

THE BUDDHA ON MEDITATION AND STATES OF CONSCIOUSNESS PART II: A TYPOLOGY OF MEDITATION TECHNIQUES

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There is inevitably great difficulty in translating from noumenal experience to the realm of discourse, from raw reality to abstract concept. Experience is the forerunner of all spiritual teachings, though similar experiences may come to be articulated differently; the Vedas say, "The Truth is one, only the sages call it by different names." In any given exploration of higher states of consciousness, the version set down in words is of necessity an arbitrary, and perhaps nebulous, delimitation of states, their characteristics, and their bounds. Lao Tzu recognizes this dilemma in the *Tao Te Ching*:

The way that can be told
Is not the constant way;
The name that can be named
Is not the constant name.

Garma Chang (1970) explains that the Tibetans recognize two levels of religious doctrine and practice: "The Expedient Teaching" and "The Final Teaching."¹ The Expedient Teachings are the multitude of world religions, each shaped by and for the people who adhere to it; the variance among faiths is accounted for by these shaping factors. But the Final Teaching at the (often esoteric) core of all faiths is essentially one and the same. The typology of techniques which follows here is aimed at the level of Final Teaching, where doctrinal differences fall away, the unity of practice coming into focus. Religious systems differ by virtue of accident of time and place, but the experience that is precursor to religion is everywhere the same. The unity in Final Teaching underlying the various techniques is inevitable: all men are alike in

*two levels of
religious doc-
trine and
practice*

¹I am grateful to Sonja Margulies for calling this distinction to my attention.

nervous system, and it is at this level that the laws governing Final Teaching operate.

*typology of
meditation
practices*

The Buddha's map of MSC in the *Visuddhimagga* embodies a threefold generic typology of meditation practices which undercuts ostensible distinctions in techniques stemming from differences in ideologies. Though any given system may draw on techniques from different categories, it is the specific technique that is classifiable in this typology, and not the system as a whole. As a first step in a systematic investigation of the myriad meditation practices, the *Visuddhimagga* road-maps serve here as the skeleton of a typology allowing the sorting out of techniques in terms of their mechanics, despite the conceptual overlay that accompanies them. This exercise in typology is intended to be seminal, not exhaustive. In some cases only one of numerous techniques belonging to a given system will be discussed by way of illustration. This typology is one of parts, of specific practices, rather than a taxonomy of the complex totality of religious systems and spiritual paths. In this classificatory application of the *Visuddhimagga*, I have drawn examples from among the meditation systems represented at present in the West, dealing with both their specific techniques and their antecedent roots in the schools of the East. The summaries that follow are based primarily on published sources rather than personal investigation. They may, therefore, seem incomplete or imprecise to a person on any of these paths, for each is a living tradition that presents itself differently to each person according to his needs and circumstances. The summaries are intended to discuss each technique in enough detail to show its unique flavor while demonstrating its place within the typology.

*the path of
concentration
and the path
of insight*

In the realm of mind, the method is the seed of the goal: the state of consciousness one reaches is contingent upon how one chose to get there. Just as each meditation subject is consequential in the level of absorption for which it serves as vehicle, so does one's technique determine whether one will follow the path of insight or of concentration. If the mind merges in samadhi with the meditation subject, and then transcends its subject to even higher levels of jhana, then one traverses the path of concentration. On the path of insight, mind witnesses its own workings, coming to see finer segments of mind-moments and becoming increasingly detached from its workings to the point of turning away from all awareness in nirvana. The great traditions evolved from these two paths can be broadly distinguished by their goal: whether it be the "One" or the "Zero." The One is the path of

samadhi, of mind merging with its object, of self dissolving into Self in union. The Zero is the path to nirvana, mind taking itself as object, where all phenomena, including mind, are finally known to be voidness, where ego-self dissolves into nothingness.

There is a third path, which combines the One and the Zero; *vipassana* as described in the *Visuddhimagga* is itself perhaps the best example of practices integrating concentration and insight. When concentration and insight are combined in a meditation system, the combination is not simply additive, but rather *interactive*. Concentration multiplies the effectiveness of insight; insight-borne detachment facilitates concentration. This interaction can occur only when concentration is held to the access level—in jhana there can be no insight. In systems that combine the two, the outcome is a nirvanic state and consequent ego reduction. In terms of the One and the Zero, the formula that best expresses this interactive dynamic is: $1 \times 0 = 0$.

a third path

Integrated: The One and the Zero
Concentration and insight combine
and interact, ending in nirvana;
 $1 \times 0 = 0$.

Concentration: The One
Samadhi leads through the
jhana; mind merges with
the object in Unity.

Insight: The Zero
Mindfulness culminates in
nirvana; mind watches its
own workings until cessation.

A CONICAL TYPOLOGY OF MEDITATION TECHNIQUES

Claudio Naranjo (1971) has outlined an overlapping three-fold typology of meditation techniques, which includes as its first two categories "The Way of Forms" and "The Negative Way," the paths of concentration and of insight, respectively. His third category, "The Expressive Way," includes visionary and prophetic experiences, possession states, artistic, shamanistic, and psychotherapeutic surrender and openness to impulse and intuition. From the viewpoint of the *Visuddhimagga* system this third category entails experiences within the domain of discursive thought, not within the range of MSC (though some, such as visions and prophecy, can be fruits of jhana).² As such, they perhaps represent a maximal ex-

*Naranjo's
typology of
meditation
techniques*

²Fischer (1971) makes a distinction similar to Naranjo's; while he lumps the Way of Forms and The Negative Way along a "perception-meditation" continuum of trophotropic (decreasing) sympathetic nervous system arousal, he distinguishes

*meditative
states of con-
sciousness and
altered states of
consciousness*

*emphasis: be-
havioral analysis
of procedures
and techniques*

pansion of normal consciousness into altered states, but do not overleap its bounds into the realm of jhana or nirvana, where discursive thought stops.

This difference in typologies demonstrates the point of divergence between altered states (ASC) and meditative states (MSC): from the perspective of normal consciousness, the Expressive Way is unquestionably a range of extraordinary mental states, but from the viewpoint of the *Visuddhimagga* these are not, strictly speaking, meditative states. It may be, in fact, that the Expressive Way is inimical to the attainment of MSC, since by acting out every impulse one may reinforce patterns of thought and desire, strengthening these habits of mind so as to enhance their power to hinder transcending the sphere of thought. Sila, a standard preparation for meditation, is exactly opposite: the conscientious denial of expressing impulse in action. A possible alternative effect, as Naranjo points out, is the arising of *vairagya*—spontaneous renunciation—brought about by consciously living through all one's desires.³

Naranjo's typology is "beyond the forms," focusing on general similarities rather than specifics; this discussion is of the forms per se: a behavioral analysis of procedures and techniques, so that researchers will be able to interpret more appropriately the nature of results, and design and plan accordingly. Among traditional meditation schools there are perhaps few pure types save for those systems centering around a single technique—e.g., "Transcendental Meditation." Many contemporary schools are eclectic, using a variety of techniques from both paths, making allowances for individual requirements—the Sufis, for example, use mainly the *zikr*,

the Expressive Way as an opposite continuum of "perception-hallucination" with ergotropic (increasing) arousal. His trophotropic dimension includes creativity, psychosis, and mystic ecstasy; the ergotropic subsumes insight and concentration meditation. Fischer postulates increasing arousal as a path to jhana: at the peak of arousal one "rebounds" into jhana as a physiological protective mechanism.

Fischer's dichotomy is in partial agreement with Meher Baba (Donkin, 1954), who said "mind speeded is mad, mind slowed is *mast*, mind stilled is God." Meher Baba traveled throughout India identifying and aiding *masts*, "God-intoxicants," who had begun to slow their minds by focusing on God but had gone astray. *Masts* were usually wholly out of touch with the world of consensual reality and most often regarded as insane. While agreeing with Fischer's view that madness is in the direction of "mind speeded," Meher Baba distinguished between "mind slowed" in the *mast's* "divine madness" and psychosis—a distinction wholly unknown to Western psychiatry.

³Suzuki (1957), in comparing the spontaneity of a Zen master with that of certain Christian gnostics, shows that both share what Naranjo characterizes as Expressive behavior. But in doing so, Suzuki emphasizes the distinction between spontaneous expressiveness resulting from the loss of ego through Zen, which brings one into the eternal moment and spontaneity, and that which is itself in the service of an ego impulsively satisfying every desire. The former is the by-product of sustained meditation practice and MSC; the latter is itself an obstacle to the intensive efforts necessary for MSC.

a concentration practice, but also sometimes draw on insight techniques like *Muraqaba*, which is concentration on the flow of one's own consciousness. For purposes of typology a specific technique within each system will be emphasized by way of illustration.

The goal of all meditation systems, whatever their ideological orientation or source, and whichever of the three main types, is to transform the waking state through the fruits of practice—to die to the life of the ego and be reborn to a new level of experience. The state of consciousness gained through concentration in jhana, or through insight in nirvana, is discontinuous with the three normal states of waking, dreaming, and sleeping; it is a fourth state. The ultimate transformation sought by meditation systems is a new state still: a fifth state of consciousness mixing with and re-creating the three normal states.⁴ In each school this end-state is labeled differently according to the unique perspective of the accompanying belief systems. But no matter how diverse the names, the phenomenon itself is the same. All these systems—whether concentration, insight, or integrated—propose the same basic formula in an alchemy of the self: the diffusion of the effects of meditation into the waking, dreaming, and sleep states, though each identifies this process in its distinct vocabulary.

*goal of all
meditation sys-
tems*

In the Buddha's teaching, the path to the One is of subsidiary importance, useful as initial mind-training in the path to nirvana. Eliade (1969) points out that in the *Visuddhimagga* tradition, jhana is a means of access to "a suprasensible reality, and not a *unio mystico*"—the jhanic experience prepared the monk for a "super knowledge" whose final goal was nirvana. But by no means all great spiritual teachers have been in agreement with the Buddha's assessment of path and goal. The most notably polar opposite approach to HSC is that of the adherents to the various sects and schools of *bhakti*, and so this typology will begin there.

HINDU BHAKTI

Bhakti, or devotion to a divine being, is perhaps the dominant popular mode of worship in contemporary world religions. In this respect a Christian gospel singer, a Hassidic Jew dancing

⁴The fifth state meets Tart's (1971) criteria for a "higher state of consciousness": (1) all functions of "lower" states are available—i.e., waking, dreaming, sleeping,—and (2) some new functions, derivative of jhana or nirvana, are present in addition. Since the fifth state has these attributes by definition, it may be the only unequivocally "higher state." Within Tart's formulation, jhana and nirvana are not HSC, but rather meditation-specific states of consciousness, or MSC.

*the essence
of bhakti*

and singing at the Wailing Wall, a Sufi reciting “El Allah Hoo,” a Hindu singing “Hare Krishna,” and a Japanese Buddhist repeating “na-mu-a-mi-da-bu, na-mu-a-mi-da-bu,” are all more or less engaged in the same process, though directed toward different objects. The essence of bhakti is making the object of devotion one’s central thought. The ecstasy of the devotee is most often that borne of access concentration; in its higher reaches bhakti merges into the path of jhana.

Hare Krishna

Swami Bhaktivedanta’s Hare Krishna group is in an orthodox Hindu bhakti tradition. In the classic *Srimad Bhagavatam*, remembering or constant chanting of Krishna’s name is recommended over all other practices as the best path for this age; the *Kalisantharam Upanishad* has Brahma extol to the bard Narada as the highest or *maha-mantra*, “Hare Rama, Hare Krishna”—Hare, Rama, and Krishna all being manifestations of Vishnu. Even so, a bhakta may choose any deity or divine being as his devotional object, or ishta. Having done so, he must try to keep the thought or name of his ishta foremost in his mind at all times. Besides *kirtan* (chanting or singing) there are three main levels of *japa*, or repetition of the name: verbal, silent verbalization, and mental. Each succeeding form of *japa* is regarded as “ten times” more efficacious than the preceding one (Poddar, 1965).

In its beginning stage, *japa* is to be maintained in the midst of life’s activities, until gradually the mind is occupied solely with that one thought. The *mala*, or rosary, is a common technical adjunct to *japa*; with the telling of each bead, the name is recited once. Other aids to *japa* include gearing recitation to each breadth, or to every beat of the pulse. No matter what the mnemonic device, the principle is the same: to return attention to repetition at once when the mind ceases to be engaged elsewhere. The goal of this stage of practice is to make the habit of repetition stronger than all other mental habits—i.e., one-pointedness. Poddar (1965) suggests that the neophyte practice a minimum of six hours of *japa* per day. If successful, the name will repeat of itself virtually every moment, day or night.

By way of social reinforcement of the initially vulnerable mental habit of constant worship through remembering, the *Bhakti-Sutras of Devarsi Narada* (Poddar, 1968) make stipulations similar to those of the *Visuddhimagga* to the would-be meditator. *Satsang*, the company of persons on the same path, is highly recommended as a counter to the pull of worldly attachments, as is the visiting of saints. The bhakta

is further urged to avoid talk of "women, wealth, unbelievers, and enemies." In early stages it may be necessary to seek out a new, nonworldly reference group; as one's consciousness becomes more thoroughly imbued with the thought of the ishta worldly company may be seen as repugnant.

Another echo of the *Visuddhimagga* is in the emphasis on purity in the bhakti path. The success of the bhakta is dependent upon his own virtues; purity, says Vivekananda (1964), "is absolutely the basic work, the bedrock upon which the whole Bhakti-building rests." As in all such paths, virtue, which is in the beginning an act of will, becomes a by-product of the practice itself. As the mind becomes attached to its devotional object, it withdraws from worldly objects; by love of God, says Vivekananda, "love of the pleasures of the senses and of the intellect is all made dim." An aspect of renunciation unique to bhakti is the "giving up" of attachments in the sense of offering them up to the ishta. Thus, claims Vivekananda, the bhakta has no struggle "to suppress any single one of his emotions, he only strives to intensify them and direct them to God." Poddar (1965) observes that "compared to the joy of repeating the 'Rama nama' all other enjoyments of the world are insipid."

*unique aspect
of bhakti
renunciation*

Bhakti begins on the level of duality, with the devotee separate from his ishta, as from any love object. The *Bhakti Sutras*, in fact, include a typology of Divine Love which includes loving the ishta as one's friend, as one's spouse, and as one's child. Prabhavananda and Isherwood (1969) suggest that "all human relationships may be sublimated through the practice of bhakti yoga." Though this love may begin with the forms of, and energies invested in, interpersonal love, it ends in union with the state of love evoked by the love-object. Here, says Vivekananda, "Love, the Lover, and the Beloved are One." At this level the practice of bhakti merges into the path of jhana. The mergence comes in two stages: ecstasy and absorption. The fruit of japa, constant remembering at every moment of waking awareness, brings with it "love-intoxication." The feelings of bliss, rapture, and joy at this stage are characteristic of access concentration. The ecstatic devotee's behavior may be as erratic as a madman's; the *Srimad Bhagavata* (XI, ii) describes this stage:

. . . the devotee loses all sense of decorum and moves about in the world unattached. . . . His heart melts through love as he habitually chants the Name of his beloved lord, and like one possessed, he now bursts into peals of laughter, now weeps, now cries, now sings aloud and now begins to dance.

*characteristics of
devotee's be-
havior*

*an accomplished
bhakta and
samadhi*

The enraptured devotee may be on the threshold of samadhi. From the access-level that his ecstasy indicates, he can gain in meditation the first jhana through concentration on his ishta. Once this level is reached, according to Swami Muktananda (1971), there is no further need for chanting or japa: they are preludes to meditation. An accomplished bhakta can attain samadhi on the least stimulus suggesting his devotion. Sri Ramakrishna, for example, once went to a theater performance of the life of Sri Chaitanya, a seventeenth-century bhakti saint. At several points during the play, on seeing portrayals of Chaitanya's devotion to Krishna, Ramakrishna went into samadhi (M., 1928).

The psychological concomitants of this level of proficiency on the way of bhakti are tantamount to a basic personality change. As Vivekananda (1964, p. 90) puts it, "when a person loves the Lord, the whole universe becomes dear to him . . . his whole nature is purified and completely changed." Renunciation becomes effortless, all attachments save to the beloved having fallen away. From this intense and all-absorbing love comes perfect faith and self-surrender, the conviction that nothing that happens is against one: "not my, but Thy will be done." He perceives "the sacred within the secular," as Maslow (1970) describes sacralization; everything is sacred because it belongs to the Beloved. All things being His, the bhakta no longer need observe any external forms or symbols for worship. He worships in his heart, the world having become his altar. Kabir (1970, p. 40) eloquently sums up his own experience of this state:

O Sadhu! the simple union is the best,
Since the day when I met with my Lord,
there has been no end to the sport of our love . . .
I see with eyes open and smile, and
behold His beauty everywhere;
I utter His name, and whatever I see, it
reminds me of Him; whatever I do,
it becomes His worship . . .
Wherever I go, I move round Him,
All I achieve is His service:
When I lie down, I lie prostrate
at His feet.
He is the only adorable one to me: I
have none other.
My tongue has left off impure words, it
sings His glory day and night:
Whether I rise or sit down, I can
never forget Him; for the rhythm
of His music beats in my ears.

Kabir says: I am immersed in the one
great bliss which transcends all
pleasure and pain.

SUFISM

Kabir, himself beyond all religious forms, was from a Muslim family, though he followed a Hindu guru; the officials of his sixteenth century Benares classified him as a Sufi. Sufism is the tradition associated with Islam most closely corresponding to the form and spirit of Hindu Bhakti. The most widely known Sufi practices involve ecstatic singing and dancing. In his quest for union with the Divine Beloved, the Sufi follows a familiar pattern and path. The accent in one segment of Sufi teaching is on divine grace, which descends from above on the pure of heart and lifts him to transcendental heights. Understandably, then, there is a great emphasis on practices of renunciation and purification. In his study of Persian Sufis, Rice (1964) enumerates the stages of progressive self-purification preparatory to divine union. These stages include: acts of repentance, avoiding whatever has the least semblance of wrong, turning one's back on worldly vanities, and a "constant watch over the heart"; acts of renunciation, such as voluntary poverty, heedlessness of worldly affairs, and self-surrender to the Divine will; entrusting one's destiny to God; accepting all tribulations as tests of purification, and practicing contentment with whatever comes. The central psychological premise supporting these renunciatory acts permeates Sufi thought; Abu Said of Mineh framed that premise as (Rice, p. 34)

*self-purification
and divine union*

When occupied with self, you are separated from God. The way to God is but one step; the step out of yourself.

An auxiliary, but key, practice among Sufis is that of *zikr*, the Farsi term for *japa*, which literally means "remembrance." The *zikr* par excellence is *La ilāha illā 'llah*: "There is no god but God." A *zikr* always accompanies Sufi dancing, the efficacy of which is enhanced by maintaining the remembrance throughout. "The dance opens a door in the soul to divine influences," wrote Sultan Walad, Rumi's son (Rice, p. 101); "the dance is good when it arises from remembrance of the Beloved." Sufi dancing embodies a two-fold method for strengthening concentration: on the one hand there is the need to attend to the dance steps, on the other there is constant oral repetition of God's name. The bliss and ecstasy often accompanying Sufi dancing mark a concentration developed to the access level; the dance itself may, with experience,

"remembrance"

"dance"

stimulate internal cues for increasingly easy entrance to access-level bliss states.

*sequence of
states*

ultimate stage

The *zīkr* is also to be practiced as a solitary meditation. At first it is an oral repetition, later a silent one; a fourteenth-century manuscript on the practice says, "When the heart begins to recite, the tongue should stop." The goal, as in all meditation systems, is to overcome one's natural state of mind—"carelessness and inattention"—and become one-pointed on God. One's original motivation may well be the realization of the truth of the Sufi comment on normal consciousness, that man is "asleep in a nightmare of unfulfilled desires"—and that with transcendence, desires fall away. Along the way the Sufi undergoes a number of states typical of progress in meditation—e.g., *qurb*, a sense of God's constant nearness induced by concentration on Him, and *mahabba*, losing oneself in contemplation on the Beloved. Among its fruits are visions and the "station of unity," where *zīkr* (the remembrance), *zakīr* (the one who remembers), and *mazkur* (the One remembered) become one—i.e., the first *jhana*. Mastery is recognized as the point when there is effortless fixed attention on the *zīkr*, driving out other thoughts from the mind. This state is seen as a pure "gift of grace" where one is "lost in Truth," having achieved *fana*, or the absorption of *jhana*. The ultimate stage is that of *baga*, abiding in the *fana*-consciousness while in the midst of the phenomenal world (Manzani, 1928). The Sufi Idries Shah (1971) speaks of it as an "extra dimension of being" operating parallel to ordinary cognition, and calls it "Objective Consciousness." Union with God in absorbed love marks the height of attainment, but Sufis, according to Robert Graves (in Shah, 1971), "admit its value only if the devotee can afterward return to the world and live in a manner consonant with his experience."

CHRISTIAN HESYCHASM

*Christian
gnostics and
mystics*

The route of the Sufi is the path of *jhana*, while his telling of his inner journey is in the vernacular of the gnostic: if one opens his heart to God, His grace descends on the pure of heart, and one loses oneself in mystic union. So also with Christian gnostics and mystics. The practice of *japa* has been a mainstay of Christian worship from the beginning, though the usual contemporary use of rosary beads is a dim remainder of more whole-hearted remembrance of God. Thomas Merton (1960) observes that what is today practiced as "prayer" in Christian churches is but one—albeit the

surviving one—of a range of more intensive contemplative practices. The fourth century Desert Fathers, for example, engaged in absorption aided by the verbal or silent repetition of a single phrase from the Scriptures. The most popular was the prayer of the Publican: “Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me a sinner.” In its short form, *Kyrie eleison*, it was repeated silently throughout the day “until it became as spontaneous and instinctive as breathing.” The Desert Fathers emphasized sila, and renunciatory and expiatory acts were commonplace among them. As in the *Visuddhimagga*, sila was an adjunct to concentration; in the words of one of the Fathers, “the soul, unless it be cleansed of alien thoughts, cannot pray to God in contemplation.” The hoped-for result of the Fathers’ endeavors was what Merton calls a “no-where-ness and nomindness”—a condition known by the name *quies*, literally “rest”—the individual having lost all pre-occupation with a limited “self.”

Kyrie eleison

The tradition stemming from the practices of the Desert Fathers, though virtually lost in Western Christendom, has been kept unchanged since the first millenium of Christianity in Eastern Orthodoxy. The practice of the Prayer of Jesus is seen as the fulfillment of Paul’s injunction to “pray always”; the early Fathers called it “the art of arts and the science of sciences,” which led one toward the highest human perfection. This teaching has been preserved in the collection of early Christian writings known as the *Philokalia* (Kadloubovsky and Palmer, 1971), the translation of which from Greek to Russian at the turn of the century came on the crest of a wave of revival of the practice throughout Russia (chronicled in *The Way of the Pilgrim*; French, 1970). The practice itself is designed to awaken and develop strength of attention and concentration, and as in all bhakti paths, the essential conditions enumerated for success are “genuine humility, sincerity, endurance, purity.” Hesychius of Jerusalem, a fifth-century teacher of the use of the Jesus Prayer (known now in the West as Hesychasm), describes it as a spiritual art that releases one completely from passionate thoughts, words, and evil deeds, and gives a “sure knowledge of God the Incomprehensible”; its essence is purity of heart, which is the “same as guarding the mind, kept perfectly free of all fantasies” and all thoughts. The means is unceasingly calling upon Christ with perfect attention, resisting all thoughts; he describes discursive thought as “enemies who are bodiless and invisible, malicious and clever at harming us, skillful, nimble and practised in warfare,” who enter in through the five senses. A mind caught in discursive thought is distant from

*the practice of
the prayer of
Jesus*

Jesus; to overcome sense-consciousness and attain a silent mind is to be with Him.

instructions

Among the "Directions to Hesychasts" is the direction that no effort be spared to find a teacher and guide who bears the Spirit within him and to devote oneself to such a master, obeying all his commands. Once the teacher is found, further aids include seclusion in a quiet, dimly lit cell, eating only as much as one needs to keep alive, silence, full performance of Church ritual, fasting, and vigils, and most important, practice of the Prayer. The *Philokalia* quotes St. Nilus: "He who wishes to see what his mind really is must free himself of all thoughts; then he will see it like a sapphire or the hue of heaven." The instructions for stilling the mind specify sitting on a low stool in the solitude of one's cell on first awakening, and for an hour (or more, if one is able), "collect your mind from its customary circling and wandering outside, and quietly lead it into the heart by way of breathing, keeping this prayer: 'Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me!' connected with the breath." When with practice it becomes possible to so "pray" with perfect one-pointedness, "then, abandoning the many and the varied, we shall unite with the One, the Single and the Unifying, directly in a union which transcends reason"—presumably, in *jhana*. The Prayer is not to be limited to these sessions only, but practiced always without distraction in the midst of all activity. One who has mastered this phase of ongoing practice is described as himself having the stature of Christ, enjoying perfect purity of heart. St. Isaac comments that one who has attained a state of effortless, constant prayer (Kadloubovsky and Palmer, 1971, p. 213):

. . . has reached the summit of all virtues, and has become the abode of the Holy Spirit . . . when the Holy Spirit comes to live in a man, he never ceases to pray, for then the Holy Spirit constantly prays in him. . . . In eating or drinking, sleeping or doing something, even in deep sleep his heart sends forth without effort the incense and sighs of prayer.

from interpersonal to transpersonal love

The initial power of *bhakti*—Hindu, Sufi, or Christian—is the element of interpersonal love felt by the *bhakta* toward his devotional object. As he progresses on this path, that love becomes transformed from an interpersonal to an "impersonal," or transpersonal, love. Said St. Bernard, "Love begins in the flesh and ends in the spirit." It is no longer the object of devotion that is experienced as bestowing bliss; rather, it is the transcendental states of which that bliss is one

aspect, and these are found to exist within the devotee as a potentiality of his own consciousness. It is no longer necessary to cling to the external form of the devotional object; the states once evoked therefrom have come to be fixtures of one's own consciousness. The process of coming to identify the devotional object with an internal state is parallel to that of attaining jhanas. By becoming one-pointed on the object of devotion, keeping it ever in mind, the devotee refines his consciousness to the state of jhana. Sankaracharya noted this process when he observed that bhakti ends in a quest for the Self: what begins as an external evocation of love becomes in the end an internal absorption, delighting uninterruptedly in "pure Self"—i.e., in jhana (Poddar, 1968).

The practice of bhakti, by bringing the mind to one-pointedness through constant remembrance of the object of devotion, can bring the bhakta to the level of the first jhana. But if he is to go beyond this level, he must transcend his own devotional object, for any thought of name-and-form, even that of a Deity, binds one to the lower jhana reaches. Sri Ramakrishna, for example, for many years an ardent devotee of the Divine Mother, had experienced many visions and states of bliss as Her devotee. Later he took initiation from a naked ascetic (Saradananda, 1963, p. 255):

*transcending the
devotional
object*

After initiating me . . . The Naked One asked me to make my mind free of function in all respects, and merge in the meditation of the Self. But, when I sat for meditation I could by no means make my mind go beyond the bounds of name and form and cease functioning. The mind withdrew itself from all other things, but as soon as it did so, the intimately familiar form of the universal Mother appeared. . . . But, at last, collecting all the strength of my will, I cut Mother's form to pieces with the sword of discrimination. . . . There remained no function in the mind, which transcended quickly the realm of names and forms, making me merge in samadhi.

The Visuddhimagga emphasizes the need, at the point of initial access to a new plane of consciousness, to cut ties to the preceding plane. Each plane has its special points of appeal, some exceedingly sublime. The prerequisite work for gaining the next higher level, then, is to become detached from the lower plane, as Ramakrishna did, lest the mind be pulled back to it. For bhaktas in general, this means that one's devotional object in form must finally be abandoned in favor of becoming oneself, in jhana, that manifestation of pure being for which the object of devotion is himself worshipped.

MEHER BABA

*Meher Baba: an
eclectic master*

Although Meher Baba's primary teaching is devotion to a guru and the self-surrender of a bhakta—his American followers know themselves as "Baba lovers"—he is eclectic in offering a wide range of meditation techniques as complementary practices, under the guidance of one who has himself successfully completed this journey, a "Perfect Master." Meher Baba describes the ascent to HSC in terms of seven planes or states of consciousness which, reflecting his Sufi background, he calls *fanās*. The means of access to each fana is concentration. At each new plane there is a radical change in the conditions of mental life: initially one experiences the plane only in a "paralysis of mental activity"—i.e., jhana—and gradually that plane comes to characterize the mind's functioning in all phases of life. With each higher fana one undergoes a "lowering down of mental activity" and a substantial diminution of ego-life. At the seventh and last plane, mind is quiet and ego is totally and finally annihilated.

*progression of
fanās*

The progression he describes through the fanās is a close parallel to that of the jhanas. The first fana is characterized by a temporary experience of bliss and loss of limited self; the second by absorption in bliss and "infinite light," the third by loss of body-consciousness, a feeling of infinite power, and withdrawal of consciousness from the external world. In terms of the *Visuddhimagga*, this is the ascension through access concentration to the first, second, or third jhana. The fourth fana is marked by the emergence of supernormal powers, just as is the fourth jhana. At the fifth plane, all worldly desires are annihilated; the tendency of jhana-consciousness overpowers the discursive mind so that thought and action in the waking state become wholly intuitive and spontaneous. Then at the sixth plane one sees "God and the Infinite" (perhaps as in the sixth jhana) as a continual perception, without any break. Reaching the seventh and last plane—"Fana-Fillah"—one no longer sees God, but merges with Him, in a "final annihilation of the self." This final stage is sahaḥ samadhi; God-consciousness pervades one's entire universe of experience. Meher Baba insistently warns of the danger at each new fana of thinking it to be the final destination. Attachment to each fana must be broken if one is to finally reach sahaḥ samadhi, "the only real awakening." He distinguishes two aspects of sahaḥ samadhi: *nirvāṇa* in the sense of jhanic absorption (not necessarily identical with the *Visuddhimagga* nirvanic state), and *nirvikalpa*, the waking-state manifestation of fana-consciousness, "Divinity in Expression."

*final stage:
sahaḥ samadhi*

The function of meditation for Meher Baba is to take one "beyond the limitations of the mind." What he calls "meditation" is the first stage of a process that gradually develops into the focused concentration of samadhi. He recommends for the object of meditation some divine person or object, or some spiritually significant theme or truth; the process should not be forced and mechanical, but rather an intensification of one's natural inclinations. Such general meditation could entail thinking about some expression of "the Divine Truth," hearing a discourse from a Master, or reading his writings, until discursive thought stops and one has an intuitive perception of its truth. But there is no set course of exercises prescribed for all comers; instead he emphasizes that a Master can best decide what technique is most suited to each aspirant at each point on the path. If, for example, one has the capacity for concentration, these meditations are unnecessary. Says Meher Baba (1967, p. 113):

In concentration mind seeks to unite with its object by the process of fixing itself upon that object, whereas meditation consists in thorough thinking about a particular object to the exclusion of everything else.

In other words, "meditation" for Meher Baba is in the realm of access concentration, and preliminary to what he calls "concentration," which is the means to jhana. The essence of the process is one-pointedness, for the development of which Meher Baba enumerates a broad range of techniques. For beginners, he proposes "personal meditation," where the meditation subject is a person who is a "spiritually perfect" Master—e.g., Jesus, Buddha, Krishna, or Meher Baba himself. The four stages of this technique—a form of bhakti—are: meditating on the divine qualities of the Master; concentration on the physical form of the Master; the "meditation of the heart," where one feels an uninterrupted flow of love toward Him accompanied by joy and self-forgetfulness; and finally, the "meditation of action"—a karma yoga—where one offers all one's action to the Master and tries to express the ideals He embodies in all one's acts.

*Meher Baba and
meditation*

The "impersonal meditations" suggested by Meher Baba begin with cultivating a habit of thought which regards "all forms as equally the manifestations of the same one all-pervading life and as nothing in themselves separately." This contemplation is to be coupled with an attitude of detachment toward one's own body. The two together prepare one for meditation on the "formless and infinite aspect of God"; he suggests one focus on a symbol of infinity such as the sky

*a variety of
techniques*

or "vast emptiness." The final phase of this exercise is to identify oneself with and merge into the infinite—very possibly as in the fifth or sixth jhana. Another variety of meditation recommended is the "quest for an agent of action," where one ceaselessly presses the query: "Who is this 'I'?" This search for an agent to one's acts is designed to lead to a detachment toward these processes of self. An alternative means recommended for cultivating detachment is similar to mindfulness techniques: regarding oneself as the witness of all physical and mental happenings. Still another range of techniques offered by Meher Baba to the aspirant are a close approximation of vipassana. These take as the object of attention the mental operations themselves, and ultimately aim at *stilling the mind*. The first step in this procedure is to write down one's thoughts as they come, in stream-of-consciousness fashion. A later stage is the intensive awareness of thoughts as they appear in consciousness. These prepare the way for the attempt "to make the mind blank." At this stage the practice differs from vipassana per se: the procedure is to alternate two "incompatible" forms of meditation. The example given is five minutes of concentration on the form of the Master with eyes open, in alternation with five minutes of absorption with eyes closed in the thought "I am infinite."⁵ The state thereby achieved sounds much like the nirvanic state: "complete internal silence."

*stillness of mind
in world of
action*

All these forms of meditation are seen as culminating in sahaj samadhi. At this "ultimate goal of life" meditation is a self-sustained spontaneous fact of existence. Stillness of mind is expressed in the world of action. One is now free of all ego ties and interests; consciousness is no longer determined by the deposits of the past. Meher Baba (1967, p. 167) describes it as "a state of full wakefulness in which there is no ebb and flow, waxing or waning, but only the steadiness of true perception." One is now a *siddha* or *sad-guru*, himself a suitable object for meditation.

SRI AUROBINDO

In a sense, Sri Aurobindo's yoga begins where Meher Baba's leaves off—with sahaj samadhi. Sri Aurobindo (1949, 1955,

⁵As we have seen, the former practice corresponds to access concentration, while the latter can bring one to the fifth jhana. The basic principle in vipassana practice is to use concentration borne of samadhi to witness thoughts while at the access level; it may be that the technique proposed by Meher Baba for achieving a "blank" mind is functionally the same as the vipassana path to the nirvanic state, though structurally different. He attributes the utility of this technique to a "quick alternation" between high-intensity incompatible mental operations.

1958), in his voluminous works on the "synthesis of yoga," makes use of a dynamic similar to bhakti but within a framework as eclectic as Meher Baba's. Aurobindo's concept of his Integral Yoga subsumes and overreaches other systems, and is described in a wholly original system of imagery and vocabulary. His is an evolutionary view, seeing man as a transitional being: Integral Yoga aims at a conscious collaboration in the next stage of human evolution. The means is to blend the transforming power of HSC with life's activities, making life-as-lived a divine experience while working on altering one's physiology in order to enter the next evolutionary level. The real work—physiological self-alteration—can begin in earnest only with the attainment of sahaj samadhi.

*Aurobindo's
evolutionary
view: Integral
Yoga*

*the real work—
physiological
self-alteration*

The process of spiritual unfolding is as varied as individual differences, and so Aurobindo (1958) prescribes no uniform, set practice: "The spiritual life is not a thing that can be formulated in a rigid definition or bound by a fixed mental rule; it is a vast field of evolution" with a thousand variations. Thus Integral Yoga can consist in whatever technique is found to work for one at a given point in sadhana. Perhaps the central criterion for this path is described by Aurobindo as "a will for purity, a readiness . . . to subject to a divine yoke the limiting and self-affirming ego." Certainly another criterion is allegiance or devotion to Aurobindo himself and to his successor and collaborator, the Mother at Pondicherry, and to their goals. Among traditional paths commonly followed by practitioners of Aurobindo's Integral Yoga are bhakti, karma-yoga—i.e., striving to act in detached self-awareness while remembering the Mother—and sitting meditation. The usual combination is the practice of one-pointedness techniques and devotion to the Mother.

*central criterion
for this path*

*usual practice—
one-pointedness
techniques and
devotion to
the Mother*

The fruits of meditation in MSC are, from Aurobindo's point of view, not the final goal but "a first stage of evolution." All samadhis, including the highest jhanas, are to be reintegrated with the activities of life. These jhana states belong to the realm of the "Overmind"—when, e.g., consciousness rises to the *sahasrara*, "and one emerges into the light" (i.e., in the sixth jhana, of infinite consciousness). This is but the starting point of Aurobindo's yoga. He says (1958), "It is in the waking state that this realization must come and endure." The fundamental process is at each higher level of consciousness to "bring down" its power and perception into "mortal life," making it a constant attribute of the waking state. This

*fundamental
process*

“divine life in the body”—what Meher Baba would call *sahaj samadhi*—is the “Supermind.”⁶

*final stages of
integral yoga*

*ultimate step in
Aurobindo's
dream*

After each ascent of consciousness into the realms of the Overmind (i.e., the *jhanas*) comes a descent which unearths “all the layers of dirt . . . throwing up all the impurities.” When this period of purification is over, one can sustain a “supramental consciousness.” Aurobindo describes this emergent consciousness as beyond the conceptual universe, knowing everything in all aspects, seeing “the infinite in the finite.” Living in an eternal now, one’s actions are natural and spontaneous, “led by an inner consciousness which is in tune with the Infinite and the Eternal.” In this egoless state one is beyond becoming or striving. One has further unleashed the psychic power known as *shakti* and can mobilize its energy as the key to the final stage of Integral Yoga: transformation of being at the cellular level. Esconced in the Supermind, one is potentially ready for the ultimate step in Aurobindo’s dream, conscious collaboration in the next evolutionary stage of the human species. The strategy is to re-make one’s body via a structural reorganization on the molecular level altering the function of the cells. Normal organic function is to be replaced by “a dynamic functioning” of *chakras* (psychic energy centers), entirely transmuting all physiological systems. Among the effects of this transformation would be cessation of the need for nutrients as sustenance and a vastly expanded lifespan. This phase is still in its experimental stage, and is being carried on by the Mother (Aurobindo passed on in 1950) as an “adventure into the unknown.” If successful, this experiment, in the words of Satprem (1970), will “create a divine supermanhood on the earth which will no longer be subject to the laws of ignorance, suffering, and decomposition.”

PATANJALI’S ASTANGA YOGA

The goal of *bhakti* is *yoga*, or union; as such it is reckoned as one of many Indian yogic paths for transcending duality. The ultimate locus of the phenomenon of duality is within the mind, in the separation between the mechanisms of experience and the object of experience. The state in which a bridge is forged between the experiencer and the object in *yoga* is called *samadhi*, where consciousness “merges” with its contents, and is the same as *jhana*. The *Bhagavad Gita* places yogic techniques at the heart of Hinduism, recommending

⁶The Overmind pertains to an MSC experienced apart from waking activity; the Supermind represents the merging of MSC with the waking state.

yoga as the means for obtaining mystical union with Krishna, a personal God; the Lord Rama himself is instructed by his guru in the *Yoga-Vasishtha* (Shastri, 1969) to “remain rooted in the consciousness: ‘I am infinite,’” and so unite with Brahman. In either case, the principle is that central to all yogas: the transcendence of normal dualistic consciousness in samadhi.

*principle central
to all yogas*

The most authoritative source on yoga today remains Patanjali's *Yoga Aphorisms* (Prabhavananda and Isherwood, 1969; Vivekananda, 1970), dating back more than 1500 years, to about the same period as the *Visuddhimagga*. The spiritual *zeitgeist* of that era is reflected in both—indeed the paths they outline are in large part identical. The main difference between these two manuals for HSC is Patanjali's insistence that samadhi is the highway to liberation. The royal, or *raja*, yoga outlined by Patanjali entails *ashtanga*: eight key practices, or limbs. The first two, *yama* and *niyama*, are moral training for purity—i.e., *sila*. The next two are *asana*, the development through physical exercises of a firm and erect posture, or “seat,” and *pranayam*, exercises for controlling and stilling the breath. Both the third and fourth limbs have become intricately developed in their own right, so that some yogic schools use these practices as their main methods—and most Americans associate “yoga” with these two exclusively *hatha* practices.⁷ Most detailed expositions of *hatha* and *pranayam* point out that these practices are adjuncts to the attainment of samadhi, though some focus solely on rigorous physical purifications as means to HSC. Vyas Dev (1970), for example, details 250 *asana* postures, elaborates 50 different *pranayam* exercises and 25 methods for cleansing internal organs. Before sitting in samadhi for a long time, advises Vyas Dev, one should clear the bowels completely by drawing in and expelling water through the anus, empty the bladder by drawing water and expelling it through a catheter, and purify the digestive system by swallowing and extracting about 70 feet of string made of fine yarn, swallowing two or three pints of lukewarm salt-water to induce vomiting, and swallowing and extracting a three-inch wide strip of cloth seven yards long.

*the eight limbs
of ashtanga yoga*

Patanjali's stipulation about these first four limbs, however, is that they be undergone simply to the point where body and mind are stilled as preliminaries for sitting in meditation, and the obstacles to concentration such as doubt, sloth, de-

⁷Among the systems introduced to the West which emphasize these two limbs are Yogananda's Self-Realization Fellowship, Yogi Bhañan's “3-H” Organization, and Swami Sachidananda's Integral Yoga Institute.

*samadhi as
heart of yoga*

spair, and craving for sensual pleasures are overcome. The second group of limbs are all steps in becoming one-pointed. The fifth, *pratyahara*, entails withdrawing the mind from sense objects, so that attention can focus on the primary object. The sixth, *dharana*, is holding the mind on the object, while the seventh, *dhyana*, involves "an unbroken flow of thought toward the object of concentration"—these two respectively correspond to initial and sustained application in the *Visuddhimagga* system. The final limb is *samadhi*. The combination *dharana*, *dhyana*, and *samadhi* is the state of *samyama*, what the *Visuddhimagga* calls *jhana*.⁸

The aphorisms mention that practicing *samyama* on "single moments and their sequence" gives discriminative knowledge, or *prajna*, which "delivers from the bondage of ignorance." But this foray into the path of insight is overlooked in almost every modern system based on Patanjali. It is *samadhi* which is seen and taught as the heart of yoga; Vivekananda (1970) says, "*samadhi* is Yoga proper; that is the highest means." Patanjali names any number of objects for concentration: the syllable *Om* or other mantra, the heart, a deva or "illuminated soul," a divine symbol, or any object. The meditator, in merging his consciousness with the primary object, will first achieve *savichara samadhi*—access concentration, where there is identity with the primary object "mixed with awareness of name, quality, and knowledge"—and then *nirvichara samadhi*—first *jhana*, where there is identity without other awareness. Once the *nirvichara* level is gained, the meditator is to wipe out even the thought of the primary object, and so attain *nirvikalpa samadhi* (as in the example of Sri Ramakrishna), where all sense of duality is obliterated. When *nirvikalpa samadhi* is mastered, so that one can at will pass in and out of it repeatedly, one's consciousness differs decisively from before. Having "realized the Atman," one knows the conceptual universe to be an illusion and comes to regard all normal experience as painful. The final stage is enlightenment, "eternal existence in union with the Atman"—*sahaj samadhi*. Even in the waking state one now resides in *samadhi*, no longer identifying with the normal mind or its sense-perceptions. Being is grounded in a consciousness transcending the sensory world, and so remains detached

⁸*Samyama* mastery brings with it a long list of supernormal powers—virtually the same enumeration as in the *Visuddhimagga*. The procedure for using them is also the same. By "making *samyama*" on an appropriate object, a variety of supernormal feats become possible—e.g., *samyama* on the distinguishing marks of another man's body gives one knowledge of the true nature of his thoughts and moods. The list includes knowledge of the past and future and of previous lives, supernormal hearing and sight, and so on. Powers, observes Patanjali, appeal to the ego, and so are "the last temptation." One must give them up before full liberation; Sri Ramakrishna calls powers "heaps of rubbish."

from that world while operating in it. This "ideal of Yoga, the state of *jivan-mukti*," writes Eliade (1970), is life in an "eternal present" where one "no longer possesses a personal consciousness—that is, a consciousness nourished on his own history—but a witness consciousness which is pure lucidity and spontaneity."

*a witness
consciousness*

RAMANA MAHARSHI

The process of attainment via samadhi of the jhanas up to the sixth, awareness of infinite consciousness, is the basic practical teaching of Sri Sankaracharya's classical Advaitist school of Vedanta (Vimuktananda, 1966). The goal is union of mind with Brahma, infinite consciousness; the fifteen steps elucidated for "becoming Brahma" approximate those recommended in Patanjali and the *Visuddhimagga* for the jhana path. The preliminary steps are of renunciation and restraint of the senses; the sila formulation is in terms of *yama*: non-killing, truthfulness, nonstealing, continence, and nonreceiving of gifts. The complementary practice of *niyama* is the development of one-pointedness in absorption on Brahma, i.e., "pure consciousness, where seer, sight, and seen cease." In this state there is "complete forgetfulness of all thought by first making it changeless and then identifying it with Brahman." In his succinct instructions, Shankaracharya thus telescopes the entire progression from initial concentration to what may be the sixth jhana. He echoes Buddha in warning against attachment to gross feelings of pleasure arising from lower attainments in the material jhanas, which could serve as an obstacle to achieving the formless states. He also warns against the same "mental hindrances" to concentration, such as idleness, desire for sense-pleasure, distractedness, and the "tasting of joy" resulting from the jhanas. Shankaracharya, like Buddha, is careful to emphasize the need for jhana mastery (1966, p. 66): "The aspirant should carefully practice this meditation . . . until, being under his full control, it arises spontaneously, in an instant when called into action."

*"becoming
Brahma"*

Sri Ramakrishna is one contemporary being who realized these teachings; *The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna*, recording his day-to-day life as witnessed by the anonymous author M., is an extraordinary document of life lived in sahaj samadhi. His disciple Vivekananda carried the theme of Advait Self-realization to the West, and the organization he founded carries on that tradition. Another who attained full sahaj samadhi was Ramana Maharshi. He himself reached that state spontaneously at 17 when suddenly one day he experi-

the path of
"Self-inquiry"

Maharshi's
operational de-
finition for
liberation

subsidiary
practices

enced a "death" from which he emerged a realized being (Osborne, 1964). His basic teaching is that of Advait: the goal is "the plenary experience of the non-dual self," or Brahman. The direct path he taught is "Self-inquiry," one-pointed attention to the inquiry "Who am I?" tracing the thought "I" back to its subtlest beginnings. Constant concentration on the source of the "I-thought" brings a state where the "I"-thought ceases, a wordless, illuminated "I-I" remaining. This pure consciousness, says Ramana Maharshi, "is unlimited and one, the limited and the many thoughts having disappeared"; the *Visuddhimagga* system would see it as the first jhana. Sri Ramana defines samadhi as a subtle state in which even the thought "I-I" disappears—i.e., the second jhana and above. By the continual practice of samadhi it becomes a permanent state, suffusing all other states of consciousness. This is the level of the *jivan-mukta*, the liberated man. Ramana Maharshi (1962) proposes a simple operational definition for distinguishing between one still on the path at the level of *nirvikalpa* and one liberated in sahaj samadhi: if there remains a difference between samadhi and the waking state, there is still work to do; if no difference, the goal of sahaj samadhi has been reached.

All paths, according to Ramana Maharshi, end in the process of Self-inquiry. But not all aspirants are immediately ready for the intense one-pointedness required. For these others Sri Ramana recommends subsidiary practices such as japa and the breathing exercise of *pranayam*, or whatever else might aid in stilling the mind. An alternative path to Self-inquiry suitable to some is *Guru-kripa*, surrender to a Master whose grace descends on the devotee. If one's surrender is complete, all sense of self is lost. Coupled with association with the pure being of the guru, the devotee's mind thus becomes "purified" or stilled so that he is able to turn inward in meditation and find the Self. This is the guru's "grace," which is in fact immanent in the devotee as a potentiality of his own being. There is, says Ramana Maharshi, no difference between God, Guru, and Self: the external guru helps the devotee find the internal Self. Samadhi, says Sri Ramana, is your true nature; for one who dwells in it, there is no ego and there are no "others." The *jivan-mukta* has transcended body-consciousness and the conceptual universe; he does not see the world as different from himself. The state of the Realized One is described in Shankaracharya's *Vivekachudamain* (R. Maharshi, 1962, p. 92):

He who, even when his mind is merged in Brahman, is nevertheless awake, but is at the same time free from the character-

istics of the waking state, and whose realization is free from all desire, should be considered a *jivan-mukta*.

MAHARISHI MAHESH YOGI

The teachings of Shankaracharya are a variant of the classic statement found in Patanjali's *Yoga Sutras*. Both advocate enlightenment through the path of jhana; Patanjali more fully discusses a wide range of subsidiary practices of purification. Maharishi Mahesh Yogi's widely known system of "transcendental meditation" traces its roots back to these two sources, but is a re-formulation of both in Western terms. Maharishi denies the necessity of imposing on oneself an attitude or acts of renunciation. He sees purification as an effect of MSC, but not as a cause. According to Maharishi (1971), "proficiency in the virtues can only be gained by repeated experiences of samadhi."

"Transcendental Meditation"

In other respects, Maharishi's technique is in the mainstream of the jhana path. Like all yogis, Maharishi sees that "duality is the fundamental cause of suffering." His technique for transcending suffering entails three major steps. The first is silent repetition of a mantra—a Sanskrit word or sound—to develop one-pointedness. Though in teaching there is emphasis in avoiding effortful concentration, the student is told to bring the mind as it wanders back to the mantra, and in effect the process is one of becoming one-pointed. The following oft-quoted description by Maharishi of the nature of the technique can be seen as a description of the focal narrowing of attention on a meditation subject and subsequent transcendence of the subject in ascending through access concentration to the second jhana (1969, p. 470):

three major steps

... turning the attention inward towards the subtler levels of a thought until the mind transcends the experience of the subtlest state of the thought and arrives at the source of thought ...

Maharishi describes the consequent process of progressive stillness of mind in terms of the bliss that arises. The goal of mantra is what he calls "transcendental consciousness": when mind "arrives at the direct experience of bliss, it loses all contact with the outside and is contented in the state of transcendental bliss-consciousness." That is, one achieves access-concentration or jhana. The second phase is the infusion of jhana, or "transcendental consciousness" into the waking and sleep states by alternating them with periods of meditation. In intensive courses, hatha yoga asanas alternate

with sitting in meditation. The state thereby achieved is *nirvikalpa* samadhi, or "cosmic consciousness," where "no activity, however rigorous, can take one out of Being." As the meditator progresses, he is given instruction in techniques more advanced than simple use of mantra, and the periods of practice are extended; the specifics of advanced techniques are not given in published sources, but revealed to the individual only at his initiation.

While most bhakti paths end in samadhi, Maharishi's program is unique in approaching devotion through the back door, via jhana mastery. The third major step utilizes the bliss borne of samadhi, focusing it as devotion toward an external object. This step can take the form of initiating others into the technique: prior to the transmission of mantra, the initiator does *puja*, making offerings of gratitude to Maharishi's lineage of gurus, "the cherished names of the great masters of the holy tradition." Cosmic consciousness is thus transformed through devotion into "God-consciousness," where all things perceived are experienced as sacred; "everything is naturally experienced in the awareness of God." One now dwells in perfect harmony with nature and the Divine; "God-consciousness" is the resultant state. Arriving at God-consciousness, according to Maharishi, entails a physiological transformation whereby the metabolic changes characteristic of jhana permeate the waking and sleep states and one is aware of God in all aspects of creation. Beyond God-consciousness one may evolve into a state called "Unity," where consciousness is so refined that all things are perceived free of any conceptual illusion. From the viewpoint of other yoga systems, Maharishi's path ends with sahaj samadhi.

SWAMI MUKTANANDA

A number of systems recently introduced to the West trace their roots back to the same sources as Maharishi's but emphasize still another tradition: *Kundalini Yoga*, an essentially Tantric teaching. The Tantric tradition indigenous to India is apparently a refinement of Shamanistic practices that has found its way into both Hindu and Buddhist meditation systems; its means to liberation are MSC and the arousal of energies that give rise to supernormal powers, or *siddhis* (Douglas, 1971; Eliade, 1970). Kundalini, according to Tantric physiology, is a huge reserve of spiritual energy located at the base of the spine, in the *Muladhar*. When aroused, the kundalini is said to travel up the spine through six centers, or chakras, reaching the seventh at the top of

Tantric tradition and Kundalini Yoga

the head. As it reaches the higher centers, kundalini is said to produce experiences of MSC⁹ (Sivananda, 1971).

A variant of kundalini yoga is *siddha-yoga* as practiced by followers of Swami Muktananda. Swami Muktananda's system may begin with traditional practices: asana, pranayam, bhakti chanting, and japa, or meditation with mantra—e.g., "Guru Om," or with each breath "so-ham." But he emphasizes the guru-disciple relationship; the core of his teaching is the tradition of *siddha-yoga*, in which the guru is said to grant a direct, instantaneous transcendental experience to the devotee. This process, called *shaktipat diksha*, is an initiation by look, touch, or word whereby the devotee who approaches the guru with love, devotion, and faith has his *shakti*—the energy of kundalini—aroused. When this happens, all other intentional practices fall away; the action of kundalini within produces spontaneous meditation, pranayam, asanas, and mudras, without the devotee's prior training or volition. This process of purification is said to take 3 to 12 years, by which time the entire personality of the devotee is transformed, the "limited I" having been abandoned, and realization attained of "oneness with all-pervading Cosmic Intellect" (Amma, 1969; Muktananda, 1969, 1970). The imagery and terminology with which Muktananda describes this process is that of kundalini (1970, p. 54):

... the Kundalini, which stays in the *Muladhara*, gradually travels upwards piercing the *chakras* on her way until she reaches *Sahasrara*, the thousand-petalled lotus in the crown of the head . . . and the spiritual endeavor of an aspirant gets fulfilled.

While undergoing *shaktipat*, one experiences a wide variety of involuntary reactions: powerful moods of joy, dullness, or agitation; strange bodily postures, gestures, tremors or dancing poses; feelings of wonder or fright; a period of pain in all parts of the body; various internal stirrings, muscle throbbing, or thrills; spontaneous deep meditation; visions of lights, deities, or celestial places accompanied by a great joy and bliss; and, finally, there is a "divine light of indescribable

Swami
Muktananda's
siddha-yoga

initiation by
the guru

⁹Lama Govinda (1969) has related the chakras to specific physiological loci; Green and Green (1971)—themselves psychophysicists—describe them in terms of an "occult physics," as "etheric organs." The physiology of kundalini seems to have few specific correlates with Western anatomical science; Ramana Maharshi (Mahadevan, 1965) says these "mystic centres" are "but products of imagination," meant for "beginners in Yoga." Their status in the West thus far seems to be on a par with, say, Freud's constructs of ego, superego, libido, and cathexes—useful conceptual tools without specific anatomical referents—though future research may verify their existence. Many organizations in the West have an orientation to kundalini yoga—e.g., Swami Sivananda's Divine Life Society and its offshoots.

Supreme
State

lustre" or a subtle inner sound always in meditation (Muktananda, 1970). These phenomena serve to purify the meditator, so that he can more or less sustain *turiya*—jhana-consciousness—while in the three ordinary states of waking, dreaming, and sleeping. *Turiyatita* is reached when the kundalini has stabilized in the *sahasrara*; one in this state has forgotten body-consciousness, enjoys extraordinary bliss and profound tranquility, and has attained "the fruit of Yoga," remaining "ever absorbed in the Supreme State," whatever he does.

a first-person
account

Muktananda's autobiographical *Guru* is a remarkable first-person account of the whole process. His own guru, Sri Nityananda, raised Muktananda's kundalini via *shaktipat*, "a secretly concealed means of initiation used by the great sages," and transmitted to him the power to give this *diksha* to others. Though previously he had done pranayam and mantra meditation, he finally meditated only on his guru. The process ended for Muktananda with the vision in meditation of a small blue light, which he calls "the Blue Pearl." This tiny spot suddenly extended until it was an "infinite light," filling the universe with blue rays (similar to the *Visuddhimagga* description of attaining the fifth jhana via kasina), then subsided again to a dot. After this vision, "Muktananda was bereft of consciousness and memory. The distinction 'inner' and 'outer' evaporated. He was no longer aware of his own self . . ." (p. 178). On emerging from meditation, he found that the Blue Pearl stayed in his field of vision, eyes opened or closed, in his "inner eye." To this day he always sees it; when he looks at an object, he first sees the dot of blue, then the object. Though Muktananda meditates still, he feels there is nothing more to see—the Blue Pearl signifies the merging of kundalini in *sahasrara*, marking union of self with Self in *turiyatita*. From then on, says Muktananda, "I attained perfect peace and equanimity." A disciple of Muktananda, Amma (1969, p. 11), says of one in this state:

He has nothing to do and nothing to achieve; still he does the activities of worldly life remaining a witness to them all.

KIRPAL SINGH

the Path of
Sound Current

Kirpal Singh (1971) in his presentation of *Shabd Yoga*, the Path of Sound Current, does not dwell on the role of chakras, but like Swami Muktananda's *Siddha-Yoga* emphasizes the role of the guru in guidance, and offers a means for reaching from this world of form to the realm of the Formless. To do

so via this system, three conditions must be fulfilled: one needs a true Master, must practice self-discipline, and must pursue the method of *Shabd*, meditation on transcendental inner sounds. A true Master, or *Satguru*, under guidance from his own teacher has himself traversed this inner path to its goal; his state of mind is free of ego and attachment, his acts virtuous and creative. He is the living embodiment of the unity of experience at the foundation of all religious creeds, says Kirpal Singh, and has the compassion of Buddha and the love of Christ. Such a *Satguru* is pivotal to success at every step in Shabd Yoga: through his initiation the disciple will experience inner light and sound, and with his guidance will finally transcend body-consciousness (in jhana) to find the "inner guru" whose "Radiant Form will appear unsought to guide him onward." Through loving and obeying the true Master, as Kirpal Singh describes the process, the "little self is forgotten," and the Master's grace descends (or emerges from within), rewarding the disciple's efforts by facilitating the requisite condition for finding the inner guru: one-pointed concentration.

A key adjunct in developing one-pointedness is self-discipline in the form of a simple and pure life. Kirpal Singh does not advocate an ascetic renunciation of the world and one's place in it, nor the repression of desires, but rather urges the cultivation of internal detachment and moderation. As an aid to his pupils, he has them each keep a daily log of any "lapses in thought, word, and deed" as well as a record of time spent and experiences in meditation. These records of the inner life are sent to him by his students all over the world in a monthly progress report as an aid in achieving conscientiousness and its fruit in self-discipline. Kirpal Singh sees an interaction effect between self-discipline in life and concentration in meditation: "Some discipline is necessary, but . . . it must ultimately be inspired by inner spiritual experience." The integration accruing from the meditator's self-discipline "enables him to gain greater concentration, and so higher inner experience, and this inner experience must in turn have repercussions on outer thoughts and action."

daily record

The method wherein concentration is developed begins with an initiation by the Master where the disciple, it is said, is given a first-hand experience of at least a rudimentary level of a transcendental reality. As Kirpal Singh describes the initiation, the teacher instructs his student to close his eyes and focus attention on a point between and behind the eye-

*development of
concentration*

*emergence of
inner guru*

brows—"the seat of the soul"—and receives a mantra "charged with the inner power of the guru" which is to be "repeated slowly and lovingly with the tongue of thought." By this means the disciple's scattered thoughts are gradually collected at a single point. As he approaches the level of access concentration, he will begin to see "shifting points of light," which cease flickering as concentration increases and which consolidate into a "single radiating point." As the light becomes a point, "inner hearing" begins, marking entry into "another world, a different realm of experience," where physical consciousness is transcended in jhana, and the inner guru emerges. Through this "divine guide" one acquires the detachment required for attaining higher levels of jhana. Just as the *Visuddhimagga* advises, from the inner guru "the soul learns to overcome the first shock of joy and realizes that its goal lies still far ahead." Exactly how far this is in terms of jhanas can't be known from printed sources, save that at last there is "naught but the Great Ocean of Consciousness, of Love, of Bliss Ineffable." The effect of this achievement as it permeates the rest of one's life, says Kirpal Singh, will make the disciple himself a true Master.

TANTRA AND TIBETAN VAJRAYANA

*tantra yoga
and supernormal
psychic powers*

Neither Swami Muktananda nor Kirpal Singh make much of the supernormal powers which are said by Tantrics to accrue from mastering the jhanas. Tantra yoga is unique among systems for changing consciousness in seeing the attainment of *siddhis*, or supernormal psychic powers, as marking the end of the path: "For all sadhana ceases when it has borne its fruit in siddhi" (Woodruffe, 1965, p. 14). It may be due to the high states that the possession of powers betokens that they are taken by some as symptomatic of the goal in Tantra. Certain Tantric sadhanas are devised to produce specific *siddhis*; the perfected Tantric master is called a *siddha*, one who has mastered powers. Meditation is the central characteristic of all Tantric practices, *samadhi* the means and ends, no matter the specifics of formulation.

*the essence of
tantric practice*

The essence of Tantric practice is the use of the senses to transcend sense-consciousness in jhana. Though the senses are, of course, the modality of all techniques for one-pointedness, Tantrism is unique in the diversity of techniques it offers for transcending sense-consciousness: among them are the use of mantra; *yantra*, or objects for visualization exercises such as kasina and mandala; concentration on *shabd*,

the super-subtle inner sounds; *pranayam* and *asanas*; concentration on the play of forces in the chakras; and *maithuna*, the arousal of shakti—kundalini energy—through controlled, ritual sexual intercourse. The key to *maithuna*, as well as the goal of all these practices, is the detachment borne of samadhi, which converts the energy of desires into higher forms. Tantric texts frequently repeat (Eliade, 1970, p. 263), “By the same acts that cause some men to burn in hell for thousands of years, the Yogin gains his eternal salvation.” Practitioners of Tantric sadhana sometimes deviate from cultural proprieties—e.g., violating the Hindu tradition by taking wine and meat, meditating in ritually unclean places such as charnel grounds—especially in the Bon Marg, or “left-handed” path. Actions which from outside may seem cultural improprieties have within Tantra a special, deeper meaning, as can be seen in this description from the catalog of the Tibet House Museum in New Delhi of a *kapala*, a cup made of human skull mounted on a silver stand:

The vessel holds the Amrit used for performing esoteric rituals. Those who have such dualistic concepts as the clean and the unclean cannot think of using a human skull. But the Tantrics, who have gained Transcendental Wisdom, have no superstition and to them golden cups and human skulls are the same. The skulls are used to symbolize this attitude of mind.

The language of Tantra is veiled, and typically is open to many levels of interpretation.

Tantric sadhanas are often intricately complex, consisting of series and combinations of many interwoven elements—e.g., gazing at a yantra, reciting mantra, and visualizing a deity or set of symbols, all in a set sequence.¹⁰ Many of the more complicated Tantric practices are not themselves transcendental in nature, but are a preliminary training in one-pointedness and preparation for jhana. An example of one such is the following Tibetan practice of Arising Yoga, which its

*preliminary
training for
one-pointedness*

¹⁰One such current technique is that taught by the Mahatmas of the Divine Light Mission, devotees of the teen-age Guru Maharaj Hans-jl. This teaching comes from a line of gurus including Kirpal Singh's own Master, and resembles Shabd in some ways. The first initiation entails a fourfold practice wherein the initiate visualizes a “divine light,” experiences a “divine taste,” hears a “divine sound”; and visualizes the guru, all accompanied by appropriate mudras. Another new proponent of Tantric spiritual practice in the West is the group called Ananda Marg, path of bliss. Ananda Marg offers the student a similarly complex array of advanced practices, including meditation on the chakras accompanied by appropriate visualizations of colors and slokas in Sanskrit describing chakra function, projecting consciousness outward from chakra points, pranayam, and mantra for use throughout the day's activities. As with most tantric schools, the specifics of practice in these two are secret, as are details of more advanced techniques.

translator, Garma Chang (1963, p. 122), explains is done with conscious effort through the "mundane mind"; he enumerates as its main features and steps:

- (1) Visualizing all objects and the self-body as dissolving into the great Void.
- (2) Visualizing in the Void a bija seed (i.e., mantra) transforming itself into an image of the Self-Patron Buddha.
- (3) Visualizing the Self-Patron Buddha Body in its entirety, including the Three Main Channels and the Four Chakras.
- (4) Visualizing the Mandala and identifying all manifestations with Buddhahood.
- (5) Reciting the Mantra of the Patron Buddha and applying a specific visualization for a special yogic purpose.
- (6) Visualizing all objects, including the Self-Patron Buddha Body, as dissolving into the bija in the Heart.
- (7) From the Void again projecting the Self-Patron Buddha and the Mandala.

*assessment of
spiritual paths
difficult without
participation
in practices*

It is difficult to assess the true nature of any spiritual path without participating oneself in its practices. This methodological principle is especially apparent with respect to Tantric systems like Tibetan Vajrayana, where the heart of instruction is wholly esoteric. Vajrayana, the Tantric segment of Tibetan Buddhism, is veiled in secrecy; the great legendary Tantric Milarepa warns (Chang, 1970), "The teachings of Tantra should be practiced secretly; they will be lost if demonstrated in the marketplace." Though translations like Evan-Wentz' (1968, 1969) give a vivid taste of these Tibetan teachings, if one is to follow the intricacies of this path it is essential to find a teaching lama as guru, for even now the practical methods are transmitted only from teacher to student.¹¹

*teaching lama
essential*

*outline of
Vajrayana
theory in
practice*

Though the techniques of Vajrayana are founded on the *Visuddhimagga* tradition, it also blends purely Tibetan elements with Indian Tantrism. In an outline of Vajrayana theory and practice by the Dalai Lama (1965), the theory of Vajrayana is seemingly identical with the *Visuddhimagga*—or as Mahayanists call it, the *Hinayana* tradition, or "Lesser Vehicle." The critical difference between the traditions is the Mahayanist "Bodhisattva Vow": to gain enlightenment not just for oneself, but for the sake of the salvation of all sentient beings. This difference in motive is seen by the Dalai

¹¹Among the lamas actively teaching in the West are Tarthang Tulku in Berkeley, and Chogyam Trungpa in Colorado and Vermont. Chogyam Trungpa (1971) reiterates the need on this path for a guru or "competent guide," since "the tendency towards self-deception becomes increasingly dangerous as one progresses on the path."

Lama as decisive, producing a subsequent qualitative difference in both path and goal. The Hinayana nirvana is seen as a prior stage to the Mahayana goal of Bodhisattva. Still, the conception of the nirvanic state is the same: it is "liberation from this bondage" of *samsara* by "cessation," where the "roots of delusion are thoroughly extracted," the ego or I-thought severed.

The Vajrayana path as the Dalai Lama describes it is a near-perfect approximation of the *Visuddhimagga* teaching. There are three "Moral Precepts," vehicles for the realization of the "Triple Refuge"—Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha—as internal realities. The first precept is *sila*; the second is *samadhi* (Tibetan: *shiney*), fixing the mind on one object so it develops one-pointedness. The recommendations for optimal conditions to practice *samadhi* are as in the *Visuddhimagga*: seclusion, severing ties to worldly activities, and so on. The meditation objects resemble those of Indian Tantra, mainly figures of deities, Buddhas, and Bodhisattvas, and are portrayed in multiple aspects "so that they suit the physical, mental, and sensuous attitudes of different individuals," and arouse strong faith and devotion. The lama who is instructing will select a *yidam*, or deity, for meditation, appropriate to the student's needs. The Dalai Lama enumerates four steps in the stages of *samadhi*. There is an initial fixing of the mind on the primary object, then the attempt to prolong the sustained period of concentration on it. In the next stage, concentration is intermittent, diversions alternating in the mind with attention to the primary object; the experience of joy and ecstasy from one-pointedness strengthens efforts at concentration. This stage—*jhana* access—culminates when the mind finally overcomes disturbances, enabling concentration on the object without any interruption whatsoever—the full one-pointedness of the first *jhana* and above. The final stage is that of "mental quiescence," where concentration is possible with the minimum of conscious effort—i.e., *jhana* mastery. One can now concentrate on any object with effortless ease; psychic powers have become possible.

The significance of *jhana* mastery in Vajrayana, however, is not in the powers made possible, but in its potential use to realize *Sunyata*, the essential emptiness of the phenomenal world, including oneself—what the *Visuddhimagga* calls *anatta*. The means for this is the third precept, the practice of *vipassana* (Tibetan: *thagthong*), using the power of *samadhi* as a stepping stone for meditation on the "meaning of *Sunyata*." Though the Dalai Lama (1965) does not de-

*approximation
of Vajrayana
path and
Visuddhimagga
teaching*

*"Sunyata",
essential
emptiness of
phenomenal
world, including
oneself*

tail the nature of vipassana technique in Vajrayana, he mentions that the flow of the undisciplined mind can be stopped, "and the wandering or projecting mind brought to rest, by concentration on the physical make-up of one's body and the psychological make-up of one's mind"—two techniques of vipassana taught in the *Visuddhimagga*. By means of vipassana with Sunyata as focus one discards ego-beliefs, finally reaching "the goal that leads to the destruction of all moral and mental defilements."

*consequential
differences
between
Mahayana and
Hinayana*

At this final stage of the Vajrayana path, the differences in motive between Mahayana and Hinayana become consequential. If one undertook the process solely to realize the Triple Gem within and liberate himself, he will be what the *Visuddhimagga* calls an "arahant." If motivated by the "Bodhi-chitta of love and compassion," one will gain the "superior release" of the Bodhisattva, where one's state of consciousness makes him a perfect vehicle of compassion, leading others toward liberation. In either case, says the Dalai Lama, a Bodhisattva has "cleansed his mind of all impurities and has removed the motives and inclinations that lead to them," and severed ties to the conceptual world of name-and-form, the locus of normal consciousness.

Mahamudra

The penultimate in some Vajrayana teaching lines is *Mahamudra*, first expounded in the eleventh century by the guru Tilopa to his disciple Naropa with the fundamental instruction "Look into the mirror of your mind."¹² Chang's (1963) translation of Tilopa's "Song of Mahamudra" has these summatory lines:

If with the mind one observes the mind
One destroys distinctions and reaches Buddhahood.
The clouds that wander through the sky have no roots, no home;
Nor do the distinctive thoughts floating through the mind.
Once the self-mind is seen, discrimination stops.

The means, in theory, to the Mahamudra state is strikingly similar to the *Visuddhimagga* practice of vipassana (though the specifics of practice are given only in oral transmission). Guenther (1963) describes it as a "relaxation of the tensional pattern of the senses" which breaks up the perceptual-cognitive chain by "arriving at pure sensation"; Tilopa says, "Mahamudra is like a mind that clings to nought." Sense-

¹²There are numerous schools within Tibetan Buddhism, each with its own special emphasis and training; Chogyam Trungpa, for example, belongs to a line whose highest teaching is "Maha Ati," the "Zen of Vajrayana," said to be a stage beyond Mahamudra.

perceptions are attended to with detachment, by the power of which whatever one has met with as appearance is understood to be “co-emergent awareness,” i.e., mind taking an object. At this precognitive level one recognizes that “all the entities of the outer objective world are based in mind.” All external objects are thus reduced in the perceptual situation to pure sensation or raw experience. One sees that all sam-sara is only mind-process, devoid of any self. This realization results in “securing an inner immunity which cannot be assailed by doubts, hopes, and fears.”

In his translation of the Mahamudra text “The Yoga of the Great Symbol” Evans-Wentz (1968) enumerates numerous practices for the development of Mahamudra, most representative of Tantra, and some clearly along the lines of the *Visuddhimagga*.¹⁸ The Evans-Wentz version starts from the initial development of one-pointedness, “the path leading to Mahamudra.” A second method is “concentration without using an object”—i.e., contemplation of the process of mind. Throughout, the text intermingles techniques for one-pointedness and vipassana-like practices. The latter include detachedly watching the “interminable flow of thoughts” until one perceives “the arising and cessation of thoughts,” and letting thoughts go as they will so that “when cognitions arise . . . consciousness of them is concomitant with their arising.” Such practices lead to a state where there is neither inhibition of nor reaction to thoughts, and an equanimous spontaneous cognition of thoughts arising and vanishing. These are all prior steps in what Evans-Wentz’ Tilopa (1968, p. 139) describes as:

This art of attaining Liberation by merely recognizing the thoughts, whereby one acquireth understanding of the inseparable nature of the abandoner (i.e., the mind) and of the thing to be abandoned (i.e., the thought).

“Abandoning the mind” has the same significance in Vajrayana as in vipassana: the realization of non-self and subsequent ego-loss. This end state of Mahamudra, says Guenther (1963), is “an ever-lasting task rather than an achievement”; it has to be “attended to by meditation and

*practices for the
development of
Mahamudra*

*end state as non-
effortful task
rather than
achievement*

¹⁸Evans-Wentz notes that this teaching was extant in India before Tilopa. The text of the teaching itself cites the *Abhidhamma*, the Theravadan collection containing the *Visuddhimagga*, as well as a wide variety of yogic sources. It may be that the core of Mahamudra is the body of techniques detailed in the *Visuddhimagga* with a Tantric admixture. The Tibetan tradition uses Theravadan sources such as the *Visuddhimagga* as a basic teaching, acknowledging their validity and utility and then amplifying upon them. In reckoning the ten *bhumis* (or stations) of the Bodhisattva Path, for example, Chogyam Trungpa says the seventh *bhumi* is equivalent to the *Visuddhimagga* arahant stage—there being three *bhumis* beyond (personal communication).

practiced." Still, this "task" cannot be said to be effortful—it is simply the ongoing process of mind in what Lama Govinda (1969) calls "the ultimate state of integration." The Ven. Lama Kong Ka, in transmitting the teaching of Mahamudra, directs one who would become a Bodhisattva through perfect Mahamudra-awareness to "stop discriminating, abandon habitual thoughts of 'accept this' and 'reject that,'" and strive to reach a state where meditation and activities become one. This meditation of the Bodhisattva, according to Chogyam Trungpa (1971), is mindfulness, albeit of an effortless and spontaneous sort: "He is awake to the situations as they are. . . . He doesn't watch himself acting or meditating, so his action is meditation and his meditation becomes action."

Zen

basic practice:
zazen

Zen, like Tibetan Vajrayana, perhaps differs more on the level of theological rationale than in actual practice from the *Visuddhimagga* techniques of which it is ultimately derivative. "Zen" is, in fact, a cognate of "jhana," and both are derived from the Sanskrit "dhyana," meditation. The process of cultural diffusion culminating in Japanese Zen is historically linked to the *Visuddhimagga* tradition through the Ch'an school of China. The transitions undergone in the voyage through time and space from India of the fifth century to Japan of the present day are most evident in terms of doctrine; doctrinal differences have tended to emphasize these changes and to obscure similarities. The basic practice, zazen, remains essentially identical to vipassana, though with the addition of subsidiary trappings such as sutra chanting and manual labor. Among the changes, the focus in zazen has broadened from sitting meditation to a range of stimuli and life-situations which act as multiple motivators to overcome the ennui relentless sitting alone might bring, especially for beginners.

The practice of zazen begins, as with vipassana, with a firm grounding in concentration. The accent in most Ch'an and Zen schools is on a variety of concentration techniques: the insight of prajna is seen to flow from samadhi. Of the "awakenings" in Zen, many are stages of jhana; Luk (1971) elaborates the Ch'an master Han Shan's autobiography, showing that the bulk of his major awakenings encompassed the jhanas into the formless level. To realize an "absolute nirvana," however, Luk (1966) advises that concentration and insight must be equally developed. The

essential interrelatedness of the two is set forth by the Sixth Patriarch, Hui Neng, a link in the chain of transmission which the Mahayana tradition traces directly back to Gautama Buddha (Luk, 1962, p. 44):

Dhyana and wisdom are one and not two separate things. Dhyana is the substance of wisdom and wisdom is the function of dhyana . . . They are like a lamp and its light.

Throughout its history there has been a tension within Zen and affiliated schools of Buddhism centering around maintaining a functional equilibrium between the two poles of dhyana and wisdom—i.e., concentration and insight. In the fifteenth century, for example, the Pure Land sect practice of *Nembutsu*—repetition of the name of Buddha—made inroads into Zen circles. The Zen master Huan-chi responded by warning his disciples that though there was no dispute between the two pathways, one should choose one or the other exclusively, for neither will be attained if both are attempted. Suzuki (1958, p. 168) notes that the goal of Nembutsu, “rebirth in the Pure Land,” is a symbolic reference to the state of samadhi reached by its intensive practice: “The devotee is persuaded to practice the Nembutsu in order to see the Buddhas, but when he actually enters into a samadhi he sees them in quite a different form from what he might have expected.” The “rebirth” is a spiritual regeneration, one and the same psychological fact as the achievement of jhana. But this is not the goal of Zen. Jhana—in Zen terminology, the “great fixation” or “a state of oneness”—is an intermediate stage in progress toward final realization. Suzuki warns (1958, p. 135):

When this state of great fixation is held as final, there will be no upturning, no outburst of satori, no penetration, no insight into Reality, no severing the bonds of birth and death.

Among the techniques used in Zen are some unique variants of devices for achieving samadhi. One such, the koan (used primarily by the Rinzai sect), is a puzzle utterly impervious to solution by logic or reason—its “solution” lies in transcending thought, its purpose is to liberate the mind from the snare of language (Miura and Sasaki, 1965). Assigned a koan such as “What was your face before you were born?” or “What is Mu?” the aspirant keeps the koan in mind constantly, no matter what he is doing—when other matters intrude on the mind, he immediately returns to it. As the mind discovers its inadequacy to solve the insoluble, a feverish pitch of concentration is generated accompanied by

*koan as unique
variant of de-
vices for
achieving
samadhi*

a supreme frustration, and what once was a fully stated koan reduces to an emblematic fragment—e.g., simply “Mu.” When the discursive faculty finally exhausts itself, the moment of “realization” comes: thought ceases in the state of *daigi* or “fixation,” and the koan “yields up all its secrets” in the attainment of *jhana* (Suzuki, 1958).

*fruits of joriki
and “seeing into
your true
nature”*

Yasutani (Kapleau, 1967), a contemporary roshi, utilizes the koan for his more advanced students, while for beginners he assigns concentration on breathing. He sees the aim of *zazen* not as rendering the mind inactive in *jhana*, but “quieting and unifying it in the midst of activity.” Consequently, his students work with concentration techniques until a modicum of *joriki*—strength arising from a mind unified and one-pointed—develops. The fruits of *joriki* are equanimity, determination, and a potential ripeness for *Kensho-godo*, the satori-awakening of “seeing into your True-nature.” Working with a koan, for instance, the student finds that the point of *samadhi*-fruition comes when there is “absolute unity with Mu, unthinking absorption in Mu—this is ripeness.” At this point, “inside and outside merge into a single unity.” With this *samadhi* experience, *Kensho-godo* can take place, where one will “see each thing just as it is.” This satori-awakening is seen in Zen as a waking state aftereffect of *samadhi*; Yasutani-roshi notes that satori usually follows a period of *samadhi* practice. In an autobiographical essay on his own training, D. T. Suzuki tells of his first attainment of *samadhi*, on the koan Mu (1969):

But this *samadhi* is not enough. You must come out of that state, be awakened from it and that awakening is *prajna*. That moment of coming out of *samadhi* and seeing it for what it is—that is satori.

*“just sitting”
and “bare
attention”*

A given *kensho* experience may fall anywhere within a wide range of depth, degree, and clarity. *Joriki* strengthens satori; the *joriki* developed in *zazen* cultivates the satori-effect until finally it becomes an “omnipresent reality shaping our daily lives.” When the student has gained some degree of control over his mind via one-pointedness exercises like counting breath, or “exhausted the discursive intellect” with koan, Yasutani-roshi frequently sets him to *shikan-taza*, where one marshalls a heightened state of concentrated awareness in “just sitting,” with no primary object. One sits alert and mindful, free of points of view or discriminating thoughts, merely watching; the technique is markedly similar to *vipassana*. A connected practice is “mobile *zazen*,” where one enters fully into every action with total attention and

clear awareness—it is “bare attention” as taught by the *Visuddhimagga*. The close parallel between zazen and vipassana is striking; Kapleau (1967), in fact, cites a key sutra from the *Visuddhimagga* on mindfulness as a “pre-description” for this zazen:

In what is seen there must be just the seen;
In what is sensed there must be just the sensed;
In what is thought there must be just the thought.

The awakening which samadhi brings is a prior step in Zen to the final satori, the “whole of Zen.” The technical Mahayana term for satori is *paravritti*, a “turning-over” at the base of the mind by which one’s entire consciousness is wholly transformed. One becomes thoroughly detached from thought and sense-perception as the result of this turning over of the mind, described by Wei Wu Wei (1968, p. 78) as a transition from

*discussion of
satori*

. . . externalization to internality, from objectifying the “kingdom of the Earth” *without* to integrating the “kingdom of Heaven” *within*. . . . This is a reversion from durational thought and sensation to immediate apperceiving unextended in “space” and “time.”

Suzuki (1949) describes the process as one where the facts of daily experience are taken as they come, and from them “a state of no-mind-ness is extracted”; all sense data is received and registers, but with non-reaction. This abstention from reactive thought, says Blofeld (1962, note 64), “does not mean trance-like dullness, but a brilliantly clear state of mind in which the details of every phenomenon are perceived, yet without evaluation or attachment”; Blofeld’s description is the essence of the insight path as set forth in the *Visuddhimagga*. It was the Sixth Ch’an Patriarch, Hui-Neng, whose teaching set the tone for Zen practice to this day, who introduced *chien-hsing*, “to look into the nature of the mind” as the key practice of his teaching.¹⁴ The

¹⁴At the time he was in the midst of a factional dispute with Shenhui (a Dharma scholar competing for successorship from the Fifth patriarch), who advocated a Zen centering on samadhi practices, with prajna relegated to mere intellectual understanding. Hui-Neng countered by affirming the equal footing (and essential sameness) of samadhi with prajna practice; the “insight” he advocated was an “abiding in the non-abiding.” His instructions parallel the Buddha’s for vipassana (Suzuki, 1949 p. 65):

. . . sit in the right meditation posture, and purge your mind thoroughly of thoughts—thoughts about all things. . . . Present events are already here before you; then have no attachment to them. . . . When thoughts come and go, do not follow them. . . . When abiding with thoughts, do not tarry in them. . . . When thus freed from abiding in thoughts, you are said to be abiding with the non-abiding. . . . If you have a thoroughly clear perception as to the mind having no abiding place anywhere, this is a clear perception

master Hui Hai (in Blofeld, 1962), a successor to Hui-Neng's teaching, is succinct in his statement of the Zen principle of deliverance: "When things happen, make no response: keep your minds from dwelling on anything whatsoever." The fourteenth-century Zen master Bassui, in a sermon on attaining "One-mind," affirms that what is termed "zazen" is "no more than looking into one's own mind, neither despising nor cherishing the thoughts that arise." What the masters describe is a neutral psychological stance toward all inner and outer phenomena, which is both means and end in Zen. The coalescence of means and ends is functionally marked by a psychological continuity between sitting and the rest of one's day; Ruth Sasaki (Murai and Sasaki, 1965, p. xi) elaborates:

The experienced practitioner of zazen does not depend upon sitting in quietude on his cushion. States of consciousness at first attained only in the meditation hall gradually become continuous, regardless of what other activities he may be engaged in.

false satori stage

There are numerous moments of satori in zazen practice, some of which seem to be experiences of jhana, some stages in the path of insight. Yasutani warns his students, for example, to ignore *makyo*, illusory visions and sensations, which he describes as temporary mental states arising when one's ability to concentrate develops to a point within reach of *kensho* (probably indicators of the access concentration level). Kapleau mentions a "false satori" stage, sometimes called the "cave of Satan," where one experiences serenity and believes it to be a final realization; this pseudo-emancipation must be broken through, just as with the pseudo-nirvana on the vipassana path. The final drive toward enlightenment as described by Kapleau (1967, p. 13) is also a description of the psychology of the stages just prior to nirvana on the path of vipassana: one's effort is "powered on the one hand by a painfully felt inner bondage—a frustration with life, a fear of death, or both—and on the other by the conviction that through satori one can gain liberation."¹⁵

of one's own being. This very Mind which has no abiding anywhere is the Buddha-Mind itself.

¹⁵A common popular error is the view that satori comes about fortuitously, without any particular prior effort. Collections like Rep's *Zen Flesh, Zen Bones* can be misunderstood as supporting this view, enumerating case after case of the dramatic moment of final satori-breakthrough seemingly brought about by a mere word, gesture, or odd moment of perception. What is lacking, of course, is mention of the years of intensive zazen practice which has brought the aspirant to the final moment of ripeness. The underlying and invisible dynamic of these moments of sudden intuitive understanding is explained in a work on Satipatthana; its applicability to zazen is clear (Nyanaponika Thera, 1968 p. 46):

Silently and in the hidden depths of the subliminal mental processes, the

The stress in Zen practice is on the need to ripen an initial satori through subsequent practice, until it finally permeates one's life. The means to a satori is concentration coupled with insight or mindfulness; the subsequent full fruition is a state of mind stilled, beyond any further technique or practice. Kapleau describes the object of zazen as: "the cultivation first of mindfulness and eventually mindlessness." These two psychological conditions are amplified by Kapleau (1967, p. 201):

Mindfulness is a state wherein one is totally aware in any situation and so always able to respond appropriately. Yet one is aware he is aware. Mindlessness, on the other hand, or "no-mindness" as it has been called, is a condition of such complete absorption that there is no vestige of self-awareness.

This final Zen stage of "no-mind" is *mujodo no taigau*, where the spontaneity and clarity of *kensho* or satori is manifest in all one's acts. Here means and ends coalesce; the posture of mindfulness is built into one's consciousness, and so it is full awareness devoid of self-consciousness. On the way to this enlightenment one will have directly experienced, e.g., the arising, flourishing, and passing away of thoughts, and so realized the three truths of Buddha: that all things are impermanent, that "life is pain, and that all forms are *ku*, empty or voidness." One thus ceases clinging to the phenomenal world, yet continues to act in the world. Yasutani-roshi calls this "truly living Zen," when one's life and final Zen awareness are fully integrated. Among the attributes of one in this state are childlike spontaneity and simplicity, compassion, effortless grace, and the experiencing of life with immediacy and full awareness. Recognizing the depth of this transformation of personality and its pervasive effect on behavior, Zen has comparatively little emphasis on moral precepts. Rather than merely imposing precepts from the outside, Zen sees morality as emerging from within, a by-product of the change in consciousness zazen can bring. The depth and quality of this change can vary in degree and kind; it is a Zen rule of thumb that there are many satoris along the way to final, full enlightenment. Thomas Merton (1965) points out that the Ch'an and Zen teachings are the true inheritors of the thought and spirit of the Taoist Chuang

*final stage
of Zen*

*attributes of
"truly living
Zen"*

*degrees of
enlightenment*

work of collecting and organizing the material of experience and knowledge goes on until it is ripe to emerge as what we call an *intuition*. The breaking through of that intuition is sometimes occasioned by quite ordinary happenings which, however, may have strong evocative power. . . . Many instances are recorded of monks where the flash of intuitive penetration did not strike them when they were engaged in the meditative practice of insight proper, but on quite different occasions: when stumbling, etc.

Tzu, who wrote these words, which could be taken to summarize the path as well as the finished product in Zen (p. 112):

No drives, no compulsions,
No needs, no attractions:
Then your affairs
Are under control.
You are a free man.

GURDJIEFF

The system that G.I. Gurdjieff introduced to the West after extensive travel in Asia meeting “remarkable men” is, in the words of his pupil Orage (in Anderson, 1962), the religious teachings of the East disguised “in a terminology which would not alienate the factual minds of Western thinkers.” Ouspensky (1971), another student of Gurdjieff, characterizes the system as an “esoteric school,” not suited to mass tastes, which tells *how* to do what popular religions teach *has* to be done—i.e., raise one’s consciousness. Gurdjieff himself called it The Fourth Way: not the traditional path of the fakir, monk, or yogi, but the way of the “sly man,” who does not retreat from the world in solitary meditation, but works on his consciousness in the mirror of his relationships with people, animals, property, and ideas. Gurdjieff founded a school for disseminating his insights and techniques, and since at an advanced stage the student must share his acquired knowledge with others in order to advance still further, there have grown up numerous second-, third-, and fourth-generation Gurdjieff groups, each with its own style and idiosyncracies. The original school made use of a great range of techniques, so that any given latter-day group of this Fourth Way may or may not fit the Gurdjieffian system discussed here.

most every person is “asleep”

Gurdjieff’s assessment of the human condition is that most every person is “asleep,” living a life of mechanical repetition and automatic response to stimulus. “Contemporary man,” writes Gurdjieff (1971), “has gradually deviated from the natural type he ought to have represented . . . the perceptions and manifestations of the modern man . . . represent only the results of automatic reflexes of one or another part of his general entirety.” Like the Buddha, Gurdjieff understands the normal state to be one of suffering. The remedy he offers begins with observing oneself; Kenneth Walker (1969, p. 206), who studied with Ouspensky and Gurdjieff, puts it thus:

We are imprisoned within our own minds, and however far we extend them and however highly we decorate them we still remain within their walls. If we are ever to escape from our prisons, the first step must be that we should realize our true situation and at the same time see ourselves as we really are and not as we imagine ourselves to be. This can be done by holding ourselves in a state of passive awareness.

The specific practice Walker describes is "self-remembering," a technique of deliberately dividing the attention and directing a portion back on oneself. Within the multiple and fluctuating selves which compose the normal "self" one establishes a self that is only watching all the rest: the "observing I" or the "Witness." There is initially great difficulty in coming to a stable observing "I": the beginner constantly forgets to remember himself, and self-observation surrenders to the usual full identification with whichever "I" has reign over the mind at a given moment. But, with persistence, the self-remembering process becomes self-reinforcing, for in Ouspensky's words, "the more we appreciate our present psychological state of sleep, the more we appreciate the urgent need to change it." The psychological stance required is self-directed detachment, as though one's own thoughts and acts were those of some other person with whom one is only slightly acquainted. Ouspensky (in Walker, 1969, p. 40) instructs:

Observe yourself very carefully and you will see that not *you* but *it* speaks within you, moves, feels, laughs, and cries in you, just as *it* rains, clears up and rains again outside you. Everything happens in you, and your first job is to observe and watch it happening.

Self-remembering proceeds just as does the mindfulness of vipassana, which it closely resembles: with the realization of a lapse in self-observation, one returns from wandering mind to the task of watching oneself. Though the various Gurdjieff circles make use of a range of techniques for developing one-pointedness, these are subsidiary to the principal work of self-remembering; the critical skill sought is the capacity to direct attention to self-observation. Gurdjieff taught to his own groups Eastern sacred dances which served multiple functions, among them to illustrate the cosmological system he propounded and to instill a degree of one-pointedness in the dancers: Walker's experience as a dance pupil was that one or two moments of mind wandering and all coordinated movements collapsed.¹⁶ Ouspensky (1971) em-

*"self-remembering" and
"observing I" or
"Witness"*

*self-remembering
and
mindfulness*

¹⁶Walker (1969 p. 69) describes another key exercise learned directly from Gurdjieff, called "body-sensing":

*examples of
self-
remembering*

phatically links self-remembering to the path of insight, naming as antithetical to his goal both the samadhi trance state and the normal state of identifying which "imprisons man in some small part of himself." Just as with the practice of insight, in self-remembering the "distorting glasses of the personality" are abandoned in order to see oneself clearly. Like mindfulness, in self-remembering one acknowledges oneself in entirety without any comment and without naming what is seen; it is pre-conceptual cognition. Other examples of self-remembering practices are: to focus on one aspect of everyday behavior—e.g., movements of the hands or another body part, or facial gestures—witnessing it all day; or "wherever one is, whatever one does, remember one's own presence and notice always what one does." These instructions for developing the Witness are parallel to, e.g., those of the Buddhist monk Nyanaponika (1968) for mindfulness, though they are cast in terms of Gurdjieff's system of "psychic centers" controlling body, emotion, and thought. The similarity between systems is probably no accident; both Gurdjieff and Ouspensky traveled in lands where vipassana was taught precisely to learn such methods, and Gurdjieff was a great borrower, re-shaper, and transmitter of Eastern teachings.

*multiplicity
of selves*

In the course of self-remembering one comes to realize (as on the path of insight) that one's inner states are constantly flowing and fluctuating and that there is no such thing as a permanent "I" within. One comes to recognize an internal cast of characters—"principle features"—each in turn dominating the stage and adding its idiosyncracies to the shape of personality. With self-observation the multiplicity of selves becomes apparent, then falls away; through observing them these selves lose their hold as one ceases to identify with them. In the process, analytic self-awareness gives way to self-remembering, for which it is both preparatory and supplementary; this change marks a transition from a conceptual self-observation to a state of nonconceptual cognition. By strengthening the observing "I" and remaining detached from all the others, one can "wake up." In waking

We were told to direct our attention in a predetermined order to various sets of muscles . . . relaxing them more and more as we came around to them again. . . . Whilst we were doing this we had at the same time to "sense" that particular area of the body; in other words, to become aware of it . . . with practice the attention can be thrown on to any part of the body desired, the muscles in that particular area relaxed, and sensation from that region evoked. This exercise as described fits precisely a technique for *vedana vipassana* (insight of sensation) which I was taught in India, save that the primary task was to feel sensations and the relaxation was a side-effect. Gurdjieff sometimes alternated body-sensing with concentration-developing practices—e.g., counting, repeating strings of words—just as the *vedana vipassana* I learned is systematically alternated with concentration on breathing.

up, the existence of everyday selves is sacrificed in order to enter into a unique state qualitatively distinct from normal consciousness. Walker describes this state of continuing self-awareness as "a sense of being present, of being there, of thinking, perceiving, feeling, and moving with a certain degree of control and not just automatically." In this state the Witness is crystallized as a continuous psychological function; one can see oneself with full objectivity. The criterion for knowing oneself completely in this way is observation simultaneous with occurrence in the mind rather than in retrospect—also a key landmark on the insight path.

Complete self-knowledge of this kind is seen as an intermediate stage, preliminary to the highest state, "Objective Consciousness." In this state one sees not only oneself but everything else as well with full objectivity. Objective Consciousness is reached by, and is the culmination of, self-remembering. Ordinary consciousness is not wholly dislodged, but full objectivity in an a-conceptual reality is superimposed upon it, adding an "inner silence" and liberating sense of distance from the continuing rumblings of the mind. One's experience of the world in Objective Consciousness is entirely altered; Walker (pp. 47–48) describes this end-state in Gurdjieff's training:

*highest state:
objective
consciousness*

The small limiting "self" of everyday life, the self which insists on its personal rights and separateness, is no longer there to isolate one from everything else, and in its absence one is received into a much wider order of existence . . . as the clamor of thought within dies down into the inner silence, an overwhelming sense of "being" takes its place. . . . Such limiting concepts as "yours" or "mine," "his" or "hers" are meaningless. . . . and even those old divisions of time into "before" and "after" have been drowned into the fathomless depth of an ever-present "now." So also has disappeared . . . the division between the subject and the object, the knower and the thing known.

KRISHNAMURTI'S CHOICELESS AWARENESS

Krishnamurti's (1962) analysis of the human predicament is quite close to that of the Buddha. The mind and the world, says Krishnamurti, are in everlasting flux: "There is only one fact, impermanence." The mind clings to a "me" in the face of the insecurity of flux, but the "me" exists only through identification with the things it imagines it has been and wants to be. The "me" is "a mass of contradictions, desires, pursuits, fulfillments, and frustrations, with sorrow outweigh-

*analysis of
human
predicament*

ing joy." There is constant conflict within between "what is" and "what should be." The conditioned mind, in Krishnamurti's analysis, flees from the facts of its impermanence, non-self, and sorrow, building walls of habit and repetition, pursuing the dreams of the future or clinging to that which has been, paralyzing one from living in the present moment.

*opposition to
methods and
techniques*

In its dissatisfaction, says Krishnamurti, the mind may try to achieve an escape from the mechanisms of conditioning, but in the very attempt simply creates another prison of methods to follow and goals to achieve. He opposes *methods* and *techniques* of every kind, urging one to put aside all authority and tradition—from them one can only collect more knowledge, while what is needed is "understanding." For according to Krishnamurti, no technique can free the mind, for any effort by the mind only weaves another net. "Freedom is not the outcome of the desire to be free," but rather desirelessness itself. He is most emphatically opposed to concentration methods for liberation (quoted in Coleman, 1971, p. 114):

By repeating Amen or *Om* or Coca-Cola indefinitely you obviously have a certain experience because by repetition the mind becomes quiet. . . . It is one of the favorite gambits of some teachers of meditation to insist on their pupils learning concentration, that is, fixing the mind on one thought and driving out all other thoughts. This is a most stupid, ugly thing, which any schoolboy can do because he is forced to.

*"choiceless
awareness"*

The "meditation" Krishnamurti advocates does not follow any system, least of all "repetition and imitation." He proposes a "choiceless awareness" as both means and end: the "experiencing of what is without naming." This meditation is not within the realm of discursive thought; all thought and all knowledge he says, belong to the past, and meditation is always the present. The mind must relinquish all the patterns and habits it has acquired out of the urge to be secure; "its gods and virtues must be given back to the society which bred them." All thought and all imagining must be relinquished; advises Krishnamurti (1962, pp. 8–10):

Let the mind be empty, and not filled with the things of the mind. Then there is only meditation, and not a meditator who is meditating . . . the mind caught in imagination can only breed delusions. The mind must be clear, without movement, and in the light of that clarity the timeless is revealed.

Krishnamurti echoes Tilopa's *Song of Mahamudra* in advocating what sounds like an end-state only, a methodless

method. But on closer scrutiny, Krishnamurti, like Tilopa, directly tells all who might hear the "how" while at the same time he insists that "there is no how; no method." He instructs one "just to be aware of all this . . . of your own habits, responses." His means is to observe all awareness, constantly watching. This mode of careful attention he calls "self-knowledge"; its essence is "to perceive the ways of your own mind" so that the mind is "free to be still" as it must be to understand. Understanding as Krishnamurti describes it comes into being when the discursive habits of thought are still. The key is "attention without the word, the name"; still, he instructs, "Look and be simple": where there is attention independent of reactive thought, reality is.

tells "how" and insists "there is no how; no method"

The process Krishnamurti proposes for attaining self-knowledge is a virtual duplicate of mindfulness training as described by the Buddhist monk Nyanaponika. But Krishnamurti himself most certainly would not condone such a comparison because of the danger he sees inherent in trying to achieve any goal via preformulated technique. The process he suggests for allowing the mind to become still springs from the very realization of one's predicament, for to know "that you have been asleep is already an awakened state." This very truth, he insists, will act on the mind, setting it free. Without detailing any specifics, Krishnamurti (1962, p. 60) assures that:

When the mind realizes the totality of its own conditioning . . . then all its movements come to an end: it is completely still, without any desire, without any compulsion, without any motive. . . .

This awakening is for Krishnamurti a spontaneous, automatic process: "realization." The mind discovers, or rather is caught up in, the solution "through the very intensity of the question itself." This realization cannot be sought: "it comes uninvited." Should one somehow experience the realization of which Krishnamurti speaks, a new state of being would emerge, freed from conditioned habits of perception and cognition, devoid of self.¹⁷ To thus understand reality in his

awakening is spontaneous automatic process: "realization"

¹⁷Given that the groundwork for (and the result of) this realization is similar to mindfulness, one sees that Krishnamurti's nontechnique may tap into the same dynamic as vipassana, where the identical realizations—of impermanence, non-self, suffering—trigger a sudden stilling of the mind in the nirvanic state. The *Visuddhimagga* system would classify Krishnamurti as a "dry-worker"—i.e., one who undertakes vipassana ("seeing things as they are") without any prior or auxiliary practice of samadhi. Though, again, he himself would undoubtedly reject any such comparisons, in his person-to-person talks he creates a situation that confronts his listener with the absurdity and futility of resolving one's dilemmas of whatever sort via the rational mind, which sets the stage for a "realization." After a dialogue with Krishnamurti, Coleman (1971: p. 91) wrote,

*"aloneness
beyond
loneliness"*

sense is seen by Krishnamurti as equivalent to love: "Where the self is, love is not." The state thus emergent is an "aloneness beyond loneliness," where there is no verbal movement within the mind, but rather a pure experiencing, "attention without motive." One is free from envy, ambition, and the desire for power, and is free to love with understanding and compassion. Here feeling is knowing, in a state of total attention with no watcher. Living in an eternal present, one ceases collecting impressions or experiences; the past dies in each successive moment. The sleep state becomes one of complete rest and renewal where one does not dream at all. With choiceless awareness, one is free to be simple; as Krishnamurti (Coleman, 1971, p. 95) puts it:

Be far away, far away from the world of chaos and misery, live in it, untouched. . . . The meditative mind is unrelated to the past and to the future and yet is sanely capable of living with clarity and reason.

MEDITATION RESEARCH: FOOTHOLDS AND STRATEGIES

*problems in
terminology*

The differing names used among meditation systems to describe one and the same way and destination are legion. Sometimes the same term is used in special, but very different, technical senses by various schools. "Void," for example, is used by Indian yogis to refer to jhana states, and by Mahayana Buddhists as signifying the realization of the essential emptiness of all phenomenon; the former usage denotes a mental state *devoid* of contents (e.g., the formless jhanas), the latter refers to the *voidness* of mental contents (i.e., *anatta*). Another example of the confusion in naming: Phillip Kapleau (1967) distinguishes between zazen and meditation, saying that the two "are not to be confused"; Krishnamurti (1962) says *only* "choiceless awareness" is really meditation. Only the recognition that both zazen and choiceless awareness are insight techniques, and that by "meditation" Kapleau means concentration (while Krishnamurti denies that concentration practices are within the province of meditation at all), allows one to see that these seemingly unrelated remarks are actually emphasizing the same distinction: that between concentration and insight. In using the Buddha's map and vocabulary as a template for viewing diverse reports from within the mind, we can gain

*distinction
between
concentration
and insight*

"I believe he . . . deliberately leads his listeners nowhere, frustrates them to the point where they seek the answers within themselves"; like a Ch'an or Zen koan master, he baffles his listener with sometimes elliptical and seemingly fruitless intellectual mazes.

a foothold in these otherwise shifting sands, regardless of the overlay of jargon and cosmology.

In Table 1 a representative spectrum-wide sample of 15 meditation systems is classified according to the threefold typology developed here. The principle criteria for classification are (1) the mechanics of technique: whether mind concentrates on a fixed mental object, or mind observes itself, or both operations are present in integrated combination; and (2) internal consistency in description: if a concentration technique, whether other characteristics of the jhana path are mentioned—e.g., increasingly subtle bliss accompanying deepened concentration, loss of sense-consciousness; or if an insight technique, whether other characteristics of insight practices, such as the realization of the impersonality of mental processes, are present; or if combined, whether, e.g., concentration techniques are adjuncts at the access level to insight (as in vipassana). Inclusion in this classification is restricted to those cases where both criterion (1) and (2) are clearly met in the literature pertaining to each of the fifteen systems.

*criteria for
classification of
15 meditation
systems*

The “findings” on the topography of consciousness by the Buddha and other spiritual masters of the East are in the empirical-experiential mode; scientists in the West tend to attack these (or any) areas of knowledge in the empirical-experimental mode. These are not, of course, opposite strategies, but rather an interacting duality. The experiential gives rise to hunches, hypotheses, constructs; the experimental investigation refines and amends, feeding back new data. Each is an essential adjunct to the other, and both are essential elements in the spiral process whereby solidly grounded theory is generated. The Buddha and other masters can be seen as taking the first tentative steps into a psychic *terra incognita*, laying the experiential groundwork that would subsequently prompt others to follow in their own style.

*strategies of
spiritual
masters and
Western
scientists
compared*

Transpersonal psychology researchers may discover that their discipline requires at certain points a trans-methodology: the psychological safety and distance afforded by traditional behavioral-science tools and the accompanying conceptual superstructure—e.g., the notion of “subjects”—may prevent contact with beings who are in the fifth state. Their teaching and being seems to center in inner realities, and may evaporate for those who need at every step to objectify and cross-validate these transpersonal aspects. For ages the communi-

*trans-personal
research may
require a
trans-
methodology*

TABLE 1
APPLIED TYPOLOGY OF MEDITATION TECHNIQUES

TEACHER, SYSTEM, OR SCHOOL	TECHNIQUE	TYPE	NAME OF FIFTH STATE
Hindu Bhakti	Japa	Concentration	Union
Sufi	<i>Zikr</i>	Concentration	<i>Baga</i> ; Objective Consciousness
Hesychasm	Jesus Prayer	Concentration	<i>Quiès</i> ; Purity of Heart
Meher Baba	Varied spectrum of meditations	Integrated	Sahaj Samadhi; Sadguru
Sri Aurobindo	"Bringing down the Overmind"	Concentration	Supermind
Patanjali's Ashtanga Yoga	Samadhi	Concentration	Sahaj Samadhi
Ramana Maharshi	Self-inquiry	Concentration	<i>Jivan-mukti</i>
Maharishi Mahesh Yogi	Transcendental Meditation	Concentration	God-con- sciousness; Union
Swami Muktananda	<i>Shaktipat-diksha</i>	Concentration	<i>Turyatita</i>
Kirpal Singh	<i>Shabd</i> Yoga	Concentration	True Master
Tantra Yoga	<i>Yantra</i> , <i>maithuna</i> , mantra, visualization, etc.	Concentration	Siddha
Tibetan Vajrayana	Mahamudra: <i>shiney</i> and <i>thagthong</i>	Integrated: concentra- tion and insight	Bodhisattva
Zen	Zazen: koan, breath, and <i>shikan-taza</i>	Integrated: concentra- tion and insight	"No-mind"
Gurdjieff	Self- remembering	Insight	Objective Con- sciousness
J. Krishnamurti	Self-knowledge	Insight	Choiceless Awareness

cation and transmission of fifth-state qualities have been within a master-student, guru-disciple paradigm, and by their very nature may not be feasible in any other structure; the work of Carlos Castañeda (1971) demonstrates this dynamic. In short, perhaps one may *know of* these beings and their qualities, but not *share in* those qualities, as long as they are approached within the confines of Western research strategies. Guenther (1963), in his introduction to the life of Tilopa, who resigned his position as head of the eleventh century Nalanda University to seek out his guru and devote himself wholly to meditation practice, comments:

Throughout the years he had been engaged in intellectual activities which are essentially analytic and thereby become oblivious to the fact that the human organ of knowledge is bi-focal. "Objective" knowledge may be entirely accurate without, however, being entirely important, and only too often misses the heart of the matter.

Ouspensky (1971) cautions that it is difficult, if not impossible, to judge the level of consciousness of a person higher than oneself, and that one can only recognize with any certainty beings on one's own or a lower level. For a researcher, this means that it may be hard to recognize the most fruitful subjects for studies of HSC, especially those in the fifth state. A further complication is the possibility that we do not yet accurately perceive the most crucial parameters of HSC. It may be, for example, that the dimensions of physiology—e.g., EEG patterns—which are testable at present are *not* the critical variables in levels of consciousness, or that they are only peripherally and not particularly systematically related to HSC. One possibility is that the gross changes in psychophysiology—heart rate, blood pressure, alpha, etc.—show up largely in the early stages, marking the distinction between the waking state and the MSC "fourth state" (i.e., jhana). When one has made the transition into the fifth state, the key changes may have more subtle indicators. It may be that in the fifth state indicators other than psychophysiological measures are more appropriate indices, e.g., the quality of "loving kindness" or of "open-heartedness"—the degree one loves others without attachment—may be more central a variable than brain-wave patterns.

A sample of meditation masters would show striking behavioral differences and idiosyncracies, some stemming from life history, some attributable to training, some cultural, and so on. These differences may be passed on in their own teaching as unique styles and practices: Kirpal Singh, e.g., is a celibate, a strict vegetarian, and a teetotaler, while Chogyam Trungpa is married, eats meat, and drinks liquor; Maharishi Mahesh Yogi is the proponent of a single set series of techniques for all pupils, while Meher Baba suggests a varied spectrum of practices depending on individual requirement. There may well be an innate hierarchy within HSC, but even though it is tempting to draw judgments of relative attainments among masters and teachers, by what criterion such a hierarchy might be ordered is by no means clear from the vantage point of normal consciousness. In evaluating these behavioral differences among masters and among the various meditation paths, the researcher should

differences

heed the advice in a Sufi tale retold by Idries Shah (1971, p. 75):

Yaqub, the son of the Judge, said that one day he questioned Bahaudin Nawshband in this manner:

When I was in companionship with the Murshid of Tabriz, he regularly made a sign that he was not to be spoken to, when he was in a condition of special reflection. But you are accessible to us at all times. Am I correct in concluding that this difference is due to your undoubtedly greater capacity of detachment, the capacity being under your dominion, rather than fugitive?

Bahudin told him:

No, you are always seeking comparisons between people and between states. You are always seeking evidences and differences, when you are not you are seeking similarities. You do not really need so much explanation in matters which are outside such measurement. Different modes of behavior on the part of the wise are to be regarded as due to differences in individuality, not of quality.

The fifth state, borne of the consequences of meditation practice, at its highest level means the displacement of the personal ego as the basis for behavior.¹⁸ In its initial phase the

¹⁸One conceptual model applicable to an understanding of the fifth state is Arthur Deikman's (1971) theory of "bimodal consciousness." Deikman describes two primary modes of psychophysical organization: an "action" mode and a "receptive" mode. The action mode is geared to manipulating and acting on the environment, its agencies are the striate muscle system and the sympathetic nervous system, and it is associated with beta waves, an increased baseline muscle tension, focal attention, object-based logic, heightened boundary perception, striving toward achieving personal goals—in sum, what we usually consider the active waking state. By contrast, the receptive mode is (p. 481):

a state organized around intake of the environment rather than manipulation. The sensory-perceptual system is the dominant agency rather than the muscle system, and parasympathetic functions tend to be most prominent. The EEG tends toward alpha waves and baseline muscle tension is decreased. Other attributes of the receptive mode are diffuse attending, paralogical thought processes, decreased boundary perception, and the dominance of the sensory over the formal.

The receptive mode is typically maximal in infancy; as we progress developmentally into egohood, the striving activity of the action mode comes to dominate. The receptive mode can, however, predominate briefly in adult life in such activities as making love or in relationships of the sort Buber calls "I-thou." One's choice of mode is tied to one's basic motive for action: these are simply different strategies for engaging in the world. As Deikman points out, an "enlightened monk" would operate in the action mode to the minimal extent necessary to conduct his work in the world, and while doing so, the receptive mode would still predominate in his awareness. Deikman further notes that meditation techniques are geared to take the meditator out of the action mode—if only for a time—and shift his awareness to the receptive mode in a process he calls "deautomatization, an undoing of the automatic psychological structures that organize, limit, select, and interpret perceptual stimuli"—i.e., those habits of mind the *Vissuddhimagga* terms "hindrances to concentration." In the case of concentration techniques this shift focuses on *disattending* to these usual ways of thinking and perceiving, which come to be seen as distractions to one-pointedness. With in-

fifth state seems to be an act of effort, albeit subtle, and is contingent upon the emergent ability to maintain prolonged meditation awareness in the midst of other activities. As the state produced by meditation melds with waking activity, the fifth state comes into being, lastingly changing one's experience of the waking state. Fifth-state reality is seemingly discontinuous from our normal experience of ourselves and our universe. Though the *Visuddhimagga* would draw distinctions at the level of enlightenment according to the path of access, it may be that at this point all paths merge, or that from our perspective the similarities far outweigh the differences. A fifth-state being transcends his own origins; e.g., persons of any faith can recognize him as exceptional or "perfect," or—if so inclined—revere him as a saint. Elsewhere (1971) I have made a beginning in relating the fifth state to Western psychology. A more precise and detailed phenomenology of the fifth state would be more fittingly drawn from studies of those rare beings in that state now alive. Suffice it to say here that from the perspective of Western psychology an enlightened being defies classification or understanding within the framework of traditional psychodynamic theory. From an Eastern perspective he is what every person should strive to become. Contemporary research approaches to meditation have focused for the most part on the changes occurring within the meditation session per se. But to focus there and ignore the global effects of meditation practice on the meditator's life as a whole is to misunderstand the central aim of the whole process and to underestimate the grand design of which sitting in meditation is only a part.

*similarities far
outweigh
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GLOSSARY¹⁹

Abhidhamma—lit., "the nature of now," a lengthy treatise on consciousness attributed to Gotama Buddha and included among the oldest of Buddhist scriptures in the Pali language.

anagami—lit., "non-returner," the third of four levels at which nirvana can be realized.

ananda—subtle and exquisite feelings of bliss.

sight techniques the shift comes in withdrawing from the cognitive level of thought and perception and holding attention at the level of bare percepts, thus undercutting mental manipulation of reality through mechanisms like categorization. When these meditative skills are carried over into all life situations they produce the fifth state, one attribute of which is the receptive mode.

¹⁹The meanings given are for the terms as used in the context of this paper and are not to be considered definitive.

anatta—lit., “not-self,” the Buddhist doctrine that all phenomena, including “one’s self,” are devoid of any indwelling personality; the realization that there is no abiding entity within one’s mind or being.

anicca—lit., “impermanence,” the Buddhist doctrine that all phenomena are transitory; the realization that one’s world of reality is continually arising and disappearing every *mind-moment*.

arahant—lit., “saint,” the final of four stages of realizing nirvana, at which the last vestige of selfish motivation has disappeared; the end of the path in the Visuddhimagga system of psychospiritual development.

asubhas—decaying corpses used as objects for meditation in their natural state in burial or burning grounds, classified according to their state of decomposition and including a skeleton.

bardos—intermediate states between life and death; realms of reality representing mind states.

chakra—one of seven psychic energy centers distributed from the base of the spine along the spine to the top of the head.

Dharma language—the esoteric, spiritually oriented, or symbolic sense of ordinary words and their meanings.

dukkha—lit., “suffering,” the Buddhist doctrine that the world of consensual reality is the source of all woe; the realization of the unsatisfactory nature of all mental phenomena.

jana—Sufi term for a state of full absorption, equivalent to *jhana*.

HSC—Higher states of consciousness; a state where functions of “lower” states are available in addition to new functions of other, altered states of consciousness.

jhana—a degree of absorption on a continuum beginning with a full break with normal consciousness marked by one-pointed concentration on a meditation object to the exclusion of all other thoughts or awareness of external sensory inputs, and ending in a state of ultrasubtle residual perception.

kasina—a visual meditation object, usually a foot or so in diameter, circular or square, consisting of a single color or light, which may be concrete or imagined.

loca—a realm of reality existing in mental or supramental dimensions, spoken of as a “world” as real as our own, and typifying a distinct mental state.

MSC—meditation-specific states of consciousness; a state attained through meditation which transcends normal sensory awareness and cognition.

mudra—a ritual physical gesture, posture, or pose expressing a specific state of mind or consciousness.

Nikaya—lit., “collection,” a compilation of Southern Buddhist sutras.

nirodh—the state of total cessation of awareness attained through meditation.

nirvana—the state in meditation of awareness of no consciousness at all, the experience of which diminishes the ego as a subsequent effect; the unconditioned state.

nirvichara samadhi—a state of concentration where there is only awareness of the primary object; equivalent to first jhana.

nirvikalpa samadhi—a state of concentration where all thoughts, even awareness of the meditation subject, cease altogether; equivalent to second jhana and above.

Pali—the North Indian dialect spoken by Gotama Buddha in preference to Sanskrit, and the sacred language of scriptures in Southern Buddhism (as Latin is used in Catholicism).

prajna—lit., “insight,” also, “wisdom,” the ability to perceive phenomena simply as they exist rather than in terms of a meaning derived from a learned personal, group, or cultural belief system or other consensual notion of reality.

pranayam—techniques for altering consciousness by controlled breathing patterns.

sadhana—any system of spiritual practice; a path for psychospiritual evolution.

sahaj samadhi—the stabilization of jhana-consciousness in the midst of the ordinary state of waking, dreaming, and sleeping.

sakadgami—lit., “once-returner,” the second of four levels of realizing nirvana.

samadhi—the technique of one-pointed concentration in meditation; also, in Sanskrit sources, a psychophysiological state of absorption in a single object of concentration to the exclusion of all awareness of any other sensory inputs or thoughts (see *jhana*).

sangha (Pali) or *satsang* (Sanskrit)—technically, those who have attained the nirvanic state, and generally speaking, the community of seekers on a spiritual path.

satipatthana—lit., “mindfulness,” a technique of constant bare attention to all sensory perceptions or thoughts, so that the mind is not stimulated by them into thought chains, but witnesses them all without reaction; when mastered, satipatthana develops into vipassana.

savichara samadhi—a state of concentration on a meditation subject where awareness is mixed with thoughts relating to the object; equivalent to access concentration.

sila—lit., “virtue,” the practice of moral precepts for the purpose of clearing the mind of preoccupations which would distract one from spiritual practice, especially concentration in meditation.

sotapanna—lit., “stream-enterer,” the first of four levels of attainment of nirvana.

sukha—a state of intense pleasure and well-being.

sutra—a literary form used for most Hindu and Buddhist sacred scriptures.

varagya—the falling away of desires as a side-effect of spiritual growth.

vipassana—lit., “seeing things as they are,” a meditation technique where attention is turned to constant scrutiny of each successive unit in the thought-continuum.

Visuddhimagga—a summary of the Abhidhamma sections

on meditation and consciousness, done in the fifth century
A.D. by Bhuddaghosa.

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