1981

The Origins of Meditation: Perspectives Beyond the Scientific Research

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THE ORIGINS OF MEDITATION: PERSPECTIVES BEYOND THE SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH

by

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A Dissertation Submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate School of Loyola University of Chicago in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

August

1981

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to express my appreciation to Dr. John Shack, Dr. Alan DeWolfe, and Dr. Jerome Wagner for their continued encouragement and support through all the phases of this study in spite of its unconventional format. I am also very grateful for Deborah Young's generous assistance and consultation concerning issues in the area of philosophy. Finally, I would like to thank my parents for their patience and good humor while awaiting the completion of this work.

Vita

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CHAPTER I

THE IMPLICATIONS OF A SCIENTIFIC APPROACH TO MEDITATION

In order to develop a truly meaningful understanding of meditation, it is essential to assume a much broader perspective on this phenomenon than that presently found in the realm of scientific research. The reason for this does not stem from any lack of attention meditation has received from the scientific community. Scholarly research on meditation continues to grow at a steadily accelerating pace within psychology, as a recent review by Kannelakos and Ferguson (1973) [1] testifies. The necessity, rather, to go beyond the boundaries of scientific research in conceptualizing meditation stems from certain limitations found within the traditional methods and assumptions of science itself. The preliminary task of this work, therefore, will be to make explicit the specific obstacles encountered in attempting to understand meditation primarily from within the confines of traditional research methods and reports. The way will then be cleared for presenting alternative contexts for the purpose of studying and representing meditation. This study will primarily rely on the writings of Indian Vedanta and yoga in forming this alternative viewpoint. Vedantic philosophy and yoga have described and studied the practice of meditation for over two thousand years; they provide an authoritative perspective for appreciating

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[1] Kannellakos, D.P., and Ferguson, P.C. (Eds.) The Psychobiology of Transcendental Meditation. Los Angeles: MIU Press, 1973.

meditation's breadth and depth as a tool for radically transforming one's ordinary waking consciousness.

The Nature of the Contemporary Research on Meditation:

In reviewing the amassed psychological research on meditation, a consistent picture of meditation's purpose and defining features does not readily emerge. This is neither surprising nor unusual among new phenomena investigated by psychology, where new constructs and techniques enjoy an initial period of energetic research in as wide a variety of settings as possible. Meditation, similarly, in its two most popular Western adaptations (Transcendental Meditation which utilizes the silent repetition of a specially chosen syllable or 'mantra' and Zen sitting meditation which involves a passive concentration on one's breathing) continues to be studied in a variety of clinical settings with varying degrees of success.

In its beginning, Western research into meditation centered around investigations into the remarkable mastery Indian yogis displayed over various physiological processes. Bagchi and Wenger (1958) [2] and Anand, Chhina, and Singh (1961) [3] have documented advanced meditators' surprising ability to alter their EEG rhythms, oxygen consumption, galvanic skin responses, and blood pressure levels in a positive

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[2] Bagchi, P.K., and Wenger, M.A., Electrophysiological correlates of some Yogic exercises. Journal of Electroencephalography and Clinical Neurophysiology, 7, 1958.

[3] Anand, B.K., Chhina, G.S., and Singh, B., Some aspects of electroencephalographic studies of Yogis. Journal of Electroencephalography and Clinical Neurophysiology, 13, 1961.

direction. Subsequently, scores of publications have developed in this area assessing the efficiency of various meditative techniques in reducing hypertension, lowering physiological indices of stress, controlling autonomic functions, and promoting relaxation among populations of drug and alcohol abusers. Shapiro and Giber's (1976) [4] recent review provides a good summary of this material.

Most typically in these research studies persons are taught a variation of either a Zen or TM meditative technique which they are asked to practice over a period of anywhere from one day to twelve weeks, after which changes in their physiological processes or personality are noted. Recently, critics such as Smith (1975) [5] have contended that the efficiency of meditation stems from nothing more sophisticated than either the expectation of relief or the relaxing effect of merely sitting quietly. Other investigators have begun to question whether short term meditation is either different from, or superior to, various other relaxation strategies including biofeedback regimes and systematic desensitization procedures. Although in published studies meditation is generally shown to be more effective than no treatment whatsoever in reducing stress, tension, anxiety, and addictive behaviors, there is not conclusive evidence as to its

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[4] Shapiro, D., and Giber, D., Meditation and Psychotherapeutic Effects. Paper presented at the American Assosciation for the Advancement of Science, Pacific Regional Meeting, June, 1976.

[5] Smith, J.C., Meditation as psychotherapy: a review of the literature. Psychological Bulletin, 1975, 82, pgs. 558-564.

uniqueness or superiority in comparison with other relaxation strategies. In Seer's (1979) [6] latest review of the literature on clinical methods for the control of essential hypertension, for example, no significant conclusions could be reached on whether biofeedback, meditation, or progressive relaxation training were most helpful in treating hypertension. The latter two techniques were favored, however, because they could be used without special equipment.

Despite the lack of a clear definition encompassing the dynamics and essential components of meditation, research, using a loosely defined body of meditative techniques, continues to grow. A cursory sampling of the recent literature reveals reports of meditation's usefulness for such diverse purposes as: providing better recall of archetypal dream material (Faber, Saayman, and Touyz 1978),[7] for increasing empathy in graduate counseling students (Lesh 1970),[8] fostering improved self-actualization (Nidich and Dreskin (1976),[9] and improving creativity and classroom participation among elementary

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[6] Seer, P., Psychological control of essential hypertension: review of the literature. Psychological Bulletin, 1975, 82, 1015-1043.

[7] Faber, F., Saayman, G., and Touyz, S., Meditation and the archetypal content of nocturnal dreams. Journal of Analytical Psychology, 1978, 78, 1-22.

[8] Lesh, T.V., Zen meditation and the development of empathy in counselors. Journal of Humanistic Psychology, 1970, 10, 39-63.

[9] Nidich, S., and Dreskin, T., The influence of transcendental meditation: a replication. Journal of Counseling Psychology, 1976, 20, 565-567.

school children (Hendricks and Roberts, 1977). [10] When the need for a definitive theoretical explanation does arise, the tendency for researchers in this field is to explain meditation from within the pre-existing framework of whatever school of thought they currently belong. This tendency ultimately impedes progress toward a unified definition of meditation, as a recent example of two researchers' attempts to explain Zen meditation illustrates.

Shapiro (1976) [11] and Lesh (1970) [12] have each attempted rather extensive explanations of Zen meditation from both a cognitive-behavioral and neo-analytic orientation, respectively. Not surprisingly as a result, Shapiro describes Zen meditation as a 'behavioral self-management technique' involving five stages of increased proficiency. The first stage encompasses the meditator's efforts to strictly limit his attention to the rhythmic process of his breathing while trying to breathe naturally. At the second stage, the person who is meditating usually forgets about the task at hand (focusing on his breathing) and lets his attention wander among a variety of unrelated thoughts and images. By stage three the meditator learns to focus on his breathing without 'habituating' to the task as he did in stage two. Global desensitization becomes the hallmark of

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[10] Hendricks, G., and Roberts, T.B., The Second Centering Book: More awareness activities for children, parents, and teachers. N.J.: Englewood Cliffs, 1977.

[11] Shapiro, D., Zen meditation and behavioral self-control. American Psychologist, 1976, 7, 519-532.

[12] Lesh, op. cit., pg.40.

stage four as the meditator dispassionately observes the global hierarchy of covert stimuli within his mind. Finally, at stage five, as the inner covert stimuli become less dominant, the meditator becomes increasingly aware and sensitive to internal body signals and other stimuli that were typically ignored. Shapiro then proceeds to note meditation's similarity to other well established behavioral constructs including covert reinforcement processes and systematic desensitization. [13]

The language and theoretical emphasis is quite different, however, in Lesh's neoanalytic account of Zen meditation. Lesh, utilizing the psychoanalytic model of consciousness which places normal waking consciousness 'on top' and anything other than that as 'below' (or subliminal to waking consciousness) adopts the concept of 'regression in the service of the ego' to represent Zen meditation. Using material from Shafer (1958) [14] and other analytically oriented therapists, the author focuses on the dynamic aspect of meditation wherein various logical and/or defensive ego functions are suspended, thereby facilitating greater access to more genetically primitive mechanisms and pre-conscious mental contents. The concept of regression in the service of the ego accounts for the ability of individuals to make use of the increased access to topographically

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[13] Shapiro, op. cit., 522-525.

[14] Shafer, R., Regression in the service of the ego. In G., Lindzey (Ed.), Assessment of Human Motives. N.Y.: Rinehart Publishers, 1958.

pre-conscious material and its organization without being overwhelmed in the process. The purpose of Zen meditation for Lesh, therefore is to allow all these pre-conscious processes to gradually surface into one's awareness until there is no splitting up of consciousness on the part of the meditator. The explanations presented by Lesh and Shapiro differ markedly, as would further formulations about meditation that could be gathered from various other schools of psychology including adherents of Gestalt, Adlerian, and Jungian approaches.

It is not the purpose of this paper to survey literature from all the major schools of psychological theory in order to evaluate their strengths and weaknesses in defining meditation. This decision is not due to any lack of alternative theories within psychology, but rather to the fact that there is no clearly dominant theoretical system representative of the field. The absence of one, or even two, generally accepted schools of thought to organize and unify psychology's research efforts results in there being no common ground from which to conceptualize meditation. Indeed, as Kuhn [15] would point out, it is precisely psychology's lack of a dominant theoretical paradigm unifying its laws, theories, and research that signals its relative immaturity as a "normal science".

The field of psychology does possess one basic unifying factor,

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[15] Kuhn, T.S. The Structure of Scientific Revolutions. University of Chicago Press, pg.24, 1975.

however, despite the controversy generated by its divergent schools of thought. That factor resides within psychology's identification as a 'scientific' profession, as modeled on the methods and traditions of the extremely successful natural sciences. Despite the numerous disagreements among the different theoretical orientations in psychology, there is general agreement on the belief that science represents the most powerful and accurate tool the field possesses for discovering the 'truth' about meditation or anything else. Insofar as the scientific model has become psychology's authoritative methodology for deriving knowledge about man, it is within the workings of science itself that we find the common ground that psychology uses in its study of meditation. A thorough analysis of how this scientific model operates becomes necessary if we are to understand the strengths and weaknesses of psychology's central tool for investigating meditation. For indeed, meditation is viewed within India as an investigative process also, albeit a process with a methodology and world view that is radically different from science.

The Formal Limitations of Traditional Scientific Research:

It is not unusual for scientist-practitioners within psychology to be generally unaware of the fact that modern science makes certain 'metaphysical' (i.e. not scientifically or empirically verifiable) assumptions about the nature of the real world and man's place in it. Scientists are generally ignorant of the decisive effect science's axiomatic assumptions have in shaping their theoretical perspectives,

ways of thinking, and methods for acquiring knowledge. This state of ignorance is not surprising, for as Kuhn and others have observed, the professional training of the average scientist-practitioner does not address such considerations. [16] As Kuhn explains, the education of the average scientist is closely modeled on the well-documented rules and procedures for problem solving that have already been established and generally accepted within the scientific community that trains him. His overall education prepares him to further expand on problems and areas of research already selectively screened according to the dominant paradigm of his field. The need does not arise for the scientist in training to actively step back and critically examine and evaluate the overall structure within which he works.

This practical orientation of the scientist requires his active participation in the doing of science, the improvement of research technique, and other activities pertinent to the area of investigation he selects. Quite probably, most scientist practitioners may go through their entire careers progressing from simpler to more complex problems associated with their field of study without questioning the first premises of their science. As long as the model is successful, the need to step outside it, to view science as only one possible tool among many for gathering knowledge and understanding an object or process, is greatly diminished. And there is little doubt that the scientific model that has produced revolutionary changes in nearly

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[16] Ibid., pgs. 44-47.

every field of Western study and technology represents one of the most powerful and successful tools for solving problems and gathering knowledge that man has developed.

In spite of its enormous successes, however, various critics over the last century have pointed out certain limitations amidst the strengths of science. These limitations are sometimes echoed within psychology by a few of its prominent figures. No less an authority on the development of psychology than Sigmund Koch (1969) [17] has voiced concern about difficulties the field faces in exclusively following the empirical methods of the natural sciences. After many years of extensively studying the entire field, he judged that a good deal of the enterprise of psychology involves the proliferation of 'pseudo-knowledge,' adding that "the idolatry of science in our age has insured that this phony knowledge be taken seriously by people everywhere... even by sensitive, sophisticated, or creative people." [18] He further concludes that the major directions evident in psychology in the last one hundred years have stemmed from the field trying to model itself on the natural sciences. This modeling stemmed not from the fruits of following the methods of science, but rather as a security fetish bringing assurance to the psychologist, and hopefully to the world, that he was a scientist. [19]

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[17] Koch, Sigmund, Psychology cannot be a coherent science. Psychology Today, 1969, Vol. 3, 64-66.

[18] Ibid., pg.67.

[19] Ibid., pg. 67.

It is only by taking a closer look into the nature of the scientific method that its limitations with regard to psychology's research on meditation becomes clear. This author is particularly indebted to the efforts of David Bohm, [20] Edwin Burtt, [21] and William Hill [22] whose writings have greatly aided a fuller understanding of these limitations.

Modern science as we know it is but three hundred years old, a relative newcomer in the history of man's thought. Nonetheless, the influence it exercises on the cosmology underlying our mental processes is so pervasive and complete that we could hardly picture a world not conditioned by the discoveries it has made. It's continuing success, moreover, has earned it the reputation "of being the one discipline that successfully and consistently finds solutions to the problems it sets for itself." [23]

Following the line of argument developed by Martin Heidegger in his The Age of the World View, [24] Hill contends that both the success and limitations of science are but two manifestations of the central characteristic that sets science off from other ways of gaining knowledge, or even from science as it was practiced by the ancient

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[20] Bohm, David, Fragmentation and Wholeness. Jerusalem: Van Leer Foundation, 1976.

[21] Burtt, Edwin, The Metaphysical Foundations of Modern Science. N.Y.: Doubleday & Co., 1932.

[22] Hill, William, On The Success and Limitations of Science. unpublished thesis, Loyola University of Chicago, June, 1973.

[23] Ibid., pg.8.

[24] Heidegger, Martin, The Age of the World View. Measure, II, 1951, pgs. 269-284.

Greeks and Medieval thinkers. That germinal characteristic, Heidegger states, is the fact that modern science functions primarily in the mode of research. Research itself, he continues, distinguishes itself from other modes of knowing, in that it proceeds by 'projecting beforehand' its area of study.

While most scientists may not explicitly characterize their activities as a form of 'projection', they are aware that in order for their work to be called scientific, it must be rigidly controlled from the onset with respect to what it wishes to study and the operational methods it intends to use. Any psychologist would be considered unscientific, or somehow foolish, if, for example, he decided to study depression by whatever means occurred to him at any given time. Instead, science demands that he project beforehand not only a clearly defined research question, but also how he is going to gather his information, and the data and mathematics he will use in reaching his conclusions.

The collection of empirical facts alone does not constitute science. Science takes shape when these facts are incorporated into a broad interpretive theory that can be projected onto the phenomena under investigation. Two other conditions, absent in premodern science, are required in contemporary scientific theories. First, the interpretive theory must be a logical and self-consistent whole from which deductive inferences can be drawn; and secondly, the theory must be formulated such that a sequential train of inferences eventually suggest empirically possible experiments to

confirm or fail to confirm those inferences.

Actually, ancient science was characterized precisely by its lack of either a specific projection before its investigation of a phenomena, or a pre-determined set of rules for governing that investigation. In addition, ancient scientists were often also philosophers, and thus did not make as absolute a separation between the disciplines of science and philosophy as do modern scientists. As a result, pre-modern scientists would not only employ rational-analytic modes for the study of objects, but also much information derived from subjective or intuitional experience. The methodology of modern science typically seeks to minimize the influence of subjective processes in favor of knowledge derived from the standardized methods of research.

The role of subjective experience was further devalued in favor of the scientific method when modern science began its extensive reliance on mathematics (an inherently non-subjective system) during modern science's emergence around the time of Copernicus. During that era of science's emergence, there arose a growing belief within the intellectual community that not only did the world operate according to universal laws of cause and effect, but that these laws were essentially mathematical in nature. Burtt discusses the implications of this transition from pre-modern science's acceptance of subjective modes of inquiry (which encompasses Indian forms of meditation), to modern science's exclusive reliance on the objective methods of mathematics and experimentation. In order to understand the reason

for this transition, one has to fully appreciate the following question. Why did Copernicus and Kepler, in advance of any possibility of acquiring empirical proof, firmly postulate a heliocentric model of the universe contrary to the established evidence of all the astronomers of their period? In fact, not only did their theory contradict the prevalent geocentric model of Ptolemy (whose system could just as accurately chart and predict the motions of the planets as did Copernicus's new system), it also challenged another fundamental belief of the times. Copernicus's new model contended that information received through observation and the senses alone could not provide an accurate base for studying the astronomical universe, and it was precisely this empirical data that formed the mainstay of Ptolemy's geocentric solar system.

Copernicus and Kepler challenged the prevailing world view precisely because of their radically new belief that the infinite harmony underlying the structure and movements of the planets was mathematical in nature. Indeed, it was due to the fact that the mathematics of their model of planetary motion was both more simple and harmonious than Ptolemy's, that Copernicus placed so much faith in it. A second, and equally powerful belief arose within Copernicus's and Kepler's thinking, specifically, that all certain knowledge that is possible for man must be mathematical in nature. The world, Kepler believed, "operated in a mathematically harmonious way, and a true hypothesis is always a more inclusive conception binding together facts which had hitherto been regarded as distinct... revealing a mathematical

order and harmony where previously there had been only diversity." [25] In the century that followed, as astronomers and mathematicians verified the theories of these two men, a radical shift began regarding Western man's view of the world and his place within it.

Prior to the Copernican revolution which marks the beginning of modern science, the universe was a much smaller and more finite place with man and the earth at its center. Aristotelian and Neo-Platonic philosophy dominated man's thinking, and the external world was believed to exist predominantly for man's sake. In the pre-modern period, such categories and psychological entities as substance, essence, form, quality, and relation were viewed to be the most important concepts in forming a meaningful picture of the world. True knowledge was not mathematical in nature, but developed in accordance with a person's ability to subjectively comprehend and follow the ethical and ontological principles postulated by the dominant schools of Christian theology and Greek philosophy of the time. The ultimate reality of the universe was attributed to the influence of such transcendent entities as noumena, pure spirit, or God.

As the success of the Copernican model grew, however, this 'ancient' world view was gradually replaced by a picture of the universe which operated according to mathematically perfect causal laws independent of man's influence. As Galileo extended the domain of

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[25] Burtt, op. cit., pg.36.

this new science into the realm of the terrestial dynamics of motion, he postulated a crucial division of the world, a division whose impact would be most fully felt in the latter ideas of Descartes. On one side, Galileo contended we have "the world which is absolute, objective, immutable, and mathematical" while on the other side there is only that which is "relative, subjective, fluctuating, and sensible. The former is the realm of knowledge, both divine and human; the latter is the realm of opinion and illusion." [26]

Sense perception, in the new scheme of scientific thinking, belonged to this latter category of the world which was subjective, fluctuating, and confusing. The senses provided only untrustworthy knowledge about the secondary (taste, color, texture etc.) qualities of objects and the world. Only by the proper exercise of reason and logic in following mathematical guidelines could man arrive at the more important 'primary' qualities about objects. These primary qualities, said Galileo, are expressed in terms of number, figure, magnitude, position, and motion. In time, scientific thinkers came to view these primary qualities as more 'real' than those of sense experience. The belief was growing that <u>all</u> knowledge was ultimately reducible to mathematical relationships, a conviction that marked a radical departure from the prevailing world view based on Aristotelian science which traced things back to qualitative and therefore ultimately irreducible distinctions.

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[26] Ibid., pg.65.

The stage was thus set for the adoption of Descartes' famous metaphysical dualism separating man from the world of nature. Descartes' dualism firmly divided the inner realm of the mind (which was localized in the body, and whose essence was thinking and the subsidiary processes of sense perception, feeling, imagining, and willing etc.) from the outer physical world. The external material world, with its primary mathematical qualities extended infinitely throughout space were more universal than those finite secondary qualities residing in the inner realm of subjective experience. The world of man was seen as encapsulated within the realm of thinking, and did not extend beyond his physical body. This inner realm became insignificant in relation to the infinite universe outside him, a world consisting of a huge mathematical machine endlessly extended through time and space. [27]

It is significant to note that although Descartes, like his predecessors, maintained that true and certain knowledge of the world could only proceed from logically deduced inferences based on fundamental mathematical axioms, he realized that these axioms themselves could not be proven mathematically. Rather, he explained, these original axioms must be derived 'intuitively', adding, "By intuition I understand ... the conception which an unclouded and attentive mind gives us so readily and distinctly that we are wholly freed

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[27] Ibid., pg.83.

from doubt about that which we understand." [28] Descartes famous axiom 'I think therefore I am' exemplifies the need for intuitively acknowledging certain basic premises which underlie all systems of knowledge. Nonetheless, he bypasses any description regarding the development of this pre-scientific intuitive capacity in favor of developing his well known ideas with regard to the mathematical nature of the universe.

As Cartesian dualism strengthened its hold on Seventeenth Century man's thinking in the West, a return to an earlier conception of the world as described by the Greek philosopher Democritus, took place. In Democritus's model, matter, divided into infinitely small indivisible atoms possessing none but mathematical qualities, formed the basic building blocks of the universe. This atomistic viewpoint was increasingly employed by the later natural sciences to explain an ever widening array of phenomena, including the varied influences these atomistic motions exert upon the senses resulting in the subjective secondary experiences of man.

Indeed, as scientists sought to fill in the 'mathematical blueprint' comprising the fundamental nature of the world around him, earlier Greek and Medieval questions concerning the meaning and purpose of human life were abandoned. The entire problem of the possibility of reaching any transcendent knowledge beyond the empirical

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[28] Ibid., pg. 121.

realm was rendered meaningless in a world increasingly believed to be 1) fundamentally mathematical in its causal properties, 2) operating mechanically and harmoniously independent of man, and 3) ultimately comprised of matter. It was from these metaphysical assumptions that the later currents of 'logical positivism' and 'materialistic determinism' originated in modern science about which we shall comment in the sections to come.

As Newton combined his consummate mathematical talent with his pioneering work in the use of experimental methodology as the proper vehicle for deducing information about the empirical properties of objects and processes, the basic groundwork of modern science was completed. The brilliant success of Newton's theories made a lasting impression in the thinking of all the sciences of Europe at that time. Henceforth, investigation into the causal properties of all events were increasingly viewed in terms of the categories of motion, energy, mass, inertia, magnitude, and especially space and time. Philosophical speculation and metaphysics subsequently became 'subjective' activities of dubious value in comparison with the scientific 'objectivity' inherent in the scientist's adherence to the methods of mathematics and experimentation in his research.

Returning once again to the question of modern science's specific success and limitations, Heidegger focuses upon the field of physics as a prime example of both the projective and mathematical nature of science. Physics, Heidegger states, projects nature as the "self-sufficient kinetic relation of points of mass in space and

time. From this original blueprint of the universe, all natural events are determined in advance as spatio-temporal kinetic magnitudes." [29] Consequently, given this projection of natural events in terms of magnitude, the use of numbers and calculations becomes the appropriate mode for describing these events. It is not the use of mathematics per se that gives physics and the natural sciences their mathematical nature, but rather the initial metaphysical assumption they make regarding the underlying form of worldly events.

The exactness of physics and the other natural sciences that psychology imitates is intimately linked to the initial projections these sciences make. As Hill has insightfully pointed out:

> Exact measurement and exact calculation are, incidentally, exact for the same reason that science is exact. A measurement is exact if it appeals to a definite standard and does not deviate from it; a calculation is exact if its method is clearly stated and adhered to in practice. In each case what is to be done (measuring or calculating) is understood in advance, and if this is strictly adhered to, the process is exact. While the Greek and Medieval scientists may have employed exact measurement in their science, their science as a whole (not projecting a hypothesized blueprint regarding the nature of the physical world) was not exact. It merely observed. [30]

Physics, on the other hand, functions as an exact science to the degree it proceeds precisely from the blueprint of nature that it originally projects.

The role of any single experiment, therefore, is either to confirm or fail to confirm some particular aspect of that larger

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[29] Heidegger, op. cit., pg.271.

[30] Hill, op. cit., pg.14.

projection of nature accepted by the scientific community. In Kuhn's words, research 'fleshes out' specific questions delineated within the dominant theoretical paradigm of the period. The dominant guiding force behind the process whereby past research results shape and direct subsequent research efforts is the impetus to fully explain nature under a particular paradigm. Science as a whole, is the meta-process or meta-paradigm that shapes the successive paradigms that arise during the history of any particular natural science.

Insofar as science is the 'meta-method' of arriving at knowledge in Western culture, it exercises an enormous influence on our approach to the environment. Science must reduce all nature into objects in order for nature to 'exist' within science's most basic projections about the world. Heidegger echoes this point in noting that the existence of science lies precisely in its objective representation of things, and secondly, that for science, 'truth' lies in the certainty and exactitude of that representation. [31] The result has been a tendency in the scientific community to define as existent only those things which can be known with certitude within the parameters of its particular models. If no such certainty of representation is possible, the existence of the phenomena must remain in doubt.

This tendency has culminated in the attitude of 'logical positivism' which is quite strong within psychology and the natural sciences. Following the ideas of Auguste Compte, the logical positivists

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[31] Heidegger, op. cit., pg.272.

believed that only observable, sense-mediated events and measurements constituted the proper data for scientists investigating the invariable relationships of human behavior. Consequently, any other forms of knowledge (including meditative forms) that extend beyond sense experience, are to be excluded from scientific acceptance or regarded as unreliable until they are reduced to empirically measurable objects. Ironically, since as we have previously noted, subjective sense experience was by itself considered unreliable as a basis for certain knowledge by many scientists, it is only after this subjective data is processed by strict methods of experimentation and statistical analysis that it becomes valid knowledge.

Hill concludes by noting that Western man gradually switched from his previous orientation of simply experiencing his natural world to a position of actively separating himself from this natural world that he studied. Modern scientists assumed a new relationship regarding nature, wherein they began selectively choosing which questions they would ask of nature, and excluding any evidence deemed unreliable or lying outside the questions chosen. Through this process of selective censorship and attention with regard to its object of study, science obtained a procedure by which it was able to abstract from nature exactly the type of answers it wanted and no others. Hill summarizes by saying:

> The reason for the success of this method should be made as clear as possible. There can be no doubt that its (science's) success is limited, but it is precisely because it is limited that it is successful at all. The genius of the method lies in

> the fact that it deliberately chooses a perspective and sytematically investigates nature from that perspective and no other. Only data appropriate to that perspective is collected, and the conclusions reached are valid within the limits of the initial projection (assuming of course that the projection is rigidly adhered to throughout the investigation). [32]

The Dangers of Scientifically Processing Meditation:

Modern science has developed from a tradition that has historically minimized or devalued subjective experience in its quest to utilize pure mathematical logic and reason to discover the fundamental laws of nature. Science's successes have resulted in a corresponding metaphysical belief within psychology that there exists a 'physics' or 'blueprint' of personality dynamics replete with immutable laws that research will one day uncover. The impetus to be scientific if one is to gain credibility within psychology remains strong, regardless of an individual's humanistic, behavioral, or analytic allegiances. Hence, despite the fact that there is no single dominant theoretical paradigm guiding psychology's research or representing its 'projective' blueprint of personality, the field is still unified in its adherence to operating scientifically.

There are a number of dangers for psychology if it uncritically accepts that science, per se, is the single most valid means of obtaining true knowledge with regard to all dimensions of human experience. The following chapters will serve to portray meditation as an equally valid means of arriving at certain knowledge. In

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[32] Hill, op. cit., pg.20.

addition, by assuming an exclusively scientific perspective, scientists run the risk of equating truth with objectivity of representation or certainty of representation, in their search for knowledge.

Another problem involves the question of whether the 'essence' of an activity or object is fundamentally distorted in the process of being scientifically reduced to an empirically measured object. This is a frequently mentioned concern with regard to the creative arts and humanities, not to mention meditation. Finally, psychology must keep in mind that science represents a particular manner of looking at the world rather than absolutely true knowledge of the way things are. Scientific knowledge is strongly conditioned by the methods and assumptions that science has embraced. Psychologists and other scientists have much work to do in discovering how the practice of science itself intimately shapes and effects our manner of thinking about things and ourselves.

The primary reason for tracing the limitations of the scientific perspective that underlies psychological research has been to lay the groundwork for one idea, this author's belief that investigators must be able to step outside of a scientific perspective and investigative approach in order to properly understand meditation. It is crucial that one appreciates that the Eastern consciousness which gave birth to meditation, has not been conditioned to view the world as being ultimately comprised of matter operating independently of man. Although Indian philosophy and psychology agrees with Western

science that sense experience by itself is not a reliable source of knowledge, its culture has developed a radically different method than science for deriving certain knowledge about man and the world. Dualistic thinking, intimately present in the scientist's tendency to separate himself from the objects he studies 'out there' in the environment, is actively discouraged within the Indian meditative tradition which assumes a monistic world view.

The emphasis in all meditative disciplines rests on examining the meditator's immediate subjective experience and mental states in order to arrive at a true understanding of his nature. The meditator cannot separate himself from his relationship to the object of his study (i.e. his own consciousness) to the degree a scientist can in studying the material world. Reason and intellect alone (even as expressed in the form of science) have never, in the eyes of Indian systems of philosophy and meditation, been considered sufficient tools for attaining certain knowledge about man. For although reason, mathematics, and deductive logic hold a high place in Indian philosophy, these faculties, unaided by transcendental experience, remain blind to the higher dimensions of human consciousness.

Indian meditative literature rests on the belief that not only does intellectual knowledge fail to eliminate uncertainty in the understanding of one's personal consciousness, but that an over-reliance on scientific and other modes of intellectual processing can become an obstacle in freeing the mind for immediate experience.

There is a famous story that has been passed down over the centuries concerning a university professor who visits a Zen Buddhist priest. The professor introduces himself as doctor so and so who has studied at a number of famous universities. He states he would like to learn about Zen and meditation. The priest simply says, "Would you like to sit down?" "Yes." "Would you like some tea?" Once again the visitor says he would. The priest then poured some tea and continued pouring even after the cup was full until finally the professor exclaimed "The tea is spilling, it is spilling all over!" "Exactly", the priest replies, "You come with a full cup. Your cup is already spilling over so how can I give you anything? You are already overflowing with all your knowledge. Unless you come with emptiness and openess, I can give you nothing." [34]

If a researcher approaches the study of meditation with his 'cup filled' with any fixed ideas that it is primarily a form of global desensitization, regression in the service of the ego, or relaxation, he will have correspondingly less room for being open to fundamentally different representations of meditation. Similarly, if the scientist persistently requires that meditation be objectified and processed to conform to the existent parameters and methods of science's latest hypothetical projection, he leaves little possibility for assuming an experiential approach to the study of meditation. In the next chapter, we will be frequently reminded of the fact that

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[34] Huang, A.C. The Essence of Tai Chi. Utah: Real People Press, Pg. 14, 1973.

Indian Vedantic philosophy and meditation always relies on immediate experience as the definitive source for its theory and vision of man. India's epistemological orientation is not dominated by the spirit of empiricism, atomism, material reductionism, and logical positivism, as is Western science and psychology. Instead, Indian psychology and meditative philosophy revolve around the non-material issues of defining and developing the dynamic properties of being, consciousness, and spirit. In the following chapter we will review India's perspective on these issues and her particular vision of man's place in the world. Once we fully understand that vision, meditation's role as a subjective vehicle for personal growth, transcendence, and expanded awareness will become more clear.

CHAPTER II

THE MEDITATIVE TRADITION WITHIN INDIAN CULTURE

> As the stream of experience passes us by, we find no beginning and no end. With our science we slash arbitrary cuts across that stream and find innumerable relations intertwining indeterminate parts that we can define and organize into systems with considerable skill. But as to the ultimate nature of the parts in relation we know nothing at all. [1]

The Non-dualistic World View of Vedanta:

The Indian world view, which has given birth to the practice of meditation and yoga, is fundamentally spiritual in nature. India's spiritual tradition intimately permeates every field of her thought; philosophy and psychology in India are not merely allied subjects, but are rather integral extensions of this tradition. The culture's emphasis on exploring the spiritual (i.e. non-material) aspects of man and the world "did not originate from a sense of wonder or curiosity as it seems to have done in the West, but rather it arose under the pressure of a practical need for dealing with the presence of moral and physical evil in life." [2] Philosophic and psychological endeavor was primarily directed toward finding a remedy for these ills, and the consideration of metaphysical and spiritual questions arose as a matter of course.

The most distinguishing feature separating Indian philosophy

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[1] Merrell-Wolff, Franklin, The Philosophy of Consciousness Without and Object. N.Y.:Julian Press, pg. 3, 1973.

[2] Hiriyanna, M., Outline of Indian Philosophy. London: Allen & Unwin, pg.18, 1932.

and psychology from its Western counterpart is the former's insistence upon knowledge derived from direct experience, as opposed to the use of abstract reasoning and deductive logic. The Sanskrit word for philosophy in India, 'darsana', means seeing or experience. This translation is a reflection of the fact that all metaphysical discourse in orthodox Indian philosophy has its foundation in immediate perception and not speculation. Intuition, spirit, and being are not regarded by the Hindu mind as concepts, speculative and problematical, but as things directly knowable. They can be experienced not merely by the chosen few, but under the right circumstances, by everyone. This perception, the meditative literature states, is not of the senses, nor should it be confused with the operations of the intellect; it is beyond the senses (transcendental) and not fully representable in rational terms.

The fountainhead for the remarkable systems of Indian metaphysics and psychology are the Vedas. The Vedas themselves are the oldest scriptures of India, consisting of a large body of very ancient texts. For our purpose of tracing the central features of India's particular vision of human nature, we shall confine ourselves to one portion of these works, the Vedantic literature. The word Vedanta means 'the end of the Vedas' referring to that body of Vedic texts known as the Upanisads. The Upanisads represent the final culmination and highest wisdom concerning the nature of Absolute Spirit or Soul described in the Vedas.

The number of original Upanisads is unknown, about 108 have been preserved, however, ranging in length from a few hundred to many thousands of words. They vary widely in style and manner; some are in prose and others verse. As Prabhavananda explains, because the Upanisads were the works of mystics and seers, their authors were concerned with reporting insights that came as a consequence of meditative intuitions and visions, not with making them rationally coherent; consequently, there is no systematic beginnings or endings within this literature. Sixteen of the surviving 108 Upanisads have come to be recognized as authentic and authoritative by Indian philosophers including Samkara, the foremost Indian expert on Vedanta. Samkara, the seventh century poet/philosopher, remains the unrivalled exponent of advaita Vedanta, the non-dualistic branch of Indian thought that we shall employ in exploring the Indian world view. [3]

Samkara asserts that the fundamental purpose of Vedanta is to correct a prodigious error that plagues man, the misconception that empirically derived knowledge in conjunction with reason and logic is sufficient for comprehending human nature. A primary tenet of Vedanta is the assertion that the operations of the mind and intellect are not enough in the quest for full self-realization. Reason and empirical investigation of the world will not result in any definitive answers concerning the most basic questions about man's innermost nature and being.

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[3] Prabhavananda, S., The Spiritual Heritage of India. N.Y.: Doubleday & Co., pg.279, 1963.

The epistemological controversy surrounding the existence and validity of intuitional and transcendental states of awareness has traditionally been argued by Western philosophers. The possible existence of modes of knowledge that extend beyond mere sense perception and analytical reasoning remains a classic question of metaphysics. Deussen reiterates this point in stating: "if empirical or physical investigation were able to throw open to us the true and innermost being of nature, we should only have to continue along this path in order to come at last to an understanding of all truth, the final result would be PHYSICS and there would be no ground for METAPHYSICS." [4] Although the status and legitimacy of metaphysical questions has decreased in the West with the onset of modern science, the existence of metaphysical (i.e. directly intuitive and supra-rational but not sensible)sources of knowledge remains a cornerstone of Vedanta.

Samkara believed that it was the task of Vedantic yoga and meditation to open men's eyes to the limitations of ordinary rational/analytical thinking, and thereby correct the error that reason alone is sufficient to answer all questions. Deussen points out that no less an authority than Immanuel Kant addressed the same issue:

> To the same conviction came Kant by quite another way, since with German patience and thoroughness he subjected the cognitive faculties of mankind to critical analysis, ... to examine whether these faculties be really fitting instruments for the investigation of transcendent objects, whereby, however, he arrived at

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[4] Deussen, Paul, The System of the Vedanta. N.Y.: Dover Publications, pg.47, 1973.

> the astonishing discovery that, amongst others, three essential elements of the world, namely, Space, Time, and Causality are nothing but three forms of perception adhering to the subject, or, if this be expressed in terms of psychology, innate functions of the brain; from this he concluded with incontestable logic that the world as it is extended in time, and knit together in all its phenomena, great and small, by the causal nexus, in this form exists only for our intellect, and is conditioned by the same; and that consequently, the world reveals to us 'appearances only' and not the being of things in themselves. [5]

Although Kant concluded his ideas with the belief that the being of 'things in themselves' was intellectually unknowable, Indian philosophy and psychology contend that in fact all men possess a latent ability for such understanding of their innermost nature. The Vedantic systems of yoga and meditation arose in response to the need for a practical means of achieving transcendental and intuitional knowledge of 'things in themselves'. The rigorous conditions that must be met in order to achieve these higher states of consciousness constitute the major portion of the next chapter. Before proceeding further, however, we need to develop a more precise picture of what we mean when we use the term 'being', the innermost substratum of the human personality.

Deutsch [6] has extensively explored the mental processes whereby men order their experience so as to form an ontology or sense of being. This task has traditionally been attempted by philosophers, and Deutsch is no exception. The complexity and subtlety in explaining

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[5] Ibid., pg.48.

[6] Deutsch, Eliot, Advaita Vedanta: A Philosophical Reconstruction. Honolulu: East-West Center Press, 1969.

the operation of such a basic process as being is the reason why this dimension of man has eluded serious study and definition. Asking a scientist how he would define or study the nature of his own being would very likely produce in him a state of confusion or bewilderment. Being, in scientific terms, would most likely be equated with the 'realness' of an object (i.e. its capacity to be operationally defined and empirically represented in a reliable manner). Being, as defined by Vedanta, however, is quite different, and an understanding of this process is so fundamental to the Indian world view as to warrant closer study.

The Three Levels of Being and Reality of Vedanta:

In his Advaita Vedanta, Deutsch utilizes the term "subration" in order to clarify the different levels or types of being within the Indian world view:

> Subration is the mental process whereby one disvalues some previously appraised object or content of consciousness because of its being contradicted by a new experience. A judgement about something is contradicted by a new experience when it is impossible -- more as a psychological fact of one's being than a purely logical state of one's mind -- to affirm (act upon or to orient one's attitude upon) both the previous judgement and what is learned or acquired in the new experience. From the standpoint of the subject, to subrate means to undergo an experience -- practical, intellectual, or spiritual -- which radically changes one's judgement about something. An object or content of consciousness is subrated or subratable when it is or can be so disvaluated, denied, or contradicted by another experience. [7]

In Vedantic thought, subration represents the crucial process

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[7] Ibid., pg. 15.

whereby one can rectify errors which uncorrected would lead the person toward subsequent misconceptions. Psychologically, it involves the withdrawal of attention from some object of awareness (an idea, material object, person, or process) as it was originally judged to be, and the fastening of one's attention either on the same object as reappraised, or to another object that replaces the first object as the content of one's awareness (and the placing of a higher value upon the new judgement or content of consciousness). Deutsch provides a simple illustration of this process by referring to a misrepresentation that might take place in a wax museum. When a person who is first viewing a wax figure takes it to be a living person, then later discovers (perhaps by touching it) that it is not alive, the individual has subrated his prior experience of the object; he has rejected his initial experience and judgement and replaced it by another which he believes better conforms with reality.

Subration, with its emphasis on the role of fresh insight or immediate experience in arriving at a sense of certainty, serves as the main criterion for making ontological distinctions in the Vedantic world view. In terms of the subrative process, one's individual experience dictates that the more something is capable of being subrated, the less 'reality' it has, or conversely, the more 'reality' something has, the less capable it is of being subrated. [8]

Absolute reality according to the Indian perspective, is that

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[8] Ibid., pg.17.

which cannot be subrated by any other experience. For the word reality to have any distinctive psychological meaning or unique ontological content, it must be strictly defined (in absolute terms) to refer to the highest form of human experience which is non-subratable. Yet there are lesser forms of reality attributable to various levels of development according to Vedanta, and Deutsch has consequently coined three categories of being (Reality, Appearance, and Unreality) each with a different degree of reality. [9]

In the monistic system of Vedanta, the only experience or state of being which cannot be subrated by any other experience is that of pure spiritual identity/realization; the experience wherein the separation of self and non-self, of ego and world, is transcended and pure Oneness remains. Whereas subration implies and requires the presence of some object or content of consciousness that can be contradicted by later experience, Reality alone is non-dual. In terms of a phenomenology of experience, Absolute Reality denies the possibility of there being some <u>other</u> object that could replace it. The advaitin's Reality cannot be conceived in terms other than itself insofar as it is the whole which transcends all parts; by its nature as oneness, no distinctions can be applied to it, and all ordinary modes of thinking and judging, which presuppose a subject and object, must be suspended when confronting it. [10]

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[9] Ibid., pg.15.

[10] Ibid., pg.19.

Brahman is the name given to that transcendent reality. Brahman is not a 'He' or an 'It' but rather the state where all subject and object distinctions are obliterated; it is the timeless, unconditioned, undifferentiated oneness of being. The Upanisads seek to minimize the limitations of ordinary language (which names and divides the world into discrete objects) by referring to Brahman using metaphor and aphorisms:

> As rivers flow into the sea and in so doing lose name and form, even so the wise man, freed from name and form, attains the Supreme Being, the Self-luminous, the Infinite. [11]
>
> Brahman is Supreme; he is beyond all thought. Subtler than the subtlest is he, farther than the farthest, nearer than the nearest. He resides in the heart of every being. [12]
>
> That which cannot be expressed in words but by which the tongue speaks -- know that to be Brahman. That which is not seen but by which the eye sees -- know that to be Brahman. That which is not drawn by the breath but by which the breath draws --- know that to be Brahman. That which is not comprehended by the mind but by which the mind comprehends -- know that to be Brahman. [13]

Descending from the highest level of Absolute Reality, Deutsch's second level of being, i.e. Appearance, refers to those things which can be subrated by other experiences (see Table 1). He lists three subcategories of being within the broad category of Appearance: the 'real existent', the 'existent', and the 'illusory existent'. The

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[11] Mundaka Upanisad, III, verse 8, from Prabhavananda, op. cit., pg.44.

[12] Mundaka Upanisad, II, verse 7, from Prabhavananda, op. cit., pg.59.

[13] Kena Upanisad, I, verses 5-9, from Prabhavananda, op. cit., pg.45.

TABLE 1

Deutsch's Hierarchical Levels of Vedantic Ontology

I. Absolute Reality: Non-dualistic
Non-subratable
Supra-rational
Noumenal

Increasingly less subratable ↑

II. Appearance: Dualistic
Subratable

Subcategories

A. The real existent as applied to
1. Existential and social relations
2. Objects of experience
3. Ideational concepts

B. The existent as applied to
1. Existential and social relations
2. Objects of experience
3. Ideational concepts

C. The illusory existent: subratable by all other types of experience
ex. hallucinations
erroneous sense perceptions

III. Unreality: Self-contradictory
Neither subratable nor non-subratable
Non-experiential

real existent is the highest (and therefore most valued) sublevel because by definition it cannot be subrated by the other two subcategories. Similarly, the illusory existent is the least valued due to the fact that experiences within this category can be subrated by experiences from the other two levels. In order to describe each subcategory in more detail, Deutsch provides examples of each with regard to three areas: existential relations (the psychological domain of interpersonal and social relations), objects (whether they be objects of experience or physical objects created by human activity), and concepts (the realm of cognitive processes and ideas).

The real existent in terms of existential relations is found in those relational experiences that most completely satisfy the emotional, intellectual, or spiritual demands placed upon them. The real existent represents that level of being found in the deepest and most fulfilling of relationships, such as that of altruistic love or perhaps the relational experience between self and one's God. Maslow's 'peak experiences' would fall into this category of valuation, a category of experience which is characterized by its self-validating qualities of richness, completion, egolessness, aliveness, and transcendence.[14] The primary criteria for the relational experience at the level of the real existent is that by definition, it has already been valued as among the highest in the order of personal experience (within the the subject-object realm.)

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[14] Maslow, Abraham, Toward a Psychology of Being. N.Y.: Van Nostrand Reinhold, pgs.105-110, 1968.

The real existent also applies to particular objects, which according to the manner wherein they were 'created', 'brought into being', or 'responded to', participate in reality while at the same time retaining a distinctive nature of their own. [15] One who experiences a particular object (a work of art for example or an aesthetically pleasing object) and who feels that this experience is special (i.e. that it provides a sense of integration or insight), values the experience in a way which rules out its being contradicted or replaced by another kind of sense-mental experience. Such an aesthetic experience is only subratable through the realization that no work of art is comparable to the splendor of Reality itself; and that no object or experience within the domain of Appearance can fully grasp that splendor. [16]

Finally, concerning the subarea of concepts and ideas, the real existent applies to those logical relations (for example those represented by mathematical axioms, such as the law of contradiction in mathematics) that have a necessary and indispensable function in organizing and making possible propositional truths. These concepts, by definition, cannot be disproven or contradicted by other sense-mental experience. What is logically necessary cannot be denied within a system that is committed in advance to their use.

The real existent represents the highest experiences or objects found within the category of Appearance, subratable only by the

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[15] Deutsch, op. cit., pg.20.

[16] Ibid., pg.21.

qualitatively different experience of noumenal Reality. The second highest order of being within the domain of Appearance Deutsch terms the 'existent'. It comprises those contents of experience that can be subrated by the real existent or Reality itself. Once again it will be useful to understand Deutsch's existent as it relates to the three areas of existential relations, particular objects, and concepts/ideas.

Within the domain of existential relations, the existent covers the majority of ordinary and everyday interpersonal contacts and experiences. Casual or more formal encounters with others based on a wide array of instrumental needs and motivations fall within this category. These 'existential relations' can be subrated by the more fulfilling experiences (self-actualizing, unselfish, transcendental) found in the deeper relationships within the domain of the real existent. The majority of Western psychology's research into normal and abnormal interpersonal behavior falls within the range of the existent level of being.

Deutsch's use of the term existent in reference to particular objects is a bit more difficult to understand. Specifically, the existent in relation to the subcategory of objects refers to any 'particular qua particular', that is, when any object is ultimately taken as an independent reality. Deutsch explains:

> These objects (a thing, natural phenomenon, an idea) are subrated by the real existent the moment one realizes and affirms the interdependence of all particulars. The particular qua particular is subrated, in short, when the relations that the par-

> ticular has to things and to processes that are external to it become the content of experience. Once one realizes that any particular has its being in and through its relation with other particulars and processes, with Nature or with existence as a whole, that it is a dependent being, the otherwise absolute separateness and uniqueness of the particular is contradicted and replaced by that more universal realization. [17]

The theoretical development of family therapy as a system's model can serve as an example of this process. Prior to the pioneering ideas of the early family therapy proponents, conventional therapists typically viewed clients from the 'particular qua particular' perspective. Stated simply, early psychotherapists generally perceived their clients as particular individuals (objects) having an independent reality separate from other members of their family. Although genetic parental influences were deemed important, the therapist might typically underestimate the importance of subtle but ongoing relationships that the client maintains with his family of origin. The absolute separateness or independence of the client's lifestyle was a notion that was subrated, however, as family systems theorists postulated a larger context of family dynamics from which to view the client's behavior. To the degree that the client remains actively engaged within the larger family dynamics, an orientation emphasizing the client's separateness is contradicted and replaced by the more perspicacious family systems model which transcends the particular qua particular perspective. The underlying goal of Indian

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[17] Ibid., pg.22.

epistemology and meditation is to foster an ever more inclusive and less particular understanding of the Real, and one's relationship to it.

Finally, among the domain of concepts, the existent refers to those logical relations that can be found in any of the formal systems of algebra, calculus, quantum mechanics et cetera. By definition, these systems are designed to operate successfully only within the restricted parameters that they originally set forth.

Completing the third subcategory within the category of Appearance is the 'illusory existent'. It represents those contents of experience that can be subrated by all other types of experience. Hallucinations, erroneous sense perceptions, paranoid delusions and the like possess an illusory reality; they may be vivid, yet fail to satisfy the basic practical or intellectual requirements of ordinary empirical fact.

The third major mode of being, Unreality, is that which neither can nor cannot be subrated by other experience. An object is unreal when, because of its self-contradictory nature, it cannot qualify as a datum of experience. Objects such as a square circle represent things that have a conceptual status only -- as contradictions. Whereas every phenomenon of experience within the realm of Appearance has a degree of reality insofar as it is a part of our awareness, Unreality is the name for that category which by definition, can never be a content of human experience.

From the Vedantic viewpoint, the three fundamental categories of being, Reality, Appearance, and Unreality constitute levels of reality that are qualitatively distinct. Because they are qualitatively different in nature, reason cannot establish valid relations (causal, temporal, or others) between them. It is the office of reason to distinguish and to define, however, because Reality itself is indivisible and non-dual by nature, it cannot be ranked among reason's objects. From the standpoint of Reality, all other modes of being and consciousness within the realm of Appearance are limited and imperfect. Vedanta recognizes, however, that the hierarchical distinctions between these three levels are necessary and valid as mental organizations of experience from the standpoint of ordinary sense-mental consciousness.

Although Indian philosophy and psychology view transcendental states as providing the ultimate authority for their theories, they nonetheless reserve a special place for the legitimacy of logic and reason in the acquisition of knowledge of numerous aspects of the world. Indian epistemology, however, radically opposes the general belief of 'scientism' which is more prevalent in Western culture. Scientism postulates that the methodology of the positive sciences is <u>in principle</u> capable of answering all meaningful questions, and that philosophy and religion (Occidental or Oriental) represent merely pre-scientific disciplines that will wither away in the light

of the superior vigor and success of science.[18] Indian epistemology would assert that scientific knowledge can never be absolutely certain, and in principle can always be successively replaced (ad infinitum) by another hypothesis or paradigm that provides proof that it is a more meaningful or comprehensive theory for the evidence at hand. It is for this reason that empirical knowledge falls within the domain of Appearance, and has always been considered of secondary importance by Vedanta in comparison to knowledge of Reality itself. Only the latter is completely non-subratable and capable of overcoming all doubt and uncertainty.

The guiding concern of the Vedantic literature is to lead the individual to a realization that his innermost being resides in this absolute Reality. Yet how is it that ordinary man has come to identify his essential being with his physical self, thoughts, mental capacities, or volitional life? And what is the 'saving' knowledge that will enable the serious questioner to realize that all of his self-identifications as a separate entity apart from the Absolute constitute a form of ignorance? Samkara addresses these questions and others as he explains the Indian concepts of Atman, jiva, and maya.

The ancient rsis or mystics, looking outward, observed a world of nature that was always in motion. Looking inward during meditation they also observed incessant change -- sensations, emotions, memories,

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[18] Heelan Patrick, Hermeneutics of Experimental Science in the Context of the Life-World, pg.9, from Ihde, and Zaner, R.M., (Eds.) Interdisciplinary Phenomenology, Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1977.

images, thoughts, fancies -- forever succeeding one another like restless waves upon a shoreless sea. [19] The question they asked time and time again was, is there anything that is permanent and without change amidst this ceaseless stream of consciousness? It was clear that one's physical self was not, subject as it was to disease and death. The senses, emotions, and the mind itself were also always changing and in flux. The authors of the Vedas finally voice a confident affirmation. "Yes, somewhere within or behind the tumult, apart from it, superior to it, there is a silent and constant witness;" the rsis called it Atman or the true Self:

> The body is mortal, always gripped by death, but within it dwells the immortal Self. This Self, when associated in our consciousness with the body, is subject to pleasure and pain; so long as this association continues, freedom from pain and pleasure can no man find. But as this association ceases, there ceases also pleasure and pain. Rising above physical consciousness, knowing the Self to be distinct from the senses and the mind - knowing it in its true light - one rejoices and is free. [20]

Atman, for advaita Vedanta, is pure self-shining consciousness (timeless, spaceless, and everpresent) which underlies and supports individual human awareness.

The individual personality, termed 'jiva' in Sanskrit, is a combination of Reality and Appearance. Jiva is 'real' insofar as it realizes Atman as its ground; it is 'appearance' insofar as it idenfies itself as a finite being subject to the material laws of space,

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[19] Prabhavananda, op. cit., pg.48.

[20] Ibid., pg.51.

time, and causality. The individual self is empirically real, being an entity of subjective and objective experience; but it is transcendentally unreal (according to Vedanta) because it can be subrated by the experience of discovering one's nature as Atman. If you were to strip away all of the elements that the ordinary man believes to comprise his real self (his feelings, mental capacities, attitudes, physical characteristics) Samkara teaches, you would be left with man as pure spirit and consciousness alone, a free and timeless being. [21]

The Role of Superimposition in Dualistic Cognition:

The ultimate purpose of Vedantic psychology and meditation is to foster the immediate realization that Atman forms the ground of one's being. It is tremendously difficult to gain an immediate understanding of this fact, particularly because it involves a re-ordering of one's ordinary conceptions of reality. Samkara emphasizes that one must begin with the insight that any conceptions or judgements about the nature of the world that proceed from or entail a dualistic framework (making ultimate distinctions between things, i.e. subject/object, self/other) implicitly fail to realize the oneness of being and therefore are in error. The ordinary Occidental perception that the real world consists of independent objects, persons, things, and processes (Democritus's atomistic world view) is an expression of this type of error. Maya is the Indian term for this erroneous assumption about

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[21] Ibid., pg.289.

the world. Maya represents all experience that involves this process of making absolute distinctions, thereby imposing false limitations upon the oneness of the Absolute. Maya permeates all human activities within the category of Appearance; all rational-analytic thought is subject to maya and all language results from it.

According to Vedanta, the world of thought and matter possesses only a phenomenal or relative existence, and is superimposed upon Brahman, the unique absolute reality. "As long as we remain in ignorance (that is, as long as we continue to dualistically conceptualize), we shall continue to experience this apparent world, which is really the effect of superimposition." [22]

The process of superimposition is somewhat similar to the more familiar psychotherapeutic concepts of projection and transference. Both projection and transference (leaving aside for the moment their uses in Western psychology in terms of the defensive operations of the ego) are constructs referring to the process whereby an individual (the knowing subject) misrepresents or distorts the object known (i.e. therapist, friend, or situation etc.). The primary feature of these constructs centers on the mechanism whereby the subject inaccurately attributes some trait, feeling, or quality to another object that does not belong to it.

Superimposition, according to Vedanta, occurs whenever distinctions arise in the course of everyday thinking. The process of

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[22] Ibid., pg.286.

making distinctions is inevitable and necessary from even the earliest moments of human development. From the primal state of oneness present at birth, the neonate soon begins to make the most primitive distinctions in order to create a sense of individual identity and boundary. This marks the first point where the 'ego-idea' of private individual being is superimposed upon the unconditioned oneness which is Brahman. Samkara, echoing the spirit of Vedanta, states that from that point onwards, man becomes increasingly less able to understand that Existence is not our private property, but that it is universal and absolute.

> The moment we have made this central act of superimposition, the moment we have said 'I am this, I am separate, I am an individual' we have made further superimpositions inevitable. The claim to individuality for ourselves implies individuality everywhere. It automatically superimposes a multiple world of creatures and objects upon the One... Ego-idea and world appearance depend upon each other. Lose the ego-idea in transcendental consciousness, and the world appearance (as we ordinarily know it) must also vanish. [23]

Superimposition, like projection and transference, results in a fundamental and generally unconscious misperception of one's immediate surroundings. By superimposing the qualities of separateness and difference onto our innermost identity and the objects around us, we distort the nature of the world.

A second stage of superimposition (which we shall discuss in detail in the next chapter) occurs when the ego idea (I am Mr. Smith or Mr. so and so) reaches out and begins to identify itself with the various

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[23] Ibid., pg.283.

structures; the body, one's physical and mental attributes, actions, ideas and so forth. As superimpositions multiply, 'I statements' (I am Catholic, I am resourceful, I get hurt easily) become increasingly more complex, qualitative, and numerous. Eventually the developing ego claims purely external objects and things as its own (this is my wife, here is my car) by identifying (or disidentifying) in various degrees with every object of the world. Behind this process of superimposition/maya that dominates our phenomenological world of thought remains the true Self, Atman. Utterly detached from the moods and workings of the ego, the Self looks on. It alone provides the real ground of being without which the ego would cease to exist.

Vedanta has placed all those aspects of ordinary consciousness that involve superimposition within the realm of Appearance. The consignment of such a large portion of our everyday rational-analytic thought to a lesser aspect of being and reality explains why so much effort has been expended in transcending everyday modes of thought through meditation. Schuster, comparing Western psychotherapy with Eastern psychologies has commented on the latter's emphasis on 'ego-transcendence'. [24] Western psychologies, by contrast, are more exclusively concerned with 'ego-enhancement'.

Schuster has observed that psychotherapy has traditionally studied the wide range of dysfunctional behaviors and coping styles

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[24] Schuster, Richard, Toward a Synthesis of Eastern Psychology and Western Psychotherapy. Psychology, Vol.14 (1), pgs. 3-14, 1977.

that interfere with ordinary living. He asserts that Western psychology is the 'negative path'; its theories and techniques begin by outlining present negative or unhealthy aspects of personality, and then seeks new techniques and theories to eliminate these dysfunctional elements. The Western therapist strives to foster more healthy ego functioning by alleviating the feelings and perceptions of worthlessness, anxiety, depression etc. that cripple the ego. Therapy generally aims at fostering an enhanced sense of self/ego within the client.

Indian systems of meditation, by contrast, address themselves to many of the more universal causes of suffering inherent in the operations of the relatively normal ego. Indian models of human development concentrate on such areas as the appropriate and inappropriate uses of thought, the control and mastery of anxiety through non-attachment to ordinary sources of reinforcement, and the practice of maintaining equanimity and compassion as a means of alleviating negative emotions. Schuster terms Indian psychology as the 'positive path' because its theories and methods (yoga and meditation specifically) encourage ego-transcendence as a means of alleviating a wide variety of human ills. The Indian world view, with its emphasis on the unity underlying all beings, consequently encourages a sense of values and way of perceiving the world that discourage self-actualization via methods that strengthen the ego's sense of separateness or specialness.

It is crucial that the reader understand that the starting points of Western psychotherapy and Indian meditation (as a technique

of ego-transcendence) are quite different. Whereas Western therapies begin with dysfunctional persons at various stages of personal development, Indian meditative disciplines are reserved for persons who are already relatively healthy individuals. This pre-requisite is echoed in the famous Indian epic, the Mahabharata, "the way of yoga is only for a man of unweakened mind and character... for none else, that is clear." [25]

Meditation, in all its advanced forms, comprises a sustained method for transforming consciousness from a stage where it limits itself to the confines of the solitary ego, to the next level of consciousness which is trans-personal, trans-temporal, and transcendental. This transition, which we shall discuss in the following chapter, is an exceedingly difficult and demanding process. It presupposes a level of personal development that has already reached the upper limits of growth from within the confines of an egoistic (dualistic) world view, yet has found this perspective insufficient. Yet until this transition is accomplished, the individual's level of personal understanding remains within the illusory realm of Appearance only, devoid of the illuminating knowledge of his true Self which is pure consciousness.

Vedanta's numerous teachings and insights into the impermanence of all the things that the ordinary man uses to maintain a secure sense of himself has one purpose, to produce a deep sense of frustration, dissatisfaction, and disillusionment. Until this point is

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[25] Fuerstein, Georg, and Miller, Jeanine, A Reappraisal of Yoga. London: Rider & Co., pg.7, 1971.

reached, an individual's desire for transcendence remains weak and unsteady. Deussen adds:

> For he who enjoys the day of life with childlike cheerfulness, however high a flight his genius may take in other respects, will only touch in passing the last and highest problems of being, ... to seize them fully and clearly requires a deep feeling of the nothingness and vanity of all this life, and a corresponding longing to pass (quoting the Brihadaranyaka Upanisad) 'from the non-existent to the existent, from darkness to light, from death to immortality.' [26]

The average individual possesses a multitude of defense mechanisms designed to repress or obscure the inescapable fact of his own mortality and the impermanent character of his solitary ego. Vedanta echoes the sentiment of Ernest Becker who, in affecting a synthesis of psychoanalytic and existential viewpoints concludes "It is not libido that constitutes man's most fundamental repression, but rather death itself." [27] The fact that few individuals seriously question the transitory nature of everything they hold to be real and permanent attests to the effectiveness of these mechanisms.

The meditative tradition of India has classically examined the nature of the ego and its defenses, and found it wanting as a source of permanence or true being. For over two thousand years within Indian systems of yoga, there has been an unbroken succession of highly trained teachers and students who have devoted entire lifetimes to the

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[26] Deussen, op. cit., pg.82.

[27] Becker, Ernest, The Denial of Death. N.Y.: Doubleday and Co., pg.14, 1973.

practice of self-observation and the study of the ego. Their insights and systematic methods of introspection form the basis of contemporary meditative practice. With a rigor matching that of modern science, they extensively explored the inner workings of their own minds. Indian psychology and philosophy served to record and organize the recurring insights derived from the data of their personal experience and experimentation.

The culmination of India's long study into the nature of the mind and consciousness has been her insistence on self-realization through ego transcendence. Yogic disciplines that enable modern adepts to achieve near miraculous mastery over their physiological processes are impressive, all on their own, to modern science. From the Vedantic perspective, however, such mastery is only a preliminary method for eliminating physiological and sensory distractions that can interfere with objective self-observation and study of the ego. In order to discover the transcendent aspects of one's being, Vedanta maintains that one must overcome an even more pervasive source of distraction and interference, i.e. the enormous complex of subjective elements that constitute the mind. In the next chapter we will review this monumental task, and meditation's crucial role in ego-transcendence.

CHAPTER III

MEDITATION AND THE PSYCHOLOGY OF CONSCIOUSNESS

Know that all creatures pursue and act, by nature, to the end to become like God. Meister Eckehart [1]

All creatures seek after unity; all multiplicity struggles toward it -- the universal aim of all life is always this unity. Johan Tauler [2]

The evolution of consciousness beyond the boundaries of the ego toward ever higher and more inclusive states of consciousness is a long and arduous process. Vedanta describes this highest state of self-realization and consciousness in terms of our underlying nature as Atman. The varieties of meditative practice in India serve as the primary vehicle for this realization. Yet for the average Westerner, the majority of these ideas, practices, and theories of evolution remain foreign and confusing. Western psychology faces a similar dilemna in bridging the gap between its developmental theories that emphasize ego-development and ego-enhancement, and Indian developmental theory that describes the highest stages of ego-transcendence.

In this chapter, we will be investigating meditation's role as a vehicle for ego-transcendence. The ego traditionally serves as the indispensable center for consciousness in Western developmental theories. In Vedantic and yogic systems of development, however, this

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[1] Fuerstein, Georg, and Miller, Jeanine, A Reappraisal of Yoga. London: Rider & Co.,, pg.2, 1971.

[2] Wilber, Ken, The Atman Project. Wheaton: Theosophical Publishing Co., pg.xii, 1980.

eventually becomes an impediment toward further growth. In order to understand the growth inhibiting aspects of the ego, we need to gain a clearer understanding of its development and its limiting characteristics. For this purpose, we shall employ Wilber's model of the evolution of the ego (or self-sense) which he outlines in his most recent work, The Atman Project. [3] Wilber's transpersonal (or trans-egoic) developmental model is especially valuable because he integrates ideas of Western ego-development with an Eastern appreciation of the need to radically dis-identify with the basic structures of the ego during the uppermost stages of growth. A summary of the Vedantic model of the mind and ego will also be presented; it not only provides another context for understanding meditation's effectiveness in overcoming egoic processes but it also provides a bridge between the seemingly divergent theories of Eastern and Western psychology.

Wilber's Transpersonal Model of Development:

Wilber draws upon a vast range of theoretical sources in formulating his transpersonal view of development that he entitles the 'Atman project'. His ideas represent a synthesis of Western analytic, humanistic, existential, and transpersonal psychologies with the primary schools of Eastern religion and philosophy (including Hinduism, Buddhism, and Vedanta). Incorporating the cognitive studies of Piaget,[4]

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[3] Ibid.

[4] Piaget, J., Structuralism. N.Y.: Basic Books, 1970.

and Werner [5] with the developmental studies of Loevinger, [6] Arieti, [7] Maslow, [8] Jacobsen, [9] Kohlberg, [10] and others, Wilber begins his description of the essential characteristics of all human development.

Heinz Werner was convinced that "Wherever development occurs it proceeds from a state of relative globality and lack of differentiation to a state of increasing differentiation, articulation, and hierarchical organization." [11] The philosopher Jan Smuts observed this same process in nature and commented that "Everywhere we look in nature we see nothing but wholes. And not merely simple wholes but hierarchical ones: each whole is part of a larger whole which itself is part of a larger whole." [12] Adopting a dynamic picture of the

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[5] Werner, H., The concept of development from a comparative and organismic point of view. Harris, ed. The Concept of Development, Minneapolis: Univ. of Minn. Press, 1957.

[6] Loevinger, J., Ego Development. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1976.

[7] Arieti, S., The Intrapsychic Self. New York: Basic Books, 1967.

[8] Maslow, Abraham, Toward a Psychology of Being. New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold, 1968.

[9] Jacobsen, E., The Self and Object World. New York: International Universities Press, 1964.

[10] Kohlberg, L., Development of moral character and moral ideology. In Hoffman, M., and Hoffman, L., (eds.) Review of Child Development Research. Vol.1, 1964.

[11] Wilber, op. cit., pg.1.

[12] Smuts, Jan, Holism and Evolution. New York: Macmillan, 1926.

universe, Smuts termed this ceaseless dynamic drive from homogeneity to ever higher unities within nature, 'holism'.

Wilber maintains that the human psyche is a similar expression of this evolutionary growth process. He states, "Psychological growth is simply a microcosmic reflection of universal growth on the whole, and has the same goal: the unfolding of ever higher unities and integrations. And this is one of the major reasons that the psyche is, indeed, stratified. Very like the geological formation of the earth, psychological development proceeds, stratum by stratum, level by level, stage by stage, with each successive level superimposed upon its predecessor in such a way that it includes and transcends it." [13]

The whole of any developmental stage becomes merely a part within the next larger whole that succeeds it; this whole is itself transformed into a part by the next successive stage... ad infinitum Using language development as an example, a child first imitates babbling sounds which are then subsumed within a larger whole (vowel and consonant sounds), which is succeeded by simple words, then phrases, and then simple and extended sentences. At each stage, Jakobsen [14] comments, the new structure of language is superimposed upon the earlier ones, until the newest structure is itself dissolved and reorganized within the context of the next highest strata of language.

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[13] Wilber, op. cit., pg.1.

[14] Jakobsen R., Child language aphasia and phonological universals. In Gardner, H., The Quest for Mind. N.Y.:Vintage Press, 1972.

Modern developmental psychology has investigated such diverse aspects of the personality as: cognitive development, the acquisition of language, moral and emotional development, and the formation of intrapsychic structures and psychosexual stages. For our purposes, we shall concentrate exclusively on Wilber's description of the development of the 'self-sense' or ego as it evolves from a state of undifferentiation and oceanic inconscience at birth, to ever higher states of unity, consciousness, and integration. In describing the lower and middle stages of this development of the self-sense Wilber draws primarily from the Western psychological literature; when he describes the highest levels of development of human consciousness (assuming that the authentic mystic/seer represents these stages) he turns increasingly to Eastern systems of thought.

The self-sense, viewed in terms of the overall life cycle, moves from the lower stages of subconsciousness (predominantly instinctual, pre-temporal, impulsive, primary process and id dominated) to self consciousness (egoic, temporal, secondary process conceptual thought) to superconsciousness (transcendent, transpersonal, and transtemporal). The driving force behind this evolutionary movement, Wilber contends, is man's innate drive toward ever higher self-esteem, i.e. "to be an object of primary value, representing in himself all life, 'cosmocentric', first in the universe, god-like, Atman itself." [15]

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[15] Wilber, op. cit., pg.121.

Wilber believes that man's drive toward self-esteem, or to use Becker's [16] terms, to be Heroic, constitutes man's deepest and most fundamental motivation. Heroism itself, Becker states, is first and foremost a reflex of the terror of death. "From that terror emerges the universal need to be immortal, deathless, spaceless and timeless, infinite, One and the Whole." [17] From birth onward through all the stages of its growth, the self-sense repeatedly faces the possibility of its own destruction by anything that falls within the category of 'the other'. The limited definition of self at each developmental stage can be threatened or opposed by elements that stand apart from the self. The threat of death or annihilation at each successive stage of its growth requires, according to Wilber, that the ego leave behind its familiar self-definition at a particular level and move upward toward an ever more comprehensive (i.e. less limited) and unified (i.e. less dualistic) understanding of itself. Should this upward process fixate or regress at any transitional point between the various stages of development, personal growth is halted long before the highest states of consciousness. Insofar as transcendence from one level of development to another always involves a 'dying' to the familiar boundaries that constituted the previous self, upward growth can often be perceived as a threat in and of itself. Western psychology is intimately aware of the variety of defense mechanisms that the ego can

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[16] Becker, Ernest, The Denial of Death. N.Y.:Doubleday & Co., 1973.

[17] Ibid., pg.3.

develop to protect itself against change or growth.

It is beyond the scope of this work to detail all the examples and explanations Wilber cites to illustrate his model of development. A working knowledge of his model is possible however, if we concentrate on the central principles of development that he employs. A cursory survey of his developmental stages from birth upward will serve to illustrate these principles in a more concrete manner. The foundation will then exist for introducing the role of meditation in transforming consciousness beyond Wilber's stage of the 'existential self', the highest level of Western ego-enhancement.

The Early and Middle Stages in the Development of Self-Consciousness:

Loevinger has concluded that the baby at birth cannot be said to have an ego.[18] Indeed, for the neonate, existing within the most primitive state of wholeness and oceanic bliss, there are no distinctions between self and not-self, body and environment, inside or outside. Wilber adapts the word 'pleromatic' (from the gnostic term pleroma referring to a state where the self and material world is undifferentiated) for this first stage.[19] The pleromatic self is adual, pre-spatial, pre-temporal, and autistic. In the absence of any perceived limitations, this embryonic ego enjoys a paradise of innocence and the magical omnipotence of ignorance.

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[18] Wilber, op.cit., pg.7.

[19] Ibid., pg.7.

The first challenge of the infant is to fashion some sort of world of objects apart from himself. Wilber's 'uroboric' stage appears when the neonate makes its first and most primitive distinctions between subject and object during the first weeks of life. Doing nothing, lying inert in the unconscious, the uroboric self experiences various rudimentary tensions of hunger followed by pleasure when fed. This primitive sense of self, still only a germinal form of the ego, creates momentary boundaries of inside and outside, hunger and nourishment, discomfort and satisfaction. The uroboric self goes on to make numerous other distinctions during a period that Wilber states roughly overlaps Piaget's first three stages of sensorimotor development.

The onset of this first duality, uroboric self and uroboric other, is also the landmark of the first primordial fear. The Jungians and Freudians are in agreement that this fear is best interpreted as an oral one, i.e. the fear of being swallowed, engulfed, or annihilated by the 'bad breast'. [20] Since the uroboric self realizes it can swallow 'the other', it itself fears the same fate. The Upanisads echo the sentiment that this process is the same at all levels of development, "Whenever there is other...there is fear." [21]

The typhonic self arises next, usually between the ages of four to eighteen months. This stage is broken down into two substages;

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[20] Klein, M., The Psychoanalysis of Children. N.Y.: International University Press, 1960.

[21] Prabhavananda, S., The Spiritual Heritage of India. N.Y.: Doubleday & Co., pg.61, 1963.

first there develops an awareness of the axial body, followed by the later development of the 'image body'. The axial body refers to the neonate's new ability to sense its physical body as clearly distinct from its surrounding environment. The neonate's world consists of a series of momentary axial images and objects (sensations perceived 'in here', objects perceived 'out there') which afterwards immediately disappear from awareness. The emotions of this substage are what Arieti calls 'proto-emotions', such as fear, rage, tension, satisfaction, or dissatisfaction. [22] Quick, short-circuited seeking or avoiding behaviors motivated by survival and pleasure needs dominate this sub-stage. A rudimentary self-consciousness emerges as the organism forms simple relationships between its emotional and perceptual states and other objects.

The typhonic self's emergent ability to create extensive imagery (that is, to attain object constancy) is the decisive achievement of the second sub-stage. The first significant images are hypothesized to be primarily axial ones directed at the mother, for example images of the good breast/bad breast, or good mother/bad mother. As these images and mental representations expand, however, they encompass an ever greater number of images of the neonate's axial body which coalesce into a sense of 'I-ness'. Another crucial transformation of this sub-stage takes place with reference to time. The young child's

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[22] Arieti, S., The Intrapsychic Self. N.Y.: Basic Books, 1967.

matrix of experience has become expanded through time in a symbolic and representative fashion. The child can now experience prolonged emotions sustained by the feeling tone of the images he produces. Anxiety, which is nothing but imaginal and sustained fear, is similarly extended in time; on the private side, wish-fulfillment and varieties of imagined pleasure also become more predominant.

The imaginal processes at these early stages still operate in what Sullivan calls 'the parataxic mode'. [23] The undifferentiated wholeness of experience is broken down into parts which are still not connected in any logical or syntaxical manner. The infant operates from a primary process world of fantasy and wish-fulfillment that is less productive than the more creative and unifying use of fantasy found at the higher stages of development.

There is general agreement within psychology that these early stages of growth are dominated by the most basic biological and psychological needs and processes. Wilber views the typhonic sense of self as a sort of 'body-ego'. This body-ego is dominated by the most instinctual urges which are pre-social, impulsive, id-dominated, and visceral (pre-occupied with such activities as biting, sucking, chewing, grasping, and touching).

Yet in the process of differentiating self from object, the generalized awareness of the body forms the first real expression of

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[23] Sullivan, H.S., The Interpersonal Theory of Psychiatry. N.Y.: Norton Press, pg.28, 1953.

individuality. The body-ego has transcended its material environment in such a way that it can now perform operations on the 'uroboric other' of its former stage. An important triad of evolution has taken place. By first differentiating the self from object (material world), the typhonic self transcends that object and can operate on it using the structure developed at the next highest stage. Although its mastery is quite fragile, the typhonic bodyego has transcended the pre-temporal material oneness of the pleromatic paradise.

The emergence and acquisition of language signals the transition into the next developmental stage, that of the 'membership self'. The child's phenomenal world is radically transformed by the use of language, altering not only his new sense of self, but also his cognitive style, sense of time, and perception of reality. The child's ability to use language and abstract thought does not happen all at once, and at first is still permeated by the earlier structures of primary process illogic and magical thinking. Gradually, however, the acquisition of language transforms pre-logical cognition into logical, linear, and organized abstract thinking.

From a phenomenological perspective, the child begins the process of constructing a comprehensive picture of the world based on the cultural views of his membership group. Through the symbols of language, grammar, and syntax, the child learns a particular description of things that is superimposed on the pre-verbal consciousness of the earlier typhonic realm. He is further taught to call this

description reality. Wilber makes reference to the teachings of don Juan from Journey to Ixtlan to emphasize this point:

> For a sorcerer, reality, or the world we all know is only a description.
>
> For the sake of validating this premise don Juan concentrated the best of his efforts into leading me to a genuine conviction that what I held in my mind as the world in hand was merely a description of the world; a description that had been pounded into me from the time I was born.
>
> He pointed out that everyone who comes into contact with a child is a teacher who incessantly describes the world to him, until the moment when the child is capable of perceiving the world as it is described. According to don Juan, we have no memory of that portentous moment, simply because none of us could possibly have had any point of reference to compare it to anything else.
>
> For don Juan, then, the reality of our day to day life consists of an endless flow of perceptual interpretations that we, the individuals who share a specific membership, have learned to make in common. [24]

The membership self transforms the pre-verbal images of the bodyego into a new form, consistent with the symbolic representations of his membership group. Wilber reiterates that the primary reason early childhood memories are forgotten is not due to repression, but because these earlier experiences do not fit the newly emergent linguistic structures of the membership self; the child simply outgrows the pre-verbal imaginal structures of the typhonic self and no longer has access to the processes necessary to represent these earliest experiences.

Consciousness, greatly expanded through the vehicle of symbolic language, creates for the mind a mode of perceiving the world that

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[24] Casteneda, C., Journey to Ixtlan. N.Y.: Simon & Schuster, 1972.

extends far beyond the moment by moment sensory input of the typhonic bodyego. Time is no longer the extended present of imagination, but itself becomes a sequence of discrete events, a linear chain of abstract representations divided into the past, present, and future. Linear thinking is also encouraged by the fact that English itself is a 'linear' language as opposed to the idiographic, character based languages of the far East.

The child's formation of an abstract conception of time enables him to achieve a more active mastery of his surroundings. By inserting 'time' between immediate perception and instinctual response, the child is able to learn from past mistakes as well as anticipate future consequences. The result of this delayed reaction process is something that Neumann, a Jungian, views as a splitting of the various gestalts of experience.[25] The membership self learns to break up the larger context into partial aspects, experiencing things piecemeal, one after another in linear succession, in time.

Language acquisition not only expands the child's world, it also allows him to delay, control, and channel his earlier impulsive behaviors so as to earn membership in a much larger community. The price he pays for this upward expanse of consciousness is an increased sense of his own isolation and vulnerability as an individual within a world greatly expanded in time and space. This period is often

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[25] Neumann, E., The Origins and History of Consciousness. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1973.

marked by the onset of an extended period of nightmares for the child, reflecting a sense of terror and mortality that inevitably accompanies the realization of separateness. Language, nonetheless, becomes an indispensable structure whereby the child can transcend the simply present world of images and instinctive urges of the typhonic ego. As the child enters the world of true mental and conceptual functioning, he develops an increased ability to picture sequences of ideas and events not immediately present to the body's five senses. As the mental membership self emerges and differentiates from the axial body, it thereby transcends the body and can operate upon it using the higher structures of verbal mediation.

Before proceeding to the next two increasingly complex stages of Wilber's model, we need to reflect on one insight. What continually amazed Wilber throughout all stages of growth was the surprising fact that although the contents of each stage were quite different, the form whereby evolution occurred was essentially the same. At this early point in our short review of the Atman project, we can see how after a higher order structure is introduced into consciousness, the self abandons its old structure and identifies with the newly emergent structure. We have observed how the self-sense, leaving behind its pleromatic fusion with the material world, gradually identifies with the bodyin terms of the typhonic self. Subsequently, as language emerges to dominate consciousness, the self begins to shift away from its exclusive identification as a bodyego toward its greater

identification as a membership self bound by the structures of syntaxical language.

Wilber summarizes the essential form of psychological growth by noting that at each point of transition between developmental stages we find: 1) a higher order structure emerges in consciousness (with the help of symbolic forms), 2) the self identifies its being with that higher structure, 3) the next higher structure eventually emerges, 4) the self disidentifies with the lower structure and shifts its essential identity to the higher structure, 5) consciousness thereby transcends the lower structure, 6) and becomes capable of operating on that lower structure from the higher order level, 7) such that all preceding levels can be integrated into consciousness, an ultimately as Pure Consciousness.[26]

Each time a major transition occurs, a new higher-order structure gradually emerges from the deepest levels of the psyche, subsuming the lower structure preceding it. At each developmental shift, the 'whole' of one level becomes merely a part of the next higher order whole. The primary mode of the self becomes merely a component of the new higher-order self (for example the body was the mode of the self before language emerged, whereupon it became merely a component of the self). Development and transcendence became equatable terms within Wilber's system.

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[26] Wilber, op. cit., pg.80.

Wilber describes this process in several different ways in order to fully clarify his idea. He observes that: 1) what is 'whole' becomes 'part', 2) what is formerly 'identification' becomes 'detachment', 3) what is 'context' becomes 'content', 4) what is 'ground' becomes 'figure' (which releases higher-order ground), 5) what is subjective becomes objective (until both of these terms become meaningless), 6) what is 'condition' becomes 'element' (for example, the mind which is the a priori condition of egoic experience becomes merely an element of experience in the higher order realms). [27]

Wilber's purpose is to demonstrate how transcendence is not something which is extraordinary or occult but rather an integral part of everyone's experience in the process of growing.

> The infant learning to differentiate his body from the environment is simply transcending the pleromatic world; the child learning mental language is simply transcending the world AND the simple body; the person in meditation is simply transcending the world AND the body AND the mind.
>
> The form of each growth is essentially the same... the form of transcendence: it traces a gentle curve from subconsciousness through self-consciousness, remembering more and more, transcending more and more, integrating more and more, unifying more and more, until there is only that Unity which was already the case from the start... ultimate in all directions. [28]

The Mental-Egoic and Existential Realms

The fourth and fifth stages preceding the self's entry into transpersonal states of consciousness are named the Mental-Egoic and

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[27] Ibid., pg.81.

[28] Ibid., pg.81.

and Centauric-Existential realms, respectively. Insofar as these two stages encompass the largest span of the developmental sequence (roughly from the ages of six to adulthood), we will be forced to limit our coverage to only those aspects of ego development most relevant to our discussion of meditation as a vehicle of transformation beyond these stages.

The core of the self-sense within the mental-egoic realm is essentially a 'thought-self, or self-concept. The ego becomes a constellation of self-concepts or identifications which form a nucleus for the complex assosciational entourage (of memories, experiences, images, attitudes, and sub-personalities) which evolve over time. Arieti lucidly details the central importance of the idea/concept in influencing the nature of the developing ego at this stage:

> Except in the earliest phases of development, the individual's state of cognition determines most of the changes which occur in his psychodynamic life. It is his state of cognition that reelaborates past and present experience and, to a large extent, alters their emotional assosciations. Among the most powerful and emotional forces which motivate and disturb men are many which are sustained or engendered by complicated symbolic processes. The individual's concept-feelings of personal significance, of self-identity, of his role in life, of self-esteem, could not exist without these complex cognitive constructs... Concepts enter into and to a large extent constitute the image of the self. Man at the conceptual level no longer sees himself as a physical entity or as a name, but as a repository of concepts which refer to his own person... In thinking, feeling, and even in acting, man becomes more concerned with concepts than with things. [29]

Cognitive-learning, psychodynamic, and developmental theorists

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[29] Arieti, op. cit., pg.42-43.

have extensively studied the manner wherein the child and adolescent first form the identifications with significant others that later becomes the foundation for various intrapsychic and cognitive structures. Freud's formulation of the superego, Jung's 'persona', and Horney's 'idealized self' are but a few examples of the intra-egoic thought structures that have arisen in psychology's history. Western psychology has been particularly strong in detailing the various ways particular aspects of these egoic structures can be repressed, distorted, selectively screened from awareness, fixated on, or projected in the course of a lifetime. For the sake of simplicity, Wilber adopts Jung's terms 'personae' and 'shadow' to represent the sum total of all those aspects and self-identifications that combine to form the self- sense at this stage. The shadow, of course, refers to those aspects of the personal self which could just as well have access to conscious awareness, but which for dynamic reasons, do not.

By the late stages of the mental-egoic level (ages twelve to twenty-one) the individual, depending on his ability to come to terms with the dynamically defended aspects of his personality, hopefully begins to master and integrate his various personae. This mastery takes place as the individual becomes able to first identify and differentiate the various aspects of his personae, and then disidentify with them. This dis-identification enables the individual to rise above any confining or restricting aspects of his overall persona, thereby clearing the ground for a new, more mature, and integrated ego.

This process of self-actualization through the formation of ever broader and more integrated conceptions of the self becomes the prime activity of the Centauric-Existential realm.

The self-sense's upward evolution is by no means a simple or inevitable process. We cannot cover the various principles Wilber employs to explain the self's success or failure as it faces the challenges at each developmental level, or in the transition between two levels. Nor can we cover the use of symbolism and the five levels of unconscious processes that Wilber defines within his model. Yet it is important that we understand one fundamental conflict that determines the success or failure of the Atman project at each successive level in its upward drive. Before describing that conflict, we need to clarify one other aspect of his paradigm.

Wilber's model of development rests firmly on the assumption that a person already possesses at birth (albeit unconsciously) all the 'deep structures' necessary in his struggle to move from pre-personal to personal and then transpersonal states of consciousness. The term 'deep structures' (adopted from linguistics) refers to the basic limiting principles that dictate all the potentials inherent to that stage of development. Each successive stage has a unique deep structure which remains emergent or enfolded within the all encompassing 'ground-unconscious' up until its point of actualization. [30]

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[30] Wilber, op.cit.,pg.83.

Jung, of course, was the pioneer in illustrating the innate existence of such deep structures as archaic symbols and racial memories which are present at birth. These archaic images and potentialities were not inherited in the sense of having been a product of earlier experience. Instead, the archetypes are viewed as arising from innate predispositions that have formed in the course of man's phylogenetic evolution. Wilber extends this idea one step further. Not only are there rudimentary deep structures containing the archetypal patterns of man's racial past but there are also pre-existing 'higher' deep structures. These structures contain the visionary symbols and archetypes that signal the emergence of transcendent states of consciousness in the movement toward Oneness, Unity, Atman realization.

The belief that a person at birth possesses all that is necessary for transcendence is a common theme within the spiritual literature of both the East and West. Wilber, of course, postulates the universal drive to actualize one's enfolded potential for absolute unity and wholeness as man's most fundamental psychological motivation. The problem, however, is that the self-sense achieves only a limited approximation of this wholeness at each stage of its growth. The unity of the self-sense at each level is compromised by the defining characteristics of that stage, hence the ego achieves only a limited actualization of its Atman nature. Thus at each stage the self must be content with what Wilber sees as only a compromised realization of its innermost being, a realization that more perfectly and fully approximates

Unity and Wholeness at each successive atage.

At each of the lower and middle stages of development, the self-sense must be satisfied with substitutive forms/gestalts of integration and wholeness. As we have previously noted, the continued existence of the separateness of the ego is maintained by the superimposition of numerous boundaries upon a prior sense of undivided wholeness. The greater the number of these boundaries, the more this original sense of wholeness becomes obscured in the process of superimposition.

As a person habituates to the belief that the self-imposed boundaries comprising the ego are ultimately real, a fundamental dilemna is created. Since personal existence is defined as possible only within the limited boundaries created by the ego, any loosening or dissolution of those boundaries is perceived as a threat of death or annihilation on one's being or identity. Transcendence, however, because it requires that the self-sense detach itself from an exclusive identification of the egoic structures at that stage, represents a form of dying to the present form of the ego. Caught between two opposing forces, on one side the desire for transcendence, while on the other the need for security and stable boundaries, the self-sense faces conflict on every level.

Once wholeness of being is first obscured by the emergence of a separate self-sense, two major drives are created, Eros and Thanatos.[31]

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[31] Ibid., pg.104.

Wilber defines Eros as the drive for perpetuating the ego's present existence, and avoiding anything that might signal its dissolution (i.e. Thanatos). "This inward, isolated, pseudo-self is fiercely defended against death, dissolution, and transcendence on one hand, while aspiring and pretending to be cosmocentric, omnipotent, and immortal on the other." [32] Yet Eros creates a double-bind for itself. Its ultimate desire is to recapture a sense of wholeness, but in order to do so it must dissolve all boundaries between self and other...and this is precisely what it resists. Since true union is not possible for Eros, it develops symbolic substitutes for true unity. Wilber describes it in terms of ontological hunger, endlessly seeking, grasping, desiring, wishing, and planning in its search for wholeness, but finding only hollow imitations.

Eros, driven by the correct intuition that in essence the self is none other than Atman, nonetheless resists the possibility of change and transcendence. In the place of <u>being</u> everything (a characteristic sense of Oneness experienced during higher states of consciousness), Eros desires to merely <u>have</u> everything. [33] The separate self stalls in its upward evolution until it eventually becomes deeply dissatisfied and disillusioned with its substitute forms of omnipotence and cosmocentricity (such as strivings for fame, wealth, power, professional status, and authority). Ever present behind each substitute object with

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[32] Ibid., pg.104.

[33] Ibid. pg. 106.

which the self-sense identifies (the mortal body, a set of values, ideas, or personal experiences) remains Thanatos to signal the impermanence and illusory nature of that object.

Thanatos, by nature, ceaselessly conspires to destroy the moment by moment boundaries that the ego constructs. It is the primal death terror or fear that is experienced by all beings that become acutely aware of their own separateness and sense of isolation. Yet Thanatos is also a force of transcendence; it plays a crucial role in tearing down the constraining boundaries of the self at one stage to facilitate the self's transformation to the next level. Wilber provides a few simple examples of the death terror at the early stages of growth:

> We saw that at the bodyego stage, the self was almost exclusively identified with the body's simple emotions and instincts. Its Eros seeking is instinctual, biological, visceral-hunger, and if these instincts are traumatically frustrated (say, the hunger drive of the infant), then that disruption is experienced as a death-seizure, to disrupt the instinct is to disrupt the self, because they are identical at that stage.
>
> As the verbal mind emerges, however, the self differentiates or disidentifies from its exclusive attachment to the instincts, and switches its essential identity to the verbal self (let's say the persona). It can now accept -- within limits -- the frustration of the eating instinct: it no longer 'dies' when food is not immediately available or forthcoming -- it simply gets hungry. But it now has a new seizure. Humiliation for instance, is a death-seizure of the persona.
>
> The self, which is now identified with the persona, suffers a literal death seizure if the persona 'loses face' or is fundamentally humiliated. The persona says"I could have died of embarassment". This occurs and will occur as long as the self is identified with the persona and it ceases only when and if the self disidentifies with the persona, accepts its death, transcends it, and moves on to a higher and more inclusive self-structure. This process is repeated at every stage... When all the structures have been dis-identified with and transcended, there is only the Boundless. [34]

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[34] Ibid. pg.110.

Wilber's thesis describing the self's development toward ultimate transcendence becomes increasingly less abstract as one reads his entire work; the Atman Project provides numerous examples and explanations for each of his major assertions. For our purposes, however, we are most concerned with the ego's transition beyond the existential-centauric stage of development. This is the point where meditation becomes the primary vehicle for accomplishing that task.

We have already mentioned that Vedanta clearly states that the sustained practice of meditation should only be undertaken by persons of strong mind and character. In addition, such an individual has typically experienced a growing dissatisfaction with the more conventional pre-occupations and pleasures of the world as he increasingly turns his attention toward questions of authenticity and meaning in the face of his own death and finitude. This latter quality characterizes the individual within the existential-centauric stage of development.

A great deal of self-actualization has already occurred within the existential self; it has overcome a series of more narrow egoic self-identifications and superego conditioning from the past. Body-mind separations have largely been subsumed within the existential self's ability to realize the underlying unity between its somatic and psychic components. The existential self, representing the highest level of growth of the mature ego, is relatively rare within society as a whole. But even at this stage, there remains a strong sense of autonomy, individuality, and separateness from 'the Other'.

Despite the existential self's new pre-occupation with questions of its own being, and its relative freedom from the everyday concerns that dominated its earlier stages, it still possesses certain egoic characteristics. The existential self still experiences a sense of anxiety at the prospect of totally abandoning the surviving identifications it utilizes to construct its sense of self.

The existential self at this point, however, discovers its pervasive ability to create its own sense of meaning for everything it does. The meaning of any action or object in one's phenomenological world is realized to be a function of the self's 'intention' with regard to that object or action. Equally important, as Husserl and subsequent phenomenologists have observed, intentionality and meaning are a product of the mind. The existential self becomes acutely aware of the subjective manner in which his mind creates and sustains the sense of meaning (or meaninglessness) of all his acts, and indeed his very sense of self.

From an existential point of view there is no escaping or transcending this fundamental relationship between the mind and self. The existentialists stress man's awesome responsibility and loneliness when he realizes that through his mind, he singlehandedly chooses the meaning or value of all things. In the face of uncertainty, death, or a lack of meaning, the existential self can only exercise a rebellious courage to choose authentically despite his doubts, fears, and uncertainties.

At this point, Wilber leaves behind existentialism and Western

theories of ego-development. At this juncture in Indian models of development, it is the very structure of the mind (and its capacity for ascribing valuation, meaning, and intention) that must be overcome. The mind has always served as an indispensable component of the self in Western psychological theories. The radical step of disidentification with the extensive workings of the mind therefore, appears impossible. Yet Vedantic systems of meditation have evolved with that express purpose to quiet the complex, turbulent processes of the mental apparatus.

The Vedantic model of the mind provides a good working model of the basic components of this 'apparatus'. The Vedantic model is particularly valuable because it was formulated to describe the role the mind can play in sustaining a limited sense of self/ego (whether at the existential or lower levels of development). Meditation's purpose, consequently, centers on its role in transforming and transcending the mind while developing access to more powerful faculties of awareness.

The Vedantic Model of the Mind

As we have mentioned, a major obstacle in the self's struggle to move beyond the existential level derives from the self-sense's strong identification with the mind. The existential-centauric self has already become increasingly cognizant of the manner with which it creates a personal sense of meaning in the face of death. Furthermore,

the self continually atfributes its actual existence to the structure of the mind, a mind that it sees as giving meaning to every object it confronts.

From the Vedantic perspective, however, pure consciousness and being reside only in the Self/Atman. The mind is only an 'instrument' of knowing, a tool that one may use, say as one might use a computer or microscope. Yoga psychology warns of the danger of exclusively identifying oneself with the mind (i.e. I <u>am</u> the thoughts I'm thinking, the memories I'm remembering, the perceptions I'm perceiving) rather than pure consciousness itself which <u>uses</u> the mind. A simplified working model of the Vedantic conception of the mind will help clarify this pivotal idea.

For the most part, psychology has studied the mind indirectly; the investigator first postulates some hypothesis and then gathers relevant empirical evidence to test his ideas. For the most part, psychology has abandoned serious efforts to develop a viable discipline of introspection for directly studying mental processes. One reason for this may be its belief that the ordinary person is an unreliable source of information about his own mind because he is too much a part of what is being studied. The situation is not unlike that of atomic physics, when physicists realized they could not investigate atomic phenomena with total precision because their instruments themselves affected to a significant degree what was being studied. The typical individual, according to the Vedantic viewpoint, does not at first

possess the ability for observing and studying the functioning of his own mind; he would quickly become overly involved and subsumed within the normal stream of covert processes (mental, emotional, and perceptual) that comprises his everyday consciousness.

Over the course of the last two thousand years, however, Indian systems of meditation and yoga have evolved with the specific purpose of enabling the serious individual to directly study the structure and workings of his own 'internal instrument', the mind. "The mind"' Swami Rama comments, "is seen by the practitioner of yoga as not only an obstacle to the consciousness he seeks, but also as a bridge over which he may reach that consciousness..." [35] The meditator regards it warily so as not to be caught up in its machinations, but strives to observe it objectively in order to understand its dynamics.

Jnana yoga is the branch of yoga that provides the most detailed explanations concerning the psychological operations of the ordinary mind. Jnana, from the Greek word gnosis (to have knowledge of), identifies the three major aspects of the Vedantic model of the mind: 'manas', 'ahankara', and 'buddhi'. In addition, we shall also discuss one other supporting component, 'chitta' (see Figure 1). [36]

The three faculties of manas, ahankara, and buddhi are meant to function in an interrelated manner, and should not be viewed as independent entities which exist in opposition to each other. Manas (also

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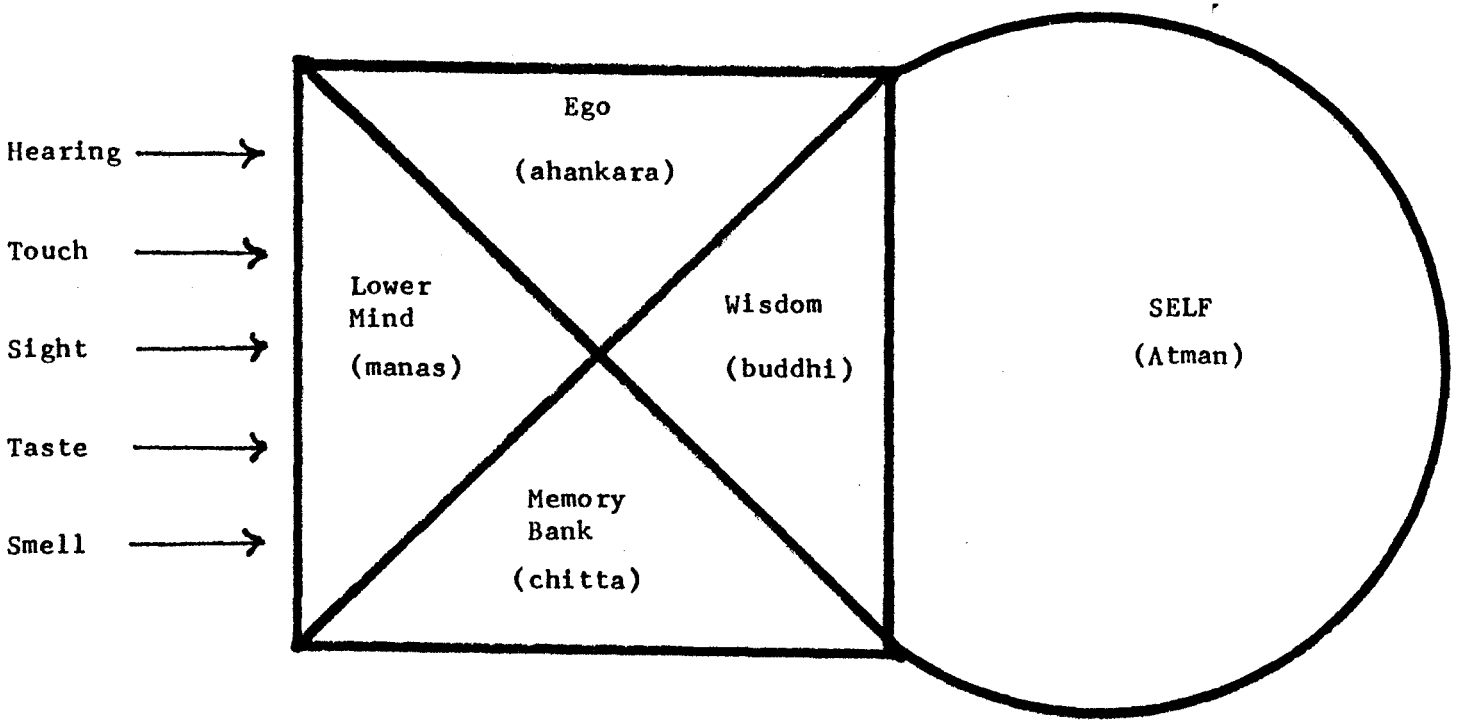
[35] Rama, S., Ballentine, R., and Weinstock, A., Yoga and Psychotherapy: The Evolution of Consciousness. Glenview: The Himalayan Press, Pg. 65, 1976.

[36] Ibid., pg.71.

FIGURE 1

THE VEDANTIC MODEL OF THE MIND

(from Rama, Ballentine, and Weinstock)



termed the sensory-motor mind or lower mind) is that faculty which is most in contact with the multitude of external stimuli from the surrounding environment. It registers both the external stimuli coming in through the five senses as well as the covert stimuli coming into immediate awareness within the person. After gathering both of these sources of input, the manas coordinates them with previously learned motoric and behavioral responses.

Weinstock has likened manas to a sort of internal television screen which displays a fluctuating succession of complex inputs.[37] In addition, manas can also register memory traces, ideas, and feelings from past experiences and conditioning. Although manas itself has no ability to make conscious decisions without the intervention of the faculty of buddhi (to be discussed shortly), manas nonetheless will react automatically to stimuli producing an impulse to act based solely on past habits and learning. Before describing the working of manas in greater detail, a cursory description of the other interrelated faculties is necessary.

The intelligent use of the information flashing upon the screen of the manas depends upon the actions of ahankara and buddhi. Ahankara, or the agency of 'I-ness', serves to transform the impressions received by the lower mind into personal experience by deciding whether or not to relate them to a sense of personal identity. The sensory-motor mind

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[37] Ibid. pg.70.

flashes "a chair is seen", to which the ahankara adds "I see a chair". Ahankara is the faculty that continually decides which ideas, experiences, perceptions, identifications, and attitudes should be accepted as extensions of oneself. It provides a flexible sense of personal boundary throughout the course of a lifetime; it can selectively accept or screen out a vast array of material in the formation of one's sense of self.

After incoming material has been registered by the manas, and related (or not related) to I-ness, often some decision or descrimination must be made, and a response selected. Buddhi, termed the 'crown jewel' of descrimination and understanding, represents this power of decisiveness. The practice of sharpening and developing this faculty (from which Buddhism takes its name), remains an ongoing task throughout meditative training. When buddhi is undeveloped, it rarely influences the operations of the lower mind. Manas, therefore, blindly responds to situations demanding a choice solely on the basis of past conditioning, a set of habits that may be dominated by the more primitive motivations of simple hedonism, self-interest, and instinctual urge.

The last structure, chitta, interfaces with manas, and intimately affects the entire mental complex. Chitta, or the memory bank, principally lies outside of immediate awareness. It is the storehouse of one's entire past, including all previous impressions, memories, and experiences. If one were to picture the ongoing procession of outside

sensory input that registers on the manas as a 'stream' of consciousness, chitta represents the immensely deep river bed of the unconscious over which that stream flows.

Chitta can function actively or passively. According to complex associational patterns formed in the course of past learning, chitta will actively send up into consciousness certain memories, instinctual urges, emotional overtones, and habitual thought patterns. The psychoanalytic technique of free association is an example of this process, which Vedanta expands to cover our everyday reaction to all objects of our immediate experience. Conversely, during periods of sensory deprivation, sleep, mental inactivity, or meditation, chitta passively supplies a host of inner material from its vast unconscious reservoir.

To the degree that the faculty of buddhi remains undeveloped, actions represent complex stimulus-response conditioning outside the conscious awareness and control of the individual. Without buddhi/will, responses are not 'decisions' in the true Vedantic sense. The individual, driven by impulse and previous habit, responds immaturely, and more like a child who is extremely susceptible to immediate urges and gratifications.

Jnana yoga categorizes the majority of our day to day behaviors such as planning, desiring, acts of affection, anger, jealousy, sexuality, ambition etc. within the realm of the unreflective operations of the manas. Manas has been likened to a rather dull and unimaginative drone by Vedantic theorists; its job is to receive information and

coordinate it with appropriate actions without any deeper reflection as to the ultimate purpose of its acts. Bereft of the influence of the higher aspects of the mind, at the mercy of lower motivations and mechanical habits, manas creates only doubt and confusion when it is left to operate on its own.

It is buddhi's role to oversee the operations of manas. Buddhi evolves in the course of development as does other aspects of the self. For the sake of simplicity, we shall briefly describe the three stages of buddhi's development that Aurobindo outlines. [38] In its most primitive form, buddhi's crude discriminations of the material reaching awareness through the manas is dominated by self-interest and survival. Decisions on this level are strongly subservient to the unthinking influence of instinctual drives, primitive emotions, and past experience. Buddhi's judgements at first are based on the most primitive considerations as to whether an action will increase the self-sense's well being and sense of comfort or security.

Beyond this elementary functioning which persists throughout the first half of one's life, a more mature level of buddhi is possible. Depending on the influence of significant others and one's cultural and educational climate, the power of reasoning and intelligence becomes associated with the faculty of buddhi. Using the skills of practical reason, buddhi becomes increasingly able to cultivate a

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[38] Aurobindo, The Synthesis of Yoga. Pondicherry: Aurobindo Ashram Press, pg.625, 1971.

series of guidelines in forming a coherent philosophy of life. It decides which directives (moral, aesthetic, political, philosophical) it shall employ in setting acceptable standards of conduct in relation to others and society. The nature of buddhi's everyday choices becomes a direct reflection of the values (or lack thereof) that the individual has adopted.

At the highest level of development of the mature ego, buddhi exclusively concerns itself with the question of pure truth in deciding an issue. It becomes (for the existential-centauric self) uncompromising in its transcendence of the dictates of social acceptability and conventional virtue as acceptable guides. Buddhi, in its pursuit of what is most real and true, becomes a guide for the serious meditator. It enables him to make choices that lead him closer to the simplest and most unifying principles underlying the highest states of consciousness experienced during meditation. Aurobindo states that few, if any, can use this highest faculty of reason with utmost purity, but that the attempt to do so is the utmost capacity of the innermost instrument, the mind. [39]

These three stages are but arbitrary divisions encompassing the innumerable intermediate stages of buddhi's development. At each point in the course of growth, however, buddhi may take one of two possible courses. When the self gives in to the pressure of Eros, buddhi's

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[39] Ibid., pg.625.

influence succumbs to the forces of past conditioning designed to maintain the status quo of the ego's present structure. Buddhi's role as an instrument of transcendence, and as a faculty for discriminating between what is real (less subratable and fostering greater self-actualization) and less real, is forfeited. But another choice is possible. As Weinstock states:

> Buddhi may assert its authority over the realm of impulse, instinct, and habit and choose some different course of action. Acknowledging the existence of these lower motivations it may make a decision which is relatively independent of impulses or past programming. Buddhi has the capacity to remain detached from the influence of memory traces and sense impressions. It has, at least potentially, the ability to choose. Since it is by definition, the decision making function, it can decide to permit influence by some memories and not others. By maintaining a detached, observing attitude toward the other memory traces, it can allow them to merely pass away and dissipate. Buddhi can decide to step outside the chain of cause and effect. It can decide not to remain caught up in that cycle of action and reaction determined by precious programming. By using its full potential it acquires the property of will. This sort of performance by buddhi is characterized as 'pure reason' in yoga psychology. [40]

Buddhi is the crucial faculty within the Vedantic model of the mind. Similar to the dispassionate 'observing ego' of psychoanalysis, it also possesses the responsibility to discriminate and make choices based on its observations. If buddhi fails to exert its potential to observe and evaluate impulses, thoughts, memories, and stimuli that urge the manas toward reflexive action, personal development comes to a halt.

The practitioners of yoga and meditation were well aware of the

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[40] Rama, op. cit., pg.93.

powerful influences past impressions, experiences, and internal dialogues exercise in determining the instrumental value of future actions and ways of experiencing the world. Each commonplace repetition of a habitual way of thinking, feeling, or acting is recorded and leaves a deep impression within the unconscious memory bank, chitta. Without the intervention of willful discrimination, present behaviors repeatedly reinforced and over time become increasingly resilient to change. The stronger and more powerful the source of reinforcement (in the perceiver's eyes) an object or action possesses, the greater the degree of resistance or inertia a person faces in altering their response to that object or action. Indian psychology has long studied the growth-inhibiting aspects of the behavioral construct of reinforcement, which in their systems they term 'attachment'.

The Nature of Attachment

Vedanta, over the centuries, observed the repetitive nature of the majority of our everyday thoughts, feelings, and behaviors. The root cause of this repetitive cycle is classically explained in terms of the concept of attachment. In all its complex later forms, attachment centers around the germinal experience of simple pleasure and pain.

In our previous discussion of Eros and Thanatos, we outlined the self-sense's pull toward substitute gratifications that enhance and perpetuate the present boundaries of the ego. The Indian concept of

attachment (or raga) performs a similar function. In the earliest stages of development, the child's sense of I-ness (ahankara) is quite fragile. The neonate's I-ness fluctuates in identifying, at first, with anything and everything. With the onset of pleasure and pain, however, the categories of good and bad emerge within the world of objects. The infant's first impulses of I-ness is to 'become attached' to everything that is good and pleasurable, and to reject (that is to see as not-I) all that is bad, painful, or aversive.

At this early stage, it is not unusual for the young child to disclaim all 'bad' thoughts, feelings, and actions by projecting them onto someone else. In this way the child protects its fragile ego from bad or disturbing materials that appear on the screen of the lower mind/manas. The child's early attempts to maintain this illusion that his new definition of himself is totally good fails as he receives parental correction concerning the incompatibilities of his projections.

The child's failure to totally control his surroundings so as to maintain a constant state of pleasure and reward result in his forming broader and more realistic self-definitions. Personal growth proceeds as a consequence of the child relinquishing old attachments to various objects (the idea of being perfect, and exclusive dependence on one parent, the structures of Wilber's developmental model) in forming new attachments to various objects, ideas, and experiences which coalesce to form a sense of self. The orderly process of growth necessitates the 'letting go' of the previous complex of attachments (and aversions)

that formerly defined the ego, and the adoption of a new series of self-identifications.

Indian psychology conceptualizes individual personality as the sum total of those attachments and aversions that one has acquired in the course of a lifetime. Vedanta and yoga also recognize the powerful role attachments can exercise in inhibiting the process of personal growth. The urge to repeat and recreate past pleasurable experiences through a well established set of behaviors, attitudes, and motivations becomes the self's rational against change. This urge in all its subtle forms is termed 'desire'. On the opposite side, the self faces multiple forms of anxiety as a consequent of the attachments it makes. As long as one is addicted to the objects, relationships, ideas, or conditions that he feels he must have to be secure, happy, successful, et cetera, an underlying concern about losing these objects is created. A vague but pervasive anxiety inevitabley accompanies the attachments of the self, an anxiety that inhibits new behaviors or ideas that might jeopardize these attachments. In general, Indian psychology would postulate that the greater the number of personal attachments one maintains, the greater the degree of underlying anxiety. The stronger the valence of the attachment the faculty of ahankara attributes to the objects it chooses, the less detachment the person retains for objective evaluations and decisions.

A very simple example of the process of making attachments concerns the everyday experience of owning possessions. We have all

experienced a strong sense of 'attachment' to some material object (a car, a house, a piece of jewelry etc.) which our faculty of ahankara has imbued with a sense of I-ness (my car, my house etc.). Consequently, there is created a simultaneous desire to protect that possession, as well as a corresponding sense of anxiety when that object is threatened in any manner. One has only to remember the extreme sense of personal despair experienced by millions during the stock market collapse of the 1920's to understand the degree to which persons become intimately attached to economic and material objects for a sense of self-esteem and security.

Attachments to non-material objects, such as one's relationship to another person, can also be perceived as providing the essential nexus for preserving one's sense of emotional security, worth, and well-being. This perception, in turn, sustains powerful affective motivations to preserve that relationship, even when it might become undeniably harmful or destructive.

The myriad of things (material objects, persons, ideologies, ambitions) that can serve as objects of attachment is endless. Throughout all of the stages of development, various forms of attachment are natural and necessary. Yet at the highest stages of evolution and transcendence, the restrictive nature of attachment must be understood and overcome. Buddhi, defined by its characteristic quality of objectivity and impersonal detachment, remains as the primary faculty for for overcoming the attachments from previous experience.

When this faculty of discrimination is poorly developed or utilized, an insidious pattern begins. Vedantic psychology views such a person as becoming increasingly compelled to compulsively repeat the same patterns of thinking, acting, and feeling in order to maintain his sense of security. In addition, each action, idea, or feeling connected with the complex of objects that comprise the total of one's attachments leaves behind it an impression. These impressions (termed samskaras) are registered continually in the unconscious memory bank (chitta). In essence, the unconscious is thus more heavily programmed each day by the repetition of one's ordinary modes of thinking, feeling, and acting which produce these memory traces in their wake.

Once registered and stored in the unconscious, these samskaras re-arise to further influence (as complex feedback loops) present behavior toward conformity with these previous patterns of thinking, feeling, and acting. The more repetitive or emotionally charged the samskaras, the more compelling it will be in influencing future action. Karma is the Indian term for this psychological feedback process. Karma becomes the vicious circle whereby present behavior prompted by past habit -- further programs and conditions the psyche and the unconscious-- which in turn exerts a strong influence on the psyche to repeat past patterns -- which in turn reinforces unconscious patterns -- which further affects present actions, ad infinitum. Ballentine writes:

> As long as such samskaras or past impressions go through this cycle of rising, being automatically invested with energy because of their compelling character, sinking and rising again, they are

> habits. As long as the pattern persists, one's thoughts and behaviors continue to be governed by them. If through an act of will... detachment is maintained so that no further thought and action proceeds from it (the samskaras), karma loses its power to motivate and a 'habit is broken'. [41]

The faculty of buddhi or will should be genuinely developed by the time the existential self emerges in the course of growth. The ability to discriminate between courses of action and thought which will lead toward transcendence and growth versus attachment and the maintenance of fixed patterns, becomes more acute. The individual's boundaries of I-ness have already expanded beyond the narrower limits of its earlier stages. Buddhi becomes more mature and shifts its attention towards serious inquiry into what is most real in terms of personal experience and being. Meditation emerges as the vehicle which attempts to break the automatic patterns of thought, feeling, and behavior conditioned by the samskaras -- patterns which formerly comprised the structure of personal identity, one's solitary ego.

Classical Preparations for the Practice of Meditation

Meditative practice plays a dual role in the process of transformation; on the one hand it de-conditions the individual from the previous structures he had employed in forming a sense of personal identity and phenomenological sense of reality, while simultaneously encouraging the development of more intuitional and unified states of awareness. Ordinary behavior and patterns of thinking are suspended

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[41] Ibid. pg.183.

by the technical restraints created by the various meditative tasks. Whereas the ordinary flow of everyday behavior and cognition focuses attention outward onto the world of external objects, meditation redirects attention inward onto the apparatus of the mind. Meditation, in almost all of its forms, involves 'being mindful of', 'dwelling upon', or developing a sustained awareness of some object designed to facilitate the subjective awareness of pure consciousness itself.

During the early stages, the typical beginner is unable to quiet his mind for any prolonged period of time during his meditation; his immediate attention repeatedly becomes caught up within a series of previous thoughts, pre-occupations, and impulses. These compelling pre-occupations and distractions vary according to the psychological pre-dispositions of the individual. In order to 'purify' and prepare the body and mind of the meditator toward maintaining deeper states of concentration, various meditative traditions have classically prescribed guidelines for daily behavior as an adjunct to formal meditative exercises.

For the advanced meditator within Indian tradition, negative emotional states and ordinary personal attachments are viewed not only as a waste of time and energy, but also a continuing impediment to their progress in meditation. Consequently, many meditative schools have formulated guidelines for such areas as diet, exercise, moral conduct, sexual relations, and virtuous modes of thought and behavior to name but a few. Hatha yoga, for example, evolved as a preparatory

exercise discipline for cultivating relaxed, tension free postures designed to enable the meditator to master physical discomforts during long meditative sessions. Over time, of course, it has developed into a much more sophisticated and complex system for the mastery and control of various physiological processes. The difficulty in overcoming and mastering psychological pre-dispositions that interfere with meditation is equally challenging. A thorough alteration of past habits is a long and arduous task. For this reason, the 'preparatory' process of following various physical, psychological, and moral guidelines remains an integral component for trainees during the long course of meditative study.

Patanjali, the classical exponent of Raja yoga, provides one of the most famous examples of a series of practical guidelines used in preparing students to reap the benefits of meditative practice. His first five guidelines represent vows of self-restraint (yama) designed to alter negative personality traits and mental attitudes. The five areas of self-restraint include non-violence, non-misappropriation, non-craving for sensual enjoyment, non-lying, and non-possessiveness. The yamas also cultivate a state of inner abstinence from a number of conventional attachments as well. [42]

Patanjali also lists five observances designed to foster a number of positive psychological characteristics within the meditator.

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[42] Eliade, Mircea, Patanjali and Yoga. N.Y.: Schocken Books, pg.63-65, 1975.

These observances involve maintaining a sense of contentment, compassion, austerity, self-surrender, and humility throughout the course of daily activity. Each of Patanjali's ten guidelines have been extensively elaborated over the centuries since his death. Not surprisingly, his observances parallel many of the moral and ethical percepts found in many of the world's major religions. He is but one figure among many who have stressed the need for cleansing the ego of its ordinary attachments and negative tendencies if one is to develop their higher capacities (spiritual or otherwise). Insofar as meditation aims at developing a modality of <u>being</u> that may be expressed in any situation, it too requires that the meditator cultivates a state of psychological well-being and tranquility amidst fortune or misfortune.

Many of the traditional guidelines supplementing meditative practices were originally designed for monks or persons living within a religious community. Release from the ordinary obligations of family and job typically freed the monastic aspirant for the single-minded pursuit of meditation. The Visuddhimagga, the Theravedan Buddhist text outlining the stages of meditative progress, illustrates just how demanding some of the guidelines for monastic aspirants could be. Goleman summarizes the ten categories of attachments that the advanced meditator was expected to overcome. They include: 1) any fixed dwelling place if its upkeep causes worry, 2) family, if their welfare causes concern, 3) accruing gifts or reputation that involves spending too much time with admirers, 4) a following of students, 5) projects,

'having something to do', or being too busy with teaching, 6) travelling about, 7) people dear to one whose needs demand excessive attention, 8) illnesses necessitating undergoing treatment, 9) theoretical studies unaccompanied by practice, and 10) supernormal psychic powers, the practice of which becomes more interesting than meditation.[43]

In order to realize the highest summits of consciousness, the committment to the principles and practice of meditation and one's desire for self-realization must permeate every waking moment and inspire every thought and action. There is a famous teaching story that has been passed down through the centuries, concerning the central requirement for reaching a state of 'enlightenment'.

> A novice disciple once asked his guru what was the main thing he need to do to obtain enlightenment. "Come to the river and I will show you", answered the sage.
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> When they arrived at the riverside, the guru pushed his surprised disciple into the water and held his head under, despite his struggles.
>
> When the half-conscious disciple was released, the guru asked, "What did you think when you were under the water?" "Air," replied the disciple. "All I wanted to do was to breathe."
>
> "Excellent" replied his teacher. "When you want enlightenment as much as you wanted air, you will be doing the first thing necessary for enlightenment."

The lifestyle of monastic renunciation was originally designed to free the mind of the aspirant from the worrisome worldly responsibilities that might interfere with his meditative training. This 'spirit' of renunciation can also be cultivated by laypersons amidst the ordinary obligations of job and family, although this is more difficult. In

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[43] Goleman, Daniel, The Varieties of Meditative Experience. N.Y.: E.P. Dutton, pg.6, 1977.

either case, a person with a mind truly unconcerned with externals, calm and ripe for meditation, is rare indeed. [44]

De-Conditioning and the Negative Path of Meditation

In the early stages of meditative training, the beginner is steadfastly encouraged to practice an attitude of 'letting go'. Letting go of what? Everything. Narajno, in describing two of the major styles of meditative practice, terms this approach the 'negative way'. [45] The negative way is the invisible backbone of a second major category of meditative techniques, termed the concentrative or absorptive path of meditation. We shall discuss this latter style shortly.

Throughout all the varieties of meditative exercises, there exists the development of an increased receptivity toward the unfolding inner material that streams across one's consciousness. The practice of letting go represents a spirit of non-interference in relation to the parade of thoughts, memories, feelings, impulses, and assosciations that arise in meditation. The overall attitude of quietly observing without reaction in this negative path of meditation can ge generalized to any number of processes. The meditator practices letting go of former habits, preconceptions, attachments, styles of selective attention, and the boundaries that might serve to define the structure of separateness or I-ness.

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[44] Ibid. pg.7.

[45] Naranjo, Claudio, and Ornstein, Robert, On the Psychology of Meditation. N.Y.:Viking Press, pg.75, 1971.

Naranjo and others have correctly noted that meditation is most truly a spirit, an attitude, an inner posture of how to be, rather than any specific thing or technique. This elusive quality of 'being' is generally sought after in the simplest of external situations: in stillness, in silence, or in just sitting.

> Just as we do not see the stars in daylight, but only in the absence of the sun, we may never taste the subtle essence of meditation in the daylight of ordinary activity in all its complexity. While practice in most activities implies the development of habits and the establishment of conditioning, the practice of meditation can better be understood as quite the opposite: a persistent effort to detect and become free from all conditioning, compulsive functioning of the mind and body, habitual emotional responses that may contaminate the utterly simple situation required by the participant. This is why it may be said that the attitude of the meditator is both his path and his goal: the unconditioned state is the freedom of attainment and also the target of every single effort. What the meditator realizes in his practice is to a large extent, how he is failing to meditate properly, and by becoming aware of his failings he gains understanding and the ability to let go of his wrong way. The right way, the unconditioned state, is what remains when we have, so to say, stepped out of the way. [46]

The Indian and Buddhist concepts of 'mindfulness' and 'bare-attention' describe the mental attitude practiced during the negative way; the goal is the attainment of this unconditioned state of pure awareness. The practice of mindfulness serves to break through one's stereotypic modes of attention and perception. The natural tendency of the mind is to habituate to the environment and to substitute abstract names and previous conceptions for the moment by moment activity of the world. In mindfulness, the meditator attempts to methodically

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[46] Ibid. pg.9.

view each event he experiences as though for the first time, i.e. with only his bare attention devoid of any pre-conceptions, memories, or attitudes he might already possess concerning that event. The meditator must focus his attention on the first phase of perception when his mind is receptive rather than reactive (that is reacting according to past conditioning).

The practice of mindfulness or bare-attention is one of the more advanced of meditative techniques. It requires that the meditator has already developed a high degree of concentration; this in turn enables him to calmly observe, for long periods of time, the contents or objects of his inner experience. This degree of mental stillness and undistracted concentration may have taken many months of preliminary meditative training to develop. During this previous period, the beginner has typically mastered the more basic meditative exercises designed to focus attention on a single object (one's breathing, a particular image or sound) without interruptions or distractions.

When the practitioner becomes able to dispassionately observe his ongoing stream of consciousness, he may begin to practice this inner attitude of mindfulness for increasingly longer periods of time each day. During special meditative retreats, or at the most advanced stages, the meditator will practice mindfulness throughout his waking hours. At first, the meditator chooses only one of the four classic subdivisions of subjective experience as the target for his practice. Goleman reports that these four basic categories are: 1) physical

impressions from the senses and the body, 2) emotions and feeling states, 3) the varieties of mental processes, and 4) the objects toward which one turns his attention.[47]

In practicing mindfulness and bare-attention on the category of feelings, for example, if the meditator experienced some irritation during the day he would simply note 'irritation' (as opposed to reacting in some typical manner to the irritation or saying to himself, 'I am irritated'). The Visuddhimagga even provides an extensive list of positive and negative emotions that the meditator can utilize in dispassionately noting and clarifying the feelings arising within him. As each feeling comes into awareness, the meditator objectively observes its arrival as well as the circumstances of its emergence. He receptively observes each emotion, but does not react.

The daily practice of this meditative technique produces a gradual weakening of the unconscious associational link between the feeling itself, and the structure of I-ness/personal identity. Numerous feelings become separated from the awareness contemplating them. This same attitude of mindfulness is subsequently turned toward the three other categories of physical sensations and bodily activities, objects of attention, and mental processes; appropriate schema for classifying the elements from each area exist in turn. The meditator eventually creates an observational distance between his act of mindful awareness, and the mind, feelings, sense impressions, and attentional objects he studies.

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[47] Goleman, op. cit., pg.23.

As the advanced meditator perfects his ability to practice mindfulness of these complex areas that constitute his stream of consciousness, a series of insights emerge. Goleman explains that the first major realization is that the phenomena contemplated are essentially distinct from the faculty contemplating them. In other words, the person experiences the startling realization that there is a larger, underlying, unconditioned state of awareness that is separate from and unaffected by the workings of the mind it witnesses.[48]

The Vedantists, of course, employ the term buddhi to characterize this aspect of awareness which can dispassionately witness the operations of the intellect. Yet buddhi is also considered as simply one aspect of this underlying state of unconditioned awareness.

Another disconcerting insight typically follows this first revelation. Whereas previously the meditator had possessed a stable sense of ego or identity fashioned from a complex nexus of personal thoughts, feelings, sensations etc., he now views the illusory nature of this 'stable' ego. The meditator witnesses instead, the endless flux of subjective phenomena operating in the complex cause and effect patterns of past conditioning. Only the witnessing state of dispassionate awareness is stable and persists without interruption.

This crucial intersection, where the meditator moves from studying the nature and stability of those elements that constitued his previous

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[48] Ibid., pg.24.

sense of identity, to the state where he immediately experiences the instability of the ego, serves as the transition point between the existential and transpersonal stages of Wilber's model. The advanced meditator awakens to the timeless truth echoed by Buddha concerning the illusory appearance of the unified ego:

> Just as when the parts are set together
> there arises the word 'chariot',
> So does the notion of being
> when the aggregates are present. [49]

A deep realization of the impermanence and transitory nature of the elements that previously comprised the existential self becomes undeniable to the meditator at this level. As the individual becomes aware that there is no lasting or indwelling permanent entity within the changing field of mental processes, a strong sense of disenchantment sets in. This disenchantment allows for the meditator's eventual detachment from his exclusive identification with his 'mental apparatus', thereby clearing the way for further insights into the nature of transpersonal states of consciousness. His sense of being is no longer associated with the various habits from his past conditioning, but instead becomes identified with the mode of dispassionate and unconditioned awareness present during meditation.

The negative path of meditation wherein the meditator moves away from, disidentifies with, and lets go of the contents of his ordinary consciousness is designed to cleanse his awareness and produce a state

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[49] Ibid., pg.26.

inner emptiness and receptivity. He develops a conscious detachment from the workings of his mind and feelings that previously captured his total attention and prompted his actions. This inner emptiness and detachment should not be mistaken as a decrease in the meditator's participation in the world. Instead, these qualities prepare consciousness to be a medium that is truly receptive to new insights undistorted or processed by the influence of past experiences or judgements. Once more the self has transcended the conditions of its former self-definition in its evolution toward ever higher states of unitary consciousness.

The Concentrative-Absorptive Path of Meditation

Whereas the negative path of meditation involves a letting go of the ordinary objects of consciousness, the concentrative-absorptive method involves contemplation upon specific meditation objects. These meditation objects can be sounds (mantras, or sounds from nature), things and images (mandalas, a candle flame, the lotus, a corpse, a deity figure), feelings or ideas (compassion, infinite space, logical paradoxes such as the Zen koan), or whatever a meditation teacher feels is appropriate for a particular student. Although the initial emphasis between these two meditation paths is different, we shall see that their eventual goal is not.

Naranjo makes the astute observation that classic meditation objects are generally external representations of the type of consciousness present in the meditative state itself; "all object-centered meditation

is a dwelling of the individual upon his deepest identity, upon the reflection of himself in the mirror of symbolism." [50] Vedanta, we recall, sees man's deepest identity as Atman, pure unified consciousness, formless yet within all forms. From their viewpoint, there are an endless number of symbols that can assist the meditator in realizing his innermost being as pure consciousness.

By discussing some of the more common symbols and objects used in concentrative-absorptive styles of meditation, we shall also glimpse some of the main features that characterize higher states of consciousness. At the same time we must remember that concentrative meditation also plays a dual role; one one side it provides symbolic referents and clues concerning the next highest levels of consciousness while simultaneously providing meditation objects designed to supercede and replace the objects that dominate one's everyday awareness. Volumes of detailed works have been written concerning the specific properties of the various symbols that can be used in meditation. Once again, the following discussion is not meant to be definitive. Its purpose is to provide an introduction to the overall psychological influence of these symbols.

In the early stages of absorptive meditation, the student's attention oscillates between his object of meditation and any number of interfering thoughts, feelings, and impulses. Through diligent

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[50] Naranjo, op. cit., pg.21.

practice the student eventually achieves his first breakthrough when his attention becomes unaffected by any inner or outer distractions that present themselves. The meditator achieves a tenuous state of concentration or 'one-pointed' awareness that he focuses upon the meditation object. As this one-pointedness is strengthened through practice, the meditator can remain undistracted for long periods of time. The meditator's ability to remain unaffected by any interfering thoughts or distractions is noteworthy. Deikman has written extensively about the outcome of this achievement; he calls it the 'de-automatization' of experience.[51]

Briefly, automatization is assumed to be the basic process in which the repeated patterns of acting, thinking, or feeling result in the disappearance, from conscious awareness, of the various intermediate steps within these patterns. Deautomatization reinvests these processes with attention so as to dissolve the automatic or habitual nature of these patterns. Actually, the practice of bare-attention within the negative style of meditation also deautomatizes attention and awareness. But Deikman believes this same process occurs in concentrative meditation. Indeed, after the mind's distractions are neutralized, the meditator is left with an undistracted and one-pointed state of awareness. He can then witness and experience specific meditation objects 'as if for the first time'.

Contemplative meditation, requiring that the meditator relinquish

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[51] Deikman, A., Deautomatization and the mystic experience. In Tart, C., (ed.) Altered States of Consciousness, N.Y.: Doubleday & Co., pg.25, 1969.

his customary automatic modes of conation and perception, is designed to foster enstasis. "The function of enstatic consciousness is a total unification wherein subject and object, perceiver and perceived, and the process of cognition melt together into a single act, and all opposites are lifted. Then the mind is transcended, and the thing, as it really is, is known." [52] The sense of emptying one's mind and self and merging with the object of concentration is a common experience of higher mystical states. Deikman's famous experiment where he had subjects meditate on a blue vase over twelve sessions resulted in numerous reports of this enstatic experience. [53] For those subjects who could tolerate letting go of their ordinary ego boundaries, a dissolution of their usual subject-object differentiations occurred. Afterwards these participants expressed a deep sense of appreciation for the richness and aesthetically pleasing elements of this deautomatization experience.

Concentrative meditation typically encourages enstasis with those meditation objects that symbolize a transcendent aspect of being. Symbols of centrality (the sun, the lotus, the cross), equanimity (a calm lake), tranquility (a candle flame), loving kindness (the image of Christ or Buddha), formlessness (empty space), and the unity within the conciliation of all opposites (the sacred syllable OM, or the yin-yang circle) are but a few that have emerged in the quest for self-realization. These

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[52] Fuerstein, G., and Miller, J., A Reappraisal of Yoga. London: Rider & Co., pg.35, 1969.

[53] Deikman, A., Experimental meditation. In Tart, op. cit., pg.204.

qualities are classic features of many higher states of consciousness found in the written accounts of mystical experience.

Regardless of the symbol chosen, absorptive meditation culminates in a three-fold state of centeredness, receptivity, and unification. It becomes an exercise of centering in the sense that it concentrates one's energies around the central, innermost aspects of being. Secondly, it involves a surrendering to one's original Atman nature by becoming receptive to the presence of those transcendental symbols and creative insights that remain buried beneath the automatic operations and accumulations of the ego. Finally, it constitutes an act of unification wherein the duality of subject and object gives way to a sense of integration and equanimity beyond all polarities or oppositions that divide the self.

The attainment of these higher states of meditation is understandably difficult. The probability of reaching these ideal states increases according to a variety of factors such as one's degree of zeal and energy, depth of concentration, degree of psychological development and self-mastery, type of instruction, and length of experience. In addition, many schools of meditation stress the importance of being supervised by an experienced teacher or guru in order to overcome the obstacles and dangers inherent in exploring the unfamiliar terrain of inner space. As one Zen quote suggests: "If you wish to know the road up the mountain, you must ask the man who goes back and forth on it." [54]

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[54] Goleman, op. cit., pg.10.

The meditation teacher's role is somewhat similar to that of a Western psychotherapist. Both encourage the pupil/client to overcome traits and forms of egoism that serve as obstacles to further development. The more the guru-therapist can empathically and intuitively understand the heart and mind of the individual seeking guidance, the better they will be at prescribing an appropriate form of meditation/therapy. A truly competent meditation teacher, however, is highly accomplished at entering transpersonal states of awareness. These are unfamiliar and poorly understood regions of consciousness to most orthodox therapists who are more likely required to prescribe ego-enhancement (rather than its annihilation) regimes to their less highly developed clients. The historical biographies of such eminent figures as Friedrich Nietzsche, Carl Jung, and William Blake attest to the dangers of psychosis when venturing alone beyond the ordinary boundaries of the ego into the unknown depths of the psyche. The guidance of an experienced meditator who has firsthand knowledge of altered states of consciousness can be invaluable in this respect.

The creativity of various meditation teachers has also resulted in the development of a wide array of methods for facilitating a student's progress. Zen meditation masters, for example, traditionally employ a series of koans to frustrate ordinary modes of thought in fostering more intuitional awareness among meditators. Koans are a class of paradoxical questions that cannot be solved by any rational means; Zen students discover the correct response to each koan only

after developing a series of a-rational insights into the question itself. Cryptic questions such as "What is Mu?" or "What is the sound of one hand clapping?" are two examples of famous koans. Ornstein has documented the use of teaching stories by Sufi adepts in order to remove rigid or distorting modes of attention among their students.[55] A variety of 'meditative' activities (chanting, whirling, dance, breathing exercises, prayer, menial tasks etc.) continues to flourish among the numerous religious communities and groups involved in meditative instruction. These activities and many more share a common purpose in freeing the pupil's mind of limiting and selective modes of awareness; the doors of perception are then opened toward new, deautomatized, and altered states of consciousness.

Supervision in meditation is particularly crucial at the more advanced stages of training. Numerous teachers warn of the subtle forms of attachment that many advanced students develop toward the paranormal powers and experiences that might arise during meditation. These paranormal or miraculous powers are termed 'siddhis' in Sanskrit, and 'makyo' in the Zen Buddhist literature. These paranormal phenomena include such occurrences as precognition, knowledge of the thoughts of others, recollections of former existences, out of body experiences, and various types of beatific visions and sensations. Meditators are advised to maintain a state of detached vigilance toward these

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[55] Ornstein, op. cit., pg.202.

phenomena. Should the student form any attachment to these occurrences by cultivating his ability to sustain or repeat them, he will seriously impede his overall progress. A competent teacher will be able to discriminate between these alluring but superfluous events and those experiences of absorption and bliss that actually signal a person's movement toward higher states of consciousness.

At the highest stages of mastery in both the negative and concentrative-absorptive styles of meditation, the emphasis shifts toward maintaining the modality of being and awareness fostered during meditation. By this stage, the numerous aspects and functions of ordinary ego consciousness (reasoning, labelling, categorizing, analyzing etc.) can be silenced at will. Distractions from without or within cease as the meditator achieves one-pointed concentration on his choice of meditation object. Goleman marks the onset of the meditator's complete absorption (jhana) with the meditation object as the point where an individual makes a total break with ordinary consciousness.[56] Feelings of rapture and bliss, experienced as waves of thrilling happiness, are common at this stage.

To achieve even deeper levels of concentration (and higher states of pure consciousness) the meditator eventually abandons his primary object of concentration, and instead meditates on the subtle state of awareness produced by his full absorption with his initial meditation

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[56] Goleman, op. cit., pg.13.

object. Goleman describes eight successive levels of absorption or jhanas as they are termed in the Buddhist literature. [57] At each successive jhana, the practitioner leaves behind the subtle state of awareness that has chrystallized during his meditation, and seeks the next state of consciousness which is even more formless and universal.

Although the fine distinctions between each successive jhana must remain cryptic and fanciful to anyone who has not undergone prolonged training in meditation, a review of the eight jhanic stages is nonetheless noteworthy and fascinating. We have already repeatedly described the first jhana, where the aspirant practices his ability to achieve one-pointed concentration on a particular object. When he is able to achieve complete absorption in meditation, he enters the level of the second jhana, and feelings of rapture appear.

To go still deeper, the meditator masters his ability to achieve and sustain the state of awareness produced by the second jhana. He then notices a feeling of equanimity at the level of the third jhana; it is a subtle state of even-mindedness from which his previous state of rapture, by comparison, is only a gross form of excitement. In mastering the third jhana, Goleman continues, the meditator experiences an exceedingly sweet state of bliss in sustaining his state of equanimity, a bliss which resists the pull back toward the grosser rapture of the second jhana. Finally, at the level of the fourth jhana, the meditator abandons all forms of mental pleasure that might interfere with even

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[57] Ibid., pg.15.

more total states of mental stillness.

The next step in concentration marks the aspirant's entry into the four subsequent 'formless jhanas'. Whereas the first four levels were attained through concentration on some material form (an image, sound, visual object) and qualities of awareness derived from that form, the next four jhanas involve passing beyond all perceptions of form. The fifth jhana typically uses infinite space as an object of contemplation. The meditator's mind now abides in a sphere so sublime that all perceptions of form have ceased. His concentration is so one-pointed that he usually cannot be disturbed from his state of absorption until the completion of a pre-determined time limit that he sets before entering the meditative state. The sixth jhana is achieved by first reaching an awareness of infinite space and then turning one's awareness to infinite awareness. The seventh jhana is absorption with no-thing-ness, or voidness. Finally, the ultra-subtle eighth jhana is simply described as a state of neither perception nor non-perception.[58]

The final goal of both the negative and concentrative styles of meditation is the attainment of a transcendental consciousness of the Self. Consciousness has successively detached itself and overcome the structures of body, mind, and ego with which it had been formerly identified. These three aspects of the Self are now perceived to be mere vehicles of a much broader source of consciousness that can, in turn,

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[58] Ibid., pg.20.

observe, utilize, or silence them at will. When the body, mind, and ego become totally tranquil during meditation, the practitioner achieves an unconditioned state of pure awareness; "in the light of that clarity the timeless is revealed" and the meditator becomes enlightened as to his innermost nature as pure spirit, Atman.[59] This mystic union is said to bring with it an ineffable, non-subratable sense of peace, unity, and fulfillment that surpasses all words and descriptions:

> As unknowable, unobstructed, unqualified Consciousness, it (Atman) shines forth in completion from moment to moment, like an infinite series of ever-newly-perfected states, forever changing in its play, forever the same in its fullness. As infinite, all-pervading, and all-embracing Consciousness, it is both the One and the Many... As Infinity it demands wonder; as God it demands worship; as truth, it demands wisdom; as one's true Self it demands identity.[60]

Meditation's origin and 'raison d'etre' within Indian tradition is inextricably interwoven with this evolution toward transcendental consciousness. This attainment ranks as the supreme human achievement in Indian thought. To date, however, psychological science remains primarily focused on the various secondary features of meditation; it investigates meditation as a therapeutic instrument for fostering psychosomatic health, relaxation, and equilibrium or in alleviating addictive or problem behaviors.

Psychology's understanding of meditation has been hampered by the simple fact that it is thoroughly unfamiliar with Indian systems

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[60] Wilber, op. cit., pg.149-150.

of psychology, philosophy, and consciousness. Another obstacle has been science's inability to even approach meditation in terms of its definition as a vehicle for developing increasingly egoless and supra-rational states of consciousness. Bound tightly by an empirical methodology, psychological science possesses little means for meaningfully evaluating or incorporating such a process.

In our final chapter we shall review psychology's need to move beyond its over-identification with science (both in terms of the discipline's self-definition as well as in terms of its investigative procedures) if the field hopes to radically alter its present approaches to the study of consciousness. If psychology can broaden its theories and methods to integrate the discoveries and insights embodied in the meditative approach to the study of consciousness, the latter discipline might greatly accelerate psychology's growth in that direction. The final task of the following chapter, therefore, will be to summarize how meditation, with its emphasis on ego-transcendence over ego-enhancement, non-attachment over overt and covert reinforcement patterns, and non-evaluation over intellectual analysis, emerges as a primary challenge to the established principles of Western psychotherapy and personality theory.

CHAPTER IV

MEDITATION'S ROLE IN THE FUTURE DEVELOPMENT OF PSYCHOLOGY

The famous historian William Durant once said that the wonder of India is the continuity of her civilization and the unity of her culture despite the diversity of her peoples, languages, politics, and religions. [1] The strength of her intrinsic culture has also allowed her to absorb and integrate foreign influences, and thus add to her own tradition. Nonetheless, as Aurobindo points out, the heart of India's cultural stability and creativity stems from her intellectual approach to spiritual realization. "One thing seems certain, that the spiritual motive will be in the future of India, as in her past, the real originative and dominating strain." [2] The sudden transformation toward economic and technological modernization that has transformed China and Japan is not India's goal. Many outsiders may mistakenly interpret this as a sign of India's social backwardness and intransigence toward change. The real explanation, Aurobindo asserts, is that India lives centrally in the spirit: she possesses a "greater, intenser, and more brooding depth" that results in a less ready adaptiveness to rapid contemporary change. On account of this reflective and introspective bent of mind, her steps have to be deliberate and her procedures hesitant until the

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[1] Durant, William, Our Oriental Heritage, The Story of Civilization, Vol.1, N.Y.:Simon & Schuster, pg.391, 1954.

[2] Aurobindo, S., The Renaissance of India, Calcutta: Arya Publishing House, pg.44, 1946.

readjustment comes from the profoundest inwardness. [3]

Indian models of meditation and consciousness reflect this long-standing dependence on the spirit of reflectiveness, inwardness, and personal realization in addressing contemporary pressures for change. India's emphasis on subjective disciplines that focus attention inward toward 'knowing oneself' has reached its highest expression in the practice of meditation. Reason alone, Vedanta states, is not only an insufficient guide when confronting the currents of contemporary change, but also in response to the impermanence, complexity, and possible meaninglessness of one's existence. When the capacities of the ego and intellect fail, one must be prepared to look beyond reason for a source of guidance for these questions.

For the last three hundred years, Western science has attempted to rationally reduce the uncertain, ambiguous, or unknowable dimensions of the world of mind and matter. Before the onset of relativity theory, many scientists hoped science could provide an ever expanding series of stable laws to explain the cause and effect relationship between all phenomena. The emerging post-relativity paradigms of physics, however, have caused some scientists to question just how successful any particular rational paradigm of the universe will ever be in dealing with the endless series of questions that nature poses.

As the limits of reason and intellectual analysis come more

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[3] Ibid., pg.46.

clearly into focus in psychology and the sciences, an interest in a-rational and intuitive modes of understanding should increase. Psychology typically sees intuitive forms of understanding as a culturally less sophisticated (and perhaps more dispensable) counterpart to the more precise and productive category of ratio-analytic cognitive processes. Indian psychology and philosophy, however, evaluate these two categories of cognition quite differently. In their eyes, intuition and those non-processing modes of simple non-evaluative awareness are more creative, integrative, and dynamically useful than ratio-analytic processes in deriving insight into the most fundamental questions facing the individual.

In a final effort to support Vedanta's high opinion of the special value of meditative states of consciousness, this chapter will focus on the following three areas. First it will summarize the need for psychology to fashion a new orientation toward its definition and use of science. Until this is undertaken, the need for non-scientific modes of investigation such as meditation will be seriously jeopardized. Second, this chapter will discuss meditation's usefulness in contributing to psychology's emergent trend toward more unified and holistic models of consciousness and personality. Third, the chapter will review the major differences between meditation and psychotherapy in terms of the type of change they attempt to induce.

Toward a New Definition of Psychological Science

As Wilber has portrayed, human development proceeds when the self

responds to the limitations of its former self-definition by 1) achieving insight into the constraints of its former condition, 2) gradually dis-identifying itself from the elements of its former definition, and 3) identifying with a new, higher and more unifying structure that subsumes and integrates its former definition.[4] At present, psychology faces a comparable developmental challenge regarding its overall self-definition. Until recently, it has always viewed itself as primarily a 'scientific' field of study. As psychology becomes more aware of the constraints science imposes on the study of conscious states, the field may choose to expand its self-definition to include fundamentally non-scientific modes of introspective investigation for this task. But first, psychology must achieve a comprehensive overview of its operation as a science.

For David Bohm, an internationally renown physicist, the greatest challenge facing scientists in the 1980's is the need for stripping away present misconceptions about science. Science, like Western society, is in danger of permanently crippling herself due to the unconscious propensity for 'fragmented' thinking. Fragmented thinking (or modes of inquiry) serve to endlessly divide, categorize, and break up man and the world into what is then viewed as essentially separate parts. In Bohm's opinion, science's habit of analytically differentiating, dualizing, and fragmenting phenomena in order to study it has dire consequences.

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[4] Wilber, Ken, The Atman Project. Wheaton: Theosophical Publishing House, pg.79, 1980.

This fragmented habit of thinking eventually superimposes itself onto the individual's perception of himself and his environment.

> Thus art, science, technology, and human work in general, are divided up into specialties, each considered to be separate in essence from the others. Becoming dissatisfied with this state of affairs, men have set up further interdisciplinary subjects, which were intended to unite these specialties, but these new subjects have served ultimately to add further separate fragments. Then, society as a whole has developed in such a way that it is broken up into separate nations and different religious, political, racial groups, etc. Man's natural environment has correspondingly been seen as an aggregate of separate parts. Similarly, each individual has been fragmented into a number of separate and conflicting compartments, according to his different desires, ambitions, psychological characteristics, etc., to such an extent that it is generally accepted that some degree of neurosis is inevitable, while many individuals going beyond the 'normal' limits of fragmentation are classified as paranoid, schizoid, or psychotic. [5]

Bohm acknowledges that it has always been necessary and practical for men, in their thinking, to divide and separate things in order to reduce many problems to manageable proportions. Yet essentially, this process of division is a way of thinking about things which is practical and useful for a wide range of functional activities. But when this notion extends to man's notions of himself, the divisions are no longer useful or convenient. Instead, individuals will experience and act upon the world as a series of separately existing fragments. Having created a fragmented world of independent objects, man will come to believe that reality 'as it is' is fragmented, rather than his habit of thinking. Unless it is recognized for what it is, men will lose sight of an

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[5] Bohm, David, Fragmentation and Wholeness. Jerusalem: The Van Leer Foundation, pg.1, 1976.

underlying sense of personal wholeness. Fragmented thought sustains a personal sense of fragmentation, and ultimately defeats the urge toward unity and wholeness which is crucial for psychological health and development.

Bohm contends that scientific methods and conceptualizations extensively engage in this habit of fragmented thinking. Pervaded with differences and distinctions, scientific thought tends to see nature as a collection of interrelated but separate parts. In order to correct this habit, it should be remembered that science is essentially a product of thought. As such, scientific theories are primarily a form of insight, i.e. an agreed upon way of looking at the world, and not an absolute knowledge about the way things are.[6] Bohm argues that instead of supposing that scientific theories represent true 'facts' (which might be replaced by new theories and facts), it would be better to say that scientists are developing new forms of insight which are clear up until a point, but which become unclear beyond that point.

> Thus the Newtonian form of insight worked well for several centuries, but ultimately (like the ancient Greek insights that came before it) led to unclear results when extended into new domains. In these new domains, new forms of insight were developed (the theory of relativity and quantum theory). These gave a radically different picture of the world from that of Newton (although the latter was found to be still valid within a limited domain). If we supposed that theories give true knowledge, corresponding to 'reality' as it is, we would have to conclude that Newton's theory was true until 1900, after which it suddenly became false. Such an absurd conclusion does not occur if we see all theories as forms of insight.
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> In this activity, there is evidently no reason to suppose that there is a final form of insight, or even a steady series of

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[6] Ibid. pg.3.

> approximations to this. Instead, one may expect an unending series of new insights (that will, however, assimilate key features from the older forms as simplifications). [7]

The progression of a series of successive theories/insights that subsumes the scientific paradigms that preceded them becomes an example of the subrative process discussed in the second chapter. Yet when scientists forget that theories are ever-changing forms of insight that give shape and form to their experience, scientific vision becomes locked within the confines of a single fixed theory or world view.

Fixed theories of the world provide a temporary sense of security and stability for the ego as well as for the scientist. Furthermore, fixed theories are often apparently confirmed by experience. Research has shown, for example, that if a person approaches another individual with a fixed theory or projection that this individual is an 'enemy' against whom one must be on guard, the latter individual will react in an unfriendly manner, thereby confirming that projection. Nature, similarly, will respond to the scientist in the manner in which it is approached.

The history of science is a chronicle of the demise of 'fixed' theories that espoused final and conclusive proof for some universal law that applies to all situations. A more prudent way of approaching science's discoveries would be to consider them as various different ways for looking at one reality, useful within a certain domain, yet unclear and misleading when extended beyond that domain. In the future, the

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[7] Ibid. pg.4.

crucial task will be for scientists to be able to recognize and set sensible and meaningful limits for its particular theories and methods.

Psychology, in particular, needs to recognize the limits of scientific theories and methods in relation to the domain of subjective experience and the study of cognition itself. Sigmund Koch (1981) [8] has been studying psychology's progress as a discipline for understanding behavior for the last forty years; he has concluded that the field's primary reliance on the fixed methods of scientific research for gaining insight into the human personality has resulted in "a proliferation of ameaningful thought and inquiry". Psychology's uncritical imitation of science without an appreciation of science's limits has served to block meaningful new discoveries in the field.

The central characteristic of ameaningful thought (or an ameaningful mode of inquiry) is the assumption that valid knowledge arises primarily as a result of strict scientific processing, rather than from the experience of discovery. It presumes that knowledge is almost automatically a result of an assembly line, a 'methodology'. [9] Psychology's emphasis on strict experimental methods, operational definitions, precise empirical measurement, and statistical parameters for determining significance and validity reflect this dependence. These objective methods have long been successfully used by the physical sciences to study material phenomena. Ameaningful thought arises, Koch believes, when

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[8] Koch, Sigmund, The Nature and Limits of Psychological Knowledge, American Psychologist, Vol.36, pgs.257-269, 1981.

[9] Ibid., pg.259.

psychology unquestioningly assumes these objective methods will provide meaningful knowledge when applied to a wide variety of subjective processes.

In his six volume project, Psychology: A Study of Science, Koch extensively evaluated the viability of the behavioristic enterprise which modeled itself upon the empirical sciences. [10] His epistemological investigation listed numerous flaws in the principles of empiricism, positivism, atomism, and reductionism that permeated the behavioral theories. In his scathing evaluation, Koch illustrated the dependence of the behavioristic epistemology on principles that philosophers of science had long established as shallow, impoverished, and defective. Nonetheless, the dysfunctional nature of many of these scientific tenets is poorly understood by most psychologists. The reason, Koch explains, is that the twentieth century scientific community persists in seeing little value in evaluating the philosophical underpinnings of its methodology.

Psychology's avoidance in evaluating the epistemology of its empirical methods has resulted not only in a great deal of pseudo-inquiry, but also in a bias against more subjective and non-scientific modes of inquiry. Koch suggests that psychology create a new specialty of 'epistemopathology' to discriminate between methods of true discovery and ameaningful investigation. Koch lists just a few symptoms of

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10 Koch, S., Psychology: A Study of a Science (Vol. 1-6), N.Y.: McGraw-Hill, 1959, 1962, 1963.

epistemopathology that he finds prevalent in the contemporary research:

1) Single principle imperialism.
2) Tendency to make so restrictive a definition of the field of study as to render the study besides the point, or indeed finished before it has begun.
3) Tendency to select a simple case, and then to assume that it will merely be a matter of time and energy until the 'complex case' can be handled by application of the easy composition rules.
4) Tendency to persist so rigidly, blindly, patiently in the application of rules, despite fulsome indications of their disutility, that the behavior would have to be characterized as schizophrenic in any other context.
5) Tendency to accept any 'finding' conforming to some treasured methodology in preference to 'traditional' wisdom or individual experience, no matter how pellucidly and frequently confirmed that non-scientistic knowledge may be. [11]

Koch speculates that scientists' excessive dependence on the methods of formal science (beyond the natural limits set by epistemological evaluation) is a counterreaction to the awesome ambiguity and uncertainty of the human condition. The presence of a science, a methodology, a set of rules for gathering knowledge that give definite answers, "all reflect an endemic need for developing a conceptual box that gives promise of relieving the pains of cognitive uncertainty and easing problematic tension." [12]

In its extreme form, ameaningful inquiry attempts to reduce the ambiguity of the human situation by believing that its methodology can, in principle, answer all questions put before it. The ultimate meaning of ameaning is indeed that it is a fear driven species of cognitive constriction, a reduction of uncertainty by denial, a form of phony

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[11] Koch, S., The Nature and Limits of Psychological Science, op. cit., pg.258.

[12] Ibid., pg.264.

certainty achieved by the covert annihilation of the problematic, the complex, and the subtle.

The problematic, the complex, and the subtle represent an important range of meaningful question for psychology. Koch describes this dimension in terms of the 'antinomal texture' of human experience. The antinomies are a class of questions that reason must inevitable confront, yet for which there is no rationally decidable answer. An antinomy highlights the limits of reason insofar as it is a class of questions such that a thesis and its contradictory thesis can each be proven with equally impeccable and logically unassailable arguments. Kant postulated a number of these now famous antinomies, including questions of 1) the infinite extent and divisibility of space and time, 2) the existence of God, and 3) the freedom of the will. [13] Bertrand Russell expands on this list which has confronted men over the centuries:

> Is the world divided into mind and matter, and if so, what is mind and what is matter? Is the mind subject to matter, or is it possessed of independent powers? Has the universe any unity or purpose? Are there really laws of nature, or do we believe in them because of our innate love of order?
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> Science tells us what we can know, but what we can know is little and if we forget how much we cannot know we become insensitive to things of a very great importance. Uncertainty, in the presence of vivid hopes and fears, is painful, but it must be endured if we wish to live without the support of comforting fairy tales. [14]

Russell, Koch, Bohm and many others concur in encouraging psychology to give more attention to its epistemologies, habits of thinking,

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[13] Weldon, T.D., Kant's Critique of Pure Reason. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1958.

[14] Russell, Bertrand, A History of Western Philosophy. N.Y.: Simon & Schuster, pg. 3., 1945.

and its tendency to avoid the antinomal dimension of life through its overreliance on being 'scientific'. In order to reverse a trend toward fragmentation and insular specialization that is common within the sciences, psychology would do well to redefine itself as something more than a science. Acknowledging the awesome domain of physiological, psychological, and parapsychological phenomena that psychology attempts to study, the field must look to additional tools (besides science) in order to bring a sense of cohesion and integration to this discipline. Koch suggests redefining/replacing the term 'psychology' with the locution 'psychological studies'. Each area of these studies would have its own contextual framework of theories and methods of investigation. The field would then be expanded to more easily accepting more intuitive and subjective approaches for studying certain phenomena in addition to its present methods.

Once psychology understands the inherent limits of science, it can redefine itself as a discipline employing a wide range of methods, each of which become appropriate within a specific domain. Should psychology transcend its own definition as a science, it will have much work ahead of it in setting up meaningful guidelines for choosing between objective/scientific and subjective/introspective modes of inquiry. The meditative literature, with its emphasis on the special benefits of studying consciousness using intuitional, introspective means, should play an invaluable role in setting up those future guidelines.

Meditation and Emergent Models of Holistic Development

It is much easier to point out the antimonal gaps that science cannot fill than to propose detailed means for dealing with these gaps. In turning to our second area of discussion, however, it seems apparent that psychology is turning toward increasingly holistic models of the psyche and consciousness for filling this gap. Ira Progoff was one of the early pioneers who recognized that psychology needed a fundamentally different view of personal development in light of the eroding dominance of neobehavioral science and psychoanalysis. This 'rebirth' of psychology would focus on the previously ignored potentials of human consciousness.

> The foundation of this new kind of psychology is its conception of man as an organism of psychological depth and spiritual magnitude. Its task is to bring the modern person in touch with the sustaining and creative forces of life beyond all intellectual doctrines, and to make these forces available to man in terms of experiences that he can learn to verify by himself, within himself.[15]

Psychology's old views about the nature of human consciousness are undergoing a steady transformation. The basic position of neuroscience and traditional behavioral psychology is that consciousness is the cumulative result of a complex series of neuro-physico-chemical events. Sperry's interpretation of consciousness took exception to this viewpoint. He postulated that consciousness was something distinct and special in its own right.[16] Andrew Weil summarized this 180 degree

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[15] Progoff, Ira, The Death and Rebirth of Psychology. N.Y.: McGraw-Hill, pgs. 164-165, 1956.

[16] Sperry, Roger, A Modified concept of Consciousness, Psychological Review, 76:6, pgs.532-536, 1969.

reversal away from a physicalistic definition of consciousness. "I am content to regard consciousness as a thing in itself, the cause and not the effect of brain chemistry." [17] As consciousness became recognized as a powerful operating force in its own right, psychology began focusing on questions of unitive and altered states of consciousness, parapsychology, meditation, and non-rational states of awareness.

In 1967, a new movement began in psychology for studying the newly emergent questions about consciousness, intuition and creativity, mystical experience, and non-ordinary states of consciousness. It differed from the recent humanistic schools of psychology which emphasized self-actualization and inter-personal processes. Instead, this new movement focuses attention on the inner personal dynamics of transcending processes. Anthony Sutich and Abraham Maslow termed this new orientation 'transpersonal psychology'. With the publication of the Journal of Transpersonal Psychology in 1967, they introduced this fourth force in psychology, the other three being analytic, behavioral, and humanistic psychology. [18]

Sutich felt that the concept of self-actualization neither possessed the breadth or depth to encompass the transpersonal dimensions that constituted man's innermost nature. Maslow (1969) concurred, and

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[17] Sutich, Anthony, The Emergence of the Transpersonal Orientation, A Personal Account. Journal of Transpersonal Psychology, 8:1, pgs. 5-19, 1976.

[18] Weil, Andrew, The Natural Mind, Psychology Today, 6:5, pg.53, 1972.

went on to distinguish self-actualizers from transpersonal 'transcenders'.

> I have recently found it more useful to differentiate between two kinds (or better degrees) of self-actualizing people, those who were clearly healthy, but with little or no experience of transcendence, and those in whom transcendent experiencing was important and even actual. [19]

Self-actualizers, in comparison to transcenders, are seen to be more practical, mundane, and secular people who are primarily engaged in the actualization of personal needs and idiosyncratic potentialities. Transcenders on the other hand, live more on the level of being rather than becoming. At that level, they are more concerned with the intrinsic value of existence for its own sake without trying to manipulate it for a series of particular purposes. Maslow's recognition of man's potential for transcending self-actualization for the realm of being parallels Wilber's centauric-existential level of development. Maslow listed numerous meanings for the term transcendence which involves moving beyond all dichotomies in order to create superordinate wholes and a unified perception of the world. In Maslow's eyes, this need to transcend is a 'metahuman' one that is essential for all human beings.

Developmental theorists such as Wilber and Maslow have only recently suggested that the highest levels of personality development are characterized by the transpersonal qualities of egolessness, radical

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[19] Maslow, Abraham, Various Meanings of Transcendence, Journal of Transpersonal Psychology, 5:2, pg.33, 1969.

transcendence and non-dualistic states of consciousness and being. It is too soon to predict how well or at what point their unconventional ideas will be integrated into other theories of personal development.

Vedantic theories, by contrast, enjoy a longstanding consensus regarding the transpersonal properties (such as the sudden increase in intuitive capacities, and a corresponding decrease in ego-enhancing activities) that dominate the upper reaches of consciousness and development. Indian theories of psychology and meditation enjoy a distinct advantage over their Western counterparts. India's agreement concerning the transpersonal and transcendent character of these highest states provides their psychology with a clear standard for evaluating specific behaviors. Since transcendental states represent the highest levels of health and adjustment in Indian psychology, all behavioral, emotional, and mental processes are ultimately judged by whether they facilitate or impede progress in attaining these highest states. Western psychology lacks a set of cohesive standards due to the field's diversity of opinion concerning the characterstic properties of the highest stages of development.

For over two thousand years, Vedantic models of meditation have acknowledged the subtle, immeasurable, and supra-rational nature of the most advanced stages of consciousness. Rational processes of the mind which objectify, categorize, and superimpose distinctions upon one's ongoing stream of consciousness are suspended and subrated by

non-dualistic, holistic modes of awareness. John Welwood (1977a, [20] 1977b)[21] and Michael Washburn (1978) [22] have stressed that psychology must replace its dualistic constructs and ideas about the self and consciousness. Psychology's entrenched habit of viewing the psyche as split into parts (mind/body, the unconscious vesus the conscious) in uneasy relationship with each other has been changing with the onset of gestalt and organismic theories of personality. Welwood and Washburn, however, believe that Eastern meditative paradigms will become the most valuable resource for forming holistic theories of consciousness to supercede traditional topographical models.

Meditative paradigms continually focus attention on the unitary nature of a non-conditioned, non-processing field of dynamic consciousness that persists despite the rational processes of fragmentation, differentiation, and superimposition that dominate mental activity during ego-development. These rational processes, as science has shown, exist to organize and analyse complex information about the world in a pragmatic manner. Meditation, however, strives to insure that these processes do not become harmful by so dominating or fragmenting one's stream of consciousness so as to destroy an inner sense of 'wholeness'.

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[20] Welwood, John, Meditation and the Unconscious: A New Perspective. The Journal of Transpersonal Psychology. 9:1, pgs.1-26, 1977.

[21] Welwood, John, On Psychological Space, The Journal of Transpersonal Psychology, 9:2, pgs.97-118, 1977.

[22] Washburn, Michael, Observations Relevant to a Unified Theory of Meditation, The Journal of Transpersonal Psychology, 10:1, pgs.45-65, 1978.

Being so immersed in these dualistic habits of thinking, Western psychology has greater difficulty than Eastern psychologies in recognizing this threat.

The trend toward holistic theories of consciousness and personality in psychology has arose in counterresponse to the fragmenting influence of analytic and behavioral models of man. Welwood describes one of the most popular holistic models of consciousness that is recently emerging. This model borrows from the classical Tibetan analogy between the infinite properties of the mind and the image of infinite space. The Buddhist metaphor states that "the essence of mind (awareness) is like space, there is nothing it cannot encompass. This 'open space' of individual awareness, furthermore, constitutes the basic ground of one's being; it is an insubstantial, groundless, undivided, omnipotential awareness that underlies our more conditioned patterns of thinking." [23]

The Zen meditative tradition has also evolved this image for representing the limitless capacities of the mind. Zen has repeatedly employed the symbol of open space or 'voidness' to represent the most fundamental and powerful aspects of consciousness. Hisamatsu summarizes the ten properties of this open space of pure unconditioned awareness that persists beneath the surface of everyday mental activity:

1) It is without obstruction, allowing things to emerge without being filled in by them.
2) It is omnipresent, present in all phenomena, in form and emptiness.

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[23] Trungpa, C., The Myth of Freedom. Berkely: Shambala Press, 1976.

3) It is impartial, in the sense of letting things be what they are.
4) It is broad and great, meaning that it is not limited by any conceptual forms.
5) It is formless, not able to be captured or expressed by any delimited structure.
6) It is pure, uncontaminated by perspectives and viewpoints.
7) It is stable, neither arising nor passing away, but the ground of all such temporal phenomena.
8) It is 'voiding of being' meaning that it cannot be said to 'exist' in any objective way.
9) It is 'voiding of voidness', meaning that open space is not simply nothing.
10) It is 'without obtaining' meaning that it cannot be grasped or held in any way. [24]

Although the features of this original 'ground' of awareness remain foreign to Western psychological models of the mind, this model of open space reflects striking parallels with the trend toward 'field' theories of modern physics. The notion of there being indivisible particles of matter at the heart of solid phenomena (or any absolute distinctions i.e. matter/energy) has been superceded by relativity and quantum theories. Indeed, the atom has come to be regarded as a poorly defined cloud, dependent for its particular forms upon the whole environment, including the observing instrument. Recent advances in relativity theory have shown that one cannot maintain absolute divisions between observer and observed, subject and object, or matter and energy. Each side of these polarities eventually become merging and interpenetrating aspects of a larger, indivisible, unified field.

Bohm uses the image of "Undivided Wholeness in Flowing Movement'

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[24] Hisamatsu, S., The Characteristics of Oriental Nothingness, Translated R. DeMartino in The Philosophical Studies of Japan, Vol.2, Tokyo: Maruzen Press, 1960.

to represent the dynamic flux that characterizes all sub-atomic fields. He borrows from William James' famous 'stream of consciousness' metaphor to illustrate his image. [25] The 'flow' of this undivided movement of matter-energy exists prior to the physical phenomena that arise and dissolve in the course of that flow. An undivided field of dynamic awareness also exists prior to the definable forms of thoughts and images that arise and dissolve in this flux, like ripples, waves, and vortices in a flowing stream of water. As happens with such patterns of movement in an actual stream, some thoughts recur and persist in a more or less stable way, while others are evanescent. [26] Bohm summarizes the parallel between his subatomic model of Undivided Wholeness and holistic representations of the mind.

> The proposal for a new general form of insight is that all matter is of this (undivided) nature. That is, there is a universal flux that cannot be defined explicitly, but which can be known only implicitly, as indicated by the explicitly definable forms and shapes, some stable and some unstable, that can be abstracted from this universal flow. In this flow, mind and matter are not separate substances. Rather they are different aspects of one whole and unbroken movement.
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> In this way, we are able to look on all aspects of existence as not divided from each other, and thus we can bring an end to the fragmentation implicit in the atomistic point of view which leads us to divide things in a throughgoing way. Atomism still, in a limited sense, provides a valid form of insight, i.e. that in spite of the undivided wholeness in flowing movement, the various patterns that can be abstracted from it have a certain relative autonomy and stability, which is indeed provided for by the universal law of flowing movement. But now we have the limits of this autonomy and stability sharply in mind. [27]

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[25] James, William, The Principles of Psychology. N.Y.: Dover Publications, 1950.

[26] Bohm, op. cit., pg.10.

[27] Ibid. pg.6.

Vedantic and meditative models of consciousness begin by describing the field of undivided wholeness/absolute consciousness that transcends all rational attempts to limit or define it. Ordinary rational thought which superimposes 'fixed' frameworks upon this dynamic flux are functionally necessary in many contexts. The developmental emphasis in meditation, however, is a steady movement toward cleansing the mind of fixed habits of thinking in favor of fostering a state of awareness that is creative and dynamic in its 'emptiness and openess'.

Meditative models of consciousness operate from the fact that there is a universal, transpersonal, field of consciousness that interpenetrates and subsumes the more limited field of ego-bound consciousness. Moreover, Vedanta imphasizes the need for developing access to these egoless, intuitional fields of awareness through meditation since they cannot be reached by rational means. Western psychology has only recently accepted the possible existence of these transpersonal aspects of consciousness. Psychology's expertise in this area is quite limited. In the next section, we shall discuss some of the reasons for this, and meditation's future role in encouraging more radical forms of psychological transcendence.

Meditation From a Psychotherapy Perspective

Although meditation's final goal of complete ego-transcendence is markedly different from conventional psychotherapy objectives, there are numerous intermediate parallels between these two activities.

Many investigators, including Shapiro, [28] Carrington, [29] and Kara (1979) [30] have compared the influences of meditation and psychotherapy. Before describing meditation's more unique properties, some of the fundamental similarities between these two disciplines should be presented.

In their broadest context, both meditation and psychotherapy begin by enhancing the individual's ability for consciously becoming aware of his innermost patterns of thinking, feeling, and behaving. Ideally, this increased capacity for self-awareness will enable the person to uncover the various motives behind these patterns; the client/meditator will then be in a position to make conscious and responsible choices regarding his future behavior and self-development. Psychotherapy, however, is more reliant on the expertise of the therapist who must first establish a trusting, empathic relationship with the client. The client assumes more of a dependent position with this authority figure, who guides the individual according to the dictates of the the therapist's theoretical preference.

The therapist typically serves as a sort of 'observing ego' to his client. He notes transference patterns and the presence of various defensive mechanisms that operate during the therapy hour or during the

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[28] Shapiro, Deane, Precision Nirvana. N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1978.

[29] Carrington, Patricia, Freedom in Meditation. N.Y.: Doubleday Press, 1977.

[30] Kara, Ashok, The Guru and Therapist:Goals and Techniques, Psychotherapy: Theory, Research, and Practice, 16:1, 1979.

client's verbal reports of his experiences. Through the medium of verbal interchange, free-association, testing, dream-analysis, and other methods, the therapist elicits the personal meaning and emotional overtones of the client's self-statements, memories, and experiences. Once the client's problems and their meanings have been communicated to, and recognized by the client, the latter assumes increased responsibility for changing the nature of his behavior and self-evaluations.

While meditation also involves the intermittent supervision of a guru or teacher, the meditator is expected to immediately assume a much greater degree of individual responsibility for solitary self-observation. The meditator must fashion his own observing ego through his efforts of daily practice. Furthermore, his mindfulness training aims at developing a calm state of observational awareness that is less interpretive of the subjective material that presents itself (in comparison with the more 'directive' styles of psychotherapy). Unlike therapeutic approaches which selectively focus on dysfunctional behaviors and aspects of the psyche, meditation impartially allows attention to range over all aspects of ego functioning. As a result, meditation can play more of an integrative role insofar as it encourages a diffuse, holistic overview of the entire range of covert mental processes.

Carrington has commented on the advantages 'bare attention' styles of meditation possess over the technique of free association, a comparison often made by analysts. Both processes begin by fostering a relaxed, distraction free environment in order to minimize external

stimulation. Yet during free association, the therapy client faces a series of restraints that are not a part of meditation. First the analysand must verbalize all of his free associations. The meditative state is not disrupted by this requirement. Furthermore, by not having to transform all inner experience into verbal form, the meditator is less likely to interrupt the dynamic flow of inner events which later may or may not (say in the case of a subtle image or feeling) be verbalized. [31] Free association also has a more specific purpose of pinpointing complexes or problem areas, and the client may feel pressured by the therapist to perform in a certain manner. Meditation occurs without a second party being present, is totally non-evaluative, and is prompted (ideally) by the individual's desire for greater self understanding.

Of course, meditation's role of increasing one's capacity for global self-observation naturally extends to include the problem patterns of thought and behavior that psychotherapy addresses. Research interest in meditation has been sustained not only by meditation's usefulness as a tool for self-observation, but also by its success in fostering a relaxed, non-evaluative attitude in the process. As the trend in psychotherapy turns toward more efficient and powerful methods for developing a client's objective self awareness, particularly outside of the therapy hour, interest in meditation will continue. As therapy

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[31] Carrington, op. cit., pgs.28-30.

shifts its attention from problem behaviors to the subjective and covert self-statements that perpetuate those behaviors, there will be a similar increase in the demand for introspective methods that clients can use for recognizing and altering this material.

One crucial difference remains, however, between the practice of meditation and conventional psychotherapies. Behavioral, rational-emotive, and humanistic therapy typically attempt to replace the client's distorted or negative self-statements. Similarly, positively evaluated aspects of the self/ego are reinforced and expected to replace or supercede those negatively evaluated patterns of behavior. At the intermediate stages of development, this evaluative faculty is a necessary and appropriate tool for making decisions in therapy. For persons at the more advanced/integrated developmental stages however, this process of valuation is discouraged by meditation because it becomes an obstacle blocking further ego-transcendence. The reasons, as we have previously see, centers aroumd the role evaluation plays in 1) subtly dividing one's phenomenological world into multiple dualisms (good/bad, pleasant/unpleasant, strong/weak) that exist in opposition to each other, and 2) necessitating that the ego struggle to maintain and protect its attachment to those particular positive evaluations formed during its previous conditioning.

Meditation represents a more powerful tool for deep structural personality change at these higher stages insofar as it demands a radical attitude of complete non-evaluation during its practice. Over

an extended period of practice, meditation's non-evaluative attitude of global acceptance permits easier access to those repressed portions of the psyche the evoke feelings of guilt, fear, anger, or threat. The ability to detach from these feelings and non-judgementally observe them allows the individual to transcend and master these emotions. On a psychosomatic level, non-evaluation provides the basis for maintaining a corresponding state of physical relaxation, centeredness, and non-arousal. On an ego-developmental level, it allows the person to gradually disidentify from his previous fears, resistances, and characteristic patterns of self-evaluation.

Roberto Assagioli reinforces the need for a strong underlying attitude of non-evaluative acceptance for psychological health. He summarizes his belief by stating "we are dominated by everything with which our self becomes identified...we can dominate and control everything with which we can disidentify." [32] Roger Walsh (1976) illustrates this principle by describing how he approached his own troubling emotions with an attitude of detached observation and non-evaluative acceptance:

> The more complete this acceptance, the more effective it was in deflating this negativity. If, for example, I became anxious about something and then got angry that I was scared, then it became apparent that it was necessary to accept all the layers of this emotional onion and effectively say that it was okay to be depressed, angry, and scared. As soon as the outer onion ring was accepted, then the inner ones also collapsed with it. [33]

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[32] Assagioli, Roberto, Psychosynthesis. N.Y.: Penguin Books, pg.22, 1965.

[33] Walsh, Robert, Reflections on Psychotherapy, Journal of Transpersonal Psychology, 8:1, pgs.106-107, 1976.

By observing the cyclical nature of emotions, the meditator acquires the ability to step back and simple view the numerous ups and downs, and positive and negative events and feelings that fill his life. By stepping outside the flux of feeling bad when we judge our situation to be disadvantageous, or good when our situation appears beneficial, the meditator relinquishes the need for affectively labelling his experiences. The Chinese philosophy of Taoism particularly emphasized the wisdom of non-evaluation in maintaining a sense of inner calmness and equilibrium amidst life's unpredictable cyclic changes.

> This may be illustrated by the Taoistic story of a farmer whose horse ran away. That evening all his neighbors gathered together to commiserate with him since this was obviously judged to be an instance of bad luck. The farmer's only reaction was to say 'May be'. The next day the horse returned, but brought with it six wild horses, and the neighbors once again came to congratulate him on his good fortune. He said only 'May be'. And then on the following day, his son tried to saddle and ride one of the wild horses, was thrown, and broke his leg. Again the neighbors came to offer their sympathy for his misfortune. He just replied 'May be'. The day after that, conscription officers came to the village to seize some young men for the army, but because of his broken leg the son was rejected. When his neighbors came to say how fortunately everything had turned out the farmer would only say 'May be'. [34]

As the meditator evaluates less and less, and identifies less and less with any trait or attachment in order to gain 'security' there is a corresponding decrease of defense mechanisms. Quite simply, there is less of an ego to protect, or fewer 'negative' situations that must be avoided.

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[34] Watts, Alan, Tao, the Watercourse Way. N.Y.: Pantheon Books, pg.31, 1975.

Wilber's transpersonal model of growth is unusual within psychology because of its emphasis on developing ego-less, extensively non-attached, and supra-rational states of consciousness. Conventional therapies are much more cautious, if not skeptical, about the development of these capacities. Psychotherapy tolerates a limited degree of egolessness, non-attachment, and non-evaluation. For the most part, however, conventional psychology considers the ego as the 'terra firma' for basic awareness and balks at the Vedantic suggestion of its radical transcendence.

Deane Shapiro's Precision Nirvana compares the principles of Western behavioral theories and meditation. In this work, he categorizes both the positive and negative (from a therapeutic perspective) aspects of the qualities of egolessness, non-evaluation, non-attachment, and holistic or intuitive modes of consciousness. His listing (see Table 2) provides a representative example of psychology's misgivings and what the field suspects might happen should they unilaterally favor egolessness over a strong ego, non-attachment and non-evaluation over attachments and evaluation, and intuition over rational cognitive modes.[35]

Shapiro's table represents the field's 'projected' assessment of the longterm outcome should a meditative state of awareness come to dominate one's consciousness. One must remember that this is a projection since Western psychology has little firsthand experience with the

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[35] Shapiro, op. cit., pgs. 172-173.

TABLE 2

Shapiro's Comparative List (condensed form)

Positive Aspects	Negative Aspects
Egolessness:	
1) greater ability to take risks without fear of being judged	1) lack of belief in oneself, less of a personal sense of identity
2) ability to experience oneself in a variety of situations without the self-concept being threatened	2) greater passivity, less willing to make decisions or choose a direction in life
3) ability to adapt to a wide variety of situations	3) less responsibility for one's actions
4) ability to not be self-conscious and therefore more open to others	4) less feelings of self control
* 5) greater capacity for transcendence	
Passive Non-evaluation and Yielding to Experience	
1) willing to trust oneself and one's personal intuition	1) less skills for setting goals or evaluating progress
2) greater relaxation and peace of mind	2) lack of vigor, or willingness to strive for personal excellence or perfection
3) greater creativity, flexibility, and spontaneity	3) mushiness, lack of firm standards or beliefs
4) ability to let go, greater openess to experience	4) not willing to stand up for oneself
Non-Attachment	
1) non-possessiveness	1) non-caring, numbness
2) ability to see more objectively and clearly	2) withdrawn, unfeeling

TABLE 2

	Positive Aspects	Negative Aspects
	3) broader, more non-judgemental perspective	3) less willing to commit oneself to ideas, people
*	4) less goal-oriented and more process oriented and conflict free	
	Altered States of Consciousness	
	1) living in the moment	1) lack of precise awareness
	2) non goal-oriented	2) non-focused, useless in the ways of the world
	3) non-cognitive openess to experience	3) less able to make order out of sensory input
*	4) greater capacity for holistic integration, insight, and discovery	

* Additional listings put in by this author

prolonged development of these altered states of consciousness. Faced with the logical question of what would happen if the ego 'let go' of everything with which it was identified, psychology can only speculate. With little cultural belief in, or support for transpersonal states of consciousness, it assumes that this letting go would result in a series of negative consequences. Personal identity, self-control, and active participation in the world would be greatly reduced. The ego would lose its vigor and motivation for personal excellence as the forces of inertia, passivity, and non-committment emerge. Total devotion to maintaining a sustained state of meditative awareness is viewed as incompatible with ordinary functioning.

A person who practiced mindfulness meditation for extended periods of time would eventually (in psychology's eyes) becoming increasing non-focused and emotionally indifferent; he would exist in a hazy intuitional state that would preclude clear access to ordinary ratio-analytic processes or goal directed behavior. All in all, the field speculates that a unidirectional development of the states of egolessness, non-attachment, and non-evaluation encourages depersonalization and the loss of ability to actively guide one's own actions.

The eventual outcome of radically abandoning the primary modes of the ego and the intellect is fundamentally different according to Vedanta and Eastern experience. Unlike psychology, the formation of these meditative states do not in any way diminish aspects of one's real, transpersonal self that values vigor, committment, compassion, or perfection.

In actuality, a conscious suspension of one's participation in the processes of evaluation, attachment and goal oriented behavior, and analytic thinking represents the meditator's vigorous committment to the ideals of self-perfection and transcendence. The former processes of discriminative evaluation and logical-analytic thinking are not irretrievably abandoned. They remain to perform a number of practical functions and to provide certain forms of insight within a limited context. Yet as the meditator observes the effects of these processes on his attempts to achieve a unified and harmonious sense of being, the divisive and non-integrative properties of these activities come into focus.

It is misleading to believe that the meditator's preference for a detached, non-evaluative state of awareness borders on mushiness and withdrawal, or that it erodes the possibility of having firm standards or guiding principles. Everyone familiar with the extensive pre-requisites and training within the established systems of meditation understand that this non-evaluative modality is the end product of correctly following a strict set of firm standards. Only a person unfamiliar with the deep values and compassionate ethical ideals of Vedanta and yoga would confuse non-attachment with non-caringness or numbness. Altered states of meditative awareness are earned by taking extraordinary risks and by exceptional personal sacrifice and effort. It is not from a lack of firm beliefs or non-assertiveness that meditation's rigors are undertaken. It is precisely the meditator's experience of the impermanence

of the ego as well as his firm belief in ever higher states of growth that explain his unusual 'behavior'.

Personal Recommendations and Summary

In closing, the central question that emerges concerns the chief contribution meditation can make to a field of psychology that has only recently made serious efforts to study it. On an abstract level, meditation's primary usefulness lies in its ability to provide a sophisticated theoretical alternative for viewing the mind and ego. Meditative frameworks represent a quantum leap into a description of what the upper ranges of personal development and consciousness are like. Psychology is only in its adolescence as it attempts to understand the transpersonal qualities of egolessness and adualism that characterize the immense regions of the 'open space' of consciousness. For the moment, the vast areas of consciousness that lie beyond the boundaries of the ego represent an uncharted and possibly threatening dimension for the profession. As Wilber might say, psychology's collective Eros would naturally panic when confronted with the boundless open space that lies at the root of all awareness. Its science attempts to create some rational order to counteract this antinomal texture of the human condition. Consciousness without a centering ego is a difficult notion for psychology.

The meditative tradition of India balances this Western condition of unfamiliarity and apprehension when confronting the egoless regions of consciousness. As Welwood states, this open space of pure consciousness

is not threatening simply because it provides no support, feedback, or confirmation for a sense of individuality that we ordinarily feel we must affirm. Instead, meditative contexts recognise this open space as the fertile, omnipotential ground of our entire being. [36] Realizing the superior creative and dynamic potential of this formless, unconditioned state of consciousness, Vedanta maintains that there is no need, ultimately, for projecting or superimposing self-created psychological worlds of which we are the center.

Mainstream psychology is presently neither in a position to 1) accept or understand most of the discoveries and beliefs that Indian meditative systems propose about the existence of states of consciousness beyond the ego, and 2) utilize many of the advanced techniques of meditation. Only a few decades ago, the field preferred to view the mind as it it were simply 'an empty black box'. Indian systems of meditation have been refining their techniques for studying this mental apparatus for the last two thousand years. They have developed a multidimensional approach for transcendence via methods that develop understanding and then control of the mind, body, senses, and emotions. Fortunately for modern psychology, their preliminary methods strive to be both simple and universal enough to be adapted for use by individuals of foreign cultures.

On a practical level, psychology should turn its attention to

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[36] Welwood, On Psychological Space, op. cit., pg.108.

the most basic category of meditative exercises designed to increase one's introspective concentration through 'mindfulness' training. As we have previously mentioned, mindfulness meditation initially has the meditator practice sustaining a sense of detached awareness focused on one of the four areas detailed in the Vidsudhimagga; they are 1) physical impressions arising from the body and the five senses, 2) emotions and feeling states, 3) the succession of objects that capture one's attention, and 4) the types of mental processes and their operation.

With the resurgence of interest in the single case study as a means for intensively investigating personality, mindfulness meditation could play an extremely valuable role. The richer and more detailed a subject's subjective report of his covert processes (particularly in the four areas that the Vidsudhimagga covers), the more complete the picture/gestalt the investigator possesses for understanding the relationship between the subject's inner experience and his outer actions. Meditative training would increase the clarity and depth of the subject's self-reports. Investigators should also become proficient in objectively monitoring the simultaneous succession of their own a)physical sensations, b)feeling states, c) objects of attention, and 4) mental processes that arise in response to studying (or doing therapy with) their subjects. Meditation once again represents the most powerful and appropriate tool for preparing clinicians and investigators for this task of monitoring the full range of their own responses over and above their more typical intellectual interpretations in response to a case. Finally, the

difficulties investigators will experience in studying their own stream of consciousness through meditation should sensitize them to the obstacles their subjects face on the same task.

There is scarcely any area in the field of psychological development and therapy where an increased ability to observe and report the full range of one's inner experience could be viewed as anything but beneficial. And yet there is very little sustained training (outside the context of therapy) even in graduate programs in psychology designed for the specific purpose of increasing mindfulness of the crucial dimensions of inner experience. Lesh (1970) has documented the significantly increased levels of empathic sensitivity graduate counseling students displayed after just one month of basic Zen breathing meditation.[37] An experimental program studying the effects of a year long program in mindfulness meditation among psychologists and other populations is long overdue.

Speculation about the psychological uses of the concentrative-absorptive styles of meditation is premature given the field's lack of exposure to more preliminary meditation regimes. Psychology, therefore, should concentrate on the practical contributions the 'negative' styles of meditation have to offer. Much more work remains in gathering more detailed information from the Indian literature in the areas of 1) the specific schema/system the Visudhimagga has developed for classifying the contents from the four major categories of subjective material, and 2) case studies and first hand accounts of the longterm

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[37] Lesh, T.V., Zen meditation and the development of empathy in counselors. Journal of Humanistic Psychology, 10, pgs. 39-63, 1970.

effects of mindfulness training.

Above all else, the meditative literature represents a challenging source of innovative ideas for the future study and development of higher states of consciousness. The seemingly divergent styles and techniques of the various meditative traditions converge on the common principles of egolessness and non-attachment that signal ego-transcendence. This present study provides at most an introductory overview of the values and dynamics of meditation for members of the psychological community who are more familiar with the operations and perspectives of experimental science.

Hopefully, this work contains the seeds of as many questions as it does answers concerning the phenomena of meditation. A number of issues come quickly to mind. At what developmental level(s) should meditation be introduced? What are the criteria? How should the 'negative/mindful' versus the 'absorptive/concentrative' styles of meditation be used, alternately, separately, as a function of the individual's personality style? What are the differences and similarities between superimposition and the psychodynamic concepts of transference and projection? What are the specific psychological properties of the various symbols and images used in the concentrative styles of meditation? How do they relate to Jung's archetypal symbolism? Meditation will continue to offer a vast supply of questions for future research and theoretical contemplation.

If Indian models of consciousness are to assume any significant

role in psychology's future growth, a number of obstacles must be addressed. This study has outlined some of these major impediments, and therefore makes the following recommendations. First, psychology should place greater educational emphasis on understanding the epistemological implications of its scientific activities and viewpoint. This in turn would help clarify the limits of scientific modes of discovery and create room for accepting the validity of subjective experience per se. Second, in expanding its self-definition beyond that of being primarily a science, psychology should exercise a sustained openess toward integrating foreign systems of psychological development. At present, very few psychologists have attempted any first-hand study of the classical systems of meditation and consciousness.

Finally, the field should continue to examine the heuristic value of integrative, holistic, and transpersonal models of ego development and consciousness. Wilber's model ranks as one of the field's most progressive efforts in that direction. Such models more naturally correspond to the non-dualistic systems of Vedanta and the emergent paradigms of contemporary physics. The meditative literature is unanimous in giving intuitive, non-dualistic modes of consciousness superior status over linear, analytic models of processing information. At present, however, Western values favor the development of these latter cognitive faculties over the little understood nature of intuition.

Meditation's final goal is to create a harmonious sense of <u>being</u> through the development of ever higher, more unified, and harmonious

modes of awareness. Until the disruptive and growth inhibiting nature of excessive attachments, fragmented thinking, superimposition, and a fixed sense of self/ego are studied and understood, this development stalls. Simple belief or mechanical repetition of any guidelines, meditative or otherwise, is not sufficient. In order to be truly transformative, meditation demands a seriousness found at the highest stages of ego development. This dedication facilitates the emergence of a personal sense of discovery into the nature of one's being and a number of subrative changes about one's conception of reality. Development continues and consciousness 'expands' as a result of this subrative process of subjective insight.

Both science and meditation aim at uncovering an ever more unified, holistic, and comprehensive understanding of man. Science, from practical necessity, confines itself to the methods and parameters of the empirically measurable. Meditation draws its inspiration from an acknowledgement of the immeasurable. As psychology continues to clarify its own self-definition, its future approaches to the study of meditation remain unpredictable. If the field continues to model itself after the pre-relativity empirical sciences, it will find many reasons to take issue with Vedantic models of meditation and consciousness.

If, however, psychology follow's Koch's advice to expand its self-definition to include not only the methods of science but also the contextually different approaches of philosophy and the other humanities, new approaches for understanding meditation should ensue.

Koch concludes his review of psychology's first one hundred years by offering the profession a challenge. He asks that psychology have the honesty to accept its own intellectual finitude when confronting the antinomal and fathomless character of the world. The willingness to confront the inevitable mystery of existence without the illusory security of pseudo-knowledge and epistemopathology becomes an act of courage. [38] From an existential viewpoint it is an act of courage. According to Vedanta, it is the beginning of the journey into the innermost aspects of the self and transcendence.

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[38] Koch, The nature and limits of psychological knowledge, op. cit., pg.269.

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The final copies have been examined by the director of the dissertation and the signature which appears below verifies the fact that any necessary changes have been incorporated and that the dissertation is now given final approval by the Committee with reference to content and form.

The dissertation is therefore accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosphy.

Date

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