

Mysteries of the Heart: Thoughts on a Spiritual Life - Part Two

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The great yogi Gorakhnath, in his *Siddha-Siddhanta-Paddhali*, states that the object of yoga is twofold; 1) the elevation of the consciousness to higher and higher planes, and 2) the progressive dematerialization or spiritualization of the physical body (*kaya-siddhi*).

Through spiritual science we learn that the consciousness is evolving from the dense slow-moving vibrations of the material world, toward the subtle quickened vibrations of the spiritual. As the spirit ascends and the consciousness is refined the vehicles become pure conductors of the Spiritual Light. As this incoming light illuminates the mind, it also begins to illuminate its reflection, the body. Thus the physical and etheric matter of the body becomes in a sense radioactive, it begins to radiate a subtle light/energy. It is this radiation, primarily of the *Brahamarandhara*¹ center that is responsible for the nimbus around the head of saints in some paintings.

The etheric body is the essential nature of the physical body, its prototype. It is the source of the body's life and energy. It also coordinates the activity of the dense physical body via the brain. The evolution of the human body, paralleling the evolution of consciousness and spirit, progresses from the dense, fixed, slow-moving vibrations of earth and water toward the subtle, ethereal, quickened vibrations of fire and light. The eventual destiny of the physical body, we are told, is its transformation into a body of fire and light. The greater the expansion and elevation of the consciousness, the greater will be its need for a refined spiritualized body through which it can find adequate expression in the material world.

Unfortunately, this perspective runs counter to the present materialist belief system, which maintains that the dense physical plane is the origin and foundation of life; that consciousness has somehow impossibly and randomly

evolved from dead matter. This kind of materialistic thinking has kept humanity from discovering the true secrets of the aging process, which occurs primarily through material densification, a crystallization of the body that obstructs the free flow and circulation of subtle energies, nerve impulses, and even the dense physical fluids necessary for the continual regeneration of the body.

Rudolf Steiner taught that the "Beast" of *The Book of Revelation*, whose number is 666, refers to the forces of materialism, which will be at its peak of power at the beginning of the 21st century.² This counterforce to evolution seeks to drive us toward greater densification, hardening, and crystallization. Only the unifying properties of the heart can counteract the forces of materialism. The fire of the heart, not only retards the aging process, not only refines and elevates the consciousness; it is the root source of our psychic energy and power as well. The psychic energy that can move mountains, that can save the earth from destruction, is the very same fire-energy of the heart. All the psychic powers (*siddhis*) of the yogis, all the miracles of the saints, arise from the fire of the heart. "The strongest source of fiery energies, the heart, still has not been investigated as a manifestation of impelling force and of creative power."³

To maintain equilibrium on the Path it is essential that the refined and expanding

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consciousness be united with useful creative activity. In other words, the outgoing creative energies should be equal to and in step with the incoming spiritual energies. This represents the union of a refined spiritual receptivity with the spontaneous creativeness of the will and divine purpose. In Tibetan Buddhism the highest *Anuttara*⁴ yoga involves the union of *upaya* (spiritual creativeness) and *prajna* (wisdom). This yin-yang equilibrium of energies is to be maintained on all levels. Like electrical energy, spiritual energy can only circulate within the human consciousness and organism when the circuit is complete. If it is incomplete illumination will be lacking. This is basis of spiritual ecology. It is also true of all relationships. Receiving (*yin*) must always be accompanied by giving (*yang*), inspiration by creativeness, and wisdom by a creative will that is in harmony with the will of Heaven.

To maintain a balance with the eternal Way, every leader must be a follower, and every follower a leader. To be a leader without also following the will of heaven is to be out of balance on the side of yang. Every true spiritual teacher is a disciple of one higher, and every true disciple is a teacher in some way to those who come after. To lead is to give. To follow is to receive. When giving and receiving find an effortless, spontaneous balance equilibrium is attained. If we are to be strong and effective leaders in the world, then we must be equally strong and effective followers.

The duality and separation of opposites, such as absolute and relative, spirit and form, unity and diversity, self and others, exist only as the delusion of the conceptual mind. When the conceptual mind becomes still, the wide-open awareness that remains can perceive the original and eternal purity of the non-dual nature of opposites. We must remember that to still the conceptual mind does not mean to hold it back but rather to enter the silence, which is its essential nature. This silence, which is empty of the motion of thought, is a wide-open radiant awareness. Thought is not to be despised for it is a necessary tool to latter interpret and express the experience. But for the realization of

the essential nature of consciousness thought takes no part. It is a mistake to think that awareness and thought are synonymous terms. Awareness continues even when thought is silent. Stop thinking for a moment and observe. Awareness can perceive the thoughts of the conceptual mind but the thought cannot perceive awareness. The purpose of Raja Yoga is to still the conceptual mind so that the original primordial mind that remains, which is awareness without the thoughts and without a sense of separate self, can operate clearly without distraction.

According to the Maitreya, the coming Buddha, the first four of the ten stages of enlightenment are:

- 1) Realization and identification with one's true nature, which is universal and divine.
- 2) Realization of the non-duality of opposites.
- 3) Spiritual freedom. Freedom from the limitations of ignorance, desire, and outside conditioning.
- 4) Identification with the Buddha-nature within all beings.⁵

The "Buddha-nature" is the spiritual essence within all beings, our true nature, higher Self, Atma, the Christ within. Such a nature is universal, impersonal, and not separate from the essence from Life in all beings.

One of the obstacles to following the spiritual path is the subconscious fear that by uniting with the One we will lose our identity, our individuality and will. The fear of losing one's individuality has even caused some to turn against the Light and to move further into isolation. The Teacher says; "To presume that individuality is safeguarded by disunity is the logic of darkness."⁶ "Identity remains," says Master Djwhal Khul, "even in nirvana."⁷ What is lost is our sense of separateness; what is lost (or transcended) is a personality based entirely upon the false assumptions that arise from believing that we lead a separate isolated existence. To merge with the universal does not mean homogenization. Rather it means a wisely and diversely expressed creativeness within the framework of unity, cooperation and com-

plete interrelatedness. *Kaivalya* (isolated unity), the goal of the Raja Yoga, is the realization of our identity, our unity with the All, while at the same time manifesting an individual expression.

Abu Bakr Siraj Ed-Din in his Sufi classic, *The Book of Certainty*, writes of the death of the self as a spiritual experience.

That which is taken away by extinction is restored in Eternity according to the Infinite measure of Its Real Self. The different beings are extinguished in the Truth as different colors that are reabsorbed into the principal whiteness of light. Yet, as it were, on the other side of the Whiteness are the True Colors. Each incomparably more distinct in the Eternal Splendor of Its Reality, as revealed in the Light of the Whiteness, than ever it was in its illusory self; and yet at the same time there is no duality, no otherness.⁸

As we strive to unite our consciousness with the higher planes of spiritual awareness, an invisible thread of light is created as a link between the pilgrim in the body and the seed of his spirit on a much higher plane. Technically, this link is called the Antahkarana. Along this luminous pathway inspiration, insight and love divine descend into the consciousness. As we become proficient in the use of this bridge to our higher nature and the higher worlds, we gain subtle indications of the fiery Impulse moving us, and all life, toward the Great Perfection. In the ancient Hindu scriptures the term “Antahkarana” is defined as the field of consciousness that includes *Buddhi* (spiritual intuition), *Ahamkara*⁹ (a sense of self), and *Manas* (mind).

In the *Brahma Sutra* it is said that “the only difference between Brahman (God) and a *jiva* (human being), is the development of the antahkarana.” The Antakarana is the connecting link between the spiritual consciousness and the personality consciousness. When these two aspects of the consciousness are fully linked through the great unifying energy of the heart, union with the supreme is attained.

The same principle can be applied horizontally as well as vertically. For example, to the clairvoyant eye a bridge of light energy is created

whenever we open our hearts to another. Much is exchanged between people with heart; in fact this interchange of psychic energy is the basis of brotherhood and telepathy. This thread of fiery heart energy also serves as the connecting link between the spiritual teacher and the student, and explains how the teacher's guidance can become internal through an overlap in consciousness. When the Teacher says, “the beauty of service is contained in the blending of consciousness,”¹⁰ a close cooperation between student and the mind and purpose of the Teacher is indicated.

The best teacher will always emphasize the need for self reliance and independent thinking, will always underline the need to learn from experience and one's perception of the truth. Having a teacher and learning from experience, therefore, are not contradictory concepts. Both are necessary.

The Teacher has said, “Some people must memorize useful counsels, whereas others know the fundamentals of life in their hearts; both kinds need a teacher.”¹¹ No one, say Tibetan Buddhists, has ever attained illumination alone. Even the Buddha, they tell us, was guided through the stages of enlightenment by the Thagatha Buddhas or “Buddhas of the Ten Directions.”

Rather than looking for the truth from others, perhaps we can search directly into the questions of life for ourselves. In this suggestion is embodied the Aquarian ideal of independent thinking. The direct perception of higher truth is attained through the unifying properties of an open heart. With an elevated consciousness, we can begin to perceive truths directly. Blind belief, as well as blind disbelief, which is just as deadly, is then transcended and we begin to realize that we have always had the innate potential to understand the truth behind appearances. The best teachings elevate the consciousness in such a way that students are able to transcend the need for an outside authority. “I hold it true,” says Albert Einstein, “that pure thought can grasp reality, just as the ancients claimed.” And as “Socrates rightly observes,” writes Proclus, “the soul upon delving within

herself can perceive all things, even unto deity itself.”¹²

There is a significant difference between belief and faith. Belief is blind. Faith is a conviction, based upon internal evidence that cannot be proved or demonstrated. Belief is usually the acceptance or rejection of someone else's truth. Through belief inflexible religious dogmas are formed. Most wars are fought over conflicting beliefs, religious or ideological. Belief is an emotion based upon desire. Faith is a conviction of the heart. Faith is the beginning of straight knowledge, which is freedom from blind belief.

Unlike materialistic truths that must be physically demonstrated before they can be accepted, metaphysical truth can and must be verified in one's own consciousness. A good spiritual teacher is one who can awaken in students an awareness of a spiritual truth from within themselves. In the ancient Mysteries this awareness was often invoked as a subtle memory. Sufism, for example, which arose, we are told, from the original Persian Mysteries, still speaks of the awareness of higher truth as a “remembrance.”

Rudolf Steiner, an initiate of remarkable clairvoyant abilities, said that only those truths which we have realized for ourselves can be taken with us into the subtle world when the body dies. Second-hand information lives only in the brain, and therefore may pass away to some extent with the body. When we perceive the veracity of something, when we have truly made it our own, through experience or through pondering the words of a teacher, the awareness goes deeper than mental impressions stored in the brain, it becomes an integral part of our spiritual body. This is also true of strong emotions which contin-

ue on in our emotional/desire body. Only those qualities that we have truly made our own, for good or ill, can be taken with us from life to life.

As the Master Djwhal Khul says, “Only that which is the result of self-effort, of hard struggle and of bitter experience, is of lasting value... Only that which we know for ourselves becomes inherent faculty. The statements of a

teacher, no matter how profoundly wise he may be, are but mental concepts until experimentally part of a man's life.”¹³

These perceptions transcend the rational mind completely. The rational mind rightly divides and separates everything into parts, while the illuminated heart consciousness perceives directly in terms of unity or the whole. The perceptions of an illuminated consciousness transcend all outside conditioning. This in-

cludes the fixed forms of religious and ideological thinking. Eventually the disciple must rise above the forms of religious dogma before he or she can perceive the truth directly without bias or predetermined ideas. When the great Zen Master Wu-Men says to “Kill the Buddha” he is instructing his students to kill out the outside conditioning of religion, to look directly into the original face of the truth that does not change.

The perceptions of an illuminated consciousness include the realization of selflessness, not as an attitude that we must develop, but rather as a higher truth that we must realize. The term “self” usually means an isolated or separate identity. Remove the isolation and the pure selfless nature of our true identity is realized, or as Plotinus stated it “to become one with the essence of everything while yet remaining wholly yourself.”

Thought is not to be despised for it is a necessary tool to latter interpret and express the experience. But for the realization of the essential nature of consciousness thought takes no part. It is a mistake to think that awareness and thought are synonymous terms. Awareness continues even when thought is silent.

Before enlightenment human beings are fragmented in their awareness. This separation of the different aspects of consciousness, higher and lower, gives rise to the idea of a higher and lower self. Illumination bridges the gap between the definite breaks in consciousness.

An illuminated consciousness also realizes the synthesis of all that is beautiful. It clearly perceives the essential nature and meaning of beauty. The reason great joy always accompanies illumination is because the truth that is perceived is so beautiful! But Illumination does not change anything. There is just as much truth before as after.

An illuminated consciousness realizes that love and wisdom are the two sides of the one heart essence. It realizes its unity and identity with the spiritual essence within all beings. The perceptions of an illuminated consciousness include the essential oneness of the universe, which is not the subtotal of the parts, but rather the essential unity behind the manifestation of the parts.

An illuminated consciousness perceives no separation between the one who sees, the act of seeing, and that which is seen. It perceives the inner meaning of the Law of Attraction, the divine Impulse to evolve spiritually. It is the result of divine Heart Energy as a magnetic attractive force, drawing those who can respond to it to ever higher, more refined levels of consciousness and being.

Illumination always descends from above. It cannot be created or figured out from below. It can't be created because it exists already. It can't be figured out because it transcends the rational mind. Illumination is at first a kind of spiritual telepathy, not from an outside source, but from the universal essence of being within us all. Enlightenment begins with contact and ends with unity. Illumination dissolves the Great Illusion, which falsely perceives the universe as an external phenomena, which is but a reflection, a movie projecting internal events on the screen of the mass mind.

It is said that sages renounce the world in order to perceive the truth of Spirit. But it is not the

world which they renounce so much as its effects and conditioning. What they renounce is materialism, the false religion of form. Materialism is false because it sees only the form, the effect, and not the cause, the original archetypal impulse, behind it. If we hold too strongly to the form, however fine and true that form may be, perceiving the fundamental truths behind it becomes difficult.

The intuitive heart consciousness perceives the truth behind the appearance of forms. It perceives the formless world, of which the world of form is but a reflection. For this reason words, which are of the form world, cannot really describe it. Illumination transcends organized religious forms, which are so often dogmatized, crystallized and devoid of spirit.

The spiritual Path is never confined to any one teaching or religion. The best teachers will guide the students so that they may transcend the forms in which the truth is presented and see directly. It is an error to mistake the form or image for the spirit it is attempting to represent, or to use the Zen analogy, "to mistake the finger pointing at the moon for the moon itself."¹⁴ Memorizing the words of the scriptures may be useful but can never take the place of direct perception. For the rational mind it is easier to understand the letter of the law than the spirit of the law. Importantly, we strive to understand the truth of teachings other than our own. In this way we can avoid the trap of sectarianism, fanaticism and limiting dogma.

It is difficult for people to accept the fact that all world religions have a common spiritual source. And while the forms and details may differ depending upon the need, culture, and time period, essentially they are all attempting to express, in their own way, the same transcendental experience of the heart. "All religions, art and sciences," says Albert Einstein, "are branches of the same tree." Some emphasize the active compassionate side of the heart experience, while others seek more the wisdom of the heart. An artist who expresses beauty is also responding to the divine fiery impulse of the heart.

The fire of the heart is not a symbolic or poetic abstraction. It is a very subtle energy. And

while we may not yet be able to measure this energy with physical instruments, we can feel its warmth and see its effects. When the fire of the heart is strong we feel a great and powerful joy. Eventually this joy becomes a continuous expression of our essential nature. This is the “exaltation of the saints” and the “divine intoxication” spoken of in the scriptures. It is particularly noticeable during unselfish prayer or sincere communion with the divine. When the fire of the heart first begins to make its presence felt, and we begin to feel that unmistakable sense of well-being and joy, we often feel a rush of pride in our accomplishment. This causes the joy to wane.

Sometimes in the beginning, when there is a danger of unstable intoxication, it is necessary to calm and stabilize these feeling currents. This can be done without any loss of intensity. In fact the greater the emotional calm the greater the intensity of the inner fire. When the emotional currents have been stabilized the psychic energy becomes less an erratic flaming and more an electric fire of high intensity. This involves an easy non-attachment, without any feelings of pride or self-love. “The calm of the yogi,” says the Teacher, “is as the tension of an ocean wave.”

Rudolf Steiner said that it is impossible for us while still in the body to look upon our good qualities without some trace of egotism, pride and self-love and that it is only when freed from the body that these separative emotions can be eliminated completely. William Shakespeare in his 62th Sonnet says:

The sin of self-love possesseth all mine eye,
And all my soul and all my every part.
And for this sin there is no remedy,
It is so grounded inward in my heart.¹⁵

Spiritual achievement is precisely the overcoming of this so-called impossibility!

The popular mantra of “love-yourself,” is deadly for it disguises the true nature of love, which is devoid of self. In the evolution of self-love is the lowest kind of love, and while it was a necessary first step for primitive humanity, we must now leave it behind. In the evolution of the great love principle we move

from self-love to a love of one’s mate, children and friends. And as we consciously enter the Path love expands to include one’s coworkers, humanity and eventually all beings everywhere. Master D.K. has said that the awakening of the heart center never pertains to oneself but only to others.

An interesting analogy exists between the life of a human being on the physical plane and the life of skin cells on the surface of the body. The skin cells are dependent upon nourishment of the blood from the heart, as well as upon the removal of impurities through this same lifeline to the heart and lungs. If the connecting link between the cells and the source of their life is not strong, disease is the result. The same is true for a human living on the physical plane, the outer surface of the universe. If our lifeline with Spirit is weak, then disease is the result. If humanity continues to turn away from the source of its being, it cannot survive for long. Thus it is important, even vitally necessary, that we turn our thoughts and our hearts to the Source of our Being; that we invoke the Spiritual Light of that Source into the life and consciousness of humanity. “Verily,” says the Teacher, “only union with the Source of Light moves the spirit onward.”¹⁶

Our connecting link with the Source is the spiritual Hierarchy, those enlightened Beings who have for uncounted centuries invisibly guided the spiritual evolution of the world without interfering with humanity’s free will or karma. They have been called Bodhisattvas, Christ and his Church, Sons of Resurrection, Rishis, Gods, Immortals, Masters of Wisdom, Heroes, Children of the Sun, and so on. In the same way that the Soul, the Atman, the Buddha-nature, is the spiritual heart essence for the individual, so the Hierarchy is the spiritual heart essence for humanity. By thinking about them with respect we strengthen our connection with the spiritual world of which they are a part. “The most wondrous fire,” says the Teacher, “is the flame of the heart saturated with love for Hierarchy.”

One of the fundamental principles of life is contained in the phrase “unity in diversity.” This law of unity manifesting as a multitude of diverse parts holds true for all whole and living

systems on all levels. The human body, for example, is a single entity, manifesting as a complex hierarchy of interrelated and interdependent lesser entities.

We see human beings as individuals and rarely view humanity itself as the essential unity it is. On the other hand we are so used to thinking of God as a single unit that we often fail to perceive the truth that God manifests as a plurality, a complete hierarchy of individual yet united spiritual beings.

In the coming New World the “God idea” will be greatly expanded so that it will more closely reflect reality, so that it will be in keeping with the present and future discoveries of science, and so that it will embrace both the unity and the infinite multiplicity of divine beings.

Over the past twenty-five centuries many illuminated seers have given prophecies concerning humanity and the present time. And though these prophecies stem from widely differing cultures, religions, and time periods a common thread unite them all. The following three points are often emphasized:

1. A great transformation of the earth is fast approaching, one that will usher in a New World in line with new spiritual principles.
2. The “old world,” based upon materialism, must, to some extent, pass away. This will constitute a “fiery purification,” which will be difficult due to humanity’s resistance against it.
3. A great World Savior will appear to sound the keynote of the coming age

According to the prophecies of ancient India, the darkest hour will be just before the dawn of the golden age of truth (*Satyayuga*). The *Vishnu Paraná* says that at that time true spiritual teachers will be hard to find and that false teachers will be found in large numbers selling their teachings in the market place. The great Sufi mystic, Hazarat Inyat Khan, has given us a fairly accurate way to determine false teachers: They are the ones beating the drum. “Do not listen to one,” says the Teacher, “who charges for his teachings.”¹⁷

These teachings go on to say that:

From the small to the great humanity perverts all truth... Therefore fiery purification becomes lawfully... A great preparation for a world change is taking place, one in which the Fiery Forces participate. Thus all the principles of the fiery laws will be given to humanity as a final touchstone... Thus we are prepared for the Great Hour.¹⁸

The decline of the earthly garden is dangerous . . . People have destroyed the resources of the earth without mercy. They have poisoned the earth and air. They have laid waste the forests, those storehouses of prana. They have decimated animal life . . . They believe that untried chemical compounds can take the place of prana and earthly emanations. They plunder the natural resources, unmindful that the balance must be maintained. They do not ponder the catastrophe of Atlantis . . . ‘How can we best serve on Earth to effect the utmost benefit at present?’ One must restore the health of Earth.¹⁹

The impulse behind spiritual evolution is toward integration, unity. That which resists this impulse moves toward disintegration, disunity. This is natural law. As humanity gains the power to resist its own destiny, its own spiritual evolution, it also embraces the possibility of its own destruction. The same law that compels nature to destroy those organisms that either deviates from, or can no longer adequately express the unfolding patterns of evolution, also applies to humanity. “There are no words in human language,” says the Teacher, “that can warn people sufficiently against self-destruction, the destruction of the planet, or the pollution of space.”²⁰ “The date approaches and those who have not learned to swim must swallow their fill of the brine.”²¹

¹ This center in the brain (the Chamber of Brahman) is thought to be the dwelling place of the soul and serves as the opening by which the soul can escape. The Sahasrara Chakra lies above this so called “hole” or “cave” in the brain.

² See *Reading the Pictures of the Apocalypse* by Rudolf Steiner. This lecture is available online at:

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- http://wn.rsarchive.org/Lectures/ReadApoc/ReApoc_index.html.
- ³ *Fiery World III* (reprint 1935; New York: The Agni Yoga Society, 1980), 207. Note: All of the Agni Yoga Society Books are available at: www.agniyoga.org/ay_downloads.html.
- ⁴ Anuttarayoga Tantra is translated as the “Unexcelled Yoga Tantra” or “Highest Yoga Tantra,” in Tibetan Buddhism in the categorization of esoteric tantric Indian Buddhist texts that constitute part of the *Kangyur*, or the “translated words of the Buddha” in the Tibetan Buddhist canon.
- ⁵ See *Maitreya: The Heart Essence of the Great Perfection* edited by Dorje Jinpa (Ashland, OR: Pentarba Publications).
- ⁶ *Fiery World I* (reprint 1931; New York: The Agni Yoga Society, 1980), 234.
- ⁷ Alice A. Bailey, *A Treatise on Cosmic Fire* (Reprint: 1925; New York: Lucis Trust, 1973), 52.
- ⁸ *Ibid.*, 18.
- ⁹ John Grimes, *A Concise Dictionary of Indian Philosophy* (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 1996), 37.
- ¹⁰ *Hierarchy* (reprint 1931; New York: The Agni Yoga Society, 1981), 128.
- ¹¹ *Fiery World I*, 51.
- ¹² Proclus, “On the Theology of Plato, Book I,” as quoted by Manly P. Hall in the *Secret Teachings of all Ages* (Radford, VA: A & D Publishing, 2007), 75.
- ¹³ Alice A. Bailey, *Letters on Occult Meditation* (Reprint 1922; New York: Lucis Trust, 19197), 60.
- ¹⁴ Lu K’uan Yu, *The Surangama Sutra* (Trans, Charles Luk; London: Rider, 1966), 31.
- ¹⁵ William Shakespeare, *The Complete Works of William Shakespeare*, Sonnet LXII, <http://shakespeare.mit.edu/> (accessed May 3, 2011).
- ¹⁶ *Hierarchy*, 180.
- ¹⁷ Also see *Agni Yoga* (reprint 1929; New York: Agni Yoga Society, 1997), 404.
- ¹⁸ *Fiery World III* (reprint 1935; New York: Agni Yoga Society, 1980), 152.
- ¹⁹ *Fiery World I*, 631- 630,
- ²⁰ *Infinity I* (Reprint 1930; New York: The Agni Yoga Society, 1980), 166.
- ²¹ *Agni Yoga*, 47.