EDITORIAL

As we go in publication of this issue of 'THE DIVINE VISION' we are in the peak of hot summer with the meteorological department forecasting temperatures crossing 45 degree Celsius soon. The temperatures are gradually rising year to year as the subject of Global Warming takes center stage at international discussions in the United Nations. The readers may be wondering as to how the topic of global warming appears in the editorial column of a spiritual periodical? Well it is our mad pursuit for materialistic growth and the law of Karma taking its toll which is leading us to dooms day much before ever expected.

Rather than living in harmony with the nature, man has always exploited the nature for his personal greed. For centuries man has been digging coal and pumping oil and using these heavily polluting fossil fuels for production of power for electricity or automotive industry. Scientists have been pointing out that burning of these fossil fuels lead to release of millions of tons of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere, such as carbon dioxide, which form a kind of blanket in the inner crust of the atmosphere. This crust does not permit the sun heat reflected from the surface of the earth to escape in the space thus gradually trapping the heat within the earth atmosphere. This unwanted heat is causing havoc on earth by fast melting glaciers in the North and South Poles of the earth thus causing spate of floods in the rivers and rising of the sea levels. The results are disastrous for humanity in all aspects. On one side the sea level rise, even by a meter or so, will submerge low lying cities all over the world and on the other side the depleted snow clad mountains will stop supplying snow-fed rivers in summer turning masses of lands into deserts. The danger of global warming is far more terrifying than the global terrorist fears

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prevailing presently and unless tackled NOW, will turn into irreversible disasters for the mankind on earth.

The developed nations are fully responsible for the catastrophic situation we are in but the fast developing nations like China and India are catching fast. The blaming game has started but both the parties wish to have relentless growth of economies and there lies the real problem. Clean energy alternatives such as wind energy and solar energy are available but will take some more time before becoming commercially viable to match coal and oil. In the meanwhile courtesy United Nations a formula is being worked out whereby the polluting industries will compensate the clean industries till they stop greenhouse gas emissions in the atmosphere.

Global warming and the consequences are bound to hit Indian economy and environment badly. The UN report predicts that India could lose as much as its 9% GDP, largely from events like submergence of low lying coastal areas including Mumbai & Chennai.

All scientists now believe that silent power of the sunlight transforming light into clean energy will make solar energy the largest source of power by the end of the century. The wind energy has already made great strides in the world and Indian scene and both these energies are estimated to grow over 50% year on year basis.

Our ancestors, Rishis and Sages have always been right when they say that we should never forget to prey our Sun god (Surya Devta) and wind god (Pavan Devta) as these only will prove to be our only saviors on earth . The earlier we stop exploiting nature and aligning with it, the more we can enjoy the only place available to us for our living – the mother earth.

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THE DIVINE VISION

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Approaches to Self Realization

By: Sri Dr. O. P. Kohli

Self Realization is the ultimate spiritual goal, the soul's release from the bonds of transmigration. The soul, once entered upon a bodily existence, remains trapped in a chain of successive rebirths until it attains the perfection or enlightenment that allows its release. The methods by which release is sought and attained differ from one philosophical school to the next, but most schools consider Moksha to be the highest purpose of life.

Liberation from the cycle of existence, the eternal cycle of birth, suffering, death, and rebirth is often identified with a state of knowledge in which the phenomenal world and its concerns are shut out in favour of a mystical identification with the ultimate, changeless ground of all things.

In Yoga, self-realization is knowledge of one's true self, or inner-self. This true self is also referred to as the Atma to avoid ambiguity. The term "self-realization" is a translation of the Sanskrit expression Atma Jnana (knowledge of the self or Atma). The reason the term "realization" is used instead of "knowledge" is that Jnana refers to knowledge based on experience, not mere intellectual knowledge.

The concept of self-realization became very popular since the founding of Self-Realization Fellowship by Sri Paramahansa Yogananda in 1920.

As discussed above, while the goal of self-realization is the same

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in all yoga paths, the means used to achieve that goal differ.

1. Self-Realization according to Sri Paramhansa Yogananda: Self-realization is the knowing in all parts of body, mind, and soul that you are now in possession of the kingdom of God; that you do not have to pray; that God's omnipresence is your omnipresence; and that all that you need to do is to improve your knowing.

2. Self-Realization in Sahaja Yoga: According to Sahaja Yoga, self-realization is a process of kundalini awakening. Sahaja Yoga teaches that there are seven main energy points, or chakras on the subtle body that can be balanced by awakening the Kundalini, a normally dormant energy which exists in every human being. When self-realization is achieved, a person will feel a cool breeze on top of their head. If there is a feeling of warmth or heat, then the body has not achieved such balance.

3. Self-Realization in Reiki Tummo: According to Reiki Tummo, self-realization is a part of the process of kundalini awakening before reaching full enlightenment and Yoga (Union with the Divine). **Reiki** is a form of spiritual practice, often compared to faith healing, proposed for the treatment of physical, emotional, mental and spiritual diseases. MikaoUsui developed Reiki in early 20th century in Japan, where he said he received the ability of 'healing without energy depletion' after three weeks of fasting and meditating on Mount Kurama. Practitioners use a technique similar to the laying on of hands as well as gestures in the air, which they say will channel healing energy (ki). They say the energy then flows through their palms to bring about healing.

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4. Self-Realization in Surat Shabd Yoga: Surat Shabd Yoga cosmology depicts the whole of creation (the macrocosm) as being emanated and arranged in a spiritually differentiated hierarchy, often referred to as eggs, regions, or planes. Typically, eight spiritual levels are described above the physical plane, although names and subdivisions within these levels will vary to some extent by movement and Master. In this arrangement, *Self-Realization* is attainted in the third heaven level, Daswan Dwar, Spirit-Realization is attained in the fourth heaven level, Bhanwar Gupha, and God-Realization is attained in the fifth heaven level, Sach Kand (Sat Lok). All planes below the purely spiritual regions are subject to cycles of creation and dissolution (pralya) or grand dissolution (maha pralya). This cosmology presents the constitution of the initiate (the microcosm) as an exact replica of the macrocosm. Consequently, the microcosm consists of a number of bodies, each one suited to interact with its corresponding plane or region in the macrocosm. These bodies developed over the *yugas* through involution (emanating from higher planes to lower planes) and evolution (returning from lower planes to higher planes), including by karma and reincarnation in various states of consciousness. The Path of Light and Sound involves the initiate traveling the microcosm__dharmicly in consciousness (soul) with the guidance and protection of the Outer Living Master in the physical world and the Inner Shabd Master in the higher worlds, eventually experiencing Self-Realization and continuing to unfold until the regions of pure spirituality are reached and God-Realization is attained.

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5. Self-Realization in the Tradition of the Himalayan Masters: The goal of sadhana is the highest Joy that comes from the Realization in direct experience of the center of consciousness, the Self, the Atman or Purusha, which is one and the same with the Absolute Reality. This *Self-Realization* comes through the three streams of Yoga meditation of the Yoga Sutras, the contemplative insight of Advaita Vedanta, and the intense devotion of Samaya Sri Vidya Tantra, the three of which complement one another like fingers on a hand. (Yoga, Vedanta, Tantra). This group employs the classical approaches of Raja, Jnana, Karma, and Bhakti Yoga, as well as Hatha, Kriya, Kundalini, Laya, Mantra, Nada, Siddha, and Tantra Yoga. Meditation, contemplation, mantra and prayer finally converge into a unified force directed towards the final stage, piercing the pearl of wisdom called bindu, leading to the Absolute. (Bindu, Tradition, Convergence).

6. Different Yoga Schools leading to Self-Realization: The different yoga schools simply adhere to different applications of inner discipline, all of which ultimately lead to the liberation of the soul and to a unique understanding of the Divine Unity finally leading to *Self Realization.* The schools are merely named according to the yogi's objective of self-transformation and the instrument chosen for such anticipated change.

The Yoga schools are:

a. Ashtanga Yoga: and its different variations, for the most part, aim at the fullest development of any one human faculty—the mind, emotions, life-force or the physical body. Such partial perfection is then allowed to spill over to one's entire being.

b. Sri Aurobindo's Purna Yoga: or Integral Yoga focuses on the whole being in order to bring

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about total transformation. The approach, objective and means of Purna Yoga are all integral in essence.

c. Jnana Yoga: refers to knowledge but the emphasis is not on acquiring information but on developing the analytical powers of the mind. The manner in which the power of analysis is applied depends on the metaphysical system within which it is practiced. In the *Samkhya system of Indian philosophy*, the focus is on understanding one's own inner self. In *Advaita Vedanta* (non-dualist Vedanta philosophy), the idea is to understand the difference between reality and illusion.

d. Bhakti Yoga: is all about getting in touch with the Divine Being by following the outpourings of one's heart. The term 'bhakti' can be roughly translated to mean 'devotion', and this emotion coupled with the Christian concept of faith leads to a state of mind which can be described as being immersed in bhakti. This strand of yoga principally advocates love and devotion as the path to moksha or liberation.

e. Karma Yoga: Originally, it was believed that the practice of *Karma Yoga*, accompanied by the observance of certain rituals, would lead to liberation from the cycle of birth and death. In the Bhagavad Gita, lord Krishna further extended the semantics of the term *karma* to mean detached action, that is, subjugation of the individual will to Divine purpose. According to the Bhagavad Gita, these three different paths of yoga (jnana, bhakti and karma) help to define three different categories of men—reflective, emotional and active, respectively—distinguished on account of the distribution of emphasis on the theoretical, emotional and practical aspects of human personalities.

f. Raja Yoga: or Ashtanga Yoga, which was formulated by

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Patanjali into a definite system from classical yoga, forms one of the *Shad-Darshanas* or classical systems of Indian philosophy. The school of *Raja Yoga* prescribes to a particular meditative system, which focuses on the analysis and control of the field of human consciousness. Often known as the 'royal road' or the 'royal path' ('*raja*' in Sanskrit denotes 'king' or 'royal'), it offers a comprehensive method for controlling waves of thought by channeling mental and physical energies into spiritual energy.

g. Hatha Yoga: The school of Hatha Yoga attaches a lot of importance to the perfect physical form, believing it to be a way of attaining spiritual perfection. And to this end it takes the help of *pranayama* (breath-control exercises) and *mudras* (hand gestures) to attain self-realization. Often seen as part of *Raja Yoga*, the origins of *Hatha Yoga* can be traced to Gorakhnath, the 12th-century founder of the *Kanphata Yogis*. The word '*hatha*' is derived from the two root terms, '*ha*' meaning 'the sun' and '*tha*' meaning 'the moon'. Taken together, the term stands for 'union of force'. Hence, central to *Hatha Yoga* disciplines is the harmonizing of its positive (sun) and negative (moon) currents.

h. Kundalini Yoga: is the potential form of *prana* or life force, lying dormant in our bodies. It is conceptualized as a coiled up serpent (literally, '*kundalini*' in Sanskrit is 'coiled up') lying at the base of our spine, which can spring awake when activated by spiritual disciplines. The practitioners of *Kundalini Yoga* concentrate on psychic centers or *chakras* in the body in order to generate a spiritual power, which is known as *kundalini* energy.

The practice comprises of awakening and then forcing this energy, flowing through *nadis* or channels, up the psychic channel

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of the *sushumna*, which runs from the base of the spine to the brain. The three main channels running alongside the spinal cord are *ida*, *pingala* and the *sushumna*. When this *kundalini* energy, pictured as the serpent residing in the first *chakra* at the root of the spine (*muladhar chakra*), is raised up through the rest of the *chakras* until it reaches the seventh and the highest *chakra* (*sahasrara*) located at the crown of the head—self-realization occurs. This induces the blissful state of *samadhi*. The school of Sahaja Yoga is very similar to the Kundalini school.

i. Mantra Yoga: refers to the repetition of *mantras* (words or sounds) during various yoga meditation techniques. This ritualistic chanting helps bind the mind to a single thought until it attains the state of *samadhi*.

j. Tantra Yoga: The roots of *Tantra Yoga* go back to ancient fertility cults of India. The history of this strain of yoga, like the *Kundalini* school, is linked with the worship of *Shakti*, the primordial female energy. The objective of Tantra Yoga is to merge with the Ultimate by the arousal and channeling of sexual energy. The Tantra school equates spiritual awakening with the awakening and rising of the *kundalini* power. According to Tantra, the Kundalini is present in everything, even in the smallest of particles, in the form of cosmic energy. Only a fraction of it is operative, while an unmeasured residuum is left 'coiled up' and untapped at the 'base root'.

Some men, ignorant of the main approaches to Self-Realization, listen to the instructions of the Guru and follow the path of worship which will take them to the Supreme Goal. It is egotism in the hearts of most men that prevents their listening carefully to the wisdom of the ages.

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DREAMS OF LIMITATIONS

By: Sri Dr. O. P. Kohli

As soon as your mind becomes restless, order it to calm with your strong will. Whenever we worry, we are deepening the delusion within us. When we look at the process of death with the eye of Wisdom, we see that after all it is merely a thought of God passing through a nightmare of change into blissful freedom in Him again. Saints and sinners alike are given freedom at death to a greater or lesser degree according to merit .In the astral world the souls enjoy freedom as if they never knew during their earthly life.

The human body with its unique spinal centers and brain was a special creation of God. To equip the soul with a vehicle capable of expressing its Divine potential. The delusion of desire for material things again compel the man to come back to earth after a *Karamically* predetermined time in the astral world. Even though the soul knows that the body is subject to disease and troubles, the delusive desires for earthly experiences veil that knowledge and deceive his consciousness and again and again he returns, until he is no longer desirous of an earthly life. So reincarnation is a series of dreams within a dream.

Someone is born in Japan as a powerful being, rules for a time, and then dies. He may be reborn in India and travel in a bullock cart into the forest to meditate. He may next find rebirth in America as a successful businessman and again after death may reincarnate

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in Tibet as a devotee of Lord Buddha and spend his life in a monastery. So for sometimes you are a Hindu, sometimes Japanese or American or a Tibetan and how long will you pass through these dream changes of creation? What is going to free us from sufferings? Only knowledge of God and realization is the way to freedom which we can acquire through conscious spiritual efforts.

There is no longer a barrier difference between solids and liquids or any other form of matter but we have to realize this and such power does not come to us by mere imagining. Once, some of the scientists of England observed one young boy as he walked through twenty-seven feet of fire without a single blister. A newspaperman who was present there thought the fire a fake and tried the same experiment and was badly burned. The young boy, by certain process of thought, had convinced his mind of the truth that the fire was nothing but consciousness and therefore could not harm the body, which was also consciousness.

When we believe that cold water won't hurt us, we won't be affected by it. But if we feel we are going to catch a cold from the chill, we will catch. Thus by controlling our mind we can experience the truth that this — is a delusion and comfort comes from the mind. The world trains our mind in different ways. It gets us accustomed to so many things ad then we think we can't be happy without them. Some saints in India eat hardly anything and live under the most rigorous conditions and yet they have wonderfully strong bodies, far better than those of the average well-fed and well- cared – for people in the world.

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Miracles performed by great saints may be miracles to us, but not to them. Mind is the power that creates every thing and everything can be controlled by mind provided we develop more and more mental strength through meditation and receive God in our consciousness. We should not be attached to the passing dreams of life but live for God and God alone. Outside of God there is no security, delusion can attack you. Meditate deeply and faithfully and one day you will wake up in ecstasy with God.

Whatever you say and do to others, let it be with love—Sri Sri Paramahansa Yogananda – Excerpts from book 'Journey to Self - Realization."

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DEVELOP THE DIVINE VISION

By: Suresh C Pahwa

There is God in every thing and this Divine Vision can be initiated and developed with deep meditation and spiritual guidance from a right Guru.

As cream is hidden in milk so is Spirit hidden in all things. Spirit is the true source of all knowledge. Where there is light there is God. But where there is darkness, there is also hidden presence of God. Whether it is Love or hatred God plays His role.

Once you have full faith in the belief that God is every where and is the real doer behind everything this world will be different for you. You will see the dynamic presence of God in the beauty of a flower, in the innocence of a child, in the radiance of the sun, in the generosity of the earth, in the harmony of the universe, in the beauty of the heavens, in the waters of the rivers and oceans, in the intelligence of man and the vastness of the universe .Your relationship with the world in which you live and deal with would change for ever.

For a man of that vision and understanding, the entire universe becomes a huge temple of God and he becomes His devotee, with countless opportunities to worship Him, feeling His presence and being blessed. Once such Vision is developed reading of books and visiting temples

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would look a weak link to God. When you develop this vision of oneness, you become filled with love, with a new vision and awareness that is not ordinary to earthly plane. You lose your sense of insecurity and mortal fear that plagues every ordinary being in this world as he struggles and trudges along all alone in the world. Wonderful things start happening.

You must accept God's living presence whole heartedly and once you are not afraid because you have this feeling of certainty that God is with you all the time and that He has become your partner in every thing you do. You will not incur any sin because you are guided by Him all the time.

The seers and saints have this vision. They feel the oneness of the Universe and through that feeling they become closer to the divine both within and without. For them every thing in the universe is sacred. For them nothing is abominable or hateful because even the negative aspect of the universe is permeated by Him.

Through this vision they finally experience the omniscience and omnipresence of God and become one with Him. Theirs is the path of the radiant masters, of the souls that are permanently freed from the bondage of mortality and earthly life and have gained the right to enter the abode of Supreme Bliss, never to return again

There is no failure on this path. Only temporary setbacks which come in order to strengthen your resolve and prepare you for the goal. It is not difficult to practice this simple exercise. You need to develop

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aspiration, faith, conviction and willingness. They are your companions on your road to salvation. If you trust them and stick to them, they would lead you to the doors of light and pure delight.

So prepare yourselves for this great journey and look for the wondrous vision and feelings that overtake you as start on your path.

I find above as the easiest and simple way to be closer to God and enjoy His bliss all the time.

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An introduction to Vedanta

By Dr. Manoj Pabrai

Within the larger spectrum of Hindu Philosophy, there are six orthodox systems: ***Vedanta, Mimamsa, Sankhya, Vaisesika, Nyaaya and Yoga****.*

Vedanta forms the basis of most modern schools of Hinduism. Vedanta is the only philosophical tradition that remains alive today. The reason is that unlike any other philosophical school, Vedanta has been fully integrated into the Hindu religion. Vedanta literally means 'end of the Vedas' but it is interpreted as 'culmination of the Vedas'.

The founder of Vedanta tradition is said to be the *Vedic Seer Vyasa*, but its most *well known exponent was Adi Shankaracharya.* The Vedanta system virtually represents Adi Shankaracharya's interpretation of the Sutras. The Sutras are a collection of rituals and practices that have been sanctioned in Vedic literature.

The Vedanta philosophy continues to be very popular among Hindu philosophers and is a subject at many discourses at temples. There are many contemporary names associated with this philosophy. Some of the most distinguished traditional teachers of Vedanta of the present day in India are mentioned at the end of this article.

Vedanta (Devanagari: वेदान्त) is a spiritual tradition explained in the Upanishads that is concerned with the Self Realization by which one understands the ultimate nature of reality (Brahman) and teaches the believer's goal is to transcend the limitations of self-identity and realize one's unity with Brahman. Vedanta which implies "the end of all

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knowledge" - by definition is not restricted or confined to one book and there is no sole source for Vedantic philosophy. Vedanta is based on immutable spiritual laws that are common to religions and spiritual traditions worldwide. Vedanta as the end of knowledge refers to a state of Self-Realization, attainment, or Cosmic Consciousness. Historically and currently Vedanta is understood as a state of transcendence and not as a concept that can be grasped by the intellect alone.

The word *Vedanta* is a Sanskrit compound word which can be treated as:

- *Veda* = "knowledge" + *anta* = "end, conclusion": "the culmination of knowledge"
- *Veda* = "knowledge" + *anta* = "essence", "core", or "inside": "the essence of the *Vedas*".

Vedânta is also called Uttara Mimamsa, or the 'latter' or 'higher enquiry', and is often paired with Purva Mimamsa, the 'former enquiry'. Pûrva Mimamsa, usually simply called Mimamsa, deals with explanations of the fire-sacrifices of the Vedic mantras (in the Samhita portion of the Vedas) and Brahmanas, while Vedanta explicates the esoteric teachings of the Arnanyakas (the "forest scriptures"), and the Upanishads, composed from ca. the 9th century BC until modern times.

The essence of Vedanta philosophy is that all human beings have souls (Atman). And although physically all beings have a separate existence, their souls are actually not separate. They are merged into one supreme soul (Param-Atmah) or the absolute soul (Brahman). This unity of different souls is called Advaita or non-dualism (also called Monism). The doctrine of Advaita is central to Vedanta philosophy. The visible

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and palpable universe around us is considered to be unreal (Mithya) which is but an illusion i.e. Maya), while that which is the supreme reality the absolute soul (Brahman) cannot be perceived by our normal senses of sight, smell, hearing or touch.

Sub-schools of Vedanta

Advaita Vedanta:

Advaita Vedanta is the most influential school of all, and many philosophers, both Indian and Western, have been influenced by it. It was propounded by *Adi Shankaracharya*, a renowned Hindu philosopher, and his *Parama Guru Gaudapada*, who described Ajativada. According to this school of Vedânta, Brahman is the only reality, and the world, as it appears, is illusory. As Brahman is the sole reality, it cannot be said to possess any attributes whatsoever. An illusionary power of Brahman called Mâyâ causes the world to arise. Ignorance of this reality is the cause of all suffering in the world and only upon true knowledge of Brahman can liberation be attained. When a person tries to know Brahman through his mind, due to the influence of Mâyâ, Brahman appears as God (Ishwara), separate from the world and from the individual. In reality, there is no difference between the individual soul *jîvâtman* and Brahman. Liberation lies in knowing the reality of this non-difference (i.e. a-dvaita, "not-two"-ness). Thus, the path to liberation is finally only through knowledge (*jñâna*).

Vishishtadvaita:

Vishishtadvaita was propounded by *Ramanuja* and says that the *jîvâtman* is a part of Brahman, and hence is similar, but not identical. *The main difference from Advaita is that in Visishtadvaita,* the Brahman is asserted to have attributes, including the individual

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conscious souls and matter. Brahman, matter and the individual souls are distinct but mutually inseparable entities. This school propounds Bhakti or devotion to God visualized as Vishnu to be the path to liberation. Mâyâ is seen as the creative power of God.

Dvaita:

Dvaita was propounded by *Madhya*. It identifies God with Brahman completely and in turn with Vishnu or his incarnation Krishna. It regards Brahman, all individual souls (*jîvâtman*s) and matter as eternal and mutually separate entities. This school also advocated Bhakti as the route to liberation. There is no concept of Mâyâ as an illusionary power behind the world.

Dvaitâdvaita:

Dvaitâdvaita was propounded by *Nimbârka*, based upon an earlier school called Bhedâbheda, which was taught by Bhâskara. According to this school, the *jîvâtman* is at once the same as yet different from Brahman. - jiva relation may be regarded as Dvaita from one point of view and Advaita from another.

Shuddhadvaita:

Shuddhadvaita propounded by *Vallabha*. This system also encouraged Bhakti as the only means of liberation to go to Goloka (lit., the world of cows; the Sanskrit word 'go', 'cow', also means 'star'). The world is said to be the sport (Leela) of Krishna, who is *Sat-Chit-Ananda*.

Achintya Bhedâbheda:

Achintya Bhedâbheda propounded by *Chaitanya Mahaprabhu* (Bengal, 1486-1534). This doctrine of inconceivable and simultaneous one-ness and difference this is actually an ancient system of knowledge

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and devotion to Supreme Personality of Godhead, Sri Krishna. However he has indicated that this sublime gift has been brought to mankind through the kind effort and dedication of an unbroken chain of teachers beginning with the Supreme Lord Himself. In the modern age of science and technology, the pure teachings are broadcast all over the world. Lots of institutions is following the path of Mahaprabhu around the world like ISKCON, Gouriya math, Vaishnav sampradaya, Sri Radharaman Achrayas, Srila Atul Krishna Goswami ji Maharaj, Sri Sribhuti Krishna Goswami Ji Maharaj, Sri Pundrik Goswami ji Maharaj etc.

While Adi Shankaracharya propounded the Smârta denomination, all the other above-mentioned Acharyas were strongly Vaishnavite in orientation. The Advaita, Vishishtadvaita and Mimamsa (i.e., purva-) have their epistemology in common.

Purnadvaita or Integral Advaita:

Sri Aurobindo, in his The Life Divine, has synthesized all the extant schools of Vedanta and given the most comprehensive resolution integrating cues from the Western metaphysics and modern science. He has also restored the umbilical cord of the Vedantic exegesis with the Vedas.

Modern Vedanta:

The term "modern Vedanta" is sometimes used to describe the interpretation of Advaita Vedanta given by *Swami Vivekananda* of the Ramakrishna order of monks. He stressed that:

- Although God is the absolute reality, the world has a relative reality. It should therefore not be completely ignored.
- Conditions of abject poverty should be removed; only then will people be able to turn their minds toward God.

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- All religions are striving in their way to reach the ultimate truth. Narrow sectarian bickering should therefore be abandoned, and religious tolerance should be practiced — between different Hindu denominations, as well as Christianity, Judaism, Islam, Buddhism, etc.

Vivekananda traveled to the Parliament of the World's Religions in Chicago in 1893, and became an influential figure in synthesizing Eastern and Western thought. He played a major role in the spread of Vedanta to Western nations. His travel to the West was criticized by some orthodox Hindus. His proponents claim that he made Vedanta living, by understanding how it could be applied to the modern world, and by investing it with his own spirit. For Vivekananda, Vedanta was not something dry or esoteric, but a living approach to the quest for self-knowledge.

In his interpretation of Advaita (as in Adi Shankaracharya), there is still a place for Bhakti (devotion). Monks of the Ramakrishna order suggest that it is easier to begin meditation on a personal God with form and qualities, rather than the formless Absolute. Saguna Brahman and Nirguna Brahman are viewed as obverse and reverse of the same coin.

List of teachers:

There have been many teachers of Vedanta in India and other countries over the

centuries. Some of the most distinguished traditional Indian teachers of Vedanta of the present day are:

- • Hari Prasad Shastri,
- D. Krishna Ayyar,
- Ramana Maharshi,

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- Narayana Guru,
- Shri Siddharameshwar Maharaj,
- Sri Ranjit Maharaj,
- Swami Rama Tirtha,
- Swami Vivekananda,
- Swami Sivananda,
- Swami Krishnananda,
- Swami Paramananda,
- Swami Chinmayananda,
- Swami Sri Lilashahji Maharaj,
- Shri Maharishi Mahesh Yogi,
- Sri Aurobindo,
- Shri Swami Tapovan Maharaj,
- Sengalipuram Muthannaval,
- Mannargudi periyaval,
- Paruthiyur Krishna Sastri,
- Anantarama Dikshitar,
- Kanchi Mahaswamigal,
- Swami Ranganathananda,
- Parthasarathy Swami Parthasarathy,
- Sri Swami Dayananda Saraswati,
- Baba Ramdev,
- Nithyananda Swamigal,
- Muralidara swamigal,
- Swami Krsnapriyananda Saraswati.

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The link between Allergies and Asthma: Double trouble

By Dr. Manoj Pabrai

If you have Allergies, Asthma or both, you may wonder what they have in common besides a maddening ability to make you miserable. Allergies and Asthma often occur together. In fact, allergic asthma (allergy-induced asthma) is the most common type of asthma around the world, especially in India.

If you have both Allergies and Asthma, the same substances that trigger your allergy symptoms can also inflame your airways, leading to asthma symptoms such as:

- shortness of breath,
- wheezing and
- chest tightness.

For many people with asthma, their asthma symptoms are triggered by an allergy to airborne substances such as pollen, dust mites or pet dander. In some people, skin or food allergies can cause asthma symptoms.

What are allergies?

An allergy is a condition in which your immune system reacts to a harmless substance — such as a *pollen, mold or food* — as if it were harmful. Allergies can affect almost any part of your body.

For example,

Hay fever (allergic rhinitis) affects the upper airways, causing sneezing and a runny nose.

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- *Skin allergies* such as eczema can cause rashes.
- *Eye allergies* such as allergic conjunctivitis can cause itchy, watery eyes.

The term allergy also describes different substances that cause allergic reactions.

So you might have a *pollen allergy, mold allergy, latex allergy, food allergy, drug allergy or insect sting allergy,* for example.

What is asthma?

Asthma is a chronic condition that occurs when the main air passages of your lungs, the bronchial tubes, become inflamed. The muscles of the bronchial walls tighten and extra mucus is produced, causing your airways to narrow.

If you have asthma, you may have symptoms such as

- difficulty breathing
- shortness of breath
- a tight feeling in the chest
- coughing and wheezing

What are the similarities between allergies and asthma?

You may have allergies, asthma or both. Nearly all children with asthma — and up to half of adults with asthma — also have allergies. For many if not most people with asthma, a major cause of their asthma is an allergy to airborne substances such as *pollen, mold, dust mites and animal dander.* In these sensitive individuals, such exposures will trigger an allergic reaction in the bronchial tubes. The mechanism behind allergic and asthmatic reactions is often the same: *Your immune system mistakes these normally harmless substances as invaders you sneeze and wheeze.*

What are the differences between Allergies and Asthma?

Allergies encompass a much broader set of allergic problems, such as *hay fever, eczema and allergic conjunctivitis,* while asthma relates

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only to the condition of the bronchial tubes. You may have allergies but not asthma. Or you may have asthma and few or no allergies.
Although allergens are the most common cause of asthma symptoms, sometimes non-allergen triggers are to blame. These can include:

- viral or sinus infections,
- exercise,
- gastro-esophageal reflux disease (GERD),
- cold air and
- exposure to irritants such as *pollution, perfume and tobacco smoke*.

How do allergies and asthma develop?

In children, the first sign of an allergy often is *eczema*, a skin rash that may affect the abdomen, chest, face and limbs. Between ages 1 and 2, hay fever signs and symptoms such as *sneezing, congestion and a runny nose* may appear. By age 5 or 6, many of these children develop asthma. But it's different for every child. Some children may have milder allergies, with some eczema and hay fever, which gives them an increased risk of developing asthma later in life. When children have hay fever and no asthma, allergy shots, which desensitize them to particular allergens, may reduce their future risk of developing asthma.
Some adults develop allergies or asthma later in life. Women are more likely than men to develop asthma after age 30.
Adult asthma might be chronic, or it may be triggered by

- respiratory infections,
- cold air,
- smoke, or
- exposure to work-related substances such as *wood dust, chemical sprays and plastics.*

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How does an allergic reaction cause asthma symptoms?

An allergic response affects the lining of the nose and the lining of the airways in a similar way. Symptoms occur when antibodies in your blood are exposed to an allergy-causing substance (allergen). These antibodies can trigger allergy symptoms such as *nasal congestion, scratchy eyes or a skin reaction* — and for many, inflammation of the airways associated with asthma.

For example, if your immune system produces allergy antibodies when you're exposed to cats, you're said to have a cat allergy. Proteins in cat fur or cat dander trigger the release of chemicals that cause inflammation and swelling in the lining of the nose. If you have allergic asthma, your reaction to cat fur or dander can also cause the lower airways to become inflamed, triggering asthma symptoms.

If I treat my allergies, will it prevent asthma?

Some allergy treatments can reduce asthma symptoms. A type of allergy treatment called allergy shots (immunotherapy) can help treat asthma by gradually reducing your immune system response to allergens that cause your asthma symptoms.

If you have allergic asthma, avoiding the allergic substances that trigger your symptoms can reduce asthma and in some cases, control it completely.

Are allergies and asthma treated differently?

Some medications work for both allergies and asthma, but may be taken differently. For example, corticosteroids which you spray into your nose reduce inflammation from hay fever. Corticosteroid creams applied to your skin reduce inflammation by an allergic skin reaction. And inhaled corticosteroids, which you breathe into your lungs using an

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inhaler device, reduce inflammation of the bronchial tubes caused by asthma.

Certain other medications are clearly more effective for one condition over another. Antihistamines, for example, are commonly used to treat hay fever but don't work well in treating asthma. Bronchodilator inhalers, which open congested airways, are a big part of asthma treatment, though they aren't used to treat hay fever.

Who's at risk of allergic asthma?

A family history of allergies is a major risk factor for allergic asthma. Another risk factor is having hay fever or other allergies. More than one out of every four people who have hay fever also develops asthma.

Is all asthma caused by allergies?

Though allergic asthma is the most common form of asthma, there are other forms and triggers of asthma, including

- exercise-induced asthma and
- non-allergic asthma triggered by infections or
- cold air or
- gastro-esophageal reflux disease (GERD).

Some people have asthma triggered by more than one type of trigger.

Take charge: Keep symptoms under control

If you have bothersome allergy and asthma symptoms, talk to your doctor about treatment. Recognizing the relationship between the body's immune system and how the airways react has led to improved treatment of asthma symptoms for many people.

Knowing your triggers, taking steps to avoid them, and working with your doctor to find the right treatment to manage your symptoms will help keep both your allergy and asthma symptoms under control.

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TOPIC FOR CONTEMPLATION

By: Suresh C Pahwa

Should we negotiate with God for favours?

There are two schools of thought:

1. God is all pervading and all knowing and there is no need to pray seeking explicit favours.
2. Even though God is all knowing we need to pray, explain our problems and seek His favours to alleviate our problems.

As a corollary to 2nd school of thoughts emerges the art of negotiation with God.

There is no doubt that God is responsible for all good and all bad happening in this world as He is the one who has created this great cosmic delusion of *Maya* in which man is influenced to behave wrongly and then face difficulties. And when in difficulty he strives to overcome his problems himself to the best of his ability. If nothing works, he thinks of God and prays for His blessings and favours.

Man is a temporal mortal being. He does not even know why he came on earth, nor when he will leave it. He is totally dependent on God given nature and all is given to him without his asking from Him. We are sustained by God during every moment of our existence and therefore it is quite logical to believe that we are on earth to perform our God given

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duties to the best of our ability and to lay results at His feet. In the process of performing our duties if we face difficulties we should not be afraid to ask for any assistance from God as a child to his father. To negotiate with All Giver is fooling ourself. To be grateful and thankful to Him is fine but to pray or donate with conditions and riders attached is not wise.

Having given the background, we can now easily analyse the two schools of thoughts given in the beginning of this contemplation.

If one has complete faith in God and patience (*shrada* and *saburi*) one can perform to the best of one's ability and leave all results in the hand of God. Whether favourable or unfavourable God will only do what is best for His devotee in the long run. Seeking explicit results are totally unwarranted.

God is all merciful. When one prays to seek particular favour, He tends to grant the same but along with the favour also are bundled the unpleasant consequences which, in long run, may not be very conducive. The All Giver does not need our negotiated gifts to please Him – these are perhaps given for self-satisfaction when a man takes God to be his equal or as super human being.

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Personal Experiences of Devotees

1. Mrs. Kiran – Ludhiana

I am 50 years old. I was suffering from sensation of sounds of ringing, roaring, twinkling of bells in the ears. The ENT specialist told me that the sounds donot come from any external source. It was a disease called Tinnitus which can be caused by several factors like ear wax, pain in the middle ear, pain in the external ear, by deafness, by worry, by anxiety or by depresson. It may also be an indication of an imminent attack of epilepsy or fainting.

I tried many medicines but had no improvement at all.

I met Dr. O.P.Kohli through a friend. He chanted certain *Mantras* on my ears and gave me some *talismas* to use for 2 months.

By God's grace I am fully cured now. May God bless Dr. Kohli for helping me out of such miserable disease. Apart from the physical problems I also seek spiritual guidance from him and find immense peace in his association.

2. Ms Jyoti- Delhi

I am 35 years of age. An unpleasant odour emanates out of my mouth on breathing out. I fully care for my teeth and gums. The correct oral hygiene prescribed by specialists was of no use to remedy this unwelcome situation. With stroke of luck I contacted Dr O.P. Kohli through a friend of mine. He gave some *Talismas* to use for two months.

By God's grace I started improving and am fully cured now. Quite surprisingly even intake of raw onions, garlic and strong spices in food do not affect me.

I feel quite comfortable in my social circle now and am ever grateful to Dr. Kohli for this miraculous treatment.

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3. Shri Dwarka Nath- Jammu

I am 60 years old. The dry winter or cold could inflame my lips and cause cracks. At other times the lips were swollen, painful and red on account of cold sores. The longer use of medicines administered was of no use.

I was lucky to be introduced to Dr. Kohli. I was given mustard oil by chanting mantras and by its application for a few weeks , I was fully cured.

May God bless Dr. Kohli for having helped me by curing my miserable disease.

4. Mr.Kuldipji – Aknoor(Jammu)

I am 30 years old and had been seriously suffering from highly infectious problem of throat for last 4 years. The symptoms begin in the throat and the respiratory tract. The throat becomes sore and swollen. A thick membrane forms on the tonsils, in the nose, on the wind-pipe. Breathing becomes difficult because of obstructed air ways. It leads to weakness and heart palpitation. The medicines prescribed by the specialists including immunization could not prevent the disease.

I had almost given up any hopes of cure when I was introduced to Dr. Kohli through a friend. Dr. Kohli gave me some *talismas to* use for 2 months and I am fully recovered. I can again enjoy my life by grace of divine Guruji- Dr.O.P.Kohli.

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Devotee's Questions & Answers

Bhai Sahibji Answers

Qn.1 What are we capable of becoming?

Ans. What we think we become that. The Guru is our Spiritual doctor. If we follow his prescriptions even a little bit, our life will be transformed. Go on with stead-fast faith, devotion and joy. Long before you reach your Divine goal, you will have realized how very sweet life can be when it is lived rightly.

Qn 2 How can I convince myself that I am on the right direction in my spiritual life?

Ans. If you are glowing with inner radiance, vitality and happiness, you are in the right direction.

Qn3 I have many thoughts during meditation and cannot concentrate. What should I do?

Ans. Meditation needs patience, regularity and longing. With time you will be able to go deep and the thoughts will reduce.

Qn.4 Is it very difficult to get closer to God?

Ans. If you practice even a hundredth part of what Guruji taught you, you will reach God.

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Qn5. How should a spiritual person live?

You must be stricter by making God the centre of your life.

Qn6. Can we do some work for God?

Ans. If God chooses you for any duty then it is a blessing.

Qn7. Bernard asked the master, "What is the best way to transform emotion into devotion?"

Ans. "The company you keep," the master replied, "Will determine in what direction your feelings develop."
"Master," asked the disciple, "What if I am alone when I meditate?"
"Am I not always with you?" the master replied with a loving smile.

Qn8. Is it a fit of emotional frenzy to cry, plead and shout to God to appear?

Ans. By all means it is all right. Half-heartedness will never take you to God.

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*"The peace of meditation is the language and embracing comfort of God"***—– Sri Sri Parmahansa Yogananda – Satsanga Lessons.**

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NEWS AND EVENTS

VISIT TO PURMANDAL

Bhai Sahib along with few members of LSF visited Purmandal on 8th November 2008.

The holy place is 40 kms just off the National Highway leading towards Pathankot.

The Purmandal temple complex is built on the banks of the sacred, mostly underground river Devak (Also known as Gupt Ganga locally) often referred to as 'Chotta Kashi'. Its main temple is dedicated to 'Umapati' while the other temples worship Lord Shiva. These ancient temples are associated with Shaivites of the Kashmir valley.

There is a regular bus-service from Jammu. Accommodation is available in Pilgrims' Sarai. The members of LSF worshipped the naturally formed Shivling in water whose level remains the same all the time. On Shivratri, the town is transformed for three days as people celebrate the marriage ceremony of Lord Shiva to Goddess Parvati here.

We meditated there for 30 minutes and returned to Jammu with blissful state of mind.

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BHAI SAHIB'S BIRTHDAY

God sent Lord Jesus Christ on earth to promote spirituality through Christianity on
25th December and our spiritual leader and Guruji Dr. O.P.Kohli was born a week earlier on 17th December.

Members of LSF and other devotees of Bhai Sahib look forward to 17th December, to celebrate the birth day of their spiritual leader and founder of Life Sciences Foundation.

On 17th December 2008 the birthday was celebrated in the Ashram & meditation center, Chattarpur farms, Delhi instead of the usual residence at Paschim Vihar. The change of venue was necessitated due to ever increasing devotees and members of LSF who wished to come and wish Bhai Sahib 'A very happy Birthday'

The programme in the Ashram was started with the spiritual discourse by Bhai Sahib.
He beautifully explained the role of *Purusha* and *Prakriti* with guidelines for conduct of proper life. He stated that the human body is sum total of externals of nature plus consciousness. The role of seven spinal chakras, their development and the difference between an ordinary man and *Yogi* was explained in simplified manner.

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The celebrations were attended by over 400 members and devotees. The members also took the opportunity to congratulate Guruji on arrival of his grandson.

The discourse was followed by *Havana, organized by Mrs and Mr. GL Arora* which further purified the entire campus. A brief talk by Mr G.L.Arora on LSF affairs, congratulations to Bhai Sahib on birth of grandson and to all members for the coming new year-2009 was very heart warming.

All attending the function were requested to have tea and snacks at the end of the programme.

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May God bless our Guru Ji and spiritual leader Dr. O. P. Kohli with a long healthy life so that we and many more continue to get spiritual guidance and remedies to our physical & mental ailments with his charismatic powers.

VISIT TO CHITRAKOOT

LSF members represented by Mr. Naresh Bagai, Mrs Anju Bagai, master Akshay & Siddartha along with others visited Chitrakoot (195 kms from Khajurao) on 25th December 2008.
Chitrakoot, the hill of many wonders, nestles peacefully in the Northern region of the Vindhyas. It is a place of tranquil forest glades and quiet rivers and streams, where calm and repose pervade. The place also has

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a spiritual legacy that goes back to the legendary ages. It was the forest of Chitrakoot that Rama, Sita & Laxmana spent 11 of the 14 years of exile.

The group visited the following temples:

1. Ram Ghat
2. Kamad Giri Parikarma
3. Paramahansa Ashram
4. Janaki Kund
5. Sfatic Stone on the banks of Mandakini river
6. Hanuman Dhara
7. Footprints of Sita Mata
8. Gupt Godavri Cave
9. Kanch Mandir
10. Panch Mukhi Dhara
11. Bharat Koop
12. Also Madganjan Mahadeva Temple and Ganesh Bagh are other worth seeing places.

Devotees worship, move around and feel as if God is standing all around the Parikarma

The Lord is all around but we don't feel Him until we remove the lid of ignorance and merge our consciousness with His.

The party led by Shri Naresh Bagai experienced real and lasting satisfaction on their return to Delhi.

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