

The Spiritual Quest

The struggle to know who I am, in truth and spirit is the spiritual quest. The movement in myself from the mask to the face, from the personality to the person, from the performing actor to the ruler of the inner chamber, is the spiritual journey. To live, work, and suffer on this shore in faithfulness to the whispers from the other shore is spiritual life. To keep the flame of spiritual yearning alive is to be radically open to the present and to refuse to settle for comforting religious dogma, philosophic certainties, and social sanctions.

Who am I? Am I Judas, am I Jesus? Out of fear and out of desire, I betray myself. I am who I am not. I cover my face with many masks, and even become the masks. I am too busy performing who I think I am to know who I really am. I am afraid: I may be nothing other than what I appear to be. There may be no face behind the mask, so I decorate and protect my mask preferring a fanciful something over a real nothing.

I cling to the herd for comfort. Together we weave varied garments to cover our nakedness. We guard the secret of our nothingness with anxious agility lest we should be discovered. Occasionally, I hear a voice uttered in some dark recess of myself. Sometimes it is the soft sobbing of a lonely child. At other times, it is the anguished cry of a witnessing conscience. At yet other times, it is the thundering command of a king. "Who are you?" I ask. I AM.

What am I asking when I ask "Who am I?" What sort of answer would be acceptable? Do I want a chart of my genealogical and social relations? A list of my racial and biological characteristics? A catalogue of my psychological features-my likes and dislikes, desires and fears? These are all the things that shape my personality. But whose personality is it? Who wears this mask? In response to a little knock at the door of my consciousness, I ask "Who is it?" No naming is sufficient. What I seek is to see and touch the face of the one who calls.

"Who am I?" does not ask for an enumeration of scientific facts: it expresses a certain restlessness, groping, and exploration. It is the beginning of a movement towards light, towards seeing things clearly, as a whole. It is the refusal to remain in the dark-fragmented and on the surface of myself. It is a state of searching for meaning, comprehensiveness, and depth. It is the desire to wake up.

Soon I betray this impulse and am lulled back to sleep by comforting caresses and fairy tales. I sleep, dreaming of great adventures and of quests for hidden treasures. I dream of many journeys, many peaks, and of lions guarding the mountain passes. Sometimes for a moment I wake up to find myself a prisoner of what I know and what I am. Even finding the door of my little prison open, I stay in it, afraid to leave, counting and recounting my possessions and my testimonials.

I share many walls with others. With vigour and imagination, I collaborate with others in building castles of science, art, philosophy, and religion in which we may rest secure, unmindful of our ignorance of who we are, why we are here, and why we do what we do. But the silent witness inside me asks “What do you seek?”

Awakening

All spiritual traditions thus diagnose the human condition: we are asleep and our life, our ambitions, our fears, and our activities are governed by vast forces outside of our will or control. With instruction, grace, and effort, we can wake up, see our situation as it is, and begin to listen to our inner voice.

Gurdjieff tells an Eastern tale about a very rich and mean magician who had a great many sheep. He did not want to hire any shepherds nor erect fences around the pastures where the sheep grazed, although often the sheep wandered away into the forest and were lost and some of them ran away, for they knew that the magician wanted their flesh and skins. At last the magician thought of a remedy. He hypnotized his sheep and suggested to them that no harm would come to them because they were immortal. Moreover, he suggested that the magician was a good master who would do anything for his flock and that even if anything were to happen to them it certainly would not be just then and they need not worry about it.

Furthermore, the magician suggested to his sheep that they were not sheep at all: to some he suggested that they were lions, to others that they were eagles, to others that they were men, and to some that they were magicians like himself. Under the influence of hypnotism the sheep believed the magician, who could now rest without care and worry. The sheep never ran away again and quietly awaited the time when the magician would require their flesh and skins. Meanwhile, they grazed happily on the prescribed pasture without needing either shepherds or fences.¹

Thus we quietly wait, telling each other our conjectures about the wonderful past or the glorious future, our free will or immortality, our loving Father or the great Teacher, the nature of the electron or the rotation of the galaxy—all in a hypnotic sleep, rarely recognizing the real terror of our human situation.

We discover the dream nature of our ordinary existence only when a shock momentarily wakes us up. When we come to, we realize we were sleeping; but soon the soporific forces lull us to sleep again. Most of our life is lived in dreaming, daydreaming or wake-dreaming, and we see the world through a glass darkly: this is the Vedantist's experience of the thralldom of illusion or *maya*. It is only by lifting this veil of *maya* that one can become awake, *buddha*. If we open our eyes, we see that in our ordinary existence we are estranged from our real self and that we live in a fallen state. We are sinful because we have missed the mark; we experience suffering, *dukkha*, out of ignorance. We are not what we truly are; having forgotten ourselves, we have mistaken our identity.

A nineteenth century Indian saint, Ramakrishna, told a story about a tigress who attacked a flock of goats. Shot by a hunter just as she sprang on her prey, the tigress gave birth to a cub and died. The cub grew up in the company of the goats. Following their example, it started eating grass and bleating like them, even when it grew to be a big tiger.

One day another tiger attacked the flock and was amazed to see a grasseating tiger in the flock. When the wild tiger caught up to the grasseating tiger, the latter began to bleat. The wild tiger dragged the other to the water and asked it to look at its face in the water and see that it was identical to that of the wild tiger.²

The wild one gave a little meat to the bleating tiger, who had difficulty eating it. Gradually, however, the grasseating tiger got to know the taste of blood, and came to relish the meat. Then the wild tiger said: "Now you see there is no difference between you and me; come along and follow me into the forest."³

We can well imagine the jungle reverberating sound of the two free tigers roaring! We have forgotten our face, our wild roar, and we bleat-as if we were goats. When we remember ourselves, it is like the prodigal son when he came to himself. This our brother "was dead and is alive again, was lost and is found" (Luke 15:24). Miserable though we may be, we can come alive; we can reorient ourselves and undergo a radical transformation. With effort knowledge, and guidance, one can become what one is, "Son of the Most High," partaker of divine nature, and a child of God (Psalm 82:6; II Peter 1:4; I John 3:12).

When one begins to wake up, one realizes the inner conflict between two poles of oneself: darkness and light, the lower self and the higher self (Plotinus), the little I (*ahamkara*) and the real I (*Atman*) of the *Upanishads*, the world and God (John), and flesh and Spirit (St. Paul). And this battle is waged in the psyche of human beings. The mind is the battleground of the Bhagavad Gita or as the Maitri Upanishad (6.34:11) says, "Mind, in truth, is the cause of bondage and of liberation." Upward and downward tendencies take hold of us periodically; in turn we affirm and deny our deeper selves. In this cosmic play of vast forces, we squirm like a fish on a hook.

The Ego

Central to spiritual life, both in the East and in the West, is the requirement to surrender the ego. Christ said, "If anyone wishes to be a follower of mine, he must leave self behind" (Matthew 16:24). This is essential - not beliefs, churches, rituals, or doctrines. The second birth is only possible after the displacement of the ego from the center of oneself. One of the main purposes of asceticism, esoteric traditions, and spiritual practices is to help a person see the fact that by oneself, as one is, one is nothing. Then one may be able to surrender the ego to the higher will and be reborn in the Spirit. "In my end is my beginning" (T.S. Eliot, *Four Quartets*) or as a Hasidic saying has it, "There is no room for God in one who is full of oneself."

What then is the ego? At the base of all our activities, there is some anxiety - physical, social, or metaphysical. Our minds are never quiet; constant scheming, calculating, and worrying produces the incoherent sounds of our internal talking machine. The roots of this universal anxiety are the desire to be something, to become somebody, to claim that one is somebody, and the accompanying fear of the failure of this claim. Corresponding to these, there are inner and outer postures and roles that we imagine for ourselves or we acquire from our conditioning. Then we identify ourselves by these roles. The constellation of these postures, pretensions, desires, fears - conflicting and changing - is the ego.

Whatever in me hankers for acquisition, possession, and recognition, demanding *my* comfort, claiming *my* success, prestige, wealth and power, is my ego. We use a single word, but in reality, at the level of the ego, there is nothing permanent or constant, only confused and dispersed multiplicity-like a whole army of drunken monkeys in frenzied agitation, running helter-skelter without direction, aim, or will.

All the actions of the ego are anxiety ridden. Siddhartha the Buddha expressed it simply, as one of his four Noble Truths: the cause of sorrow, *dukkha*, is selfish craving, *tanha*. Our selfwill, nourished by our craving, attempts to fashion the world according to our egointerest. This absurd enterprise is bound to fail and our self-will suffers. It is this self-will, this ego, which we need to be free of in order to be prepared for another life. Indeed “nothing burneth in hell except self-will” (*Theologia Germanica*, chapter 34).

Selfwill and selfinterest dominate our lives and turn the world into a huge bazaar where we are all shouting at the top of our voices to attract attention and to make our little bargains. Christ said “my kingdom is not of this world” (John 18:36) for anything of this world, belonging to the web of ego, is opposed to the life of the Spirit. “Anyone who loves the world is a stranger to the Father’s love” (James 4:4 and I John 2:15).

This is not to say that we should stop living in the world and commit suicide, or that we should somehow put up with the world until we die. Rather, it is a matter of basic orientation: it is not the world but our worldliness that opposes the Spirit. Christ prayed for his disciples, “I pray thee not to take them out of the world, but to keep them from the evil one” (John 17:15). It is the evil one who tempts us into selfishness. But in the life of a spiritual person, a sense of supraworldliness pervades every act, transforming everything. When one is not driven by craving and is not under the sway of the world, one can operate under different laws, taking direction from inside. Then the most ordinary human activity becomes a sacrament and an act of worship. Action is then pure, simple, and in the present-without anxiety, which always concerns the past or future.

A Zen monk asked his master, “In order to work in the Tao, is there a special way?”

The Master replied “Yes, there is one.”

“Which is it?”

“When one is hungry, one eats: when one is tired, one sleeps.”

“That is what everybody does; is their way the same as yours.”

“It is not the same.”

“Why not?”

“When they eat they do not only eat, they weave all sorts of imaginings. When they sleep, they give rein to a thousand idle thoughts. That is why their way is not my way.”

As we are, without bearings, our ego interest does not accord with the longing of our deeper self. We do not seek the inner kingdom above all else. In the reversal of the true order, we primarily strive for the dominion of the world. If necessary, we even deny and sacrifice the higher for the lower, but “What will a man gain by winning the whole world, at the cost of his true self?” (Matthew 16:26). It is the false self, the ego, which is obsessed with winning the world. This ego is what we must overcome in order to be “born again ... of the Spirit” (John 3:78).

Conquest of the ego is indeed victory over the artificial psychic world of our own making which we inhabit and which keeps us burdened and weighed down. Those who have overcome the world are from above and are not of this world; then living in the world these ones are not driven by worldly desires or ambitions. They do what is demanded of them from above, not for their personal satisfaction or glory.

The distinctive features of egoism are *Inness*, sundered from the rest of the universe, and *myness*. These are the very core and substance of it and it is by these that one "binds oneself with the self like a bird in a snare" (Maitri Upanishad 3:2). These are the nuclei around which everything of the world revolves. A person of the world says: "I do this, I own that." Such a one is self-centered even when doing good works in the service of others. As long as any activity-praying, meditating, almsgiving-is controlled by one's I, it is a selfish activity.

This have I gained today, this whim I'll satisfy, this wealth is mine and much more too will be mine as time goes on. He was an enemy of mine, I've killed him, and many another too I'll kill. I'm master here. I take my pleasure as I will; I'm strong and happy and successful. I'm rich and of good family. Who else can match himself with me? I'll sacrifice and I'll give alms: why not? I'll have a marvelous time! So speak fools deluded in their ignorance. (Bhagavad Gita 16:13-15)

Selfless acts are done only by those who are not under the sway of their ego, who do not act by themselves or for their own self-advancement - on earth or in heaven. Those who are free of the hold of the ego respond to an inner demand which may or may not allow for their own convenience. "I do nothing of myself... I seek not mine own glory... I am not myself the source of the words I speak to you: it is the Father who dwells in me doing his own work" (John 8:28; 8:50; 14:10).

Thus there are two ways of acting: in the first, the self is the initiator, and in the other the self is an instrument which does the bidding of a higher will. The struggle between these two tendencies is the conflict between the profane and the sacred, our two natures. A great deal of confusion results from the fact that in either case-whether self is the author or a tool-language is used and acts are done by and through aspects of ourselves. We tend to consider only the immediate appearance and identify ourselves completely with the ego which usurps for itself the rights of authorship. Thus we live for ourselves alone, estranged from the person behind the mask of our personality. For us, Self-realization becomes myself-realization; the demon of *mine* does not leave us.

What is usually called individualism is totally opposed, in its essence, to the spiritual point of view.⁴ The same is true of the modern, post Renaissance humanism which regards the meaning and end of a given human life in terms of the individual and the fulfillment, glory or salvation of the particular person. Ultimately, from this point of view, the person is responsible to themselves, to their isolated, nuclear ego, sundered from the cosmos. Thus the individualistic modern person is vehemently self-centered, devoted to self-expression and self-fulfillment, acknowledging no higher authority. This is precisely the self which Christ said must be denied in order to follow him. In a truer individualism, one is responsible for the nourishing and emergence of the deeper Self within. This Self, however, cannot be controlled and manipulated by us. We may, in our stillness, allow it room; only then may we hear and obey It.

The Sanskrit word for ego is *ahamkara* which literally means “I am the doer.” This word clearly expresses the egoistic point of view which according to the *Bhagavad Gita* (3:27-28) can be maintained only in ignorance: “Every action (*karma*) is really performed by *Prakriti’s gunas* (Nature’s constituents). One who is deluded by ego thinks “I am the doer.” But those who have the true insight into the operations of the *gunas* and their various functions knows that *gunas* act on *gunas*, and remain unattached to their actions.” Everything that we see or sense, including our bodies and our psychic functions, are products of the play of forces of nature. The essence of egotism is for us to think that we are the maker of ourselves and of our destiny. Fooled by ignorance, we think we run the show, like the tribe whose members believe that the sun rises only because of their daily prayers. We are like kittens convinced that the doors open by the force of our mewling.

There is a Hasidic saying that the proud are reborn as bees, for in their heart the proud say, “I am a writer, I am a singer, I am a great one at studying.” What is said of such people is true-that they will not turn to God, not even on the threshold of hell. Therefore, they are reborn after they die. They are born again as bees that hum and buzz, “I am, I am, I am.”⁵

According to a simile used in the *Katha Upanishad* (1.3:34), the human body is like a chariot whose steeds are the senses; mind or discursive intellect (*manas*), the reins; soul or contemplative intellect (*buddhi*), the charioteer; and the Self (*Atman*), the owner of the chariot. *Buddhi* is the integrated intelligence which stands between the human mind and the Spirit between what is below and what is above, between the individual and the cosmos.⁶ It is the will that can orient a human being towards the light of the Spirit and give direction to the mind and the senses. On the other hand, if the senses get unruly, like the steeds of a chariot, they affect the mind, which in turn leads to dissipation and fragmentation of the *buddhi*. The *buddhi* has an amphibious character. It can dive into and stay in the lower world of matter, or it can soar into the higher realms of the Spirit. In the first case, a person is led into conflicting desires, illusion, and darkness. That is sin; that is what causes sorrow. In the other case, there is the possibility of movement towards light towards understanding, integration, and unity.

Mind (*manas*) and the integrated intelligence (*buddhi*) both belong to our psyche and, along with our body, are the determinants of our individuality which, with effort and help, can serve a higher purpose. Belonging to our material nature, they represent our particularity - the specific collocation of forces and the peculiar combination that distinguishes each one of us from others. This is the field of individual deeds, memories, and thoughts; this is the realm of space, time, and causation; this is the arena of human efforts and knowledge. This is where we can purify ourselves, orient ourselves upward, and make ourselves available. One can attend to one’s nets and lay them judiciously; then one must wait patiently, in readiness for what may come.

When one’s lips have been cleansed with “a glowing coal,” a call may be heard, “Whom shall I send? Who will go for me?” One may then, if one has the courage, become an instrument, a prophet, and say like Isaiah, “Here am I; send me” (Isaiah 6:6-9).

As we are, we are unable to see, hear, or understand higher reality, for we live in a state of self-preoccupation. If we recognize our situation, we can begin to be open to what is. We have to prepare ourselves to see and to hear-and to be there when we are called. We can do the divine will when we do not do our own. We have a right ordering within ourselves when we can say like St. Paul, “I live, yet no longer I, but Christ liveth in me” (Galatians 2:20).

Surrendering the Ego

Every spiritual tradition recognizes and attempts to reconcile a deepseated duality in human nature.⁷ There is the lower self, the separated ego, enmeshed in the world, arrogating to itself the total identity of the person, in conflict with the Spirit. As long as we remain under its sway, we are “estranged from God” (Colossians 1: 21) and in sorrow. It is, however, possible for us to repent and come to our right mind,⁸ to reorient ourselves radically and to allow ourselves to be led by the Spirit. Only then can an inner reconciliation take place. In a dialogue written by Jacob Boehme, we find a very suggestive metaphor:

Disciple: ... Oh how may I arrive at the unity of will, and how come into the unity of vision?

Master: .. Mark now what I say; The Right Eye looks in you into eternity. The Left Eye looks backward in you into time. If now you suffer yourself to be always looking into nature, and the things of time, it will be impossible for you ever to arrive at the unity you wish for. Remember this; and be on your guard. Give not your mind leave to enter in, nor to fill itself with, that which is without you; neither look backward upon yourself... Let not your Left Eye deceive you, by making continually one representation after another, and stirring up thereby an earnest longing in the selfpropriety; but let your Right Eye command back this Left... And only bringing the Eye of Time into the Eye of Eternity... and descending through the Light of God into the Light of Nature... will you arrive at the Unity of Vision or Uniformity of Will.⁹

The power of “nature and the things of time” is clearly great and our assertive ego, supported by all the worldly forces, proclaims itself. Surrendering the ego begins to appear as suicidal and disastrous - contrary to our ideas about human development and success. We wish to deal with what is higher than us on our own terms. To us it seems that sages are beside themselves and not in their right minds for they behave as if they were dead to the world. But those who “possess the mind of Christ” feel that “the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God” (I Corinthians 2:16; 3:19). We have to be out of our worldly minds in order to be raised from the dead and made new in mind and spirit (Ephesians 4:22-24; 5:14). Only if we can leave our lower self behind, and be “crucified... to the world,” can we be born in the Spirit (Galatians 6:14). As the Maitri Upanishad (6.34:67) says, “The mind, it is said, is of two kinds, pure and impure, impure from contact with desire and pure when freed from desire. By freeing mind from sloth and distraction and making it motionless, when one attains to the state of nomindness, that is the last step.”¹⁰

When one is ended, is emptied out of self, one does not speak primarily as this or that person, with such-and-such a history. One does not speak then as a particular individual, for Selfrealization is not self-expression. The Self is not yet another acquisition or achievement, however sublime. It cannot be won, coerced or violated.

The Spirit is no more yours than mine; we cannot possess it. It is the Spirit that is the owner of the chariot. Leaves cannot lay claim to the wind. The Spirit is not private; it is supraindividual and supracultural. Those who are born of the Spirit do not proclaim themselves, for, as Plotinus says of a transformed person, “this man has now become another and is neither himself nor his own” (*Enneads* vi 9.10).

All that socially or culturally defines these individuals is no longer of much significance. They have become non-entities from a worldly point of view, their kingdom is elsewhere. The Buddha is “neither priest nor prince nor husbandman nor any one at all. I wander in the world a veritable naught ... useless to ask my kin.”¹¹ Like Melchizedek, he “has no father, no mother, no lineage; his years have no beginning, his life no end. He is like the Son of God: he remains a priest for all time” (Hebrews 7:3).

The kind of knowledge that can lead us to the Spirit has a transforming character; in the process we become different. In order to know what is higher than us, we have to *be* higher. In fact, being and knowing are so intimately connected that the Mundaka Upanishad (3.2:9) declares, "One who knows Brahman (Absolute) becomes Brahman." For Parmenides (*Diels*, Fr. 185) and Plotinus (*Enneads* vi. 9) "to be and to know are one and the same." Opening oneself to the Spirit is thus already a movement towards being born of the Spirit.

The liberated person, for whom the magical veil of *maya* is lifted, is no longer within the confines of space and time. One who knows the Spirit, who has become the Spirit, is no longer any particular one, for such a person is identified with the very essence of the universal. The Spirit may, however, manifest itself through a given body and mind-through an individual in spacetime-but that does not limit it.

The ocean may give rise to waves and be active through them, but it is not limited by them. Our ordinary consciousness is only a small window through which we look at reality; from the point of view of higher consciousness, our vision is unnecessarily restricted. If we widen our doors of perception, we can see, not as we do now, but more clearly. One who is awakened to the Spirit dwells both in time and in eternity; although in time, one is not restricted by it. Eternity is not something opposed to time, nor does it mean an infinite temporal duration, continuing on and on forever. No description exclusively in terms of time can be adequate for comprehending eternity, just as no combination of lines in two dimensions can produce a cube. In that sense, the eternal realm is timeless. What one needs is another dimension of consciousness. As long as we remain confined to our ordinary consciousness, we experience and move only in time, having only vague and occasional hints of eternity.

Men's curiosity searches past and future
And clings to that dimension. But to apprehend
The point of intersection of the timeless
With time, is an occupation for the saint
No occupation either, but something given
And taken, in a lifetime's death in love,
Ardour and selflessness and selfsurrender.

T. S. Eliot, "The Dry Salvages" in *Four Quartets*

In order to experience the timeless realm, one does not need to physically die; it is the reorientation of the ego that is necessary. When one is awakened, the tentacles of spacetime fall away, and one is timefreed (*kalavimukta*). Then one does not live in the past or in the future, but now, in the present, fully awake, radically open. Eternity contains time within it just as a cube includes a square. A consciousness viewing our temporal world from an eternal and universal point of view cannot be limited by our notions of linear sequence of time and causality or of threedimensional space. To it past and future events are as clearly comprehensible as the present ones; clearly visible are the objects far and near.

Yesterday I said something that would seem truly incredible. I said: Jerusalem is as near to my soul as the place where I am now standing. Yes, in all truth; what is even more than a thousand miles farther than Jerusalem is as near to my soul as my own body; and I am as sure of this as I am of being a man.

(Meister Eckhart)¹²

A person not confined by spacetime becomes a seer and a hearer—one who sees and hears subtle things clearly. Whatever is eternal is always present, without beginning or end in time. “If we take eternity to mean not infinite temporal duration but timelessness, then eternal life belongs to those who live in the present” (Ludwig Wittgenstein).¹³ Kierkegaard speaks of us being *contemporaneous* with the eternal, redemptive (though past) deed of Jesus Christ. The temporal order—past present and future—does not describe or delimit the eternal order. When one is liberated from time, one says with Aurobindo,

I have become what before time I was
A secret touch has quieted thought and sense:
All things by the agent mind created pass
Into a void and mute magnificence.¹⁴

Sages are all agreed that Spirit is beyond description, ineffable. Just as It is neither red nor non-red, It is neither one nor many, neither plenitude nor void, neither in time nor out of it, neither within nor without, neither this nor that. It is neither nothing nor everything. All categories of thought and description derive their existence and meaning from It and not It from them. It is not defined or exhausted by any formula or symbol whatever. “By what should one know that by which all this is known? By what...should one know the knower?” (Brihadaranyaka Upanishad II. 4:14). Thought, knowledge, and language all function in time and can at best comprehend and describe what is temporal, not what is spiritual and therefore eternal. Negligence of this fact is responsible for innumerable doctrinal disputes in religions and for the problems for religion which the philosophers pose. Like fools, we look at the finger which points to the far star and take hold of it as if it were the star.

In order to say anything at all about the distant star, sages have used various symbolic words, such as That, Brahman, God, YAHWEH, Allah, Suchness, Void, Absolute, Truth, Love, Nothing—all attempts to name the Nameless. So long as these remain only words, concepts and ideas, they are like dead coals without any flame.

At their core, however, they embody the force of volcanic eruptions; they stand for the “devouring fire” which one approaches only with fear and trembling (Deuteronomy 4:24) in order to sacrifice one’s ego. One who experiences the baptism under fire may emerge melted down and reshaped, not as oneself, but as the very Person, as Purusha, as the Child of God. One may rise from the dead to “mature manhood, measured by nothing less than the full stature of Christ” (Ephesians :13).

What are we—we who are drawn by divinity and held down by our selfish concerns, we who hear the call from the other shore and betray it? The movement from this shore to the other is the spiritual pilgrimage. Our life touches both shores, but out of ignorance and fear we cling to this shore which we imagine we know and where we feel secure and in control. We do not know what will become of us and what we might do if we let go of our usual worldly props. Lest we make fools of ourselves, we choose to stay in the familiar prison of our little egos, trying to strike bargains with the unknown, using coins of piety, good works, and learning. However, in spite of our great need for certainty, there just cannot be any guarantee of what will be revealed when we open ourselves and become vulnerable.

Endnotes for *The Spiritual Quest*

1. In P.D. Ouspensky, *In Search of the Miraculous--Fragments of an Unknown Teaching* (London: Routledge, Kegan Paul Ltd., 1957), p. 219.
2. *The Gospel of Shri Ramakrishna*, Translated with an introduction by Swami Nikhilananda (Madras: Mylapore, 1947), p. 170.
3. Also St. Athanasius, "He became man that we might be made God" (*Athan. Orat. de Incarn Verbi Tom 1*, p. 108).
4. See René Guénon, *The Crisis of the Modern World*, trans. by A. Osborne (London: Luzac & Co., 1942), chapter V, for a discussion of this point.
5. Martin Buber, *Ten Rungs. Hasidic Sayings* (New York: Schocken Press, 1947), p. 103. This egoistic "I am" is entirely different from the "I AM" of the fullness of being uttered, for example, in Exodus 3:14 or by Christ at many places in John.
6. *Buddhi*, which constitutes the subtlest and the highest faculty in human beings, is not translated easily. In translating the parable of the chariot in the Katha Upanishad (1.3:34), S. Radhakrishnan (*The Principal Upanishads*; London: George Allen & Unwin, 1953, p. 623) renders it as *intellect*; Aurobindo (*Eight Upanishads*; Pondicherry: Sri Aurobindo Ashram, 1965, p. 49) as *Reason*, H. Zimmer (*Philosophies of India*; New York: World Publ. Co., 1961, p. 363) by *intuitive discernment and awareness*, R.C. Zaehner (*The BhagavadGita*; Oxford University Press, 1969, p. 238) by *soul*. (Zaehner's authority for this translation is based on the verse 2:41 of the Bhagavad Gita in which it is declared that the essence of the *buddhi* is will, which in the Christian tradition inheres in the "soul.") In other connections, these authors and others employ other words to translate *buddhi*. Some of these are: wisdom, consciousness, awareness. The verbal root *budh* means "to wake up; to rise from sleep; to heed, attend to; to perceive, to notice, learn, understand, become aware of; to have insight into, understand thoroughly." *Buddhi* then means, returning to consciousness; presence of mind, intentions, purpose, design; perception, comprehension; intellect understanding intelligence, talent; discrimination, judgment and discernment.

In the *Sankhya Karika* (23) *buddhi* is defined as *adhyayasaya*, i.e., "determination, resolution, mental effort, cognition, awareness." *Buddhi* is above *manas* (mind, thinking faculty, ratiocination) and comprises the totality of human emotional and intellectual possibilities. This is why it is termed *mahan* (the Great One). It is also known as *Prajña* (wisdom, discernment), *dhi* (intuition, imagination), *Khyati* (knowledge, power of distinguishing objects by appropriate names), *smrti* (memory, remembrance), *chitta* (comprising both functions of the reasoning faculty and the heart viz., observing, thinking, desiring, and intending.) It is integrated intelligence. It is useful to retain the Sanskrit word *buddhi* because any rendering into English is problematic. In my judgment the closest one word translation is *soul* as distinct from *mind* as well as *Spirit* or *Self*. If one used the tripartite division of *psyche* made by Plotinus, integrated or purified *buddhi* is the highest element which is directed to the contemplation of the Nous and the One; before purification, *buddhi* corresponds approximately to the middle element which may be attracted upwards or downwards. For a discussion of the importance of *buddhi* and *buddhi yoga* in the *Bhagavad Gita* and its parallels in Greek thought see A. H. Armstrong and R. Ravindra, "The Dimensions of the Self: *Buddhi* in the Bhagavad Gita and *psyche* in Plotinus," *Religious Studies*, vol. 15, 1979. (Reprinted in R. Ravindra, *Yoga and the Teaching of Krishna*, Chennai, India: Theosophical Publishing House, 1998.)
7. This duality is not necessarily ultimately (ontologically) real. In some traditions, such as the *Advaita Vedanta* of Shankara, such dualism is vigorously opposed. However, the conflict of our higher and lower selves is a matter of experience, and can in practice be resolved only when the lower finds its place in a higher synthesis, which is not achieved by ratiocination alone.
8. The Greek word *metanoia*, usually rendered as *repentance* in the standard translations of the New Testament is literally *change of mind* implying a radical re-orientation. For some elaboration, please see A. K. Coomaraswamy, "On being in One's Right Mind," *Review of Religion*, New York, VII 1942, pp. 3240; and R. Ravindra, *The Yoga of the Christ* (Shaftesbury, England, Element Books, 1990 (Also re-published as *Christ the Yogi*, Rochester, VT, U.S.A., Inner Traditions, 1998.), p. 45.

9. Jacob Boehme, *A Dialogue between a Scholar and his Master concerning the Supersensual Life*. Dialogue II.
10. There is a similar doctrine in St. Thomas Aquinas (*Sum Theol.* 1.34.1 and 2). Clearly, the *superconscious nomindness* being referred to here is not to be confused with the *subconscious mindlessness* of lower humanity.
11. *Gottam Sn.* 4556. Compare with the incident described in Matthew (12:46-50) when Christ did not recognize his mother and brothers. The Buddha said, "I am not anyone anywhere, nor is there anywhere aught of mine" (*Anguttara Nikaya* 2:177).
12. Sermon: *Adolescens, tibi dico: surge!*
13. *Tractatus Logico Philosophicus*, Proposition 6.4311. Meister Eckhart says of eternity. "Everything stands in a present now."
14. "The Self's Infinity" in Sri Aurobindo, *Last Poems* (Pondicherry: Sri Aurobindo Ashram, 1952).

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