind, and culture understood in this sense is not compatible with the merely useful aspect of science.

Shrii Sarkar, in his first discourse on neohumanism,³⁰³ too addresses this critical issue; proper adjustment of inner and outer spheres of human existence or the lack of it

The inner psychic movement of human beings, their existential awareness, is completely rhythmic. A portion of whatever happens in the outer world, in outer existence, is adjusted with the inner psychic rhythm, and another portion is not. When the happenings in the outer world are not adjusted with the inner psychic rhythm, one feels some distress. You may have experienced in your personal life that sometimes you feel very uneasy in the company of certain people, but you feel quite comfortable with another group. When the rhythm of your movement in the external world, the rhythm of your lifestyle, conforms to your inner psychic rhythm, you feel comfortable. But when these rhythms do not correspond, you feel uncomfortable. For progress in the external world there should be clear guidelines, a clear and well-integrated philosophical base. The society often lacks this; and that is why people tend to lose balance in social life. When those who have developed intellectually come in contact with an uncongenial environment, they find it difficult to adjust.

Nourishment

Sometimes the environment helps us, other times not. When it does not, we should make necessary adjustments or changes to stay on course to achieve our goal. One's subjectivity should never be lost in crude matter. Thus, there is a need and utility for proper diversion and inner transformation.

Assagioli requested his patients and followers to pay attention to what they took in. He reminded them about one of the mind's secrets: "Everything is food."³⁰⁴ The mind feasts continuously on physical and mental food. The earliest source of this idea is perhaps the aforementioned Taittiriya Upanishad, where we learn that the physical body is the food of the crude mental mind, which in turn is the food of the purely mental mind, which is the food of the supramental mind, etc., leading up to the soul of the living being merging in the supreme cosmic soul. These days, many have ideas about a healthy diet and its social, ecological and economic implications. Assagioli formulated subtle ideas about our psychic nutrient absorption and psycho-ecological life. In the same way as we live by taking physical nutrition, we take psychic nutrition from the environment and surroundings continuously and process them in our internal existence.

Today, various electronic media play a significant role in making up our physico-psychic environment. Among elements detrimental to the inner and outer psychic environment, Assagioli counted aggression, violence, anxiety, depression, despondency, greed and all forms of selfish desire, cynicism, and more. These are real "psychological poisons" permeating the mental atmosphere, he opined.

A closer examination will reveal that inner pollutants indeed cause immense problems both for individuals and the collectivity in the form of toxic inherent driving forces (samskaras). In order to resolve and prevent such reactive toxins efficiently, Assagioli advised:

What methods are to be used by the skilful will to achieve psychological hygiene? The fundamental one consists in withholding attention and interest. Most people can do this to a

considerable extent, once they understand the advantage of it. So, it can be of great help to foresee in clear terms the harmful consequences of absorbing such poisons.

An even more powerful approach is the method of substitution: the cultivation of other, better interests, the systematic focusing of the attention on constructive things. This tends to give immunity to the negative, harmful, or poisonous influences.

A most effective method, explained by Patanjali in his Yoga Sutra, is neutralisation, which entails the active cultivation of qualities that are the antithesis of the harmful ones ... courage in place of fear; joy in healthy pleasures instead of depression and despondency; moderation as a substitute for greed. As for overemphasis on sexuality, the most effective antidote is true love. It is thus not a question of not loving, or of loving less, but of loving better.³⁰⁵

Buddha advised along the same lines:

Overcome anger by patience, overcome dishonesty by honesty, overcome greed by generosity, overcome falsehood by truth.³⁰⁶

Shrii Sarkar took a comprehensive approach to the challenges of physical and psychic nourishment:

Suppose you are attending a party, and have a craving for more cake but your stomach is so full that to eat another is a physical impossibility. You return home disappointed, for you think that had you eaten a few more you would have enjoyed the party even more. This is what happens with physical pabulum—being limited it cannot provide unending satisfaction. But the flow of*

* *Pabulum* (pl. *pabula*) from the Latin means “intellectual sustenance, nourishment, mental food”. “The mind takes the form of the physical object or psychic idea it encounters. This assuming of a form in the mind is called psychic pabulum or ábhoga. Unless the mind is liberated from its pabulum permanent peace is not possible.” Source: “Psychic Assimilation in Psycho-Spiritual Practice”, Shrii Shrii Anandamurti, Ananda Marga Ideology and Way of Life in a Nutshell 9, and Subhásita Samgraha 8.

*subtle psychic pabulum is endless. Because of its limitlessness, the human mind cannot accept it endlessly. After enjoying it for a while one becomes tired. This sort of pabulum can never provide one with supreme satisfaction or supreme development either. Hence, we cannot call psychic pabulum the desideratum of life.*³⁰⁷

To differentiate and discriminate between various forms of nourishment—crude, subtle and even more subtle mental food—is a first step towards enlightenment. In Sanskrit, the term for it is *viveka*, conscience, or “conscious endeavour to decide in favour of benevolence when confronted with both benevolence and malevolence”.³⁰⁸ There are various forms of conscience or discernment according to the area of its development, detailed by Shrii Shrii Anandamurti in a discourse in 1957.³⁰⁹

- Discrimination between the permanent and the impermanent.
- Realising the integral entity in everything.
- Realising the state of consciousness in everything.
- Realising the various states of consciousness within one’s own mind relative to Absolute Consciousness.
- Realising that the above knowledge has to be integrated in action and devotion, without which one is caught up in the vanity of knowledge unable to attain the Great.

The final realisation involves giving up even the most elevating of foods to enter into the source of all nourishments, the Supreme Cognition. Shrii Sarkar argued that since pabulum is something that is enjoyed, the Supreme cannot be called pabulum, or an object of enjoyment. The Supreme can only be termed as one’s desideratum or goal, the highest subjective stance.³¹⁰ The chapter on spiritual practices details particular steps of giving up nourishing the mind, even in subtle ways, in order to attain the Supreme.

Developing Helpful Habits

The mind is made bigger and stronger in certain ways, and smaller and weaker in other ways. Deep inside, we may know what this is about in our case, and we may proceed to do something about it—or not! If we feel powerless or unable to go through with it, we may just leave it to the wind, and perhaps hold on to old bad habits.

A simple course of action is to substitute a bad habit with a good one. Yet, this is often easier said than done. And when we are on the subject of habits, the job is not done just by starting to do something new and positive. The auspicious beginning must be sustained over time, to be transformed into one's own nature and being. On the way, supportive company and self-discipline are of great help.

4. Siddhis

Siddhis are various states of psychic and psycho-spiritual perfection, each centred on an entity of some degree of subtlety. The abilities or forces obtained by such perfection is also termed as occult powers; the powers attained by cultivation.

Shrii Shrii Anandamurti explains that a rule of siddhis is that the subtler the power one desires to achieve, the more mental purity one would need to acquire in order to achieve that subtle power. In general, the science of mind refers to eight major occult powers,³¹¹ which all may arise or occur at some point during one's psycho-spiritual sojourn. These siddhis are:

1. *Ānimā*: Reducing one's sense of existence or mental arena to smallness with the help of the mental force born of spiritual practices, and thereby being able to enter within another entity and know everything about that entity.
2. *Laghimā*: Being able to enter the intra-molecular spaces of any entity by concentrating one's mental faculties, and directing that entity according to one's desire.
3. *Mahimā*: The result of this siddhi is gained through making oneself vast through mental concentration or by

unfolding the inherent ubiquitous force of latent human qualities. ... “It is not proper for any spiritual aspirant to use this siddhi knowingly because while the world may gain something from its application, the world can also be harmed by its misapplication. If a person is influenced for even a short time by malice or jealousy then he or she can do great harm with this siddhi. Thus, a spiritual aspirant should shun this many-thorned siddhi,” Shrii Sarkar cautioned.

4. *Iishitva*: To engage one’s supra-mental and spiritual force for the welfare of the outside world.
5. *Vashitva*: The person who has perfected this siddhi can bring under his or her control any entity or factor.
6. *Prāpti*: By this siddhi one can visualise any factor of the psychic world within himself or herself. Such an individual can know the original substance or the essence of any factor without having to go through books or resorting to some other medium. Omniscience is one branch of this power.
7. *Prakāmya*: Just as a person can amass wealth in the physical world by means of this power, he or she can also do the same in the sphere of intellectuality. One becomes skilled in all knowledge. Filled with love, one can become one with the Supreme Consciousness in the spiritual world.
8. *Antaryāmitva*: Filling another’s mind-stuff with one’s own mind-stuff and thereby knowing every iota of their ectoplasmic vibration, that is, knowing all of a person’s mind or thought.

Such subtle siddhis are of elevated nature, but they have no relation whatsoever to the realm of genuine spirituality.³¹² Shrii Sarkar would advise spiritual practitioners to avoid occult powers and only focus on their spiritual goal. He counselled that such powers may quite naturally arise on one’s path, and one would be wise to leave them as signposts along the road where one has to pass on way towards the Supreme goal. “Power corrupts and absolute power

corrupts absolutely,” he would quote, commenting further: “Power without devotion is a force leading to degradation. You should not forget that God is the source of all ultimate power.”³¹³

5. Apexed Psychology

*When the movement of the human mind is not in many lateral directions—north, south, east and west—but towards the Supreme Entity, then the mind becomes apexed, pinnacled. This pointed mind either merges in the Macrocosm, or gives up its individual existence in the Supreme Cognitive Faculty.*³¹⁴

Apexed psychology is achieved through systematic spiritual meditation. Spiritual meditation is a continuous process where the concentrated mind is associated with certain subtler, essential cells of the human brain. The way to evolve one’s systematic spiritual meditation is by developing methodical concentrated thinking (page 155). Every nerve cell has its own controlling point, and there is a single, supreme controlling point for all the nerve cells. This supreme controlling point is the Guru cakra, the plexus of the Guru (page 116). All glands are controlled by this supreme controlling point.³¹⁵ In the Ananda Marga system, the location and functioning of the Guru cakra is integrated into one’s meditation routine from the start.

*The right wing of the pituitary plexus controls the qualities, attributions and quanta of the leftistic propensities, which are a little more than 400 in number. The left wing of the pituitary plexus controls the qualities, attributions and quanta of the rightistic propensities, which are also a little more than 400 in number. The total is a little less than 850. When both sides of the pituitary plexus are fully developed and fully utilized, one attains apexed intellect. Leftistic propensities are those which have a degenerating and depraving effect, such as shyness, shamefulness, melancholia and fear. Rightistic propensities are those which pave the way to supra-consciousness.*³¹⁶



15

Ideation

Ideation evolves a single idea as the focus of bio-psychological or bio-psycho-spiritual transformative evolution. That is, the ideational process affects both the biological structure as well as the mind.

Let's say a youngster desires to become "great". He or she does not know what great exactly is or what it takes to become great. It is not a case of copy-paste or association but a matter of feeling and response to present circumstances and allowing it to grow. If regularly contemplated upon, the idea of becoming great gets lodged deep in the being of that youngster, allowing its penetrating focus to mobilise and transform nervous energy, glandular secretions, and crude mind towards the goal of being great.

In ideation, one may take the help of body movement, feeling, thought, imagination, visualisation, creativity, intuition, and other resources according to one's nature and choice, to immerse one's vital energy in the ideational flow to strengthen it further.

With constant repetition ideation may assume tsunami-like proportions. Body, mind and spirit all come together in a mighty response. Even in times of great adversity and tremendous clash active, regular ideation may continue to transform the bio-psychological structure into its goal; i.e., into its core idea.

How It Works

Ideation does not move randomly like for example a chain of associative memories may do. Instead, it moves from the sphere of unknown into the sphere of the known with its goal of becoming the object of its ideation. How can something or somebody move "from

the sphere of the unknown to the sphere of the known” or from abstract to concrete? It means that one evolves from one state (known) to another (unknown) by ideating on the idea of the latter.

Let’s say you want to become more aware, and start ideating regularly on that state or quality. When you have reached a state of higher awareness, the goal of your ideation, you will realise that you have changed beyond what you previously knew or were.

Becoming very rich may provide another such example. Before the person became so wealthy, he or she may have thought of doing this and that with all the riches now at one’s disposal, partying with friends, living well, doing a lot of good, etc. The new reality may however be very different to such preconceptions. One may even leave one’s former friends when entirely new interests and priorities take hold of one’s life by force of all that money.

In the same way, the results of efficient ideation will definitely change a person’s life for better or worse depending on the nature of the object of one’s ideation. The science of mind explains these dynamics in terms of psycho-physical parallelism and psycho-spiritual parallelism. It means that the mind may take either course, towards the crude or towards the subtle, as conveyed on pages 45 and 216.

“Tantra explains ideation as follows: ‘Ideation is a mental tendency. The flow of ideation can be brought about through repetition’. This repetition of ideation is generated by inner or outer repetition of mantra. If human beings repeatedly ideate on the Supreme Soul, their psychic waves gradually straighten as they come in contact with the perfectly straight spiritual waves of that Entity. Repetition of mantra is the practical way to realise the Supreme. In the Vedas, Aham Brahma, Tattvamasi and many other mantras have been mentioned but what does a person gain by knowing the theory behind these words without experiencing any practical realisation from them? The Vedas do not state clearly how to ideate, nor how to realise the inner import of mantra, nor even how to use mantras in practical life.”⁸¹⁷

What makes ideation work? The secret is its appeal to the pure consciousness at the core of our being, to our soul. The soul supports whatever we decide to do. If we want to take some external action our soul will support it. If we want inner change, it will support that, too. That fundamental cognitive core of ours supports any activity of ours while seeing to it that our inherent driving forces also have their say. That is, if our driving forces support our intentions, things will definitely play out according to our wishes. Whereas if our own driving forces oppose our intentions and tend to bring us in a different direction, our soul will support that, too. To our soul, our intended actions and our driving forces are one and the same. This is why things sometimes do not work “according to plan”.

This is probably why placebo and faith in healing work, too. By devotion to the Almighty we redeem ourselves.

Spiritual Ideation

In spiritual ideation, the object of attention is infinitely greater than the mind. It is a psycho-spiritual approach. How can something so great and incomprehensible as the Supreme Being be the object of our ideation? How may a limited being imagine its infinite creator and endless origin?

The technique is to imagine that the Supreme is witnessing us, that oneself is Its object and not that It is one's object. The reality is that we exist by, of, and for the Great, like bubbles on the surface on the ocean. Our trouble is that a bubble does not feel at one with the ocean. In a brief colourful moment, its separate existence is reflected in its own little capsule of foam derived from that great ocean. The ocean itself is well aware of the actual identity of those fleeting bubbles but the bubbles are not. In every moment bubbles are merging back into the ocean and no trace of the existence of those bubbles will remain.

Were we to suggest yet another picture of ideation, it would be sunbeams warming up sea-water. Gradually the water evaporates and rises upwards. The mind has the potential for rising infinitely to

become one with its inner sun. Spiritual ideation is to knock at the door of an unknown entity and when the door opens, one gets lost in the infinite embrace of that welcoming entity and become that entity.

When the mind meditates—thinks with concentration—on something, it will in the end merge into that object. If that object is an infinite subjectivity, the mind will sooner or later lose itself in that immeasurable greatness.

The actional and intellectual approaches (called karma yoga and jinana yoga, respectively) do not allow one to address one's core of being directly, as they have their own relative yardsticks with which they measure worldly progress and success. Sense experiences may lead the human mind toward the world of physico-psychic ideation:³¹⁸ "I will become as great as the biggest mountain in the world!" The world of intellectual or psychic ideation may lead the mind toward the world of cognition: "Who am I, from where did I arrive here, where am I heading to?"

The world of intuitional cognition may ultimately merge into the world of spirituality: "The Supreme One is the only reality, and I love It." Step by step the world of the organs becomes suspended in the psychic world, and the psychic world in the spiritual world. This gradual ideational process is explained in the section on withdrawal in the chapter on spiritual practices. These are the main increments of the kaleidoscopic evolution of the microcosmic mind in the second, introversial phase of the cosmic creation.

The Science of Mantra

A mantra is a word or collection of syllables with a liberating effect on the mind: "A sanctified word that helps one in attaining salvation is a mantra."³¹⁹ In particular, two factors are essential to effect "the awakening by mantra".³²⁰ First, the mantra must fit the person's inherent reactive driving forces (samskaras), and second, it must be infused with the requisite power to be able to transform a microcosmic consciousness into the Macrocosmic state.

Mantra is sound-based. As we heard at the beginning of the book, the first vibration of the material creation is sound. We also came to know that the first stage of the manifest creation is subtle and inaccessible to the ordinary consciousness of living beings. Sound is at first created in the form of ideas, as a psychic reality of the cosmic mind. Gradually, this psychic reality is transformed into physical reality in the process of creation. So, sound is the most subtle form of material expression, linking the cosmic physical realm with the cosmic psychic realm.

The cosmic force at this stage of transforming cosmic psychic reality into physical reality is termed as *parashakti* in Sanskrit.³²¹ This primal cosmic force exists also in human beings.³²² Before being initiated into the power of mantra, one's parashakti is lying dormant coiled up in the lowermost vertebra at the bottom of the spine by the basal plexus (muladhara chakra). By application of a suitable mantra this potentially spiritual force is awakened. By regular spiritual practice this physico-psycho-spiritual force of a human being, which is bound by the person's inherent reactive driving forces, gets further transformed from crude to subtle in successive stages. As it rises through the various plexi (cakras), along the spine up towards the chief plexi at the top of the head, the practitioner experiences states of increasing subtlety and finally attains the cosmic state.

According to Shrii Shrii Anandamurti:

The point where the sense of the unit identity is locked is called kula. Hence those who achieve perfection through spiritual practice are called kaola. Those who can move the collective ectoplasm through the medium of their ectoplasmic rhythm, can awaken new power in sound through their own ectoplasmic strength. ... and those who can perform such a tough task are called Mahákaola. They alone are worthy of the status of guru and no one else. When a Mahákaola awakens vibrations in the universal ectoplasmic body through the medium of particular sounds, those sounds acquire the status of siddha mantras. A spiritual aspirant can only achieve perfection through the medium of those siddha mantras.

The powerful consciousness of a siddha mantra is realised in “conceptual understanding of and psychic association with the mantra”.³²³ The practitioner strives to imbibe the spirit of the empowered mantra. He or she applies proper spiritual ideation while using the mantra, and in the process realises the spiritual object of the ideation with the help of the meaning, rhythm, and power of the mantra.

Shrii Shrii Anandamurti quotes the ancient Diksaprakash scripture where Shiva states:

*Mantras without their corresponding ideation are merely a couple of letters mechanically uttered. They will not bear any fruit even if repeated a billion times.*³²⁴

The Essence of Our Being

Parables are a beloved form of imparting subtle realities. The following is from the ancient Svetasvatara Upanishad text:

*As oil in seeds, as butter in cream, as water in dry river-beds, as fire in wood, so is the Self seized within the self, if man looks for it by truthfulness and penance.*³²⁵

Shiva reasoned in the same way, as stated in the Kularnava Tantra:

*Ideation on Brahma is the best process in which oneness with the Divine is felt spontaneously and always; inferior to that is concentration in the form of dhyana and dharana; lower than that is praise and the singing of hymns, and the worst is idol worship.*³²⁶

Such scriptural communications informed people that there is a potentiality in us that should be realised, and the essential process for realising one’s full potential, to become one’s true self, is ideation. For that reason, spiritual meditation is called intuitional practice,³²⁷ the transformation of body and mind into intuition and soul.

The key to successful spiritual ideation is sincerity and inner longing.³²⁸ One should not be like a parrot but proceed with

reverence towards that most subtle entity who transforms one's being bit by bit. The transition from being habitually preoccupied with random association to meditating with purposeful ideation is an essential adaptation process for spiritual practitioners. One goes increasingly "deeper into it".

Ideation and Ideology

Ideology is application of an idea. Whether we are conscious of it or not, ideology is the way we live, the basic idea we practically follow in our life.

Ideation, too, is associated with some idea or the other, and involves our bio-psychology; i.e., the way nerves and glands work with the mind via the plexi (cakras). Therefore, suitable lifestyle and proper exercise are part and parcel of spiritual practice. In this way meditation is directly related to ideology; i.e., to the way one lives and conducts oneself.³²⁹ As one layer more subtle than the other is developed and realised, the life and lifestyle of the practitioner go on changing. One acts and behaves differently out of new understanding and with a clearer goal of life.

This is another secret of the science of ideation. As ideation is connected with the innermost entitative core in us all, the practitioner of spiritual ideation is able to transform even other minds into subtle simply by his or her spiritually ideational presence,³³⁰ as illustrated by the following story:

A pious mother routinely maintained that her son was a good person, in spite of him being a thief and offender to the point where he landed in jail. Still the mother held that her son was good. When he got out, he contacted his mother who again stated her conviction loud and clear: "You are a good person, my son, my heart tells me you are good!" The son took off and was soon again convicted. This time, his mother passed away when he was in jail, and when he was released, he sought out his hometown where others now lived in the family house.

"The last thing your mother said when she died was that you are good," the son got to hear. At this point, he broke down,

pulled himself together, and gradually became one who came to mean much to others. Long before he died, people said about him that he had become “as good as his saintly mother”.

Shrii Krsna’s X Factor

As indicated, habitual or instinctive association is a significant challenge to anyone who wishes to research, reflect, contemplate, and think deeply about existential matters such as “the world”, “myself”, or “our common future”. Often, in order to arrive at something new, original and well-functioning one has to detach oneself from simply correlating old truths.

Throughout his life, the Great Krsna educated the heroes of the Mahabharata war in how they best could act and struggle for the good. The heroes were five brothers. Embodying those lifelong teachings of Shrii Krsna, the Bhagavad Giita at the core of the Mahabharata epos is worked out as a dialogue between the middle brother Arjuna and Shrii Krsna. Towards the end of it, Shrii Krsna explains that any action consists of the following five factors:

1. The body, or the arena, where the action takes place.
2. The doer; a person, or a group.
3. The means applied; the organs, tools or instruments.
4. The way those means are being used, the style of operation.
5. Divine providence or intervention, the spiritual great unknown, the soul, “God”, “the one upstairs”.³³¹

It has been established that anything and everything is dependent on being substantiated by pure consciousness. Consequently, the fifth factor is essential for any action but is realised only in the subtler layers of the mind. In Shrii Krsna’s formula, this X factor is not only fundamentally substantiating and witnessing but is also decisive by force of its spiritual cognition. It is the action of the Causal Cosmic Mind, of citishakti, the force of consciousness. Those who have developed affinity for it; i.e., who are of evolved mind themselves, take it as the Grace of the Supreme. That is, Supreme Grace is proportional to one’s proximity to the Supreme. A person of crude

intellect may say that “it turned to be a piece of inexplicable luck” or “misfortune” whereas an intuitionally developed person may sense or understand the deeper dynamics of the incident and appreciate the divine workings behind it all.

The first four factors of Shrii Krsna’s formula—body or arena, doer, tools, and style—are stored in the mind-stuff as imprints. They are part of one’s driving forces. By evolving the potential for the divine X factor; by refining and evolving the subtle, sublime and causal layers of one’s mind, those four first factors of actions are transformed accordingly. In the end, one surrenders to the Supreme whose Grace is paramount. Due to one’s proximity with the cosmic nucleus, one’s existence clearly appears to depend on that grace.

At the other end of the spectrum, when a person may be drifting away from that nucleus, he or she may even blame the Supreme for whatever is going on: “How can there be a God when such awful things just happen!”

By association—planned or not—we may act one way or the other and expect some result. Such expectations may or may not be fulfilled as the outcome will anyhow be determined by inherent reactive forces. Krsna therefore recommended letting go of expectations and instead focus on the divine factor, in order to not just create further associations according to the laws of action (explained in the chapter on how the mind perpetuates itself). In the Bhagavad Giita, Shrii Krsna is quoted:

*You have the right to action but not the right to the fruits of the action. You must not do actions that will bind you, but you must not be averse to action, either.*³³²

*Set aside all other dharmas and take shelter in Me alone; I will save you from all sin, have no fear about that.*³³³

The bewildered ego is caught between the bark and the wood—between the outer “known” world and the inner unknown. This is the position of the distraught hero Arjuna, symbolizing the mental ego dominated by the mutative tendency. He has no place to rest either in the physical world or in the core of his being so far inaccessible to him. This is the predicament of the aspirant who is

new to spiritual practice and overburdened by mundane experience. For that reason, beginners may lapse into botanising among the crude mind-stuff rather than making a proper ideational effort for the unknown. This is the rule rather than the exception, as elucidated in a lively sketch by Swami Vivekananda (page 247). The tried and tested remedy for this state of “Arjuna’s vacillation” is to keep the divine and sacred clearly visible in front of one’s inner eye.

When spiritual aspirants run towards their object of ideation with all their inner longings and urges, with all their stamina and sincerity, they will certainly move unhindered, because there is no distinct boundary line, no limiting factor around the subtle mind. There is a slight border line but it is very hazy—indistinct. ... Now in view of this hazy realization of that golden nameless entity in the initial stage of spiritual realization, it may be asked, does the Supreme Consciousness really appear in that golden form before the spiritual aspirant? Is it the actual bearing? No, it is not like that. It is the aspirant who visualizes that golden form according to his or her samskaras. Supreme Consciousness is always beyond form and name. It is because of the inherent driving forces of the practitioner that the Supreme Consciousness has to come down to the spiritual aspirant in that special form.³³⁴

Idolisation vs. Ideation

Ideation and idolisation are essentially different. One may idolise somebody, yet that person is bound to have both good and bad qualities just like any other person. Therefore, it is not wise to idolise a person because of some perceived good qualities as the bad qualities of that person may “sneak in the backdoor” and thereby come to influence and shape oneself perhaps even more than any good qualities. Say a person is charming and charismatic, and now you also want to be like that. So, you emulate that person to the best of your capacity and in the process, you develop a few of his or her bad qualities, too, for instance deception and cynicism. Thus, instead of idolising someone it is advised to focus on good qualities in them while discarding any bad quality in oneself and others by way of

transforming them into good ones. This is achieved by selecting one's object of ideation carefully.

A New Beginning

To ideate is to dare, to go for the unknown. Those who feel they have nothing to lose may devote themselves to ideation, whereas those who want to cling to status quo may choose to continue with association. Emigrants and refugees know they may not return, that nothing will be like before, that they may adopt the nationality of the country they move to, its food habits, ways of living, etc.

Human progress can take place in the material world or in aesthetic science. What is the speciality of this aesthetic science? When does aesthetic science become sweet and fascinating? It becomes so when internal psychic expressions move towards the supra-sensuous. It becomes crude in the absence of the supra-sensuous. But when there is dominance of the supra-sensuous, it establishes human beings in intuitive ideation. When we cultivate a particular part or aspect of the science of music or aesthetic science, it is to be remembered that aesthetic science will have to be based on mysticism. What is mysticism? Mysticism is the never-ending endeavour to find out a link between the finite and the Infinite.

Humanity, in its all-out quest for this aesthetic science, attained spirituality. One must acknowledge this. Herein lies the excellence of aesthetic science. For this reason, I have given my whole-hearted and explicit support for aesthetic science. You know that there are certain religions which do not encourage aesthetic pursuits. You will notice that in those religions inertia, inferiority complexes and a sense of violence are predominant.³³⁵



16

The Mind Perpetuates Itself

The English philosopher Herbert Spencer (1820-1903) stated that the most adaptive (“fittest”) endure to move on. Charles Darwin (1809-1882), the father of modern evolutionary theory, agreed with Spencer. When observing two flies of the same kind, one with eyes who continue the species, and one without who is an exception to the species, Darwinists may conclude that the capability of developing eyes made the seeing fly superiorly equipped to the blind one who could not make it to the next level in the game of evolution.

This is a materialist view, not a spiritual one. A spiritual view of evolutionary reality includes an understanding of both unit driving forces and cosmic forces. The supreme reality is that everything moves on towards final merger in the Supreme, aided by cosmic consciousness, which is both cognition and operative force.

Hereditary Mass

The science of mind and current evolutionary biology agree that there is hereditary mass, but disagree on the content of it. Evolutionary biologists work with materialistic theories about physical threads of DNA consisting of genes in the cells, and transmission of behaviourally acquired information via nervous system functions. The science of mind, for its part, concludes that the accumulated reactive driving forces, samskaras, of the individual mind as well as interventions by the cosmic operative principle determine bio-psychological evolution:

- Two or more similar creatures exposed to the same environment will evolve differently, relative to their inherent reactive driving forces.
- The operative principle may engineer revolutionary development for groups of individual beings provided those developments are supported by cosmic cognition.³³⁶

New Driving Forces Created

The mind upholds its existence by acting on physical and psychic objects. The nature and style of its actions are decided by its inherent driving forces. It means that you and I will drink our cup of tea in different ways in keeping with our disparate reactive driving forces.

By acting, the mind ordinarily forms fresh actional momentum—reactive driving forces. In this way the mind perpetuates its own existence by pursuing physical and mental action. Without action the mind ceases to exist, as in the case of sleep, fainting or falling unconscious for any reason. As suggested earlier, the ego's worst nightmare is its own annihilation. In order to avoid it, the mind continuously generates fresh actional forces, the Sanskrit term for which is *samskara*; “renewal”, “change from one form to another”.

Shrii Sarkar summarised it:

“The ten organs always convey information to the mind. The mind on receiving the information creates reactions to it in the physical body, and in the process gets reacted to itself.”³³⁷

Perhaps you listen to some music. Unconsciously your mind begins to move your body, a finger drumming against your leg, while you quietly think: “Perhaps I could sing that song for someone?” A thought like that may be connected to one propensity or the other: “socialise”, “make an effort”, “be popular”, “wealthy”, etc. The mind's lyre has many strings. In this way, the mind upholds continuous activeness in an apparently eternal cycle of one action leading to the next. This is quite a dirty trick to all those who desire instant enlightenment and peace and quiet served on a silver platter. But who can blame the mind as even many people desire to live forever!

Various Causes

If we take the perspective of the visible result of an action, we usually first become aware of the material cause, then the efficient cause, then the psychic stimulus, and at last, if at all, a fundamental cause, the original cause.³³⁸ We may use a painter as an example:

This painter is good at what she does. One customer is in particular impressed by the quality of the paint, while to another it seems that the painter's steady hand is the main cause of the good work. The paint itself is the material cause and the painter's hand the efficient cause, the two general types of subsidiary causes of the result of an action.

If we talk to the painter herself, she would let us know that she feels inspired by pleasing customers and that this inspiration is the actual cause of customers' great satisfaction; it is why she takes the trouble to choose the exactly right kind of paint and why she has developed such a fine hand at it.

However, neither the customers nor the painter points to the root cause of it all, which is a particular deep-seated reactive driving force for delivering and finishing well; deep down this painter aspires to be a most competent crafts person. This is this root cause that provides the painter with the inspiration that results in an eye for selecting the right kind of paint, a fine hand, and taking all care to please the individual customer. The feeling that customers must be pleased is a psychic stimulus, an effect of the original cause, which is to be a great crafts person no matter what.

With reference to the above discussion on genetics, DNA is both an effect and a cause. To some, DNA appears to be the original hereditary mass, while it is really only a subsidiary cause causing bio-psychological unfoldment. The machinery of DNA allows for accumulated reactive driving forces to be transmitted by the operative principle from one life to the other of living entities.

As previously indicated, changes in DNA may also be caused by divine support or intervention; i.e., the operative, manifesting principle may take action on a species as a whole, on individuals, on an entire era, etc., according to the whim of the cognitive principle.

Such dynamics were suggested with reference to evolutionary and revolutionary changes (page 80) and earlier regarding the development of underdeveloped creatures (from page 47).

Hidden Past, Present and Future

Most people today have little idea about this reality: the connection between previous actions and one's present inherent reactive driving forces. It is so because those forces are stored in a layer of the unconscious mind and sprout in another subsidiary layer also inaccessible to the conscious mind. In the chapter on the five layers of the mind, we learnt that our accumulated driving forces are:

- Stored in the sublime intuitive layer.
- Sprout in the supramental intuitive layer.
- Experienced in the subconscious, purely mental mind.
- Acted out by the crude mental layer.
- Physically expressed in the outer world.

That is, most people do not perceive of the connection between the seeds of driving forces, their germination and subsequent mental blossoming leading to physical action, and how such reactive chains ordinarily create new seeds. Because the subtler parts of an action are stored in the unconscious, the ego part of it is felt only in the subconscious. We therefore do not usually have a comprehensive view of our actional self. As that part of our awareness is dominated by ego, we do not conceive of how our actions continually create fresh momentum for the mind.

Our intuitional self may know it, our soul knows it for sure but our ego does not. We may, however, become aware of this fundamental phenomenon and even put it to some use when dealing with minors and others under our guardianship. We may take the trouble to teach them directly or indirectly by “planting seeds” in their mind by way of having them do some action or other, anticipating a certain future result from it.

Proper Introspection

Why do we sometimes react to something we ourselves did? The arrangements of actional chains are in fact intricate to such a degree that we do not admit to some of our actions even after having manifested them in front of others. Children are often heard to exclaim: “No, I am not at fault—she made me do it!” and adults readily say the same in so many complex and sophisticated ways.

By rational query, i.e., by proceeding from the purely analytical ego state via the intuitional powers of differentiation and a proper judgement of the supramental mind, one may arrive at the essential seed of the actual driving force and deal with it by way of ideation, breaking the chain of action and reaction. By allowing a negative driving force to act out in the form of inappropriate judgement or antipathy, we only achieve that the subtler negative driving force itself gets strengthened. By diverting properly propensities formed of such driving forces, we may positively impact our output. In the ancient Hitopadeshah scripture we learn:

*No one is the friend or enemy of anyone by nature; by one's behaviour a person may become friendly or inimical to others.*³³⁹

In fact, we have nothing to fear from any inherent driving force. They are all our friends if dealt with constructively, and in the final analysis they are subject to their creator's discretion and not the other way around. In this regard, Shri Shrii Anandamurti once wrote in a letter to a disciple:

*Reactive driving forces (samskaras) cannot be stronger than Cosmic Consciousness. When unit consciousness starts its march towards the Supreme Self—the Cosmic Consciousness—it advances through fight against the extroversial force (avidya) and requital of its accumulated driving forces. Its march is the march of a soldier undaunted and unbaffled. It gets the final rest when crowned with victory—the feeling of oneness with Him, earned by the heroic spirit both in the inner and outer spheres of life.*³⁴⁰

Part 4: *Human Fulfilment*



17

Limitless Thirst

Mind resides at Brain 1, just behind Nerve Cell, the last stop on Neural Pathway. To one side Mind's neighbour is Soul and on the other side World, making Mind the neighbour in the middle.

To Mind it sounds like very much is going on over at World's while it is certainly much quieter at Soul's. "Good gracious," Mind marvels, "they really seem to be quite different from each other!"

Once Mind visited Soul, who had the sweetest smile which seemed to engulf the entire room where they sat. "I am in everything, without me there is nothing," Soul gently declared. Mind finds it fascinating; it is as if enigmatic, serene Soul did not disclose everything at once.

Every so often Mind drops by at most busy World's where it gets to hear: "We do not know Soul, never heard about it!" Mind finds it odd—World not having any idea about the neighbour on the other side of Mind? "I wonder what would happen if I brought World to Soul," Mind has started to ponder.

The Neighbour in the Middle

The mind is indeed the neighbour in the middle, existing between physicality and spiritual truth. As we learnt earlier, the mind can go in any of those two directions, it can visit any of its neighbours, and it always need to learn more about the business of moving purposefully in both directions.

Because mutative energies may go both ways, either towards elevation or staticity, the restless ego in the middle constitutes the critical phase of the evolution of the mind. Will a person rise in life or become an addict to matter? How far in the subtle direction is the ego capable of advancing before it gives in to its own self-centeredness and selfish propensities? Or will it transform itself fully into intuition? These are anybody's guesses. The mind may go either way, and the only way to know is to keep watching, there is no saying.

Does the self-obsessed ego itself ever think about such matters? Is it capable of that kind of lofty thinking, or does the mind require more refined subjectivity in order to get ahead in its development? How does the mind develop higher subjectivity?

Human Hunger

In the ancient Chandogya Upanishad we get to know,

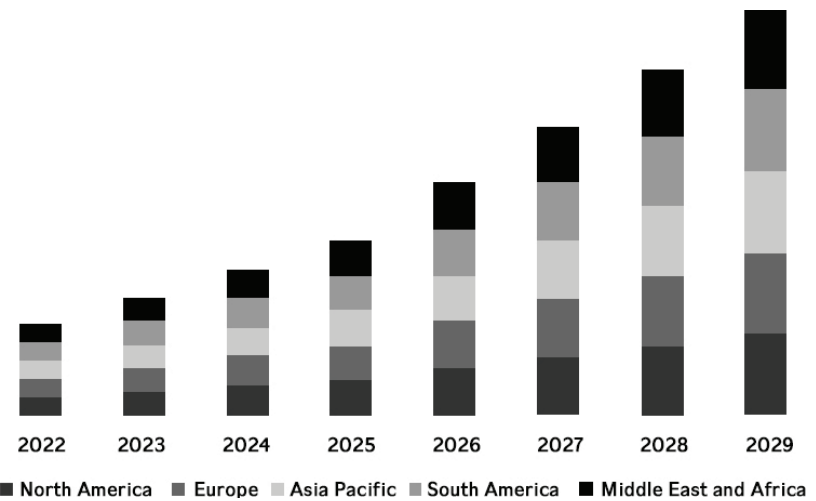
*Human thirst cannot be quenched by something limited, human hunger cannot be satisfied by something finite.*³⁴¹

This is the very driving force of evolution: to become something more ... and still more ... to finally merge with the Great. All clashes and cohesions are due to that fundamental instinct of supreme fulfilment. With their developed intellect people try in all possible and impossible ways to achieve still greater and more lasting mundane greatness. In the end, they realise that eternal greatness, permanent peace, and infinite fulfilment are beyond the limitations of the physical and psychic.

The human being has a limitless thirst. It keeps on harping ceaselessly, 'I am hungry.' The hunger for a thousand will change

*into hunger for a hundred thousand, and hunger for a hundred thousand will make room for hunger for ten million. Thus, the amount of hunger goes on increasing until a limitless amount of money is attained. This limitlessness is inherent in the Great (Brahma), and so your hunger can be satiated in the Great alone.*³⁴²

A recent market analysis reports³⁴³ that meditation will be increasing greatly in popularity over the coming years as a consequence of “The growing awareness amongst the individual and world population about the hidden power of meditation and its unconventional outcomes for the health benefits to lead a healthy life.” The report states that the popularity of meditation is expected to increase uniformly in all parts of the world:



Global Meditation Market—Forecast 2022 to 2029
Source: Data Bridge Market Research Market Analysis Study 2022

In spiritual practices, the mind is progressively withdrawn from the physical to the psychic and then to the spiritual. The trend in spiritual practice is to merge the extroversial propensities of the sensory and motor organs into the objective mind, the mind-stuff,

the objective mind into the ego, the ego into the intuitive mind, and this pure “I” into consciousness. This process is explained to some extent in the chapter on spiritual practice.

In spiritual absorption (samadhi) the conscious mind merges into the subconscious, and the subconscious into the unconscious, which by the conscious presence becomes superconscious. In the case of qualified absorption (savikalpa samadhi), the unit unconscious mind is one with the cosmic mind, experiencing itself as the Cosmos, whereas in non-qualified absorption (nirvikalpa samadhi) the unit unconscious mind is one with Cosmic Consciousness beyond any limitation and expression.³⁴⁴

The world is a panorama of endless movement, a vast assemblage of rainbow colours. If upon seeing it, people think that they have really attained something permanent, or become intoxicated with the colours, they will make a great mistake. People are attracted to minute portions of this earth, and embracing them, seek the path of self-gratification. But long before they attain satisfaction, those minute portions, those colours, vanish into nothingness, leaving them in endless frustration and lamentation, like blind, headless demons. This is not a decree of God, it is the law of the universe.

The Supreme Cognitive Principle, which is the only knowable entity for all other beings, is the sole permanent entity. To attain something permanent, one must not run after the petty pleasures of the world. Rather, knowing that eternal Entity, that permanent Entity, to be the only goal of life, one has to propel all one's mental propensities towards Him. One must not waste one's potentialities mistaking the temporal for the eternal.

*All created objects are sitting in the midst of the multitude of finite things, and with the help of a finite unit mind, it is impossible, either in theory or in practice, to think of the Infinite. When the mind becomes intoxicated with the thought of the Infinite, then the finite mind transcends its own limits and loses itself in a state of endless peace. This is the highest attainment.*³⁴⁵

From Worldliness to Soulfulness

Why do we experience ourselves as isolated physically, emotionally, socially, etc. if we really consist of all-pervading consciousness? Why is it that we are unable to experience—here and now—the pure consciousness that pervades everything?

A figurative answer is that statues of snow and ice do not experience themselves as liquid water. They are frozen and experience themselves as such. The fact that they consist only of water will become clear to them only once they melt. A more factual answer is that subtle information requires a subtle channel. The crude mind-stuff is a hindrance for subtle information to be reflected in the mind and therefore our life experiences continue to be crude.

As elaborated in this book, the human task is to merge cruder existence into subtler and finally the intuitional part into soul, thereby liberating one's existence, and that of others, from crude bondage. In the process, the planet's socioeconomic and political environment will also become more conducive to spiritual development. It will not make "frozen statues" but allow us to evolve beyond the materialistic and realise our actual vibrant individual and collective physico-psycho-spiritual nature.

In the chapter on thinking we got on to "the Shadow". It is a psychological concept of the mass of unrecognised consciousness in us eclipsed by the analytical mind. That ignored part of us is our great potential for further growth and development. How come existential darkness is potential for illumination? As established, true progress is movement towards the subtle. The essential method for it is a well-directed movement through clash and cohesion. In the process one learns to acknowledge one's shortcomings and overcome them.

Why does somebody realise the grace and somebody not? The reason is that while moving along this path around the Supreme Nucleus in the cosmological arena, if one holds the umbrella of ego over one's head, what happens? Suppose it rains and you are holding an umbrella over your head, what happens? Will you be drenched by the rain? No. If you want to be drenched you will have to remove the umbrella. Similarly, if you are moving around

*the Supreme Father and holding up the umbrella of ego, you won't be drenched by His grace, and if you remove that umbrella of ego, you will be drenched by His grace and you will feel that His grace is for you.*³⁴⁶

As featured in the chapter on the animated evolution, obstacles are the helping forces that establish one in the goal.³⁴⁷ The Canadian poet Leonard Cohen (1934–2016) sang:

*There is a crack, a crack in everything,
That's how the light gets in.*³⁴⁸

Nobel Laureate Rabindranath Tagore wrote in his price-winning collection *Gitanjali*:

It is the pang of separation that spreads throughout the world and gives birth to shapes innumerable in the infinite sky. It is this sorrow of separation that gazes in silence all nights from star to star and becomes lyric among rustling leaves in rainy darkness of July. It is this overspreading pain that deepens into loves and desires, into sufferings and joy in human homes; and this it is that ever melts and flows in songs through my poet's heart.

Limited objects cannot quench one's limitless thirst. The Supreme (Brahma) is the only limitless entity, and establishment in the Supremes' bearing alone puts an end to all thirsts or cravings. Everybody wants something more. That impetus for something new and more is hardwired in us and comes so naturally that we are mostly unconscious of its attractive powers. To that effect some analyse intellectually while others ideate spiritually, as discussed earlier. Even, some allow their life to be wrecked and self-destruct by their urge for fulfilment while others self-realise in productive ways. Not only do we dream about something else and greater, we long for it, are excited about it, strive for it every day. It is the reflection of the operative principle in us, its incessant and sometimes excessive swings from crude to subtle and vice versa.

By spiritual practice one learns to acknowledge and love one's shortcomings, without which there would be no progress. Love is the way of true transformation, as accentuated in Chapter 20.



18

What It Means to Be Human

The human condition can be considered as a dilemma. On one side, we have the mundane world with its definite limitations, its momentary realities, mounting complexities and cruel upheavals, fascinations and distractions. On the other side, we have the great prospect of peace of our inner world; its awesome resources and powers for which we have to struggle hard and in novel ways. Spoken phrases for this difficult position between our outer and inner worlds are “between the devil and deep blue sea” and “between a rock and a hard place”.

Human Being

When a microcosm reaches a stage of expanded consciousness, having made considerable psychic progress due to natural clashes or due to contact with more-developed minds, and is able to control the psychic propensities as opposed to being subservient to them, it is called human being, manuśya in Sanskrit. The term manuśya, or mánuśa, means “mind-preponderant being”.³⁴⁹

In the old Vedic Sanskrit, the mind was called *ménos*, in developed Sanskrit *mánas*³⁵⁰; a human being is *mánuś*, “of evolved mind”,³⁵¹ “with clearly reflected consciousness”.³⁵² In Latin, the ancient word *manus* became *mens* (“mind”), *mensch* in German and now lives in European languages in such words as *man*, *mental*, and *dementia*. The word *woman* is a compound of old English *wif*, “female” and *man*, “human”.

In Roman mythology, the goddess Mens personifies the mind and right thinking. Human beings, the mentally evolved beings with intellect, are capable of very much more than being conditioned solely by material circumstances, as plants are, or only by instinctive impulses, as animals are. By only looking at the nature of animals, humans will not realise the potentiality of their own existence. Animals eat, sleep, procreate, and hedge against annihilation. Humans share these traits, but as noted earlier also have their own nature with the following qualities or potentialities:

- Expand all of their physico-psycho-spiritual existence.
- Flow along with all of the creation.
- Serve selflessly.
- Attain the Supreme State.³⁵³

*The manifestation of consciousness is greatest where the sense of existence is most pronounced. For this reason human beings are considered the most developed beings. But is there anything more to the human being... does this exhaust his potential? No. The sweetness of this sense of existence is hidden in the glory of its expansion. It is their existential greatness and its unhindered radiation that makes human beings great. Thus, in another sense, when we say "conscious entity" we mean human being.*³⁵⁴

Two-edged Sword

Charles Darwin observed: "Man ... has spread more widely than any other highly organized form; and all others have yielded before him. He manifestly owes this immense superiority to his intellectual faculties."³⁵⁵ Darwin further stated: "Any animal whatever, endowed with well-marked social instincts, would inevitably acquire a moral sense or conscience, as soon as its intellectual powers had become as well developed, or nearly as well developed, as in man."³⁵⁶

Ireland's first well-known author of novels, George Moore (1852-1933), grew up at a time when the ideas of Darwin took the world with storm:

*Some men spend their lives watching bees and ants, noting down the habits of these insects; my pleasure is to watch the human mind, noting how unselfish instincts rise to the surface and sink back again, making way for selfish instincts, each equally necessary, for the world would perish were it to become entirely selfish or entirely unselfish.*³⁵⁷

Many animals sense and act much stronger than humans do. Human beings with their sophisticated tools and systems may on the other hand dominate, utilise, and even eradicate animals who are physically much stronger than them. Their expanded consciousness enables humans to act purposefully beyond their physical instincts and even intervene in the creation. Plants and animals never intervene in the creation, their intention is always to fulfil their natural needs and requirements.

Humans, on the other hand, may create havoc everywhere simply because they remain unfulfilled by only living a physically instinctual life, but do not know how to proceed further in evolution to fulfil their individual and collective life in a proper way. Transforming selfish propensities into unselfish ones becomes an essential task of human beings of expanded intellect, are they to prevail in existence.

The Flow of the Human Mind

When probing the ego, we were reminded that the mind is in an intermediate position, like a river that may flow both ways either towards increased understanding and blessedness, or towards frustration and unhappiness. In the same vein, Shrii Sarkar stated:

*A river moves from the mountain towards the sea, and never from the sea towards the mountain; but in the case of human minds, or human microcosms, the movement may be from the mountain towards the sea or from the sea towards the mountain. This is the speciality of the human mind.*³⁵⁸

The mind's position is echoed by Isaiah, the prophet of the Old Testament, and John the Baptist of the New Testament: "I am the voice of one calling in the desert, make straight the way for the

Lord.”³⁵⁹ The outer world is 100% diverse. In itself it has no potentiality for unification or oneness, and will in all its inconsistency remain manifold and fragmented. It is up to the human expanded mind to create unity in the world, or not. If we involve ourselves with the diverse physical creation only, our mind will also fragment.

The inner world has the potentiality for infinite oneness. We just have to struggle a bit to realise it, as we have now learnt. Some do just that, for a while at least. Yet, since working within oneself is initially a tough task, for reasons explained earlier in the book, many give it up somewhere along the way. Later, they may give it another try, and in this way keep trying and failing at intervals. Few beginners work at it consistently. The Katha Upanishad states:

*Many people never even get the chance to hear discourses about the Soul. Of those who do hear, many cannot comprehend. Fewer still are those who can speak authoritatively on the subject, and even fewer those who can grasp the significance.*³⁶⁰

This is echoed by the later, probably Medieval, Srimad Bhagavatam where the five-year-old Dhruva responds to Maharṣi Narada’s suggestions that he should give up meditation and return to his parents:

*It is very difficult to get a human life. Only after living life after life as an insect or a worm, etc., does one attain a human body—and then only if one is very lucky. Those who utilize this body for noble deeds are few, and those who utilise this life for spiritual progress are even fewer; so, as I have attained a human body, the more I utilize it for noble deeds from an early age, the better it will be. As it is difficult to attain a human body, and even more difficult to attain a body which can be utilised properly, one should start a life of spirituality from the age of five. Oh, Narada, I may become decrepit, I may even die tomorrow. Why should I wait until I’m old? Besides, the sooner we do good deeds in our life, the better it is for us. Why should we delay?*³⁶¹

The reason we keep coming back to the inner world has already been elucidated: we are never satisfied with the limited which on

repetition begins to appear as something already digested. Yet, as the perceived wisdom goes: “The meeting of two old friends after a long time is most sweet—for a brief moment.” Thus, the river of the mind keeps flowing in two directions. Sometimes the seeker feels the attraction of the Great towards the spiritual goal; at other times he or she gets distracted by the pushes of their inherent reactive driving forces towards the limited and crude. And so, it continues until the seeker is firmly determined in his quest, like the small child Dhruva.

True Yoga

The pure I, our intuitive self, focuses on unity. It does not go by egoistical, analytical judgement. As long as this core of our personal self is underdeveloped, it remains powerless and subordinate to the wily ego. When the intuitive self outgrows the ego, it will influence and guide all our actions and finally assimilate all of the ego. This development of the pure self does not imply any need to leave the physical world. For thousands of years the tradition was for seekers to live in seclusion. Those who sought freedom and salvation left their hearth and home for the forest or mountains—and stayed there. There was no reason for them to do so. On the contrary, it is advised not to give up the world in search for the sublime.

While performing spiritual practices, it is far more practical to remain in society than to escape into remote seclusion. In the midst of all, the means to work out one’s remaining reactive driving forces are easily found. Opportunities for acting and serving abound in society and not in mountain caves or in remote parts of wild forest. A verse from the Isa Upanishad of the ancient Shukla Yajurveda states:

*The one who cultivates ignorance drifts towards darkness, and the one who cultivates only knowledge drifts into still greater darkness.*³⁶²

A constructive, service-oriented lifestyle centred on spiritual practices is key not only to one’s own progress. By setting an excellent example of properly integral living and selfless service, others will be

inspired to follow it. Hence the tag “escapism” for those who remain in caves and jungles instead of contributing actively to society.

Conscience

The chapter on spiritual practices has a section on morality. Conscience is filled with moral dynamism. A subtle feeling speaks: “Do this, not that.” That constructive, elevating, guiding inner voice comes from someone or something in us that sees what we are about to do. In the old Norse language, conscience was known as *samvit* and *samvett*; in modern Swedish and New Norwegian *samvete*, in Sanskrit *samvit*. The Latin *conscientia* and English *conscience* have the same meaning: “something in us knows; integrated knowledge”. What is it in us that knows what is right and wrong, and tells us about it in no uncertain terms?

The mind-stuff is viewed by the ego, which is watched by the pure self, which is witnessed by the soul, and our soul is the reflection of the Cosmic Soul. From this we understand that conscience develops in us when our pure self evolves—the intuitive I consciously watching the ego. Conscience arises with the feeling or experience that pure existence is watching over me. People may think for themselves that the pure entity that watches over them is “God”, an angel, a late parent, or their conscience. In reality, their own pure subjectivity generates conscience by confirming that it is watching everything that is going on in the person’s—the ego’s—life. It is the inner voice. This faculty or ability to tell the difference between good and bad, useful and useless, meaningful or meaningless, etc., develops further as the pure self approaches the state of soul.

Conscience is intuitional. It can inform us about things that we did not think about earlier, and routinely knocks on our door when we least expect it. Mind you, should you ignore it the knocking will stop forever. When conscience calls, respond in full!

Among the well-known expressions of established collective conscience today we find the humanitarian NGO Doctors Without Borders and many organisations for prevention of cruelty to animal

and plants and the establishment of their rights. We do well to support, participate in, and found such conscientious collective enterprises of great service to the entire creation.

Reason

Rationality is morality, conscience, and intuition rolled in one. Just like conscience is filled with moral, reason is filled with the discerning powers of conscience. Ecology is a modern example of it. The rationality and morality of ecology derive from its subtle, cosmic understanding: everything is connected and meaningful. Ecology reflects natural laws beautifully and is in harmony with all. Ecology has rightly been called the most important idea of the 20th Century.³⁶³

Dogma and Rationality

Earlier, in connection with rationalisation, we dissected dogma. Essentially, to be human is a liberation struggle, and a first step is to understand the real nature of dogmas and deal decisively with them.

Religious or any other type of dogma is different from nature worship notions and ancient superstitions. While primitive belief systems grew out of fear of nature, religious dogmas were made to replace those primitive ideas while continuing to use the psychology of fear as a ruling device. Dogmas are static concepts, not stumbled upon by simple nature dwellers but cunningly invented by brainy clergy, be they of the religious, capitalist or any other variety.

There is no free thought in a dogmatic system. Such a system is a far greater threat to human evolution than superstition and primitive misconceptions about nature, because it ties up evolved minds with unnatural, unscientific, inhuman ideas.

The medicine for dogmatism is the development of rational thinking while practising cardinal human values.

Cardinal Human Values

Human beings have an affinity towards authenticity, congruence, and genuineness. They like, love and respect people of personal integration, moral courage, and expressed values. In fact, all human beings have the potentiality to express characteristically human traits such as decency, closeness, warmth, service-mindedness, morality, sense of responsibility, conscience, compassion, and magnanimity of mind. Other examples are grace, forgiveness, selflessness, love, friendship, dignity, nobility, and pity. We are all eager to experience such touches of another human being.

Human values are really a family affair, the concept of the universal, joyous human family. In fact, we find the same fundamental human values as the base of legislations, the formation of nations, and developments towards the realisation of individual and collective welfare all over the world. For this reason, people are apt to conceive of great personalities as members of their own family, and may hang pictures of them on the wall at home or in the neighbourhood.

Early in the book we mentioned divine cosmic vibrations, *devatas*, and their relation to higher human expressions. Cardinal human values are not something invented by human beings or first and foremost found in academic dictionaries. They are spelled out by the beating of the human heart and are found in the border area between the psychic and the spiritual, as specified earlier. Such values are already realised in some people, in others they are about to be discovered and explored, and in still others they exist as a potentiality of the pure, intuitive self, waiting to be acknowledged by the ego-dominated self.

Service

The human being is not an isolated creature or process. It comes into being and exists in a context. Existential isolation is a psychic agony and an individual and collective illness. The human being belongs

not only in a biological context, but also in the great cosmic relation, the universal family. As is a fundamental claim of this book, this intimate relationship originates from pure cosmic consciousness who creates the universe and guides living beings step by step.

Of all the means of communication, selfless service is the most characteristically humane. The service-minded person gives—and takes nothing in return. By choosing to serve those needy who nobody else care to serve, the ideal of service and universal family is honoured. In a family, members do not charge for shopping, cooking, cleaning, etc. In the same way, true service is rendered free of any return.

Not only is service the antidote to profiteering and self-indulgence, but to all sorts of physical and psychic selfishness. In post-capitalist society service will stand out as a massively popular fundamental human value. People will compete in doing the most creative and useful services. The concept of selfless service will be further explored in the chapter on spiritual practices.

*Service to humanity is service to the Supreme Consciousness, for the universe is created out of supreme consciousness. Every object of this universe is the creation of consciousness. Hence serving the world is serving the Supreme Consciousness, and thereby He becomes pleased." Suppose you bring good sweets for me but as I don't eat sweet so much, I eat only a little, hence if instead of giving the sweets to me you give it to some other child, I shall be pleased. Likewise serving the Supreme is serving the world. The world is created out of supreme consciousness, hence render service as much as you can. The Supreme Consciousness will be satisfied.*³⁶⁴

Here is from a brochure of the Ananda Marga organisation:

Service means giving of oneself without expecting anything in return. In our present society we've been conditioned to think that the more we gain for ourselves the happier we'll be. But in fact – as we are all realising – inner happiness lies in giving more, not taking more. Giving is indeed receiving. When we give we increase our sense of connection and feeling of oneness with all

people and all things. Indeed, with the essence of all. The transformation of selfishness to selflessness is the transformation of one's limited self (one's limited sense of awareness) into the greater Self (infinite awareness). In this process our radius of love gradually increases to encompass the whole universe.

People get depressed when they feel disconnected, cut off from the joys and sorrows of the rest of the world, imprisoned in their own concerns. But the more we expand our sense of self and connection with others, the more we feel that we're all in this cosmic drama together and we're all helping each other through it. That feeling of connection comes from daily introspection and service. The more you feel it internally the more you feel like sharing it. And the more you share it the more you feel it internally. The two aspects – self-realisation and service – are complimentary, feeding into each other like a river feeds into the sea, the sea water in turn evaporating and feeding back into the river in a beautiful cycle of integrated oneness.



19

Spiritual Practices

The origins of spiritual practices are shrouded by the mist of time. What we do know is that meditation was performed thousands of years before any of the present formal traditions existed. Excavations near the Ananda Nagar rural township, in the Purulia district in the western Rahr area of India, have revealed a mural of nine plexi (cakras) in a cave, dated some 10,000 years back.³⁶⁵ This mural indicates that people at that time were acquainted with the plexi of the human structure, the knowledge of which is applied in practical meditation.

These days, spiritual practices may be termed as an open system accessible to all. Yet, until recently it was difficult to get initiated into a system of actual spiritual practices. Shrii Sarkar commented that the seekers of old had to toil hard in order to get to learn even the most basic instructions,³⁶⁶ whereas aspirants today may easily get access to practices, but will have to toil hard after initiation. Today it may be possible for anybody to learn something, but genuine practices are still esoteric (taught in secrecy) and mystic (searching for the Infinite).

The eightfold, *astaunga*, yogic system formulated by the Great Shiva is probably the best-known all-round system of spiritual practices. A main scriptural source of it is the Shiva Samhita. Shiva is known as *Adiyogi*, the first yogi. This yogic master lived in India just before the time of script, about seven thousand years ago. Just over two thousand years ago, the philosopher Patanjali gave the eight-fold yoga system a renaissance in the form of Rajayoga. Around the same time, the guru Astavakra taught an even more

evolved form of Shiva's yoga system, Rajadhiraja yoga. Some essential elements of it are part of the advanced stages of the Ananda Marga system.

We shall now survey the basic Ananda Marga system of spiritual practices. It is learnt free of charge from a qualified teacher in person, not via an app or a book. This system allows for proper personal adaption of various techniques, individual guidance, inspiration, and timely follow-up.

From a practical point of view, a spiritual practitioner has three jobs to do:

1. Transform all of his or her mind-stuff into subjectivity,
2. Stop new reactive driving forces from forming, and
3. Perform selfless service.

In the Ananda Marga system, selfless service is part of one's regular practices, and we will come back to that shortly. First, we need to ask: How to do the other two points? How does one empty one's sinking boat of water and at the same time plug all those cracks and holes where water keeps seeping in all the time? Earlier, it was explained how the mind reinforces its mundanity by constantly generating new reactive driving forces out of every action it performs. It was also explained how one may stop generating crude reactive driving forces (samskaras), and how the remaining driving forces may be properly directed towards actual progress.

By applying spiritual ideation to any action, mundane and supramundane, the law of reaction is cancelled out and remaining mind-stuff is properly transformed into subjectivity. Proceeding on the path of self-discovery is therefore a matter of applying spiritual ideation both in everyday life, in every thought and action, and in spiritual practices. Without spiritual ideation, the practices would be parrot-like and fruitless.

In order to succeed on the path, with all the ups and downs of one's life and the corresponding instabilities of one's mind, there are certain requisites, the first of which is the observance of morality. In Ananda Marga's system of spiritual practices, morality is branched in two: psycho-physical (outer) restraint, and physico-psychic (inner)

regulation. The following details and explains Ananda Marga's concept of morality.

1. Psycho-physical Morality: Outer Self-restraint—Yama

1. Not to hurt others or hinder their natural expressions and progress; *ahimsa* in Sanskrit. One should take care not to cause others pain by one's thinking, words, and actions.
2. Exercising truthfulness and goodness in thought, word, and action; *satya*. This principle differentiates between fact and truth in cases where human life or cardinal human values are at stake. This spiritual, subjective-oriented moral principle maintains that where facts and higher truth are identical simple facts and realities shall always be applicable. Why think about lying when truth is evident? But wherever common facts violate human foundational principles we need to act rationally and allow subtle subjectivity to dominate crude objectivity. To maintain human cardinal principles is more important than upholding existing ordinary realities. What does it mean? Assuming that some live in luxury and others in poverty; the reasonable course of action would be not to be intent on continuing a system that produce this inhuman divide, but to work for the establishment of a system that allows everybody to survive and fulfil their lives. Another example: It would be true and right to communicate misleading information to lead astray an assailant in order to save someone's life.³⁶⁷
3. Not to steal physically or mentally; *asteya*. This principle comprises both stealing physically and contemplating it, as well as depriving others physical or mentally what legitimately belongs to them. "Those who have attained the crude mental mind (*kāmamaya kośa*) will say that it is not proper to steal since, if we steal, others may also steal from us. This is the trend of thought of the materialists. Their thinking is distorted with

- selfishness. One should not steal for the sake of keeping the mind pure. That is the correct approach.”³⁶⁸
4. Live in the Great; *brahmacarya*. To live in the world by acknowledging everything and everybody in one's contact as expressions of the Great—the Supreme Consciousness that holds the force of creation. This state follows from the practice of spiritual meditation.
 5. Moderation; *aparigraha*. Nor to indulge in superfluous enjoyment.

2. Physico-psychic Morality:

Inner Self-regulation—Niyama

1. Physical and mental purity; *shaucha*. To eliminate dirty thinking, jealousy, selfishness, self-righteousness, etc. come under this principle.
2. Contentment; *santosa*. Real contentment is impossible as long as one keeps running after short-lived pleasures. This is one of several principles which indicates that Yama and Niyama are about more than simply morality of the outer world. To maintain contentment no matter the challenges and difficulties of one's life is a great and necessary quality on the path towards the goal.
3. Penance; *tapah*. Mending one's ways by performing penance to reach one's goal. The difference between this principle and selfless welfare or charity work is that here sacrifice is required. Shrii Sarkar remarked, “To banquet the rich is of no use – give food to the starving. There is no need to send presents to your superiors – send medicine and food to the sick. Don't waste your time in flattering the rich; it will yield no result. Conquer the hearts of the underprivileged by your sympathetic behaviour and accept them in your society.”³⁶⁹
4. Clear understanding of spiritual matters; *svadhyaya*. Conception of and insight into the underlying meaning of spiritual literature, philosophy, and verbal renditions of spiritual subject matters.

5. Take refuge in the Supreme all-seeing that controls the creation; *iishvara prañidhāna*. This principle involves practising the basic lesson of Ananda Marga meditation twice daily.

That Which Carries

The foundation of a building is never its most visited or admired part, but nonetheless fundamental to its standing. Morality is such a fundament; if this basic human foundation is unstable any further and higher development will sooner or later wobble, too. The word morality goes back to the Vedic *moh*, “to be intent upon, to be of strong will” via the Latin *moris*, “way of behaving”, “conduct”, “character”. It is an objective term, indicating that to be intent on proper behaviour is a goal unto itself. Most moral codes are of that variety: “morality itself is a goal of life.” As such we may categorise their morality as objective morality

In Sanskrit, the term for morality is *nīti*, “that which is capable of leading towards the Highest Good; that which carries through”. The Tantric morality formulated by Shiva, Yama and Niyama, aspires to transform the mind-stuff itself into a firm foundation for higher development. Tantra’s Yama and Niyama is therefore a subjectivating moral system, that is, it increases subjectivity towards the spiritual core of existence.

*The greatest gain in becoming a moralist is that the person has tremendous moral force. That one has not committed a wrong, is not doing so nor will do so—this very awareness generates in one a force, the moral force. A sinner does not possess this moral force. A ruffian, though possessing a lot of physical strength, is afraid of the police, but a moralist, even if physically weak, is not. For the former is devoid of moral force and the latter is full of it.*³⁷⁰

Without stabilising the mind-stuff, advanced inner work and progress is impossible. If the mind instead is constantly engaged in moving towards external crudity, there will be no introspection. That

is why the first two parts of the classical system of spiritual practices are about morality. Ananda Marga's basic system is designed for practitioners who follow basic points of Ananda Marga lifestyle, which include dietary requirements (detailed on page 313), basic morality, and the performance of yoga exercises (asanas) and meditation on a daily basis according to the guidance by an approved teacher. Those who find it difficult or impractical initially to follow such a life style, are provided with a modified system. However, the requirement of observing the basic moral code, Yama and Niyama, is the same for all.

Subjectivating and Objectivating Morality

From ancient times to the present, a number of moral codes and principles were developed. China's Tao, ancient Egypt's Maat, and the Ten Commandments of the Old Testament are examples of such. Much of it is objectivated morality where moral principles are goals unto themselves. Such systems of objectivated morality make moral principles themselves a goal of life. Consequently, the one who does not follow objective moral principles may become the object of infinite retribution, such as capital punishment (killed by the government). When this happens, it is because the moral principles are not placed within a greater spiritual framework; there is no subjectivity to it but objective terror; the actions of individual and collective life are not viewed in a spiritual perspective.

We may look to ancient Egypt for an example of moral objectivism. There the goddess Maat reigned over morality. "The Confessions of Maat" consisted of forty-two moral observances, such as one should not be unfaithful, steal, kill, etc. In practise it says: "If you do not steal you are moral; if you do, punishment awaits." Stealing seem to have been a bit of a problem in ancient Egypt. Many of the commands of Maat admonished worshippers not to take "the bread of the gods from the temple", neither "the khenfu cakes from the altar of the deceased", and not "any of the priests' cows on the way home".³⁷¹ These are all objectivated, reified moral principles, in

all likelihood established in the interests of some social class or the other.

Yama and Niyama constitute subjectivating morality. The ten principles evolve a greater sense of subjectivity; of one's differentiating powers, soul and spirituality. These principles are therefore not focal points of punishment, but of rectification, of personal and collective improvement. As subjective morality is subordinate to spiritual progress, the principles of such morality serve to liberate from crudeness and not to condemn. Among other things Yama and Niyama tell us that we should:

- Not be a hindrance to the development of others.
- Be ready to face adversities in order to develop ourselves and others.
- Cultivate a sober lifestyle of a balanced mind, allegiance to eternal truth, and other subjectivating points.

Time, Place and Person

As is universally known, times, places, and persons change ceaselessly. In fact, those three factors form the basic triangle of our fundamentally relative existence. Consequently, objectivating morality loses its significance with time and in the end becomes irrelevant. Somewhere, certain moral practices may be legal and seen as normal, while at other times and in other places the same may be illegal or seen as abnormal. With time this may even change into the reverse!

Everywhere in the world something which is legal today was illegal just a few decades ago. Under such circumstances, with such incessant changes, if anyone would insist on maintaining objectivated morality over time it would be a case of "morality for morality's sake" and not for the good of living beings. Alternative terms for such rigid objective morality are "oppression" and "repression".

Ability

As clarified earlier, the objectivated, reified part of the mind, packed with imprints of previous experiences, is without subjective ability. Subjectivity, on the other hand, is morally pregnant: “I feel bad because we stayed up too late last night watching that rubbish movie. Before we do any such thing again, we should look into whether it would be worth it or not as I don’t want to waste time and energy needlessly like that.” The pure I is the real provider of morality. It is the part of our subjectivity that acknowledges universal existence, which is at the heart of morality, empathy, and humanity. This pure self is empathic, intuitive and always ready to side with cosmic truth.

Some people conceive of spiritual practices as the only means to evolve intuition. Shrii Shrii Anandamurti did not agree and told the following story:³⁷²

Bankimchandra Chattopadhyay (1838-1894), the novelist and author of India’s national anthem, was deputy district magistrate early on in his life. Once, a case was brought before him where two friends accused each other of a murder committed. The case had already been subject to investigation but the officers had not been able to sort it out.

After Bankimchandra had heard both men, he decided they should carry the dead body on a stretcher from the morgue to the cremation ground that same night. The instruction was to pick up the stretcher just after midnight and leave it at the cremation ground and return back home immediately, while the body would be cremated by the family of the deceased in the morning. Then Bankimchandra would pronounce his verdict the next day in court.

At midnight, the two men reached the morgue where they picked up the stretcher with the body upon it. Together they started out carrying the stretcher on their shoulders, one in front of the other. While proceeding, one of them lamented: “You know very well that you did it, so why are you drawing me into it! I had nothing to do with it and now my reputation will be soiled.” The other replied: “I understand your perplexity; yes, I did it, but

by confusing the judge in this way none of us will ever get into trouble, they will have to let us both go as there is no conclusive evidence.” In this way they argued while proceeding to the cremation ground. Once there, they put down the body and hurried home.

The next day Bankim pronounced his judgement in court. It was based on his own testimony. It was he, and not a dead body, who had been on the stretcher listening to the two men talking on way to the cremation ground. One of the men was pronounced guilty, the other let to go.

Bankimchandra Chattopadhyay may not have been an active spiritual practitioner but he was a strict moralist. By his unwavering allegiance to morality, he had developed intuitional powers, and it was his intuition that led him to understand the reality of the matter already when the two men were presented before him the first time at court. The rest was just his practical arrangement to get a substantiated verdict. Strict morality is itself a path to intuition, Shrii Shrii Anandamurti concluded.

How would a moral mind develop intuition? The crude mental mind loses its grip on a moral-minded person. Practising morality makes one more rational and less prone to crude instincts. As the mind restlessly searches for opportunities to continue its existence, a moral mind will tend to explore the supramental mind when no longer slave to the crude mental. As detailed in a separate chapter, there are various forms of intuition such as mundane and psycho-spiritual forms of intuition. The above example of Bankimchandra may be said to be more of the mundane variety.

Moral Impulse

Because of the greater subjective scope of the pure I, its intuitional responses and reflections are much more subtle and comprehensive than those of the ego. However, if the ego is strong, stubborn, and not prepared to comply with any initiative of its higher self, it can get in between to censor initiatives of the pure self. One may refuse to listen to the inner voice. The ego may choose not to return

something to the rightful owner—a loaned book, money, etc.—even after having reflected thoroughly on it: “Yes, it is true that she loaned me the money, but she has so much of it, what will she do with more? After having lent me the amount, which on the whole means next to nothing to her, she never asked me to give it back to her. It is only natural; how can a well-off person like her care about such a small amount? It is much better if I can spend this little amount on something we sorely need instead of paying it back to that monied person.” All we hear here is an unwillingness to depart with money loaned. The ego has for all intents and purposes an ongoing relationship with the mind-stuff, which would be either moral or immoral depending on the influence of instincts, propensities, and the higher self. In this case it happens to be a bit depraved.

Spiritual Morality

As indicated, in ancient times yoga was not advertised. Spiritual seekers were left to follow moral principles and do physical service for a long time, sometimes decades or most of their life, before they could receive elementary initiation into spiritual practices. The idea behind this strictness was that no initiate should bring disaster on themselves or others by being tempted to misuse higher energies and insights. The long waiting period was intended both to clear internal difficulties prior to receiving initiation, and to test the aspirant’s sincerity in order to strengthen it. In Ananda Marga, the only requirement for initiation is to state a willingness to live a moral life in order to be able to proceed on that path of self-realisation. The rest is to be learnt and integrated in successive stages following initiation. Spiritual philosophy considers ethical customs and usages as a first step towards higher conduct of life. Morality is the growing ability to preserve one’s mental balance and equipoise in any condition and circumstance of life, so that the spiritual effort may continue unimpeded.³⁷³ Shrii Sarkar stated: “Morality is the base, spiritual practice (sadhana) the means, life divine to goal.”³⁷⁴ Neither morality nor spiritual practices are the goal, but divine life is, and morality is the basis of the practices that will get you there.

3. Yogic Exercises—Asanas

The physical body and the mind are entwined. The mind expresses itself through propensities (*vr̥ttis*), and the dynamism of the propensities, their force, depends on the state and activities of different endocrine glands of the body.

Hormones

There are many endocrine glands in the body and from each there is a secretion of a particular hormone, generated when blood travels through the gland and is transported further on by the bloodstream. Conventional medicine informs us that hormones are powerful.³⁷⁵ It takes only a tiny amount to cause big changes in cells or even your whole body. That is why too much or too little of a certain hormone can be serious. If there is any defect in the secretion of hormones or any defect in a gland, certain propensities become excited.

Shrii Shrii Anandamurti explains this is why in spite of having a sincere desire to follow the moral code, perform certain noble or meaningful tasks, shoulder responsibilities, etc., many persons just cannot do so.³⁷⁶ They may understand that they should do such things as meditation, complete their homework, or refrain from acting out but they cannot collect themselves sufficiently because their minds deviate due to the excitement of this or that propensity. A person may know that what he or she is about to commit is a wrong and that it will have unfortunate consequences, and still be unable to avert the catastrophe. If a person wants to control the excitement of undesirable propensities, he or she must rectify the defects of the glands. Asanas is of considerable help in this task, and therefore yoga exercises are an essential part of spiritual practices.

Yogic exercises result in physical well-being and serenity. Patanjali defined such exercises as calm, quiet and easy postures which are held with proper inhalation and exhalation.³⁷⁷ Yoga exercises exercise the nerves, tissues, glands and organs of the human body. The regular practice of asanas keeps the body healthy and cures many diseases. These yogic exercises control the glands, the glands

control the secretion of hormones, and the secretion of hormones controls the propensities. So, they help practitioners to balance the body and concentrate the mind.

According to the Ananda Marga system of spiritual practices asanas are practiced for the following reasons:

- To increase the flexibility of the body.
- To rectify glandular defects and balance hormonal secretions in order to control the propensities.
- To balance the body and mind.
- To withdraw the mind from undesirable thinking.
- To prepare the mind for subtler and higher spiritual practices.³⁷⁸

That yoga exercises balance the secretion of hormones of many important glands is a little-known phenomenon. The balancing is the result of the exercises' bending and stretching accompanied by systematic inhalation and exhalation, effecting pressure and release of pressure directly on the glands.³⁷⁹ In this way, overactive and underactive glands are regulated. Properly prescribed exercises contribute to the bio-psychological balance necessary for effective meditation. Such balance allows the body and mind to work increasingly in tandem in all spheres of life.

The "glandular effect" is a main reason as to why practitioners experience immediate relaxation and serenity. Another cause of this felt physico-psychic relaxation is the impact that these exercises have on the nervous system by way of exercising nerve fibres and strengthening the entire system by stimulating lymph glands.

Lymph

Conventional medicine reckons the lymphatic system is part of our immune system. The connection between lymph and hormone secretion is about to dawn on medical science today. New facts about lymph are being presented all the time. The ancient yogic esoteric science has detailed knowledge about lymph and its profound effect on human body and mind. "The lymphatic glands supply raw

material, lymph, to the factories, the glands, and the surplus lymph goes to the brain and provides food for the nerve cells in the cranium.”³⁸⁰ Activated glands transform lymph into hormones.

A lymphatic gland is a small bean-shaped structure. There are hundreds of lymphatic glands found throughout the body. They are connected to one another by lymph vessels. Clusters of lymphatic glands are found in the neck, underarm, chest, abdomen, and groin. For example, there are about 20-40 lymphatic glands in the underarm.³⁸¹

Shrii Sarkar offered many details about the functioning of lymph in the bodies of living beings. Lymph is produced from the energy and vitality acquired from food, air, water, sunlight, and the entire creation produced by the five elemental factors. A maximum of lymph is produced from food which contains a lot of chlorophyll, which accelerates the speed of the production of lymph. We see this fact reflected in that granivorous animals produce much milk, while carnivorous animals, such as dogs, give very little milk.

Lymph is produced from animal protein also but because animal protein produces a lot of heat in the human body, the lymph is quickly converted into semen. Monkeys and deer produce much lymph, but it is not converted into semen because it is utilized in running and jumping. The final stuff is shukra with its three stages: lymph, spermatozoa and seminal fluid. Yoga science holds shukra to be the most developed stuff—“the cream of all creams”, the final essence of lymph.³⁸²

Positive or negative catalytic agents have an important effect on the manufacture of lymph. Positive psychic and positive physical environments are positive catalytic agents, and negative psychic and negative physical environments are negative catalytic agents.

Lymph itself is a hormone, and is converted into other hormones by different glands. Lymph is the initial hormone. The creation of hormones in the other glands depends upon these positive and negative catalytic agents.

Particulars of Yoga Exercises

The regular practice of asanas contributes greatly to physical health and to the remedying of many types of physical and psychic imbalances and sufferings. The benefits of asanas are myriad, and good meditation presupposes regular practice of these yogic exercises. As mentioned, the Ananda Marga system prescribes yoga exercises in combination with a system of proper diet and life style, and those who cannot follow the complete system for some reason or the other may do some of the exercises as detailed by an authorised instructor. There are a number of helpful guidelines for practising yoga exercises in the Ananda Marga system that may be learnt from a qualified teacher.

4. Withdrawal—Pratyahara

The “Hadith” tells of a beautiful event. Once a man presented a silk scarf to the great prophet Hazarat Mohammad. But Hazarat Mohammad did not keep that scarf with him, for he said that at the time of his prayer (namaj) his mind repeatedly kept turning from God to the grandeur of the scarf. The eye-catching form of the scarf extroverted his mind through the medium of the sight organ, and proved harmful to his introversive spiritual practice. So, you see, the organs run after objects for happiness. They have to, for the preservation of their existence.³⁸³

Withdrawal is the first stretch or part of psycho-spiritual meditation. In itself, withdrawal is not complete meditation. Similar to morality, it has a role to play. Proper withdrawal is fundamental to real meditation. The process leads somewhere where another stretch or part takes over, all described in this chapter. No stretch on the spiritual path is isolated from the others. Practitioners may go back and forth between the different parts for a good while in order to refine, consolidate and perfect the various layers of their mind before final merger with the Supreme becomes a reality.

The Sanskrit word *pratyāhāra* means withdrawal. The verb *āhāra* means to “assimilate”, to “bring something into oneself”. The prefix *prati* means “reverse”, “in the opposite direction”.³⁸⁴ Why opposite? Because the mind is used to moving from inside and out, towards externalities. As soon as we wake up, we begin to move about in the external world. From our treatise on the awake state, we remember that most of us do not have much of a conscious inner life as long as we stay awake. Most of our awareness and attention is externalised. The withdrawal process of meditation is to reverse this dynamic, to allow us to move from outside to inside.

Withdrawal is a dynamic process of several phases. In the first phase, the mind withdraws from external physicalities by way of merging them into the mind-stuff. It involves the meditator now seeing his or her inner mind only and not allowing one’s awareness to roam in the outer world. In the next phase, the mind-stuff merges with the ego. Here the self faces inner disturbances and complications, and struggles to bring them to a common inner focus.

As a result of a proper process, any propensity of turning outwards is turned within by degrees, resulting in a deepening and widening of consciousness. This development happens as the energies of those elements of the mind-stuff being brought together by the self, who then absorbs their energies. When this empowered concentration arrives in the purely mental mind, further psycho-spiritual practices may commence.

*The importance of yogic withdrawal (pratyāhāra sādhanā) is immense, because it involves a harmonious blending of knowledge, devotion and action. In this effort, the spirit of doing (Shākta bhāva) finds its consummation, and the latent devotion starts sprouting. This sprout ultimately develops into the highest universalism (Vaeśṇava bhāva). Shaeva bhāva is the path of knowledge. So, in social life there is a great need for action-oriented people (Shāktas) and universalists (Vaeśṇavas). ... Yogic withdrawal begins with vigorous action and culminates in selfless devotion.*³⁸⁵

The Physico-Psycho-Spiritual Process

To a beginner, physical-psycho-spiritual withdrawal may be easy in theory but challenging in practice. Any sincere meditator will be able to provide countless cases of how the mind plays up to resist internalisation. Let us look at an everyday, practical situation

- ⇒ While sitting for meditation, one hears a bird singing outside. “Quite beautiful,” the meditator thinks.
- ⇒ By way of association, one may come to think about an old acquaintance who once saved the life of a bird. “A very good person,” the meditator reflects.
- ⇒ Which leads to the fresh memory of a manager at work who recently made some clumsy remarks about vegetarianism and stated before the co-workers at lunch that animals are born to be our food. “What a senseless person,” the meditator muses.

At this stage, groomed by the song of the bird outside that led to the awakening of some related memories, it only takes but a second for our meditator to get up in arms about human frailties and stupidities, giving serious thought to how to give a fitting reply to several people and possibly at least half of humanity. In less than a minute, the meditator feels a strong urge to finish the meditation quickly to get up and plan to support many such good causes and do many other important works as well.

Whatever is set in motion in the meditator, when he or she first allows himself or herself “to listen to that bird singing”, has nothing to do with meditation but with some sort of mental association driven by a propensity to act in some way, which again is driven by an accumulated reactive driving force, the original cause, of the mind, such as “standing up for justice” or “not accepting injustice”. As this expressed externalising trend now threatens to take over completely, when one should instead be internalising one’s awareness, it betrays the fact that there is little control over the mind and probably as little mental balance in particular situations (such as in the aforesaid scene at work or while participating in any “action for justice”).

Ideation, Not Denial or Suppression

The mind certainly runs towards propensities, but suppressing them is not the way to go because more energy will be consumed in this effort. One has to divert the propensities by learning the art of withdrawal.³⁸⁶ How would a process of proper withdrawal work? First of all, not by denial or suppression. To admonish oneself, that “No, I should not be thinking about such things when I should be meditating,” amounts to suppression and denying oneself of the opportunity to transform such negative thinking into something positive.

*The question of suppression, repression and oppression does not arise in the realm of spiritual cult. You are simply to maintain equilibrium and equipoise—that is, you are to move maintaining proper parallelism with the fundamental propensities of the human mind.*³⁸⁷

As established, the fundamental propensity of the human mind is that it wants to maintain its existence by involving itself with some object or the other. Yogic withdrawal is a process of transformation of that activity, without suppressing it, and the first essential step of this process is acknowledgement; i.e., to become conscious of what is going on in the mind-stuff. Such acknowledgement is the first step in the process of transforming mind-stuff into ego: “I am now properly aware of what is going in my mind right now; I wanted to get up from meditation to do some justice...” For such insight to happen one first has to bring the body and mind in from the external world, and that is why eyes are closed and the body brought to rest, and there are additional practices to enhance this initial part of the process, which will be explained here.

In this way, by persisting in withdrawing the mind from external realities towards subtler internal ones, the practitioner succeeds in developing both his or her conscious crude and subconscious purely mental layers of mind. Such psychic clashes and cohesions cannot however transform mind-stuff beyond the scope of the subconscious mind by themselves. That is, the subconscious layer may evolve, but will not result in any further, subtler development of the mind. And

if only the subconscious layer evolves in this way, the ego may become hugely inflated at the expense of subtler mind. The proper way is therefore to:

1. Acknowledge squarely all facts of the present outer or purely inner situation (and not only those that are pleasing to the ego).
2. Superimpose the idea of still subtler consciousness on those acknowledged facts, by way of spiritual ideation.

For instance, one may remind oneself that the “questionable” manager of our case story has both good and bad sides, and that oneself have feelings about them and what sort of feelings they may be. There may be other implications as well, such as that the ego did not always respond nicely to the manager, however clumsy the manager may have been. This would take place in the phase of transforming mind-stuff into ego; the ego becoming acutely aware of the present situation, warts and all. This part of the process may or may not be particularly pleasant or comfortable as it would involve an honest analysis of egotistical actions and feelings. The great benefit of this uncomfortableness is that one soon learns to turn to a subtler entity than the ego in order to resolve such issues. Inspirational company that allows for sharing and upliftment, helpful studies, and a progressive lifestyle overall including spiritual habits such as regular kiirtan (page 267) and other activities greatly help in this transformation of acceptance.

Outer Suggestion and Auto-suggestion

Shrii Shrii Anandamurti introduced a complementary concept of “outer suggestion” and “autosuggestion”.³⁸⁸ Suppose somebody motivates you, or you are reading a good book or seeing an informative movie, resulting in you making new strides on the path of progress. This is outer suggestion. A good friend calls you: “Hello, don’t sit alone and miserable like that, come with me and enjoy good company, we can do many great things together!” You are awakened and moved by this sort of outer suggestion.

When you have internalised such progressive dynamics, it is called auto-suggestion; you are able to complete a process by the strength of your inner motivation. Even when you become tired and perhaps dejected you are able to encourage yourself: "I will not stop just yet, let me go on for a little while longer until I see the completion of this task." In meditation, the application of techniques in the inner world amounts to auto-suggestion. If somebody joins you and comes to inspire you it would be outer suggestion. For reasons stated earlier, both outer suggestion and auto-suggestion are essential on our life journey from fundamental negativity towards fundamental positivity. We are all born with numerous reactive driving forces that at any time may arise to oppose and collapse our zest for progress. Systematic inner work and regular spiritual and motivational company are the best insurance against such internal and external counter forces.

In time, the continued process of withdrawal as part of daily spiritual practice, the ego evolves parts of itself into pure I. With further processing, the pure I turns into soul when the feelings are actually surrendered to the higher self. By surrendering the dynamics of clash and cohesion to one's subjectivity, their painful aspects are resolved in the greater subjectivity. It is a process of synthesis where one's existential core, the subjectivity, is realised in an increasingly greater sense.

In case of denial and suppression, whatever is being suppressed will remain in the mind-stuff and rebound with increased force as soon as a suitable occasion arises. Why will it return from the depths of the mind with increased force? Because such suppressed imprints will quietly build muscle in order to come out victorious the next time. They build their muscles by secretly draining our energies via temporary unconscious pockets of the subconscious mind. An example would be nurturing an inferiority complex by being servile to some authority without really noticing it, and then one day explode in rage when that inferiority complex is touched on by somebody else who may not be perceived as an authority or otherwise threatening.

Our entire being, including abandoned and despised parts of our history and self, long for liberation and merger with the Supreme. This is perhaps part of psychology, and the idea of addressing it in this book is to make clear that by a proper process of yogic withdrawal any complex and difficulty may be sublimated and resolved. In fact, just as many people see a therapist to resolve such issues, meditation offers a way and means to fill both the role as a client (the objective mind-stuff with its issues) and the therapist (the subjectivity of the same mind who steers the process towards a satisfying conclusion). Hence, we may say that meditation is therapy for one in the same way as therapy is meditation or contemplation for two.

Ego into Pure Self

Roberto Assagioli stated: "We are dominated by everything with which we have identified ourselves. We can dominate and control everything of which we dis-identify ourselves."³⁸⁹ When the significance of the difference between itself and the mind-stuff has dawned on the ego, it will be increasingly curious and eager to transform more of the mind-stuff into itself. That is, the ego starts to introvert somewhat. It may soon be gorging on planning and conspiring about how to get the most of its resources, analyse others, etc. This leads to a phase of further transformation where the ego may or may not determine that it would like to proceed further into subtlety.

It may say: "I really want to meditate. These birds, both outer and inner, no doubt exist, and so do I, and so does everything and everybody else that I may come to think of. Now, instead of thinking about all of them one by one in an analytical manner, let me think about them in a synthesising manner. Their common factor is existence. They all exist inside of me. By remembering and feeling all these things, I actually contemplate existence in so many forms, so let me contemplate existence in itself ..."

Or not. It would depend on the reactive driving-forces of that mind (constructive auto-suggestion), and to some extent the amount

of inspiration it receives from outside (outer suggestion). If at this point the mind proceeds further inside it marks the transformation of ego into pure self by way of identifying all objects of the mind-stuff and their actional potentialities with pure subjectivity: “I exist”.

The Way of Liberation

Earlier, we learnt that knowledge, action, and devotion are the three basic areas of yoga, and that devotion is essential for proper knowledge and action. The process of withdrawal evidently consists of directing knowledge and action in a certain direction as part of spiritual practices. What is the status of devotion in this process?

Devotion is essential to the process. Devotion is the practical expression of spiritual intimacy, of the highest form of love, and is the only way to carry out withdrawal and any part of spiritual practices without generating fresh reactive driving forces. Devotion involves surrendering oneself to the beloved. It is a feeling of becoming one with the ever-present.

With only action and knowledge, withdrawal would not yield the desired result but remain a hard and bitter part of meditation that only produces more and perhaps adverse reactive driving forces. Every imprint in the mind-stuff—every memory, feeling, thought, etc.—is always ready to express itself. They all represent a reactive driving force.

Earlier it was explained how the mind instinctively react in an extrovert way, due to its legacy of accumulated crude reactive driving forces. When closing the eyes and directing one’s awareness towards greater subjectivity, and not towards the objectivated mind-stuff, those extroversial imprints in the mind-stuff will automatically start to express themselves. Thus begins a tug of war between the practitioner’s natural tendency towards extroversion and the desired inward movement towards greater subjectivity.

The essential technique is to face each and every such imprint and identify it as an expression of the spirit and surrender it to the Supreme. Devotion is the proper mental framework that will carry this process to its successful conclusion. With devotion, the energy

of those imprints—the momenta of those driving forces—will not flow towards crudity and objectivity, but towards greater subtlety and subjectivity. This technique was described in some detail earlier and is elaborated here.

Clarification and Support

Withdrawal is a process of transforming static energy (mind-stuff) into mutative (ego), and mutative into sentient (higher subjectivity). This is the reason why many experience withdrawal process as difficult. It is easy to transmute some mutative energy into static (achieving a final mundane result) but difficult to transmute static into some abstract unknown supramundane or spiritual state via the mutative, as reasoned earlier.

To some it may appear as if withdrawal sets in motion far too much mutative energy, which is unfamiliar and perhaps uncomfortable to them. Withdrawal may even become a source of enjoyment to some, as it allows for much thinking, analysing, etc. in the inner world: “Here I sit with eyes closed and nobody disturbs me, let me avail myself of this opportunity to think a little bit ...” In all such cases, a spiritual environment provided by kiirtan and good company is most essential. Likewise, following up and going through the various lessons of meditation with a qualified spiritual teacher time to time will prove most valuable.

Focussed Process

Yogic withdrawal is purposeful methodical focused thinking. Suppose you do some autogenic training. It is a physio-therapeutic method for relaxing muscles by concentration.³⁹⁰ You may for instance like to relax your arm from the tip of the fingers to the neck. If you think that “let me get all of this relaxed and then I will be finished” you will not succeed. The reason for the failure will be that “all of this” and “finished” are all abstracts. Before you even get started your mind will be thinking of something else than your body. If you instead will be thinking that “first I shall relax the five fingers

one by one from the tip through the phalanxes to the wrist, then the lower arm, the elbow, the upper arm, and at last I shall relax the various parts of the shoulder,” then you may succeed.

The same principle, of not excluding or suppressing, but by taking all of one’s awareness from the outer world through the body and the mind towards the soul, is essential to yogic withdrawal. It is called one-pointedness, apexed, or pinnacled mind. In spiritual practice, the starting point is the extroversial mind and the end point the Supreme Self, the supremely apexed point, the cosmic hub. The secret of the success of this process is that the starting point (most crude) is an expression of the end point (most subtle). Remember, the starting point of the cosmic coincides with its ending point. By establishing the starting and end points in your mind, and then confirm to yourself that you will be moving from the one to the other, your mind will correct itself if it would happen to stray away from the process on the way. You are making a simple map for your mind, which it will go by. You may not succeed 100% the first time, but if you persist in maintaining and strengthening this focus, you will soon succeed in moving your awareness in a coherent movement from A to Z via B, C, D, etc., from the fundamental negativity in you to the fundamental positivity of the merger with spiritual truth.

Enhancing the Elevating Force

There are many benefits of focussed, devotional withdrawal. Firstly, the process of withdrawal is made easy and enjoyable by devotion. Secondly, by devotion the withdrawal process teaches the mind how to live in constant joyous progression towards liberation come what may. The regular practice makes the pure mental mind very strong. Thirdly, and most importantly, proper withdrawal generates a subtle mental force that is required to navigate the deeper layers of mind where the seeds of the remaining driving forces are found. This intuitional force liberates the practitioner from many external and internal bondages by supplying insight and wisdom.

By now we know well that the cosmic creative force consists of three main tendencies: the static, the mutative, and the elevating.

These three exist in everything in various proportions and one of them will be dominating at the moment. According to the nature of their accumulated reactive driving forces, human minds, too, are dominated by one or the other of these tendencies. One tendency will be dominating a particular mind and the other two will also influence that mind to some extent. This is why it is important to regularise meditation both with regards to time and place, as the accumulated energy of those precise points will feed back to the practitioner even when one may be out of sorts or uninspired. Other methods for generating spiritual energy at the time of practice are presented later in the chapter.

Battle

The withdrawal process, transforming extroversial, scattered energies into an inward, pointed force, is unfamiliar to the extroversial habituated mind, and therefore difficult at first. Swami Vivekananda (1863-1902) drew an animated picture of it:

*How hard it is to control the mind! Well has it been compared to the maddened monkey. There was a monkey, restless by his own nature, as all monkeys are. As if that were not enough someone made him drink freely of wine, so that he became more restless. Then a scorpion stung him. When a man is stung by a scorpion, he jumps about for a whole day; so the poor monkey found his condition worse than ever. To complete his misery a demon entered into him. What language can describe the uncontrollable restlessness of that monkey? The human mind is like that monkey, incessantly active by its own nature; then it becomes drunk with the wine of desire, thus increasing its turbulence. After desire takes possession comes the sting of the scorpion of jealousy at the success of others, and last of all the demon of pride enters the mind, making it think itself of all importance. How hard to control such a mind!*⁸⁹¹

Swami Vivekananda's allegory tells the story of having to face and transform the tremendous mutative energies of the mind. So long as

the person had not taken to meditation, the ego's policies of *détente* and *peaceful co-existence* vis-à-vis the higher self, saw to it that those materialistic imprints quietly assisted the ego whenever they were called for and for the rest just kept mum as much as possible.* However, such political manoeuvring by the ego never led to the mind developing significantly beyond the psycho-physical scope of those crude imprints which remained in place.

Phases of Struggle

In the science of mind, the first difficult phase of numerous external and internal disturbances is termed *yatamāna* in Sanskrit, “making an effort, trying”.³⁹² The second phase of somewhat less confusion is called *vyatireka*, where one sometimes has some control, other times not. The third phase of introversial progress is called *ekendriya*, “one organ or outlet”. At this stage of introversial development nearly all propensities are under control except for one which may run wild on and off. The particular difficulty here is that as the mind now has achieved a significant level of concentration, so that when control is lost that particular wayward propensity may express itself with considerably more force than at previous stages of disturbance. Thus, the chances of downfall are significant at this stage. Shrii Shrii Anandamurti once found it opportune to explain this matter to a spiritual aspirant:

Suppose you climb a hill and fall down a short distance. Nothing serious may happen. Perhaps, you may feel some pain or get a cut on some part of your body. But, if you climb a little higher and fall down, then for sure you will incur a bigger injury. You may even break a bone in your arm or leg. Now, if you are at the top

* *Détente* is the term for political “kiss and makeup” after a crisis between superpowers in spite of their continued ideological differences. “Peaceful co-existence” was an initiative of post-Stalin Soviet Russia to appease western powers that the East-European sphere did not plan a violent world-wide Communist revolution.

of the hill, very high up, and you fall down, you will certainly be seriously injured. You could even die.

If you go for a walk, and fall down, you would just get up, brush off the dust and dirt from your clothes, and continue to walk. But if you ride a bicycle and fall, you are likely to get more hurt. If you fall from a motorcycle, you would incur more extensive injuries, even severe injuries. If you fall from a moving train, the injuries would be still worse. If you fall from a plane, you will surely die. But if you fall from a rocket, it is possible that your body would not even land on this Earth.³⁹³

In the court of evolution, the enlightened will be judged in a different light than one who is not, i.e., in the light of one's developed consciousness. The history of spirituality is replete with incidents of practitioners falling. In fact, the only guarantee for not having a fall, is complete surrender to the goal, as implied above.

In the fourth phase of *vashīkāra*, “control”, the propensities are controlled by one's intuitional subjectivity which directs them towards the Supreme.³⁹⁴ At this stage, the battle between objectivity and subjectivity, between the wayward ego and the steadfast pure I, has gone decisively in favour of the latter.

Is Entering into the Mind Dangerous?

When going through what it means to be human, we learnt from the Isa Upanishad that the one who cultivates ignorance drifts towards darkness, and the one who cultivates only knowledge drifts into still greater darkness. The propensities of the mind do not live openly in the crude conscious mind. Along with our other inherent reactive driving forces they live deep in the mind-stuff, in the subconscious mind and deeper, from where they will appear in any shape and form when they themselves choose to. Those lurking propensities—longing for material objects, anger, avarice, infatuation, attraction, vanity, envy, etc.—nourish various imprints of the mind-stuff like a seasoned keeper of watch-and-attack dogs sees to it that his predators are always healthy and ready for action.

The need to balance our positive and negative energies is fundamental to everybody, not the least spiritual practitioners. As we now know, successful withdrawal of mind is a process of assimilating static energy (imprints in the mind-stuff) into mutative energy (the ego), which is to be assimilated by elevating energy (the pure self) which is assimilated by pure consciousness (the soul). In the Vedas, it is stated that the force of creation is waning continuously in the introversion phase of creation.³⁹⁵ This phenomenon, the waxing of the cognitive principle and the waning of creative, is felt particularly in spiritual practices where the speed of introversion is at a maximum. What to do with all this energy, positive and negative?

Strange Encounters

Delving deep into the mind may arouse surprising and even startling experiences. As we learned in the chapter on the layers of mind, one's inherent unexpressed driving forces are stored in the subliminal layer of the mind, they germinate in the supramental layer, and they are fully experienced in the pure mental mind. Such encounters with previously hidden aspects of oneself, may manifest internally or externally or both according to their dynamics. If in a dream somebody comes across a driving force (*samskara*), which was so far unexpressed, that experience could be dismissed as just another strange dream. However, when it occurs in conscious meditation it becomes difficult to dismiss the incident as irrelevant.

Meditators may encounter deep-seated and hitherto unexpressed driving forces whenever the mind gets very concentrated and introverted. As the driving force encountered is unfamiliar, and therefore not integrated into everyday consciousness, what occurs may appear surprising, weird, or even shocking. Therefore, many are apt to dismiss such sudden revelations concerning one's inner self as foreign and unrelated to oneself. In psychology this is termed "denial"; i.e., one simply projects the content of the incident on to somebody or something else. Still, whether one identifies with what is happening to oneself or not, that driving force needs to be surrendered to the Supreme Consciousness.

In the process of properly acknowledging one's driving forces and transforming them into the subtlest entity, the role of the Supreme Guru is prominent, to whom anything and everything may be surrendered. Guru Brahma is both the starting point and the end point of one's process; the one to whom one could turn at any point on one's life journey.

*The moment spiritual practitioners start spiritual practice they must surrender all their original actions to Brahma so that they do not have to endure the reactions. This surrender is the most important aspect of spiritual practice.*³⁹⁶

Keeping good company (satsaunga) also plays an important role on the inner path, as subtler points and experiences may be shared only meaningfully with somebody like-minded. In this regard, regular review of one's meditation practices constitutes part of keeping such good company.

Proper Withdrawal

*Now in pratyahara yoga, what are you to do after withdrawing all your propensities from the objective world, from the physicalities of the world? To where are these mental propensities to be directed? If the mental propensities are withdrawn, but are not guided to some other point, what will happen? Those withdrawn mental propensities will create internal disturbance in your mind, will create disturbance in your subconscious and unconscious strata. It is dangerous. ... So, whenever you are withdrawing your mental propensities from different objects, you are to guide those collected propensities into some moving object, moving within the realm of your mind.*³⁹⁷

Proper yogic withdrawal is not a pathological, psychological withdrawal into confusion, paranoia and other disturbed and distorted states of mind, but one of existential growth, expansion, and ultimately absorption into greater consciousness. In conventional psychiatry, "withdrawal" is a clinical term associated

with adverse and pathological states. Symptoms may include remoteness, absence of motivation (apathy), little or no ability to engage or enjoy, little or no empathy, isolation, etc. As made clear, yoga psychology is acutely aware of these dangers. If mental propensities are suspended without being directed towards more subtle states, dangerous reactions may result. Therefore, the rule is that mentally unstable persons should not be taught challenging meditation.

While on the subject, we are reminded of our earlier exploration of “the Shadow”. Recently, the media reported that meditation may have negative effects, with particular reference to mindfulness meditation.³⁹⁸ “The dark side of meditation” was mentioned: a study showed that more than 60% of practitioners had felt at least one negative effect, anything from increased worry to depression to fully developed psychosis. Plainly speaking those 60% had perhaps actually tried to meditate, while the minority, who did not report anything negative, may not have managed to do any meaningful meditation at all. I for my part cannot remember having talked to any regular meditator about this who had not personally encountered new and significant challenges in meditation. But there was a young man once who showed up at a yoga course for the second time only to inform us that since last, he had “seen the light”. He assured us that his life had become fantastic—and that was the last we saw of him. Not that the other participants bothered. Rather, they expressed that the words of the young man had made them uncomfortable, if not embarrassed, as they felt they still had a lot to work on, as all beginners usually have. Most of them continued on the course.

Anyone who has meditated over time knows well that real progress follows from brave struggle and persistent effort. As stated in Svetasvatara Upanishad: “There is no other way.”³⁹⁹ Even those who experience spiritual states early will later come to know hardship in their practices. The Sanskrit word *sadhana* means “effort to complete the journey”. One cannot say at any point of a journey whether its hardships are over or not. It is in the nature of things. A journey is always full of surprises.

5. Vital Energy Control—Pranayama

The various parts of the eightfold yoga system make up the yogic way of regulating and refining mind and body. Directing and regulating the vital energy, *pranayama*, known by many as breath control or “yogic breathing”, is one of these elements or tools. *Prana* means “vital energy”, and *yāma* “to regulate”. The goal of this regulation is then not to simply calm or stop the breath, but to direct and control the vital energy through relaxing the breath and give it a spiritual direction.

There are two methods for such regulation: physical regulation of the vital energy (*hathayoga pranayama*) and psycho-spiritual regulation (*yudhisthira pranayama*).⁴⁰⁰ The former is performed without any point of concentration and without the practitioner allowing him- or herself to be filled by any particular form of ideation. The word *hatha* consists of *ha* and *tha*. *Ha* represents the psychic nerve channel along the spine that leads physical energy (*piungala nadii*) and *tha* for the one that leads psychic energy (*ida nadii*); *hatha* meaning the usage of physical force (the breath) to control the mind. *Hathayoga* is mundane yoga with the ideal of balancing various forces of existence.⁴⁰¹

Pranayama with mental concentration at particular points and with cosmic ideation, is called *yudhisthira pranayama* after the eldest of the five dharmic brothers of the Mahabharata epic. *Yudhisthira* was the first to popularise this kind of method for the regulation of the vital energy.⁴⁰² The name *Yudhisthira* means “the one who is calm even in battle”. This method of vital energy control is included as the fourth lesson in the basic system of Ananda Marga meditation, with three further developments in the higher, special form of that system of meditation.

Need for Caution

Spiritual ideation is the common critical element of the regulation of the vital energy and the process of withdrawal. Shrii Sarkar advised:

There are abuses of prāñáyāma also. If practitioners, during the period of prāñáyāma-induced contraction, indulge themselves merely in the parading of their own petty vanity instead of using that force of contraction for the inculcation of cosmic ideation; that is, if they devote themselves to the expression of their own little egos, they will gradually tend towards crudeness. Even without practising prāñáyāma, if people zealously propel their little egos towards worldly enjoyments, they will also meet the same fate. Prāñáyāma is exceedingly harmful—devastatingly disastrous—for those without cosmic ideation.⁴⁰³

The Vital Energy Organ

We all have a vital energy organ, but not everybody is familiar with it. The main reason many have no idea about this organ is that it consists only of air, of ten forms of air working within and around the physical body. Thus, it is invisible to us, and even if we can observe and feel the mechanics of those airs we do not relate them to this particular organ. Yet, we all experience its functioning and effect on our being throughout the day. It is an extraordinary organ. The vital energy organ never gets sick itself, but we may allow it, consciously or not, to weaken or strengthen a number of essential physical and psychic functions. The most essential of these activities are perhaps perception and contemplation.

Coordinating

The vital energy organ coordinates physical and psychic activity via the breath. Its constructive potentiality is realised by training to breath systematically with ideation. As we now know, ideation is to direct the mind purposively in harmony with activities of nerves, cells and glands. The vital energy organ consists of five internal and five external bodily functions of the aerial factor (see table on page 257). By practising breathing consciously, one advances greatly in perception, concentration and meditation.

This organ of vitality is not counted as a bodily organ as it has no physical gate on the surface of the body. Its foremost function is to regulate the flow of energy in and out of the body. It may be trained and developed, and its state and activity affect the human state of mind and ability to both perceive and comprehend crude and subtle information. This is the case not only with incoming information via the sensory organs, but also with the mind's own abilities of subtle conception as well as with its motor activities.

The vital energy organ affects the mind to a considerable degree. The organ is able to amplify and augment, lessen and reduce anything that our mind experiences and is involved in. In Sanskrit, it is called *pranendriya*, “vital energy organ”. It is this organ those who sit in meditation with fingers pressing their nostrils attempts to manage. In Sanskrit, that particular activity is called *pranayama*, “regulating the vital energy”, as explained above.

Perception

As is well-known, the physical body has altogether ten organs:

- Five sensory organs: ears, skin, eyes, nose and tongue.
- Five motor organs: voice, hands, legs, excretory and genital organs.

The sensory organs feed us information from the physical world. The motor organs allow us to act upon the reactive driving forces stored in us. At the centre of all these activities is the mind-stuff's apperceptive plate (page 50) and the coordinating vital energy organ related to our breathing. This organ works much in the same way as the overall director or engineer of a hectic event.

When the mind-stuff takes the form of incoming inferences perception becomes possible. Now, the vital energy organ pulsates; it contracts and expands—its waves flow in series of motions and pauses.⁴⁰⁴ During the states of pause of this organ, the mind-stuff is able to receive inferences properly and take the form of shapes actually represented by those inferences. On the other hand, if the vital energy organ is worked up for any physical or psychic reason,

impressions may be inaccurate and even imperceptible. The more emphatic the pause of the vital energy organ, the clearer the impression in the mindstuff. Shrii Sarkar illustrates this fact by the example of a common experience. “If one eats something while walking or running, one is not able to enjoy the taste fully. This is due to the mind-stuff not being able to receive the inferences under such a circumstance. One is not able to receive and understand an idea simultaneously with some other physical and mental activity.”

The key to this dynamic is the vital energy organ, which has the capacity to let all physical nerves flow in the pattern in which it itself is flowing. This means that if vital energy organ is in the expansive stage, driven by inhalation, and not in the contracting one, driven by exhalation, every nerve, along with mind-stuff itself, is in the expansive stage flowing in the same wavelength as that of the vital energy organ. The result is that incoming inferences face hindrance and cannot activate the mind-stuff. It is like a strong wind blowing or a storm raging. It becomes very difficult to see anything then, that is the mind-stuff does not receive the incoming waves due to those disturbing waves between the sensory apparatus and the mind.

If the vital energy organ be in the regulating position, pausing, it creates such a calmness throughout the psycho-physical structure making crystal sharp perception possible. So, the vital energy organ plays an essential part in aiding or even allowing the mind to receive inferences, in assisting the mind-stuff to perceive them correctly, so that the ego may have a relevant cognition.

*This is the psycho-philosophy behind the practice of vital energy control (pranayama), wherein the practitioner tries to let this vital energy organ remain in the state of pause, thereby merging the paused unit mind into the ocean of consciousness just to have the experience of the supramental stratum.*⁴⁰⁵

ANATOMY OF THE VITAL ENERGY ORGAN ⁴⁰⁶		
Vayu	Area	Function
Prāña	Between the navel and the throat	Helps with the respiratory functions and the circulation of vital energy
Apāna	From the navel down	Helps in the excretion of urine and stool
Samāna	The navel area	Maintains equilibrium between the prāña and apāna vāyus
Udána	The throat	Helps in vocalisation and expression of thought
Vyāna	Throughout the body	Helps in the circulation of vital fluids and blood, and in the perception and non-perception of experience by way of helping the physical functioning of the afferent and efferent nerves
Nāga	The joints	Helps with jumping, and extending the body such as in throwing
Kúrma	Glands	Helps with the action of contraction
Krkara	The entire body	Helps in yawning and stretching, expressing itself in the increase and decrease of air pressure.
Devadatta	The stomach	Rouses thirst and hunger based on the increased or decreased pressure of food and water in the stomach
Dhanainjaya	The entire body	Contributes to sleep and sleepiness

The experiences of soft and hard, melodious and harsh, hot and cold are being experienced by the vital energy organ. Similarly, with the help of this vital energy organ one may pick up that a particular person is gentle and warm, or a particular person is mean and hostile. These are not physical experiences but subtler physico-psychic experiences felt by our “sixth sense”—the vital energy organ. The particular function of the vital energy organ is to recognize such inherent states or objectives of experienced sense perceptions and psychic projections. This subtle organ also works as an auxiliary force of one’s own mental activities. That is, if the vital energy organ allows one may stop then and there and reflect deeper on what is going on. If this organ does not allow for it, if it is in a highly expansive state and far from calm, cruder driving forces may prevail.

As this subtle organ is composed of aspects of air, it is sensitive to the state of the body. If the body is worked up, influenced by mutative energy, the vital organ will pulsate correspondingly and be far from a state of calm. Whereas if the body is dominated by the sentient tendency, one may find it quite easy to bring the vital energy organ to a state of prolonged pause where both impressions and actions become more lucid. Likewise, if the mind itself is worked up or dominated by mutative energies, the state of the vital energy organ will be mutative, too, and it may require some effort to calm it. Here, the question of static food and thoughts does not arise, as the static tends to take the mind away from any inner work and towards the outer physical world via the crude mental mind. If that is the case, the vital energy will be running after the objects of interest in the outer world—without the person noticing much of it.

Controlling the vital energy organ in order to regulate one’s perceptive or other cognitive powers, may be likened to attuning or dialling in a receiver—a TV receiver, radio receiver, etc. When channels are properly received it becomes possible to see and hear clearly and distinctly. When this organ steadies the physico-psychic processes, the sensory organs and nerve fibres becomes correspondingly calm, and the mind-stuff itself is calmed. This calm further affects the mind which in the absence of incoming “noise” need not contract around these and instead are free to expand.

This explains the fact that when the vital energy organ is brought to a calm during the yogic practice of directing one's vital energy (pranayama), one may experience oneself and one's surroundings clearly. In this state the intimate relationship between the vital energy organ and the mind's apperceptive plate becomes obvious. Whatever is there in the conscious mind-stuff will be available to the subjective mind, to the ego. For this reason, the instruction for those who practice pranayama is to apply spiritual ideation, in order not to get carried away by and enlarge any crude elements of the mind-stuff, but instead transform the cruder objective energy into subtler subjectivity. Thus, vital energy control serves two purposes; first to transform crude mind-stuff into subtle subjectivity, and second to calm the body and mind to such an extent that the mind is allowed to concentrate and move into the superconscious.

Earlier, we heard of the evolution of physical feelings into psychic ones. From the chapter on the animate evolution, we remember that living beings develop their subjectivity when they start to conceive of their inherent reactive driving forces (samskaras) and gradually learn to direct them.⁴⁰⁷ Evolutionarily speaking, the vital energy organ marks a stage of development where human beings actively take part physico-psychically, psychically, and psycho-spiritually and purposefully oppose or admit their inherent driving forces.

We may say that this organ strengthens, or weakens, will power in those spheres, and also subtle psychic-physical will power, which means more informed, intuitional actional power. The vital energy organ is an important tool in spiritual practice and a clear indicator of the state of the body-mind-spirit dynamics. For instance, during a meeting you got involved in a heated debate where arguments flew, and you and your people were not able to accept any of the contentions of the other side. At home in the evening, you have the opportunity to reflect on what took place earlier in the day, and you realise that some of the arguments of the opposing side were actually sensible. "I was carried away by our group and did not think clearly," you tell yourself. And a further thought strikes you: "If I had been this calm in that meeting, I may have applied better judgement then and there."

This is the power of the vital energy organ: When worked up and breathing fast the body-mind combo may not allow for subtler driving forces to direct affairs. Whereas when in a calm physical and mental state, the rhythm of breathing and the calm vibration of the vital energy organ may allow both for subtler information from outside to actually come through the apperceptive plate and make an impression on the mind-stuff, and for one's own subtler driving force, of longer wavelength than crude ones, to affect proceedings.

Subtle Channels

Why do practitioners of vital energy control (pranayama) close one nostril after the other while breathing in and out? Three channels run through along the spine at its core. These are not physical, but psychic nerves. One of them conducts psychically oriented mental energy and ends up exiting from the left nostril. Another conducts physically oriented mental energy and ends up exiting from the right nostril. The third, rising straight up through the spine between the two others, conducts potential spiritual energy. The two other channels do not run straight, but crosses from one side to the other at several points. Wherever those two intersect over the third channel in the middle is the centre point of a psycho-spiritual plexus, called *cakra* (pronounced “chakra”) in Sanskrit.

There are five plexi or cakras along the spine where the two cruder nerves cross over the most subtle nerve in the middle, plus two more above the nose. The goal of a proper system of vital energy control is to loosen the knots at the crossings so that the spiritual potential of the practitioner may flow freely through the third straight channel all the way from the first plexus at the base of the spine to the topmost at the crown of the physical body.

Those three subtle channels are called by different names in various traditions, such as moon channel (left), sun channel (right), and sky or space channel (middle). The most commonly known terms in Sanskrit are perhaps *ida nadii* (coming out of the left nostril), *piungalá nadii* (right nostril), and *suśumná nadii* in the middle.

6. Focused Concentration—Dharana

Dhāraṇā in Sanskrit means “to bring the mind onto a particular point of the body”. In the Ananda Marga system, it involves focussing on the respective controlling points of the five fundamental factors of the creation in the physical body, as done in the third lesson of the basic meditation system.

The mind-stuff takes the form of its object. This happens when the mind receives information via the sensory organs as well as when it acts via the motor organs. As a form is definite, and therefore dominated by the static tendency of the force of creation, any form that the mind-stuff may take is limited. That is, the incoming sensory impressions and expressed actions will never be unlimited, they are always limited and not everlasting. An external experience or involvement consists of a number of imprints in rapid succession. All information or experience of the outer world appears therefore to be dynamic, but consists in reality of a number of static impressions one after the other.⁴⁰⁸

Dharana, focused concentration, is based on this principle that the mind takes the form of its object. The specialty of dharana is that the form created in the mind-stuff is subtle and strengthens the concerning cakra where the focus or concentration is established. With that, the practice of dharana results in control of the cakras.

Refinement

Ananda Marga meditation includes some practices added to the framework of the Great Shiva’s classical framework. Active spiritual practice is essential to actual spiritual development. As explained earlier, up to a certain level human development is facilitated by physical and psychic clashes, but at a certain point the longing for the Great is the sole evolutionary force. In spiritual practice, the plexi (cakras) play a decisive role. The most important parts of initial spiritual practice are refining (*shodhana*) and achieving control over (*niyantraṇā*) the psycho-spiritual plexi.⁴⁰⁹ They are lessons of the Ananda Marga system resulting in control over the cakras.

7. Spiritual Meditation—Dhyan

Patanjali defined pure meditation (dhyan) as “an unbroken flow towards the supreme goal”.⁴¹⁰ In dhyan, the process is dynamic, and not static as in dharana (although dharana appears to be dynamic due to the rapid mechanical speed of one impression appearing after the other). Dhyan is a dynamic process as the object of the meditative focus is of inner concentration and not outer. In the psychic world there are no definite limitations as those of the outer world. As the object of dhyan is spiritual and may be maintained over time in the psychic space, the process is psycho-spiritual, that is a process that begins in the psyche and ends in the spiritual realm.

Such pure meditation is concentrated thinking on the Supreme Being. The practitioner makes an all-out effort to merge his or her I-feeling with a greater subjectivity. The mind rises and rises towards Supreme Consciousness. “Pure meditation” means that the previous stages—ethical living, yoga exercises, withdrawal, control of vital energy, and focused concentration—are integrated into it. The mind is now collected and focused in one continuous flow towards increasingly greater subtlety.

The Subjective Object

It was mentioned that “the object of dhyan is spiritual”. In the chapter on ideation it was asked how a greater, spiritual, supreme being may be the object of a lesser subjectivity such as ours. How can the small meditate on the great—how can microcosmos imagine Macrocosmos? In spiritual meditation this is worked out by the practitioner visualizing him- or herself being the object of the all-witnessing supreme consciousness.⁴¹¹ The Great, Brahma, consists of both the cognitive and operative principles, but to reach that state the practitioner need not meditate on the operative principle, as one is already packed with imprints of its dazzling work. What is needed is to transform those static, mutative, and sentient items back to consciousness, in order to reach the state of the Supreme. Thus, contemplation of Supreme Consciousness is needed, not

contemplation of what is already created. The practical way to contemplate that Supreme State is to imagine Supreme Consciousness seeing oneself.

The mind should be suspended. But where should the suspended mind go? Suppose we build a dam in the mouth of a river. If there is not a small outlet for the water, the dam will burst under the force of the current, which could be catastrophic. Similarly, if the mental flow is checked, it is also dangerous. The mind must be directed along a particular path, it must have some kind of mobility. Dhyána means to direct the mind towards the Supreme One. Remembering the Supreme Consciousness is dhyána. In this thought process there is a sense of mobility. The absence of mobility leads to crudeness and ultimate destruction. Those of you who are students of psychology will understand this subject better.⁴¹²

8. Absorption—Samadhi

If a doll made of salt, wishes to fathom the depth of the ocean, is it possible? If at all it tries to do so as soon as it enters the ocean, it will itself dissolve and become part of the water. This is what happens to the salt doll. Human beings will meet a similar fate.⁴¹³

The story of the salt doll and the ocean has been told by many mystics and is probably very old.⁴¹⁴ The only way to interpret this story is that the material world we live in, the mind and the soul all are states of one and the same reality. To be able to realise this reality the mind must transform into soul and spirit. When that is done there is no longer anyone who may tell the story of what took place. The human mind has merged with cosmic mind.

In the first lesson of Ananda Marga's system of meditation, the practitioner allows all of his or her psychic energy to flow towards the Supreme in the form of a personal inner point accompanied by a personal mantra filled with spiritual ideation. The goal of this meditation is attributional merger (savikalpa samadhi), the state of

“I am the Great”.⁴¹⁵ In the sixth lesson, dhyān, the focus directed towards the apexed spiritual point of the human structure. Here the mind seeks non-attributational merger in the infinite Great (nirvikalpa samādhi), the unmanifest, original state beyond expressed subjectivity.

Yoga and Soul

What is the difference between the pure, intuitive I and the soul? The pure I is the individual pure feeling of existence: “I am, I exist.” This pure I-feeling is greater than any I-feeling associated with time, place, person, actions, etc. It is the individual’s sense of being.

The soul of living beings witnesses everything that takes place in life. It confirms everything of past, present and future. The soul of living beings is a reflection of the Cosmic Soul on the individual mental plate.

The soul witnesses the mind. Without it, the mind would not have been substantiated, it would not have existed. As established early on, for anything to exist it needs to be substantiated by another subjectivity and that subjectivity will by nature be more subtle than the former. At a certain point of its development, the ego, having evolved out of the mind-stuff, becomes the subject of the mind-stuff. (Before this development, the individual mind-stuff is substantiated by the cosmic doer-I.)

As explained earlier, this is a gradual process, where the ego at first becomes aware of the mind-stuff’s driving forces, and only later grows to take charge of those reactive forces itself. Likewise, the ego becomes the object of the pure self, which evolves out of the ego, and in turn the pure self becomes the object of the soul. The Supreme Soul is the final subjectivity of all without which nothing would have existed.

What is the difference between the “human soul” and the “world soul”—the Supreme Soul? In the ancient Rigveda scripture, we find an image of two birds on a tree.⁴¹⁶ Shrii Shrii Anandamurti comments:

*Two friendly birds with beautiful plumes are sitting on the same branch of a tree. One is the Original Entity, the Supreme Soul, and the other is the soul of the living being, the reflection of the Supreme Soul on the unit mental plate. Whenever the unit entities do something auspicious with the help of the mind, the individual soul, due to its contact with the mind, experiences its positive effect. So, the rṣi says, "One bird (the individual soul) enjoys the sweet fruits of the tree while the other bird witnesses its enjoyment." The Supreme Soul, being the Original Entity, is not affected by the activity of the unit mind. He remains as the Witnessing Entity of all actions.*⁴¹⁷

According to the science of mind, the unification of the individual soul with the Supreme Soul is yoga. It is the Tantric definition of yoga.⁴¹⁸ In the section on yogic withdrawal, we were reminded that after withdrawing the mental propensities they are to be guided towards the Supreme Entity, otherwise they would create disturbances for the practitioner.

According to Patanjali, yoga is the suspension of mental propensities.⁴¹⁹ However, as clarified in the section on yogic withdrawal in the present chapter, when mental propensities are withdrawn from externalities and suspended, then, for want of a further goal, they create disturbances in the internal layers of the mind. It is like picking a lot of fruit and bringing it inside to the living room, waiting for it to start to rot.

Although those propensive expressions will not be functioning externally, they will become active internally. One may not steal, lie and cheat externally but may do so internally.⁴²⁰ Instead, transformation is the way of the science of mind, from crude to subtle, without stop or pause, always moving on towards the goal.

The Evolution of Yogic Practices

*Spiritual practice was first started by the Mediterranean Caucasians and the Indo-Tibetans. Later on, it was learnt by the Mongolians and the Alpine Caucasians, and still later by the Nordic Caucasians. ... The Rg Veda cult was started by the Aryans, but the practice of spiritual meditation originated in India.*⁴²¹

Human beings have moved further up the evolutionary ladder since yoga was first systematized by the Great Shiva about seven thousand years ago. Today's humanity is diverse, too, no doubt, but we have also evolved much with regards to sentiments, mentalities, and even glandular and nervous structure. Human beings of today think faster, and have much more complex ideas and feelings than their relatively simpler ancestors of just a couple of hundred years back, not to speak of hundred thousand of years. With the tremendous increase in higher education and fast communication of today, there is also a need to provide humanity with more and more rational explanations and sophisticated training that are in harmony with recent scientific findings, social, political, and cultural developments, etc.

Shiva's system of that time was divided into one subtle branch and one crude, providing for the different standards of practitioners at the time. The present Ananda Marga system of yoga and meditation is a model for today's humanity. Care has been taken to evolve a comprehensive framework that may provide guidance and practical opportunities for a wide range of practitioners.⁴²²

Another particular trend today is increasing commercialisation of self-development. Ananda Marga does not go in that direction. With the view that all-round development is the birthright of all, the Ananda Marga organisation teaches all of its yoga, meditation and other consulting services free of charge. As mentioned in the foreword, Ananda Marga is a voluntary, unsalaried organisation.

Kiirtan

As presented earlier, the basic yogic framework of Ananda Marga is “Knowledge, Action, and Devotion”. The practice of kiirtan is an ideal instrument and activity for arousing and evolving devotion to the Supreme.

The root verb *kirtt* in Sanskrit means to “express something loud enough so that others may hear”. Singing the praise of the Supreme loud enough for others to hear is called *kiirtan*. Spiritual kiirtan is an old art form, popularised in Bengal five hundred years ago. Earlier, hymns and song of praise were used for lauding all kinds of rulers, kings, and emperors. In spiritual kiirtan, the Supreme is the only recognized object of such song of praise. Today, kiirtan has been spread throughout the world by a number of movements and organisations who work for spiritual practice and devotion.

Baba Nam Kevalam is the mantra of Ananda Marga kiirtan. It is the only mantra spoken out loud in the Ananda Marga system. This mantra literally means “the name of the beloved is everything”. In many current languages *baba* means “father”. This word comes from the original *bapra* meaning “beloved”, and the same root is found in “papa”.

The word Bábá comes from Sanskrit “Bapra”. It means Loved-Beloved. “Bapra” then became “Bappa”, and then it became Bábá. It took three thousand or four thousand years for “Bapra” to become Bábá. For unit beings, the Lord is the beloved One. (Bábá Nam Kevalam).⁴²³

Nam means “name”, and *kevalam* means “only” or “exclusively”. The idea is that “whatever I can think of, feel, reach out to, etc., is an expression of the Supreme; I am surrounded by and filled by the Supreme”.

Kiirtan may be sung on all occasions and for all good purposes. When sung, the mantra affects the singers as well as others hear it spiritually, and is favourable and beneficial to one and all. Both spiritual practitioners and non-meditators may sing kiirtan together; everybody will experience its elevation and goodness. Even people who do not appreciate that kiirtan is being sung will feel is positive

influence. Srila Rupa Goswami (1489–1564), a close associate of the great reviver of spiritual kiirtan Mahaprabhu Caetanya, said: “In reverence or indifference; the result is the same.”⁴²⁴ Kiirtan has great power and is a most useful means when sung immediately before meditation. Kiirtan is often performed along with the dance *Lalita*, “gracious”, where the practitioners raise their hands in surrender to the Supreme, the beloved of their life.

*What do you gain by doing kiirtana? Several sense organs become engaged. The tongue is occupied. So during that time you won't have thoughts like, “I will eat this, eat that;” no kind of greed will remain. The sense of taste and taste buds are obstructed. The ears are busy hearing the kiirtana, so they have no scope to go elsewhere. The mind is always thinking of that, so it also has no scope to go elsewhere. And if kiirtana is combined with dance then one's attention is directed to the rhythm of the dance. As a result of the dance, hormones are secreted from the glands. So, under no circumstances can the mind degenerate. There is no way for it to go down. This is the way of the wise.*⁴²⁵

Kaosikii

Shrii Shrii Anandamurti invented and taught the yogic dance-exercise Kaosikii on 6th of September 1978. Kaosikii was given especially for women for their all-round development, and males should also do it. In Kaosikii, the practitioner takes care to relate the heel of the foot to the sound *ta* (called out during the dance), the ball of the foot to the sound *dhiin*, and the toes to the sound *dhae*, while moving the arms and upper body systematically.

Tandava

Sadashiva introduced the tandava dance all those thousand years ago. Shrii Shrii Anandamurti related its importance to the lymphatic and endocrine glands: “The hormones secreted through tandava generate greater manliness and courage in the person.”⁴²⁶

The practice of tandava is conducive for physical and spiritual progress. “The pineal and pituitary glands are activated. As a result of this, the memory is enhanced and the brain is strengthened. Cells in the brain are also strengthened. ... Tandava is the only physical exercise for the brain.”⁴²⁷

Shrii Shrii Anandamurti advised that those who are a bit old should practice tandava twice a day at the time of their spiritual practices, while the young “may practice it as much as they can”.⁴²⁸ As the practice of tandava is not suitable for women because of certain physiological constraints, he invented Kaosikii, the benefits of which are “as important as tandava”, according to him.⁴²⁹ Contrary to popular depictions of Shiva dancing tandava, an extra pair of arms do not grow as a result of practicing the dance. Rather, Ananda Marga seems to be only current movement able to explain the actual benefits of the tandava dance and propagate its regular practice.

Selfless Service

A man was fleeing a forest fire. Coming to a wide, strong river he thought: “If I can get across, I will probably be free of the fire, but how will I bring all my belongings with me? Tired from escaping the fire, he sat down on the river bank and pondered his fate. After a while, the fire approached and the time had come for him to take his decision. Leaving most of his belongings, which he had been carrying all along while fleeing, he waded into the river with only a small packet of essentials strapped on to the top of his head. In this manner he was able to swim across.

In the chapter on evolving psychic potentialities, we learnt about Buddha's advice on our constant need to refining our mind, and “drain our boat of unnecessary water”. In human life there will be many instances where one has to leave something in order to move ahead.

What may be the meaning of “having to leave something in order to move ahead”? This is what we have been doing since the beginning of our life. We left childhood to become youth and the adults. We

left education to take on greater responsibilities and work. Life is a long chain of processes of leaving one stage to embark on another. Those who have a hard time giving up the previous stage remain in a dilemma. In order to get ahead, one really has to let go and realise that nothing is ever lost, everything is transformed and becomes part of the new.

The German development psychologist Erik Erikson (1902-1994) developed a concept of identity crisis on the basis of an eight-stage theory of development stating that the human being passes through various stages of life. Erikson's teaching, like that of Buddha, was that we should move on in life without having to carry heavy baggage from earlier stages. He taught that every single one of those stages need to be properly concluded in order for us to mature and be ready to enter into the next stage without dragging along unfinished business of the previous stage.

With regards to self-development and spiritual practice, the idea of moving on freely without being held back by the past takes on new meaning and content. Spiritualists increasingly care more about others and less about themselves. This is because they realise the presence of the Supreme in everything and everyone.

It is not at all easy at first to bring the mind forward, from being obsessed by its own thoughts and the outer world, towards subtler consciousness. This forward movement by the mind requires concentration, which is something the mind just cannot do without focusing on crude objects. We have already learnt that a proper life style, morality, yoga exercises, and directing the vital energy are of great help in this regard. These things are not core techniques of spiritual practices, but they are certainly great aids, and therefore they are called *sādhanaūnga* in Sanskrit, "aiding practices". Shrii Shrii Anandamurti commented:

So, what is this process of pumping out the water in the case of the human mind? It means freeing the mind from mundane impurities. And how to free the mind from mundane impurities? By rendering selfless service to society without any restriction of caste, creed, nationality, or sex. Similarly on the mental level, the purely mental level, we have to free the mind from propensive

*ideas. That is, in the first phase there should be physico-psychic karma, and in the second phase there should be psycho-spiritual karma. One will have to render social service if one wants salvation.*⁴³⁰

A characteristic of evolved human beings is that they require less and less of service themselves, and instead desire to serve others. “There is just so much more of the Supreme out there—why should I care only about this little physical body of mine and my little world!”

Of course, service is something most people are willing to do especially when there is a great need, such as in natural calamities, war, etc. Selfless service affects us in subtle ways. By rendering service (without getting anything in return) our heart purifies our mind of selfishness, thereby “making our boat lighter”. What happens is that particularly crude elements of the mind-stuff such as “my need for survival”, “my fear of not having enough”, “the security of me and my family”, etc. are sublimated in physical action for the benefit of others and not only for me and mine. Spiritual practices like to do such service with the idea that the one who is served is the Supreme, whose limited expression has appeared to be served. Such selfless spiritually-oriented physical and mental service becomes a symbolisation of the merger of the living being and the Supreme, and is highly ideational. With that, the riddle as to who is the most benefitted by selfless service, the giver or the taker, remains unresolved.

Patience

There is no short-cut. The reality is that much crudeness needs to be transformed into subtler stuff. For most it will take time. To many a beginner, part of one’s meditation time initially takes the form of to some extent hard struggle rather than being an all-together thoroughly enjoyable activity. Remember Vivekananda’s parable (page 201)? One of the reasons for the mind boiling over when attempting to learning how to meditate is that mental training and

discipline involve more complex and demanding processes than physical activities. It is said that mental force is a hundred thousand times stronger than physical force. This is a good thing if that mental force is working in your favour, but if your mind appears to be opposing you, it may at the beginning seem like a colossal uphill task to turn that mental counterforce around in your favour. Confused and static mind-stuff must be made into something more functional and subtle, and more often than not it takes time, persistent effort, and even some amount of shrewdness to be able to do that.

A sound advice for the concerned novice is patience. Looking back, you may have waited a long time for a real opportunity to practice genuine spirituality. Those inner challenges, the clashes, are not really bad, with time they will transform and prove to be your greatest friends. So why not take your time and be patient with yourself now that you got this opportunity? In fact, patience is a deep and most dynamic force. There is an old story about the curse of impatience, most probably from the Narada Purana:

One day, the great sage Narada travelled through a forest on way to meeting God. There he came upon a yogi sitting under a tree meditating. The yogi asked Narada where he was going. "I am on my way to meet God," Narada replied.

"Would you kindly ask God how many more births I must take before I achieve enlightenment? I have been sitting here for a very long time doing my spiritual practices."

Narada promised he would return with an answer, and continued on his way. A bit further in the forest, he came upon another yogi meditating under a tree.

"Narada, where are you going?"

"To the heavens," Narada replied.

"Can you please find out for me how many more bodily incarnations I must take?" the yogi asked.

Narada agreed, and continued on his journey God. After some time he returned to the same forest. There he found the first yogi sitting and meditating. The yogi jumped up.

"Narada, did you learn from God how many more births I need to take?"

“Yes, God said that it will take another four births until you reach enlightenment.”

“What?! Four more births! Haven’t I meditated long enough? This is terrible!” The yogi got up frustrated and left his spiritual efforts forever. Narada kept walking and soon came upon the second person.

“Narada, did you pose my question to God?” the yogi asked.

“Yes, I did. God told me that you will have to take as many births as the number of leaves that exist on the tree you are sitting under.”

“Did God mention me? Did He really address my case!” This yogi spontaneously got up and began dancing in ecstasy over the joyous news, slipped into a trance and became one with God then and there.

Optimism

Spiritual practice has both technical and ideational aspects to it. Technically, the ectoplasmic mind-stuff and its endoplasmic membrane have tremendous transformational potential. Due to the increasing influx of higher inspiration, the ego-feeling expands and is progressively motivated to accept objective states of the mind-stuff as its own. As a result, negative analytical mental trends are transformed into constructive synthesising ones. An example of it is a change of mentality from “That has nothing to do with me” (denial and exclusion) to “This has all to do with me” (acceptance and inclusion).

Shrii Shrii Anandamurti holds a fundamentally optimistic view of the future development of the human psyche:

In this phase of introversial movement, when crude physicality is being transmuted into psychic, we can expect that the day is sure to come when the whole world will move from the subtle psychic realm and cross the threshold of the still more subtle spiritual world. And that day when the entire living world—dashing through a transitory phase of psychic—will become spiritual will not be in the distant future.⁴³¹



20

Love and Devotion

All of the creation is an expression of supreme consciousness, infinite and eternal. This ever-present force is felt everywhere—by those who can feel it.⁴³² Those of us with vacillating minds, who sometimes feel that sweet touch and other times not, suffer from the coming and going of love. Instead of enjoying love always and forever, we may smart from frustrated relations.

Lost Love

Why is so much of many people's love life only fleeting experiences? At times it may even seem as if love has a tendency to evaporate the moment it manifests itself. The reality is that love is permanent, whereas we are impermanent in desire.

Unfulfilled attachments generate craving for fulfilment. We may then behave like addicts suffering from withdrawal symptoms. In our desperation for love, as an alternative we may take to any available means. Instead of living in love, we begin to live with dissatisfying substitute attachments eating away at our love. We may end up by neither feeling love nor believing in it anymore.

A substitute attachment can never fill the role of love. Those who try to make do with some of those end up living empty lives. Something is always missing; things are never right. Such existential deficiency results from allowing a vacuum of unfulfilled desire for love to dominate life. Human beings are resourceful. If we cannot get something in one way, we try to obtain it in another way. It is up to us to fill that vacuum with genuine love that can prevent the onset of any future vacuum and existential troubles.

If love is all, how come there is war and all sorts of suffering and wretchedness in this world? As is well-known, some even query: "If God is so good and loving, how can such horrific things take place; is God not almighty?"

We better ask: What is the source of a conflict and hate? Misunderstanding, limited or impaired cognition, and existential pain are among the chief suspects. Wrong understanding is the actual cause of war; expressed negative sentiments are either uninformed prattle or political propaganda. With proper understanding even most hard feelings soon resolve. If opponents of some long-standing conflict are brought together to actually listen to the other, problems will soon be properly addressed and solved.

Here we may remind ourselves that one does not need to like someone in order to love the human being. We may dislike somebody's action and still love in the same way we affectionately treat a child who has committed a mistake. In this regard, we are all children growing into reality. Listening sincerely to others, thereby coming to know about their actual troubles, gives our inherent love an opportunity to germinate and unfold. In this way we develop feelings of care and affection for our adversary.

Persons who do not want openhearted dialogue need to be removed from power as they keep themselves away from the human reality. Most probably they only want to hang on to power and not solve actual problems.

The Language of Love

If actions are corrected, the real person emerges. It is easier done that way than the other way around. "Action makes a person great."⁴³³ Any living being has the potential to become great, however undeveloped or maladjusted he or she appears to be at the moment. That is why a cry for more punishment is always wrong. Instead, people may be in need of correction and even correction centres. We all require correction at times but not punishment solely.

*Punishment alone, without love, is not good. Love and punishment should go together, and the degree of punishment should never exceed the degree of love.*⁴³⁴

The mind grows in love when watered with understanding and compassion, but wilts away when subjected to hate and terror.

By which language may one make oneself understood in any of the spheres of cosmic existence? What is the mother tongue of the universe? As only a tiny part of the cosmos is physical, and the remaining vastness is psychic and spiritual, the cosmos speaks in the language of subjective existence. By that language everything is generated, directed and redeemed in a singular spirit, and not in any terms of separation, inequality, exclusion or any other forms of analysis. *The Subjective* is the universal language. This language of the entire cosmos is the language of synthesis, the language of universal, cosmic love.

Living Spirituality

May love and rationality co-exist? Love is more a feeling than a thought. Many people seem to have asked themselves if feelings are at all rational. In a separate chapter, we asserted that feeling is the outcome of any form of contact—physical, psychic, and even psycho-spiritual contact. With this definition we cannot but agree that feelings are rational, as 1) they are real, and 2) real contact between living beings and their environment and circumstances can only be meaningful. “Everything is meaningful, nothing is meaningless.”⁴³⁵

Deliberations over whether feelings are rational or not may have more to do with the fact that we sometimes experience emotions in hasty or confused ways and consequently may develop superficial thoughts or judgements about them. Acting in states of excitability, frustration, disturbance and madness more often than not tend to take a bad turn. The considerate therefore differentiates between profound feeling and racing emotionality.

The Path of Devotion

“The course of true love never did run smooth,” wrote the bard.⁴³⁶ It means that true lovers face obstacles at every step towards their reunion. The sure way to traverse the path of the Great union is to love the obstacles and difficulties it presents. True lovers smile in adversity, as they know it is what will bring them together in the end. How to do it, how to realise limitless love? The sure-fire method for it is to go by *selfless* devotion. Devotion is knowing and living love.

*Love is the expressed form of devotion. When does this expressed form occur? When it has its root or seed, only then it can occur. When there is seed, only then it will sprout. That seed is devotion.*⁴³⁷

Devotion is the third way, the others being action and knowledge:

1. By action we manifest our intentions.
2. By knowledge we seek the best way to do so.
3. By devotion our actions and knowledge are filled with feeling for the Supreme.

As both action and knowledge have their limitations, they tend to be hard and unforgiving. Our world is an ever-changing place given to relativities, and those who attempt to live in it by limited, relative means will find themselves between the proverbial rock and a hard place. Action and knowledge are unpredictable; one never knows where they may lead.

Love, on the other hand, is limitless and ever-present. What is the result of boundless love? As we are limited beings, we will lose ourselves it and become the Great Entity itself.

*When the mind leaves all objects of the world and races towards the Supreme Entity, that is known as devotion. When spiritualists move towards the Supreme Entity their minds are unknowingly and gradually transformed. A caterpillar does not know when it changes into a butterfly. Similarly, the mind of a spiritualist does not know how it changes; one day it simply realises that it is no longer a unit mind.*⁴³⁸

Devotional Feeling

So far, we have learnt that:

- Physical feelings are the first experiences of primitive beings when they come in contact with the environment.
- Mental feelings arise out of physical experiences: “open”, “closed”, “light”, “heavy”, “bright”, “sombre”, etc.
- Thoughts are indirect—about experiences—and not as immediate and direct as feelings. As our intellectual self keeps thinking about shifting sensory experiences, feelings, thoughts and memories we remain unable to achieve anything lasting in life.
- Intuition is essentially sublime feeling—contact with subtler existence, and may or may not express in the form of distinct thought.

From this we may conclude that feeling of various subtlety is the one constant throughout our evolutionary journey. Even before the first conscious action there was feeling, and in all dealings there is feeling. We may say that all thoughts, knowingly or unknowingly, are embedded in feeling.

Devotion is well-directed feeling, not wild emotion. How can feelings, which come into being in contact, be well-directed? Are they not something that just comes and goes with our various interactions and contacts throughout life?

Yes, a random feeling may be different from devotion, but devotion is still feeling. The essence of devotion is unhesitating feeling to merge with the Beloved. It is not a calculated affair like action and knowledge. Everybody knows that actions are calculated, but how about knowledge, where is the calculation?

The Status of Knowledge

Knowledge is action but on a subtle level, on the intellectual level. The application of knowledge is always calculated or motivated by some propensity or the other. Whenever any action is done, the ego

is involved. The ego enjoys the results of the actions and ponders what to do next to enjoy even more and not less. At the subtler level, at the intellectual, subconscious level, the ego enjoys in subtler way, in an indirect way when non-conscious elements—propensities, memories and other types of inherent reactive driving forces (samskaras)—act up. In this way informed action, knowledge, generates subtler ego whereas common physical action generates cruder ego. Subtler ego is a greater obstacle to spiritual progress than any other form of ego. In this respect, knowledge and intellect present bondages. Shrii Shrii Anandamurti suggested a formula to counter the binding effects of subtle ego:

*Action minus Knowledge equals Devotion.*⁴³⁹

According to this formula, if action is 100 and knowledge is 40, then devotion is 60. It means that people who do more action and has less knowledge grow less subtle ego. Suppose a person has very little knowledge, let's say 5 degrees of knowledge and performs good deeds. In that case the devotion will be $100 - 5 = 95$. On the other hand, if a person is highly learned, he or she will have to perform action to the degree of for example $100 + 40 = 140$ (where 100 is the amount of learnedness) in order to attain a devotion of 40. It means that knowledgeable people must do more to grow devotion and save themselves and society from their subtle ego. Earlier in the chapter we heralded selfless service as the sure-fire way for intellectuals to liberate themselves from subtle ego.⁴⁴⁰ Good actions without thinking about personal rewards grow the subtler parts of the mind and its devotion to Supreme Consciousness. Craving for name and fame is not part of such proper action.

Earlier we learnt that knowledge is subjectivisation of external objectivities, and that even a wee bit of intellectual knowledge may generate vanity in people, and that some nearly burst with pride when announcing something they just learnt. A minute or two ago they had no idea and now they are the very source of knowledge! Expressing devotion to the Supreme Consciousness, who is beyond any mundane and supramundane knowledge, therefore comes unnatural at first to a mind dominated by intellect.

In the physical and psychic spheres, devotion is the will to take on any hardship or struggle to realise the love of the Supreme. The Bhakti Shastra⁴⁴¹ enunciates that devotion is love personified:

Devotion is service to God, devotion is pure love, the only desire of devotees is to give pleasure to God, devotion is the life of devotees.

A devotee only thinks about and acts for his or her beloved, and even that thinking and acting is essentially feeling as the profound contact is always felt through and through; it is unceasing. A true devotee does not ever allow his or her beloved to slip away.

*In the practice of yoga, practitioners elevate the coiled serpentine of primal force and merge it into the Supreme Soul. As that fundamental force of the unit consciousness crosses various plexi, the spiritual aspirant achieves perfection at the various stages of Yoga. The primal force can be raised only when the practitioner has a longing for the Supreme Soul. ... In the absence of devotion, it is not possible to take the Soul of the living being to the Supreme Soul. Even the awakening of that primal force is not possible in absence of devotion.*⁴⁴²

Neohumanism

In the early 1980s, Shrii Sarkar formulated a philosophy called Neohumanism.⁴⁴³ It details the various sentiments of human beings, and calls for the growth and implementation devotional sentiment and rationality in all spheres of life. Human beings should cultivate devotion to the supreme spirit that pervades all of creation.

Some people have strong feelings and sentiments for their family, others for their religious or other form of community, for nation, ethnic background, social class, etc. Such sentiments define individual and collective identity, and their implications or scope vary with the mass and volume of people they include.

The sentiment for one's family is more limited than a sentiment for, say, one's locality. For instance, a local shopkeeper may have

sentiment for his or her family, and even a stronger sentiment for the locality that is served by his or her shop. In the language of the philosophy of neohumanism, this stronger sentiment of the shopkeeper would be labelled “geo-economic” as it has to do with the economy of the people of that geographical locality. If one day this merchant is able to establish a chain of stores throughout the country, his or her sentiment would probably transform into national-economic. Again, a shopkeeper may belong to a particular community and serve that community in particular. In that case, his or her sentiment would probably be socioeconomic, not determined by geography, as it has to do with a particular society or branch of society. Even if that shopkeeper manages to establish stores around the country, the sentiment will probably not become nationalistic if that particular community remains the mainstay of the fortunes of the business.

Depending on the number of beings benefitted by a sentiment, that sentiment may be determined to be more or less helpful. The sentiment of humanism is considered to be great. Still, it only includes human beings, and no other living beings. In this day and age, with the environmental crisis and growing ecological concerns, many countries have already passed laws to protect the rights of both animals and plants, as well as those of human beings. This is a new (“neo-”) philosophy for the good and happiness of all and not only of human beings, and that is why this philosophy is called neohumanism; a fresh and more comprehensive philosophy for human beings embracing the entire creation.

Why is it called neohumanism and not universalism? Because not all creatures are capable of taking all the measures needed for bringing the creation together and further onwards. Human beings have the potentiality to evolve a world for the progress of all: Live and let live!⁴⁴⁴ Love for all is not anarchy or being headless. Therefore, this consummate philosophy is called neohumanism; humanism of a new and greater human orientation. It includes all of the animated and inanimate creation while leaving the responsibility for its continued progress and well-being to humans.



21

Two Kaleidoscopes

Before we go on to conclude, let us summarise what we have learnt so far. From the beginning we have acquainted ourselves with matters that frame our life experiences. We live by a particular set of microcosmic circumstances forming our world of limitations. The great cosmos, our common home, constitutes a far bigger and more comprehensive structure than we can realise initially. It is Macroconscious and we are microconscious.

Macrocosmic and microcosmic evolution both move in incremental steps, each new step related to but a little different from the preceding. In the first phase of manifesting the cosmos, cosmic evolution moves towards increasing crudity. In the second phase, the animated microcosmic evolution moves towards increasing subtlety. Both phases are kaleidoscopic. Through kaleidoscopic evolution the cosmos makes a home for us, and in the same way we grow gradually to make all of it our own.

The Macrocosmic Kaleidoscope

Cosmic consciousness has evolved a cosmic kaleidoscope where the five fundamental factors—ethereal (spatial), aerial, luminous, liquid, and solid—are reflected and refracted in seven worlds or planes of cosmic consciousness. The cosmic self is watching as its operative principle turns and twists the kaleidoscope with increasing speed. The light that illuminates the cosmic mind-stuff is the refulgence of pure cosmic consciousness.

The cosmic worlds or planes are the seven mirrors inside the cosmic kaleidoscope. They produce one majestic pattern after the other blending into each other in increasingly manifest creation, brilliantly lit by the light of cosmic consciousness. It all begins with a powerful straight line bending and turning into a wave, followed by two and more waves in continuous succession. This development moves from widely meshed to fine-meshed, from sparse to dense, from sublime cosmic ideas to crude material expressions. All along, the operative principle with her three tendencies—elevating, mutative, and static—turns the tube of this kaleidoscope in one direction only: from subtle towards crude. This is the first phase of the great cosmic kaleidoscope creating our common cradle and home, the cosmos with the universe.

The Microcosmic Kaleidoscope

Likewise, in the second phase of cosmic creation, the created beings own their personal microcosmic kaleidoscope. At the front, where the light of consciousness pours in, tumbles the microcosmic mind-stuff. The multicoloured, multifarious imprints in the human mind-stuff reflect and refract along the walls of the microcosmic kaleidoscope in numerous mirrors deriving from the degree of the individual's development, refinement, purification, and perfection:

- Six existential layers: physical, crude mental, purely mental, supramental, sublime, and subtle causal.
- Four states of being: wakeful, dream, deep sleep, and transcendental.
- Various activities: action, ideation, thinking, memory, acquiring new skills and knowledge, rationalisation, diversion and transformation.
- Numerous crude and subtle propensities, such as cruelty, envy, worry, hope, conscience, effort, etc.
- Siddhis.
- Pinnacled mind.

Initially, the microcosmic kaleidoscope, too, is turned by the operative principle but in the opposite direction of the macrocosmic, towards subtle. In the second, inward phase of creation, the light of consciousness at first does not get through in the microcosmic kaleidoscope as the patterns forming are most compact and dense. It takes a while before sufficient light gets through for various colours and contours to be seen, and even then only vaguely for a while.

With the decreased density and corresponding increase in the amount of consciousness shining through, the microcosmic ego gets involved and feels stimulated to turn the kaleidoscope itself. As the patterns on display get increasingly more colourful, shining, and attractive the ego discovers that the kaleidoscope tube may be turned not only in the subtle direction but both ways—towards the subtle or in reverse towards the crude. In fact, some egos derive satisfaction from being able to twist their kaleidoscope sometimes this way, at other times that way. Here, the ego may begin to feel like a proper boss and quite the expert. “Why should the patterns of my kaleidoscope only turn out more and more spaced out and transparent. Even if the operative principle, the manifesting force, always wants to move us microcosms in the direction of the subtle, let me experiment a bit! Let me twist this tube back and forth for a while to see if I can have that shiny brown coloured pattern that I had some time back, that gory red, that abysmal blackish blue again, I rather fancy that ...”

When the movement of microcosms regresses in the direction of crude, the light of consciousness reduces correspondingly. Once more, the patterns of life appear darker and less distinct. The ego is no longer able to discern the patterns as clearly as before. Some egos may notice it and even try to stop the decadence and get back to turning their kaleidoscope towards subtle. However, if the decline is allowed to continue, at some point of the regressive movement the person no longer seem to care about such “details”. The only thing that really matters to inflated, insensitive egos is that the ego itself can twist and turn reality. Soon, the ego steers the wheel of his or her life wildly as if it were a rally car careening along at full speed, and the retrograde evolution becomes unstoppable.

Maya

Our microcosmic kaleidoscope is both a miracle toy and a scientific instrument. With it, we may enjoy the world, explore and utilise it. Gorgeously beautiful and absorbing are its arrangements and configurations. In Sanskrit, there is a word for it, *maya*, consciousness bound in the creative web of the operative principle.⁴⁴⁵

The idea that the entire creation is only an illusion, that even maya does not exist, was widely popularised in India around 700 CE and has continued to influence common existential belief to this day. This concept, which according to itself is nothing but an illusion, is rejected by Ananda Marga philosophy, which states that maya is the state of expressed consciousness; the work of the operative principle. The creation obviously exists, in the form of a multitudinous crude and subtler expression of consciousness. Everything in the creation changes all the time, and therefore maya, with all her kaleidoscopic patterns, is a relative and not an absolute reality.⁴⁴⁶ The only absolute truth is the infinite Macrocosmos.

One person may take a particular thing or person to be truth, the next person another. In reality, all truths are relative and subject to changes in time, space, and person. What is an illusion to one may be a relative reality to another. Even truths and illusions alter into each other in the life of one and the same person. Only the One, comprising all of time, space and person, is absolute truth. As cited earlier: “The Great, Brahma, is Absolute Truth; the universe is also truth, but relative.”⁴⁴⁷

Everything in the creation is indescribable. Still, the mind accords superficial descriptive labels to its world and everything in it. Developed minds, poets, composers and other artists attempt to express both the mysteries they conceive of and those they guess at, without ever succeeding fully in their efforts. None of what one tries to pass on from one’s own kaleidoscope is totally comprehensible or true to others who relate to their own microcosmic reality.

The way to strive for perfect communication is to leave one’s microcosmic kaleidoscope and embrace the macrocosmic one. Still, every morning as soon as we are awake, we curious people once more

put our microcosmic eye to our individual little kaleidoscope. And as we do so, a mysterious verse is heard, if one has the ear for it, set to ancient tones:

*Turn me one way, I move towards the subtle,
displaying increasingly magnificent, enigmatic forms.
Turn me the other way, in the direction of crude,
Until I come to a halt; fossilised, paralysed.*

Intuitional Turn

The pure, intuitive I only wishes to turn the kaleidoscope towards subtle. In microcosmic kaleidoscopes where patterns have become most subtle, allowing for very much consciousness to shine through, the ego is partly blinded or needs time to adjust, and therefore allows the pure self to continue turning the kaleidoscope towards the subtle. In the process, the patterns of the mind-stuff turn out more and more magnificently—genuine and marvellous. In the end, there comes a point when the brilliant light, now shooting like a thousand suns throughout the kaleidoscope, pierces straight through the mind-stuff, which no more functions like a pattern-generating filter.

The pure self stands entranced, and in the end the ego is absolutely enchanted and speechless, too. The entire display now only consists of indescribable, most captivating, supramundane golden light. The viewer may not even discover that he or she has already lowered the kaleidoscope to allow him- or herself to be entirely filled by the pure spiritual original light of macrocosmic consciousness outside of the microcosmic kaleidoscope. Nobody is turning anything anymore, neither this way nor that.

Why do we witness such a kaleidoscopic world? Variety comes according to the varieties in our inferences, coming through or emanating from our motor and sensory organs. They are not giving us the proper colour, proper smell or proper attributions of the external world. We just depend on them. And when all these inferences and objectivities merge with the unit subjectivity, that is, the unit cognition, then what happens? This unit cognition

*comes in contact with Supreme Cognition and feels that there is no difference between unit cognition and the Supreme Cognition. Both are made of the same entity, the same factor, the same element; and in the entire universe there is a single element and that element is the Cognitive Faculty.*⁴⁴⁸

Transitions

Any development, progressive or regressive, moves in waves. In the natural evolution of the animated creation, from crude towards subtle, mutual clashes and contradictions of waves reduce the wavelength of successive waves. This is a fact not only for biological evolution, but for any social, economic, political, cultural, etc. development. It is the way the creation moves in any sphere. For instance, after a great war there will normally be fresh initiatives towards peace-keeping and common welfare. After World War 1, the League of Nations was established. Following World War 2, the United Nations was established. A World War 3 could result in the beginnings of a proper world government. Perhaps, when all people of planet Earth are united under one government with one common army, they may have to face clashes with extra-terrestrial powers.⁴⁴⁹ This may sound like pure fantasy to some, but it would still be in the order of things—the continuation of clash and cohesion beyond any present limitations.

*In the vibrational world there is a sequence of similarity of curvatures (homogenesis).*⁴⁵⁰

In ordinary evolution there is a gradual change from one era to the next. When the mental movement is of evolutionary or counter-evolutionary character results will be slow and gradual in coming. If the movement takes the form of a revolution or counter-revolution, results will be quick and momentous. Significant differences in biological constitution are the result of the great amount of time that has passed. The child of a monkey is a monkey but its distant descendant may be something quite different and more evolved than that. Processes where waves follow closely upon each other, to

gradually widen the wavelengths of successive waves, is termed as “similar resultant” (*sadrsha parinam*) in the science of mind.⁴⁵¹ This evolutionary principle, of similar but not identical resultant, is the basis of the kaleidoscopic character of the evolutionary creation.

As stated earlier, there are no two identical created beings in existence and there never will be. Even no two constituents of any structure are the same. The mind is like a multifaceted prism glittering in a wide-ranging existential spectrum. At the near end of that spectrum the mind expresses physicality, at the far end spirituality. Our mental focus seems to be wavering somewhere in the middle. Whatever it is that comes through at any point in that existential prism—feeling, thought, memory—will evolve kaleidoscopically from that particular point. Mental propensities may be expressed in crude and subtle ways, in combinations with each other, in innumerable thoughts, memories, and other reactive driving forces of the inner world, reflected in the motor organs in the outer world, or transmuted by way of ideation into subtler existence. Human beings are complex and diverse.

Under the influence of their particular reactive driving forces all are moving along their own orbits with different ideations. According to the principle of universal diversity, the thought of no two persons is alike. It is an interesting phenomenon: attend a gathering of thousands of people and you will notice that all of them have different thoughts and ideas all the time developing into new thoughts and ideas according to each and everyone’s inherent reactive driving forces. Nothing or nobody stands still. Observed Shrii Shrii Anandamurti:

*So many mental pabula, so many mental thoughts are moving along with so many physical structures; so many objects and living beings of kaleidoscopic colours and characteristics are moving on.*⁴⁵²

Part 5:

Search for Truth



22

The Disparate Roots of Cognitive Science

Once a vastly radiant Entity appeared before three groups—the gods, the demons and the humans—who were standing together. This radiant Entity had neither any starting point nor any terminating point. At first none dared get close to Him and enquire of His identity. But slowly some of the gods gathered courage and went to know His identity. First of all, the wind-god approached the Entity and asked, “Who are you?” Instead of answering direct, the Entity asked him, “Who are you?” the wind-god said, “I am the mighty god of wind, I blow out everything that comes in my way.” The radiant Entity then said, offering him a blade of grass, “Here is a blade of grass, blow this if you can”. The wind could not even move it, howsoever hard it tried. The wind returned ashamed and chastened. Then the fire went and said by way of introducing himself, “I am the fire. To consume everything is my characteristic”. The fire was asked to burn that blade of grass but he was also unsuccessful and came back with bowed head. Similarly, the rain-god went and returned, having failed to make that blade of grass wet.

The people thought, "It won't work like this." They found out the most intelligent person amongst themselves, who was not only intellectual but also knew how to behave in different circumstances and was endowed with great tact. The people selected him as their leader and commissioned him with the task of finding out the identity of that radiant Entity. This leader approached the radiant Entity most reverentially and inquired, "Who are you, please?" The radiant Entity counter-questioned Him. "Who are you?" The reply was, "Just to know that I have come to you. I do not know who I am." Upon this the radiant Entity further asked, "What do you do?" This time the reply was, "I will try to do whatever you command me to do." These replies pleased the radiant Entity much and thus He disclosed His real identity;

"I am the Cognitive Principle. I am within you and also without you. Because of My presence, you do everything, you feel everything, you realise everything. You are a small fraction of mind, a small drop of water in this vast ocean which I am."

Then the leader sought a message from that radiant Entity. The radiant Entity said, "My message is 'da', convey it to all."

The message "da" was interpreted differently in accordance with the inherent characteristics of the different groups. The gods said, da means "damanam kuru", that is, just control thyself, just control all your propensities and be dánta, one who has controlled one's all propensities. This group of people according to whom da means damanam kuru were known as "devatá", divine.

Another group said da means "dayám kuru", that is, be compassionate, because compassion, dayá, will create sweetness in your heart and your heart will slowly become all-pervasive. This group of people, as per whom da means dayám kurú—be compassionate—were known as human beings

And the third group of people said, "No, no, da doesn't mean damanam kuru, da doesn't mean be compassionate, da means dánam kuru, give, donate, and they were known as dánava, daetya, the giants."⁴⁵³

This most ancient story from the Kena Upanishad provides us with a picture from back when human beings went from being nature worshippers to probing deeper into the mysteries of existence—within themselves. In its existential exploration the increasing subtler human mind had come up against a wall; the forces of nature no longer offered any satisfactory response to the limitless human thirst for knowledge. It is story from a transitional period.

Humanity's journey on the path of civilization started only 15,000 years ago. This can be inferred from the fact that human beings began evolving language about this time. The oldest part of the Vedas belongs to this period. There is a close similarity between the language used in the oldest part of the Vedas and the language of the people living 15,000 years ago. The Vedic civilization is the oldest civilization in the world.

A full-fledged civilization, with the four symbols of advancement—agriculture, the wheel, dress and script—started only about 7000 years ago. Human beings had grasped the rudimentals of these four inventions by this time. Pictorial letters were invented less than 7000 years ago, and philosophy was discovered about 4000 years ago. The first philosopher was Maharshi Kapil, who will be remembered and respected for all time.⁴⁵⁴

The Vedas

Shrii Shrii Anandamurti's science of mind is a synthesis of Vedic intuitional science and Tantric practice and philosophy. Tantra defines Yoga as the union of the individual soul with the Supreme Soul, and Tantra is the practical path of that Yoga.⁴⁵⁵ The indigenous spiritual teachings and practices of India is Tantra. It existed in India thousands of years before the Aryan invasion.

The Rigveda is the oldest part of the Vedas, the world's first scriptures. Its earliest verses may have been composed 15,000 years ago. The Norwegian religious historian J.F. Wilhelm Schencke (1869-1946) commented that the most recent parts of the Vedas "are said to belong to the millennium just before our calendar, but how

far back its oldest parts go we cannot say.”⁴⁵⁶ As a verse is called a rk (“hymn”) in this oldest part of the Vedas, this part was called Rkveda, the Rigveda of today. What remains from those times is mostly about nature worship, but even here we find traces of interest in the mind itself, as in the following verse probably more than 10,000 years old:

*“Let us move together, let us radiate the same thought-wave, let us come to know our minds together,
Let us share our wealth without differentiation, like sages of the past, so that all may enjoy the Universe.
Let our aspirations be united, let our hearts be inseparable,
Let our minds be as one mind, so that we live in harmony and become one with the Supreme.”*

This verse is sung in Sanskrit at the start of collective Ananda Marga meditation:

*Samgacchadhvam samvadadhvam sam vo manamsi janatam,
Devabhagam yathapurve samjanana upasate.
Samánii va ákútiḥ samáná hṛdayánivah,
Samánamastu vo mano yathá vah susahásati.*⁴⁵⁷

The word *veda* is old Sanskrit and means wisdom in the sense of valid, true cognition, the highest, spiritual cognition.⁴⁵⁸ Later came the word *jīnana* (pronounced: “gyan”), knowledge in the sense of “learning”, “know-how”.⁴⁵⁹

*The word jīnāna in Sanskrit is derived from the root verb jīná plus the suffix anat. The same root verb, jīná, was changed into keno in old Latin. The root verb “know” in modern English is the transformation of the old Latin keno. Because the letter “k” was in keno, the letter “k” has been retained in the spelling of “know” although it is not pronounced in modern English.*⁴⁶⁰

The older Vedas contain the wisdom of the ancient Aryans. The original land of the Aryan nomads was Europe and spreading out towards the Caucasian mountains of West Asia. From there they went in all directions. This was long before the age of script, when knowledge and wisdom spread orally. With time, as the volumes of knowledge and wisdom accumulated, this oral tradition required so

much memory power that there were certain persons trained in memorising enormous amounts of knowledge, but who may or may not have understood all of what they remembered. Likewise, there were learned persons capable of explaining and commenting on the Vedic lore, but who did not possess the required memory power. Naturally, this state of affairs led to the alterations and loss of content down the millennia.

The Upanishads

Most of the psycho-spiritual and spiritual content of the Vedas is found in the Upanishads. Upanishad means “that which brings one close”. These works of profound knowledge and wisdom is the fruit of the indigenous culture of spiritual practice, which bloomed in India even before the Aryans rode in from the northwest. More than one hundred Upanishads were included as particular knowledge and wisdom parts of the Vedas, the original parts of the Aryan Vedas having to do with rituals and other mostly mundane affairs. The fusion of the Vedas and the Upanishads is one of many expressions of how the invading Aryan authoritarian culture and the original Indian culture of spiritual practice, Tantra, came to live side by side influencing each other.

In Mandukya, Taaittiriya, Kshurika, Chhandogya and other Upanishads we find the first science of mind. All these scriptures were composed in India by spiritual practitioners. Nonetheless, we find psycho-spiritual teachings even in the oldest Vedas, if only sporadically and of lesser scale and depth than in the Upanishads. The four so-called great sayings (mahavakya), one from each Veda, are from the upanishads and establish:

Consciousness is the Great (Prajnanam Brahma).

- Aitareya Upanishad of the Rigveda.

This Soul is the Great (Ayam Atma Brahma).

- Mandukya Upanishad of the Atharvaveda.

I am the Great (Aham Brahmasmi).

- Brhadaranyaka Upanishad of the Yajurveda.

You are That (Tat Tvam Asi).

- Chandogya Upanishad of the Samveda.

These are the main mantras given at Vedic initiations for the practitioner to goad his or her mind towards a stage where real spiritual practice may be commenced, that of Tantra.

Tantra

As mentioned earlier, there are ten thousand years old findings of Tantric practices in India. The first master who systematized Tantra and gave it a comprehensive physico-psycho-spiritual form and gave it a dynamic individual-social framework, was Shiva.⁴⁶¹

The Sanskrit root verb *tan* means “to expand”, and *tra* means “liberator”; Tantra is the science that liberates from all bindings—physical, psychic and spiritual; the science that expands mind and spirit and liberates.⁴⁶² When Tantra spread near and far and changed its outer form it was called *taota* in Japanese, *tao* in modern Chinese. Spiritual meditation is called *dhyan* in Sanskrit, which turned into *c’han* in Chinese, *chen* in Korean, and *zen* in Japanese.⁴⁶³ Buddhist, Jain and Sikh esoteric practices can all be sourced to Tantra.

As mentioned earlier, Shiva set off two modes of Tantra, both going in the same direction, towards the realisation of the profound and Supreme. The crude mode was formulated for practitioners initially unable to sit in meditation for any length of time, whose minds ran helter-skelter in the outer world instead of showing any sign of focusing on inner truth. Today people know this system as “food-tantra”, “drink-tantra”, “sex-tantra”, and some other such mundane forms.

The other, subtle mode was for those who were somehow able to concentrate in the inner world. This subtle form of Tantra is brought forward by Ananda Marga today. Furthermore, tantric practices are structured in a “dark” school where occult powers are consciously sought, and an “enlightened” school for pure illumination and spiritual fulfilment. As such, Tantra is both famous and infamous. The science of mind presented in this book is congruent with the subtle, illuminating school of Tantra.

How Myths Come into Being

We just mentioned Shiva, the ground-breaking spiritual master of seven thousand years ago. With the passing of time, much that has taken place tend to recede into the background of our memory until it is no longer available to us in its original form. In the end, only the great, the momentous, and the terrible may remain on our mental canvas in some archetype, symbolic or mythological form, which may even descend into the depths of our subconscious or unconscious where they are more or less beyond our individual and collective control.

Historians are well acquainted with such dynamics, and are sometimes able to employ myths as tools to get closer to actual historical incidents and development. Serving as an example, the following exalted verses are from “The Great Hymn of Shiva” (Shiva Mahima Stotram), one of the most ancient poems in existence:

“Oh, Supreme Lord, the centre of all points, it is not possible for me to understand you fully because the mind gets lost, becomes non-existent, after reaching You.

Yet I love You. I wish to attain You with all the urges and longings of the mind, because You are my everything. I do not know what You look like. I cannot describe you.

But You must be like something. My, questions is, who am I to say what You look like? I salute You in whatever form You may be.”⁴⁶⁴

This work is very well known in India and is said to be by a heavenly musician known as Flowertooth (*Pushpadanta*):

Flowertooth was a divine musician in the court of Lord Indra (King of the Gods). Flowertooth was also a devotee of Lord Shiva and a lover of flowers.

Once he happened to see a beautiful garden adorned with charming flowers. It was King Brilliantcart’s (Chitraratha) royal garden, who was also a devotee of Lord Shiva. The King used to offer flowers from his palatial garden as a symbol of his devotion to Lord Shiva.

Flowertooth was so awestruck by the beauty of the garden, that he could not control his emotions and picked the flowers from the garden. Every day he tried to stop himself, but could not help himself and picked up the flowers. As a result, King Brilliantcart was left with no flowers to complete his prayers to Lord Shiva.

The King did all he could to address the issue. But Flowertooth had divine powers to be invisible and hence, the king could not find the culprit. Left with no ideas how to solve this problem, the king spread bilva leaves (considered to be sacred offerings to Lord Shiva) in his garden.

Flowertooth was unaware of this and unknowingly stepped on the bilva leaves. This infuriated Lord Shiva and he punished Flowertooth by taking away his divine powers.

He was shocked, but being a blessed devotee, he realised why that had happened. In order to seek forgiveness and please Lord Shiva, Flowertooth composed a song of praise in which he elaborated at length upon Shiva's greatness as a prayer. Lord Shiva, was pleased with his prayers, absolved him and returned his divine powers. This very prayer became well known as the The Great Hymn of Shiva.⁴⁶⁵

The discerning reader may perhaps think that this may be something more than a purely fabricated story. Perhaps it is an account with roots in something that happened once long ago? Did a court musician repeatedly help himself to something the King considered as his own? In that case we may guess that the account has been changed from fact to fiction, possibly by Flowertooth himself or by another talent who paraphrased the story to save the reputation of the King and perhaps others involved.

Another possibility is that a composer of hymns found it suitable to frame the Great Hymn of Shiva in a romantic mundane-supramundane way to enhance the attractiveness of his piece of art in the hope of increasing the numbers of the devotees of the Lord. Or is the background a scandal that with time became an urban myth and something of a folk tale?

The Great Shiva

As indicated, great persons and events go from being real to becoming legends and myths. The historical Shiva was so significant and celebrated that people eventually made a divinity out of him. In the absence of original written source material, academics do not regard the Great Shiva, or Lord Shiva as he is also called, as a historical person. Still, historical traditions speaking of Shiva's life and teachings, regarded as mythological or just as teachings having been associated with that mythological figure for any reason, are interesting to researchers as they are regarded as sources for most later developments in the field.

Shiva did not only give spiritual teachings, but also medical, musical and other knowledge. In spite of academic reluctance to approve of the Great Shiva, the fact that most of the well over half a million villages of India have an ancient temple devoted to Shiva, speaks of a beloved living human being and spiritual preceptor from an age now enveloped in the thick mist of time.

Before Shiva, all teachings were transmitted orally. Script was invented some hundred years after Shiva and there are many scriptures ascribed to him. It is very likely that much original material has been lost here, too. For instance, we read in "The ancient stories of Shiva" (*Shivapurana*) that the work consists of 100,000 verses in seven parts, whereas the versions we are left with today have far fewer verses in only three to five parts.

The most significant scriptural legacy of Shiva today is probably the Agama and Nigama scriptures. Agama was Shiva's response to his wife Parvati's queries, Nigama, about spiritual practices. As mentioned, after Shiva Tantra spread to China where Parvati became known as Tara.⁴⁶⁶ In modern times, 64 works of Tantra are recognized as authentic. Some of them, such as the Shiva Samhita and Kularnava Tantra bear the stamp of authenticity and direct ancestry of Shiva.

Shrii Krsna

Many biographies and numerous geographical landmarks are connected with both the Great Shiva and Shrii Krsna, the two most prominent “divinities” of Indian religious life. Krsna lived several thousand years after Shiva, in the time of script, and is therefore more than Shiva regarded as a historical figure and a legend, and not only as a myth. According to traditional Hindu astronomy, Shrii Krsna was born about five thousand years ago.⁴⁶⁷ Shrii Shrii Anandamurti and others state that the Great Krsna lived about 3500 years ago.

Like the Great Shiva, Shrii Krsna was a great master of yoga with a ground-breaking social mission. Shrii Krsna’s major social project was the Mahabharata war, which he engineered and participated in as the charioteer and life coach of the hero Arjuna. By this great war and various significant events leading up to it, Shrii Krsna polarised the righteous and unrighteous forces of the day. The Bhagavad Giita consists of teachings given by Shrii Krsna, dealing with topics such as how to still the mind, how to guide it through wisdom, how to surrender it to the higher self, what is the nature of our material existence, what is action, who or what controls our life, and what is the essence of our self. Like Shiva, Krsna was an epoch-making figure. Pioneering developments in the areas of philosophy and political and social thinking may be traced to Shrii Krsna, in addition to his matchless spiritual legacy.

Soul and Mind in Education

In Asia, early organised education was reserved for the privileged and typically took place around places of worship. Boys who did not qualify socially or otherwise usually followed in their father's footsteps or were apprenticed to learn a trade. Girls stayed at home to learn housekeeping, cooking, and to look after the younger children.

Structured Education

As the intellectual Medieval era evolved, teaching of knowledge increasingly took on academic form in institutions supported by rulers, the state, or by private sponsorship. India has both a rich history of and solid academic basis for its diverse science of mind. Up to the arrival of the British, only little general written historical documentation was handed down. This unfortunate trend was perhaps caused by the medieval teachings that the world is an illusion and nobody can escape the laws of karma and therefore thinking about the past is useless—all answers lie in the future. In any case, most of what little there is of written antique Indian history is from Greek and other visitors, and not from Indians themselves.

On the other hand, Indian thinkers and practitioners over the millennia have produced considerable material on cosmology, the humanities, science, and practical esoteric research. No other country or cultural area can compete with India in the development of the science of mind and spirit. More than 3000 years ago, children's schools in India with up to 100 students were called "Houses of Recitation" (*pathshāla*). Teachings were recited collectively and individually, mostly outdoors under a tree. This was the tradition from the time before script, i.e., more than 6000 years ago. Teachers were renowned for their elephantine memory, the need for which gradually reduced when script and reading began to take over.

The early educational system of India was impressive, too. Schools for basic education with 100-1000 students were known as "place of study of the four Vedas" (*catuspáthii*). Higher educational

institutions with 1000-5000 students were known as “greater Vedic institutions” (*maha catuspáthi*) or just “seats of learning” (*vidyápiitha*). Educational institutions with 5000-500,000 students were known as universities (*gurukula*).⁴⁶⁸

Gurukul System

The educational institutions of ancient India, from the smallest to the gigantic, promoted morality, spiritual practices, and social traditions as the basis for the teaching of all sorts of physical and metaphysical learning. Educational institutions for students from all over society offering all-round neohumanistic education, are being established today by the Ananda Marga Gurukul educational wing. The Chancellor of Ananda Marga Gurukul is to provide food, clothing, lodging and education for all its students from kindergarten through university, an ideal that can only be realized by the various institutions being integrated into society in all possible ways.

As far as India is concerned, a reasonable conclusion would be that its world-record long spiritual tradition has today ended up in politicised religious dogmatism. Due to a long-standing dogma projecting the world as unreal and illusory (and only the Supreme as truth) India’s spiritual legacy was unable to provide its people with the social, economic, political and cultural stamina needed to evolve both a dynamic personal life and a united society. Shrii Shrii Anandamurti’s science of mind establishes that the Supreme is indeed the absolute truth, but the manifest world is also truth, albeit a relative truth, created out of that perfect consciousness.⁴⁶⁹ As such, the manifest world should be treated with a view to its proper utilisation and development, including those of the potentialities of the individual and the collective.

Confucius and China

Chinese history and culture are replete with manifestation of mental potential. With Confucius (551-479 BC), moral philosophy became the basis of education, and institutions began to welcome even

capable, deserving commoners, and not only nobility. About two thousand years ago, educational activities in China evolved into military, politicised academies with its priority of producing state officials and a professional bureaucracy. During the intellect-oriented Middle Ages, provincial academies emerged dedicated to the pursuit of independent study of the classics and literature.

The classical thinking of China shares a main trait with that of Japan in being largely collectivist and less individualist. In neither country do we find a developed psychological theory of inner subject and object. Language rules behaviour and is itself ruled by the collective. The world of knowledge and learning of present China seems to be cleaved between stark materialism and authoritarianism on the one side, and significant undercurrents of traditional morality, religion, and classical romantic idealism on the other.

Western Intellectual Education

Plato established his academy around 400 BCE and it existed for more than nine hundred years. The academy based its scientific explorations and developments on the idealist philosophy of Plato, a main strain of which is that material things are less real than the assumed higher ideas of them. Plato's systemic metaphysics and his ethics of virtue and harmony were other main subjects. Dialogue and debate along the lines of Socrates and other thinkers were the basis and ideal for the academic work. Even students in the Ottoman Empire and the Medieval Arabic and Jewish worlds referred to their educational institutions as academies.

Earlier, it was stated that in absence of practical spiritual pursuit, western philosophy is the result of intellectual analysis and speculation mainly. With the onset of the Jewish, Christian and Islamic religions, dogmatism came to cement thoughts and ideas of a higher life in those areas. Still, Middle Eastern intellectuals and educational institutions were able to preserve and develop classical knowledge during Europe's Medieval night of doctrinal Church rule. Similar to China, the Middle Eastern Golden Age stands out in the area of literature and poetry, besides maintaining classical western

philosophy, evolving Indian natural sciences, and exhibiting strength in applied sciences.

Thinking influenced by dogmatic religion tends to divide reality into the profane and the holy—God exists somewhere else, remote from His creation. Such dualism is not in harmony with modern quantum physics and ecology, and cannot explain the human potential for realising the Supreme.

Confluence

The meeting of one culture or tradition with another, and their mutual result, is a recurrent phenomenon. An example of it is Hermetics, a school of Greek thought that emerged a little over two thousand years ago, exhibiting pronounced features of ancient Eastern philosophy. This philosophical school got its name from the alleged Hermes Trismegistus (a legendary Hellenistic combination of the Greek god Hermes and the Egyptian god Thoth), said to be the father of this particular trend of thought. Here we get to hear that God, the Lord, Father, mind, the Creator, the One, etc., is the utmost reality. Everything is created, maintained and destroyed both by and of the One, God is cosmos and at the same time everything that is created in it. That is, God is both in and without the creation.⁴⁷⁰

The process of creation is described as God first establishes a foundation in the form of the cosmos, providing the natural elements, i.e., the fundamental factors. It is noted that God has divided the world into seven spheres, and life finds its initial expression in the crudest of these spheres to evolve throughout the next five spheres and find ultimate realisation in the seventh. This is all in keeping with the more ancient teachings of the Vedas, Upanishads and Tantras, as brought forth by this book.

When stories and teachings wander, something is usually lost and something else added. Most of Hermetic philosophy may be traced to the Tantra of Shiva, which is the only source of such a coherent comprising record of Macrocosmos and the birth and life of microcosms within it. The seven spheres of Hermetics have their

origins in the Taittiriya Upanishad and other original Indian teachings, which also explains the five layers of the mind. In addition, Hermetics contain elements of ancient Egyptian religion, magic, alchemy, Tarot, and other teachings of the Middle East.⁴⁷¹ Western academia categorizes Hermetics as a blending of elements of various religions. This phenomenon takes place when the religions of various cultural areas meet, which is readily observed in various religious circles and much of what is termed as New Age today.

Western Psychology and the Structure of the Mind

Western academic and clinical psychology was first conceived of and developed as an empirical science by German physiologist and philosopher Wilhelm Wundt (1832-1920). Wundt founded the first formal laboratory for psychological research, where he employed various physiological instruments and devices used for measuring time.⁴⁷² He was particularly interested in reaction times and therefore in the nature of apperception—the point at which a perception occupies the central focus of conscious awareness (page 50). Wundt's orientation towards mundane utility came to dominate the field of western psychology till this day. That is, western psychology is largely extrovert in character in its aiming at “normalising” psycho-physical states and behaviour.

The Austrian psychologist Sigmund Freud (1856-1939) popularised a three-way division of the mind into the conscious, subconscious, and the unconscious. The concept of consciousness had circulated in western academia throughout the Middle Ages. In the early 1800s, the German philosopher F.W.J. Schelling introduced the concept of the unconscious, with the French psychologist Pierre Janet in 1899 following up with the concept of the subconscious as a middle level drifting in and out of focus.

Freud placed the model of the conscious, subconscious and unconscious firmly on the map of psychology, and used this model as the framework of a methodology he termed as psychoanalysis. In Freud's psychological model, “it” (*id*), “I” (*ego*), and “higher I” (*superego*) are the functions of the unconscious, conscious and

subconscious, respectively. We recognise these from the science of mind of this book: “it”—mind-stuff, “I”—ego, and “higher I”—intuitional self or pure “I”—feeling. As the system of Freud is analytical, his higher self is also an analytical function and not an intuitional one. Thinkers after Freud, among them the American clinician Jane G. Goldberg, have pointed out that a higher self has to be something more than only a critical entity.⁴⁷³

Roberto Assagioli presented a concept of the superconscious in great detail.⁴⁷⁴ Assagioli’s system of psychosynthesis, developed as an alternative to the “limited” psychoanalysis of Freud, is spiritually-oriented in theory. A real strength of this system is that it offers patients and practitioners an opportunity to understand themselves in the perspective of spirituality. Today, numerous thinkers and psychologists argue for a spirit-oriented system of psychology with room for good theory as well as efficient practice.

The American psychologists William James (1842-1910), Edward Thorndike (1874-1949), and Abraham Maslow (1908-1970) were all pioneers in their fields. James developed a theory of self that included the material, social, and the spiritual. To James, the pure “I” provides the thread of continuity between our past, present, and future selves. Thorndike had profound impact on the psychology of learning. He introduced the concept of reinforcement and was the first to apply psychological principles to school education. Maslow evolved the concept of human potentiality beyond the intellectual and individualistic, and emphasised people’s positive qualities tending towards self-realisation.

Spirit and Philosophy

Shrii Shrii Anandamurti argued that psychology is not only an objective science but part and parcel of our evolutionary, emancipating journey. He put psychology back into philosophy where it once came from, and added bio-psychology, para-psychology, and not least apexed, pinnacled psychology to it.

Because the Indian academic tradition regards spiritual practice as a science, it has always included psychology in philosophy.

Classical Indian psychology is soul-oriented and comprises the mundane with the cosmic. Indian philosophy and psychology share the same world view and are viewed as two sides of the same coin. Matthijs Cornelissen at the Indian Psychology Institute (Puducherry, India) writes:

The Indian traditions claim that the inner realms they explored contain not only the dark subconscious corners associated with the Freudians, but also a wide range of more uplifting subtle worlds. Experience confirms that, following their methods, one can find in them not only the origin of much of our ordinary behaviour, and with that effective means for therapy, but also more subtle and intense forms of happiness, love, beauty, harmony, truth and meaning, different varieties of intuition, a deeper and wider sense of one's identity, a sense of oneness with others and the world, and ultimately even the possibility of what feels like a direct contact with the Divine. It seems then very much worth the effort to explore the second option, that is to use yoga-based methods of enquiry, yoga-based "rigorous subjectivity" to develop a powerful and effective science of the entire domain of inner psychological states and processes.⁴⁷⁵

Neither psychology nor any other discipline of western academia, not even philosophy, are connected to intuitional practices, the very source of cognition. Western theology differentiates between God and the creation. When existential teachings, such as philosophy and religion, are based on assumption and imagination, there is no way people who follow those teachings may come to realise their concepts. The spirit is a living reality and not a ritualistic idea without any reference to the lives of common people.

Today, the study of consciousness and its significance with regards to our life and world is attracting the attention of cognitive researchers and neuroscientists. There is great scope for the western extroversial and the eastern introversial approaches to enrich themselves immeasurably by developing new analyses and syntheses together.



23

Towards a Synthetic Approach

Both spiritual and materialist scientists attempt to realise truth. The Israeli science writer Amir Aczel (1950-2015) opined:

*Science and religion are two sides of the same deep human impulse to understand the world, to know our place in it, and to marvel at the wonder of life and the infinite cosmos we are surrounded by.*⁴⁷⁶

A real hunger for progress and excellence is behind any human effort. The sciences of engineering bridges, creating art, and building businesses are all about reaching out to greatness. When Shrii Shrii Anandamurti formulated a comprehensive science of mind (*Manovijñāna*) in 1970,⁴⁷⁷ he stated that mind's desire for ultimate fulfilment is the essential force of its evolution. It is what makes the mind grow in magnitude⁴⁷⁸ leading to its final attainment of the cosmic state.

If we draw a line back a couple of hundred years, we observe that the world of science has accelerated at a speed relative to the increasing mass of accumulated data and available quality of thinking. The number of scientists in all spheres of existence today is astounding. The speed of science and development in general—of our thought, social interaction, sensitivities—is fast-tracking indeed. If we project these dynamics into the future, of say a thousand years, we are left to wonder about the state of science at that time. There is reason for optimism and also concern for subtle psychic and spiritual science.

Standards

As we now know, ancient Indian philosophy upholds that seven planes of being and six layers of human existence frame the macro and micro states from the crudest to the most subtle. Such information is not found in any source deemed reliable by the present western science regime. The lack of conventional evidence-based information on such non-physical standards keeps western scientists from accepting the view that cognition or consciousness is in everything and that everything is of it. Acarya Bhaskarananda Avadhuta writes:

*Science today accepts only those things which can be physically demonstrated; that is, it only recognizes the veracity of a phenomenon if it comes directly or indirectly within the scope of the inferences of sound, touch, form, smell, and taste. Now if something exists due to a sixth (non-physical) attribute, science cannot discern it, since methods of scientific proof use only the five sensory gateways. Scientists say that what cannot be proved by such methods is not to be believed. This argument is no less dogmatic than the assertion of religious zealots that "My way is the only way, my prophet the only prophet and my scripture the only scripture."*¹⁴⁷⁹

There are certain criteria for good science, such as clearly defined terminology, quantifiability, highly controlled experimental conditions, reproducibility and, finally, predictability and testability. To some, the science of mind fulfils all of these, to others not. Materialists may say that neither are its terms sufficiently concrete, nor has anything been tested properly under required formal conditions, etc. Such arguing would be in the nature of things. Perhaps in the end we would say that the only thing that cannot be measured is the unmanifest, as we only have manifest measuring devices. Shrii Shrii Anandamurti commented:

This state of objectlessness is verbally inexpressible because it is beyond the orbit of the mind, it is not mentally apprehensible. ... The lingering bliss which follows this state of vacuity is the proof

*of that state. The spiritual waves of exhilaration that fill the unit entity in this state of absolute vacuity continue to flow and trail on for some time even after that state of vacuity, that is, after the mind returns due to unserved driving forces (samskaras; the consequential reactive momenta of one's past deeds). These very trailing waves of exhilaration and joyous exuberance keep reminding the "mindful" spiritual practitioner that his or her "mindless" state had been one of absolute bliss.*⁴⁸⁰

We may conclude that good science not only demands quantifiability but also comprehensive mental faculties such as inquisitiveness, importunity and intuition. (Here we are not considering science in moral or value-related terms but operationally.)

Relativity

The science of mind explained in this book comprises the physical, mental as well as the spiritual. In contrast, Albert Einstein's formula of relativity, $E = mc^2$, depicts the world as a collection of material phenomena framed by the speed of light. When surveying the layers of the mind we learnt that humans spend 80% of their sensory energy on light alone. Perhaps present concepts of scientific relativity have been caught up in the matter of light, and therefore yet not allowing sufficiently for subtler relativities of "time-space".

Possibly we would be able to spend more of our attention on subtler matters than light in future. The physical universe of the cosmic mind-stuff is dominated by the operative principle's static tendency. It means that as long as we do not evolve our subjectivity beyond a materialistic world view, our sense of relativity will be caught up in physicalities. In future, scientists may relate relativity to the mutative and the sentient tendencies, too, and to subtle and crude subjectivity variously reflected in the different layers of the mind.

We have already begun to harvest the power of oceanic and aerial waves. Soon we will be able to harvest the energy of lightning and numerous other natural phenomena whose energy is unavailable to us today. According to oral sources, Shrii Shrii Anandamurti

suggested that in future, vibrations of the endoplasticity of the subjective self may be applied on the ectoplasticity of the objective mind-stuff, by friction as in the creation of vital energy in natural elements, producing tremendous energy unimaginable today.

“From a scientific point of view, a theory must be rejected or modified if its predictions fail to account for observed physical phenomena,” writes Steve Richheimer.⁴⁸¹ Academic scientific work today is supposed to depend on standardised processes that are visibly demonstrable and repeatable. For instance, a master’s degree supervisor may accept findings of brain waves patterns measured by a physical neural interface of an acknowledged institution, but would not accept a subjective statement on how the invisible mind is structured?

Values

So, how to convey how the invisible transcendental reality is structured? First, why on earth would anyone want to do that? After all, when we buy a computer or some other latest thing that we may need, we are not interested in the world view of its developers. Leave the scientists to their personal beliefs, why should others care about those?

Well, should we not now? On the contrary, our times is one of increasing interest in the world view and implicit actions and non-actions of its performers. Ethical, ecological, and numerous other concerns are raised every day over all sorts of transactions, productions, policy formulations, the sentiments and attitudes of law makers, etc.

The reasons why we cannot leave science alone are many, and boil down to the fact that we no longer can afford to live with our spiritual heart being separated from our analytical mind. The scientific community stand first in communicating this truth. Consider the esteemed neuroscientist and science editor Christophe Bernard, of Aix Marseille University, who informs us that “30% of the papers published by the two main science magazines cannot be reproduced, and 30% of the results are partially reproducible”:

*In the “publish or perish” scientific world, obtaining a PhD, getting a research position, and grants depend upon on our publications ... Because competition is fierce and because positions/resources are limited, we need to arrive first. This does not mean that we consciously forget about caution and rigor. Most likely it is unconscious as we tend to privilege the instant, instead of taking the time to pause and think.*⁴⁸²

This is probably a polite way of presenting a dark truth. What Bernard says is that nearly two thirds of papers published in the two top science magazines today contravene at least one fundamental principle of rigorous science, reproducibility, for reasons best known to the scientific community itself. In the world of common people, forgetting such most basic rules is called cheating and lying.

Another growing moral issue in the present world of science is a pervasive reluctance to share data because of the fear of possibly missing out on profitable patents. A well-known aspect of this problem is the unwillingness of major pharmaceutical companies to share information so that people everywhere may benefit from vital medicines and not only those who can pay for it. This is not the fault of science per se but a consequence of global capitalist domination. The list of such disadvantages—due to selfish, materialist, and dogmatic thinking across all fields and spheres—is very long.

If We, Then ...

Now for the plausibility of a spiritual approach to science. If we consider the most pleasing fact that we are capable of thinking about any material object, we should be satisfied that we have come a long way from the first organic forms that emerged from crude matter billions of years ago here on Earth. In evolutionary terms, from being something very small that could not grasp its whereabouts, we have grown to master our circumstances to a great extent.

Those two opposites—small and great—both carry their curses and blessings. The curse, or blessing, of the small is that one may soon encounter something even smaller. First atoms were introduced, then quarks, and now we have microvita of which

billions make up a single carbon atom. Similarly, if one chooses to explore greatness, one risks running into greater and still greater greatness. In both cases, the small and the great, there is a chance one will be held responsible for irreversible changes of the world! Thus, the question that presents itself to an intellectually developed person today is: How minute and extensive are our whereabouts actually, and may those extremes be reflected in the mind of something as limited as a human being and in the wider society?

A plausible extension of this sort of query is: If we have become able to think about a great number of things, such as the first organic life forms on Earth and the relativity of space and time, then who or what may be thinking about us and about the entire cosmos? As someone among us were able to calculate the speed of light, who or what may be measuring the speed of our individual and collective being, and how? For, surely, there exists no convincing counterargument to the proposition that just as we think and feel about things within and around us, something of a very different magnitude may be imagining us and our existence, creating all of us in a laboratory very different from the labs we are used to work in. If not the god of one religion or the other, who or what may that super-existential entity be?

True, assigning all of our world to a single, unifying principle would reflect most favourably on the calibre of that entity. Then, would it disempower us to the extent of rendering us ineffectual forever? Would the Great make us cognitive losers? On the contrary, the idea of the truly great, of the Supreme Consciousness, would make us godlike because in order to think of such a great entity it would not suffice to simply imagine it but to become it.

Take the statement of Hawking: "You can say the laws are the work of God, but that is more a definition of God than a proof of his existence." If Hawking had conceived of God as an ideational object there would be no issue in his mind of "God's existence" versus "the definition of God". As long as the mind clings to its analytical powers, to the exclusion of intuitional science, the Supreme Entity will remain a theoretical abstract, a doubted figure. Can a little

pitcher hold the mighty ocean? It is a silly idea. To know the ocean, the drop has to become it.

Our present limitedness is the only reason why some people do not go along with any idea of an all-pervading entity, deeming it incomprehensible. Are those of us who believe in this idea unrealistic dreamers incapable of understanding what it is that we talk about? No. Not only do we have some preliminary experience of entitative change beyond the materialistic and psychological, but we sense deep down that our human being resonates with the Supreme.

Existence, a Science Project

There is an undeniable felt relationship between the small and the great. Some call it love, others longing. Still, if there were a scientific, measurable, reproducible process to know and even attain that kind of existential magnitude it would be a proposal worthy of our rational consideration, would it not? So yes, there are causes—ethical, existential, spiritual—for arguing for the introduction of the spiritual heart and mind into the world of science. Science is still not anywhere near fully developed and many phenomena are not scientifically accounted for. Developing the fidgety mind still further will lead to tremendous advances in science. As this book shows, it is not only a matter of longing or spiritual feeling but of applied consciousness, intuition, wisdom and conscience. The world of science would benefit enormously if scientists engaged actively in higher mental and spiritual pursuits, while maintaining their strict code of scientific rigour and discipline in all research work.

Early on in the book, we learnt that the cosmos consists of seven worlds or planes. The crudest, smallest plane is our physical world, dominated by the static tendency, the tendency of the force of creation that provides demarcation to form and content. Our psychic existence is dominated by the mutative tendency, and the psycho-spiritual by the sentient. As all of cosmos is a mix of those three tendencies in various proportions in various spheres. We and our surroundings are diversely influenced by them. In fact, the existence

of these three tendencies offers crucial choices to cognisant individuals and societies. For instance, various forms of food influence our body and mind in different ways. A diet consisting of predominantly sentient, elevating food* is recommended for all who want to advance psycho-spiritually. Similar advice is offered with regard to one's social environment⁴⁸³ and other aspects of life.

While reflecting on the importance of gauging properly the influences various persons and matters may have on us, the 3rd Century India statesman Chanakya said: "Avoid association with the wicked and associate with the virtuous. Do good twenty-four hours a day, and remember the eternal."⁴⁸⁴ The world we live in provides for no absolute, permanent state, and certain items, environments, and types of company elevate or debase us more than others. According to modern physics, uncertainty is inherent in the properties of all wave-like systems.⁴⁸⁵ As regard our personal and collective lives, our existence is ever-changing consisting of innumerable relative, unstable states that continuously transform. Shrii Shrii Anandamurti maintained that worldly existence is not an absolute truth, but a relative truth.⁴⁸⁶ In its absolute being the cosmos is a unified, eternally munificent process, while the universe in its relative being consists of innumerable unitary, self-seeking processes where ambiguity and not certainty is the rule.

The Cosmic Factor and Human Effort

All through his life Shrii Sarkar continued to contribute to this area of research. In June 1989, he presented brand new ideas about human approach to cosmology and the role and utilisation of microvita.⁴⁸⁷ First, let us look at a chart he dictated (next page), and then see if we can develop our understanding of it.

* Most vegetables, fruits, and roots, all staple food-grains, most pulses, and milk products have an elevating effect on both body and mind. Hence, such food is called elevating, sentient, sattvic, pure food. (Source: "Procedure for Eating", Ananda Marga Caryācarya Part 3.)

1) The Supreme Universal Entity (Nirvishesa)

The Supreme Cognitive Principle and the Supreme Cognitive Creative Faculty ± maintaining universal equilibrium and equipoise.

2) The Supreme Attributional Principle (Savishesa)

SUBJECTIVE

(A) Knowing principle or supramundane knowledge. (Expressed energies of different characters—indestructible, interchangeable and inter-transmutable.)

(B) Doing principle or supramundane seed of the actional principle, ready for being sprouted. (Microvita of different characters, either of positive or negative nature, collectively maintaining the balance of the actional universe creating initial forms of carbon atoms that help macro- and micro-propensities in having their pure physical auxiliary media with mass and wonts.)

OBJECTIVE

(A) Planes of microcosmic and Macrocosmic propensities. (Different strata of mind: conscious, subconscious, physico-psychic, psycho-physical and psycho-spiritual.)

(B) Planes of Macrocosmic inferences and their reflected or refracted inferences. (Planes of inferences which are being activated, accelerated and stimulated by (A) subjective.)

*(A) subjective relates to and controls (B) objective, and
(B) subjective relates to and controls (A) objective.
(A) subjective is the field of psycho-spiritual laboratory research,
and (B) objective is the field of external laboratory research.
In the case of (A) subjective, results cannot come within external
laboratory tests.*

Let us first try to apprise the state and status of “The Supreme Universal Entity”.^{*} At the beginning of the book, we learnt that Brahma, the Supreme, in its unmanifested state consists of the cognitive principle as well as of the operative principle. It is the Supreme Universal Entity, the source of all. Being beyond creation, diversity, and strife, this supreme entity is the abode of eternal peace. As such, it is the cherished goal of all created beings.

Knowingly or unknowingly, consciously or unconsciously, all long for eternal peace; at their core all beings want the absence of war, fight, struggle and clash and not their presence. Permanent peace is not possible in the expressed state of creation, but only in the formless (*nirvishesa*) unmanifest state. This is why that supreme unmanifested state is termed as *nirvishesa*, sometimes referred to as *shunya*. In a 1956 discourse,⁴⁸⁸ Shrii Shrii Anandamurti explains that the term *shunya* does not mean “empty”.[†] Rather, it is filled with consciousness even though not manifested. It is this state which “substantiates the existence of matter in the micropsychic sphere by being the support or fulcrum of the mind.”⁴⁸⁹ In the first chapter, we learnt that the Supreme, Brahma in Sanskrit, means “that which is Great and makes others Great”. Something that make others great, and substantiates the existence of something else, cannot be empty or non-existent.

The reason why it is called *nirvishesa* or *shunya*, and not *savishesa* (“with form”, “attributational”), is that it is devoid of the expression of the operative principle. That non-attributational Supreme Universal Entity is the source of everything, the maintainer of everybody’s existence. It is the only complete state of being and there is nothing beyond or outside of it. That is why *nirvishesa* is the coveted state of all, a state of complete, eternal peace. The state of *nirvishesa* is the

^{*} The following paragraphs are partly based on input from Ac. Shambhushivananda Avt. who took down the dictate of the chart reproduced on the previous page from Shrii Shrii Anandamurti in Kolkata on June 10, 1989, as noted in his book *Towards a Brighter Future*, Ananda Marga Gurukula (2021), pp 186-188.

[†] *Shūnya* interpreted as “void” or “emptiness” is a central concept of some belief systems and their philosophy.

state of universal equilibrium and equipoise, with the potential to create supreme attributional consciousness in which infinite diverse expressions are manifested.

In the tangential state between the unmanifest and the manifest is the abode of Taraka Brahma, the Gurutattva, the Sadguru. When the Sadguru takes a human form, it is called Mahasambhuti. Taraka Brahma is the theme of the Advayataraka Upanishad.⁴⁹⁰ This scripture, with its focus of guru and Tantric roots, was incorporated into the more than seven thousand years old Yajurveda. Shrii Sarkar discoursed in detail on the nature and role of Taraka Brahma and Mahasambhuti.^{491 492 493 494 495}

Part 2 of the chart reflects Shrii Shrii Anandamurti's explanation of the dynamics of the creation. According to him, cosmic knower-I (subjective A) relates to and controls planes of Macrocosmic inferences (objective B), and cosmic doer-I (subjective B) relates to and controls planes of microcosmic and Macrocosmic propensities (objective A).

The cosmic doer-I (*Kṛta Purusa*) is entirely universal. The doer-part of our limited mind is called ego (*aham*), whereas in the case of the cosmic mind its doer part is no ego, as we learnt early on (page 25). In the creation, there is a dynamic interplay between material energies and the vital energy of the animated world (plants, animals, human beings). Due to the unfolding cosmic dynamics, material inferences and mind are created and evolve when microvita are brought to function. The cosmic doer-I maintains equilibrium between positive microvita and negative microvita. The cosmic intention is that both positive and negative microvita are essential and none of them should be neglected or misutilised. Both should be used positively; both are necessary for balanced progress.

The cosmic knower-I (*Jina Purusa*) is, observed Shrii Sarkar, a field of psycho-spiritual laboratory research; we cannot expect results in this field by external laboratory tests. The inferences on the macrocosmic planes and their reflections and refractions form the field of external laboratory research. Consciousness has no visible shape or form, it is beyond the senses, it is non-material. It has to be understood by the proper application of the intellect. Normally, the

intellect is agitated by waves of feeling. Even a most accomplished professor, expounding academic data systematically, is full of potential emotion waiting to be released.

The Intuitional Potentiality

When one succeeds in bringing one's intellect to a state of serene composure by applying the internal force of the collected, pointed intellect, then the radiance of the effulgent consciousness will be reflected on the mind. This soulful intellect is the subtlest part of the mind, a part of subtle causal mind, the Hirańmaya Kośa. It is from this layer that the subjective and objective seeds start to arouse their germinative potentialities, the source of our cognition. These intuitional potentialities find greater scope of expression in the subliminal mind and become fully manifested in the supramental mind. The proper application of intellect leads to proper progress in spiritual practices.⁴⁹⁶

At one point, one of those present at the said occasion in 1989 asked how these new concepts related to intuition, ego and mind-stuff. Shrii Sarkar said: "What I have given here is not according to Kapil's* description of the cosmos. This is an entirely new theory."⁴⁹⁷

Authority

In the development of his science of mind, Shrii Shrii Anandamurti was able to draw on a very large body of work by himself as well as the quite enormous legacy of earlier spiritual thinkers and masters of India. As shown throughout this book, Shrii Shrii Anandamurti's teachings have roots way back in time, as in various upanishads and other quoted sources.

Maharsi Kapil, the first philosopher (see the next page), lived in eastern India about 3500 years ago. He employed the term inferences

* Maharsi Kapil is the first known philosopher of the world, who lived in Eastern India some 3500 years ago, as mentioned in the preceding chapter.

(tanmatra) and some other core elements of the science of mind among the numerous elements of reality that his philosophy comprised. Shrii Shrii Anandamurti revised and expanded the science of mind as a modern school of our time. He took the legacy of the ancient past forward and became the first thinker to explain in contemporary, if not futuristic, scientific terms how unit minds are created out of physical matter, and that matter in its turn is a development of consciousness in the first phase of the creation, etc. By placing our seemingly insignificant lives in the context of cosmic evolution, he has solved the mystery of the nexus of micro- and Macrocosmos. In his path-breaking discourse on “Universal Human Being and the Transcendental Entity”⁴⁹⁸ (referred on page 89) he delineated the process of evolutionary psychic clashes towards the ultimate realisation of our being:

As a result of clash and cohesion the unit mind undergoes mental bursts, manas-sphota, and gets converted into consciousness. That consciousness is known as the soul of living beings. As a result of further psychic clash and cohesion, psychic expansion by dint of one's spiritual efforts, we get fuller mind, bigger mind. This greater mind becomes a collective mind, a human mind. By increased spiritual effort, by dint of one's perseverance, sincerity and active effort, the mind grows still more and achieves the state of universal mind. This is the highest phase of development in the mundane sphere. The spiritual aspirant becomes a universal being and that universal being has emanated from matter by numerous bursts in the introversial phase of creation. When this universal being looks upon cosmic consciousness as the subjective entity, and itself as Its objectivity, her or she becomes a spiritual being, a spiritual human being. There is hardly any difference between spiritual being and cosmic consciousness. When this spiritual being becomes non-attributional, that is, gives up its attributional faculties as the altar of the Supreme Consciousness,*

* The mind comprises and controls all the minds of its physical structure, as explained on page 94, and is therefore termed as a collective mind.

then he or she becomes one with Supreme Consciousness, one with the Transcendental Entity.

The Development of Yogic Philosophy

Throughout the book we have referred both to ancient and more recent sources. Philosophy, too, is situated in this timeless landscape. Maharsi Kapil formulated the world's first philosophy called Samkhya. Samkhya means "numerical". This philosophy takes into account a number of elements or components said to make up the world: the operative principle, the origin, living beings, their intuition, ego, mind-stuff, five sensory organs, five motor organs, etc. The Samkhya philosophy establishes that altogether 24 such fundamental elements may be confirmed in three ways:

1. By what we sense and perceive directly.
2. By inferences drawn from acts of sensing and perceiving.
3. What is conveyed by authorities (in particular by significant individuals and published works)

Shrii Sarkar notes that this school of thought had evolved over time and Kapil, who hailed from Jhalda in what is today the state of West Bengal, was the one who first summarized it into a pronounced philosophy.⁴⁹⁹ During the following millennium, the Samkhya philosophy was commented on and evolved further.

Nearly fifteen hundred years after Kapil, Patanjali collected his Yoga Sutras from various traditional and contemporary sources, and headed a renaissance of the classical eightfold yoga system of Shiva, in the form of Rajayoga.

Patanjali came from the village of Patun in the same area as Kapil.⁵⁰⁰ The philosophies of both these thinkers are based on a cosmology where the unit mind comes out of physical matter, and where the human mind finally merges with the cosmic. Kapil and Patanjali explain the structure and workings of the human mind in detail and how it functions with regards to the rest of existence. The main difference between the two is that Samkhya is purely theoretical and places the operative principle at its centre, while

Rajayoga operates with an individual supreme spiritual principle—not a Supreme Being of all but one for each created being—and is a hands-on yogic practitioner-oriented philosophy.

As we learnt in the preceding chapter, the science of mind is more ancient than philosophy. That is, practice preceded theory. Practitioners worked on their minds and spiritual philosophy resulted from their practical work. As mentioned, the oldest text we seem to have on the five layers of the mind, Taittiriya Upanishad of the Krishna Yajurveda, is five to seven thousand years, about twice as old as Kapil's philosophy. A more recent source on the five layers is Verses 154 to 201 of Viveka Curamani by Shankaracarya (ca. 700 CE). Shrii Shrii Anandamurti acknowledged this vast academic diversity when he formulated his unified science of mind.

Inner Authority

Permanent knowledge is not possible through perception, inference, or authority, or by studying books or discourses. The knowledge which one attains by expanding one's mind in the psychic sphere through the practice of sādhaná, which I gave the name upa átmasthiikaraṇa is also not everlasting, although it does last for a certain period. Knowledge only becomes permanent when the human beings withdraw the entire intuitive element and focus it on their spiritual point of ideation. At that time the entire universe comes within the scope of their mind, and they become omniscient.⁵⁰¹

One of the three suggested valid sources of knowledge is authority. In the Indian philosophical tradition, authorities are established by the fact that they practiced spirituality and therefore knew what they were talking about. In the same way as experienced cooks write cookbooks, spiritual authorities expound spiritual teachings. Shrii Sarkar discounted all theory and teachings not based on practice. He referred to his own teachings as “practically based teachings” (*prayogabhaomika tattva*)⁵⁰² and regularly demonstrated his own teachings to be based in actual realities.

Shrii Sarkar opined that only theory based on practice can be authentic. In matter of knowledge of mind and cosmology he relied on his omni-telepathic intuitive vision (*divya drsti*) and expounded lasting principles and frameworks to recognise the dynamics of cognitive and creative aspect of the mental domain. Shrii Shrii Anandamurti was a spiritual master who showed a practical way to the core of the mind and further to soul and cosmic consciousness.

*When theory succeeds practice, it has a practical application. First the apple fell and then the theory was formulated. The apple did not fall according to the theory. Lord Sadashiva was the first to realise that a theory can only have some practical value if it follows practice. ... His theory of Tantra was the laboratory notes of a practical scientist.*⁵⁰³

As mentioned in the discussion on microvita, Shrii Shrii Anandamurti frequently demonstrated spiritual facts and phenomena in order to clarify both new and old philosophy and theories. It is only when one takes a different standpoint than the mind itself that one will be able to say something adequately or satisfactory on the mind. In the same way as parents are in position to say something about their child, a mentally supra-evolved person may say something substantial about the cosmos, about the inner world of animals and plants, and about existential correlations that living beings may not be able to see themselves.

Western philosophy has fallen into an impossible labyrinth of never-ending analysis and speculation. On the other hand, in the eastern philosophy the persons who have attained the highest stance of supreme realisation are accepted as the recognised authority. Meditation, when correctly practised, is a way of transcending the mind and knowing all its secrets.

The western concept of individual freedom plays a role here. Freedom in the West is freedom for the individual citizen to live, think and act as he or she wishes. In the western academic tradition intellectual freedom is highly regarded: "I disagree deeply with you, but also respect your right to hold your own opinions." We may call this trend liberal humanism. In some cases, we may argue that the

western ideal of freedom has turned into dogmatic idealism where the importance of maintaining individual freedom is greater than arriving at a reasonable conclusion.

As mentioned earlier, eastern philosophy generally does not place individual freedom in the driver's seat. Instead, family, society and basic common values are essential. Eastern social philosophy seems to say: "We are tied and bound by individual and collective chains. With discipline, hard work, and sublimation of primitive attachments we may seek liberation. Let us move forward in unison aided by our great spiritual legacy."

With reference to the earlier treatise on outer suggestion and auto-suggestion, there are outer authorities and then there is inner authority. Persons with qualities such as magnanimity of mind, levelheadedness, serenity, wisdom, insight, will-power, actional power, etc. will be regarded by others as authorities. Guiding oneself is not always easy. Some may even have destructive inner authorities who tend to dominate others or allow others to dominate them. In the East, strong outer suggestion has been the norm. In the modern democratic West, collective authorities are adjusted according to public sentiments as far as possible but even here teaching authority is accepted to some extent.

The Place of Psychology

Because spiritual practice evolved as a science in the East its academic tradition included psychology in philosophy. Classical Indian psychology is soul-oriented and places the mundane side by side with the cosmic. Indian philosophy and psychology share the same spiritual origins and are viewed as two sides of the same thing. Matthijs Cornelissen writes:⁵⁰⁴

The Indian tradition provides a comprehensive philosophical framework that can not only support the enormous wealth of psychological knowledge inherent in its own spiritual paths, but also, and with equal ease, all branches of modern psychology. The core of this philosophical framework is its insight into the nature and role of consciousness, which provides a considerably more

fruitful foundation for the social sciences than the materialist-reductionist theories and methods on which Western science presently bases itself.

Based on this consciousness-based ontology, the Indian tradition contains a perfectly coherent theory of knowledge that has spawned numerous rigorous and effective techniques to arrive at valid and reliable insights in the subjective domain. The Indian tradition has an understanding of the Personality and the Self that is more comprehensive, coherent and rewarding than any other personality theory presently available in academic psychology. The Indian tradition has made extremely interesting contributions. Subjects that come to mind include emotions and aesthetics, language, motivation, human development, etc.

Last, and perhaps most important, the different approaches to Yoga contain insights and techniques to bring about psychological change, that can revolutionize applied fields like psychotherapy and education.

The Future Belongs to Synthesis

The field of cognitive science is developing fast. The mind itself emerges as the essential sphere of knowledge common to such fields as psychology, philosophy, computer science, artificial intelligence, neuroscience, and social sciences. Our mind is the key to the doors of perception, problem solving, learning, decision-making, language use, and emotional experience.⁵⁰⁵

At the same time, the world has lost its ancient spirituality and embraced religious, economic and political dogmatism. While knowledge and technology are universally accessible, the inner world of humans is unfulfilled, resulting in numerous conflicts caused by narrowmindedness.

Both the East and the West have their limitations and strengths. A vibrant synthesis of their invaluable assets is needed to generate a new global renaissance. If we want a balanced world for all, we need to evolve occidental dynamicity hand in hand with oriental sublimity.

For long, the East laboured under foreign rule and its own abnegate concepts of the world as an illusion and a sphere of suffering. The present chaos of political and religious dogmatism in many Asian countries is a sorry footnote to it. The West has run itself deep into a one-way street of materialistic individualism as far as the status of the mind is concerned, and the aspiring middle-class of the East seems to be following suit.

The Big Picture

In one of his many songs in the Bengali language, translated as “Song for a Dewdrop” in English, Shrii Sarkar extolled:

*O tiny dewdrop, in you, the whole world lies reflected.
In you, the vast ocean can be recognised.
Within the small, in decorations of atoms and molecules,
the Great exists.*

Nothing is there that can restrict attaining You.

*In beauty, in attributes and in all actions, in the silvery
adornment of nebulas, that lies surrounded by infinity,
at the terminal climax of dhyana and dharana,
You appear to us with countless rhythms.⁵⁰⁶*

Today, there is a growing awareness of the worth of and need for integrating external and internal scientific approaches. For long, the sciences of the East and the West were to all extent and purposes unknown to each other, a situation that has been upheld by western academia to the present day. Shrii Sarkar begged to differ. In a talk on education in 1969, he stated:

The Asian countries, in spite of their long heritage of morality and spirituality, have been subject to great humiliation during periods of foreign invasion. While the higher knowledge of philosophy propagated by the oriental sages and saints has been accepted as a unique contribution to the store house of human culture and civilization, the people of these lands could not resist the foreign invaders. The history of all the Asian countries, a

region of so many religions, has been dominated by foreign powers for centuries together. This imbalance brought about their material deprivation and political subjugation.

On the other hand, the West is completely obsessed with physical development. It has made spectacular progress in the fields of politics, economics, science, warfare, etc. In fact, it has made so much material progress that it seems to be the sovereign master of the water, land and air. But for all that, it is not socially content and miserably lacks spiritual wealth. Unlike the East, in the West plenty of wealth has created a crisis. Therefore, it is abundantly clear that no country can progress harmoniously with only one-sided development.

Therefore, it behoves both the East and the West to accept a synthetic ideology that stands for a happy synthesis between the two. Here, the East can help the west spiritually, whereas the materialistic West can extend its material help to the East. Both will be mutually benefited if they accept this golden policy of give and take, expressed in Bengali as, "Dive ar nive milave milive."

In the educational system of the East, there is the predominant element of spirituality. Oriental students used to go to their Guru's house at the age of five and live there up to twenty-five years of age. They led a strictly ethical and spiritual life and were mainly taught spiritual knowledge and some mundane knowledge. Then next in their domestic life, they cultivated mundane knowledge and spiritual knowledge up to 50 years of age, and in the last quarter of their life they cultivated spiritual knowledge exclusively. So, the people of the orient could not but be spiritual in their thoughts and actions. Whereas there is, in the western system of education, a clear and unilateral emphasis on mundane knowledge. So, to build up an ideal human society in the future, the balanced emphasis on the two is indispensable.

We should remember that morality, spirituality and humanity, and a happy blending of occidental extroversial science and oriental introversial philosophy is the very foundation of our system of education. Unlike Rudyard Kipling, who wrongly

observed that “East is East and West is West, and never the twain shall meet,” Ananda Marga believes in one universal society with one ideology and one cosmic goal.⁵⁰⁷

While looking at the big picture, it becomes clear that our world is in dire need of not only a value-oriented scientific community but a general value-orientation—social, political, industrial, and cultural—in order for future local and global developments to work in favour of humanity and the entire creation, and not against them. Foreseeing a rapid application of the science of the mind in the above-mentioned areas would not be an over-optimistic exaggeration but a matter-of-fact statement of a proper response to that dire need. On this optimistic note, the present book is concluded with all good wishes.

We are all born in this universe. We are all grateful to the Almighty, because He has given us the chance to know Him, to realize our nature. That is the course of our journey. How can we forget the path? The path of knowing Him is so beautiful. It is not only for us; it is for animals also; they are also proceeding on the path. None of them are left behind. Each one of us is moving towards that supreme nature according to our individual dharma, according to our individual nature. Each one of us is motivated by our samskaras, our reactive momenta. Every human being is being subjected to the reactions of his or her actions.

So samskara is motivating you, is propelling you towards or away from Him. If you forget the true nature of yourself then you are being propelled away from the Supreme Entity, from the Divine Being. But if you follow your nature then you are being propelled [towards] the Supreme Entity. It is up to you to select which path you want to go. The selection depends completely on you; but this is not the case for animals. Animals do not have the developed ego, whereas you have the total ego. You know what you should do; still, you do not always do it. Your dharma, your nature is to know that Supreme Entity. That is the nature of human beings.⁵⁰⁸

Glossary

Acarya m. or *Ácárya* f. (pronounced: Acharya) Spiritual teacher qualified to teach meditation.

Ananda. Divine bliss.

Ananda Marga. Path of divine bliss.

Brahma. Supreme Entity; comprising both Puruṣa, or Shiva, and Prakṛti, or Shakti.

Cakra (pronounced: chakra). Cycle or circle; psycho-spiritual centre, or plexus. The cakras in the human body are all located along the *suśumná* canal which passes through the length of the spinal column and extends up to the crown of the head.

Caetanya. Cosmic consciousness.

Deva. Philosophically: any vibration, or expression, emanating from the cosmic nucleus. Mythologically: a god, a deity.

Devata. Philosophically: a minor expression of a deva, controlled and supervised by the deva. (Deva and devatá are sometimes used interchangeably.) Mythologically: a god or goddess.

Dharana. The sixth limb of *astaunga* (eight-limbed) yoga. Restricting the flow of mind to particular points in the body; conception; e.g., *Tattva Dhāraṇá* means restricting the flow of mind to, or conception of, the fundamental factors.

Dharma. Characteristic property; spirituality; the path of righteousness in social affairs.

Dhyana. Meditation in which the psyche is directed towards Consciousness.

Guru. “Who dispels darkness,” who enlightens all strata of human existence.

Indriya. One of the five sensory organs (eyes, ears, nose, tongue and skin) or five motor organs (hands, feet, vocal cords, genital organs and excretory organ). The eye *indriya* (for example) comprises the eye itself, the optical nerve, the fluid in the nerve, and the location in the brain at which the visual stimulus is transmitted to the ectoplasm, or mind-stuff.

Loka. World, plane.

Karma. Action. See: *Samskāra*.

Kiirtan. Collective singing of the name of the Supreme, sometimes combined with a dance that expresses the spirit of surrender.

Kosa. Layer, sheet.

Manovijñana. The science (*vijñana*) of the mind (*manas*).

Mantra. A collection of syllables leading to liberation when meditated upon with proper ideation.

Maya. Creative Principle, i.e., Prakrti in her (active) phase of creation. One aspect of Mâyá is the power of the operative principle to cause the illusion that the finite created objects are the ultimate truth.

Moksa. Spiritual emancipation, non-qualified liberation.

Mukti. Spiritual liberation.

Onm, Onmkara. The sound of the first vibration of creation; the acoustic root (bijja mantra) of the expressed universe, Onmkara literally means “the sound onm”.

Pabulum. Latin: “food”, “nourishment”. Psychic pabulum is the assuming of a form in the mind.

Parama Purusa. Supreme Cognition, the cosmic cognitive principle.

Prakrti, Paramá Prakrti. The cosmic operative principle.

Purusa. Cognition.

Rajadhiraja (“emperor”, “king of kings”) **yoga.** An advanced, multifaceted system of spiritual practices.

Rajayoga. The term “royal yoga” indicates that the successful practitioner may move about in existence unhindered, in the same way as a monarch needs no permission to move about in the royal palace and the entire kingdom.

Rsi (pronounced: “rishi”). Person of elevated consciousness.

Sadhana. Literally, “sustained effort”; spiritual practices; meditation.

Samadhi. “Absorption” of the unit mind into the cosmic mind (savikalpa samádhi) or into the Soul (nirvikalpa samádhi).

Samskara. Mental reactive momentum due to previous action, potential action; the mind’s inherent reactive driving forces.

Shakti. The operative principle. Energy; a deification of the operative principle.

Shiva. A great Tantric guru of 5000 BCE who guided society while His mind was absorbed in Consciousness; hence, Infinite Consciousness, Puruśa.

Tantra. A spiritual tradition which originated in India in prehistoric times and was first systematized by Shiva. It emphasises the development of human vigour, both through meditation and through confrontation of difficult external situations, to overcome all fears and weaknesses. Also, a scripture expounding Tantra.

Veda. Literally, “knowledge”; hence, a composition imparting spiritual knowledge. Also, a religious or philosophical school emphasising the use of rituals to gain the support of the gods.

Vidya. Centripetal, inward force; force of attraction to the nucleus consciousness; aspect of the cosmic operative principle which guides movements from the crude to the subtle. See also Avidyá.

Yoga. Spiritual practices leading to unification of the unit soul with Paramátman.

Notes

Except otherwise noted quotes are from Electronic Edition of the Works of P.R. Sarkar (version 9.0.12.153), Ananda Marga Publications, Kolkata. The author of such quoted works is Shrii Shrii Anandamurti / Shrii Prabhat Rainjan Sarkar, as detailed by the publisher in a note to the electronic edition: “Between 1955 and 1990 Shrii Prabhat Ranjan Sarkar, whose spiritual name was Shrii Shrii Anandamurti, through his discourses and dictations produced material for what has now become a total of 268 books, some of them originally published in Bengali, some in English, and some in Hindi. He wrote in the name Shrii Prabhat Ranjan Sarkar when treating sociology, economics, philology, history and various other subjects, and when writing children's tales; and in the name Shrii Shrii Anandamurti when focusing on spiritual topics.”

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Shishir kañá, shishir kañá, tomáte dhará vidhrita
Tomáte jáy ságar cená, shishir kañá, shishir kañá.
Kśudra mājhe brihat áche, añu paramáñu sáje
Rúpe guñe sakal káje tomáy pete neiko máná, shishir kañá, shishir kañá.
Nūhārikār rajat veshe asiimeri pariveshe, dhyán dhāranār sheśa áveshe
Mūrta tumi chande náná, shishir kañá, shishir kañá.
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