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IV. The Unconscious Mind and Samskaras (Mental Impressions)

1. Swami Vivekananda's and Indian Ideas on the Subject

Vivekananda stated, "In this body are the Samskaras of the man. What are the Samskaras? This mind is like a lake, and every thought is like a wave upon that lake. Just as in the lake waves rise and then fall down and disappear, so these thought-waves are continually rising in the mind-stuff and then disappearing, but they do not disappear forever. They become finer and finer, but they are all there, ready to start up at another time when called upon to do so. Memory is simply calling back into wave-form some of those thoughts which have gone into that finer state of existence. Thus, everything that we have thought, every action that we have done, is lodged in the mind; it is all there in fine form, and when a man dies, the sum total of these impressions is in the mind, which again works upon a little fine material as a medium. The soul, clothed as it were, with these impressions and the fine body, passes out, and the destiny of the soul is guided by the resultant of all the different forces represented by the different impressions." "Each action is like the pulsations quivering over the surface of the lake. The vibration dies out, and what is left? The Samskaras, the impressions. When a large number of these impressions are left on the mind, they coalesce and become a habit. It is said, 'Habit is second nature', it is first nature also, and the whole nature of man; everything that we are is the result of habit. That gives us consolation, because, if it is only habit, we can make and unmake it at any time. The Samskaras are left by these vibrations passing out of our mind, each one of them leaving its result. Our character is the sum-total of these marks,

and according as some particular wave prevails one takes that tone. If good prevails, one becomes good; if wickedness, one becomes wicked; if joyfulness, one becomes happy.” “Samskara can be translated very nearly by ‘inherent tendency.’ Using the simile of a lake for the mind, every ripple, every wave that rises in the mind, when it subsides, does not die out entirely, but leaves a mark and a future possibility of that wave coming out again. This mark, with the possibility of the wave reappearing, is what is called Samskara. Every work that we do, every movement of the body, every thought that we think, leaves such an impression on the mind-stuff, and even when such impressions are not obvious on the surface, they are sufficiently strong to work beneath the surface, subconsciously. What we are every moment is determined by the sum total of these impressions on the mind. What I am just at this moment is the effect of the sum total of all the impressions of my past life. This is really what is meant by character; each man's character is determined by the sum total of these impressions. If good impressions prevail, the character becomes good; if bad, it becomes bad.”¹

He adds, “Practical psychology directs first of all its energies in controlling the unconscious, and we know that we can do it. Why? Because we know the cause of the unconscious is the conscious; the unconscious thoughts are the submerged millions of our old conscious thoughts, old conscious actions become petrified--we do not look at them, do not know them, have forgotten them. But mind you, if the power of evil is in the unconscious, so also is the power of good. We have many things stored in us as in a pocket. We have forgotten them, do not even think of them, and there are many of them, rotting, becoming positively dangerous; they come forth, the unconscious causes which kill humanity. True psychology would, therefore, try to bring them under the control of the conscious. The great task is to revive the whole man, as it were, in order to make him the complete master of himself. Even what we call the automatic action of the organs within our bodies, such as the liver etc., can be made to obey our commands.” “Deep down in our subconscious [today called unconscious] mind are stored up all the thoughts and acts of the past, not only of this life, but of all other lives we have lived. This great boundless ocean of subjective mind is full of all the thoughts and actions of the past. Each one of these is striving to be recognised, pushing outward for expression,

surging, wave after wave, out upon the objective mind, the conscious mind. These thoughts, the stored-up energy, we take for natural desires, talents, etc. It is because we do not realise their true origin.”² “In the ordinary mind a thought arises. The mind does not know how it began or whence it comes. The mind is like the ocean in which a wave rises, but although the man sees the wave, he does not know how the wave came there, whence its birth, or whither it melts down again; he cannot trace it any further. But when the perception becomes finer, we can trace this wave long, long before it comes to the surface; and we will be able to trace it for a long distance after it has disappeared, and then we can understand psychology as it truly is.”³ Concerning dreams, “For instance, you hear a word. That word is like a stone thrown into the lake of the Chitta [Mind stuff]; it causes a ripple, and that ripple rouses a series of ripples; this is memory. So in sleep. When the peculiar kind of ripple called sleep throws the Chitta into a ripple of memory, it is called a dream. Dream is another form of the ripple which in the waking state is called memory.”⁴

Following the logic of Swami Abhedananda (1866-1939), “The surface of the lake is like the conscious plane and below the surface is the subconscious [today called unconscious] plane towards the bottom. Every time you gratify a desire, that impression goes down to the subconscious plane, to the bottom of the lake, and there it stays. It stays there for some time in the form of an impression (samskara), and that impression again rises up in the form of a bubble, and that bubble is the desire [vasana].... In the deep sleep state, the vibration of the mind's substance becomes very slow ... governed by the subconscious mind.... That causal state retains all the potentialities of the forms or what we call the phenomena. When we go to sleep we are in the causal state.... These impressions are called samskaras, which means ‘dormant impressions.’ These subconscious activities of the mind come up in the form of waves.... What we ordinarily understand as mind substance, is regarded as finer particles of matter in vibration.... Every time we perform any action, physical or mental, it leaves an impression in the subconscious mind.... everything is alive in the form of an impression in our subconscious mind. So the subconscious mind is the storehouse of all of the impressions.”⁵ “The lower animals have minds, they have feelings, and they have subconscious minds.... the cells and tissues

have life and mind in each governed by the subconscious mind of the individual.”⁶

Abhedananda continues with his explanation (published in 1899). The unconscious mind is part of the subtle body. “The material body being the expression of the subtle body, its birth, growth, decay and death, depend on changes in the subtle body.... It [subtle body] is nothing but a minute germ of living substance. It contains the invisible particles of matter which are held together by vital force, and it also possesses mind or thought-force in a potential state, just as the seed of a plant contains in it the life force and the power of growth.... These subtle powers together with the non-composite elements of the gross body, or the ethereal particles of subtle matter, and also with the potentialities of all the impressions, ideas and tendencies which each individual gathers in one life, makes up his subtle body. As a resultant of all the different actions of mind and body which an individual performs in his present life, will be the tendencies and desires in his future life; nothing will be lost. Every action of body or mind which we do, every thought which we think, becomes fine, and is stored up in the form of a samskara or impressions in our mind. It remains latent for some time, and then it rises up in the form of a mental wave and produces new desires. These desires are called in Vedanta, Vasanas [collections of Samskaras into habits].... Every voluntary or involuntary action of the body, sense, or mind, must correspond to the dormant impressions stored up in the subtle body.... the whole series of actions, and consequently every individual act, the condition of the body which accomplishes it, nay, the whole process in and through which the body exists, are nothing but the outward expressions of the latent impressions stored up in the subtle body.”⁷

In 1920 Abhedananda added, “Mind substance is finer matter in vibration, and that finer matter may be like our electrons.... Those finer particles of matter are vibrating with a tremendous speed.... The other state of existence is the dreamless sleep state (susupti). There we enter, when we are in sound sleep, and we do not dream at all. The mind rests there. That is the causal body, and there the mind goes to its causal state. It has no particular form, but is like a nucleus of finer particles of matter, something like electrons, which receive the ethereal impressions of the

mind, and the different forces or powers of the mind remain latent. They are in a seed form, and yet there is that existence.”⁸

Swami Saradananda (1865-1927) indicated that thoughts on the mind leave permanent good and bad impressions that determine a person’s character. These good and bad thoughts transform into impelling subtle forces that determine the way people think and act in the future. The dwelling place of the bundle of mental impressions (samskaras) in the unconscious is at the muladhara a pranic center located at the base of the tailbone or spine (often identified with the sacrum plexus).⁹

Swami Prabhavananda (1893-1976) designated that Yoga psychology teaches that an individual's conscious and unconscious thoughts and actions are caused by samskaras, which are latent mental tendencies in the mind. When a thought is no longer conscious, it leaves a mental impression in the unconscious mind, which in the future will give rise as a new conscious thought. “In the ‘unconscious mind’... are stored the impressions and tendencies which have been formed in our previous existences, and which, taken together, have made us what we are.... The samskaras, or potentialities, represent therefore, the root impressions received from all our past experiences, including those of our former lives, and they have molded our characters so that, even though largely forgotten, they still indirectly control or influence our every act and thought.”¹⁰ The sum total of the samskaras forms the character of the person.

There are four kinds of samskaras: sensory perceptions, bodily sensation, feelings-emotions, and intellectual. Samskaras are like atoms or molecules that unify into a higher order more complex system of ideas, values, actions, and their interrelationships. As higher order ideas they bring about an expansion of knowledge, as values they inspire new motivation, and as actions they combine to form habits (vasanas) to make activity more organized and efficient. Vasanas are a group of samskaras forming habits, attitudes, complexes, etc. These factors combine due to many factors that include: similarity-resemblance-affinity-compatibility, coherence-comprehensiveness-logical consistency-correspondence with reality, integration-unity, congruence-compatibility, differentiation-contrast-contrariety, continuity in time or place, contiguity-adjointing,

causal relationship, usefulness-functionality-practicality, vividness-intensity, recency, frequency, and duration.

We refer to it as the “unconscious mind” since we are not directly aware of its contents. We only know of its activity through inference based on how its effects our conscious mind. Actually we have one mind with thoughts residing in three realms: conscious, subconscious, and unconscious. The unconscious mind also includes forgotten memories, subliminal perceptions, and automatic skills and reactions that form the basis of habits.

There is a temporal dimension to habits. To some extent a person unconsciously associates a certain time of day with a particular personal activity. For example, the person might routinely feel hungry at a particular time of day. Because habits are based partly on unconscious associations one is not consciously aware of the relationship between the two.

The Internal Biological Clock, technically called circadian rhythms, is a series of internal variations in the body controlled by the brain that follow a 24-hour cycle. Among other things they affect our sleep patterns.¹¹ By meditating each day at the same time it becomes a routine habit, which makes it occur naturally without effort. Does developing this routine have any effect on our inner biological rhythm?

A person might feel angry and not know why because their response is due to an unconscious feeling or idea in the mind that the person is not consciously aware of. If all of the content of the unconscious mind were known to the conscious mind the person might be overwhelmed.

When we compare a feeling of love with one of dislike, they differ in form and probably in the quality of the substance of subtle matter.

2. Sigmund Freud and the Western Viewpoint

According to the ideas of the Austrian Sigmund Freud (1856-1939), psychoanalytic theory acts to explain personality, motivation, and mental disorders by focusing on unconscious determinants of behavior. In 1913, Freud proposed a hierarchical model of human consciousness: the conscious mind, the preconscious, and the unconscious mind—each lying beneath the other. The mind is like an iceberg, with the greatest part being unconscious

and hidden beneath the water. The conscious mind includes thoughts and feelings that we are aware of. This is the aspect of our thought process that we can think and talk about in a rational manner. The contents of memory exist in the preconscious mind that lies below the level of consciousness, above the unconscious mind. This is what is meant by available memory that one is not currently aware of but can be brought into consciousness at any given moment. For example, you may not be thinking about your home address, but when the subject is brought up you can quickly recall it with ease. Traumatic and powerful negative emotions are often repressed in the unconscious and hence not available to the conscious mind. The preconscious acts as a screen between the unconscious and the conscious that bars access to the latter.¹² In 1915, Freud expressed the idea that there is a continuity of thought that is sometimes conscious and sometimes unconscious. Consequently, there are gaps in our conscious thinking where ideas suddenly arise in our mind and intellectual conclusions are arrived at we do not know how. The process is unintelligible unless we interpolate an unconscious psychical state between these gaps that makes for a continuous process. The unconscious also expresses itself through dreams. These latent unconscious mental processes enjoy a high degree of mutual independence, as though they know nothing of one another.¹³

An important discovery of Sigmund Freud was that psychological events take place below the surface in the unconscious part of the mind, exerting a powerful influence on our thinking, feeling, and behavior even though we are unaware of these underlying influences. Our feelings, motives, and decisions are actually significantly influenced by our past experiences, stored in the unconscious. While we are aware of what is going on in the conscious mind, we have little idea of the content of the unconscious. Hence, the unconscious includes what is actively hidden from conscious thought or what a person is reluctant to know consciously. It is a repository for socially unacceptable ideas, wishes or desires, painful emotions, and traumatic memories that exist outside of our conscious awareness. Through the mechanism of psychological repression, they were driven out of the conscious mind. It is precisely because they are so powerful and threatening that they are kept out of awareness. From the psychoanalytic standpoint, the unconscious is a force that can only be

recognized by its effects, expressing itself in the symptom. In a sense, the conscious self is an adversary of the unconscious, striving to keep the unconscious hidden. Though unconscious thoughts are not directly accessible to ordinary introspection, they are capable of being tapped and interpreted by special methods and techniques such as psychoanalysis, free association, dream analysis, and verbal (Freudian) slips.¹⁴

In 1923, Freud then further divided the personality into a structural model of three functions of the mind, the id, ego, and superego. Here the totally unconscious id is the repository of the primitive biological instincts of bodily needs such as hunger, and the sexual and aggressive drives. The instinctual demands of the id operate according to the Pleasure Principle, following the Primary Process of seeking immediate gratification of desires. If these needs are not met there is a state of anxiety or tension. The id and its egocentric impulses are prominent in the early life of the child since the id only part of the personality that is present from birth. Next to develop during childhood is the ego, primarily conscious, it enables the person to deal rationally and effectively with reality. It is “that part of the id which has been modified by the direct influence of the external world.” Mature adults follow the acquired and learned Reality Principle of Secondary Process, characteristic of the conscious ego, postponing gratification due to the demands of society. The superego, which develops out of the ego, is similar to the conscience or ethical-moral component of the personality. Its ideals, values, and norms are learned first from the parents and it is responsible for the repression of unacceptable impulses.¹⁵

Freud writes about the Pleasure Principle that strives to fulfill our most basic and primitive urges, including hunger, thirst, anger, and sex. They are pursued as an effort to avoid unpleasant states of tension. But there is also the broader Happiness Principle where people seek whatever brings them joy, be it through the mind, senses, and/or the body. The Happiness Principle is much broader than the Pleasure Principle since it includes not only the desire for sense pleasures based on physiological needs, but also for productive activity, to manifest prana (energy) in as many ways as possible, and many other things.

Some people also believe in ideas that bring them happiness no matter how irrational the idea are. They also act and think irrationally in order to maintain their homeostatic balance. So the main thing is to find

happiness in what makes you a better person. Because of the Happiness Principle it is sometimes difficult to renounce those desires that are harmful to us because they give us short-term joy. At the time we think they are good because we experience immediate happiness. So avoid those things that give us temporary happiness and long-term unhappiness.

There are many types of happiness and they vary in their magnitude and duration. A pleasant feeling that we receive from an accomplishment is not the same as that derived from entertainment or from sense pleasure. Happiness is felt when you are involved in activities you like doing. Short-term happiness can come from excitement or humor. Activities such as hobbies generally produce mid-level levels of happiness. The highest and deepest level happiness is associated with accomplishing an important task that makes a person feel good about themselves and pride in what they have achieved. When we achieve our life goals, we have a sense of fulfillment that can't be undone. Optimum happiness can also result from a feeling of love that comes in many forms. It can be directed to friends, family, work activities, hobbies, entertainment, reading the literature, or to Brahman-God. Optimistic people are often grateful for all of the possibilities that life presents, and have a strong belief in themselves and their ability to attain their goals.¹⁶

It is very difficult to measure the happiness level in each country. In 2012 the World Happiness Report was determined by the respondents reporting "Very happy," "Quite happy," "Not very happy," "Not at all happy." This Index was eventually abandoned and in 2018 the revised Happiness Index was based on six factors: per capita gross domestic product, social support (in times of trouble are there people you can rely on to help you), life expectancy, freedom to choose what you will do with your life, generosity in donating money, and perception of corruption in government and business. Given these six variables it is no surprise that the wealthiest countries finished on top of the list and the poorest on the bottom. Leading the list were Finland in first place followed by Norway, Denmark, Iceland, Switzerland, Netherlands, Canada, New Zealand, Sweden, and Australia.¹⁷ This is very questionable since according to the 1951-52 data collected by Erich Fromm, of all Western countries, Denmark, Switzerland, Finland, and Sweden had the highest suicide rates and ranked third to seventh in estimated per capita number of alcoholics.¹⁸ Happiness

is subjective and difficult to measure. Missing from the list are spiritual and mental health variables (e.g., neurosis, insanity, and suicide rates). Today per capita gross domestic product and life expectancy are much higher than they were during George Washington's time. Can we say people are happier now than they were at that time?

Willie Sutton (1901-80) an accomplished American bank robber stole an estimated \$2 million, and paid the penalty by spending more than half of his adult life in prison where he escaped three times. Asked, "Why did I rob banks? Because I enjoyed it. I loved it. I was more alive when I was inside a bank, robbing it, than at any other time in my life. I enjoyed everything about it so much that one or two weeks later I'd be out looking for the next job. But to me the money was the chips [of far lesser importance?], that's all."¹⁹ He also stated, "Success in any endeavor requires single-minded attention to detail and total concentration." Most people have the "Will to Happiness" and the "Will to (Manifest) Power." Sutton enjoyed committing crimes because it temporarily manifested joy (ananda), power (shakti), and concentration within him. He followed a tamasic path since there are better ways to bring these results.

Concerning the life instinct (Eros) Freud wrote, "We have decided to assume the existence of only two basic instincts, Eros and the destructive instinct. (The contrast between the instincts of self-preservation and of the preservation of the species, as well as the contrast between ego-love and object-love, fall within the bounds of Eros.) The aim of the first of these basic instincts is to establish ever greater unities and to preserve them thus—in short, to bind together."²⁰ The life instinct is similar to the "will to live." The life drive is characterized by the desire for survival, pleasure, satisfying desires, expressing positive emotions, interacting with people, and reproduction. This instinct or driving force is necessary for maintaining the life of the individual and human society, and the continuation of the species. Conversely, the death drive (instinct) (Thanatos, 1920) is the tendency that seeks to return to the inanimate state. It is the source of human aggression and destructiveness.²¹

The gifted American transpersonal psychologist Ken Wilber (b. 1949) specified "five basic types [not levels] of the unconscious process. 1) Ground-Unconscious represents, "All the deep structures given to a collective humanity—pertaining to every level of consciousness from the

body to mind to soul to spirit, gross, subtle, and causal—are enfolded or enwrapped in the ground unconscious. All of these structures are unconscious, but they are not repressed because they have not yet entered consciousness.” 2) Archaic-Unconscious includes symbols in dreams and phantasies and the basic instincts. Wilber quotes Freud who wrote, “I believe that these primal phantasies ... are a phylogenetic possession. In them the individual...stretches out...to the experiences of past ages.” This phylogenetic or “archaic heritage” included, besides instincts, “abbreviated repetitions of the evolution undergone by the whole human race through long-drawn-out periods and from prehistoric ages.” 3) Concerning the Submergent-Unconscious Wilber quotes Carl Jung (1875-1961) who stated, “The personal unconscious ... includes all those psychic contents which have been forgotten during the course of the individual's life. Traces of them are still preserved in the unconscious, even if all conscious memory of them has been lost. In addition, it contains all subliminal impressions or perceptions which have too little energy to reach consciousness. To these we must add unconscious combinations of ideas that are still too feeble and too indistinct to cross over the threshold. Finally, the personal unconscious contains all psychic contents that are incompatible with the conscious attitude [repressed material].” 4) The Embedded-Unconscious is unconscious but not repressed, being the mechanisms that brings about repression, and screening filters that screen material entering into consciousness, As Michael Washburn put it, “There are innumerable embedded structures that govern the mental ego's overall response to experience. These structures are of many different kinds. They include, for example, (1) mental-egoic subsystems or operations such as the self-concept, ego-defense mechanisms, complexes, and COEX systems, (2) acquired habits and dispositions of all sorts, (3) interjected concepts and values, and perhaps (4) certain inherited patterns governing language and cognition.”²² 5) “The transpersonal (the subtle and causal) realms are not yet repressed—they are not screened out of awareness, they are not filtered out—they have simply not yet had the opportunity to emerge.... At any point on the developmental cycle, those deep structures which have not yet emerged from the ground-unconscious are referred to as the Emergent-Unconscious.... For the ego is strong enough to repress not only the lower

realms but also the higher realms—it can seal off the superconscious as well as the subconscious.”²³

Freud’s great contribution was starting a psychological movement that deals with self-analysis, self-examination, and self-observation of our own behavior, and mental and emotional states. This enabled a great deal of future research and study by other people who sometimes made important discoveries. The goal is to generate correct knowledge, judgments, and beliefs about our actions and the workings of our own mind. We have a privileged access to our own mental and emotional states, and have observed more of our own behavior than anyone else, though perhaps not objectively. He initiated a psychological movement that has allowed many subsequent thinkers to make important and valuable discoveries. A synthesis of yogic and Western thought is bringing about a new universal, practical, and objective psychology that surpasses that of the past. He is to be credited for getting Jung, Adler, Anna Freud, and others interested in the subject of behavioral psychoanalytic psychology so they could make their special contributions. Other approaches to knowledge such as “existentialism” was fruitful for a couple of decades but eventually reached a limit beyond which few new discoveries were made. Conversely, psychoanalytic psychology has been going strong for over a century with new findings from a large number of researchers coming in on a continual basis. Freud also made significant discoveries in dream analysis; the influence of the unconscious mind on a person’s behavior; the technique of psychoanalysis; the importance of childhood in forming the personality, and the death drive. He took his patients seriously and listened to what they had to say about themselves. The advantage of this method is that in studying neurotics, these defense mechanisms were easier to recognize than in a normal person where they are far less evident and more apt to be hidden. This impressed Carl Jung since at Zurich, Switzerland they had less interest in what the patient had to say. Freud concluded, “I have a high opinion of what I have discovered, but not of myself. Great discoverers are not necessarily great men.”

His discoveries include the defense mechanisms of, “repression, regression, reaction formation, isolation, undoing, projection, introjection, turning against the self, reversal, and sublimation.” The various defense mechanisms were compiled by his daughter Anna Freud (1895-1982) in

1936. Anna was an expert in child psychology, which she practiced in Vienna and in London.²⁴

Freud had some interesting contacts with the Indian culture. During 1904/05 in a private conversation, the Swiss poet Bruno Goetz (1885-1954) then a student at the University of Vienna, spoke to Freud about Leopold von Schroeder's (1851-1920) lectures on the *Bhagavad Gita*. Von Schroeder a professor at Wien, later in 1912 translated the *Bhagavad Gita* into German. As Goetz was speaking, "Freud sprang briskly to his feet and began pacing up and down the room" emphasizing in part, "The *Bhagavad Gita* is a great and profound poem with awful depths.... If, however, without the aid of a clear intellect you become immersed in the world of the *Bhagavad Gita*, where nothing seems constant and where everything melts into everything else, then you are suddenly confronted by nothingness.... And yet this very nothingness is simply a European misconception: the Hindu Nirvana is not nothingness, it is that which transcends all contradictions. It is not, as Europeans commonly take it to be, a sensual enjoyment, but the ultimate in superhuman understanding, an ice-cold, all-comprehending yet scarcely comprehensible insight.... What do these European would-be mystics know about the profundity of the East?"²⁵

Surendranath Dasgupta (1887-1952) met Sigmund Freud in Vienna and told him, "In India it has been proved by the Yogins, throughout the ages that man can completely transform his subconscious and unconscious mind by his conscious efforts." Dr. Freud replied, "That is impossible." Dasgupta added, "Being a man of science, you cannot say anything is impossible, unless you have tried it." Freud then said he would give this subject of investigation to a research student. Dasgupta responded, "This kind of investigation is not for your students who come for research with a view to obtaining a degree." If Dasgupta had responded more positively, possibly Freud would have gained some interest in yoga psychology. He was correct, the unconscious mind can be purified by conscious yogic efforts. Dasgupta fulfilled the necessary task of authoring the five volume English language *A History of Indian Philosophy* (1922), which gave Westerners an accurate portrayal of the subject.²⁶ Freud also met Rabindranath Tagore in Europe.

On the occasion of Freud's 75th birthday anniversary in 1931, his good friend Professor Girindrasekhar Bose (1887-1953) the first President of the Indian Psycho-Analytic Society in Calcutta 1922-53, mailed him a statuette of Vishnu with four arms on a mahogany base, presently located in the Freud Museum, London. The cover letter that begins "My dear Prof. Freud," mentions sending him "one ivory statuette with stand and a roll containing two copies of a Sanskrit address to you printed on silk and three copies of the same printed on paper with the translation in type." Freud replied to Dr. Bose, "I feel gratefully elated and accept these presents ... Please give my hearty thanks to all your members and accept it especially for yourself. The statuette is charming. I give it the place of honour on my desk. As long as I can enjoy life it will recall to my mind the progress of psycho-analysis, the proud conquest it has made in foreign countries and the kind feelings for me it has aroused in some of my contemporaries at least."²⁷ Earlier in 1922 Freud was elated when Bose organized the first Psycho-Analytic Society on the continent of Asia in Calcutta, since he wanted psychoanalysis to become an international discipline. Freud responded by placing G. Bose's name on the cover of the *International Journal of Psychoanalysis* as one of its editors, and they maintained a long and lasting friendship.²⁸ Romain Rolland sent his biographies of Ramakrishna, Vivekananda, and Gandhi to Freud who honestly responded, "It isn't easy to pass beyond the limits of one's nature."²⁹

One of the reasons Freud was so creative is because early on he was one of the very few people in the world who was psychoanalyzing people and studying the defence mechanisms. Similarly, Albert Einstein unlike other scientists was thinking about what things would be like if they were moving near the speed of light.

3. Points of Agreement Between Vivekananda and Freud's Ideas

On these fourteen points of agreement, Swami Vivekananda (1863-1902) introduced most of these ideas into modern psychology before Sigmund Freud, and this should be acknowledged in contemporary psychology books. As shown in the endnotes over 80% of Vivekananda's quotes on this subject were published in an English language book between

1896 and 1910; while many of Freud's ideas on this subject came out during the 1913-39 period. In addition, Vivekananda also adds many new insights on these subjects not found in the writings of Freud or his contemporaries. Though Freud made his share of mistakes, he did not realize that he was introducing a system of thought that in the long run would be beneficial for religion.

1) Both Vivekananda and Freud agree that: the ego is associated with the conscious and

2) instincts with the unconscious mind. Freud thought the ego also possessed some unconscious aspects. Vivekananda's statement on the subject published in English in 1896 is, "We have, then, two planes in which the human mind works. First is the conscious plane, in which all work is always accompanied with the feeling of egoism. Next comes the unconscious plane, where all work is unaccompanied by the feeling of egoism. That part of mind-work which is unaccompanied with the feeling of egoism is unconscious work, and that part which is accompanied with the feeling of egoism is conscious work. In the lower animals this unconscious work is called instinct. In higher animals, and in the highest of all animals, man, what is called conscious work prevails."³⁰

Egoism is probably present in the preconscious (subconscious) mind. It is active in the dream state where one can respond angrily to criticism, etc.

3) They both agree that ideas in the unconscious originated in the conscious mind. Vivekananda noted, "Our consciousness may well be likened to this luminous point. Its past experiences have been replaced by the present, or have become subconscious [now called unconscious]. We are not aware of their presence in us; but there they are, unconsciously influencing our body and mind. Every movement that is now being made without the help of consciousness was previously conscious."³¹

4) Both believed that negative repressed emotions, feeling, and desires in the unconscious mind continue to influence our conscious behavior and the way we think, though we may not be aware of these underlying influences. Concerning repression Vivekananda realized, "Sometimes one set of impressions is held down for a while by those that are stronger, but they come out when that repressing cause is removed.... It is because you are repressing them, and they react with all their force.

At other times they do not react. How countless these old past impressions must be, all lodged somewhere in the Chitta [Mind stuff], ready, waiting like tigers, to jump up!... What came out? It was my own bad impression which had to be worked out.... You may repress [them], but the moment the spring rebounds, the whole thing is there again.”³² He adds, “To control the mind you must go deep down into the subconscious [Freud’s unconscious] mind, classify and arrange in order all the different impressions, thoughts, etc. stored up there, and control them. This is the first step. By the control of the subconscious mind you get control over the conscious.”³³ Based on the Law of Affinity, the nature of the ideas and feeling in the conscious mind, bring up similar and associated ideas from the unconscious mind. For example, compassion or anger will arouse similar ideas and feelings to arise from the unconscious mind. The vibrational state of the conscious mind attracts similar vibrations from the unconscious state. Also remembered are important events in one’s past that possess a high magnitude of psychic energy.

5) Many Westerners think of the unconscious mind as an abstraction, a theoretical and verbal construct that has no actual objective empirical existence. Conversely, Sigmund Freud correctly realized that the unconscious mind is something objective, “actual and tangible” since it produces “something so real and palpable as obsessive action.”³⁴ Yet, due to the limitations of Western knowledge on this subject he was unable to verify his belief. The unconscious mind is not perceivable to the five senses but is inferred from the effects it has on the conscious mind and human behavior.

From the Indian standpoint, the unconscious contains substantial thoughts, which can act and be acted upon, persists over time, have spatial boundaries, and are visible (to those beings in that vibrational state) and tangible. This occurs within the realm of subtle matter and energy at a vibrational level that humans and their mental instruments have not the capacity to pick up. These events take place in the molecular, atomic, and/or subatomic (quantum) realm. Because these mental impressions in the unconscious mind have a substantial existence in the subtle world, they often cannot be destroyed through the intellectual process alone. For example, an overweight person may want to permanently lose weight, but the substantial desire (composed of subtle

matter and energy) to overeat remains. Yoga psychology has the advantage that it can work with these subtle forces and transform them. The unconscious mind is part of the fine (subtle) body that Vivekananda discusses. "The fine body, according to them, is a material but transparent body, made of very fine particles, so fine that no microscope can see them.... Just as this gross body is the receptacle of the gross forces, so the fine body is the receptacle of the fine forces, which we call thought, in its various modifications.... Force cannot exist without matter. It must require some matter to exist, so the grosser forces work in the body; and those very forces become finer; the very force which is working in a gross form, works in a fine form, and becomes thought. There is no distinction between them, simply one is the gross and the other the fine manifestation of the same thing. Neither is there any distinction between this fine body and the gross body. The fine body is also material, only very fine matter; and just as this gross body is the instrument that works the gross forces, so the fine body is the instrument that works the fine forces."³⁵ Consequently, the unconscious mind is subject to the laws of the substance of subtle matter and energy that determine its nature.

Remember that Plato (427-327 B.C.) considered ideas such as beauty, justice, goodness, morality, and mathematical entities to be objectively real. How could they be grasped and made objects of thought unless they have an objective reality? They are discovered by us and not invented.³⁶

Vivekananda indicated, "The whole world is a body, and behind that is the universal mind, and behind that is the universal Soul. Just as this body is a portion of the universal body, so this mind is a portion of the universal mind, and the soul of man a portion of the universal Soul."³⁷ Is our unconscious mind a fragment of the universal unconscious mind?

6) The prana that Vivekananda writes about is the source of the psychic energy that Freud and Jung discuss. It is the energizer and fuel of the psychological system that manifests through higher or lower areas of the psyche depending on the nature of the person. For example, prana can manifest as love or anger, courage or fear, stability or neurosis. In all cases it is a powerful attractive force that engages the attention of the mind and emotions. The greater the pranic force associated with an idea, the greater the internal emotion and the more likely the person is apt to believe it. For

Sigmund Freud psychic energy is quantifiable, unlike that of physics has an aim, is capable of accumulation and discharge, and can be fused with another type of psychic energy.³⁸

According to the famous Swiss psychologist Carl Jung's (1875-1961) assessment of Freud, he mistakenly thought all types of psychic energy are transformations of sexual energy. Carl Jung stressed that psychic energy: possesses quantity and mass, can be transformed from one type of psychic energy to another, and can be converted into physical energy and vice versa. A quantum of energy is estimated by the number of constellations, frequency and intensity of the reaction, and the intensity of the effect. Psychic energy is the dynamic phenomena of the psyche working through the psychodynamic forces or states of instinct, willing, desiring, attention, and the capacity for work. Sexuality is a variant of a more primal, undifferentiated form of psychic energy or life force. Each type of drive is a specific type of energy. Libido is the neutral life energy of the human psyche "which is able to communicate itself to any field of activity whatsoever, be it power, hunger, hatred, sexuality, or religion, without ever being a specific instinct."³⁹ Libido is the driving force that sustains all human endeavors, from the lowest biological to the highest spiritual level. It may be directed toward external objects or toward the self.⁴⁰

7) Vivekananda and Freud agree that people do not arrive at their ideas and make decisions on the bases of pure reason alone, i.e., adhering to the epistemological criteria of logical consistency, correspondence, coherence, comprehensiveness, continuity, congruence, compatibility, etc. For Freud ego defense mechanisms, repressions, and unconscious motivations play their part in determining the way people think and react to situations. As a determinist he realized there must be some reason why people act irrationally, which he wanted to discover. Vivekananda pointed out that our thoughts, judgments, and attitudes are determined by our karmas and samskaras, the mental impression we generated in the past. "Everything that I do or think or feel, every part of my conduct or behavior, my every movement--all is caused and therefore not free. This regulation of our life and mind--that is the law of Karma."⁴¹ We do not remember the events of our prior lives; consequently those old samskaras

arise in the conscious mind not as specific content, but as forms (dispositions) that effect our thinking and behavior.

The laws of psychology are every bit as rigid and deterministic as the physical laws of nature. The problem with discovering these laws are that: psychological factors involve a mixture of both internal (thought and feeling patterns, neurological factors, physical health, etc.) and external environmental forces (social relationships, childhood experiences, educational level, occupation, etc.); the decisive components combine and interact in a wide variety of complex manners; and much of the deterministic material in the unconscious mind is largely unknown to us.

8) Both agree that the psychological maladies are due to false cognitions (avidya) and they can be overcome by right knowledge. With proper self-observation and understanding, many psychological problems can be avoided. They wanted to transform people's consciousness by freeing them from the domination of irrational impulses. Vivekananda states, "Ignorance is the cause of all this bondage. It is through ignorance that we have become bound; knowledge will cure it."⁴² The common goal of psychotherapy and yoga psychology is to: strengthen the person's self-concept, facilitate their psychological and social integration; promote a feeling of self-mastery, and positive expectations of hope, help, and purpose; and to provide a positive new identity and a sense of life's meaning and purpose.⁴³

Freud was a doctor who believed that neurotic symptoms will disappear for good once the patient realizes and understands their real causes. Introspection will bring a transformation in consciousness. Only through self-understanding can the patient become more conscious of the unconscious forces and self-defeating behavior that enslave them. In the words of Erich Fromm (1900-60, who was very much influenced by the Japanese Buddhist D. T. Suzuki), "Freud's own system transcended the concept of 'illness' and 'cure' and was concerned with the 'salvation' of man, rather than only with a therapy for mentally sick patients.... His aim was the domination of irrational and unconscious passions by reason; the liberation of man from the power of the unconscious, within the possibilities of man. Man had to become aware of the unconscious forces within him, in order to dominate and control them. Freud's aim was the optimum knowledge of truth and that is the knowledge of reality; this

knowledge to him was the only guiding light man had on this earth.... Freud was--or believed himself to be--the first one to put these aims on a scientific basis (by the exploration of the unconscious) and hence to show the way to their realization. While Freud represents the culmination of Western rationalism.... he speaks of psychoanalytic therapy as consisting in 'the liberation of human being from his neurotic symptoms, inhibitions and abnormalities of character.' He sees also the role of the analyst in a light which transcends that of the doctor who 'cures' the patient.... The principle to be mentioned here first is Freud's concept that knowledge leads to transformation, that theory and practice must not be separated, that in the very act of knowing oneself, one transforms oneself."⁴⁴

Freud and his followers got the general public interested in introspection, inwardness, self-inquiry, self-analysis, and studying their own psyche. The location of the source of life's problems was not only external events, but the inner nature of the person. This helped create a new mindset that prepared people to take up various yoga meditation techniques.

9) Vivekananda and Freud agree that in the last analysis it is up to the patient to change him/herself, no one else can do it for them. There is a need for self-determination that requires self-confidence and a feeling of worthiness. Vivekananda goes on to say, "Those that blame others--and, alas the number of them is increasing every day--are generally miserable with helpless brains; they have brought themselves to that pass through their own mistakes and blame others, but this does not alter their position. It does not serve them in any way. This attempt to throw the blame upon others only weakens them the more. Therefore, blame none for your own faults, stand upon your own feet, and take the whole responsibility upon yourselves. Say, 'This misery that I am suffering is of my own doing, and that very thing proves that it will have to be undone by me alone.' That which I created, I can demolish; that which is created by some one else I shall never be able to destroy. Therefore, stand up, be bold, be strong. Take the whole responsibility on your own shoulders, and know that you are the creator of your own destiny. All the strength and succor you want is within yourselves. Therefore, make your own future."⁴⁵

10) Psychoanalysis and free association like meditation is best performed in a quiet room, in a relaxed bodily position, with a lack of

external visual and sound distractions. The person is a self-observer of their thoughts and feelings, which he/she takes note of. In psychoanalysis to take their mind off externals, sometimes the patient lies on a couch so they can focus on the workings of their mind.

11) For the betterment of psychology by 1896 Freud had abandoned the practice of using hypnotism to cure patients, replacing it with the psychoanalytic method based on free association. He noted that with hypnotism only the symptom was treated and not the cause, so a new symptom might arise. Vivekananda opposed both personal and mass hypnotism. "Until the operator, by means of fixed gaze or otherwise, has succeeded in putting the mind of the subject in a sort of passive, morbid condition, his suggestions never work.... rousing in men and women that morbid, passive, hypnotic condition which makes them almost soulless at last."⁴⁶

12) Freud considered the Repetition Compulsion to be an unconscious instinctual impulse that is "more fundamental than the pleasure-pain principle and differing widely from it", since the repeated experience is often painful and contributes "no potentiality of pleasure." Examples include children who repeat mischievous behavior even though they are punished for it. It is the core of neurosis, since the neurotic repeatedly persists in using irrational and maladaptive behavior patterns.⁴⁷ On the other hand it is the Repetition Compulsion that makes society stable rather than erratic, as the repeated and predictable patterned behavior of individuals.

Vivekananda explains the reason for the existence of the Repetition Compulsion, "Every new thought that we have must make, as it were, a new channel through the brain, and that explains the tremendous conservatism of human nature. Human nature likes to run through the ruts that are already there, because it is easy. If we think, just for example's sake, that the mind is like a needle, and the brain substance a soft lump before it, then each thought that we have makes a street, as it were, in the brain, and this street would close up, but for the grey matter which comes and makes a lining to keep it separate. If there were no grey matter, there would be no memory, because memory means going over these old streets, retracing a thought as it were. Now perhaps you have marked that when one talks on subjects in which one takes a few ideas that are familiar

to everyone, and combines and recombines them, it is easy to follow because these channels are present in everyone's brain, and it is only necessary to recur them. But whenever a new subject comes, new channels have to be made, so it is not understood readily. And that is why the brain (it is the brain, and not the people themselves) refuses unconsciously to be acted upon by new ideas. It resists. The Prana is trying to make new channels, and the brain will not allow it. This is the secret of conservatism. The fewer channels there have been in the brain, and the less the needle of the Prana has made these passages, the more conservative will be the brain, the more it will struggle against new thoughts. The more thoughtful the man, the more complicated will be the streets in his brain, and the more easily he will take to new ideas, and understand them. So with every fresh idea, we make a new impression in the brain, cut new channels through the brain-stuff, and that is why we find that in the practice of Yoga (it being an entirely new set of thoughts and motives) there is so much physical resistance at first."⁴⁸

So we do not want to renounce those activities that create pleasant samskaras. If the activity ceases to produce positive samskaras it is easier to give it up. What we are renouncing is the pleasant feeling, not so much the activity itself.

In additions, the Repetition Compulsion is a factor in mental regression to past events. It is more difficult for older people to forge new samskaras, hence a tendency to relive the old samskaras of the "good old days." In forming new samskaras, the psychic pain can be greater if there is a contradiction between the original ideas and the newly acquired ones that produces "Cognitive Dissonance." We add that as people get older it is generally more difficult to create new channels in the brain-stuff and hence a tendency to be set in their ways. It is also difficult to change our ways because of the "happiness principle." We seek those experiences that have brought us the greatest happiness in the past.

The Repetition Compulsion is of course necessary to maintain a consistent and stable personality. Without it when we wake up the next morning we might be an entirely different person with an altogether different nature. But it can also be an obstacle to personality and character transformation; and a major cause of resistance to both spiritual development and psychoanalytic treatment. Many people would rather take

the easy path of repeating their old habits, rather than to take the effort to improve themselves. Resistance as a counterforce operating against spiritual and psychological development takes many forms. This process relates to Hans-Georg Gadamer (1900-2002) school of hermeneutics (interpretation) that also explains why people tend to be slow in accepting new ideas that are not compatible with their present ones. His theory of interpretation is based on the conception that a person's understanding and analysis of new ideas are not free from the restraining effects of their own prior experience, theoretical and practical presuppositions, personal values, expectations, and historically determined situatedness. A person's prior belief system creates limitations in their understanding and acceptance of new ideas.⁴⁹ A related behavior pattern is the desire to proselytize ones beliefs, which universally is one of the most common human psychological mechanisms.

According to Patanjali, lack of yogic and spiritual progress is due to "Disease, mental laziness, doubt, lack of enthusiasm, lethargy, clinging to sense-enjoyments, false perception, non-attaining concentration, and falling away from the state when obtained (I:30)."⁵⁰ For Sri Ramakrishna (1836-86) attachment to worldly desires is the main cause of resistance to spiritual growth.

Psychological defense mechanisms of resistance include: Fixation at the present level due to the anxiety and uncertainty of moving on to a higher stage of development; Substitution of lower forms of activity and satisfactions for higher ones on the pretense that they are superior; Rationalizing by placing the blame on others and by hypercriticizing a methodology of improvement; and Avoidance of transforming activities.

Resistance to spiritual and psychoanalytic progress is due to: societal pressure causing a disruption of one's current life situation and relationships; renouncing old habits means something's must be sacrificed; and incompatibility of the new values with older ingrained desires. Also involved are a lack of self-confidence and a feeling of unworthiness to attain the goal; the person cannot face their own shortcomings; fear of losing one's self and ego which threatens the stability of the self-structure; and the influence of repressed unconscious tendencies.⁵¹ In addition, sustained religious practices are time-consuming involving a commitment that the person may not be willing to make. The devotee often is not

interested in a total transformation of their basic personality structure (reconstructive therapy), but in a less radical modification of their attitudes and behavior patterns for better life adjustment (re-educative therapy).⁵² For example a person may come to a religion to overcome specific psychological problems, and when that goal is attained they lessen their commitment to the organization. Loss of motivation may occur when a temporary limit is reached beyond which further progress is difficult. The aspirant must complete one stage before they can move on to a higher one. Swami Brahmananda (1863-1922) disclosed, “We have the eternal treasure to offer. But what do people come to us for, potatoes and onions and eggplants. They want cheap material things. How many really seek that eternal treasure?”

13) Vivekananda and Freud taught universal principles applicable to people of all countries. Swami Vivekananda was the first great Indian teacher to perceived Vedanta as a universal religion, philosophy, and psychology that should be taught to the Western people. In doing so, he thoroughly studied Western thought and presented his message with incredible originality employing to some extent the ideas and vocabulary of the English-speaking people.

One of the greatest virtues of Freud’s system is that it seeks to discover the universal categories or forms of psychological (rather than rational) thought. He referred to the universal psychological functions and categories of the human mind, as ego defense mechanisms, since the ego is operative at this time. They are common to all people of all societies though there are bound to be some national-ethnic variations due to different cultural values and the application of these mechanism. The universal categories or forms of rational thought in relation to knowable objects were first developed by two great philosophers, Kanada (c. 6th/2nd Century B.C.) the founder of the Vaishesika philosophy in India and Aristotle (384-322 B.C.) in Greece. For Kanada the primary conceptual categories (Padartha) of human thought are: substance, quality, action-motion, generality, particularity, and inherence; and for Aristotle the most important of the ten are: substance, quantity, quality, and relation.⁵³ Two millennia later Freud and his followers came up with the universal categories or forms of psychological thought, i.e., the defense mechanisms

such as repression, regression, displacement, projection, denial, idealization sublimation, etc. The mind can operate in an intellectual or an ego mode.

14) There are a number of similarities between the psychoanalyst-patient and guru-disciple relationship. The guru and therapist are participant observers who play an active role in helping the person. They develop good rapport showing empathy and a sympathetic understanding of the person's feelings and needs. Their intelligent explanation and interpretation of the person's life-situation motivate them to strive for improvement that restores self-confidence and optimism. They provide expertise, help, hope, and healing.⁵⁴

According to Jerome Frank a common structure is used by a therapist or religious group that includes the following: "(1) a special supportive, empathic, and confiding relationship between the client and therapist or adherent, and religious group [or guru]; (2) a special setting imbued with powerful symbols of expertise, help, hope, and healing; (3) a special rationale, ideology, or indisputable myth; that explains health, illness, and normality and that renders sensible the person's self-preoccupations and inexplicable feelings within a logically tight framework; and (4) a special set of rituals and practices that confirms the person's assumptive world and insures within that context a constellation of new learning experiences and successful outcomes."⁵⁵

Many people relate Sigmund Freud to sexual experience. But actually after he had six children in 1895 at age 39, he showed restraint in sexually avoiding his wife because he thought it would hinder his intellectual capacities.⁵⁶

4. Areas of Disagreement Between the Ideas of Vivekananda and Freud

Freud wrote in a 1927 letter to Albert Einstein that he "had the support of a long series of predecessors from [Isaac] Newton onward, while I had to hack every step of my own way through a tangled jungle alone."⁵⁷ Einstein had thousands of years of years of prior knowledge to work with. Because of the newness of the discipline, Freud was bound to make some mistakes, many of which have been corrected by subsequent thinkers. In an effort to be original Freud's thinking is often speculative, going far beyond his

experimental and clinical data. At times Freud over interpreted his data committing the logical fallacy of pars pro toto (taking the part for the whole) leading to reductionism. He should have encouraged Adler and Jung to develop their prospective for the good of the discipline rather than oppose them. This is not to discredit the discoveries and contributions Freud made in the field of psychology some of which are mentioned above. Subsequently, psychoanalytic psychology proved to be a very practical subject with a vast potential scope for development.

Consequently, there are a number of areas where Vivekananda's teachings surpass those of Freud on this subject, as mentioned in the following eleven points of disagreement.

1) For Freud the unconscious mind (Id) contains thoughts that are amoral and egocentric dominated by the Pleasure Principle, repressed sexual (Eros) and aggressive (Thanatos) instincts. The Id is primitive, unorganized, emotional, follows the Pleasure Principle conforming to the primary process. The defense mechanisms are neurotic symptoms and not strategies of adaptive functioning. Freud who considered himself to be a destroyer of illusions, placed too much emphasis on the negative aspects and interpretation of human behavior. Pejorem partem psychology judges human behavior from its worst possible standpoint. In his studies he acquired many new ideas studying troubled neurotic patients as his sample, and he tended to look for negative factors. Consequently, his evaluation and interpretations of human nature is very pessimistic, which he admitted. This depreciation of humanity and religion can lead to a degradation of culture. Other reasons for his pessimistic view of humanity are that he: suffered from many lifelong health problems, took cocaine as part of his research during 1884-87 and continued using it occasionally until 1896 for depression and migraine headaches, thought about death on a daily basis after age forty, felt he was despised and not treated as an equal by his peers in Europe, and from 1923 onward had 33 cancer of the mouth and jaw operations to halt the spreading of the illness.⁵⁸

Vivekananda differs considerably from Freud in that he considered the unconscious mind to be the repository of both virtuous and deficient traits. As stated above he stressed, "Deep down in our subconscious [unconscious] mind are stored up all the thoughts and acts of the past, not only of this life, but of all other lives we have lived." On the other

hand, Freud underestimated the existence and importance of positive mental impressions in the unconscious mind. Vivekananda relates, “Consciousness is a mere film between two oceans, the subconscious [unconscious] and the superconscious.... What does consciousness matter! Why, it is nothing compared with the unfathomable depths of the subconscious and the heights of the superconscious! In this I could never be misled, for had I not seen Ramakrishna Paramahansa gather in ten minutes, from a man's subconscious mind, the whole of his past, and determine from that his future and his powers.”⁵⁹ We know our unconscious mind only indirectly by inference. Ramakrishna knew the contents of others peoples unconscious mind directly.

2) Freud emphasized that the unconscious contains unwanted ideas that have been actively repressed and forced out of consciousness. This is possible, but the vast majority of the samskaras (mental impressions) of the past that have subsided into the unconscious, were simply forgotten due to the limited storage capacity of the human mind. Only a small portion of these ideas were actively repressed. For example, for most of us the knowledge of the food we ate a year ago at each meal has been forgotten, there was no need to repress it. Many ideas and feelings originate in the unconscious mind or if in the conscious mind we are not aware of them. Some may eventually become conscious, others never do.

3) Freud believed that the personality and character were largely formed in the first five or six years of life. Consequently, he greatly overemphasized the effects of the oral, anal, and, phallic stages of development, Oedipus Complex, etc. in forming the child's lifelong personality and character. One scientific empirical study found no significant statistical relationship between infant training and subsequent personality adjustments of 162 farm children. The study dealt with nursing, weaning, bowel training, bladder training, punishment for toilet accidents, and sleep security.⁶⁰

Psychiatrists Sigmund Freud (1856-1939), Alfred Adler (1870-1937), and Carl Jung (1875-1961) disagreed on many things. After years of study, the one thing they agreed on was that heredity and environment alone are not sufficient to explain and predict a child's present and future adult behavior. Adler rejected the rigid determinism of the causative effects of heredity and environment on the child's future behavior. He

concluded that they yield only probabilities since there are too many exceptions. For example, two brothers with similar heredity and environment might be completely different in nature. There must be an additional factor, a missing link, an unknown causal variable. For many years Jung could not accept reincarnation, which he thought, was unscientific, so he developed a theory based on phylogenetic (or archaic) collective inheritance that Freud also accepted. While reincarnation explains individual differences, the collective unconscious only tells us about group differences. In fact the pre-existent self is a better determiner of a person's character and personality in this life than environment and heredity. It seeks birth in the proper environment and with a heredity that is congruent with its nature. If we knew about a person's prior life we would have a much better understanding of why people act the way they do. See: *Swami Vivekananda and Others on Religious Philosophy*, Ch. XIII. Reincarnation, the Pre-existence of the Soul (Self), Section 1. Theoretical Implications of the Doctrine of Reincarnation.⁶¹

Indian psychology agrees that heredity and environment are incomplete explanations of a person's character and behavior. For Vivekananda the vast majority of samskaras stored in the unconscious mind come not from the collective history of humanity (phylogenetic inheritance), but are memory traces from the individual history of the person's prior lives. They are conveyed not through the physical but the subtle (mental) body that survived the death of the physical body in the previous life. For a reincarnationist the unconscious mind is a vast repository that includes memories of all prior life events and thoughts, some of which affect one's present acts and ways of thinking. These samskaras are probably more important in determining our character than childhood events. The nature of the samskaras follow a law like process based on the internal karma of our mind. In agreement with the behaviorists all instincts are learned acquired habits; but counter to their view not necessarily in this life.

Phylogenetic inheritance explains only common group human characteristics and not individual differences as reincarnation or the pre-existence of the self does. Ideas have a changing social status in the Western intellectual world. Unfortunately, reincarnation and the pre-existence of the self or soul are outsiders, with a low social status in the

Western intellectual world. Consequently, Freud and Jung (who became more open to the possibility of reincarnation in later life) could not conceive of reincarnation as being the decisive ontogenetic factor that explains the child's behavior in addition to heredity and environment. Granted, reincarnation results in a kind of Uncertainty Principle (differing from that of quantum physics), since these prior life events will never be known and only their ramifications in this life can be studied.

Vivekananda mentions the reason a person is a criminal in this life is apt to be because that person was a criminal in their last life. This is an aspect of the Repetition Compulsion. Reincarnationists believe we inherit most mental characteristics not from our parents and ancestors, but from ourself based on our pre-existent behavior patterns and the samskaras they produced. Samskaras from prior lives obviously do not produce a memory of prior life events, but create predispositions, propensities, or potentialities to experience and respond to life events in a certain way. Similarly, many events of this life continue to affect our behavior as propensities though they have been forgotten. In addition, heredity is due to the law of karma, which selects out who one's parents will be and determines a person's DNA. Karma also places the person in the environment where they can develop their talents through the Law of Affinity.

Another idea of the pre-existence of the self was presented by Bishop Augustine of Hippo (354-430). He believed that each soul was created by God in seed form, when the world came into existence long before their conception. Since each seed differs to some extent, people have different natures, independent of their heredity and environment. A religious person, who does not believe in the pre-existence of the self, might believe that not every person was created by God in seed form with the same nature, thereby explaining individual differences.

4) Vivekananda mentions the unconscious has a wide variety of functions affecting every aspect of our personality and character. It maintains the body when one is a sleep. The unconscious influences the entire character of the person including their instincts and is not limited to socially unacceptable ideas, traumas, and painful psychological experiences as Freud thought. Western psychologists now realize that discrimination, perception, memory, and higher mental functions involved in judgment and

problem solving can take place outside of conscious awareness.⁶²

According to a great deal of modern psychological and neuropsychological research the unconscious and subconscious mind not only store information but also process it. Conscious thinking, perceiving, and learning account for only a small portion of our total mental activity. Processing that affects the way we think and act occurs at the unconscious level, operating faster than conscious thinking.⁶³

Traditionally it has been thought that the unconscious mind is incapable of performing complex mental operations. It was considered to be a storehouse of ideas and feelings some of which will eventually enter into the conscious mind, and a source of dreams and instincts. Recent studies by Ap Dijksterhuis and Loran Nordgren (2006) have challenged that idea claiming that unconscious thought is better equipped at solving complex tasks than the conscious mind. For simple tasks the conscious mind functions better. In their experiments dealing with complex tasks where multiple variables are considered they found that people who were informed, then distracted and unable to devote conscious processing to the task made better decisions than individuals who spent time deliberating over the matter and those who responded immediately. It is not known neurologically what exactly happens when unconscious thought occurs. Is the unconscious brain active in critical thinking, creative writing, problem solving, and decision making? Is it pre-conceptual? Does it gather data at a much quicker rate than the conscious mind and processes it faster and more affectively? This is an ongoing open area of study since there is a great deal of opposition to the idea of Unconscious Thought Theory.⁶⁴

There have been cases where geniuses were unable to solve a problem after working long and hard. Later they were thinking about something else and the solution to the problem came to their mind in a flash. Was their unconscious mind outside of the range of conscious awareness involved in the process? Spiritual experiences involve the superconscious mind but do intellectual insights? For an ordinary person we can assume that the solution came from their unconscious not superconscious mind.

If we cannot remember a name until we select it out from a list of names, possibly it was stored in the subconscious mind. The subconscious

mind determines the behavior of our habit reactions. In old age we might to some extent lose this faculty and be prone to misplacing things.

5) Freud was a reductionist working from too narrow a perspective, which is quite evident in his misunderstanding of the nature and purpose of religion. He considered religion to be alien to science. Consequently, he used psychology as a weapon against religion, not realizing that spiritual psychology properly understood is a great aid to religion. Vivekananda said, "It is a terrible thing to claim this inspiration falsely, to mistake instinct for inspiration."⁶⁵ What well-educated people think of as knowledge in some cases might be a prejudice as Hans-Georg Gadamer (1900-2002) implies. Freud mistook his instincts, biases, and prejudices against religion (primarily destructive) as being derived from inspiration (primarily creative). On the other hand, Freud's discovery of the defense mechanisms and his understanding of the importance of the unconscious mind on the conscious mind were the result of intuitive inspiration. Conversely, Vivekananda sought to bring science and religion together stating, "I am working a good deal now upon the cosmology and eschatology of the Vedanta. I clearly see their perfect unison with modern science, and the elucidation of the one will be followed by that of the other.... The first chapter will be on cosmology showing the harmony between Vedantic theories and modern science." "Science and religion will meet and shake hands. Poetry and philosophy will become friends. This will be the religion of the future, and if we can work it out, we may be sure that it will be for all times and peoples."⁶⁶ This includes all of the sciences including psychology. Sigmund Freud could have used his psychological findings to benefit religion. He did not and Carl Jung (1875-1961) the son of a rural pastor in the Swiss Reformed Church undertook that function.

6) Vivekananda unlike Freud extends consciousness to the superconscious level, "Because these three states--instinct, reason, and superconsciousness, or the unconscious, conscious, and superconscious states--belong to one and the same mind. There are not three minds in one man, but one state of it develops into the others. Instinct develops into reason, and reason into the transcendental consciousness; therefore, not one of the states contradicts the others."⁶⁷ "This is the first part of the study, the control of the unconscious. The next is to go beyond the conscious. Just as unconscious work is beneath consciousness, so there is

another work which is above consciousness. When this superconscious state is reached, man becomes free and Divine; death becomes immortality, weakness becomes infinite power, and iron bondage becomes liberty. That is the goal, the infinite realm of the superconscious.”⁶⁸ Once the superconscious level has been attained, the mind will be purified and all psychological problems will cease. Consequently, yoga is a great therapy for overcoming one’s psychological maladies. Because the superconscious is a hidden aspect of all peoples mind, it is inevitable that it will eventually manifest and atheism-agnosticism will cease. Along this line Sri Aurobindo recognized that people should dwell on Divine consciousness, which has more power to illuminate and alter a person’s nature than analyzing the contents of the unconscious mind. To a disciple who tried psychoanalysis in the 1930s he wrote, “If one wishes to purify and transform the nature [of one’s character], it is the power of these higher ranges to which one must open and raise to them and change by them both the subliminal and the surface being ... But to begin by opening up the lower subconscious, risking to raise up all that is foul or obscure in it, is to go out of one’s way to invite trouble. First, one should make the higher mind and vital strong and firm and full of light and peace from above; afterwards one can open up or even dive into the subconscious with more safety and some chance of a rapid and successful change.”⁶⁹ Vivekananda adds, “These three states--instinct, reason, and superconsciousness, or the unconscious, conscious, and superconscious states--belong to one and the same mind.”⁷⁰ We have only one mind that includes the divine superconscious state. It is not necessary for the physical body to die to obtain this divine state.

Does the superconscious state include both the dualistic beatific vision of a Personal Brahman-God and nondual awareness or is the latter beyond the mind?

7) The scope of yoga psychology goes far beyond the boundaries of psychoanalysis. A well-adjusted personality and character accompanied by a normal state of mental health is the goal of psychoanalysis, while for yoga the potential is a spiritual transformation of personality and character. Western psychology seeks to make the unconscious, conscious, while Yoga’s goal is to make the superconscious, conscious. Patanjali’s Raja Yoga is to a large extent a psychology of the superconscious. In Indian

psychology we are a spirit and have a mind and body, in the West we are a body and mind and have a spirit. Psychoanalysis is often utilized by mentally troubled people, while yoga is for nearly everyone. People who experienced a deep mystical experience scored at the top of the Affect Balance Scale (developed by a University of Chicago psychologist) of psychological well-being. No other factor was found that correlated so highly.⁷¹

8) Vivekananda mentioned four personality types, “There are four general types of men--the rational [Jnana Yoga], the emotional [Bhakti Yoga], the mystical [Raja Yoga], and the worker [Karma Yoga]. For each of these we must provide suitable forms of worship.”⁷² Freud emphasized psychoanalytic theory which to some extent is a form of Jnana Yoga with emphasis on understanding. Alfred Adler introduced a psychological theory of Social Interests, which is a form of Karma Yoga. He supported religion as a positive force that emphasizes living a moral life, service to the community, and helping other people. Yoga psychology also places a great deal of attention on ethical behavior, with Patanjali emphasizing such virtues as compassion and non-injury, truthfulness, honesty, and continence (II:30-39). But Yoga practice is broader in scope than psychoanalysis involving all four yogas, the two mentioned plus Bhakti Yoga (love and devotion) and Raja Yoga (meditation). The latter deals with focusing and concentrating the forces of the mind on sublime spiritual thoughts that purify it.

9) Freud and other psychologists realize the importance of environment on personality development. We are affected by other people’s ideas, behavior patterns, and emotions. In the West the mind is considered to be composed of three subjective components, intellect, will, and feelings. In addition, there is also an objective aspect of the mind known as thought vibrations. Vivekananda added a new dimension of the environment relating to unperceived vibrations. “To take an illustration from physical science, when I am doing a certain action, my mind may be said to be in a certain state of vibration; all minds which are in similar circumstances will have the tendency to be affected by my mind. If there are different musical instruments tuned alike in one room, all of you may have noticed that when one is struck, the others have the tendency to vibrate so as to give the same note. So all minds that have the same

tension, so to say, will be equally affected by the same thought. Of course, this influence of thought on mind will vary according to distance and other causes, but the mind is always open to affection. Suppose I am doing an evil act, my mind is in a certain state of vibration, and all minds in the universe, which are in a similar state, have the possibility of being affected by the vibration of my mind. So, when I am doing a good action, my mind is in another state of vibration; and all minds similarly strung have the possibility of being affected by my mind; and this power of mind upon mind is more or less according as the force of the tension is greater or less.” “It is quite possible, therefore, that this atmosphere of ours is full of such thought pulsations, both good and evil. Every thought projected from every brain goes on pulsating, as it were, until it meets a fit object that will receive it. Any mind which is open to receive some of these impulses will take them immediately. So, when a man is doing evil actions, he has brought his mind to a certain state of tension and all the waves which correspond to that state of tension, and which may be said to be already in the atmosphere, will struggle to enter into his mind. That is why an evildoer generally goes on doing more and more evil. His actions become intensified. Such, also will be the case with the doer of good; he will open himself to all the good waves that are in the atmosphere, and his good actions also will become intensified. We run, therefore, a twofold danger in doing evil: first, we open ourselves to all the evil influences surrounding us; secondly, we create evil which affects others, may be hundreds of years hence. In doing evil we injure ourselves and others also. In doing good we do good to ourselves and to others as well; and, like all other forces in man, these forces of good and evil also gather strength from outside.”⁷³ A goal of yoga is that the mind enters a state of vibration where it both sends out and receives the highest and most sublime vibrations of thought.

According to conventional epistemology people learn by perceiving the external world, conversing with others, viewing public communication, reading books, thinking things over, doing things, etc. Here, Vivekananda suggest a new way through thought vibrations, in which people pick up the moods and feelings of others that in turn affect the way they think.

In agreement with what Vivekananda wrote, Lieutenant Colonel Arthur E. Powell (1882-1969) the Theosophist from Wales who served in

the British army in northwest India as a Royal Engineer asserted that, “The power of the vibration to produce such effects [on others] depends principally upon the clearness and definiteness of the thought-emotion, as well, of course, as upon the amount of force put into it.... If made of the finer kinds of matter, it will be of great power and energy, and may be used as a most potent agent when directed by a strong and steady will.... in addition, each man also serves as a magnet to draw towards himself the thought-forms of others similar to his own, thus attracting towards himself reinforcements of energy from outside.... Such a form simply floats detached in the atmosphere, all the time radiating vibrations similar to those originally sent forth by its creator. If it does not come into contact with any other mental body, the radiation gradually exhausts its store of energy and the form then falls to pieces; but if it succeeds in awakening sympathetic vibrations in any mental body near, at hand, an attraction is set up, and the thought-form is usually absorbed by that mental body.” There are permanent collective thought forms that have been thought by many people for a long period of time. Similar thought forms tend to aggregate together and form a collective unity in a crowd or as national feelings. Most group members intensify the thought by being receptive more than creative.⁷⁴

Thomas Aquinas mentions the two functions of ideas: a) exemplars by which the Divine Mind creates the things of the world (practical cognition) and b) rationes that pertain to thought (speculative awareness). He writes, “So far as the idea is the principle of the making of things, it may be called an exemplar, and belongs to practical knowledge. But so far as it is a principle of knowledge, it is properly called a likeness, and may belong to speculative knowledge also.” “In the Divine wisdom are the models of all things, which we have called ideas—i.e., exemplary forms existing in the Divine Mind.” We tend to think of ideas as intangible thoughts in the mind (rationes) rather than as objective vibrational forces that effect the external world (exemplars).

10) The methodology of Yoga differs from the intellectual cognitive approach of psychoanalysis. Through a process of concentration, yoga unlike psychoanalysis works directly on altering the forces and vibrational states of the mind. Swami Prabhavananda (1893-1976) designated, “Now Yoga philosophy—and this is the very core of its doctrine—proposes a

discipline whereby these root impressions [samskaras] may first be overcome, and then destroyed, and whereby in consequence a complete transformation of character may in the end be effected. Yoga psychology agrees with Freud that the conscious is controlled and guided by the unconscious, but it insists that there is a power inherent in the mind through which the mind, restraining itself, can overcome the unconscious and all its tendencies, and achieve by so doing a complete renewal. Thus is its original purity restored.”⁷⁵

Yoga psychology works directly on the psychodynamic forces of the mind composed of the substance of subtle matter and energy, while it and psychoanalysis both seek to change one’s belief system. Powers of restraining the mind are developed that nullify these negative mental vibrations and impressions, and make them ineffective causing mental problems and defects to subside. Concentrating on the inner nature of the mind in meditation brings about an unexpected release and awareness of deeply embedded memories, thoughts, and feelings previously hidden in the unconscious mind. As Vivekananda explains it, “The powers of the mind are like rays of light dissipated; when they are concentrated, they illumine. This is our only means of knowledge.... To turn the mind, as it were, inside, stop it from going outside, and then to concentrate all its powers, and throw them upon the mind itself, in order that it may know its own nature, analyze itself, is very hard work. Yet that is the only way to anything which will be a scientific approach to the subject.... There is no limit to the power of the human mind. The more concentrated it is, the more power is brought to bear on one point; that is the secret.”⁷⁶

Concerning anger Vivekananda tells us, “These feelings have to be controlled in the germ, the root, in their fine forms, before even we have become conscious that they are acting on us. With the vast majority of mankind the fine states of these passions are not even known--the states in which they emerge from subconsciousness [unconsciousness]. When a bubble is rising from the bottom of the lake, we do not see it, nor even when it is nearly come to the surface; it is only when it bursts and makes a ripple that we know it is there. We shall only be successful in grappling with the waves when we can get hold of them in their fine causes, and until you can get hold of them, and subdue them before they become gross, there is no hope of conquering any passion perfectly. To control our

passions we have to control them at their very roots; then alone shall we be able to burn out their very seeds. As fried seeds thrown into the ground will never come up, so these passions will never arise.”⁷⁷

Indian psychological therapy is based on a basic principle: All mental illness and unhappiness is due to bad karmas and bad samskaras (mental impressions) acquired in this and prior lives. The mind composed of the substance of subtle matter and energy are not vibrating correctly causing mental problems. Karmas and samskaras follow impersonal determined laws of subtle matter, as physical objects do for gross matter. Rehabilitation is accomplished by changing one’s lifestyle, thinking habits, and living a spiritual, moral, and productive life. Vivekananda relates, “The only remedy for bad habits is counter habits; all the bad habits that have left their impressions are to be controlled by good habits. Go on doing good, thinking holy thoughts continuously; that is the only way to suppress base impressions. Never say any man is hopeless, because he only represents a character, a bundle of habits, which can be checked by new and better ones. Character is repeated habits, and repeated habits alone can reform character.”⁷⁸ Since we are not bound by our childhood experiences, this transformation in character and personality can occur at any time in the life-process.

There are some areas of study that require further examination. For example, the unconscious mind has been identified with the causal body (source of causation), subtle body, muladhara chakra at the base of the spine, the state of deep sleep and possibly the quantum realm (electrons). This raises the question what is the relationship between the causal-subtle-physical body, the unconscious-subconscious or preconscious-conscious mind, the seven chakras, dreamless sleep-dream-awake state, and the quantum-atomic-macro realm? It will take a great thinker to synthesize all of these into a Grand Unified Theory.⁷⁹

An IQ (Intelligence Quotient) test is like an AQ (Athletic Quotient). Both intellect and athletic ability have many components, and people vary in their level of each component. Therefore, with IQ a particular individual varies in his/her level of memory, knowledge, creativity, writing skills, mathematical skills, etc. The IQ test attempts to provide an overall average score for all of these components. Also, does IQ measure creativity in a particular field of study? For example, there could be a large number of

people with an IQ equal to or exceeding that of Thomas Edison or Albert Einstein. Can an IQ test tell us why they had the intelligence to make the discoveries they made?

11) Freud ascertained that the unconscious contains instincts that are present at birth, which he assumed were due to phylogenetic inheritance. He wrote, "The archaic heritage of human beings comprises not only the dispositions but also the subject-matter--memory traces of the experience of earlier generations [our ancestors]." Archaic heritage "consists in certain [innate] dispositions such as are characteristic of all living organisms; in their capacity and tendency, that is to enter particular lines of development, and to react in a particular manner to certain excitations, impressions and stimuli."⁸⁰ The child "replaces occurrence in his own life by occurrence in the life of his ancestors. I fully agree with Jung in recognizing the existence of this phylogenetic heritage; but I regard it as a methodological error to seize in a phylogenetic explanation before the ontogenetic possibilities have been exhausted. I cannot see any reason for obstinately disputing the importance of infantile prehistory while at the same time freely acknowledging the importance of ancestral prehistory."⁸¹ "Dreams bring to light material which could not have originated either from the dreamer's adult life or from his forgotten childhood. We are obliged to regard it as a part of the *archaic heritage* which a child brings with him into the world, before any experience of his own, influenced by the experience of his ancestors."⁸² "Our conscious acts are the outcome of an unconscious substratum created in the mind in the main by hereditary influences. This substratum consists of the innumerable common characteristics handed down from generation to generation, which constitute the genius of a race."⁸³

Vivekananda believed that the unconscious mind we are born with is a result of our actions and thoughts in prior lives.

5. Similarity between Highest and Lowest

Swami Vivekananda mentioned, "The two extremes are alike. The extreme positive and the extreme negative are always similar. When the vibrations of light are too slow, we do not see them, nor do we see them when they are too rapid." Vivekananda indicated the rare yogi totally

absorbed in meditation in an inert state totally oblivious of the outer world appears like the catatonic. Yet one is in the highest state of consciousness and the other in just the opposite. Experiencing this state the yogi “comes out enlightened, a sage, a prophet, a saint, his whole character changed, his life changed, illumined.”⁸⁴ Internally the highest Yogi and the catatonic are the just opposite, yet externally they are similar. There must be a profound metaphysical reason why a catatonic and a yogi in a high state of spiritual realization appear to be the same and that the two are sometimes confused with one another. Is it due to the way the world was created? This discovery would be worthwhile

Sigmund Freud associated the mystical “Oceanic experience” of the oneness of existence, with the primitive stage of primary narcissism, where the self and the mother appear to be undifferentiated, before the ego emerged. He also associated the mystics sattvic desire to evolve to a higher level, with the tamasic desire to regress to a lower level of existence, referring to the “will to die” as the “will to Nirvana.”⁸⁵ Because of some similarities between the two states the highest can be misinterpreted from the lowest standpoint.

According to Ken Wilber’s “Pre/Trans Fallacy,” the prerational states experienced by the infant, and the transrational states of the mystic, falsely appear to be similar or even identical. Consequently some psychological writers make a Category Error by mistakenly reducing the transrational to prerational infantilism, the transpersonal to the prepersonal, the superconscious is reduced to the subconscious or unconscious. Genuine spiritual and transpersonal experiences states are wrongly identified with regressions to the infantile state of narcissism or to the autistic and symbiotic level. Conversely, Wilber believes Carl Jung (1875-1961) mistakenly elevated the prepersonal (phantasmic, magic, mythic) to the transpersonal level.⁸⁶ We wonder what is the metaphysical reason that the highest and the lowest in some ways resemble each other.

Along these lines Vivekananda stated, “The impulses from the plane of unconsciousness are what we call instinct, and when the same impulses come from the plane of consciousness, we call it reason. But there is a still higher plane, superconsciousness in man. This is apparently the same as unconsciousness, because it is beyond the plane of consciousness, but it is above consciousness and not below it. It is not

instinct [Pre], it is inspiration [Trans].”⁸⁷ At another time Vivekananda mentioned that there are similarities between the higher and lower stages.

Ken Wilber summarizes the findings of the Hungarian-American Margaret Mahler (1897-1985). During the autistic phase in the first month of a child’s life, the primitive unintegrated ego is unable to discriminate between the internal and external world. During the symbiotic phase (1-5 months) the infant functions as though he and the mother are an omnipotent system. This is a stage of undifferentiation, of fusion with the mother where the ‘I’ is not yet differentiated from the ‘not-I.’ During the practicing subphase (9-15 months) there is a peak of grandiose exhibitionistic narcissism, he is “quasi-enamored with the world and his own grandeur and omnipotence.”⁸⁸ For an infant in its earliest stages of development, the world and the self are one, all objects are part of the self. Objective world and subjective awareness are undifferentiated. The infant cannot differentiate self from others, subject from object, or inside from outside.⁸⁹

Another example of the similarity of the highest and lowest having some common characteristics. Vivekananda points out for the highest yogi the Self and the world are one. “The Self is the essence of this universe, the essence of all souls; He is the essence of your own life, nay, ‘Thou are That.’ You are one with this universe. He who says he is different from others, even by a hair's breadth, immediately becomes miserable. Happiness belongs to him who knows this oneness, who knows he is one with this universe.” “When man has seen himself as one with the Infinite Being of the universe, when all separateness has ceased, when all men and women, all gods and angels, all animals and plants, and the whole universe have melted into that Oneness, then all fear disappears.... And this is the one way, says the Vedantist, to Knowledge. Kill out this differentiation, kill out this superstition that there are many.”⁹⁰

Mahler and Wilber write of the infant’s sense of omnipotence. Concerning omnipotence Vivekananda mentions in the final stage of yoga we will be established in the Self (Atman). We will be “omnipotent, omnipresent, ever blessed; our own Self was so pure and perfect that we required none else. We required none else to make us happy, for we are happiness itself. We shall find that this knowledge does not depend on anything else; throughout the universe there can be nothing that will not

become effulgent before our knowledge. This will be the last state, and the Yogi will become peaceful and calm, never to feel any more pain, never to be again deluded, never to be touched by misery.” In his *Yoga Sutras*, Patanjali mentions, “By making Samyama [yogic concentration] on the discrimination between the Sattva and the Purusha come omnipotence and omniscience.”⁹¹ This reminds one of Srinivasa’s (fl. 1625) description of life in heaven where the freed soul is omniscient, has the power of fulfilling all its desires at will, and can move to any location at will.⁹²

Some indigenous tribal people believe in Animism that nature is alive, in which case there is no separation between the physical and the living. This belief was first mentioned in 1871 by Sir Edward Tylor (1832-1917) the English anthropologist who considered Animism to be the earliest form of religion. Animals, plants and even inanimate objects such as mountains, bodies of water, and celestial bodies were considered to possess human qualities such as desires, consciousness, and personality.⁹³

Vivekananda described the following event that occurred to him after Sri Ramakrishna transmitted spiritual energy to him. While Vivekananda’s experience supports the idea that the world is spiritual in nature, he does not hold to the other aspects of animism. He mentioned a spiritual experience he had that lasted for days, “I was astounded to find that really there was nothing in the universe but God!... I returned home, but there too, everything I saw appeared to be Brahman. I sat down to take my meal, but found that everything—the food, the plate, the person who served, and even myself—was nothing but That.... I felt that the cabs and myself were of one stuff.... When I became normal again, I realized that I must have had a glimpse of the Advaita state.”⁹⁴

Vivekananda in this high spiritual state felt the world was “dreamlike.” At the other end of the spectrum a person with a depersonalization disorder subjectively feels that the self or world is unreal. It is as though they are living in a dreamlike state. They may lack a personal physical identity with their body. Depersonalization/Derealization is the belief in the unreality of the outside world. They are often caused by a severe traumatic event.⁹⁵

We say the person is crazy because they are having hallucinations. But if our mind vibrated like theirs we would see the same thing and would

not consider them to be hallucinations. What are the reasons we consider our perceptions correct and the so-called crazy persons wrong?

6. The Guna Personality Types

In the Sankhya cosmology of Indian philosophy Prakriti is the primal substance in its original state, eternal and beyond perception. It is made up of three gunas (qualities of substance), which are the constituent cosmic factors that characterize all of nature. Prakriti is the potency that brings about evolution and change in the empirical universe.⁹⁶ In the primordial state the three gunas are inactive and in a state of balance (equilibrium) prior to the creation of the universe. In their manifested state these forces are present in all things and beings in the world, and it is their interaction that determine an entities physical and psychological nature.

The gunas can also be interpreted as the three basic substances, which are tamasic Akasha (Primal Matter and its manifestations), rajasic Prana (Primal Energy and its manifestations), and sattvic Mahat (Primal Thought and Its manifestations). Vivekananda wrote, “Just as Akasha is the infinite, omnipresent material of this universe, so is this Prana the infinite, omnipresent manifesting power of this universe.... This Prana, acting on Akasha, is creating the whole of this universe.”⁹⁷ All three gunas have a vital higher functional side, which they fulfill. Tamasic Akasha (matter, material cause) the material, is worked on by rajasic Prana (energy, efficient cause) the source of change and activity. Sattvic Mahat (thought, formal cause) determines how Prana will operate on Akasha, in order to bring about the desired specific physical or mental form, or pattern that make up the universe. The forms pre-exist internally and potentially, and are eventually actualized.⁹⁸

Gunas are eternal, being indestructible since they cannot be further divided and they retain their fundamental nature. The qualities (or attributes, or properties, or characteristics) of each of these three entities coexistent in all parts, forms, and states of the particular substance. We might think of tamasic substance as physical matter measured by mass, rajasic substance as energy, and sattvic substance as thought.

The tamasic guna is most often described in terms of its undesirable features. Its virtues are seldom mentioned. Tamas exists because it serves

vital functions from the cosmological and personal standpoint. In the Sankhya system, *tamas* is required to produce the five gross elements of aether (sound-hear), air (heat-touch), fire (light-sight), water (liquid-taste), and earth (solid-smell).⁹⁹ It has many positive and functional aspects since *tamas* is an essential component involved in the maintaining of the universe by creating stability and predictability by resisting rapid and unwanted change. Consequently, the laws of physical objects, reason, and logic reoccur and remain constant over time that allow for the planning of future events. In the individual *tamas* manifests in sleep, restfulness, the power of habit, steadiness, homeostasis, resistance, firmness, conservativeness, and traditionalism. Without *tamas* one could not sleep, rest, or relax.¹⁰⁰

Tamas is the force of inertia the resistance of anything to change, be it a physical object, external circumstances, or ideas in a person's mind. It seeks repetition of past actions. Inertia comes from the Latin word, *iners*, meaning idle, lazy, or sluggish. In physics inertia is a property of matter that refers to the resistance of any physical object to any change in its velocity or direction of motion, unless it is acted upon by an external force. Isaac Newton (1642-1727) stated, "The *vis insita*, or innate force of matter, is a power of resisting by which every body, as much as in it lies, endeavors to preserve its present state, whether it be of rest or of moving uniformly forward in a straight line." Newton defined "inertia" to mean the cause of the phenomenon, rather than the phenomenon itself.¹⁰¹ *Tamas* is an innate force of physical matter and subtle matter (thought) that preserves the present state. *Ceteris paribus*, the greater the mass of an object, the greater the resistance to change.

Tamas functions to preserve the regularity of physical, chemical, and biological entities. For example, when we get up in the morning we assume the laws of physics have not changed, that we are basically the same person with a similar nature as we were the day before, that the building where we go to work will still be there, etc. If things did not remain basically consistent we could not plan or make decisions about future events. It is the source of stability, firmness, permanence, and resistance to change.

The biological term homeostasis is the tendency toward a relatively stable equilibrium of a living system between interdependent elements, as

maintained by physiological processes. Homeostasis is brought about by a natural resistance to change when already in the optimal condition. It helps us to maintain a normal body temperature, metabolism, weight, and other functions that are necessary for our good health.

Psychologically *tamas* is the basis of the Repetition Compulsion (the tendency to repeat behavioral responses), which is **necessary to maintain a consistent and stable personality**. It makes society stable rather than erratic, involving repeated and predictable patterned behavior of individuals. Repeating the same act a number of times leads to the formation of a habit and once formed habits bring about repetition of the same act. Habits make it easier to perform our daily tasks since they are automatic responses that require a limited amount of conscious thought. They are quick and efficient responses that avoid having to waste time and energy deliberating about what to do and how to do it. Habits can be combined into a sequence of responses that can be executed as a unit.

Prana (energy) is the foundation of *rajas* the force of activity that brings about change in the universe. It works not only through physical objects but also psychologically as an important motivator in all forms of mental life. It serves the *rajasic* function of increasing complexity and reorganizing entities in a novel way to bring about new evolutionary levels of being.

The Negative Aspects of Tamas

Vivekananda explained the traditional Triguna personality types according to the Sankhya and Yoga philosophies. “In every man there are these three forces. Sometimes *Tamas* prevails. We become lazy, we cannot move, we are inactive, bound down by certain ideas or by mere dullness. At other times activity prevails, and at still other times that calm balancing of both. Again, in different men, one of these forces is generally predominant. The characteristic of one man is inactivity, dullness, and laziness; that of another, activity, power, manifestation of energy; and in still another we find the sweetness, calmness, and gentleness, which are due to the balancing of both action and inaction.” “Again, the mind is in three states, one of which is darkness, called *Tamas*, found in brutes and idiots; it only acts to injure. No other idea comes into that state of mind.

Then there is the active state of mind, Rajas, whose chief motives are power and enjoyment. 'I will be powerful and rule others.' Then there is the state called Sattva, serenity, calmness, in which the waves cease, and the water of the mind-lake becomes clear." "When the Sattva material prevails, knowledge comes; when Rajas, activity; and when Tamas, darkness, lassitude, idleness, and ignorance." The three gunas, Sattva, Rajas, and Tamas are particles of matter.¹⁰² Sattva creates the good and the truthful, while tamas tries to destroy them.

S. Radhakrishnan found a similar idea in Plato's idea of the three constituent parts of the soul, "The three qualities of sattva, rajas, and tamas have for their equivalents in Plato Logistikon, Thumos, and Epithumia. Epithumia, like tamas, represents blind desire with its character of ignorance; Thumos is, like rajas, the element of passion and power, standing midway between ignorance and knowledge. The Logistikon, or the rational element, answers to the sattva quality, which harmonizes the soul and illumines it."¹⁰³

Being self-destructive tamas is characterized by unconsciousness, impotence, disintegration, undifferentiation, immobility, incoherence, indecision, and oblivion. This is a process of negative transformation; what had previously been created is now destroyed. For example, in drunkenness the individual reverses the evolutionary process first returning to an animalistic level and then to an inert unconscious state.¹⁰⁴ It can also manifest through cruelty and self-destruction. **According to Patanjali, lack of yogic and spiritual progress is due to "Disease, mental laziness, doubt, lack of enthusiasm, lethargy, clinging to sense-enjoyments, false perception, non-attaining concentration, and falling away from the state when obtained (I:30)"¹⁰⁵ each a tamasic trait.**

There are three possible ways for a group to respond to a situation. One of conflict (Tamas), a direct and conscious struggle where one group tries to defeat or destroy the other. Conflict theory holds that social phenomena arise as a result of conflict that is an inevitable fact of social life. Another is competition (Rajas), the pursuit of a goal by a group that depends on other groups not attaining the same end. The highest is cooperation (Sattva), whereby for their mutual benefit groups engage in joint action to achieve a commonly desired goal.

Gunas as Personality Types

According to the principles of Aristotle's system of ethics, the two extremes are deficient (tamas) and excess (rajas) and the ideal is the virtuous mean (sattva) between the two extremes. Aristotle's list follows:¹⁰⁶

Action or Feeling Excess	Deficient	Virtuous Mean	
Fear and Confidence	Cowardice	Courage	Rashness
Pleasure and Pain indulgence	Insensibility	Temperance	Self-
Getting and Spending Extravagant	Miserly	Liberality	
Getting and Spending B good taste	Niggardliness	Magnificence	Lack
Honor and Dishonor A Vanity	Submissive	Proper Pride	
Honor and Dishonor B Ambition	Unambitious	Right ambition	Over
Anger Irascibility	Spiritlessness	Good temper	
Social Conduct Obsequiousness	Surliness	Friendliness	
Self-Expression Boastfulness	Ironical Depreciation	Sincerity	
Conversation Buffoonery	Boorishness	Wittiness	
Shame Shamelessness	Timid	Modesty	
Indignation Spitefulness	Callousness	Just Resentment	

There are problems with limiting the guna personality types to three. One study listed the definitions of the three gunas described in five different articles written between 1969 and 1998. Some of these studies describe rajas from its worse standpoint using terms like: impure, bad, anxiety, greed, uncontrolled energy, dissatisfaction, and envy.¹⁰⁷ On the other hand, Vivekananda defined rajas correctly as “activity, power, manifestation of energy” and recommended that for the Indians, “the acquirement of Rajas or intense activity is what is most beneficial now. Unless a man passes through Rajas, can he ever attain to that perfect Sattvika state?”¹⁰⁸ Also, Tamas is sometimes defined as inactivity (a lack of force) and at other times as anger (a type of force), which are different types of traits.

All three gunas are present to varying degrees in all people and in all ethnic, national, religious, and other groups. The goal for all people is to maximize the qualities of the sattva guna.

Sri Ramakrishna told Vidyasagar, “Your activities are inspired by sattva. Though they are rajasic, they are influenced by sattva. Compassion springs from sattva. Though work for the good of others belongs to rajas, yet this rajas has sattva for its basis and is not harmful.” On another occasion twice he mentioned, “sattva mixed with rajas.”¹⁰⁹ Meaning that two gunas can combine. So to get a more thorough understanding we can extend the Guna Personality Types hierarchy from three to five or to increase the refinement seven categories is possible. The characteristics include:

- 1) Pure sattvic: religious experience, selfless love, goodness, joyful, peaceful, purity, honest, truthful, harmonious.
- 2) Mixed sattva-rajasic: spiritual person who works for the good of others.
- 3) Mixed raja-sattvic: creative intelligence, humanitarian efforts, a philanthropist. A devotee who meditates a lot.
- 4) Pure rajasic: active, energetic, hard working, productive, practical. If married, a person who works for the good of their family.
- 5) Mixed raja-tamasic: nervous, neurotic, paranoid, rigid, lustful, greedy, reckless.

6) Mixed tamasa-rajasic: angry, hostile, will to destroy, self-destruction, faultfinder, criminal activity, dishonest.

7) Pure tamasic: dullness, laziness, depressed, helplessness, ignorance, confused, will to devolve to a lower inanimate level.

Many people spend most of their time in one of these seven groups, but at times can enter a higher or lower category.

7. Transpersonal and Other Psychologies

There are many types of psychologies. First are those religious philosophies aimed at manifesting the Divine in humans. This includes those of Patanjali, Vedanta, Buddhism, Judeo-Christian mysticism, Islamic Sufism, and Transpersonal Psychology. Next are those that concentrate on the affirmative aspects of humans, namely Humanistic, and Positive Psychology. Third is Freudian Psychology that searches for the negative aspects of humans in order to heal them. In addition, there are psychologies that place the emphasis on behavior, the cognitive process, biological factors, how culture influences our thinking and behavior, and the effect of evolutionary development. From the standpoint of Psychological Pluralism each of the types is necessary and valuable in adding to our knowledge and in benefitting people. We should avoid intellectual bigotry and imperialism by thinking only one of these types is useful.

One of the founders of Humanistic Psychology, Abraham Maslow (1908-70) wrote, "The science of psychology has been far more successful on the negative than on the positive side. It has revealed to us much about man's shortcomings, his illness, his sins, but little about his potentialities, his virtues, his achievable aspirations, or his full psychological height. It is as if psychology has voluntarily restricted itself to only half its rightful jurisdiction, the darker, meaner half."¹¹⁰ Maslow's ideas were part of an important shift in psychology. Rather than focusing on abnormal behavior, his humanistic psychology emphasized the personal development of people.

A major creative development in the psychology of religion was the rise of the spiritually oriented Transpersonal Psychology. An important

early contribution was Maslow's *Toward a Psychology of Being* (1962, 1968) where he elegantly describes the nature of the "peak experiences" (for more details see: Chapter II, Section 2. Endeavoring to Realize Brahman-God). Other key events at this time were the publication of *The Journal of Transpersonal Psychology* in 1969 and the founding of the Association for Transpersonal Psychology established in 1972.

The field of transpersonal psychology integrates the spiritual aspects of the human experience with the framework of Western and Eastern psychological concepts, theories, and methods. The ultimate goal of following transpersonal psychology is to attain spiritual Enlightenment, a higher transcendent state of consciousness. It seeks psychospiritual self-development aimed at transcending the individual ego and present self, to reach the deeper and authentic Self. This state is attained through integration of spirituality, psychological theory, and scientific research. Its practice involves a feeling of love and insight resulting from devotion, the serenity produced by surrender to God, and humility.¹¹¹

The discipline soon reached a high level with the teachings of Ken Wilber featured in *The Atman Project* (1980), *Up from Eden* (1981), and *Eye to Eye* (1983). In these books Wilber discusses the levels of psychological development written on by contemporary psychologists. The idea being that every person has a spiritual potential of enlightenment and illumination that far exceeds that of being a well-adjusted and productive person. In addition, Wilber informed his readers on, four levels of the unconscious mind along with the superconscious transpersonal mind in Section 2; the Pre/Trans Fallacy in Section 5; renunciation (See: Ch. III, Section 4. The Reason for Renunciation); and ego-strength (Ch. III, Section 7. Avoid Egotism, Selfishness, and Pride (Hubris)). For the Pre/Trans Fallacy see: *Sri Ramakrishna and Western Thought*, Ch. XII, Section 2. General Psychological Factors). For more of Wilber's ideas see the book *Swami Vivekananda and Others on Religious Philosophy* that discusses his views on the Absolute (Ch. V, Section 6. Relationship of Brahman-Atman and the Absolute to the Universe); and both Involution and Thanatos as the involutionary will (Ch. VIII, Section 9. Vivekananda and Alexander on Evolution). Wilber's drew his ideas from his comprehensive study of mainline psychology, Eastern and Western spiritual traditions and philosophy, literature, health theories, cognitive science, social theory, and

art. Wilber adds three higher realms of human growth, the subtle, causal, and ultimate.¹¹² For Vivekananda the hierarchy is: gross (material), subtle (mental), causal (spiritual), and Absolute Reality (nondual). The Swami states, "From the causal totality comes out first the subtle image or Shabda-form of each particular thing and then its gross manifestation."¹¹³

Wilber mentions his indebtedness to Sri Aurobindo (1872-1950) particularly on the subject of involution and the levels of consciousness. He writes in *The Atman Project*, "We have already examined evolution, which is the movement of the world towards Brahman-Atman. Involution is, more or less, the opposite of that – it is the movement whereby Brahman throws itself outward to create the manifest worlds, a process of kenosis or self-emptying which, at the same time, is a process of pure act and pure creativity. As evolution is movement from the lower to the higher, involution is a movement from the higher to the lower – a movement which "enfolds" and "involves" the higher levels of being with the lower ...in order for evolution – which is the unfolding of higher structures – to occur at all, those higher structures must, in some sense, be present from the start: they must be enfolded as potential, in the lower modes.... And the story of involution is simply the story of how the higher modes came to be lost in the lower – how they came to be enwrapped and enfolded in the lower states."¹¹⁴

Vivekananda discussed the subject of involution in detail before Aurobindo did. He discerned, "From what does this evolution come, is the question. What was the seed? It was the same as the tree. All the possibilities of a future tree are in that seed; all the possibilities of a future man are in the little baby; all the possibilities of any future life are in the germ. What is this? The ancient philosophers of India called it involution. We find then, that every evolution presupposes an involution. Nothing can be evolved which is not already there. Here, again, modern science comes to our help. You know by mathematical reasoning that the sum total of the energy that is displayed in the universe is the same throughout. You cannot take away one atom of matter or one foot-pound of force. You cannot add to the universe one atom of matter or one foot-pound of force. As such, evolution does not come out of zero; then, where does it come from? From previous involution. The child is the man involved, and

the man is the child evolved. The seed is the tree involved, and the tree is the seed evolved. All the possibilities of life are in the germ.”¹¹⁵

When Aurobindo was locked up in a solitary cell in Alipore Jail for a year during 1908-09 he was visited by Swami Vivekananda who gave up his physical body in 1902 and later wrote, “I was hearing constantly the voice of Vivekananda speaking to me for a fortnight in the jail in my solitary meditation and felt his presence. The voice spoke only on a special and limited but very important field of spiritual experience and it ceased as soon as it had finished saying all that it had to say on that subject.... It was the spirit of Vivekananda which first gave me a clue in the direction of the supermind. This clue led me to see how Truth-Consciousness works in everything.... Vivekananda came and gave me the knowledge of the intuitive mentality. I had not the least idea about it at that time. He too did not have it when he was in the body. He gave me detailed knowledge illustrating each point. The contact lasted about three weeks and then he withdrew.... The going forth of Vivekananda, marked out by the Master as the heroic soul destined to take the world between his two hands and change it, was the first visible sign to the world that India was awake not only to survive but to conquer.”¹¹⁶

Precursors to transpersonal psychology include William James, James Pratt, and Carl Jung. James contribution to the field is discussed in Ch. I. Yogic Practices, Meditation, and Prayer, Section 2. Raja Yoga.

The distinguished Swiss thinker Carl Jung (1875-1961) is well known for his contribution to religious psychology. In writing an introduction to Heinrich Zimmer’s German translation of the teachings of Ramana Maharshi in 1944, Jung indicated, “The Eastern peoples are threatened with a rapid collapse of their spiritual values, and what replaces them cannot always be counted among the best that Western civilization has produced. From this point of view one could regard Ramakrishna and Sri Ramana as modern prophets, who play the same compensatory role in relation to their people as that of *Old Testament* prophets in relation to their ‘unfaithful’ children of Israel. Not only do they exhort their compatriots to remember their thousand year-old spiritual culture, they actually embody it and thus serve as an impressive warning, lest the demands of the soul be forgotten amid the novelties of Western civilization with its materialistic technology and commercial acquisitiveness.” Because Jung explained psychology from a

religious standpoint, he was respected by the Indian Swamis. He held discussions on spiritual topics with three Swamis of the Ramakrishna Order, Pavitrananda (1937 or 1938, New York), Akhilananda (before 1949, Boston), and Ghanananda (1952, England). He stated, “While we are overpowering the Orient from without, it may be fastening its hold upon us from within.” In the winter of 1936-37 Jung visited India and was highly impressed with the statue of Ramakrishna at the Belur Math.¹¹⁷

Positive Psychology began as a new area of psychology in 1998 when Martin Seligman was elected president of the American Psychological Association. Like Humanistic Psychology it was a reaction against focusing only on mental illness and emphasizing maladaptive behavior. Since that time this field of study that has been growing steadily with the Association having members from 80 different countries.

Positive psychology is the scientific study of positive individual traits, subjective experience, and institutions with the purpose of improving the quality of life. It includes the personal, relational, institutional, cultural, global, and biological dimensions of life. Interests are in character strengths, optimism, life satisfaction, happiness, compassion, self-esteem, self-confidence, personal development, and a sense of personal control that allow individuals to build a life of meaning and purpose. Personal happiness and subjective well-being are enhanced by: strong social ties with a spouse, family, friends, and colleagues; membership in clubs and social organizations; physical exercise; having interesting work; and pursuing religion and the practice of meditation. Western psychodynamic approaches are combined with Asiatic psychology. It complements, without intending to replace or ignore, the traditional areas of psychology.¹¹⁸

The New Age Movement has a favorable attitude towards the teachings of Carl Jung, Abraham Maslow and the Human Potential Movement, Ken Wilber, and Transpersonal Psychology. The Movement itself is composed of a variety of groups that hold a wide range of varying spiritual beliefs and practices. It became a major movement in the 1970s centered largely in the United Kingdom and then expanded in the 1980s and 1990s to North America. Since the term New Age was increasingly rejected in the twenty-first century it is difficult to determine its present level of popularity. Its followers have predominantly been whites from a middle and upper-middle-class background employed in the professional,

managerial, arts, and entrepreneurial occupations. They were often disenchanted with mainstream society, Two-thirds of its participants were female and over half were aged between 40 and 59.

On the positive side the most auspicious beliefs and practices held by many (certainly not all) New Agers are: realizing that their higher self is Divine in essence, personal growth that is achieved through meditation and the higher consciousness of religious experience; a holistic God permeates an inter-related universe that includes humans, interest in Goddess', religious pluralism and respect for the higher spiritual teachings of the religions of the world; a healthier environment, improving society by seeking a world of international co-operation, without violence, crime, and war, the convergence of scientific and religious idea; Indian ideas like reincarnation through which we advance in our spiritual evolution, the law of karma that humans are responsible for the events that happen to them, the subtle body, recitation of mantras, and yoga.

Mainstream society is basically rajasic, so to deviate from it one can choose the higher sattvic or the lower tamasic way of life. As Ken Wilber's Pre/Trans fallacy points out due to the apparent similarity between the highest and the lowest some people get them confused.

Questionable themes sometimes found in New Age literature are: the Age of Aquarius, akashic records, ancient continents such as Atlantis, ascended master, astrology, commercialism within the movement, communicating with the dead, conspiracy theories, crystal healing, drug use producing altered states of consciousness, hippie life-style, using magic to gain rewards, past life regression, pseudoscience, psychedelic, and psychic powers.¹¹⁹

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endnotes the CW date in parenthesis is the year the material was first published in the English language.

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⁷⁸ CW, I:208 (1896).

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⁸¹ Strachey (1964), XVII, p. 97.

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⁸⁵ M. Epstein and J. Lieff, "Psychiatric Complications of Meditation Process," *Journal of Transpersonal Psychology* (1981), p. 137.

⁸⁶ Ken Wilber, *Sex, Ecology, Spirituality* (Boston: Shambhala, 1995), pp. 205-06; Ken Wilber, et. al, *Transformation of Consciousness* (Boston: Shambhala, 1986), p. 146. A category error is when some things belonging to a particular category are presented as if they belong to a different category or a property is ascribed to a thing that does not have that property (Web: en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Category_mistake).

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¹¹⁴ Wilber (1980), pp. 160-61.

¹¹⁵ CW, II:227-28.

¹¹⁶ WARHD, pp. 561-62. Two other people who had dreams of Vivekananda before being making contact with Vedanta are an American devotee E. E. Dickinson was saved from drowning as a child having a life-saving spiritual experience of Vivekananda in 1881. A Mrs. Johnson an English woman living in Russia had a profound dream of Vivekananda, whom she was not able to identify until several years later in 1895-96 when she heard him give a speech in London (WARHD, pp. 495-96, 517-18).

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