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## I. Yogic Practices, Meditation, and Prayer

### 1. The Four Yogas

The four yogas are universal since every religion stresses devotion-heart (bhakti), knowledge-intellect (jnana), activity (karma), and meditation or prayer-will (raja). These four techniques performed to attain realization of the Divine are applicable to all religions, and all peoples, and only vary in details to suit the different forms of ethnicity and individuality. Appeal is made to what is best and noblest in men and women, bringing about a process of self-transformation. Each presents its own method without attacking the method of the others. The four yogas supplement one another being that they each lead to the same goal, realization of Brahman (God). In addition, they are complementary, since practicing one method will enhance the other three. Swami Vivekananda (1863-1902) presents the rational procedures of each yoga as an efficient and effective means of attaining one's designated goal. He disclosed, "Each soul is potentially Divine. The goal is to manifest this Divinity within, by controlling nature, external and internal. Do this either by work [Karma Yoga], or worship [Bhakti Yoga], or psychic control [Raja Yoga], or philosophy [Jnana Yoga]--by one or more or all of these--and be free. This is the whole of religion. Doctrines, or dogmas, or rituals, or books, or temples, or forms, are but secondary details."<sup>1</sup>

Swami Atmarupananda of the Ramakrishna Order in the United States explained the differences between the four methods of yoga, "Each yoga is connected to a particular human faculty and field of experience and

aspiration: jnana yoga to the faculty of the discriminating will, the field of awareness, and the aspiration for self-knowledge and unity; bhakti yoga to the faculty of the loving will, the field of beauty, and the aspiration to lose oneself (or find oneself) in the infinite Ocean of Love; karma Yoga to the faculty of the active will, the field of service, and the aspiration for unity with the whole universe; raja Yoga to the faculty of the introspective will, the field of psychology, and the aspiration for self-mastery.”<sup>2</sup>

Three Lecturers in Philosophy at Open University in England, Diane Collinson, Kathryn Plant and Robert Wilkinson provide further information on the subject. “In the light of this profound tolerance of the variety of religious belief, it is not surprising—and here he follows an ancient tradition in Hindu thought—to find that Vivekananda contends that there is no single form of discipline (or, as he would put it, yoga) suitable to lead all human beings to a realization of the truth of Vedanta. In his view, there are four major types of personality, and for each an appropriate yoga. To each of these yogas he devoted one of his major works. The approach to Vedanta via philosophy is the jnana-Yoga which has been outlined above, and which is suitable for the person in whom reason is the dominant feature of the personality. Others are primarily given to action (karma) or work, and for them karma-Yoga is appropriate, outlined in a work with this title. The goal is to act or work whilst maintaining absolute non-attachment to the work or its fruits ... In his work Bhakti-Yogar, Vivekananda describes how emotion can be controlled for spiritual ends, the ultimate goal being to love God because it is good to love God, entirely without ulterior motive. Finally, there are those who aspire to direct awareness of Brahman: mystic experience, and the discipline for them is raja-Yoga, the king of yogas.”<sup>3</sup> One might consider the practice of raja yoga to be based on a sixth sense.

It must be remembered that Indian and Western religious terms have more than one meaning. For example, a jnani is associated both with a person who follows the path of knowledge and with a Nondualism. Yet a number of great thinkers in India and in the West were Dualists.

Traditional Indian philosophy classifies religion and mystical experience into three types as described by Vivekananda, “From their interpretations have arisen three systems of philosophy and sects. One is Dualistic [Theistic], or Dvaita; a second is the qualified Nondualistic [panentheistic], or Vishistadvaita; and a third is the Nondualistic [Absolute or Acosmic], or Advaita.”<sup>4</sup> One could subdivide theistic mysticism into

Hindu, Buddhist, Christian, Muslim, Jewish, etc. In Savikalpa samadhi the theist-dualist experiences Brahman (God) and them self as being separate entities, and in Nirvikalpa samadhi the nondualists realize their Essential nature and Brahman's (God's) Essence are one. In 1957, R. C. Zaehner (1913-74) distinguished between three types of mysticism: theistic mysticism as communion with a Personal God through love; panenhenic mysticism an experience of unity or rapport with nature and the totality of existence; and monistic mysticism an experience of undifferentiated oneness.<sup>5</sup> One problem is that Zaehner combines nature and panentheistic mysticism into a single category. The later is not a worship of nature, but of the devotee's body, mind, and spirit being a fragment or part the Cosmic Body, Mind, and Spirit of God.

Many experts believe the etymology of the word religion lies with the Latin word religare, which means "to tie, to bind." This is not accepted by all. Likewise yoga means to "yoke or bind." We might think of the three yogas of the head (jnana), heart (bhakti), and hand (karma).

## 2. Raja Yoga

Swami Vivekananda was himself a perfected yogi. Even as a child, "Every night brought some strange vision to Naren. Singular was the manner in which he fell asleep. As soon as he closed his eyes, there would appear between his eyebrows a wonderful spot of light of changing hues, which would expand and burst and bathe his whole body in a flood of white radiance. As his mind became preoccupied with this phenomenon, his body would fall asleep. It was a daily occurrence." Thinking it to be a natural thing, he originally thought everyone had this experience.<sup>6</sup>

Today many experts in the field consider Vivekananda to be the Father of the modern yoga movement in both the West and in India. In agreement with this theme, Karel Werner (1925/26-2019) a Professor of Indian Religion at the University of Durham in England in his work *Yoga and Indian Philosophy* (1977) emphasized, "Vivekananda was a great Advaita Vedantist and Jnana Yogi and it was owing to him that Indian philosophy and Yoga began to fire the imagination of many people in Western countries as early as the end of the last century. Prompted by the urging of his master Ramakrishna and helped by the historical situation of India, which was responsible for his English education, Vivekananda started a

trend for popularity of Yoga, which, with inevitable ups and downs, has stayed with us ever since.”<sup>7</sup>

Vivekananda’s originality is emphasized by Sarah Strauss, Department of Anthropology, University of Wyoming, in a 2002 article, “The yoga that Vivekananda taught to Western audiences was articulated in English explicitly in and for that context. Vivekananda returned to India in triumph, bringing back the new forms of transnationally produced yoga that he had developed over the course of four years of lectures. Many of his insights were codified in written pamphlets like *Raja Yoga* ([1896] 1990), in which he explains core elements of the Hindu Sankhya and yoga traditions in terms easily understandable to a largely Christian, English-speaking, middle to upper-class audience. He framed his arguments in the language of science and in the spirit of the 1893 parliament's interest in comparative religion. Certainly, Swami Vivekananda's very modern representation of yoga put the ball in play, and many different people picked it up, adding their own spin to a characteristically Hindu multiplex phenomenon. These many new representations of yoga permitted, new practices, and accommodated new audiences for an old system.”<sup>8</sup>

In her book *A History of Modern Yoga* (2004), Elizabeth De Michelis of the faculty of Divinity at Cambridge University in England devoted over eighty pages exploring this subject. She discussed, “the shaping of Modern Yoga, of which [Vivekananda’s 1896 book] *Raja Yoga* is the seminal text. In it, Vivekananda carried out a major revisitation of yoga history, structures, beliefs and practices and then proceeded to operate a translation (often semantic as well as linguistic) of this 'reformed' yoga into something quite different from classical Hindu approaches. Vivekananda's 'reshaping' of the yoga tradition [was unique].... he brought about a number of crucial doctrinal and practical changes to key traditional concepts.” She quotes Anantanand Rambachan who wrote, “Vivekananda's influence is ... pervasive ... Not only did he largely formulate [the contemporary understanding of Hinduism], but he also gave it the language in which it is articulated. There is very little in modern Hindu, particularly Vedanta, apologetic writing that does not carry the clear imprint of Vivekananda's influence.”<sup>9</sup>

Catherine Albanese Professor of Religious History at the University of Chicago and former President of the American Academy of Religion wrote in 2007, “Elizabeth De Michelis has argued his [Vivekananda’s] seminal role as

‘creator’ of what she terms ‘fully-fledged Modern Yoga’ which for her includes, but is not limited to, ‘Modern Postural Yoga.’ In a designation that encompasses not only the United States but all of the West in interaction with the Indian Subcontinent, she credits Vivekananda's *Raja-Yoga* with ‘immediately’ starting ‘something of a ‘yoga renaissance’ both in India and in the West.”<sup>10</sup>

In a February 1896 letter to Alasinga, Vivekananda revealed, “Then you see, to put the Hindu ideas into English and then make out of dry philosophy and intricate mythology and queer startling psychology, a religion which shall be easy, simple, popular, and at the same time meet the requirements of the highest minds--is a task only those can understand who have attempted it. The dry, abstract Advaita must become living--poetic--in everyday life; out of hopelessly intricate mythology must come concrete moral forms; and out of bewildering Yogi-ism must come the most scientific and practical psychology--and all this must be put in a form so that a child may grasp it. That is my life's work.”<sup>11</sup>

Vivekananda's *Raja Yoga* (1896) the first English-language translation and commentary on the subject is unique, being that he presented yoga in a way that could be understood by modern men and women. It is written in a clear and conversational manner for educated people, rather than in a highly technical classical style understandable only to a specialized expert. That year concerning Paul Deussen's translations of Sanskrit texts, Vivekananda told him “that clearness of definition was of primary, and elegance of diction of very secondary importance.”<sup>12</sup> In the book he writes, “Anything that is secret and mysterious in these systems of Yoga should be at once rejected.... Mystery-mongering weakens the human brain. It has well-nigh destroyed Yoga--one of the grandest of sciences.... Thus Yoga fell into the hands of a few persons who made it a secret, instead of letting the full blaze of daylight and reason fall upon it. They did so that they might have the powers to themselves.”<sup>13</sup>

In all of his lectures and writing Vivekananda sought to be as broad and compressive as possible. Mentioning that each system of Indian philosophy views the Vedantic truths from a particular perspective. Unity, synthesis, and integration are the prevailing themes of his methodology. As he stated in February 1897, “All along, in the history of the Hindu race, there never was any attempt at destruction, only construction.... We have had a host of reformers--Shankara, Ramanuja, Madhva, and Chaitanya.

These were great reformers, who always were constructive and built according to the circumstances of their time. This is our peculiar method of work.”<sup>14</sup>

Consequently, in seeking a unified system of Indian knowledge he was able to explain Indian Raja Yoga from many standpoints. These perspectives included his own spiritual experiences; each of the six traditional schools of Indian philosophy (Darshanas); Tantra and Shaivite (*Kurma Purana*) yogic literature; bhakti, jnana, and karma yoga; and its correspondence with contemporary physics (matter and energy), biology (evolution, anatomy, physiology), psychology (conscious and unconscious mind), and mysticism (spiritual realization, superconscious).

Vivekananda would dictate portions of his translation of “*Patanjali’s Yoga Aphorisms*,” along with some of his profoundly thought-out ideas contained in his commentaries, and his appendix to *Raja Yoga* to Sarah Waldo, which she took down in longhand.<sup>15</sup> She revealed, “It was inspiring to see the Swami as he dictated to me the contents of the work. In delivering his commentaries on the [Yoga] Sutras, he would leave me waiting while he entered deep states of meditation or self-contemplation, to emerge there-from with some luminous interpretation. I had always to keep the pen dipped in the ink. He might be absorbed for long periods of time, and then suddenly his silence would be broken by some eager expression or some long deliberate teaching.”<sup>16</sup>

Reverend Donald Harrington of the Community Church of New York related in a speech given at the United Nations auditorium in 1993 that his father a druggist attended the Parliament of Religions in 1893 and later told his children of his experiences, “Among his reminiscences was a remembrance of how the gathering was electrified by the words that were spoken by Swami Vivekananda when he was first introduced, when he explained something which was a little difficult for American religionists to believe—that belief was not the central business of religion. He said, religion is not a way of believing, it is a way of being and becoming. Religion is being real yourself, and becoming part of what is real in the universe. This was a revelation and it was a very striking and important one. My father spoke of it very often.”<sup>17</sup>

Mrs. Constance Towne who knew Vivekananda in 1894 later indicated, “He taught me much of the philosophy he preached and wrote about, how to meditate, and what power it would be against the hurts of

life; what force of purpose it would attain for the preservation of the body, for logical thought, for self-control, for ecstasy, for the attraction of others; its power for good, its knowing how to read others and their needs; not to dull the edge of your sword, to be moderate in one's consumption of food, to know what one's own body needs to make it live well; of chastity, tolerance, purity of thought, and love for the world—not of one person but of everyone and of all created things.”<sup>18</sup>

Concerning Vivekananda's classic commentary on *Raja Yoga*, in Russia Leo Tolstoy (1828-1910) the world famous writer noted, “The book is most remarkable and I have received much instruction from it. The metaphysical side of the doctrine, the precept as to what the true ‘I’ of man is, is excellent. So far humanity has frequently gone backwards from the true and lofty and clear conception of the principle of life, but never surpassed it.”<sup>19</sup>

Incidentally, In August 1900, each morning Swamiji would walk and converse with Sir Patrick Geddes (1854-1932) on their way to the Paris Exposition. In September, they met at a party thrown by the Leggett's in Paris, France. Geddes biographer stresses that as a result of his encounter with Vivekananda, “The eastern discipline of body and mind made such a lasting impression on both Anna (Geddes' wife) and Patrick that they later handed on to their young children the simple Raja Yoga exercises for control of the inner nature.” These experiences deepened Geddes' interest in the land and soul of India. Geddes penned a Preface to a French translation of Vivekananda's *Raja Yoga* (1910).<sup>20</sup> In 1917, the *Prabuddha Bharata* praised Geddes' efforts by stating, “He has distinguished himself not only by his expert knowledge in town-planning, but also by his profound learning in all subjects connected with the betterment of human life on earth, and his selfless devotion to that cause.” The discipline of sociology was first introduced into Indian Universities in 1919 at the University of Bombay by Geddes who was later succeeded as head of the department by G. S. Ghurye.<sup>21</sup> There are some Westerners who think that personality and character changes can only come about through an involvement in the world. Actually, meditation is a more direct approach to self-transformation since it involves directly working on the mind without an intermediary. The indirect approach is to work through the external world and have those experiences reflect back on the mind.

Along this line Reverend Sidney Spencer (1888-1974) at one time Principle of Manchester College, Oxford indicated, "Vivekananda's approach was that of the mystic, the man who knows himself as one with the Infinite and Eternal Spirit, and that for him was not a mere intellectual abstraction. It was an actual living experience; it was the culmination of his own inner life. At the same time that experience and its central place for him, gave him the clue to the understanding of religion in all its forms—not that religion by any means always reaches such heights or even aspires to such heights. What he came to see was that it is experience that is essential in all forms of religion. What mattered for him were not the dogmas of religion or its rituals or moral codes taken by themselves; what mattered fundamentally was the inner experience for which it stood.... 'The end of all religions,' he said, 'is the realizing of God in the soul.' That, I believe, is indeed the vital fact, to realize God in the soul, to enter into the consciousness of the Divine Presence, however we may express it so that that Supreme and Eternal reality becomes the ruling and guiding and inspiring power in our whole life."<sup>22</sup>

Spencer adds, "The 'soul' of Hinduism he found in spirituality, grounded in the sense of the immediate presence of God and the possibility of seeing and knowing Him. At its highest level it calls for concentration on that endeavour and so (Vivekananda believed) for renunciation of the world. The Hindu seeks perfection through the merging of his life in the infinite and universal Life of Brahman (God). Hinduism stands thus in principle for universal charity and tolerance."<sup>23</sup>

Marie Louise Burke (Sister Gargi) (1912-2004) specified, "One of the most salient points of the Swami's teaching was that the Reality, the Absolute, was not a matter of speculation, but of *supersensuous* experience. Nor was the possibility of such experience a matter of speculation. Down through the ages, the great seers and saints of the world have testified to their own vivid, immediate, permanent, realization of ultimate Reality. The Swami himself not only vouched for such knowledge, but insisted that everyone can and must attain it; for without it, religion was mere talk."<sup>24</sup>

Because of its practical value, no aspect of Indian thought has gained greater acceptance in the West than yoga practice and philosophy. Today yoga and meditation are undertaken by millions of Westerners to gain spiritual awareness, maintain good physical health, reduce tension and stress, feel



peace of mind, to make their mind more concentrated, and to become a better person. Ethics tells you to be a good person, while yoga is a tool that makes it easier to attain that ideal.

According to a scientific study conducted by *Yoga Journal* and *Yoga Alliance*, the number of Americans practicing yoga has risen amazingly from four million in 2001 to 20.4 million in 2012 and to 36.7 million in 2016. The practice has entered the family system since 37% have children under the age of eighteen who also practice yoga. Seventy-two percent are women, 74% are relatively new practicing it for five or less years, and 56% are engaged in yoga for stress relief. In 2012, the National Center for Complementary and Integrative Health discovered that 18 million (8%) of U. S. adults were involved in mantra, mindfulness, spiritual, or yoga mediation. Many of these people are not associated with traditional religious and spiritual traditions. Experts expect these percentages to rise in the future.<sup>25</sup>

Consequently, with the expansion of education and yoga, modern religion is placing more emphasis on reason and religious experience than in the past. Other auspicious signs are that India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi got the United Nations to create a yearly International Yoga day beginning June 21, 2015. President Barak Obama carries a statuette of the Hindu deity Hanuman (along with a tiny Buddha statue and a Christian rosary bead and Coptic cross) in his pocket. He seeks inspiration from them when he feels tired and discouraged.<sup>26</sup> On both sides of the political spectrum, Hilary Clinton and Ivanka Trump practice yoga.<sup>27</sup>

Concerning spiritual power Vivekananda stated, "The Yogis claim that of all the energies that are in the human body the highest is what they call 'Ojas.' Now this Ojas is stored up in the brain, and the more Ojas is in a man's head, the more powerful he is, the more intellectual, the more spiritually strong. One man may speak beautiful language and beautiful thoughts, but they do not impress people; another man speaks neither beautiful language nor beautiful thoughts, yet his words charm. Every movement of his is powerful. That is the power of Ojas. Now in every man there is more or less of this Ojas stored up." "The Ojas is that which makes the difference between man and man. The man who has much Ojas is the leader of men. It gives a tremendous power of attraction. Ojas is manufactured from the nerve-currents." "The great sexual force, raised from animal action and sent upward to the great dynamo of the human

system, the brain, and there stored up, becomes Ojas or spiritual force. All good thought, all prayer, resolves a part of that animal energy into Ojas and helps to give us spiritual power. This Ojas is the real man and in human beings alone is it possible for this storage of Ojas to be accomplished. One in whom the whole animal sex force has been transformed into Ojas is a god. He speaks with power, and his words regenerate the world. The Yogi pictures this serpent as being slowly lifted from stage to stage until the highest, the pineal gland, is reached. No man or woman can be really spiritual until the sexual energy, the highest power possessed by man, has been converted into Ojas.”<sup>28</sup>

### The Rationale for a Yoga Philosophy

The goal of yoga psychology is more than having a well-adjusted personality in society, but a spiritual transformation of personality and character. Emphasis is placed on the Ideal Self rather than the empirical self. The self-image is replaced with a Divine image. Western psychology seeks to make the unconscious, conscious, while Yoga’s goal is to make the superconscious, conscious. Through a process of concentration, yoga unlike psychoanalysis works directly on altering the forces and vibrational states of the mind composed of the substance of subtle matter and energy. Through yogic practices powers of restraining the mind are developed that nullify negative mental vibrations making them ineffective in causing mental problems. Meditation brings about an unexpected release and awareness of deeply embedded memories, thoughts, and feelings previously hidden in the unconscious mind. All negative powerful emotions that can overwhelm a person are reducible to samskaras, mental impressions that a yogi can overcome through mind control. Those people who experienced a deep mystical experience scored at the top of the Affect Balance Scale (developed by a University of Chicago psychologist) of psychological well-being. No other factor was found that correlated so highly with that state.<sup>29</sup>

Raja Yoga philosophy claims that by faithfully following its methods for a long period of time, its practitioners will be transformed and adopt saintly qualities with greatly improved levels of intelligence and benevolence. They might even attain samadhi and make contact with the Divine world. In order to validate these claims Vivekananda developed a

comprehensive Philosophy (Metaphysics and Epistemology) of the Mind that has never been surpassed, to explain why this is possible. His system of ideas discussed below include: the process of personal evolution can be greatly speeded up, the awakening of the Kundalini force and superconscious Samadhi brings illumination and Divine wisdom, one mind has three states, unconscious, conscious, and superconscious that is dormant in most people, one can manifest their innate Divinity within, and our mind is a fragment of the Universal Mind. The seven chakras of the kundalini are arranged vertically. At the base of the spine in the subtle body is located a reserve of latent spiritual energy that can be awakened by yogic practices and devotion to Brahman-God. The energy will flow upward through the narrow channel of the sushumna [nerve].

Vivekananda clarifies, “The powers of the mind are like rays of light dissipated; when they are concentrated, they illumine.... From our childhood upwards we have been taught only to pay attention to things external, but never to things internal; hence most of us have nearly lost the faculty of observing the internal mechanism. To turn the mind, as it were, inside, stop it from going outside, and then to concentrate all its powers, and throw them upon the mind itself, in order that it may know its own nature, analyze itself, is very hard work.... There is no limit to the power of the human mind. The more concentrated it is, the more power is brought to bear on one point.... The powers of the mind should be concentrated and turned back upon itself, and as the darkest places reveal their secrets before the penetrating rays of the sun, so will this concentrated mind penetrate its own innermost secrets.”<sup>30</sup> When a person attempts to meditate on the inner world, there is a tendency for the mind to concentrate on their external life experiences. The mind naturally goes out through the five senses and internalizes those experiences. Unless the mind is properly trained, it is difficult for it to withdraw from the external world and observe its own nature. Meditation focuses in on the present moment, while the past and future are temporarily forgotten.

Most important, the purpose of the science of Yoga is “to shorten the time for reaching perfection.” My getting control of the internal Prana of mental power one can speed up the process of personal evolution. “Instead of slowly advancing from point to point and waiting until the whole human race has become perfect,” great souls reached perfection in one lifetime.<sup>31</sup> Yoga being a science requires experimentation. “As this Kundalini force

travels from centre to centre, layer after layer of the mind, as it were, opens up, and this universe is perceived by the Yogi in its fine, or causal form.... Thus the rousing of the Kundalini is the one and only way to attaining Divine Wisdom, superconscious perception, realization of the spirit.”<sup>32</sup> “From one state a man comes out the very same man that he went in, and from another state the man comes out enlightened, a sage, a prophet, a saint, his whole character changed, his life changed, illumined. These are the two effects. Now the effects being different, the causes must be different. As this illumination with which a man comes back from Samadhi is much higher than can be got from unconsciousness, or much higher than can be got by reasoning in a conscious state, it must, therefore, be superconsciousness, and Samadhi is called the superconscious state.” “The Yogi teaches that the mind itself has a higher state of existence, beyond reason, a superconscious state, and when the mind gets to that higher state, then this knowledge, beyond reasoning, comes to man. Metaphysical and transcendental knowledge comes to that man.... Because these three states--instinct, reason, and superconsciousness, or the unconscious, conscious, and superconscious states--belong to one and the same mind. There are not three minds in one man, but one state of it develops into the others. Instinct develops into reason, and reason into the transcendental consciousness.” “When this superconscious state is reached, man becomes free and divine; death becomes immortality, weakness becomes infinite power, and iron bondage becomes liberty. That is the goal, the infinite realm of the superconscious.” The goal is to get rid of nature's control over us by manifesting our innate Divinity within.<sup>33</sup> Spiritual (yogic) perceptions reveal Divine things that bring about profound essential changes in a person, which empirical perceptions mediated through the physical senses do not do.

Vivekananda adds, “Our bodies are simply little whirlpools in the ocean of matter. [Our mind is] simply a mental whirlpool in the ocean of mind.” “Now there is something beyond Akasha [Matter] and Prana [Energy]. Both can be resolved into a third thing called Mahat--the Cosmic Mind. This Cosmic Mind does not create Akasha and Prana, but changes itself into them.... The Mahat becomes changed into vibrating thought; and that becomes in one part changed into the organs, and in the other part into the fine particles of matter. Out of the combination of all these, the whole of this universe is produced.”<sup>34</sup>

Mahat is the omnipresent and eternal Universal Mind and Body of Brahman-God of which our mind and body are a fragment. “The mind is universal. Your mind, my mind, all these little minds, are fragments of that Universal Mind, little waves in the ocean; and on account of this continuity, we can convey our thoughts directly to one another.” “There is only one mass of mind. Different [states] of that mind have different names. [They are] different little whirlpools in this ocean of mind. We are universal and individual at the same time.”<sup>35</sup> Due to universal egoism we identify with a minute part of the physical and mental universe (an individual body and mind) and not with the totality.

The external world of the five senses and the internal world of the mind are so interconnected that through mind control it is possible to gain control over the external world. Vivekananda writes, “The external world is but the gross form of the internal, or subtle. The finer is always the cause, the grosser the effect. So the external world is the effect, the internal the cause. In the same way external forces are simply the grosser parts, of which the internal forces are the finer. The man who has discovered and learned how to manipulate the internal forces will get the whole of nature under his control.”<sup>36</sup> “Just as Akasha [Primal Matter] is the infinite, omnipresent material of this universe, so is this Prana [Primal Energy] the infinite, omnipresent manifesting power of this universe.” If a person had perfect understanding of the Prana he could “control everything in the universe, from the atoms to the biggest suns.... Thought is the finest and highest action of Prana.”<sup>37</sup>

### Swami Vivekananda and the Psychology of Religion

In 1896, with the writing of his classic work *Raja Yoga*, Swami Vivekananda became a strong candidate for being the founder of the modern “Psychology of Religion” and “Transpersonal Psychology” movements. The Wikipedia essay on the Internet considers William James (1842-1910) the Harvard professor to be its founder with his seminal book *The Varieties of Religious Experience* (1902).<sup>38</sup> James’ book has chapters on religious experience, saintliness, mysticism, subliminal consciousness a part of the mind not directly accessible to intentional observation, and other topics, and quotes both Ramakrishna and Vivekananda. He cites two long references taken from Vivekananda’s

“Practical Vedanta,” “The Real and the Apparent Man,” and most important his book *Raja Yoga*.<sup>39</sup>

Of the early American works on religious experience, second in importance to that of James *Varieties was Religious Consciousness* (1920) by James Pratt (1875-1944). An admirer of Ramakrishna and Vivekananda he favorably described the formers spiritual experiences.<sup>40</sup>

When describing religious experience James displayed knowledge of Eastern mysticism. Organized institutional religion is described as “second-hand” compared to the true religion of the private mystical experience of an individual. The potentiality for other forms of consciousness is discussed, and that such experience can impart exceptional meaning and truth-giving quality to the agent.<sup>41</sup> James makes the contrast between the “Religion of Healthy-Mindedness” and “The Sick Soul” (“Religion of Unhealthy-Mindedness”). While a healthy-minded religion is positive emphasizing religious experience, productive activity, and the glory of its founders; an unhealthy-minded religion focuses in on negative things like the evils and sins within society and individual people. Of course the great souls who are the founders of religion must point out the shortcomings of the devotees so they will work to overcome them.

In the writing of *Varieties*, James was no doubt influenced by Vivekananda but we will probably never know to what extent. To give a few biographical examples, at the Cambridge [Massachusetts] Conferences held at Sara Bull’s home, Vivekananda made the acquaintance of William James probably in October and definitely in December 1894. There is a possibility at that time Swamiji demonstrated the nature of Divine communion to James by entering into samadhi in his presence. Soon after Vivekananda and James met at dinner at the residence of Sara Bull. “After dinner the Swami and the professor drew together in earnest and subdued conversation. It was midnight when they rose from their long discourse.” Vivekananda informed Mrs. Bull, who made inquiries about their long conversation, that James is “A very nice man, a very nice man!”

It is quite likely that James attended Vivekananda’s eminent talk on “The Vedanta Philosophy” presented before the Harvard Graduate Philosophical Club on March 25, 1896. Before he gave the presentation, “Mr. [James] Lough said that Vivekananda’s addresses [his published pamphlets] interested not only the philosophical students, but also Prof. James and Prof. [Josiah] Royce, who hope to be at his Harvard talk.” Three

days later James sent a letter to Swami addressing him as “Dear Master,” inviting him to lunch at his home. Swami Abhedananda wrote that Vivekananda was offered the chair of Eastern Philosophy at Harvard University, which as a sannyasin he could not accept.<sup>42</sup> In a letter to Sara Bull dated August 2, 1900, James noted, “I have just been reading some of Vivekananda’s Addresses in England, which I had not seen. This man is simply a wonder for oratorical power.... The Swami is an honour to humanity.” In a letter to Josephine MacLeod, James wrote that he “might get hold of the first 3 parts of Practical Vedanta,” written by Vivekananda. In James’ library they discovered the works of Vivekananda, Abhedananda, and Sister Nivedita.

Raja Yoga psychology can be integrated with modern psychoanalytic theory. The practice of Raja Yoga strengthens the will and gives people the inner strength to face their problems so they can make the necessary changes in their thinking and actions to overcome their difficulties. It opens up a whole new world previously unknown to its practitioners. People engaged in yoga often peak at an older age than most people do; certainly older than an athlete and even than an intellectual. Dr. Eugene Irvine Taylor, an Associate in Psychiatry at the Harvard Medical School made the following remarks. For Vivekananda psychology, “meant the spiritual evolution of consciousness, not simply the description of sense data and its analysis by the mind.... internal science, concentration of mind means drawing consciousness back towards one’s self—a process of involution, where consciousness is systematically detached from the various objects in the external world until the mind itself becomes the object of conscious absorption. Awareness is thereby cleansed or purified, so that consciousness, and hence personality, is transformed. This, he said, was yoga.... [William James of Harvard University] saw in Vivekananda’s inner science a vast unexplored dimension for the understanding of personality and character formation. We know from subsequent references he made to Vivekananda’s system that James saw great value in the Hindu practice of systematic, daily periods of concentrated relaxation. These, James felt, could be of great use in preparing American children for learning in the classroom. James also observed in the methods of Vivekananda’s yoga a form of spiritual discipline that could be used by anyone to penetrate into untapped reservoirs of energy and power for

physical as well as mental tasks, and also in the treatment of certain neurasthenic conditions.”<sup>43</sup>

Two additional candidates for the founder of the modern Psychology of Religion are J. H. Leuba (1868-1946) a fellow at Clark University, for an 1896 article on the religious conversion process; and Edwin D. Starbuck (1866-1947) who received a PhD from Clark University in 1897, for a book titled *Psychology of Religion* (1899). Clark University in Worcester, Massachusetts was a unique institution that had only graduate students. Its first President from 1889 to 1919 was Granville Stanley Hall (1844-1924) an esteemed educational psychologist who was the first President of the American Psychological Association. Hall met Swami Vivekananda (probably at the Parliament of Religions in 1893) and later stated, “His lectures here [the United States] have attracted considerable attention in some quarters.” Its quite possible Vivekananda had some affect on Hall, since in 1896 Swami Saradananda, and in 1899 and 1909 Swami Abhedananda were invited to speak at Clark University. As part of a two-week conference held at Clark University beginning on September 7, 1909, Sigmund Freud gave five lectures on the subject of psychoanalysis. These are the only public speeches he gave in the Western Hemisphere. Two days later, his companion Carl Jung presented the first of his three lectures at the University. The following Monday the featured speaker at the conference was Swami Abhedananda who spoke on “English Rule in India--As India Sees it,” as part of an International Relations seminar.<sup>44</sup>

The Wikipedia essay considers Emile Durkheim to be the founder of the Sociology of Religion for his work on Catholic-Protestant suicide rates in 1897 and their sociological implications. The two most important early contributions to the field are Max Weber’s *Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (1905) and Durkheim’s *Elementary Forms of Religious Life* (1912).<sup>45</sup> Vivekananda also made important contributions to the Sociology of Religion not recognized by Western sources. His original ideas include: the four class theory of history, the coming spiritual age, national dharma, and the historical importance of single individuals particularity in the field of religion.

Vivekananda was also one of the first thinkers to use the ideas of contemporary physics (e.g. matter, energy, thermodynamics) and biology (e.g. evolution, heredity) in defense of metaphysical ideas.



### 3. Spiritual Experiences and the Verification Principle

Swami Vivekananda asked the question, “What is the proof of God? Direct perception, Pratyaksha. The proof of this wall is that I perceive it. God has been perceived that way by thousands before, and will be perceived by all who want to perceive Him. But this perception is no sense-perception at all; it is supersensuous, superconscious.”<sup>46</sup> “People have been fighting for ages, and what is the outcome? Intellect cannot reach there at all. We have to go beyond the intellect; the proof of religion is in direct perception. The proof of the existence of this wall is that we see it; if you sat down and argued about its existence or non-existence for ages, you could never come to any conclusion; but directly you see it, it is enough.”<sup>47</sup> “The proof, therefore, of the *Vedas* is just the same as the proof of this table before me, Pratyaksha, direct perception. This I see with the senses, and the truths of spirituality we also see in a superconscious state of the human soul. This Rishi-state is not limited by time or place, by sex or race. Vatsyayana boldly declares that this Rishihood is the common property of the descendants of the sage, of the Aryan, of the non-Aryan, of even the Mlechchha. This is the sageship of the *Vedas*, and constantly we ought to remember this ideal of religion in India, which I wish other nations of the world would also remember and learn, so that there may be less fight and less quarrel. Religion is not in books, nor in theories, nor in dogmas, nor in talking, not even in reasoning. It is being and becoming.”<sup>48</sup>

Vivekananda continues, “When the mind has attained to that state, which is called Samadhi--perfect concentration, superconsciousness--it goes beyond the limits of reason, and comes face to face with facts which no instinct or reason can ever know.... The Yogi teaches that the mind itself has a higher state of existence, beyond reason, a superconscious state, and when the mind gets to that higher state, then this knowledge, beyond reasoning, comes to man. Metaphysical and transcendental knowledge comes to that man.” Knowledge about Brahman-God is derived from spiritual perception. “Reasoning is the method of comparison between certain facts which we have already perceived. If these perceived facts are not there already, there cannot be any reasoning. If this is true of external phenomena, why should it not be so of the internal?... All knowledge must stand on perception of certain facts, and upon that we have to build our reasoning. But, curiously enough the vast majority of

mankind think, especially at the present time, that no such perception is possible in religion, that religion can only be apprehended by vain arguments.”<sup>49</sup> Many people believe that religion unlike science is not based on direct experience; but on faith, belief, and dogma. Yet, going back to the origin of the major religions of the world, we see that they were based on the direct spiritual experience of their founders. Each of them claimed to have seen Brahman-God or a Divine Being, experienced the highest Reality, and to have received the truth, discovered by a higher intuition.

In modern science they call this the “Verification Principle,” developed by the prestigious British analytic philosopher Sir A(lfred) J(ules) Ayer (1910-89). Strong verification refers to observation-statements that are directly verifiable, that is, a statement can be shown to be correct by way of empirical observation. A principle begins as a hypothesis implied by a theory, which is then compared against empirical observations. If the hypothesis is consistently supported by data through empirical verification, it achieves the rank “verified” principle. In *Language, Truth and Logic* (1936), pp. 118-19, A. J. Ayer an atheist and supporter of logical positivism wrote the mystic “is unable to produce any intelligible propositions at all.... mystical intuition is not a genuinely cognitive state.... religious experience is altogether fallacious.” Over fifty years later in June 1988, his attending physician Dr. Jeremy George said that Ayer told him, “I saw a Divine Being. I’m afraid I am going to have to revise all my various books and opinions.” This was a very unsettling experience for Ayer, since it went against his lifelong beliefs (biases, prejudices). Ayer had no idea that the verification principle could be applied to religion and that realizing God is a matter of direct perception and observation that surpasses theoretical constructs.<sup>50</sup>

Many scientists know the Verification Principle applies to perceptions of the physical body, but they are unaware of its applicability to subtle body perception such as yogic and psychic powers, or spiritual body perception. For example, Buddha established a new religion only after he attained the enlightened state of Nirvana. Jesus spoke with the Father in Heaven, perceived his presence, and received His messages. Muhammad received the *Quran* verbatim over a 23-year period transmitted by the archangel Gabriel from a heavenly realm. Swami Brahmananda (1865-1922) could see Brahman (God) within all people. Thus, the Verification Principle is the epistemological foundation of all of the major religions of

the world. One problem is that since the 17<sup>th</sup> century in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, there has been a tendency to separate mysticism, theology, and philosophy into three separate areas, whereby a religious practitioner is apt to accept one or two but not all three of them. Following the philosophy of Foundationalism, valid direct perception is self-evident and does not require additional proofs to be justified. Unlike inferential knowledge, vivid and direct intuition is known immediately.

Most often a religious experience is private (involving a single person) and not public. Yet the fact that over the centuries many Christian saints of the highest moral order have had visitations of Jesus verifies their experiences. Also, these experiences brought a lifelong transformation in these people, which is not required in the verification of scientific discoveries. As a young man Swami Vivekananda went around Calcutta asking prominent religious leaders like Debendranath Tagore, “Sir have you seen God?” Not have you written a book on or delivered lectures about Brahman (God). From Sri Ramakrishna he got this response, “I crept near him and asked him the question which I had asked so often: ‘Have you seen God, sir?’ ‘Yes, I see Him just as I see you here, only in a much intense sense. God can be realized,’ he went on; ‘one can see and talk to Him as I am seeing and talking to you. But who cares? People shed torrents of tears for their wife and children, for wealth or property, but who does so for the sake of God? If one weeps sincerely for Him, He surely manifests Himself.’ That impressed me at once. For the first time I found a man who dared to say that he had seen God, that religion was a reality to be felt, to be sensed in an infinitely more intense way than we can sense the world. As I heard these things from his lips, I could not but believe that he was saying them not like an ordinary preacher, but from the depths of his own realizations.”<sup>51</sup>

#### 4. Meditation and Prayer

Indian: “Turn the senses and the mind inward to the lotus of the heart. Meditate on Brahman” (Svet. Up.\* 2:8; cf. BG 13:24). “Without meditation, where is peace? Without peace, where is happiness” (BG\* 2:66, p. 49)? “Therefore you must remember me at all times, and do your duty. If your mind and heart are set upon me constantly, you will come to me” (BG\* 8:7, p. 95; cf. 3:12; 6:12; Kat. Up. 2:2.1; Svet. Up. 2:10).

New Testament: “I will pray with the spirit and I will pray with the mind also” (1 Cor. 14:15; cf. Jude 20). “We always thank God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, when we pray for you” (Col. 1:3). “Continue steadfastly in prayer, being watchful in it with thanksgiving; and pray for us also” (Col. 4:2-3; cf. 2 Thes. 1:11). “Pray constantly, give thanks in all circumstances” (1 Thes. 5:17-18; cf. Mt. 5:44; Rom. 12:12; Eph. 6:18).

Pray in Solitude. Indian: “Practice austerity and meditation in solitude” (Mun. Up.\* 1:2.11). “A yogi should try to concentrate his mind, retiring into solitude and living alone” (BG 6:10). New Testament: “When you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret” (Mt. 6:6).<sup>52</sup>

Swami Vivekananda expresses these ideas, “The greatest thing is meditation. It is the nearest approach to spiritual life--the mind meditating. It is the one moment in our daily life that we are not at all material--the Soul thinking of Itself, free from all matter--this marvelous touch of the Soul!”<sup>53</sup> “You must keep the mind fixed on one object, like an unbroken stream of oil. The ordinary man's mind is scattered on different objects, and at the time of meditation, too, the mind is at first apt to wander. But let any desire whatever arise in the mind, you must sit calmly and watch what sort of ideas are coming. By continuing to watch in that way, the mind becomes calm, and there are no more thought-waves in it. These waves represent the thought-activity of the mind. Those things that you have previously thought deeply, have transformed themselves into a subconscious current, and therefore these come up in the mind in meditation. The rise of these waves, or thoughts, during meditation is evidence that your mind is tending towards concentration. Sometimes the mind is concentrated on a set of ideas--this is called meditation with Vikalpa or oscillation. But when the mind becomes almost free from all activities, it melts in the inner Self, which is the essence of infinite Knowledge, One, and Itself Its own support. This is what is called Nirvikalpa Samadhi, free from all activities.”<sup>54</sup>

He continues, “In order to reach the superconscious state in a scientific manner it is necessary to pass through the various steps of Raja-Yoga I have been teaching. After Pratyahara [Withdrawal of the senses from external objects] and Dharana [Concentration], we come to Dhyana, meditation. When the mind has been trained to remain fixed on a certain

internal or external location, there comes to it the power of flowing in an unbroken current, as it were, towards that point. This state is called Dhyana. When one has so intensified the power of Dhyana as to be able to reject the external part of perception and remain meditating only on the internal part, the meaning, that state is called Samadhi. The three--Dharana, Dhyana, and Samadhi--together, are called Samyama. That is, if the mind can first concentrate upon an object, and then is able to continue in that concentration for a length of time, and then, by continued concentration, to dwell only on the internal part of the perception of which the object was the effect, everything comes under the control of such a mind. This meditative state is the highest state of existence. So long as there is desire, no real happiness can come. It is only the contemplative, witness-like study of objects that brings to us real enjoyment and happiness. The animal has its happiness in the senses, the man in his intellect, and the god in spiritual contemplation. It is only to the soul that has attained to this contemplative state that the world really becomes beautiful. To him who desires nothing, and does not mix himself up with them, the manifold changes of nature are one panorama of beauty and sublimity.”<sup>55</sup>

Swami Prabhavananda (1893-1976) made this differentiation, “Two basic types of prayer are used by different individuals: man-centered and God-centered prayer. People whose prayer is man-centered beseech God to enrich their life on earth, to remove their sufferings, to provide them with wealth, success and comfort. God-centered prayer, on the other hand, is motivated by spiritual discrimination and devotion. People whose prayers are God-centered seek Him alone, knowing that God-realization is the whole purpose of life. The Lord’s Prayer is God-centered and in it Jesus teaches us how to become absorbed in the consciousness of God and find eternal joy and freedom.”<sup>56</sup> “Meditation requires a great, strenuous effort to concentrate the mind definitely upon Pure Consciousness, upon God. It does not matter just what the conception, the ideal of the Godhead, may be. But there must be a positive something to concentrate upon. We have to raise one strong wave of thought to the exclusion of the rest.... This is what the Hindu means by meditation, a constant flow of thought toward that one ideal. In other words, you walk with God, you sleep with God, you eat with God, you live with God. Struggle to maintain that constant flow of the mind toward God.”<sup>57</sup>

Prabhavananda's successor at the Vedanta Society of Southern California, Swami Swahananda (1921-2012) recognized that prayer has many psychological benefits. "It relieves the mind of tension, which is the natural concomitant of a life of hurry and worry. It neutralizes mental repressions and purifies the subconscious. It releases an extra amount of hope and energy and thus enables a man to face life squarely.... Prayer frees man from anxiety and sustains him in moments of suffering. Prayer frees man from tension by unburdening his mind, putting faith in God's power to alleviate suffering, or by seeing one's problems in a larger perspective."<sup>58</sup> Prayer frees the mind of its problems, of egotism and the burden of negative emotions. For these reasons it cleanses and brings peace to the mind. Gradually there is an enhanced faith in God and in oneself, accompanied by an increased enthusiasm, optimism, hope, personal energy, strength of will, humility and selflessness. "Prayer's efficacy lies in helping us forget the embodied condition and become attuned to a Higher Reality. Prayer thus purifies the mind, as do other spiritual disciplines. When prayer is methodological, regular and fervent, it disciplines the mind and prepares it for higher realization."<sup>59</sup> The validity of prayer is supported by the fact that it: is universality practiced, brings great benefit to people of all religions, enables a meditator to transform their character, and it is responsible for the illumination of many mystics and saints. When prayer is practiced with sincerity, zeal, and regularity a believer is bound to receive a response, which proves its efficacy and increases their religious faith. Prayer may involve requesting favors for oneself (petitionary) or for others (intercessory)."<sup>60</sup>

The point made by Clement of Alexandria (c. 150-215) in Egypt is that some people make the mistake of praying for things that will bring them harm, under the delusion that it is to their benefit. "It is the height of folly ... to ask [for] what is inexpedient (i.e., what is evil for oneself), under the impression that it is good." "For God knows generally those that are worthy to receive good things and those that are not; whence he gives to each what belongs to him."<sup>61</sup> "When he has now reached the summit, the gnostic prays that the power of contemplation may grow and abide with him, just as the common man prays for a continuance of health." They strive to purify the soul so that they may experience intimacy with God. When a gnostic reaches a holy state, "All his life is prayer and communion

with God, and if he is free from sins he will assuredly receive what he desires.... to such as are worthy, the things that are truly good are granted even without the asking”<sup>62</sup>

Members of the Jewish Hasidic movement founded by Isaac Luria (1534-72) in Poland defined prayer (as explained in *The Jewish Encyclopedia*) as “the feeling of oneness with God, the state of the soul when man gives up the consciousness of his separate existence, and joins himself to the eternal being of God. Such a state produces as species of indescribable joy, which is a necessary ingredient of the true worship of God.” “The chief practical principle of Hasidism is communion with God for the purpose of uniting with the source of life and of influencing it. This communion is achieved through the concentration of all thoughts on God, and consulting Him in all the affairs of life. The righteous man is in constant communion with God, even in his worldly affairs, since here also he feels His presence. An especial form of communion with God is prayer. In order to render this communion complete the prayer must be full of fervor, ecstatic; and the soul of him who prays must during his devotions detach itself, so to speak, from its material dwelling.” Pray from the heart and focus all thoughts on God in order to feel His presence. God’s presence is to be apprehended even when one is engaged in secular affairs. This process produces an indescribable happiness that is part of the authentic love of God. Rejoice in the heavenly voice and potency that work within the self.<sup>63</sup>

Ramakant Sinari’s explained that the German philosopher Martin Heidegger (1889-1976) in *What is Metaphysics?* stresses the point that the well-deserved success of modern science and technology has drawn humanity away from the search for Being (Ultimate Reality, Brahman, God). Science has no means to lead people to Being, nor does it have the ability to penetrate through their yearning for Being. It has made humanity immune to higher values of life, unable to fulfill the spiritual quest. Consequently, with the oblivion of Being, modern humanity lives an inauthentic existence.<sup>64</sup> What Heidegger did not realize is that Being can be discovered through the inner world of meditation.

Anthony Wilhelm explains that the Catholics teach, “By prayer we communicate with God, open ourselves to him, find out his will for us and obtain the strength to live as we should.... Prayer is the great way in which God allows us to work with him in saving ourselves and others, in spreading

love in the world.... When we pray we try to make contact with God, become aware of him, open ourselves to his love and his desires for us.... We must be humble and reverent as we pray. Christ always reminds us that our prayers should be simple and sincere.... We should pray often, several times a day if possible.... We should pray for everyone and anyone.”<sup>65</sup>

Christians often classify the personal prayers of the faithful into five basic categories: 1) Petition is asking for personal favors by appealing to God’s mercy, love and generosity. Petitionary prayer, which requires faith in the Lord’s power and grace, could be considered as a rudimentary form of meditation. While the lower form of petition involves asking for material objects, a middle type desires better health. The higher aspect of petition seeks guidance and strength from the Lord realizing our dependence on God. It is best to pray for spiritual and moral virtues such as “love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control,” which the apostle Paul calls the “fruits of the Spirit” (Gal. 5:22-23). 2) Confession or penitence involves acknowledging our sins before a merciful God, or before a representative of the Church (Catholic), in order to attain forgiveness and the remission of the penalty for our transgressions. Confession helps us to know our shortcomings and how we can improve our self. 3) “Intercession is prayer with, for and on behalf of another person, group of people, or even the world, which is undertaken by an individual or a group.” 4) Thanksgiving is expressing appreciation and gratitude for the good things God has done for us. Praise originates in a heart full of love for God. It is important to thank and praise God for the goodness, mercy, and justice he has bestowed on us. 5) “Adoration, basically is the directing of one’s whole being toward God, so that in all its diversity it is to the praise and glory of God ... It is above all an interior disposition of devotion and the act of prayer proceeding from faith, hope, and charity. This inner act is concretized in the form of adoration, awesome reverential praise, humility, and devotion.”<sup>66</sup> Christian adoration is the most advanced form of prayer and is equivalent to the higher forms of Indian meditation. Catholics “distinguished between adoration (*latria*) which is offered to God alone, and veneration (*dulia*) accorded to the saints. Because of her unique place among the saints, the Virgin Mary receives a high degree of veneration (*hyperdulia*).”<sup>67</sup> Self-surrender to the will of God is also an advanced spiritual practice.



A Gallup Poll published in 1982 tells us: 33% of the American respondents reported that when they pray they “ask for favors” (lower petition); 78% “ask for help, guidance, or strength” (middle and higher petition); 53% “seek forgiveness” (confession); 60% “seek help for others” (intercession); and 74% “give thanks” (thanksgiving).<sup>68</sup> It is not clear from this poll, what percentage of the respondents strived for the more sublime and spiritual level of contemplative adoration of God in their prayers.

The various forms of meditation follow a format that includes the following four items.

1. The object meditated on: a) consists of no, one or many objects, b) is static or changing, c) consists of a visual form, a sound, or a sensation, and d) is perceived through the senses, or is imagined in the mind through visualization or another technique.
2. The meditative technique: a) is practiced with the eyes opened or closed, and b) might involve recitation, memorized material, discursive ideas, breath control, focusing on different parts of the body, specific posture, or physical exercise.
3. Expected effects during meditation might include: a) physical sensations or mental events, either constantly or intermittently, b) noticeable alterations in cognition, either constantly or intermittently, such as a dreamlike sensation, and c) emotions, either constantly or intermittently.
4. Expected effects after meditation might include: a) modifications in cognitions or perceptions, b) changes in one’s behavior, character, and personality, and c) altering one’s emotions.<sup>69</sup>

For many people the practice of yogic mediation opens up a whole new world. For one thing during their pre-yogic period they were unaware of some of their deficiencies that needed to be altered. After beginning yogic practice they become aware that a problem exists, start to seriously think the matter over, and make the decision to develop a self-initiated rigorous plan of self-improvement. This resolve to change oneself requires a shift in attitudes, beliefs, intentions, behavior patterns, lifestyle, self-conception, and environment, along with a commitment of time and energy. Utilizing a yogic method of self-change and mind control they are able to overcome and successfully change their negative behavior patterns. Yogic treatment gives them the self-confidence that through

individual commitment they can change their lives in key ways. It is best if it is bolstered by a social support system.

The benefits from spiritual practice follow the Multiplier Principle, meaning they far exceed the amount of effort required to obtain them. This is particularly true, if one receives the grace of the Lord.

The mind of a person interacts with other people in the external environment, who react and thereby send back messages to their mind. This is more indirect than meditation, where the person has the benefit of working directly with the contents of their mind independent of the environment. Of course, the meditator must deal with prior memories of external events in the mind.

Anger, addictions, laziness, etc, are due to the negative vibrations of the mind that produce these forms of energy-forces in the subtle matter of the brain. Through meditation these vibrations are evened out and thereby nullified, and replaced by positive vibrations of peacefulness, self-control, productive activity, etc. producing new energy-forces. When meditating one should try to enter into a new inner world, where they forget all of their outside activities and associated thoughts. This provides the opportunity to be free from one's problems. A person is having a good meditation, but if they project their joy to some external source (life event) this will distract their mind.

The mind of an exemplary yogi enters into a high state of vibration and rises to a blissful heavenly state. To see Brahman-God with spiritual eyes awakens the inner Divinity within oneself and the devotee begins to realize they are a spiritual being. This process leads to liberation-salvation. We want to place the computer chip of the Lord in our mind to maintain a remembrance of the Divine.

For some people meditation is like mental weight lifting, except the pressure of concentration is placed on the forces of the mind instead of the muscles. The meditator must be careful not to overstrain the mind and the weightlifter the body. We might think of the Lord as the master mechanic who works on the forces of our mind.

Even during trying times, yogis are not depressed because of a continuous subtle spiritual current that flows through them. Vivekananda mentions physical illness being due to over or under vibration of pranic energy. We can assume this is also the cause of bad mental health. Before a physical or mental illness arises on the physical (gross) level it already

exists on the subtle body in seed form. The medical doctor perceives it or a person experiences it after that. Meditation can help to even out the vibrations if it is detected early enough while in seed form and therefore to improve physical and mental health. There is a big difference in destroying the seed of a redwood tree than when it is fully developed.

There are a few rare people who are born meditators and yogis, but most of us strive to become meditators and yogis. Some say prayer is speaking to Brahman-God and meditation is listening to Brahman-God. Some people think success in mediation is due to love and devotion, others to purity, spiritual knowledge, strength of mind, etc. These are different ways of viewing the same thing. One commits the error of reductionism if they reduce the explanation down to only one of these and ignore the others. We might add, one should also pray for protection from oneself, from one's own egocentric ideas that distort the true meaning of a situation and cause a person all kinds of problems. An advantage of group meditation is the low cost of teaching it in groups compared to a psychiatrist who treats each patient individually.

William James' (1842-1910) account of human experience of the present moment is part of a stream of consciousness that he called the "specious present," the subjective "temporal now" awareness of psychological time. Since immediate stimuli are temporary and changing, for consciousness awareness to exist, the duration of the specious present requires a minimum length of time, perhaps a fraction of a second though for a meditator with a concentrated mind it would be longer. More time is required to integrate and organize the experience by imposing order and structure on it.<sup>70</sup>

## 5. Quiet the Mind to Realize Brahman-God

Indian: "Drawing back the senses from every direction by strength of mind, let a man little by little attain tranquility ... Once the mind is established in the Self [Atman], he should think of nothing else. Let him withdraw the fickle and unquiet mind from whatever causes it to wander away ... Supreme Bliss comes to the yogi whose mind is completely tranquil and whose passions are quieted" (BG 6:24-27). "Engaged in the yoga of constant practice and not allowing the mind to wander away to anything else" (BG 8:8).

Old Testament: “Be still and know that I am God” (Ps. 46:10).

Using an analogy while commenting on Patanjali’s yoga psychology (YS 1:2), Swami Vivekananda stressed the importance of quieting the mind so that it can concentrate deeply on the intended object, “The bottom of a lake we cannot see, because its surface is covered with ripples. It is only possible for us to catch a glimpse of the bottom, when the ripples have subsided, and the water is calm. If the water is muddy or is agitated all the time, the bottom will not be seen. If it is clear, and there are no waves, we shall see the bottom. The bottom of the lake is our own true Self; the lake is the Chitta [mind substance] and the waves the Vrittis [thought waves of the mind].”<sup>71</sup>

Swami Brahmananda confirmed, “You will find peace and happiness only if you can remember the Lord. If He is pleased, the world is pleased.... Accept all trials and tribulations boldly. Welcome them, for through them you shall surely find peace.... Know Him as your very own and you will find peace in Him.... Forget the body and its comforts; shake off the delusion of birth and death. Shake off the illusory peace of Maya and find the real peace—the everlasting peace of God.... The greatest strength of character is to live in harmony with all. No one can find peace if he hurts another. Never utter one word that would hurt another. Tell the truth, but never tell a harsh truth.”<sup>72</sup> “When the mind is once freed from craving it becomes your slave.... Know this: without worshiping God you can never have peace of mind. Therefore, spend some time every day in the worship of God, in japam and meditation, and in singing God’s glory. True devotion, faith [shraddha], and knowledge, are the results of long persistence in spiritual practices.... There is the path of the good and the path of the pleasant: one leads to everlasting peace and the other leads to suffering. Choose therefore the path of the good.... Unless you meditate, you cannot control the mind, and unless the mind is controlled, you cannot meditate.... Peace dwells in the heart of one who loves God. Realize that your life without him is barren. Yearn for him, and peace will follow. When a man finds no peace in the world, dispassion grows within him and he is drawn to God.”<sup>73</sup> Silencing the mind during meditation is more important than refraining from speech.

Moses Maimonides (1135-1204) noted, “The first thing that you should cause your soul to hold fast onto is that, while reciting the Schema prayer, you should empty your mind of everything and pray thus. You should not content yourself with being intent while reciting the first verse of Schema and saying the first benediction. When this has been carried out correctly and has been practiced consistently for years, cause your soul, whenever you read or listen to the *Torah*, to be constantly directed—the whole of you and your thought—toward reflection on what you are listening or reading. When this too has been practiced consistently for a certain time, cause your soul to be in such a way that your thought is always quite free of distraction and gives heed to all that you are reading of the other discourses of the prophets.”<sup>74</sup>

In 1913, the British lady Evelyn Underhill (1875-1941) assisted Rabindranath Tagore in compiling and translating *One Hundred Poems of Kabir* (1914-15, later called *Songs of Kabir*), and authored a scholarly eighteen-page Introduction to the book. In the same year she also wrote the introduction for *The Autobiography of Devendranath Tagore*.<sup>75</sup> In her classic book on comparative mysticism Underhill aptly explained, “Contemplation is the mystic’s medium. It is an extreme form of that withdrawal of attention from the external world and total dedication of the mind.... The price of this experience has been a stilling of that surface-mind, a calling in of all our scattered interests: an entire giving of ourselves to this one activity, without self-consciousness, without reflective thought. To reflect is always to distort.... He must call in his faculties by a deliberate exercise of the will, empty his mind of its swarm of images, its riot of thought. In mystical language he must ‘sink into his nothingness’: into that blank abiding place where busy, clever Reason cannot come. The whole of this process, this gathering up and turning ‘inwards’ of the powers of the self, this gazing into the ground of the soul, is that which is called Introversion.... Its method is the method of the mystic life, transcendence: a gradual elimination of sensible images, and bit by bit approximation of the contemplative self to reality, gradually producing within it those conditions in which union can take place. This entails a concentration, a turning inwards, of all those faculties which the normal self has been accustomed to turn outwards, and fritter upon the manifold illusions of daily life. It means, during the hours of introversion, a retreat from and refusal of the Many, in order that the mind may be able to

apprehend the One.”<sup>76</sup>

The subtle body (mind) operates not only by physical food, but by subtle food. So through the practice of yoga feed your mind with healthy thoughts and emotions and you will be much happier. Food for the Causal (Spiritual) Body includes practicing the four yogas for the purpose of realizing Brahman-God. One has to quiet the mind and go beneath surface consciousness to make contact with the Divine realm.

## 6. Utter the Name of the Lord

Indian: “Meditate on Brahman with the help of the syllable OM. Cross the fearful currents of the ocean of worldliness by means of the raft of Brahman-the sacred syllable OM” (Svet. Up.\* 2:8). “Uttering the sacred syllable OM and meditating upon me. Such a man reaches the highest goal” (BG\* 8:13; cf. Tait. Up. 1:8).

Old Testament: “Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord; and you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might. And these words which I command you this day shall be upon your heart; and you shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise. And you shall bind them as a sign upon your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. And you shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates” (Dt. 6:4-9). “Sing the glory of his name” (Ps. 66:2: cf. 5:11; 34:3; Rom. 10:13). New Testament: “When you pray, say: ‘Father, hallowed be thy name’” (Lk. 11:2). “For, every one who calls upon the name of the Lord will be saved” (Rom. 10:13). “Therefore I will praise thee among the Gentiles, and sing to thy name” (Rom. 15:9).

The Name of God. Old Testament references are so numerous; the citations given below are limited to the book of Psalms. The Lords name is to be: praised (Ps. 7:17; 9:2; 18:49; 61:8; 68:4; etc.), trusted in (Ps. 33:21), exalted (Ps. 34:3), revered (Ps. 61:5; 86:11; 102:15; 111:10), called upon (Ps. 80:18; 99:6; 105:1; 116:13, 17), sought (Ps. 83:16), given thanks to (Ps. 106:47; 122:4; 140:13), remembered (Ps. 119:55), and loved (Ps. 119:132). It is: a protector of people (Ps. 20:1), full of glory and to be glorified (Ps. 29:2; 66:2; 72:19; 86:9, 12; etc.), holy (Ps. 33:21; 103:1; 111:9; 145:21), good (Ps. 54:6), eternal (Ps. 72:17;

135:13), blessed and to be blest (Ps. 72:19; 96:2; 100:4; 113:2; 145:1, 21), a bringer of salvation (Ps. 79:9), a forgiver of sin (Ps. 79:9), great (Ps. 99:3), our helper (Ps. 124:8), and exalted (Ps. 148:13). In the *New Testament* demons were cast out by the power of his name (Mk. 9:38; Lk. 9:49), which is hallowed (Mt. 6:9; Lk. 11:2). Jesus will do what you ask in his name (Jn. 14:13-14). The name of the Lord Jesus Christ should be called upon (1 Cor. 1:2), glorified in you (2 Thes. 1:12), not blasphemed (Jam. 2:7) and believed in (1 Jn. 3:23). In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ we: are sanctified and justified by (1 Cor. 6:11), should bow our knee (Phil. 2:10), and speak all words and perform all deeds (Col. 3:17).

Vivekananda stated, “The following are helps to success in Yoga ... Repeating the *Vedas* and other Mantras, by which the Sattva material in the body is purified, is called study, Svadhyaya. There are three sorts of repetitions of these Mantras. One is called the verbal, another semi-verbal, and the third mental. The verbal or audible is the lowest, and the inaudible is the highest of all. The repetition which is loud is the verbal; the next one is where only the lips move, but no sound is heard. The inaudible repetition of the Mantra, accompanied with the thinking of its meaning, is called the ‘mental repetition,’ and is the highest.” “Repeating the names of God has wonderful power. Mantra is a special word, or sacred text, or name of God chosen by the Guru for repetition and reflection by the disciple. The disciple must concentrate on a personality for prayer and praise, and that is his Ishta. These words (Mantras) are not sounds of words but God Himself, and we have them within us. Think of Him, speak of Him.”<sup>77</sup>

Swami Shivananda (1854-1934) of the Ramakrishna Order recommended, “Repeat the name often. The repetition of his name will purify your body and mind, washing away all impurities.” “When one goes on repeating the name of the Chosen Deity with intense love, one becomes gradually filled with an ineffable bliss.”<sup>78</sup> “When this becomes a firm habit, it will continue even during sleep and generate a current of joy in the mind.... You should sit for japa with steadfastness at least twice a day—morning and evening—and repeat the mantra for a definite number of times. It should not be less than a thousand each time in your case.” “To repeat the name of the Lord over the rosary is good; repetition of the name on the fingers is better, but mental repetition of the name is the very best.” “The repetition of the Lord’s name must be practiced very

secretly so that no one knows anything about it.” “As you repeat the mantra of a Chosen Deity, think of His form as well; thus you can have both japa and meditation simultaneously.”<sup>79</sup>

Swami Brahmananda indicated, “The way of japam is the easiest path to follow. By constantly performing japam the mind can easily be made calm and steady, and finally it will lose itself in God. Therefore, I ask you to perform japam regularly and often and at the same time meditate on the Chosen Ideal. This combined practice brings quick success.” “The mantram is charged with spiritual power. The truth of this will be directly revealed to you as you practice”<sup>80</sup> “Practice japam unceasingly. Practice it with every breath. Practice it until it becomes your second nature; then you will find yourself chanting the name of God as you fall asleep and again as you awaken.”<sup>81</sup>

Concerning the practice of japam Swami Saradananda (1865-1927) of the Ramakrishna Order urged, “No special time and place are necessary to repeat the Lord’s name and worship him. You can repeat his name wherever you are.” “Mental repetition is the best. It will purify your mind and help you to keep your thoughts in God.... The name of the Lord you receive at the time of initiation is sacred to you. It is your mantra. You must not speak of it to anybody except your guru.... The repetition of the Divine name will bring into your mind holy associations, the blessed qualities of God, and take away the blemishes of the heart.... the mantra has the power to bring spiritual progress and ultimately liberation.... when the spiritual power is awakened, the mantra is seen in golden letters and sometimes is heard as clearly as a human voice.... Then the aspirant realizes God in and through the mantra.” “Regularity is very important in spiritual life. Therefore you must try to keep the same hours as far as possible.” It is best to do japa mentally neither moving the tongue nor the lips.” “By practice, a taste for repeating the Lord’s name will come and you will know peace and bliss.”<sup>82</sup>

Swami Adbhutananda (d. 1920) a monastic disciple of Sri Ramakrishna made these statements about japam, “The nature of the mind can be changed by chanting the name of the Lord. Gradually desires and doubts cease and the mind dissolves into its causality. Then there is none to think or imagine.... Practice japam and be charitable. If you can do this, you will find the Lord showering his grace upon you.... A bhakta meditates on the name and form of the Lord, while a jnani meditates on the identity



of the individual soul and Brahman. But whatever the object of meditation may be, eventually both aspirants will reach the same goal. When meditation deepens, both the name and form of the Lord and also the knowledge of the identity of the individual soul and Brahman disappear. That is certain. At that time, only a current of experience which is indescribable remains.... You people don't practice japam sincerely, so you always complain and make excuses. Look, if one makes a habit of repeating the holy name, the name itself will take hold of the mind.... Sri Ramakrishna used to say that before starting to chant the name of the Lord, one should salute the name. One should take refuge in the name of the Lord. The name and the named, that is, the Lord, are one. If one prays wholeheartedly to the name, one's prayer reaches the Lord.... Chant the name of the Lord every morning. First bathe and put on a clean cloth and then sit in the corner of a room or in a solitary place and think of God. Then you will find happiness in this life.”<sup>83</sup>

The philosophy of chanting Brahman's (God's) name is discussed by the Dutch professor Jan Gonda (1905-91), “The sabda or sound of a mantra is conceived as a spiritual sound, produced by the worshipper's mind, heard by the heart and understandable only by the initiated. Each being, in all states of existence, and each inanimate object possesses a bodily form attuned to a certain frequency of vibration. That is to say, there is associated with each organic creature (sub-human, human and super-human) and with each phenomenal object or element, a particular rate of vibration. If this be known and formulated as sound in a mantra and if it be used expertly it is considered capable of disintegrating the object with which it is in vibratory accord, or of impelling Deities to emit their Divine influence. To know the mantra of any Deity is therefore to know how to set up psychic communication with that Deity. A mantra is from this point of view a syllable or series of syllables, of the same frequency as the (usually invisible) being to which it appertains; by knowing it one is able to command the elements and phenomena of the universe. In employing mantras, one is therefore to concentrate one's mind upon the mystic process of the transmutation which is to result. Realization of a mantra is the union of the consciousness of the sadhaka [chanter] with that consciousness which manifests in the form of the mantra. It is this union which makes the mantra work.... The efficacy of mantras constituting their cardinal tenet, the spiritual background of their worship is primarily an

effort to awaken the power (consciousness) of the mantra in order to visualize the Deity from inside. Basing themselves on the belief that there is a natural connection between a name and the object so named, that there is an inseparable relationship between these—the Vishnuists going even so far as to consider the Deity and his name coincident or identical—they describe the mantras, which are full of potentiality, as living representatives of Deities. A mantra is therefore considered to be the rupa (form) of the Deity.”<sup>84</sup>

Sanjukta Gupta of Oxford University specified that according to the ancient Indian Vedic philosophy, “Each Deity has two forms, that which can be visualized and the sonic form, or mantra; the latter form is the closer to ultimate reality and is thus the more potent.” “All Hindu rituals are accompanied by mantras, whether or not they are uttered aloud. The length of a mantra can be anything from a single syllable to a whole hymn.... The Vedic mantras thus put us in touch with eternal reality; in fact, they emanate from the ground of reality. Their words are unchanging and so have a higher ontological status than the things to which they refer.” From a philosophical standpoint, sound and language precede the existence of the empirical world. The original mantras (sacred utterances) that are found in the *Vedas* are considered to be of an impersonal origin. “The syllable Om [pronounced Aum], to be pronounced at the beginning and end of a Vedic recitation, came to be regarded in early monistic thought as the symbol of the one reality.”<sup>85</sup>

A saint of the Russian Orthodox Church, Bishop Ignatius Brianchaninov (1807-67) recommended that attentive prayer should be performed using a rosary to keep count of the repetitions, with the eyes closed, in a dark room “to keep the mind from distraction and to assist it to concentrate in the heart,” and to sit in a restful position. Brianchaninov quoted Saint Seraphim of Sarov (1759-1833), “Those who have truly resolved to serve God must practice the remembrance of God and unceasing pray to the Lord Jesus Christ, saying with the mind: ‘Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner.’ By this practice, while guarding oneself from distraction and while maintaining peace of conscience, one can draw near to God and be united with Him.” “This prayer by holding the mind without dreaming, renders it inaccessible and immune to the appeals of the enemy, and daily leads it more and more into love and longing for God.”<sup>86</sup> In the

beginning, chanting the Prayer of Jesus may be dry and appear to produce no fruits. In time, “The patient and diligent worker will not fail to be satisfied and consoled; he will rejoice at an infinite abundance of spiritual fruits such as he can form no conception of in his carnal and natural state.” While the diligent worker continues in their practice, they can utter the prayer up to twelve thousand times per day. Continuously repeating this holy name in the depth of the heart, controls the mental waves of the mind, and causes the memory of the Lord Jesus to be the sole object of thought. Oral repetition of the prayer may even occur when one is asleep.<sup>87</sup>

Commenting on Brianchaninov’s ideas, Alexander d’Agapeyeff writes, “The Jesus Prayer is first repeated aloud again and again. This may be looked upon as the conditioning of the body. It is to gain an external habit of saying the prayer, to make the prayer a continuous background of one’s life. When this has been practiced for some time the next step is taken, which is to say the prayer silently, and this might be looked upon as the conditioning of the mind. The prayer must no longer be repeated by the lips but must be concentrated on as it is being thought.... The third step, when complete concentration has been attained, is then taken. The direct link is created between the body and spirit and the ‘Divine intermediary’ [of] the soul is dispensed with. Now the prayer enters the heart and lives itself with every heart beat.”<sup>88</sup>

These ideas were also expressed by the saintly Russian mystic Bishop Theophan the Recluse (1815-91), “Standing with consciousness and attention in the heart, cry out unceasingly, ‘Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy upon me,’ without having in your mind any visual concept or image, believing that the Lord sees you and listens to you.... The essential part is to dwell in God, and this walking before God means that you live with the conviction ever before your consciousness that God is in you, as he is in everything: you live in the firm assurance that he sees all that is within you, knowing you better than you know yourself. This awareness of the eye of God looking at your inner being must not be accompanied by any visual concept, but must be confined to a simple conviction or feeling.”<sup>89</sup>

For Catholics vocal prayer is private when said alone, public or communal when recited in a group. “The public prayer of the Church is called liturgical prayer and is found in liturgical actions, namely in the Mass,

the Sacraments, the Divine Office, the sacramentals, and benediction of the Blessed Sacrament.”<sup>90</sup> “Hail Mary” is an ancient prayer of the Catholic Church often accompanied by the use of the rosary. The prayer is, “Hail, Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee, blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus. Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of our death. Amen.”<sup>91</sup>

The relatively short prescribed phrases made during a ritualistic ceremony of any religion can be thought of as a mantra, meaning sacred words or a phrase of spiritual significance.

## 7. Image Worship

It was pointed out by Swami Shivananda, “Whatever is done with devotion pleases the Lord. Don't you see how people fashion images of Shiva with clay and worship them, thereby gaining in faith and devotion and attaining enlightenment and liberation? Although it is only a clay image of Shiva, if it is worshipped with love and devotion, the Lord is pleased and accepts the worship. What is made of inert clay becomes conscious and living. The essence of everything is devotion. Wherever there is devotion, know for certain that the grace of the Lord is there. External worship and things of that sort are just means to an end.” “God is in the images in a special sense. When one makes sufficient progress Godwards, one will see that God is there and even accepts our offerings of food through rays of light touching what is offered. This has been seen by Sri Guru Maharaj [Swami Brahmananda] and the Holy Mother.”<sup>92</sup>

Swami Vivekananda (1863-1902) taught that all religions utilize external physical images to represent the Divine. For many people it is necessary to have concrete symbols to worship the abstract, since we cannot think of a thing without a mental image of it in our mind. “All these are material images, and so long as you cannot conceive of the abstract as abstract, of the ideal as the ideal, you will have to resort to these forms, these material images.” “Ritual gives to that philosophy a still more concrete form, so that every one may grasp it--ritual is in fact concretised philosophy.” “My brethren, we can no more think about anything without a mental image than we can live without breathing. By the law of association, the material image calls up the mental idea and *vice versa*. This is why the Hindu uses an external symbol when he worships. He will tell you, it helps

to keep his mind fixed on the Being to whom he prays. He knows as well as you do that the image is not God, is not omnipresent.” In a letter of November 1895 he wrote an engineer and grain trader, “want to know the rituals of my creed! This opened my eyes. The world in general must have some form. In fact, in the ordinary sense religion is philosophy concretised through rituals and symbols. It is absolutely necessary to form some ritual and have a Church. That is to say, we must fix on some ritual as fast as we can.”<sup>93</sup> Religious images are like the words of the scriptures, which are vehicles through which God is venerated. The subjective state is reached through the objective. Sacred images call up thoughts of holiness, purity, and truth in the mind of the spiritual aspirant. Therefore, worship of images can produce the highest levels of spirituality, morality, and love. Through image worship, one can realize their own Divine nature and grasp the higher spiritual truths. “It is also a significant fact that spiritual giants have been produced only in those systems of religion where there is an exuberant growth of rich mythology and ritualism.” “This universe is a symbol, in and through which we are trying to grasp the thing signified, which is beyond and behind.”<sup>94</sup> “Some require an image outside, others one inside the brain. The man who puts it inside says, ‘I am a superior man. When it is inside it is all right; when it is outside, it is idolatry, I will fight it.’” “We may worship anything by seeing God in it, if we can forget the idol and see God there. We must not project any image upon God. But we may fill any image with that Life which is God. Only forget the image, and you are right enough—for ‘Out of Him comes everything.’ He is everything. We may worship a picture as God, but not God as the picture. God in the picture is right, but the picture as God is wrong. God in the image is perfectly right.”<sup>95</sup> Esteeming a religious image for the purpose of procuring material benefits is a form of idolatry that produces karmic fruits. It does not bring about the love of God or liberation-salvation.<sup>96</sup>

The traditional historical Tantric view was explained by Sir John Woodroffe (1865-1936), as to how the living presence of the Deity as represented in a religious image is evoked. “Mind as nearly as it can be to that of the Devata [Deity], is projected on to the vital and physical planes. By such projection, lines of mentative energy (or substance-energy) are made to impinge upon the matter of the Image worshiped. These lines or streams of mentative and vital substance-energy envelop the matter of the Image, create round about it an aura of radiant energy which so acts

upon the material crust of the idol that, whilst remaining apparently as matter to the senses, it becomes dematerialized for the worshiper in this sense that Consciousness, Mind and Vital Force ordinarily latent or folded up in it (from the pragmatic standpoint), become evoked, awakened and patent. This is what Pranapratishta, or Life giving rite means ... What the projective action of the worshiper does is to cast the radiant energy of his own inner being over the matter of the Image thereby evoking, unfolding, waking up, adjusting the radiant stuff and energy folded up in it. This is, so to say, piercing the crust of Matter, evoking Consciousness, Life and Mind in it, and bringing the whole into rapport with the Consciousness and Mind of the worshiper.”<sup>97</sup>

Woodroffe was a member of the Calcutta High Court (1904-22) and its Chief Justice beginning in 1915. After returning to England, he became a Reader in Indian law at the University of Oxford (1923-30). He was initiated into Tantra by an Indian expert. Woodroffe (sometimes writing under the pseudonym of Arthur Avalon) translated from Sanskrit important Tantric texts, adding his own profound commentaries and introductions (1913-22). In addition, he brought out several scholarly manuscripts explaining the philosophy underlying the Indian Tantric texts with emphasis on the kundalini, chakras, and other yogic subjects. He contributed nine publications to the *Prabuddha Bharata* between 1915 and 1928, and an additional thirty-six in the *Vedanta Kesari* during 1916 to 1929. For a time Woodroffe was the President of the Vivekananda Society of Calcutta, where he delivered a series of lectures during the years 1917-18. He wrote, “The qualities I most admire in Vivekananda are his activity, manliness and courage.... His was the attitude of a man. He spoke up and acted. For this, all must honour him, who, whatever be their own religious beliefs, value sincerity, truth and courage, which are the badges of every noble character.”<sup>98</sup>

In the first stage the religious image is a symbol of Brahman-God, which aids in concentration and visualization of the Deity; next it is a repository of spiritual power; and finally it is the dwelling place where the Lord manifests His Divine presence. Projectionist theories used by atheists, assume that religious devotees project their own inner nature onto their (false) conception of a Divine reality. Conversely, Tantra teaches that the spiritual energy of the worshiper’s inner self is projected into the material image, which in turn awakens the Divine consciousness that is latent in the

image. It is a meeting place of the consciousness of the worshiper that is projected into the image and the Deity who has entered into it in subtle body form.

Plotinus (c. 205-70) suggests an interesting analogy whereby the religious image is “like a mirror able to catch [the reflection of] a form. In that way the image is sympathetic with the Deity and is able to receive a portion of it.”<sup>99</sup>

For Nicephorus (758-829) the Patriarch of Constantinople a sacred image is “a likeness of an archetype, having impressed upon it the form of what it represents by similarity, differing from it only by the difference of essence in accordance with the materials [of which they are made]; or an imitation and similitude of the archetype, differing [from it] in essence and substance.... The image of Christ is more deserving of honor and reverence than the symbol of the cross.” There is not an identity of essence, but a likeness between the image and its archetype. Physical images bear a resemblance in sight to what they symbolize, while sound-word images are conveyed indirectly through hearing and require reflecting on what they signify.<sup>100</sup>

Thomas Aquinas (1225-74) observed that corporeal and sensible images are physical objects used as signs to symbolize the higher spiritual reality, for the purpose of uniting the soul with God. First revere God through external images, then internally through the intellect, and finally contemplate the Essence of God. “The worship of religion is paid to images, not as considered in themselves, nor as things, but as images leading us to God incarnate. Now movement to an image as image does not stop at the image, but goes on to the thing it represents.” “In the Divine worship it is necessary to make use of corporeal things, that man's mind may be aroused thereby, as by signs, to the spiritual acts by means of which he is united to God. Therefore the internal acts of religion take precedence of the others and belong to religion essentially, while its external acts are secondary, and subordinate to the internal acts.”<sup>101</sup>

In modern times Paul Tillich (1886-1965) disclosed, “The symbol [such as a religious image] grows and dies according to the correlation between that which is symbolized and the persons who receive it as a symbol. Therefore, the religious symbol, the symbol which points to the Divine, can be a true symbol only if it participates in the power of the Divine to which it points.”<sup>102</sup> Religious symbols “not only open up

dimensions and elements of reality which otherwise would remain unapproachable but also unlock dimensions and elements of our soul which correspond to the dimensions and elements of reality.”<sup>103</sup> By pointing beyond itself to the heavenly realm, it is a vehicle leading to a concrete awareness of God. A genuine religious symbol is translucent to the holy, negating itself in its limited concreteness and expressing ultimate concern. From a pragmatic standpoint, images and symbols are valuable if they foster a genuine mystical experience, evoke a reply, and move a worshiper to action. When they fail to produce a response, the religious symbol is dead. There is a danger of identifying the transparentness of an image, with the force of the Divine that operates through the image, but is not identical with it. “All idolatry is nothing else than the absolutizing of symbols of the Holy, and making them identical with the Holy itself.”<sup>104</sup> What is conditioned, partial, and finite is mistakenly elevated to the level of the unconditional, universal, and infinite.<sup>105</sup>

For more on this subject see: *Sri Ramakrishna and Western Thought*, Ch. X. Religious Practices, Section 2. Image Worship.<sup>106</sup>

## 8. Holy Places of Worship

Indian: “Assemble, speak together: let your minds be all of one accord ... The place is common, common the assembly, common the mind, so be their thought united.... be your minds of one accord” (RV 10:191.2-4; cf. AV 6:64). “All jealousies have vanished in the society of the Saints. All are my friends now, there being no enemy or stranger” (Sikhism, Adi Granth, Karara, M:5).

New Testament: “Through the church the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known” (Eph. 3:10; cf. 2 Cor. 8:1; 1 Tim. 3:15). “Christ is the head of the church, his body, and is himself its Savior.... Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her ... we are members of his body” (Eph. 5:23, 25, 30).

Vivekananda denoted that the purpose of a Temple as a place of worship is to create a pious atmosphere of holy spiritual vibrations. “Every day of our lives we throw out a mass of good or evil, and everywhere we go the atmosphere is full of these materials. That is how there came to the human mind, unconsciously, the idea of building temples and churches.



Why should man build churches in which to worship God? Why not worship Him anywhere? Even if he did not know the reason, man found that the place where people worshipped God became full of good Tanmatras [vibrations]. Every day people go there, and the more they go the holier they get, and the holier that place becomes. If any man who has not much Sattva [purity, goodness, joy] in him goes there, the place will influence him and arouse his Sattva quality. Here, therefore, is the significance of all temples and holy places, but you must remember that their holiness depends on holy people congregating there. The difficulty with man is that he forgets the original meaning, and puts the cart before the horse. It was men who made these places holy, and then the effect became the cause and made men holy. If the wicked only were to go there, it would become as bad as any other place. It is not the building, but the people that make a church.”<sup>107</sup> “Have a room for this practice alone. Do not sleep in that room, it must be kept holy. You must not enter the room until you have bathed, and are perfectly clean in body and mind. Place flowers in that room always; they are the best surroundings for a Yogi; also pictures that are pleasing. Burn incense morning and evening. Have no quarrelling, nor anger, nor unholy thought in that room. Only allow those persons to enter it who are of the same thought as you. Then gradually there will be an atmosphere of holiness in the room, so that when you are miserable, sorrowful, doubtful, or your mind is disturbed, the very fact of entering that room will make you calm. This was the idea of the temple and the church, and in some temples and churches you will find it even now, but in the majority of them the very idea has been lost. The idea is that by keeping holy vibrations there the place becomes and remains illumined.”<sup>108</sup>

Swami Prabhavananda (1893-1976) informed his congregation in Southern California that in Vrindavan the holy city of Lord Krishna, the atmosphere is charged with joy and frivolity. It is easy to think of God while staying there. Our mind is like an open door that is receptive to various positive and negative thought forms. Holy places create a spiritual atmosphere that positively affects those people who are receptive to them. Not everyone is attuned to those auspicious vibrations.<sup>109</sup>

Incense drives off ghosts and impure spirits.

For more on this subject see: *Sri Ramakrishna and Western Thought*, Ch. VIII. The Religious Order and Ritual, Section 1. Holy Places of Worship.<sup>110</sup>

## 9. Be Instructed by a Teacher (Guru)

Indian: “Only knowledge which is learnt from a teacher leads to the highest good” (Ch. Up. 4:9.3; cf. 6:14.2; Kat. Up. 1:2.7-9). “Approach a guru who is well versed in the *Vedas* and always devoted to Brahman. To that pupil who has duly approached him ... the wise teacher should indeed rightly impart the Knowledge of Brahman” (Mun. Up. 1:2.12-13; cf. Svet. Up. 6:23; cf. BG 4:34; 13:25). “Of him who gives natural birth and him who gives (the knowledge of) the *Veda*, the giver of the *Veda* is the more venerable father” (LM 2:146; cf. 2:144, 148, 200-01, 233-34; 4:162; 12:83).

Old and New Testament: “And Joshua the son of Nun was full of the spirit of wisdom, for Moses had laid his hands upon him” (Dt. 34:9; cf. Jn. 20:22-23). “He who walks with wise men become wise” (Prov. 13:20; cf. Mt. 5:14-16; 1 Cor. 4:15-16). “Stand thou in the assembly of the elders, and whoso is wise, cleave unto him. Desire to hear every discourse, and let not a wise proverb escape thee. Look for him who is wise, and seek him out earnestly, and let thy foot wear out his threshold” (Sirach 6:34-36; cf. Acts 8:30-31).

Swami Vivekananda clarifies, “This quickening impulse cannot be derived from books. The soul can only receive impulses from another soul, and from nothing else.” “These sacred mysterious words we all recognize and know, and yet if we merely read them in books, they have no effect on us. To be effective, they must be charged with spirit, touched and used by one who has himself been touched by the Spirit of God and who now lives. It is only he who can set the current in motion. The ‘laying on of hands’ is the continuation of that current which was set in motion by Christ. The one who has the power of transmitting this current is called a Guru.”<sup>111</sup> “The person from whose soul such impulse comes is called the Guru—the teacher; and the person to whose soul the impulse is conveyed is called the Shishya—the student. To convey such an impulse to any soul, in the first place, the soul from which it proceeds must possess the power of transmitting it, as it were to another; and in the second place, the soul to which it is transmitted must be fit to receive it. The seed must be a living seed, and the field must be ready ploughed; and when both these

conditions are fulfilled, a wonderful growth of genuine religion takes place.... it is a mysterious law of nature that as soon as the field is ready, the seed must and does come; as soon as the soul earnestly desires to have religion, the transmitter of the religious force must and does appear to help that soul.”<sup>112</sup> “Initiation by the Guru is necessary. Why? Because it is the bringing of yourself into connection with that great source of power which has been handed down through generations from one Guru to another, in uninterrupted succession. The devotee must seek and accept the Guru or spiritual preceptor as his counselor, philosopher, friend, and guide. In short, the Guru is the sine qua non of progress in the path of spirituality.”<sup>113</sup>

The Swami cautioned that a spiritual aspirant should be very careful in selecting a qualified spiritual guide. “In regard to the teacher, we must see that he knows the spirit of the scriptures.... It is the knowledge of the *spirit* of the scriptures alone that constitutes the true religious teacher.... The second condition necessary in the teacher is sinlessness.... He must be perfectly pure, and then alone comes the value of his words, because he is only then the true ‘transmitter.’ What can he transmit if he has not spiritual power in himself? There must be the worthy vibration of spirituality in the mind of the teacher, so that it may be sympathetically conveyed to the mind of the taught.... The third condition is in regard to the motive. The teacher must not teach with any ulterior selfish motive—for money, name, or fame; his work must be simply out of love, out of pure love for mankind at large. The only medium through which spiritual force can be transmitted is love.... When you see that in your teacher these conditions are all fulfilled, you are safe.... Without faith, humility, submission, and veneration in our hearts towards our religious teacher, there cannot be any growth of religion in us; and it is a significant fact that, where this kind of relation between the teacher and the taught prevails, there alone gigantic spiritual men are growing.”<sup>114</sup>

His brother monastic disciple Swami Brahmananda told his followers, “Keep association with the holy. Go to one who knows the path, learn about the path, and walk on the path. Then alone you will reach your destination some day. Then alone will arise faith and devotion.... The aid of the guru is very necessary. He helps the disciple to choose his own particular Ideal, according to his temperament, and then gives the mantra best suited to the attainment of concentration on that Ideal.... Not all men

know what is best for them; therefore they should seek the society of holy men. Unless man spends some time in solitude or in the company of the holy, he cannot understand his own mind.... Do you know why you should seek the society of holy men? Their experiences are a great help to a spiritual aspirant. When you visit a strange place, if you have the help of a reliable guide you will quickly see all that is worth seeing there; also he will save you from the dangers and difficulties into which a stranger is likely to fall. Similarly, from the company of advanced souls you will gather many valuable hints, and your efforts will be simplified.... For in their company doubts are removed and pure thoughts are awakened. No scriptures or books can create such pure impressions or transform a man's life as much as contact with an enlightened soul."<sup>115</sup>

Brahmananda continues, "If a man has faith in the words of his guru and follows them, then all his doubts and troubles vanish. If a man has faith in the words of his guru, God will meet all of his wants. Holding him by the hand, He will lead him on the right path.... Blessed are those who receive the grace of an illumined guru. The guru shows the way to the other shore, and removes all the obstacles. Have intense faith in the words of the guru, and follow his precepts faithfully. Thus will the impurities of the mind be washed away and the light of knowledge dawn. Enlightenment comes quickly to one who has faith in the guru.... But no man can free himself from the bonds of worldliness if he follows an ignorant teacher. There is suffering for both the disciple and the teacher.... After leaving the body the true guru lives on in the invisible realm; sometimes he reveals himself to his disciples, but at all times he helps and guides them, until they, too, attain illumination."<sup>116</sup> "When the mind has been purified by prayer and contemplation, it will direct you from within. Even in your daily duties, the inner guru will guide you and will continue to help you until the goal is reached."<sup>117</sup>

Swami Prabhavananda mentioned, "A great spiritual teacher gathers pure souls around him and teaches them, not only by word of mouth, but by actual transmission of spirituality. He does not simply give them self-confidence; he actually illumines the hearts of his disciples." If the spiritual instructor is enlightened and teaches from their inner spiritual realization, it is not at all necessary for them to have academic learning. A holy person lights the path that the disciple should follow. They must inspire confidence in their devotees, so that they can unfold the latent divinity

within themselves and realize their spiritual potential. Superior gurus know the spiritual potential of their various disciples that will manifest in the future. It is a great blessing to dedicate one's life to such an individual. They can transmit spiritual power and illumine the heart of their followers, and can transform a sinner into a holy person. Spending only five minutes with a man of God can greatly alter a person's life for the better. A superior teacher places the devotee at the feet of the Lord who in turn takes responsibility for the aspirant. Live in the society of the holy, serve them with humility and associate with saintly devotees.<sup>118</sup>

The spiritual power of Swami Brahmananda worked through Swami Prabhavananda and that was why he was so successful in the United States. Swamis Swahananda and Sarvadevananda were chosen to become his successors because they were the best qualified monastics for the job.

Joseph Trigg explained Clement of Alexandria's (c. 150/160-213/220) position on this matter. "Those who are symbolically rich in unruly passions should give to the poor, that is they should entrust themselves to a pastoral adviser who could help them disburden themselves of passions. The person whom they should seek for this delicate task is the genuine Gnostic, the elect of the elect of God. Finding such a person will not necessarily be easy since the genuine Gnostic will be outwardly quite ordinary. Once they have found and tested the Gnostic though, they should put themselves entirely in that person's hands. The Gnostic deserves an implicit trust and obedience that otherwise only God would deserve because the Gnostic participates, by good deeds, in God's saving activity, and has unmatched spiritual insight. By confessing sins to the Gnostic and taking that person's advice, those in need of healing will eventually be liberated from the passions that are the root cause of their sins.... Genuine Gnostics have a responsibility, according to Clement, 'to impart to others the hidden things of truth' as teachers and spiritual guides. This is their highest calling, as it is in their dealings with others that Gnostics have opportunity to imitate God's benevolence. Their knowledge of God obtained through the study of the *Bible* and purity of life obtained through self-discipline make Gnostics, in this role, holy priests of God and successors to the Apostles, Such qualities also make them, ordained or not, genuine Deacons and Presbyters. Because God gives them the insight

to meet each person's needs appropriately, Gnostics can foster spiritual healing or, put differently, forgive sins.”<sup>119</sup>

Clements successor Origen (c. 185-254) a Greek Christian philosopher at the Alexandrian School in Egypt remarked that a few people who belong to the moral and intellectual elite have a privilege access to God, which deep insight into the sacred scriptures has provided them. These charismatic authorities are the mediators of God’s word to the larger religious community. Few Bishops and Presbyters meet these lofty standards. Not the Ecclesiastical clergy who receive worldly honor, but the spiritual elite are the true clergy of the church. Only a saintly individual inspired by the Holy Spirit, the genuine source and agent of sanctification, has the power to forgive sin, and not those who hold high-ranking positions in the church.<sup>120</sup>

In the following quotation Thomas Aquinas formulated, “There is a twofold grace: one whereby man himself is united to God, and this is called ‘sanctifying grace’, the other is that whereby one man cooperates with another in leading him to God, and this gift is called ‘gratuitous grace’, since it is bestowed on a man beyond the capability of nature, and beyond the merit of the person.... Gratuitous grace is ordained to this, viz. that a man may help another to be led to God. Now no man can help in this by moving interiorly (for this belongs to God alone), but only exteriorly by teaching or persuading. Hence gratuitous grace embraces whatever a man needs in order to instruct another in Divine things which are above reason. Now for this three things are required: first, a man must possess the fullness of knowledge of Divine things, so as to be capable of teaching others. Secondly, he must be able to confirm or prove what he says, otherwise his words would have no weight. Thirdly, he must be capable of fittingly presenting to his hearers what he knows.”<sup>121</sup>

There is the idea that it is best if spiritual knowledge comes from the lips of a Holy Man. Only after this occurs will the aspirant be able to spiritually understand the scriptures by reading them. This is why it is important to get the blessings of a Holy Man by faithfully following his teachings. Through acquaintance with a reliable guru we come to recognize and identify with virtuous properties such as love, forgiveness, self-sacrifice, etc. Internalization of moral standards is due to interaction with suitable role models who exemplify these principles.

Apostolic Succession involves the transmission of spiritual power from one leader to another, as does the process from a guru to a superior disciple who in turn later becomes a guru. See: *Swami Vivekananda and Others on Religious Philosophy*, X. Avatar-Divine Incarnation, Section 4. Their Legacy: A. Apostolic Succession.<sup>122</sup>

One can think of the Chosen Ideal (Ishta Devata; that aspect of divinity that you worship) and guru as a Reference Individual and to some extent as a Role Model (a term credited to Sociologist Robert K. Merton). A reference individual is an individual “with whom a person identifies and on whose behavior he patterns his own behavior in a variety of situations and roles.” The behavior of the reference individual provides a standard used by the other person in determining the appropriate attitudes and actions to be performed. “Many of the values, norms, and attitudes of the reference individual are internalized by the identifying person.” An individual’s Chosen Ideal and guru whom he/she emulate, have a considerable impact on the devotee’s life. The guru provides the method and indicates the attainable goal that the devotee is aspiring for. The reference individual differs from a role model “in that the internalization of the standards of behavior and attitudes” of the “reference individual is more comprehensive, including a wide range of roles”; whereas identification with a “role model is limited to one or a very few roles.”<sup>123</sup>

For more on this subject see: *Sri Ramakrishna and Western Thought*, Ch. VIII. The Religious Order and Ritual, Section 4. Be Instructed by a Teacher (Guru).<sup>124</sup>

## Endnotes

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<sup>1</sup> CW, I:257. In this book the word Divine is capitalized to show reverence.

<sup>2</sup> Swami Lokeshwarananda, ed., *Swami Vivekananda A Hundred Years Since Chicago* (Belur: Ramakrishna Math and Ramakrishna Mission 1994), p. 517.

<sup>3</sup> *Fifty Eastern Thinkers* (London: Routledge, 2000), pp. 146-47 on GBS.

<sup>4</sup> CW, I:360.

<sup>5</sup> Peter Moore, “Recent Studies in Mysticism,” *Religion* (1973-3), p. 146.

<sup>6</sup> Life, I, p. 19.

<sup>7</sup> Karel Werner, *Yoga and Indian Philosophy* (Motilal Banarsidass, 1977, 1998), pp. 157-58 on GBS; Web: [www.soas.ac.uk/staff36441.php](http://www.soas.ac.uk/staff36441.php); WARHD, p. 576.

<sup>8</sup> Sarah Strauss, "The Master's Narrative," *Journal of Folklore Research* (May-Dec. 2002), p. 220.

<sup>9</sup> Elizabeth De Michelis, *A History of Modern Yoga* (London: Continuum, 2004), pp. 3-4, 132, 127-28.

<sup>10</sup> Catherine Albanese, *A Republic of Mind and Spirit* (New Haven: Yale University, 2007), p. 357.

<sup>11</sup> CW, V:104.

<sup>12</sup> *Life*, II, p. 124.

<sup>13</sup> CW, I:134.

<sup>14</sup> CW, V:217; *Vivekananda as the Turning Point*, ed. Swami Shuddhidananda (Kolkata: Advaita Ashrama, 2013), pp. 588-89.

<sup>15</sup> CW, I:195-313.

<sup>16</sup> *Life*, II, pp. 60-61, WARHD, pp. 251-52.

<sup>17</sup> PB (Oct. 1994), pp. 414-15; WARHD, p. 593.

<sup>18</sup> Reminiscences, pp. 249-50; WARHD, p. 308.

<sup>19</sup> BRMIC (Feb. 1986), pp. 51-53; Tathagatananda, pp. 523-24; WARHD, p. 542.

<sup>20</sup> Burke, VI, pp. 286-87, 325, 327-28, 331-32, 346-47, 366; PB (Mar. 1986), pp. 129-35; WARHD, pp. 441-42.

<sup>21</sup> PB (May 1917), pp. 90-91.

<sup>22</sup> Sidney Spencer, "Swami Vivekananda on the Harmony of Religions," VFEW (Sept-Oct. 1963), pp. 205-06; reprinted in PB (Dec. 1964), pp. 392-93; WARHD, pp. 569-70.

<sup>23</sup> Ghanananda, p. 181.

<sup>24</sup> Marie Louise Burke, "Science, Religion, and Swami Vivekananda-II," PB (April 1979), p. 173.

<sup>25</sup> Web: <http://media.yogajournal.com/wp-content/uploads/2016YIAS-Release-Final.pdf>; Web: <http://media.yogajournal.com/wp-content/uploads/2016-Yoga-in-America-Study-Comprehensive-RESULTS.pdf>; Web: <https://nccih.nih.gov/research/statistics/NHIS/mind-body/meditation>; Web: [en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yoga](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yoga)

<sup>26</sup> Web: [www.thehindu.com/news/international/Revealed-Obama-always-carries-Hanuman-statue-in-pocket/article14001552.ece](http://www.thehindu.com/news/international/Revealed-Obama-always-carries-Hanuman-statue-in-pocket/article14001552.ece); <https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=HYa8v3P5clo>

<sup>27</sup> Web: <http://www.badyogi.com/blog/praise-hillary-clintons-yoga/>; <https://www.insider.com/how-does-ivanka-trump-stay-in-shape-exercise-diet-2018-8>

<sup>28</sup> CW, I:169-70; VI:130; VIII:46.

<sup>29</sup> Gopal Stavig, "Swami Vivekananda and Sigmund Freud on the Unconscious Mind," *BRMIC* (June 2015), p. 294.

<sup>30</sup> CW, I:129-31.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, I:157.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, I:164-65.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, I:181, 183, 185, 257; II:35.



<sup>34</sup> Ibid., II:466; I:360-61; cf., I;506; II;265.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid., I:250, 504; II:13.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid., I:132.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid., I:147-48, 150-52.

<sup>38</sup> Web: [en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Psychology\\_of\\_religion](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Psychology_of_religion)

<sup>39</sup> WARHD, p. 428.

<sup>40</sup> WARHD, pp. 128-30, 359.

<sup>41</sup> Richard King, *Orientalism and Religion* (London: Routledge, 1999), pp. 21-23, 157.

<sup>42</sup> WARHD, pp. 423-24, 428.

<sup>43</sup> Tathagatananda, p. 416; E. Taylor, "Swami Vivekananda and William James," PB (Sept. 1986), pp. 383-84; WARHD, pp. 429-30, 632-33.

<sup>44</sup> WARHD, p. 806; Web:

[www.clarku.edu/micro/freudcentennial/history/1909psych.cfm](http://www.clarku.edu/micro/freudcentennial/history/1909psych.cfm).

<sup>45</sup> Web: [En.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sociology\\_of\\_Religion](http://En.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sociology_of_Religion)

<sup>46</sup> CW, I:415.

<sup>47</sup> CW, IV:34.

<sup>48</sup> CW, III:253; This and the prior references is in, Anantanand Rambachan, "Where Words Fail: The limits of Scriptural Authority in the Hermeneutics of a Contemporary Advaitin," *Philosophy East and West* (Oct. 1987), pp. 363-67.

<sup>49</sup> CW, I:150, 183; II:162.

<sup>50</sup> Web: [www.focuspress.org/2018/01/06/into-the-light](http://www.focuspress.org/2018/01/06/into-the-light)

<sup>51</sup> Life, I, pp. 60, 77. A good portion of this section appeared in an article by G. Stavig in the PB (Jan. 2019), pp. 202-13.

<sup>52</sup> Most Biblical quotations cited are from *The Holy Bible Revised Standard Version* (hereafter HB) (New York: Thomas Nelson & Sons, 1952). To create a list of parallel Indian-Christian scriptural passages used in this book the most used sources were: F. Lorinser, *Die Bhagavad-Gita* (Breslau: G. Porsch, 1869), pp. 273-85; Adolf Kaegi, *The Rigveda* (Boston: Ginn and Co., 1886), pp. 197-98; E. Washburn Hopkins, *India Old and New* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1901), pp. 149-57; George Haas, "Recurrent and Parallel Passages in the Principal *Upanishads* and the *Bhagavad Gita*," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 42 (1922), pp. 1-43; Wade Hatcher, ed., *The Bhagavad Gita and the Bible* (Seattle: Peanut Butter Publishing, 1992); Andrew Wilson, ed., *World Scripture* (St. Paul: Paragon House, 1995).

<sup>53</sup> CW, V:253.

<sup>54</sup> CW, VIII:253-54.

<sup>55</sup> CW, I:186-87.

<sup>56</sup> Prabhavananda2, p. 83.

<sup>57</sup> Christopher Isherwood, ed., *Vedanta for the Western World* (New York: Viking Press, 1960), p. 179.

<sup>58</sup> Swami Swahananda, *Meditation and Other Spiritual Disciplines* (Calcutta: Advaita Ashrama, 1997), p. 34.

<sup>59</sup> Swahananda (1997), p. 39.

<sup>60</sup> Swahananda (1997), pp. 33-42.

<sup>61</sup> Clement of Alexandria, "On Spiritual Perfection," in Oulton, John and Henry Chadwick, *Alexandrian Christianity* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1954), pp. 117-18.

<sup>62</sup> Clement of Alexandria (1954), pp. 117-24, 139-40.

<sup>63</sup> Isidore Singer, ed., *The Jewish Encyclopedia* (12 vols.; New York: Funk and Wagnalls, 1901-16), II, pp. 384-85; VI, pp. 252-53.

<sup>64</sup> *History of Science and Philosophy of Science: A Philosophical Perspective*, ed. Pradip Sengupta (Delhi: Longman, 2012), pp. 57-60.

<sup>65</sup> Anthony Wilhelm, *Christ Among Us* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1985), pp. 244-49.

<sup>66</sup> NCE, I, p. 141.

<sup>67</sup> Gordon Wakefield, ed., *The Westminster Dictionary of Christian Spirituality* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1983), pp. 307-13.

<sup>68</sup> Gallup Poll, *Religion in America* (Princeton: Princeton Research Center, June/July, 1982), p. 107.

<sup>69</sup> *The Cambridge Handbook of Consciousness*, eds. P. Zelazo, et al. (Cambridge University Press, 2007), p. 520.

<sup>70</sup> James F. Harris, "An Empirical Understanding of Eternity," *International Journal for the Philosophy of Religion* (1987), pp. 165-83.

<sup>71</sup> CW, I:202.

<sup>72</sup> Prabhavananda3, pp. 166, 192-93, 219; Tipple, p. 394.

<sup>73</sup> Prabhavananda3, pp. 229, 247, 250-51, 255, 259; Tipple, p. 394.

<sup>74</sup> GTP, III, sect.51.

<sup>75</sup> WARHD, p. 360.

<sup>76</sup> Evelyn Underhill, *Mysticism* (New York: Meridian Books, 1910, 1960), pp. 299, 302-03, 307.

<sup>77</sup> CW, I:190; VI:90.

<sup>78</sup> Shivananda , pp. 82, 161.

<sup>79</sup> Shivananda, pp. 13, 88, 162-63; Tipple, pp. 249-51, 304-05.

<sup>80</sup> Prabhavananda3, pp. 234, 264.

<sup>81</sup> Prabhavananda3, p. 236; Tipple, pp. 247-48, 303-04.

<sup>82</sup> Swami Aseshananda, *Glimpses of a Great Soul* (Hollywood, CA 90068: Vedanta Press, 1982), pp. 115, 126-28, 174, 254; Tipple, pp. 253-55, 305-06.

<sup>83</sup> Tipple, pp. 253, 332, 418; *Swami Adbhutananda*, ed., Swami Chetanananda (St. Louis: Vedanta Society, 1980), pp. 109, 122, 134, 138, 161.

<sup>84</sup> J. Gonda, "The Indian Mantra," *Oriens* 16 (1963), pp. 275-76, 280-81. This subject is covered in more detail in the unpublished, Gopal Stavig, "Indian and Western Interpreters of the *New Testament* and *Bhagavad Gita*," Ch. XIII, section 3. Utter the Name of the Lord.

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- <sup>85</sup> Mircea Eliade, ed., *Encyclopedia of Religion* (16 vols.; New York: Macmillan, 1987), IX, pp. 176-77.
- <sup>86</sup> Ignatius Brianchaninov, *On the Prayers of Jesus* (London: John M Watkins, 1965), pp. 58, 79, 88-89.
- <sup>87</sup> Brianchaninov (1965), pp. 35, 73.
- <sup>88</sup> Brianchaninov (1965), p. 8.
- <sup>89</sup> Kallistos Ware, "The Jesus Prayer of St Gregory of Sinai," *Eastern Churches Review* 4 (1972), pp. 17-18.
- <sup>90</sup> NCE, XI, p. 677.
- <sup>91</sup> Wilhelm (1985), p. 81.
- <sup>92</sup> Shivananda, p. 73; Tipple, pp. 620-21.
- <sup>93</sup> CW, II:40; I:72, 16; VIII:356 (October 1895).
- <sup>94</sup> CW, III:44; II:39.
- <sup>95</sup> CW, IV:36, 47.
- <sup>96</sup> CW, II:39-40; III:44, 60-62.
- <sup>97</sup> Sir John Woodroffe, *Mahamaya* (Madras: Ganesh & Co., 1964), pp. 143-44.
- <sup>98</sup> WARHD, p. 556; Web: [en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John\\_Woodroffe](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_Woodroffe)
- <sup>99</sup> Enneads, IV:3.11, p. 71
- <sup>100</sup> Jaroslav Pelikan, *The Spirit of Eastern Christendom (600-1700)* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1974), pp. 119, 121, 123, 125; I. P. Sheldon-Williams, "The Philosophy of Icons" in A. H. Armstrong, ed., *The Cambridge History of Later Greek and Early Medieval Philosophy* (Cambridge: University Press, 1967), pp. 514-15.
- <sup>101</sup> ST, II-II, 81.3, 7.
- <sup>102</sup> Tillich, I, p. 239.
- <sup>103</sup> F. Forrester Church, ed., *The Essential Tillich* (New York: Macmillan, 1987), p. 42.
- <sup>104</sup> Paul Tillich, *Theology of Culture* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1959), p. 60.
- <sup>105</sup> Tillich, I, pp. 238-47.
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- <sup>107</sup> CW, I:251-52.
- <sup>108</sup> CW, I:145.
- <sup>109</sup> Lecture notes.
- <sup>110</sup> Web: <http://www.vedantawritings.com/RKWTOC.htm>
- <sup>111</sup> CW, III:45; VI:141.
- <sup>112</sup> CW, III:45-46.
- <sup>113</sup> CW, III:452
- <sup>114</sup> CW, III:48-52.
- <sup>115</sup> Prabhavananda3, pp. 135, 196, 213-14, 245, 257; Tipple, pp. 59-60, 212.
- <sup>116</sup> Prabhavananda3, pp. 129-31; 126, 227-28, 285; Tipple, pp. 211-13.
- <sup>117</sup> Prabhavananda3, pp. 190-91; Tipple, p. 212.
- <sup>118</sup> Prabhavananda2, p. 35; lecture notes.

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<sup>119</sup> Joseph Trigg, *Origen* (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1983), pp. 58, 63.

<sup>120</sup> Trigg (1983), p. 144.

<sup>121</sup> ST, I-II, 111.1, 4.

<sup>122</sup> Web: <http://www.vedantawritings.com/SVRPTOC.htm>

<sup>123</sup> Theodorson, pp. 339, 355.

<sup>124</sup> Web: <http://www.vedantawritings.com/RKWTOC.htm>