

STATES OF CONSCIOUSNESS IN ESOTERIC PRACTICE

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*The future belongs to those who can
think beyond the current paradigm*

Abstract. This paper argues that the study of the phenomenon of consciousness, and specifically of human states of consciousness, unlike the very recent preoccupation of the Western science with this problem, can be traced back to almost three millennia ago when it was investigated and personally explored by the sages of ancient India, who left behind written documents of their findings, which we know today as the Upanishads. The esoteric lines of other world's major religions have also pursued the investigation of consciousness in their own spiritual traditions as the most important subject-matter of all, arriving at virtually identical experiences and conclusions as the Upanishadic seers as to the nature of consciousness. The paper is focused on a comparative presentation of two esoteric practices which have been most articulate in the description of the results of their research: Upanishads, known under the collective term Vedanta (Hinduism) and esoteric Christianity as taught by a contemporary, venerable Cypriot mystic, simply called Daskalos (teacher). The striking correspondences between these two traditions have been found in all of their aspects, from the macrocosm, the structure of the Universe, to the microcosm, the structure of human selfhood, human bodies, human states of consciousness, and precise techniques for expansion and attainment of higher states of consciousness. Also, a brief comment is made on the psychic phenomena in the esoteric tradition, as well as on the research of these phenomena carried out by Western scientists. Finally, it is maintained that a conscientious implementation of esoteric disciplines and codes of behaviour in the many aspects of human life, personal and social, is the most efficient way for eliminating all evils (wars, crimes, poverty, illnesses, and diseases, unhappiness) that have beset humanity throughout its long history.

Key words: *Hinduism, esoteric Christianity, mysticism, Brahman, Atman, Absolute, states of consciousness, consciousness, self-consciousness, superconsciousness, superconscious self-awareness, subconscious, selfhood.*

1. INTRODUCTION

Contemporary research into the phenomenon of consciousness has greatly resulted from the mind-boggling findings of quantum mechanics which necessitated vocabulary and concepts that were outside the domain of mankind's common, empirical experience. Such knowledge has been possible to express and communicate through mathematical formulas and equations by the specialists initiated in its intricacies, but in verbal descriptions to lay persons they lacked adequate words to present the exotic behavior of sub-

atomic particles. In the whole history of orthodox science until the advent of new physics the scientists had made their admirable discoveries by using the instrument of mind and intellectual understanding, but aiming at a strict "objectivity" of their knowledge, they had banished the observer and his consciousness which (conscious understanding) made the discoveries possible in the first place! Happily, the experiments related to the investigation of properties of matter and light showed that the presence of the observer is inseparably linked to the phenomena under observation, and thus the observer and his consciousness were readmitted into the field and scope of scientific study.

Another source that has contributed to our growing interest in the scientific inquiry into the subject of consciousness is popularity and easy availability of the "sacred books" of the East, of Eastern philosophico-religious literature in translations into European languages. Insights into the essence of things arrived at by ancient mystics through their direct experience have shown striking parallels with the latest discoveries of the quantum and relativistic physics. Likewise, latest research carried out by transpersonal psychologists on the theory of personality with their extended concept of man, has been based mainly on the evolved types of consciousness of Eastern yogis, mystics and saints.

A third source that has provided additional motivation for study of consciousness, especially in psychology and social sciences, are experiments by some maverick scientists (in the Sixties and Seventies) with natural psychedelic plants or synthetic drugs which launched the subjects into altered and expanded states of consciousness, proving that there is much more to our normal consciousness than was believed possible.

The objective of this paper is to show that the phenomenon of consciousness as studied in the religious traditions both Eastern in all of the major schools of thought (Hinduism, Buddhism, Confucianism, Taoism, Zen, and Islam in their esoteric aspects) and Western (esoteric Christianity) has been recognized as the most important subject-matter of inquiry and that the mystics have explored and personally experienced all the states of consciousness possible in Reality, and left behind them verbal maps of all realities and relative states of consciousness in which these realities were perceived. Their point of departure was the lowest state of consciousness that we know as an individual's personal ego-consciousness, and through various in-between states, they have arrived at the ultimate state alternatively described as God-consciousness, Cosmic consciousness, Christ-consciousness, or Absolute consciousness.

Unlike technocentric or anthropocentric approach to this problem adopted by modern natural and social sciences, this paper will use a theocentric approach. The terms "religion" and "esoteric" in this context have no theological connotations and have nothing to do with institutionalized forms of any of the world's major religions; it will be used exclusively in the sense meaning "a science of the states of consciousness". The term "mystical" shall mean "a direct experience of reality" or "the art of union with Reality". A "mystic" is "a technician of states of consciousness", who has through personal effort raised the level and quality of his consciousness to the highest echelon of self-superconsciousness. Also, the words God, Absolute, Reality, Life, or Light, will be used to mean "Absolute superconscious self-awareness".

2. TWO MODES OF KNOWLEDGE

That there are two dominant modes of knowledge was recognized over 2 000 years ago by all of the above mentioned esoteric schools; it is succinctly described in Patanjali's Yoga Sutras [1]:

I.49 The knowledge which is gained from inference and the study of scriptures is of one kind. But the knowledge which is gained from samadhi is of a much higher order. It goes beyond inference and scriptures.

I.48 In that samadhi, knowledge is said to be "filled with truth";

and about 700 years ago by one of the pioneers of modern science, Roger Bacon, who said, "There are two modes of knowing, those of argument and experience".

The first mode of knowing has been used with spectacular success by Western science in exploration of the outer, physical world. This method is based on observation of natural events through man's five senses, interpreted and conceptualized by powers of his intellectual understanding. The main characteristics of this mode is that it is perceptual, rational, relative, representational, and secular. It provides us with the knowledge we possess about the objects and events in our everyday environment. It is analytic and discursive, based on our intellect whose function is to observe sensory input and then compare, measure, divide, categorize, and describe using pairs of dualities and opposites. It is best epitomized through the abstract mathematical and verbal concepts and symbols, presented in a linear and sequential structure which is typical for our speech and thinking [2]. This mode of scientific knowledge is useful for man's existence - his biological survival and coping with the external, physical world.

The other mode of knowing has been applied with no less spectacular success by religious esoterists in their exploration of the inner world, looking behind the sensory curtain. It is intuitive, cognitive, absolute, and sacral. It is direct experience of reality transcending intellectual thinking and sensory perceptions. It is called absolute, because it is not relied on discriminations, comparisons, abstractions, qualifications and classifications of the intellect which are always relative and approximate. It is empirical experience of undifferentiated, undivided, unqualified "is-ness". However, when described this knowledge becomes relative, because it is translated into ordinary logical language, if that is possible or in so far as it is possible. Mystical insights can be acquired only through personal experience and not from books and logical reasoning. Esoteric knowledge is needed for our beingness, providing us with sense of our self-identity and meaning of our existence.

The difference between these two modes is vividly portrayed in the following parable: There are two signposts on the roadway, one stating "The Road to the Lectures on Reality" (which is generally taken by the West) and the other, "The Road to Reality" (which is the way of the East). The only way *to study* consciousness is to experience its states directly.

These two modes of knowledge and two modes of consciousness might have their origin in the structure of the human brain, which is divided into two hemispheres connected by a bundle of connecting fibers called the corpus callosum. The right side of the cortex mainly controls the left side of the body, whereas the left side of the cortex controls the right side of the body. These two hemispheres have specialized functions, although both sides share and participate in many activities. Thus in normal persons the left hemisphere is responsible for our verbal, logical, analytic and mathematical faculties. It processes information sequentially in linear time. The right hemisphere is specialized for holistic, integral processing of many inputs simultaneously, for our orientation in space, artistic achievements, recognition of faces, non-verbal ideation. Left side is used predominantly by scientists, philosophers, and writers. Right side is mainly used by visual and spatial artists, musicians, and mystics.

Scientific knowledge is still incomplete, it is still evolving, and it will always be limited by the constraints of our skin-encapsulated ego-consciousness, our five senses and the capacity of the material brain. Mystical knowledge is complete and unlimited, leaving nothing more to be discovered. Science is studying what is comprehensible and understandable, subject to eternal change and thus essentially illusory, Maya; esotericism is studying what is Real, everlasting, unchangeable.

No matter how much we admire the sophistication and the complexity of our material body and our material brains (that handful of earth in our skull), *it is our main obstacle to mystical knowledge, barring out the Reality from us and keeping us in ignorance* [3]. This is what is making human body-ego consciousness, no matter in which degree it expresses itself, to have the illusion of duality, because it is not a reality, the illusion that it is out of the oneness of the Absolute, and creating a kind of separate self from all the other people, and, unfortunately, from the Absolute. Being in the material body we have the feeling that we are different, that we are something not the Absolute, and that we are out of the oneness.

Although Reality is found everywhere we can come in contact with it only in our hearts. Ancient yogis believed that there is an actual center of spiritual consciousness, called the lotus of the heart, which is located between the abdomen and thorax and which can be revealed in deep meditation. The point of convergence between the relative and absolute truth is in the human heart.

3. CONSCIOUSNESS IN ESOTERIC TRADITION

The reality of higher (mystical) states of consciousness has been personally explored and experienced by esoteric practitioners of every religious tradition without exception. In mystical states, utterly different people of entirely different races, in different periods and different religions, learn one and the same thing; hence *in mystical states there is no difference of religions*. All the experiences are absolutely

identical; the differences exist only in the language and in the form of description. Although the mystics have raised their consciousness to the highest levels possible and described the dimensions of reality and concepts of the world resulting *directly* from these special states of consciousness, these states cannot be reached *by reason*. Mystical states are verifiable and intelligible only in mystical states; in these states men are able to know what cannot be known in ordinary state of consciousness. Ordinary state of consciousness is only a *particular* type of consciousness and "ordinary" conception of the world is only a *particular* type of perception of the world. All that is possible to get from an intellectual study of mystical states will be merely an approximation, an interpretation, a symbolic description, a tale of Reality and not Reality itself [4].

This esoteric knowledge has been accumulated for several thousands of years and has been handed down from generation of generation within small circles of initiate mystics. This knowledge of all hierarchies of realities and of states of consciousness specific to these realities refers to spheres which have not even been suspected by science, and the techniques and the disciplines leading to mastery of such knowledge are still generally unknown to scientists and mankind at large. However, it can be given only to those who seek, who have been seeking with a certain quality of consciousness, that is with an understanding of how it differs from ordinary knowledge and how it can be found. "The Self is not known through the study of scriptures, nor through subtlety of intellect, nor through much learning; but by him who longs for him is he known. Verily unto him the Self reveals his true being." (Katha Upanishad, 2.23)

As already stated, all major religions of the world possess this esoteric knowledge codified cryptically in their respective sacred books of Hinduism (India), Buddhism (South-East Asia), Taoism (China), Zen (Japan, Korea), Judaism/Kabala (Israel, Jewish diaspora), Christianity (Western World), and Islam/Sufism (Middle East, North Africa). Also, all religions are founded on revelation. Revealed knowledge is proceeding immediately by higher powers from the higher levels of consciousness or from human beings who have attained to these higher levels.

All world's religions can be traced back to their respective single founder, except Hinduism. These historical personages (Confucius, Lao Tzu, Buddha, Moses, Jesus Christ, Mohammed), having attained the highest levels of *superconscious self-awareness*, and tasting the experience of ultimate Reality and knowing their true nature beyond the identity with their body-ego consciousness, have left behind them maps of their journeys and described the disciplines and preparations needed to be practiced by anyone wishing to reach the same goal.

Acknowledging equal cognitive value of all of the above religious paths, for the sake of brevity and conciseness this paper will limit itself to a comparative presentation of two esoteric traditions, one Eastern and one Western: that of Hinduism and that of Christianity.

*"The greatest gift is
the gift of Truth"*
(Dhammapada)

3.1 Eastern Legacy - Hinduism

Uniquely among world's major religions Hinduism has no known founder; it is a thoroughly decentralized system with no formal institutional controls. The only allegiance to it is acceptance of the authority of the Vedas, but they require strong individual involvement and their truths have to be verified and proved through personal experience. That is why Hinduism avoids central authority and delegated commitment, its validity has to be tested by time and experience and therefore it knows no dogmas, no religious fanaticism and no heresy.

3.1.1 Vedas and Upanishads: World versus Consciousness

Historians put tentatively the year 2000 B.C. as the time when nomadic tribes called Arya (noble) coming from western Asia began to invade the Indian subcontinent. In the Indus river valley the Aryan invaders encountered a civilization already a thousand years old, with an advanced technology and trade. Fusion of these two cultures created the unique Indian civilization as we know it today. The Aryans brought with themselves their religious beliefs in Sanskrit language canonized in four books of hymns called Vedas - Rig, Sama, Yajur, and Atharva. In addition to the first part of the Vedas which contained the rituals, incantations, chants and offerings related to religious worship, Vedic India also contained rudiments of powerful scientific traditions, especially of mathematics: they developed modern numerals (which we received through the Arabs and thus mistakenly called them Arabic numerals), decimal place system, zero, basic algebra and trigonometry.

The second part of Vedas called Upanishads is not concerned with ceremonial worship and religious rites, but with knowledge of highest reality, of ultimate truth, nature of life and human beings, and of states of consciousness. Although written with brilliant intellectual clarity and conceptual precision, they cannot be compared with Western philosophical or scientific systems based on logic and argument, because the sages were not builders of systems, but recorders of experience. The Upanishads are *darshanas*, something seen; based on personal experience they are records of inspired teachings of individuals for whom transcendent Reality called God was more real than the world reported to them by their senses. If we want to understand the Upanishads on their own terms, we come up against the rarity of the experience they are attempting to describe. Few human beings have actually seen reality from the perspective taken by these remarkable documents. The "upanishad of the Self" is *satyasya satyam*, "truth of truth".

Unlike the Vedas which look outward in reverence and awe of the phenomenal world, the Upanishads look inward, *finding the powers of nature only an expression of more awesome powers of human consciousness*. Asking themselves, "By whose mere presence does that desire arise which moves the universe?", the ancient sages found the answer that *that which moves the world is consciousness*, which in human beings becomes, among other functions, *cognition*. That is why the Upanishadic sages showed a unique preoccupation with states of consciousness, focusing on the medium of awareness and of knowing - the mind, a feat unparalleled in the history of any religion or science. They were very keen observers of all phenomena of life and they studied our everyday waking consciousness, dreams, and states of dreamless sleep trying to find out what could be known in each and what faculty could be said to be the knower. What exactly is the difference between a dream and waking experience, both of which contained the sense of "I" of the experiencer? But what happens with that sense of "I" in dreamless sleep? Is there anything that remains the same in the constant flux of human experience? Is there any continuity, some level of reality higher than waking, in which these states of mind cohere?

These are the kinds of questions the sages asked, but they did not stop with debating them. They became absorbed in the discovery that *as the concentration deepens, the mind actually passes through the states of consciousness being inquired about*. And in concentrating on consciousness itself - "Who is the knower" - they found they could separate strata of the mind and observe its workings as objectively as a botanist observes a flower.

The significance of this discovery cannot be exaggerated. Since consciousness is the field of all human activities, outward as well as inner (experience, action, imagination, knowledge, love) - *a science of consciousness holds out the promise of central principles that unify all of life*. "By knowing one piece of gold," the Upanishads observed, "All things made of gold are known; they differ only in name and form, while the stuff of which all are made is gold." And they asked: "What is that one by knowing which we can know the nature of everything else?" *They found the answer in consciousness*. The study of consciousness was called *Brahma-vidya*, which means both "the supreme science" and "the science of the Supreme"!

It is important to understand that brahmaidya is not intellectual study. The intellect was given full training in the practice of the Upanishadic sages, but brahmaidya is not psychology or philosophy. It is definitely an empirical, laboratory science where *one's mind is both the researcher, the means of research and the object of research*, with attention turned inward, through a discipline called *meditation*.

However, meditation in the Upanishadic sense is not reflection or any other kind of discursive thinking. It is *pure concentration*, training the mind to dwell on an interior focus without distractions, until it becomes absorbed in the object of its contemplation. This state in which the outside world is totally obliterated from awareness does not mean unconsciousness: meditation is a state of extremely intense inner wakefulness. Brahmaidya is not concerned with the insights that come from concentrating on a particular part of life; it is concerned with *how concentration yields insight at all*. Observing what happens as concen-

tration deepens, the sages of the Upanishads learned to make a science and an art of insight - something that could be mastered and then taught to others [5].

3.1.2 Upanishadic Cosmogony

Having thus mastered the techniques of concentration and meditation, the ancient yogis have developed their consciousness to the highest transcendental and transpersonal states, gaining direct knowledge of their identity both on macro and micro levels.

On the macrocosmic level in their relation to nature they have experienced the whole spectrum of the outside universe, consisting of several interpenetrating layers called "lokas" [6] (Table 1).

Table 1. Upanishadic Cosmogony ¹

BRAHMAN (ABSOLUTE REALITY)	
The highest God, in Its unmanifested state and undifferentiated unity, containing all possibilities before the divine creativity. Absolute self-aware intelligence in spaceless and timeless potentiality. Inaccessible to human cognition and comprehension while we are grounded in the lowest three worlds of manifestation.	
PRAJNANA-GHANA (CREATIVE CONSCIOUSNESS)	
Between the Absolute and the World-Soul is prajnana-ghana, creative consciousness, when the Absolute has moved out of Its primal poise and become knowledge-will. This is a logical succession and not a temporal one, because the World-Soul must be there before there can be the world.	
ATMAN (WORLD-SOUL)	ISHVARA (CREATOR-DESTROYER)
Brahman manifested as the World-Soul, universal self existing in all beings, inanimate as well as animate, rocks and stones, trees, animals and men, although not realized in the same degree.	The creative aspect of Brahman. In its three functions taken separately Ishvara becomes Brahma (the creator), Vishnu (the sustainer) and Shiva (the destroyer).
PRAKRITI (UNDIFFERENTIATED SUBSTANCE)	
The seven worlds (lokas) are made by Ishvara of Prakriti, elementary, undifferentiated substance contained both in the mind and in matter. Prakriti is an effect of Brahman, so that Prakriti cannot exist without Brahman. These two are eternally inseparable. Prakriti has been defined as the effect or power of Brahman, the Reality. In other words, this illusion (<i>maya</i> , in Sanskrit) of an objective spatio-temporal universe is projected by the Reality itself. Therefore, it follows that Prakriti and Brahman must be co-existent, and that Prakriti, like Brahman, had no beginning and will have no end.	

(continued on next page)

¹ Compare also with Table 6.

(Table 1, continued)

SEVEN LOKAS (WORLDS):

The lokas, planes, interpenetrate. Each plane has its own matter of an appropriate degree of density, which interpenetrates the matter of the plane next below it. In each world the soul develops a new and higher sense of power. When we pass from one dimension to another we do not move in space, but simply change the focus of our consciousness. We have different vehicles (bodies) within ourselves which correspond to and which can function in different worlds. The worlds occupy the same position in space.

**(7) BRAHMALOKA, (6) TAPOLOKA, (5) JANALOKA, (4) MAHARLOKA
(SUPRAMENTAL WORLDS)**

The original Vedic description of the world contains three regions or three spheres: bhurloka (earth), bhuhvarloka (astral world) and svargaloka (heaven or mental world). Having attained the highest states of consciousness, the Upanishadic seers have explored and named additional four higher worlds which can be visited and experienced only by self-realized beings. The four supramental worlds are of very rapid and high frequency vibrations, and as such are beyond the reach of ordinary human beings and of their power of conceiving them.

(3) SVARGALOKA (HEAVEN OR MENTAL WORLD)

The mental plane interpenetrates the astral plane, but also extends further into space. This heaven is a thought world, a realm of intense ideation. Whatever one wishes, one gets it at one by immediate materialization of thoughts. Every man builds up his own heaven according to his own desires and imaginations. A life in heaven is very much the same sort of life we lead on the earth level, only much more intense. This heaven is also not permanent. Once we exhaust the fruits of good karma accumulated in the previous life, we have to come down back to the earth world, to start a new incarnation.

(2) BHUVARLOKA (ASTRAL WORLD)

The astral world interpenetrates the earth plane and extends some distance beyond it. The vibrations of the astral world are more rapid than those of the physical plane. The lowest planes of the seven sub-planes of the astral world are called narakas (hells) or asurya lokas (sunless planes) peopled by departed humans with beastly natures and with no good in their hearts. One of such low planes is occupied by the persons with uncontrolled passions and strong sense-cravings, and thus is often called Preta Loka, plane of hungry ghosts (hungry for sensuous experiences of the earth world).

(1) BHURLOKA (THE EARTH OR "PHYSICAL" WORLD)

The "physical" world where we get knowledge of objects through the five jnana-indriyas or organs of knowledge, i.e. the senses of seeing, hearing, touching, smelling and tasting.

3.1.3 Upanishadic Structure of Individuated Selfhood

On the microcosmic level in their aspect as human beings, the Upanishadic sages have discovered different orders of magnitude of their personality, which in the transpersonal states coincide with the macrocosmic aspect (Table 2).

Table 2. *Upanishadic Structure of Individuated Selfhood*²

<p>BRAHMAN</p> <p>Absolute Being whose essential nature is defined as <i>sat</i> (self-being), <i>chit</i> (self-consciousness), and <i>ananda</i> (self-delight). The super-personal transcendental being anterior to any concrete reality. Our true, absolute Self.</p>
<p>ATMAN</p> <p>The innermost Self of any living creature or object and divine essence of individuality.</p> <p>Between the Atman and Brahman there is no duality: it is one and the same Reality, the same God, viewed in its two relations toward the Universe. It is both inside and outside, present here this moment and infinitely far away at some other place, in the heart of atom and in all things.</p>
<p>JIVATMAN</p> <p>The living individual's higher self, the individual as embodied soul in the universes.</p>
<p>JIVA</p> <p>The individual as a human being incarnated in the worlds of separateness (the lowest three worlds) expressing a space-time personality. This personality consists of three characteristic elements. <i>Manas</i> is the recording faculty which receives impressions gathered by the senses from the outside world. <i>Buddhi</i> is the discriminative faculty which classifies these impressions and reacts to them. <i>Ahamkar</i> is the ego-sense which claims these impressions for its own and reacts to them - it is what we create our personality or our egoism. ("To identify consciousness with that which merely reflects consciousness - this is egoism" Patanjali, II.6). If the thought-wave is pleasant the ego-sense feels, "I am happy"; if the thought-wave is unpleasant, "I am unhappy". It follows then that as long as there is this false identification of our body-self with these thought-waves, with our egoism, man can never know his real Self, the Atman.</p>

3.1.4 Upanishadic Structure of Man's Bodies

The ancient seers have left behind a description of man's *several* bodies, the vehicles through which man expresses his consciousness in corresponding strata of reality (Table 3). Such are the coverings or the sheaths that hide our real nature, for our true Self, Atman, God within, is obviously none of these, and it cannot be known as long as we are identified with these bodies. They are only instruments for manifestation of various states of consciousness [7].

² Compare also with Table 7.

Table 3. *Upanishadic Structure of Man's Bodies*³

According to the Upanishadic sages, the soul creates the gross material body in accordance with the laws of the earth plane in order to provide a "house" for itself in this "physical" dimension. The gross body thus gives the soul the opportunity to be focused in time and space. But, beside the gross body, there are also several other bodies, listed below. All these bodies have their respective etheric doubles (**Pranamaya**), composed of prana, vital principle, the force which vitalizes and holds together the gross body. It pervades the whole organism and its gross manifestation is breath. As long as this vital principle exists in the organism, life continues. Pranamaya has seven major etheric centres or chakras, the areas through which the human personality experiences itself, and they are also a communicative and a controlling link between his bodies. Among them, the etheric double of the human gross material body has seven major energy centres (Table 4), their relative activity being related to different levels of consciousness.

(1) **Annamaya**, *food-body* or *gross body* named from the fact that it is nourished and maintained by food. This body is used by human beings for their actions and movement in waking consciousness.

(2) **Manomaya**, *subtle body* or *psychic body*, composed of manas - thought-forms and desires and emotions. This body is used in our dreaming state when we act unconsciously in our dreams, meaning we are not masters of our thoughts and desires.

(3^ϕ) **Vijnanamaya**, *mental body*, or *lower noetic body*, providing the faculties of discrimination, will power, and clear vision, untainted by emotions, and utilitarian reasoning. This body is also used in our dreaming state, but now consciously and self-consciously, meaning that we have mastered our thoughts and our desires.

(3²) **Anandamaya** - *body of bliss*, as this body is nearest to the blissful Self; it is known also as the *higher noetic body*. In deep sleep, when the body and the mind stop functioning, there still stands the causal (karmic) body between the finite world and the blissful Self (Atman).

3.1.5 Upanishadic Basic States of Human Consciousness

Most of the principal Upanishads, which can be regarded as a unitary work, contain beautiful expositions of the states of consciousness explored by the sages. They have established that there are three basic states which they called *waking*, *dreaming*, and *dreamless sleep* (Table 5). Their brilliant discovery is that these are not merely alternate states in which a person slips in and out every day, but that they also represent layers of awareness, concurrent strata lying at different depths in the conscious and unconscious mind.

³ Compare also with Table 8.

Table 4. *Upanishadic Etheric Energy Centres (Chakras)*⁴

The chakras represent the subtle anatomy of human beings just as the "physical" organs represent the gross anatomy. The seven endocrine glands correspond to the seven chakras. The seven chakras correspond macrocosmically to the seven lokas and related states of consciousness.

(1) **Muladhara Chakra**, located at the base of the spine, governs our understanding of the "physical" dimension. It externalizes as the adrenal gland, governing the kidneys and the spinal column. It is the chakra that is grounding us in the Earth, and survival-oriented, because through it we express our fight or flight when threatened.

(2) **Svadishtana Chakra**, situated at the base of the genital organs, is the chakra of creativity, governing sex and reproduction.

(3) **Manipura Chakra**, is located in the solar plexus. It externalizes as the pancreas, governs the action of the spleen, liver, stomach, gall bladder, and aspects of the nervous system. It is the clearinghouse for emotional sensitiveness and issues of personal power.

(4) **Anahata Chakra**, is the heart chakra. It externalizes as the thymus gland. This chakra governs the heart, blood and circulatory system, and influences the immune and endocrine systems. It is the seat and home of the soul, or our Higher Self. The center through which we feel and express love, and define our personality.

(5) **Vishuddha Chakra**, is the throat chakra. It externalizes as the thyroid gland, and governs lungs, vocal cords, bronchial apparatus, and metabolism. The centre of self-expression, communication and judgement.

(6) **Ajna Chakra**, is located between the eyebrows in the centre of the forehead. Known as the "third eye", it externalizes as the pituitary gland. It governs the lower brain and nervous system, the ears, the nose and the eyes. Commands the various states of concentration realized through meditation, and is associated with various cognitive faculties of the mind.

(7) **Sahasrara Chakra** is located at the top of the head. It externalizes as the pineal gland and governs the upper brain. Through this chakra one may ultimately reach the integration with God. This occurs when Kundalini, the serpent power, is awakened from its coiled position in the lowest energy center, and energizing chakras one by one reaches the Sahasrara.

In dreaming, the Upanishads observe, we leave one world and enter another. "In that dream world there are no chariots, no animals to draw them, no roads to ride on, but one makes chariots and animals and roads oneself from the impressions of past experience." (Brihadaranyaka Upanishad, IV.10) And then the leap of insight: "*Everyone experiences this, but no one knows the experienter.*" What is the same in both worlds, the observer both of waking experience and of dreams? It cannot be the body, for in dreams the observer detaches itself from the body and physical senses and creates his own experiences - experiences which can be as real, in terms of physiological

⁴ Compare also with Table 9.

reactions, as those of waking life. Dream and waking are made of the same stuff, and as far as the nervous system is concerned, both kinds of experience are real. When we wake up from a dream, then we do not pass from unreality to reality; we pass from a higher level of reality to a lower one.

Table 5. *Upanishadic Basic States of Human Consciousness*⁵

<p>"Brahman is all, and the Atman (the Self) is Brahman. This Self has four states of consciousness." (The Mandukya Upanishad, I.2)</p> <p style="text-align: center;">WAKING CONSCIOUSNESS - VAISHVANARA</p> <p>In this state a human being lives with all the senses turned outward, aware only of the external world, finding sensual enjoyment in gross objects and convinced that his consciousness is identical to the physical body. The waking state is the normal condition of the natural man, who without reflection accepts the Universe as he finds it.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">DREAMING STATE - TAIJASA</p> <p>In this state the senses are turned inward, and one enacts the impressions of past deeds and present desires. Dreaming is a distortion of even that limited, conditioned reality, but it is in a way higher, inasmuch as we commune with our impressions of experiences rather with the experiences themselves. The mind is now active, though independently of the sense organs, and is without the consciousness of the gross body.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">DREAMLESS SLEEP - PRAJNA</p> <p>In dreamless sleep we leave the sense of "I" completely behind; but we are unaware that we have done so. We are entirely unaware of the external world and also of the internal world. In dreamless sleep we are not conscious of forms or impressions; consciousness is undifferentiated, and individual is not aware of it. In prajna there is no mind, and there is no separateness.</p> <p>All these three states are merely forms of the Self and of states experienced before illumination; the Self is closest to its true nature in dreamless sleep.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">SUPERCONSCIOUS, TRANSCENDENTAL STATE - TURIYA</p> <p>The fourth is the superconscious state, called Turiya, neither inward nor outward, beyond the senses and the intellect, in which there is no other than Atman in its own pure state. It is neither outer nor inner consciousness, neither semi-consciousness, nor sleeping consciousness, neither consciousness nor unconsciousness. Nothing can describe it, because it is not a state of consciousness, but consciousness itself, beyond the characterizable three states of waking, dreaming, and dreamless sleep. In the union with it is the supreme proof of its reality. It is the end of evolution and non-duality. It is peace and love.</p>

⁵ Compare also with Table 10.

If waking and dreaming experiences are impermanent, should there not be something abiding, something real, to support them? Might not it be possible to wake up into a higher state, a level of reality above this world of constantly changing sensory experiences? The sages found a clue: in dreamless sleep the observing self detaches itself not only from the body but from the mind. It is the deepest, most universal layer of the unconscious. Wake up in this state, the Upanishads say, and you will be who you truly are, free from the conditioning of the body and mind in a world unbounded by the limitations of time, space and causality.

Wake up in the very depth of unconsciousness when thought itself has ceased? The language makes no more sense than a map of some other dimension. The sages who have mapped the uncharted territories of consciousness three thousand years ago, must rank with the greatest and the boldest explorers in history. Because the ascent to the summit of consciousness is not for the timid: "Sharp like a razor's edge, the sages say, is the path to Reality, difficult to traverse." (Katha Upanishad, I,3.14). And this is the greatest challenge facing a human being: to climb and reach the highest, the Himalayas of consciousness. It is the same challenge that motivated orthodox scientists like Newton and Einstein to try and penetrate the heart of the Universe. Actually, most of the daring Upanishadic sages came from the warrior caste. They yearned to know life at its core, to know it and master it, and that meant to master every current of the mind. Fusing all their desires into a single most powerful desire for Self-realization, concentrating it like a laser in a single focus on the worlds within, their attention naturally retreated from the sensory channels. As their concentration deepened, there came a moment when the body was no longer felt, when identification with the physical body was dissolved, and the sages knew beyond any shadow of doubt that they were not their body. They also realized that the powers of the brain (being itself a part of the physical body) have no life of their own, *that the brain is not conscious, but only an instrument of the mind and consciousness, because when awareness was withdrawn from the brain, they remained aware!* The Upanishads say that our gross body is the first of many layers that surround the human personality, each less "physical" than the one before.

Going further down (or rather up) in meditation, as awareness was withdrawn from these layers of consciousness one by one, the sages gradually made another astonishing discovery: they realized that they were no more mind than they were the gross body, for when awareness was withdrawn even beyond the mind, there still remained the awareness of "I". Concentration is so profound that the mind-process has come to a standstill. Space and time are transcended. "I" in meditation rests in what the Upanishads call the "body of joy", a silent, ethereal inner realm at the threshold of pure being. All that divides us from the sea of infinite consciousness at this point is a thin envelope of personal identity. That envelope cannot be removed by any amount of will; the "I" cannot erase itself. Yet, abruptly it does vanish. In the climax of meditation the barrier of individuality disappears, dissolving in a sea of pure, undifferentiated consciousness.

This state the Upanishads call *turiya*, "the fourth", for it is beyond waking, dreaming, and dreamless sleep. *Turiya* is waking up in dreamless sleep: in the very depth of unconsciousness, where one is aware neither of body nor mind. Later this state was named *samadhi*, "complete absorption" and *moksha*, "liberation" or "release", for it brings freedom from all conditioning and limitations of time and space. In *samadhi* reality is condensed into pure potential, without dimensions, without time, without any differentiation. In this absorption there is no time, no space, no causality. These are forms imposed by the mind, and the mind is still. Nor is there awareness of any object; even the thought of "I" has dissolved. Yet awareness remains: *chit*, pure, undifferentiated consciousness, beyond the division of observer and observed. The whole of reality is there, inner as well as outer: not only matter and energy but all time, space, causality and states of consciousness.

What remains when every trace of individuality is removed? The Upanishad call it *sat*, pure being, for it is in differentiating this unity that created things acquire their name and form. The sages called it *Brahman*, from the root *brih*, "to expand"; *Brahman* is the irreducible ground of existence, the essence of every thing - of the earth and sun, and all creatures, of gods and human beings, of every power of life.

Simultaneously with this discovery comes another: this unitary awareness is also the ground of one's own being, the core of our personality. This divine ground the Upanishads call simply *Atman*, "the Self"; in the unitive state the Self is *seen* to be one, the same in everyone. In all persons, all creatures, the Self is the innermost essence. And it is identical with *Brahman*: our real Self is not different from the ultimate Reality called God.

This tremendous equation - *the Atman (Self) is Brahman* - is the central discovery of the Upanishads! Its most famous formulation is one of the *mahavakyas* or "great formulas": *Tat tvam asi*, "You are That".

The joy of this state cannot be described. It is called *ananda*: pure, limitless, unconditional joy. "In the union with the Self one is not aware of what is without and what is within; that is one's real form, where one is free from all desires because all one's desires are fulfilled; for the Self is all our desire."

Nothing less can satisfy the human heart. "There is no joy in the finite; there is joy only in the infinite." That is the message of the Upanishads. The infinite - free, unbounded, full of joy - is our native state. We have fallen from that state and seek in everywhere: every human activity is an attempt to fill this void. But as long as we try to fill it from outside ourselves, we are making demands on life which life cannot fulfill. Finite things can never appease an infinite hunger. Nothing can satisfy us but reunion with our real self, which the Upanishads say is *sat-chit-ananda*: absolute reality (beingness), pure awareness, unconditioned joy.

3.1.6 Upanishadic Controlled Expansion of Consciousness

The methods of attaining the highest state of consciousness are: hearing about, reasoning about and meditating upon the ultimate Reality. One must first hear about it either coming in contact with the sacred books where these techniques are described (Vedas, Upanishads), or from the lips of someone who knows, from a guru, an illumined teacher. But hearing is not enough. No true spiritual teacher demands blind acceptance of his doctrine. In order to reach a firm intellectual conviction, we must reason and reflect about it with an openness of mind and critical judgement. Religion is, in fact, a strictly practical and empirical kind of research. You take nothing on trust. You accept nothing but your own experience. Sound knowledge of natural sciences, logic and philosophical contemplation can be a great aid in this endeavour, and help us to discriminate between the two modes of knowing. Because no teaching which goes contrary to the common sense and to the scientific body of knowledge about the physical world, can be the doctrine of the Buddha, as the Buddhists use to say.

After these two preliminary steps, we are ready for the real thing - the last step on the path of self-realization - *meditation*⁶. The Upanishads say that in its highest form meditation is concentration upon the ultimate Reality, the truth *Aham Brahmasmi* (I am Brahman), but *to know Brahman one must become Brahman*. However, precise details and full information of the exact method is not formally set down in writing, because in ancient times, as at present and throughout the intervening centuries, the full measure of the teachings was communicated directly from master to disciple. The Upanishads indicate that such details can have no use or meaning for one who is not spiritually prepared, and another reason is that in actual practice they are infinitely varied to suit the needs of individual disciples. The guru has no more important duty than to study carefully the personality and temperament of the pupils committed to his charge, and to prescribe to each, according to his nature, an appropriate method of meditation.

Patanjali's Yoga Sutras (Aphorisms, written down some time about 300 BC) are considered the best and the most authoritative compilation and reformulation of spiritual disciplines and techniques of meditation found in the Katha, Svetasvatara, Taittiriya and Maitrayani Upanishads many centuries earlier. These techniques can be practiced by the followers of any religion, although every major religion contains practices which are basically similar or almost identical to those of Yoga. *Yoga* means *union*, it is a method by which an individual may become united (or rather reunited) with the supreme God, the Reality which underlies this apparent, ephemeral universe. Our own word *religion* in its Latin root has exactly the same meaning - *re + ligare* (bind, tie). In its essential meaning yoga is defined as *the control of thought-waves in the mind*. Knowledge or perception is a thought-wave (*vritti*) in the mind. A thought-

⁶ "By the yoga of meditation and contemplation the wise saw the power of Brahman, *hidden in his own creation*." (Svetasvatara Upanishad)

wave is raised in the mind whenever an object or an event in the external world is perceived by the senses and registered by the mind. Describing the action of thought-waves, the yogis employ a simple image - the image of a lake. The lake represents the mind and the bottom of the lake the Atman (Reality). If the surface of the lake is disturbed, the water becomes muddy and the bottom cannot be seen. *So, all thought-waves, even the thoughts of the greatest scientists on the "nature" of Reality, expressed through the most sophisticated levels of conceptualization and mathematical abstraction, are still disturbances in the mind, and as such are making the clear waters of the lake muddy and obstructing our view of Reality (the bottom of the lake).*

This truth is said with proverbial conciseness in the opening aphorisms of Patanjali's Yoga Sutras [1]:

- I.2 Yoga is the control of thought-waves in the mind.
- I.3 Then man abides in his real nature.
- I.4 At other times, when he is not in the state of yoga, man remains identified with the thought-waves in the mind.

Equally clearly it is described in the Katha Upanishad, II, vi.9-11:

"None beholds him with the eyes, for he is without visible form. Yet in the heart he is revealed, through self-control and meditation. Those who know him become immortal. When all the senses are stilled, when the mind is at rest, when the intellect wavers not - then is known, say the wise, the highest state. The calm of the senses and the mind has been defined as *yoga*. He who attains it is freed from delusion."

The perfect knowledge of the Atman (our real Self) is gained in seven stages, starting from the realization that the source of all mystical knowledge is inside us, and finishing in samadhi, reunification and final absorption with Atman. In order to achieve this, we have to practice the eight so-called "limbs" of yoga, to remove the impurities from the mind. For the knowledge itself does not have to be sought. *It is already within us*, unlike that mundane knowledge which must be acquired from books and experiences in the external world.

These eight limbs of yoga are:

- (1) *Yamas* - various abstentions from evil-doing (from harming others, from falsehood, from theft, from incontinence, and from greed).
- (2) *Niyamas* - various observances (purity physical and mental, contentment with one's place in life, self-discipline, study and devotion to God).
- (3) *Asanas* - yogic postures to be followed each day until certain of the higher states of consciousness are reached. Their purpose is to calm the mind.
- (4) *Pranayama* - control of the breath and prana (vital energy), which is enabling us to act, move, and think. This is actually the point of contact between the mind and the physical body, through the centers of energy and consciousness called chakras, which are seven in number (cf. Table 5).
- (5) *Pratyahara* - withdrawal of the mind from sense-objects and, through the practice of non-attachment, control of the restlessness of the mind.

(6) *Dharana* - concentration, "turning the mind inwards within a centre of spiritual consciousness in the body" (III.1) or by fixing the mind upon the Inner Light (lotus of the heart)".

(7) *Dhyana* - meditation "is an unbroken flow of thought toward the object of concentration" (III.2); it is prolonged concentration.

(8) *Samadhi* - absorption in the Atman "when in meditation, the true nature of the object shines forth, not distorted by the mind of the perceiver" (III.3).

The first five limbs are only a form of training for the aspirant, to prepare him for the final three, which taken together, are called *samyama*. The practice of *samyama* leads first to the *lower samadhi*, named *nirvicara samadhi*, in which all the minor thought-waves have been swept up by one great wave of concentration upon a single object - the Atman. The mind becomes "pure" and "filled with truth" because it now experiences direct supersensory knowledge. But this lower state still contains a vestige of the sense of duality, it is still "I" who am meditating on the highest Reality, so there is a separation between the Reality and ourselves.

Now, even this one wave of thought has to be stilled. When it has subsided, we enter the *highest samadhi* of all, called *nirvikalpa samadhi*, which is pure, undifferentiated consciousness; one is no longer oneself, but literally one with Brahman, entering into the real nature of our Self and of the phenomenal Universe and all its forms and creatures. For behind Atman, Christ, behind any idea of a personal God, there is Brahman, the Ground, the central Reality of which these figures are only partial, individual projections. When we are united with Brahman, we are united with That which was manifested in Atman and Christ and hidden within our unregenerate selves, but which is eternally present in all of us.

When it is said that Brahman alone is real, it does not mean that everything else is illusion, but rather that Brahman alone is fundamental. The several aspects of God, the divine incarnations, have their own relative order of Reality. The materialists - those who describe themselves as being "down to earth" - are the ones who *are living in an unreal world*, because they limit themselves to the level of gross sense perception. The perception of the enlightened mystics ranges over the whole scale and covers the whole spectrum of consciousness, from the gross material to subtle, and from subtle to absolute, and it is only the mystic who knows what the nature of this Universe actually is.

How can we be sure that the revelations obtained through *samadhi* are genuine revelations and not some form of self-delusion or auto-hypnosis? Common sense suggests several tests. For instance, it is obvious that the knowledge so obtained must agree with the knowledge which has already been obtained in the same way by others. There are many knowers but there is only one truth, as said in the Vedic hymns. Again, it is clear that this knowledge must be something which is not knowable by other means - not knowable by means of our ordinary sense experience. And finally, *when related to the phenomenal world, mystically obtained knowledge must not contradict the knowledge arrived at by the scientists through the conventional scientific methods.*

3.2 Western Legacy - Christianity

"The identical thing that we now call Christian religion existed among the ancients, and has not been lacking from the beginning of the human race, leading up to the coming of Christ in the flesh, from which moment on the true religion, which had already existed, began to be called Christian." (St. Augustine)

Unlike the Upanishads, the oldest of which were written down about 2800 years ago, which are expounded in almost a modern scientific, direct and precise way of thinking and writing, the sacred books of Christianity - the Old and the New Testament - are mostly expressed symbolically and in parables. ("To you has been given the secret of the kingdom of God, but for those outside everything is in parables" Mark, 4:11, and "He never spoke to them except in parables; but privately to his disciples he explained everything", Mark, 4:34). Also, in contrast to the decentralization of authority and lack of any institutionalization of mystical research in Hinduism, Christianity has been made into a worldly, social institution, claiming the monopoly of the Truth, infallibility of the Pope and authority of the priests, and thus has become a pseudo-religion, discouraging personal experience of the Christ and God, and fostering superstitious belief, labelling heretics and excommunicating anyone within its fold whose opinions are not in accord with its dogmas. In the essence of Christianity there are no barriers to knowledge even though the priests have imposed limits and restrictions. Thus, the practice of the institutionalized Christianity in all of its varieties, is quite the contrary to the methodological injunction clearly stated in the New Testament: "Know the Truth and the Truth will set you free" (from ignorance, from illusions, from egoism...) (John, 8.32). But not the knowledge of Truth of others. *Our knowledge*. Having the teachings of others as guiding torches *we have to work to know the Truth ourselves*. The emphasis is on *us*, it does not mean "others know the Truth, and we accept it blindly". Nobody should believe in anything because it is written in some book no matter how sacred or because it is said by this or that religious authority or mystical master, unless one investigates it himself through reasoning, inquiry and concentration. The knowledge of others should guide us, not convince us, to come ourselves to the conviction. Nobody can demand from us that we believe something without knowing it from our own experience. We can only accept it as a subject for research and the belief will follow, if it does follow, as the product and outcome of that research. *Truths which have not been verified through our personal experience easily degenerate into dogmatism.*

3.2.1 *Daskalos' Esoteric Christianity*

Esoteric Christianity is not the privilege of the few, but a faithful reflection of the Soul in each of us. The etymological meaning of the term "esoteriko" in Greek indicates *knowledge found within us*, "for nothing is secret that shall not be manifest" (Luke, 8:17). Inner Christianity, as "the secrets of the heart made manifest" (1 Cor. 14:25) is less a religion and more the very nature of life - a clear, concise and complete reflection of the Truth [8].

In spite of the fact that the New Testament has been edited and expurgated, and that many things have been omitted by the early church authorities at various councils, it still contains the Truth and the whole Truth. And the Truth as presented there is for all states of consciousness and can be understood according to the relative level of personal evolution and refinement of consciousness of any particular individual. There is in the Christianity one level of understanding and feeling, and there is the Christianity of another level of understanding and feeling, beginning from a very low outward ritual or hypocritical level, which passes into the persecution of all heterodox thinking, up to the highest level of Jesus himself. Thus there are different distortions of the truth, and in this way the truth is gradually brought down to the level of Church Christianity, though in a completely unrecognizable form. But starting from the Church form, some people who are "pure in heart" may by way of feeling come to a right understanding of the original truth.

In addition to the Old and New Testaments, and various reference books, the main ideas expounded in this paper on the subject of esoteric Christianity have been developed based on the teachings [8-10] of a great contemporary Christian Cypriot mystic, named simply "Daskalos" (Teacher in Greek), who has conducted circles for research of Truth for nearly 60 years in Strovolos, Cyprus, a venerable ambassador of higher states of consciousness from the Kingdom of the Heavens. In their research for Truth, the circles aim at approaching Reality through direct experience; nothing is accepted on blind faith, advocated by most priests as a virtue. Through regular practice of exercises and meditation (encompassing many lifetimes), Daskalos has raised his present personality's consciousness to very high levels of superconscious self-awareness, and mastered all of his three bodies - gross material, psychic (body of emotions and desires) and noetic (body of thoughts).

As a result of these practices Daskalos has developed amazing psychic powers, which are used solely for healing purposes. One of these powers is his ability to remember all of his previous incarnations, some important, some unimportant, since his first descent into the worlds of existence several thousands of years ago. In his many lives he was a hierophant in the ancient Egypt, a Tibetan lama, a Hindu yogi, Aztec shaman, the early Christian mystic Origen, a Russian writer, etc., and although at the very doorstep of Theosis (at-one-ment with Absolute Beingness), he refuses to enter it finally, choosing instead to keep coming back to the gross material world to serve and help mankind refine its consciousness in this theanthropic activity of God in Christ

and of man in Christ through which we realize our Theosis. His desire for repeated re-incarnations is making him "too big for a man, but too small for a God".

Daskalos' teachings come from two sources: from his own experiences in the realities in which he moves self-consciously and from entering into a state of complete attunement and at-one-ment with the superconsciousness of Yohannan, the archangelic entity who once lived on planet Earth as Saint John, author of the fourth Gospel. This super-intelligence is the planetary Logos, supervising the evolution of consciousness on the Earth and directly guiding the teachings, using Daskalos as a channel.

The main proof of his teachings is in his extraordinary healing abilities, especially those related to elongation of bones in a shorter leg, realignment of a crooked spine, de-immobilization of paralyzed hands and arms, removal of malignant tumors, and similar feats involving flesh and bone tissue, which rules out any possibility of the patients' or onlookers' auto-suggestion.

3.2.2 Daskalos' Esoteric Christian Cosmogony

Daskalos' cosmogony is divided in two units - the unmanifest state of be-ness and beingness and the worlds of manifestation and existence (Table 6).

A. *Absolute Infinite Reality: the State of Be-ness and Beingness*

Although our concept of the highest Reality, God, is inevitably limited by the capacity of our human understanding while living in the gross material world, and having in mind that unfathomable Reality is inconceivable and beyond any notions and attributes, we can use the name that God Itself gave in answer to Moses' question in Exodus, 3:14 - "Ego eimi o On" - "I am Beingness" or as generally translated into English "*I am that I am*". It is the same Ego, the same I am, the Self and I-ness expressed by human beings in various limited ways in their manifestation in the worlds of existence.

Absolute Be-ness is a state of Self-aware Absolute Superconsciousness, of Absolute Selfhood, where these attributes of consciousness and self-consciousness mean that it is not a blind, unconscious force, and that It knows what It is. The first characteristic of Absolute Infinite Be-ness within Its absolutely stable state is *Will*; this state is stable because at this point It has not expressed vibration. However, vibration exists within Absolute Be-ness as a state not yet made manifest, vibration without anything moving yet. When the vibration is expressed the Worlds of Existence are planned and Absolute Be-ness becomes *Absolute Beingness* in two modes of expression, as Absolute Selfhood, Christos Logos, and Absolute Superconsciousness, Holy Spirit. The worlds are the common creation of the Christ Logos and the Holy Spirit.

Between beingness and existence, between divine self-sufficiency and divine munificence, there is a new state which is Mind, divine supersubstance out of which all things are made. Everything is Mind - the infinite ocean of various frequencies of vibrations in which every thing is formed and lives, but it does not include Absolute Beingness.

B. *Worlds of Existence*

According to Daskalos the Worlds of Existence consist of seven heavens or universes (Table 6). The higher four worlds, which individual human beings can enter only after they have attained the state of self-realization, are named the *Worlds of Oneness* (Unity), because in them individuals no longer feel separate from the Creation and other human beings. The lower three worlds are called the *Worlds of Separateness* because human beings have an illusion that they are separate from one another and from everything else.

a) *Worlds of Oneness (Unity)*

"*And God said, Let there be light: and there was light.*" (Genesis, 1:3)

In reality nothing became. Everything is! With the "said", light was expressed from the *State of Beingness* into the *Worlds of Existence*. This is an example of something that is expressed and not created; of something that was already in the world of beingness. Nothing is created for the first time. Everything is!

This is the point where it is possible to answer the eternal question: "Does God exist?". The answer is a definite "No!". *God does not exist - God is!*

These higher heavens we can study not as earthly human beings, but after self-realization, as purified Souls and perfected Spirits, and not through acquiring common knowledge found in books, use of logic and intellect, but through attunement.

b) *Worlds of Separateness*

The Absolute Beingness is found, in full power and glory, in the infinitely small atoms of matter and in the vast and boundless galaxies; in the depths of the sea and on the snow-capped mountains. It is everywhere, in full and eternal authority, from the utmost depths of the Void to the throne of Its ineffable glory.

The Worlds of Separateness are the poorest kinds even though they give us the greatest paradises and the greatest hells. The Worlds of Separateness include not only the gross material world, but also the psychic and the noetic worlds. These are worlds of forms, images, impressions. They are called the Worlds of Separateness because one sees oneself as a separate entity which gets impressions and interprets them. It is something other than the

real self. In the Worlds of Oneness, the supranoetic worlds, the worlds of ideas, laws, causes, and principles, that are beyond concrete thought forms, separateness is transcended.

Beyond the three Worlds of Separateness - the gross material, the psychic, and the noetic - there is the kingdom of heaven which is within us.

Table 6. Daskalos' Esoteric Christian Cosmogony⁷

A. THE STATE OF BEINGNESS:	
ABSOLUTE INFINITE BE-NESS (ABSOLUTE INFINITE REALITY)	
That aspect of Absolute lying beyond the reach of human and archangelic comprehension. The Ultimate Source, fathomless, and inarticulate depths of the Divine, beyond expression ("... for no man hath seen God at any time" 1 John, 4:12).	
ABSOLUTE INFINITE BEINGNESS (GOD THE FATHER)	
What we can know of God we see in reflection as witnessed both externally and internally. Absolute Beingness is above all the Divine Common Selfhood, consisting of Absolute Beings within the One Being. Absolute Beingness manifests Itself as the Logos and the Holy Spirit, "and these three are one" (1 John, 5:7). These Absolute Beings are Holy Monads, eternal entities, Logos and Holyspiritual Archangelic Orders, whose self-consciousness gives this One Reality an appearance of multiplicity.	
WILL-PLEASURE (EUARESKEIA)	
Absolute Beingness expressing Itself in Itself as Creation. The Will-Pleasure, in Greek euareskeia, carries a sense of pleasure derived from bountiful giving, as practiced by a warmly generous and wealthy source. God's pleasure in creativeness.	
CHRIST LOGOS	HOLY SPIRIT
The Logos, the Divine Common Selfhood, is Absolute Beingness manifested as Self-super-consciousness.	Impersonal Superconsciousness that expresses the Omnipotence of Absolute Beingness and makes possible the creation and preservation of the Universes. The dynamic aspect of Absolute Beingness as Omniscience and Omnipotence (closest to the concept of Nature used by scientists).
MIND	
Mind is bearer of all life. Everything that exists is made of Mind at varying frequencies of vibration, from super-substance to solid matter. Mind is an emanation of Absolute Beingness imbued with the Total Wisdom, Love, Power and Purity of its Creator. Mind is not an immortal Being, but substance eternally used in all Creation. Mind is divine at its source, and holy in its expression.	
The purpose of Mind is the creation of the universes. Although it is only a medium, it also has some form of consciousness, which is expressed as the laws of the material plane.	

(continued on next page)

⁷ Compare also with Table 1.

(Table 6, continued)

B. WORLDS OF EXISTENCE:
a) WORLDS OF ONENESS:
SEVENTH, SIXTH AND FIFTH HEAVENS: CAUSAL WORLDS
<p>Above the noetic worlds, less tangible heavens called the causal worlds give definition and order to grosser material universes. The non-dual conditions of pure Love, Causes, Principles, Laws, and Ideas of Creation, cared for by the highest echelons of the Archangelic Orders, exist here in their archetypal state.</p> <p>These heavens can be investigated only by higher aspects of human consciousness.</p> <p>The causal planes give rise to the higher noetic planes.</p>
FOURTH HEAVEN: HIGHER NOETIC WORLD
<p>Higher mental world. Here there are discernible forms in juxtaposition to one another, as yet unexpressed, in perfect harmony and order. A state of ideas in the Eternal Now. From the noetic world the Archangels derive the forms for creating and sustaining the phenomena of life. This is the state where we may come to rest in between incarnations.</p>
b) WORLDS OF SEPARATENESS:
THIRD HEAVEN: LOWER NOETIC WORLD
<p>Lower mental world. The most rarefied of the three Worlds of Separation. In the noetical world - the world of thought and home of the noetic body - Total Wisdom of Absolute Beingness first finds expression as thought-forms, ranging from galaxies to unicellular organisms. This is a world of seven planes, each with seven sub-planes.</p>
SECOND HEAVEN: PSYCHIC WORLD
<p>The world of emotions. This super-sensuous world is also composed of seven planes, each having seven sub-planes. The lowest three of these seven planes are the so-called "hells", the fourth corresponds to the idea of "purgatory", and the highest three are the so-called "paradises". When we leave our gross material body, undergoing the sudden change we call "death", we first go to one of these planes using there our psychic body.</p>
FIRST HEAVEN: GROSS MATERIAL WORLD
<p>The lowest vibration of Mind. Mind made solid to compose the three-dimensional gross material world and body. Earth's gross material body is the planetary sphere.</p>

3.2.3 Structure of Selfhood after Daskalos

Prior to passing through the Human Idea, humanity is an Archangel within the Archangelic Orders. Before their expression, human beings and archangels, as Holy

Monads, differ little from each other. Later, however, when they return to be within the Absolute Beingness, the difference is great. Archangels cannot obtain self-super-consciousness in any of their expressions. This is because they have their being within the Eternal Now and are exposed to various experiences without being able to make comparisons. An archangel of fire, for example, uses this element with Total Wisdom, but does not know the emotions and thoughts which are aroused by the presence of this element. Conversely, human beings, as prodigal children (Luke, 15:11-32) are fully exposed to the worlds of duality, of space-place-time impressions, and are therefore able to develop a keen sense of *individuated self-consciousness*.

After passing through the Idea of Archangelic Man, a ray of the Spirit then continues through the Idea of Heavenly Man to be shaped according to the law of the Human Idea. From that moment it takes on its own separate radiance within Absolute Beingness. A small ray of our Spirit-Ego-Being enters into a separate domain of Total Wisdom, Total Power and Total Love as a Self-Aware Soul. Now we have two foundations for the Inner Self: the Holy Monadic Self within Absolute Beingness and Its emanation which passes through the Heavenly Man Idea to be formed into Self-Aware Soul. Here our Holy Monadic self takes on a separate existence from that of the archangels.

Individuated Selfhood

Corresponding to the seven universes of Creation are the veils which dress the Spirit-Soul-Ego during its sojourn. Human form does not contain the kingdom of the heavens, but rather is the kingdom of the heavens. In other words, the traveller is the journey, the seeker is the sought. And when we seek this kingdom "all things shall be added unto you" (Luke, 12:31).

Human beings in their highest states express the Divine Love, Causes, Principles, and Laws of Creation. In lower, more dense states, as bodies, they express thought (noetic) and emotion (psychic) in the worlds of separateness. Our gross material body, such a small portion of the Selfhood, and yet often mistaken for the self, belongs to the gross material plane.

After passing-over from the gross material plane, we shall continue to live in the psychic world and, later on, in the noetic world, before reincarnating on the gross material plane. The parable of the Prodigal Son (Luke, 15:11-32) shows our free will and decision to leave home, Beingness, and enter into the Worlds of Existence.

The central task of each Soul is to reunify the Self - after its evolution through the cycles of incarnations - into the unified Self in Theosis.

The Individuated Selfhood, as a single unit, encompasses four discernible expressions presented in Table 7.

Table 7. *Daskalos' Esoteric Christian Structure of Individuated Selfhood*⁸

The Individuated Selfhood, in all of its various manifestations, is in the image and likeness⁹ of Absolute Beingness (Genesis, 1:26). (In the Hebrew original *Elohim*, which means 'many gods', said "*Na'aseh Adam betzalmenu*" - "Let us make a man in our image, after our likeness".

HOLY MONAD, SPIRIT-EGO-BEING

This is our real Self, in at-one-ment with the multiplicity and self-sufficiency of Absolute Beingness. The Spirit-Ego-Being projects a ray of Itself into Creation. The Will/Pleasure of Absolute Beingness to express Itself in Itself, is identical to the Will/Pleasure of the Spirit-Ego-Being to express Itself in Itself. The Spirit-Ego-Being is not really an expression of the Selfhood, rather it is a creator of the Selfhood.

SOUL-EGO-BEING, SELF-AWARE SOUL

We become a Soul-Ego-Being or Self-Aware Soul the moment a ray of the Spirit-Ego-Being passes through the Human Idea, at which point our Self is understood as something complete, yet seemingly separate from the whole. The Self-Aware Soul with its projections is both Beingness and Existence.

Self-Aware Soul, which is formed of Spirit, then begins to express Itself. As the Soul is of incorruptible Spirit, it is self-sufficient and omniscient. All Souls are equally luminous. The Soul can never be harmed or weakened in any way, so "Fear not them that kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul" (Matt., 10:28). It is the Soul which distinguishes humans from other Beings, for archangels have no need of a Soul as they each belong to a communal order. It is the Soul that harbours the divine individuation of each human Spirit-Soul-Ego when we return to Absolute Beingness. The Soul is the womb of self superconsciousness.

PERMANENT PERSONALITY

Our higher or inner self. Described as "the feet of the soul", this self is an expression of, and in union with, the Self-Aware Soul in the worlds of time and place. The Permanent Personality contains the Divine Laws, Total Wisdom, Total Power and Total Love. The task of the Permanent Personality is to select and supervise the lives and experiences of the present-day personalities through its various incarnations. That part of ourselves upon which the incarnational experiences are recorded and are transferred from one life to next.

PRESENT-DAY (TEMPORARY) PERSONALITY

This is the personality we express in each individual incarnation. It is the projection of the Permanent Personality into the Worlds of Separation and their subplanes. It is that aspect of the Self which experiences emotions, desires, and thoughts, of which a character is formed. With time, this personality learns to interpret the impressions and correct its reactions, so that a refined personality develops. It is this expression of the Selfhood that Jesus asked us to "deny" (Matt., 16:24) so that we may better understand our Real Self.

⁸ Compare also with Table 2.

⁹ a) We have *self-sufficiency*. As Absolute Beingness is without any needs, we contain within us everything: "The Kingdom of Heavens is within you." We lack nothing and need nothing that we do not already possess.
 b) As Holy Monads, we can express ourselves *self-consciously* within our own universe and within our own selfhood. In a similar way, the Logos expresses Its Self within Its universes as the Common Selfhood.
 c) We have the power of shaping the Mind substance into thought and emotion, and of expressing ourselves as love. And when deemed worthy we are awarded the gift of *emanating*, not merely *shaping*, the Mind super-substance, the bearer of life.
 d) We have been blessed with the gift and the *responsibility of procreation* for other incarnated Souls. In this way we are co-creators within the Divine Plan, with the Holy Spirit, the Holy Archangels, and the Christ Logos.

3.2.4 Structure of Man's Bodies after Daskalos

Every human being lives simultaneously in three planes of existence (gross material, psychic and noetic) and has a corresponding body for each of these three worlds (Table 8). These three bodies have their respective etheric doubles.

There is a number of psycho-noetic centers located in the etheric doubles of our respective bodies, centers of energy or centers of consciousness, called *chakras* in the East (Table 9), corresponding to many special gifts with which human beings are endowed.¹⁰

3.2.5 Structure of Consciousness after Daskalos

The simplest definition of consciousness is interactional: it is the capacity of a system to respond to stimuli. By applying different stimuli, we shall elicit different responses from this system. Other definitions of consciousness are transactional - exchange of energy or exchange of information between the system and the environment.

These definitions prove that everything that exists has some level of consciousness, whether inorganic or organic in origin, from the particles within an atom, to galaxies. In other words, *all matter contains consciousness, to a greater or lesser extent*. Consciousness is the main characteristic of matter. Everything on the material plane is conscious.

The lowest type of consciousness is *mineral consciousness*, expressing a kind of *sensitivity*. If we stimulate an atom by applying ultraviolet light or other electromagnetic radiation, one or more electrons may get excited and respond by jumping into a higher orbit farther away from the nucleus. This type of consciousness is possessed by rocks, stones, crystals; that means that they are sensitive to the weather, to etheric vibrations, to electricity, to magnetism - each of these elements we call matter, because - matter is Mind solid and has a certain sensitivity.

¹⁰ a) Our greatest gift is the *heart*. Through it we may reflect divine love towards God and our fellow men. The heart is the house of the Common Selfhood, the home of the Logos, and we must keep it pure, for "*Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God*" (Matt. 5:8).

b) Another gift is the *brain* with its psychic and noetic counterparts. This is the centre of inspiration and reason, permitting us to comprehend the presence of God all around us. When Moses began to look within himself and moved up to the level of the cerebellum, symbolized as a burning bush which is never consumed, he heard for the first time the voice of God (Exod. 3:2). The two tablets of Moses on which were inscribed the Laws of God, the Ten Commandments, represent the two lobes of the human brain (Exod. 34:28). When, at some time in our conscious development, we vitalize this etheric centre, we shall also hear the voice of our Inner Self, our Self-Aware Soul, and become one with God's Laws.

c) It is through the solar plexus, another valued gift, that the Holy Spirit expresses itself as will-power and instinctive wisdom. As the seat of subconscious awareness, the solar plexus is also the storehouse for etheric vitality.

d) The fourth gift comprises our reproductive organs, which come into use at the right time, in the right circumstances and at the right age. They are Holy Spiritual. They are the means of perpetuating life on the gross material plane, and they should not be abused.

Table 8. *Structure of Man's Bodies after Daskalos*¹¹

During their period of life in the three Worlds of Separateness, human beings live simultaneously with their three bodies: gross, psychic and noetic ones. Although the psychic and noetic bodies are seen as one with the gross material body, they are in fact separate and can exist independently of each other. The three bodies are the garments that the Self-conscious Soul wears to express itself from one incarnation to another. These three bodies have their respective etheric doubles. *Etheric double*, composed of *ether*,¹² *vital principle*, is the mould around which the gross material body is constructed after the matrix of the Heavenly Man. It cannot exist independently of the gross material body. The phenomenon of death occurs when the etheric double is cut off from the gross material body. Dissolution of the etheric double after it is separated from the gross material body takes about forty days; that is why in the Eastern Orthodox practice a candle is lit for forty days for the deceased person. Every etheric double has several major energy centres, (cf. Table 9).

(1) Gross Material Body is our familiar "physical" body which we use for our movement in the earth plane. It is sustained by solid food, liquids, and etheric vitality (prana) supplied by its etheric counterpart or double. It is the lowest expression of our self. The centre of the gross material body is the chakra of the solar plexus.

(2) Psychic Body or *subtle body* or *astral body* is the body of sentiments and emotions. The psychic body is what we ourselves build of "psychic" substance, having as its centre the chakra of the heart. It constitutes our present-day personality. The quality of the present-day self-aware personality is precisely the quality of its thought-forms containing emotions and desires. The psychic body is also a mortal body like the material one and it is eventually separated from its etheric double, causing our "second death".

(3e) Lower Noetic Body or *lower mental body*, the body of our thoughts which has the form and shape of our material body. The centre of the noetic body is the chakra of the head.

(3f) Higher Noetic Body or *higher mental body*, is shapeless, existing within the higher noetic world. The higher noetic body concerns laws and causes. The higher noetic body is the set of those vibrations that maintain the cohesion of forms and images at the lower levels. It is the abstract, which is the real. When we exist only with our higher noetic body, we are closer to reality than when we exist with the other bodies.¹³

¹¹ Compare also with Table 3.

¹² The *ether* which is necessary for life has four basic properties or functions: creative, kinetic, sensate, and imprinting. In healing and psychotherapy, advanced mystics can draw energy from the etheric double of the psychic body, use portions of all the four kinds of ether and consciously project an *elemental*, and then follow its course and activity. Imprinting ether keeps them informed what that elemental is doing and whether it is doing what it was sent to do. Sensate ether helps them to feel what is going on in the body of the sick person. Kinetic ether is the means for the transport of the elemental, while the creative ether carries out the actual therapy.

¹³ We are we whether we have bodies or the form, or not. Because by reaching these high levels of self-consciousness, our Self is not in need of a certain form. We have awakened (resurrected) then to our *divine* nature as God and we can get any form we like and know anything we like, by using attunement and at-one-ment. This is *Superconsciousness*, holyspiritual superconsciousness. When we join it together with the Self, with our *logic* part, we have *Self-Superconsciousness*.

But no matter which degree of consciousness we express, our Self is always the same, never changing, what is changing is our expression, our level of consciousness. So, we are not our consciousness, it is only the means by which our Selfhood expresses itself. Thus we can express ourselves instinctively, subconsciously, consciously, self-consciously, self-superconsciously, yet - we are one Self. We are not many Selves expressing ourselves in many places.

Table 9. *Etheric Energy Centres (Chakras) after Daskalos*¹⁴

On the gross material body's etheric double, the etheric centres are called sacred discs or "churches" (Revel. 1:20). In the etheric double of the psychic body, stronger in activity, these centres are called sacred spheres or "lamps" (Revel. 4:5). In the etheric double of the noetic body there are even more active centres with a wider concept of space and time, called "radiant stars" (Revel. 1:16-20). Many Christian saints have opened these sacred discs without ever consciously trying to develop them. They have done it through the practice of virtue, reason, powers of observation and through self-discipline. It is the safest way to awaken them, otherwise premature opening of these centres may be damaging to people's present personalities, causing even some types of mental disorders.

(1) The sacred disc at the lower end of the spine (Muladhara Chakra) is situated at the point of the sacrum. It resembles a red snake with seven coils with its head pointing up the spinal column. Although it looks like a snake, it is really fire. It is the primordial fire within both the gross material body and its etheric double, which constitutes the basis of material existence.¹⁵

(2) The centre of the solar plexus (Manipura Chakra) begins to move normally while the fetus grows in the womb, because the embryo gets fed through the umbilical cord which later becomes the navel. It is right at that spot that the disc of the solar plexus is perceived. It is *the centre of a brutish type of consciousness*, which has no connection with our self-aware Self.

(3) The disc at the heart (Anahata Chakra) begins to revolve simultaneously with the movement of the disc at the solar plexus. It begins revolving while the infant is still in the womb. The two discs, that of the solar plexus and of the heart, are responsible for offering us the phenomenon of life. After birth the sacred disc at the heart is also responsible for energizing the movement of the lungs. It is the most sacred of all the discs and constitutes *the centre of self-consciousness*. It is the cradle of the Christ Logos.

(4) The disc in front of the eyes (Ajna Chakra) is like a mirror. For an ordinary person this mirror is covered with etheric mist that will not allow the proper reflection of images. This is how life begins for ordinary people. For most people this mirror never clears up. They never learn how to focus their attention, how to concentrate. The way to advance the proper functioning of this disc is through the development of the power to concentrate, to hold in one's mind a noetic image and maintain it for a period of time without distraction. Whether a person will make a good use of this centre will depend on how advanced one is as a present self-conscious personality. When the mirror develops and clears up, it will not only reflect images coming from the outside, but it will begin to reflect images that spring from the centre of the disc, from within. It is at this point that space, is transcended and clairvoyance begins. In a state of clairvoyance ordinary sight is temporarily closed off and concentration from within begins. Then the clairvoyant, like a television camera, begins to receive images from places anywhere on the planet or from any condition of the psychic realms.¹⁶

(5) The centre of the brain (Sahasrara Chakra) includes two of the most important centres of the etheric double which are right next to one another between the two lobes and the cerebellum. *This is the seat of our self-aware superconsciousness*. The sacred disc which is linked to its corresponding centre in the brain lies over the head about half a foot and revolves in a clockwise direction. This is the normal movement of all the discs.

¹⁴ Compare also with Table 4.

¹⁵ According to the Old Testament it is the sword of the Archangel Michael, the "flaming sword which turned every way" (Genesis, 3:24), with which the first humans were expelled from the Garden of Eden and which keeps the entity in its gross material state. In the initiates, the awakening of the primordial fire within the material body can burn up the entire etheric double of the human being and cause the death of the material body.

The next in order is *vegetable consciousness*, which in addition to sensitivity expresses also *sensibility*, with a broader range of reactions to stimuli. Plants have a higher grade of sensitivity than the sensitivity of the rocks or the crystals. There is a nice flower. Outside the sun rises and the flower turns to the sun.

Then there is *animal consciousness*, which is manifested through *instinct* and *instinctive subconsciousness*, including in itself also the sensitivity and sensibility. This subconsciousness is common to all kinds of life forms around us and all those modes of consciousness are in the Holy Spirit.

Human beings also have the *holyspiritual consciousness* of minerals, plants and animals, expressed as sensitivity, instinctive consciousness and subconsciousness. There is nothing in the universe that is not in a human being. We do not remain on the instinctive level, although majority of human beings express *subconsciousness* and *waking consciousness* (cf. Table 10).

Contrary to human beings, plants and animals do not have a self, they are not logocentric in expression. They are the expression of a hidden self behind them, which are the angels and archangels in their creationism - creating them. There is a self behind them, but these forms are not expressing their own self. That is why a human being is god, but not so animals and plants, because all these are crystallized - materialized - thought-forms, elementals, of the Archangels. Using Mind supersubstance, the Archangels, with their creative meditation are composing all those living forms around us, the mineral, the vegetable and the animal kingdom, and they implant life in these forms, but that life is their Life, it's not independent life of the animals or the plants. This is the point, while a human being is expressing his own Life, because - he is god.

The only true consciousness is self-consciousness. When we start using Mind as *reason* and *pure thoughts*, we become able of a higher expression of our Self as *self-consciousness*. By developing the expressions of our Self as consciousness, we can find out what is our real nature.

¹⁶ At this stage the individual is in a position to have an understanding of what Reality is. When eyesight and clairvoyance are transformed into knowledge and understanding we observe the harmonious movement and the opening of the *disc over the head*. And when the mystic advances further he enters into a state of ecstasy, at which point the disc in front of the eyes plays hardly any role. It is the disc on the top of the head that takes over completely. In ecstasy a person becomes one with the Divine, with the higher spheres. The sacred disc over the head moves fast and beautifully, while the movement of the disc in front of the eyes slows down.

This occurs when the *Sacred Fire* (Kundalini) is awakened and through the spine rushes upward. After reaching the centre in the brain it proceeds towards the lotus of the head, absorbing at the same time the surplus energy from the disc in front of the eyes. The extra energy results from the intense concentration that precedes the ecstatic rapture. The state of ecstasy lasts only briefly and only while the present self-conscious personality in coordination and oneness with the permanent personality is focused on the higher spheres.

Table 10. Basic States of Human Consciousness after Daskalos

The highest type of consciousness is human consciousness which encompasses all kinds of consciousness that exist in the universe.

SUBCONSCIOUSNESS

Three quarters of human personality consists of what is called the subconscious or subconscient mind. Our subconscious and our personality are simultaneously located in our three bodies: noetic, psychic and material. Otherwise, the disintegration of the gross material body upon the phenomenon called "death", would cause the dissolution of our personality.

Our subconscious is triadic in nature, consisting of the following three chambers:

(1) One chamber contains all *elementals*¹⁷ which we have ever created ourselves, or revitalized "ready-made" elementals created by other human beings. Elementals are the basic "building-blocks" of which our personality, our character, is composed, colouring all our intentions, our purpose and our meaning of life. Our every thought, emotion or desire creates and projects outward an elemental, a psycho-noetic thought-form charged with energy, which upon projection carries on an existence and life of its own.

(2) The second chamber contains the life-giving *etheric vitality* (prana in Hindu tradition, and qi in Chinese tradition). This is our "daily bread" in the Lord's Prayer. It is obtained from the Sun, through breathing, meditation, solid and liquid food, and rest.

(3) The third and the most valuable chamber is the seat of the *Logos* and the *Holy Spirit*. This chamber of our subconsciousness is *clean*, not contaminated by elementals. It is the source by which Mind as the formless supersubstance is coming down to be used by the Holy Spirit and the Holy Archangels in building the bodies. Happily, the human being is not able to influence it, as long as he is under the slavery of egoism.

WAKING CONSCIOUSNESS

This is humanity's predominant state of consciousness, consisting of a great variety of discrete altered states of consciousness, although most often expressed as a kind of instinctive subconsciousness.

SELF-CONSCIOUSNESS

Certain rare human beings have developed their consciousness to higher levels - to *self-consciousness*, which means becoming aware of one's real Self, which is not the same as one's present-day personality's self. From this point, a man expresses himself *logically*, as a God, taking his proper position in the creation, by expressing a Selfhood.

SUPERCONSCIOUSNESS AND SELF-SUPERCONSCIOUSNESS

Spiritually developed humans possess also Superconsciousness and Self-Superconsciousness. The qualities of this kind of Self-Superconsciousness are the power and the skill of attunement and at-one-ment. Attunement is concentrating on something and getting whatever that something is offering us, offering to our consciousness. Through the power of attunement in one single moment we can know many, many things that through other means of observation we cannot have in studying for years and years. This ability means receiving things and knowledge of things in an instant, for which we would need hours and years to take. At-one-ment is the Super Self-conscious state in which one is able to merge oneself in complete unity with any other being or existence, and with Absolute Beingness in Theosis, without ever abandoning one's Self-Conscious Ego.

¹⁷ There are two types of elementals:

The Mind we are using as the means to manifest our consciousness is not God. It is the expression, not the nature of God. What can we know about the Mind as human beings? Very, very little, by using it subconsciously, and most of the time stupidly. But we can know that by using Mind in the right way, we can express and develop a kind of self-consciousness in the various ways of its expression. Most people, even advanced mystics, make the mistake to mix up the consciousness with the Self. The Self is a different thing from the consciousness which the Self is expressing. *The consciousness is the expression of the Self through Mind.* What is behind consciousness? The real Self. The real Self is God, while Mind is not. Mind is as a mirror, many kinds of mirrors, which we use to see the Reality reflected in them.

We shall learn the nature of the Mind as emotion, what is Mind as thought, and finally what is Mind itself as formless supersubstance - making it a crystal clear mirror to see ourselves reflected in it. Yet, what we see in the mirror is not our Self. It is our image. What is this crystal clear mirror? Our *Self-Superconsciousness* (when we raise our consciousness to those high levels as Self-Superconsciousness). *Yet, we are not the Self-Superconsciousness.* The Superconsciousness is our expression. We, our Self, are behind it. At that moment we have them united - the Self and Superconsciousness. The one expressing itself (the Self) and its expression, or, the manner in which it is expressing itself (the Superconsciousness).

It is a great reward to see our Self reflected as Superconsciousness and compare it with the self we were seeing in the three dirty mirrors (gross material, psychic and noetic bodies). Then, we will rejoice. We will now know what we are looking like. Yet, we must find what we are - not what we are looking like. We should not stay there. We should find our real Self. God. What is the form of this God, of our Spirit-Soul-Ego? Formless - yet, everything. What is its name? There is no name except - "*I am*".

In that state we can become anything, being - ourselves. All forms are ours, are in us, are in the Kingdom of the Heavens which is in our own nature. We can become anything and know anything. Then, we will understand what is God.

a) Emotional thought-forms or desire-thoughts, when negative emotion prevails over thought, motivated by base and selfish desires, such as greed, hatred, anger, malice, envy, jealousy. Desire-thoughts contain maximum amount of emotion and a minimum amount of thought.

b) Reasoned thought-forms or thought-desires, when desires have passed through reason. Thought-desires contain maximum amount of thought and a minimum amount of emotion. Predominance of desire-thoughts elements degrades our subconscious, and thus our character and our personality. As with material bricks, which we can use to build either a palace or a prison, so desire-thoughts imprison our free-will and we become slaves of our desires and our emotions. Improvement of our subconscious begins when we master our thoughts and put all our desires and emotions under a strict control.

As we need physical hygiene when our material body gets dirty or starts sweating, no matter whether we are blue-collar workers or Nobel-prize physicists, daily hygiene of our subconscious is also most necessary. It is done through regular self-observation, introspection, and an analysis of the quality of our thoughts and desires, leading us to self-knowledge.

By expressing our divine nature as gods, we can develop in us to some extent *omnipotence, omnipresence and omniscience*.

So, no human being has possibilities in using Mind and thought in a way that any other person cannot do. As everybody is entitled by God to breathe and make his material body live, so everybody is allowed and can use the Mind as Super-substance in developing his consciousness from subconsciousness to become an awakening consciousness, self-consciousness, and then superconsciousness. There are no limits. Nobody can say, "What I can do nobody else can do." It is a matter of time and training, and the will to get that knowledge.

The main difference between human beings is in the quantity and quality of their individual consciousness, and not in terms of their physical appearance and social and professional stature, their wealth or their possessions. Modern man is still preoccupied with the struggle for survival and physical *existence* which leaves no time to dedicate himself to the pursuit of his *beingness*. Whenever there is no existential struggle for survival, man turns to non-survival oriented activities of art and religion.

Why are all human beings not on the same level of consciousness? They are not, because *they don't want to!* If they want, they can be. Because the Absolute Beingness and the Logos, as the Lord of Selfhood, is giving us in abundance Mind to use it. Everybody has the right to the daily bread which comes from heaven, which is Mind. But do we use Mind?

All over the world, in highly civilized countries, and in the third worlds countries, among aborigines, human beings are using Mind *subconsciously*. Even those calling themselves scientists. They don't use Mind self-consciously or consciously. By using Mind subconsciously focused on gross matter, the scientists are presenting humanity with wonderful things: radio, television, spaceships, computers, many, many things. But *there is no life* in those things, because they are not using Mind supersubstance self-consciously, as Archangels are doing: they are using Mind creating *living* things.

3.2.6 *Controlled Expansion of Consciousness after Daskalos*

Spiritual development is not simply a matter of theoretical knowledge, but requires rigorous, continuous and patient exercise. The steps and techniques are identical in all religious traditions, although the actual details are different to suit the differences in the nervous systems.

(1) Patterned breathing (cf. pranayama in Patanjali's eight limbs of yoga, cf. 3.1.6) - from the moment we are born into the world we breathe. Breathing is basic to life. Along with the food, rest, sleep, and sunshine, breathing is a major source of etheric vitality necessary for the generation and regeneration of a healthy life. Mostly, people breathe instinctively, and their breathing is shallow, not allowing etheric vitality to be distributed all over the body, and resulting in poor health.

At least twice a day for a period of about five minutes, we should breathe *consciously*, gaining control over the work of our lungs. We should begin by relaxing as much as possible, forgetting all our worries and freeing the mind and body of all activity. One full inhalation through the nostrils is followed by a full exhalation through the mouth. Breaths should be patterned on the counts of the heartbeat, in the beginning 3:3, then 4:4 and 6:6. We first fill our abdomen, then the torso's midsection and lastly the chest. As soon as the chest is full, we immediately begin to release the breath, starting with the abdomen, and finishing with the lungs.

(2) Concentration (cf. dharana in Patanjali) - The first condition for creative thinking and healing. Concentration should be focused as a magnifying glass, which no outer distractions can disturb, to self-forgetfulness of the present-day personality.

(3) Observation (cf. dhyana in Patanjali) - Attention without tension. Perfect concentration. The ability to observe in detail and to recall what we have observed is vital to our understanding of the Reality. Observation is an aspect of our divine nature. Observation and concentration make us both human and gods, as we can probe the outer and inner worlds deftly and gracefully. It is through observation that we are able to expand our conscious awareness to endless heights. In increasing our awareness and understanding of our surroundings, becoming keenly aware of all the nuances, we will move out of the small shells of our personalities and into the larger truths. There are no limits how far we can extend our comprehension of the Reality when we develop our ability to concentrate and observe.

The more aware we become of the world which surrounds us, the more conscious we will be in the worlds beyond. This applies equally to our nightly visits, when we sleep and "dream", to the other planes, as it does when we eventually pass over from the material plane into the more refined worlds. Through enhanced observation comes an ability to see beyond apparent limitations and to control the course of our experiences in the psychic and noetic worlds.

(4) Visualization (cf. dhyana in Patanjali) - The most important skill for performing an exercise is visualization - the ability to form psycho-noetic images and scenes. Psycho-noetic images are elementals constructed of Mind super-substance at varying rates of frequency. Once created, an image has a real, multi-dimensional existence that is far more durable than any gross material object.

After learning to observe carefully and to concentrate fully, we gain the ability to visualize consciously. There is nothing more powerful than thought, and visualization is the process of harnessing thought in a constructive manner. We visualize all the time, mostly unconsciously, by creating elementals of uncontrolled desire-thoughts, and this is the way in which we create our world.

Visualization should not be confused with fantasy. In shaping substance (using creative, kinetic, imprint and sensate ethers) human beings seek to replicate the work of the Logos and the Holy Spirit by faithfully reproducing noetic forms. Visualization is used as a vehicle for expansion of our consciousness, as it is the *language* between

the mundane and the divine, and the "key" to the kingdoms (Revel. 3:7). By constructing specific forms and settings we allow for interaction with divine energies. Additionally, visualization is indispensable in healing work for invoking images of health and perfection where illness and disease have set in. Our ability to form these images is a most divine gift and privilege that we need to fully develop.

(5) Introspection (cf. yamas and niyamas in Patanjali) - An inner exploration to trace the sources of our emotional and noetic behaviour with the resolve to self-consciously structure our personality and its subconsciousness. The determination to free ourselves of the limitations of egoism, by releasing "your conscience from dead works" (Hebr. 9:14) is moving towards the wise and loving voice of the Soul.

Daily introspection, "looking within" is the process of self-examination, of "knowing thyself". This is the core practice of every Researcher of Truth, and of all those interested in Self-Realization, whose aim is "the euthanasia of the egoism".

(6) Meditation (cf. samadhi in Patanjali) - In meditation the exploration moves beyond the subjective experience of the present-day personality, into the boundless oceans of the Mind, towards alignment with the universal and eternal and unions with the Absolute superconscious self-awareness.

The systematic practice of meditation within a definite and accepted spiritual framework is congenial to all religious schools of the world, for either goal is the same - to bring the aspirant to the highest state of consciousness. Through these techniques one finally transcends all levels of the mind and goes on to Christ consciousness and realization of the absolute consciousness. Meditation does not require a belief in dogma or in any authority. It is an inward journey in which one studies one's one self on all levels and ultimately reaches the source of consciousness. The aim of meditation is Self-realization - a direct vision of Truth. The meditative experiences that great mystics have witnessed from the deeper realms of their being - experiences that do not come from the contact of the senses with sense objects. "And when he was demanded of the Pharisees, when the kingdom of God should come, he answered them and said, The kingdom of God cometh not with observation. Neither shall they say, Lo, here! or, Lo, there! for, behold, the kingdom of God is within you." (Luke, 17:20-21).

Meditation gives a direct vision of God in the temple of the body.

When Jesus invites us "Come to me, all who labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gently and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light" (Matt. 11:28-30), he is encouraging us to practice the discipline of stillness and meditation. The word that he used, **yoke** in English is from the same Sanskrit root as the word *yoga*, both signifying union or binding together, and are used in appropriate contexts to indicate preliminary disciplines as well as the achieved state of God-realization, or universal Christ-consciousness, which is the goal of all spiritual effort. Thus, Jesus was saying "My *yoga* is easy...".

This Self-realization (the realization of God within) is an ever-present possibility because it is an ever-present reality, though in a latent state of awareness. The power, awakened in the aspirant, to achieve this level of superconscious awareness, is the power of the indwelling Christ (our Common Selfhood) in every person.

The teachings of Jesus conveyed in the Gospels constitute, in essence, a manual for meditation. In figurative language they describe the various stages of meditation, provide guidelines for overcoming obstacles in practice, and explain the ultimate outcome of the meditative endeavour [11].

3.2.7 *Daskalos' Meaning of Christianity*

"For this I came into the world that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice." (John, 18:37)

Although we live in the so-called Western or Christian world, we are all aware only of the cultural implications of Absolute Beingness' manifestation on the Earth. Socially, the greatest revolution in our civilization is the transition from paganism to Christianity. This is reflected most clearly in our calendar, our counting of time, which is referenced to the year when the Logos was incarnated and humanized in the body of Jesus of Nazareth. Our greatest works of art are based on the Christian symbolism, particularly in painting, sacral architecture and in music. However, in spite of Christianity being the dominant form of religious practice in the Western world, the real meaning of this momentous event *in terms of evolution of human consciousness* escapes almost all of us.

Jesus Christ appeared on our planet at *the midway point, between our beastly unconscious past, and the superconscious state of Theosis or God-realization*. Our Holyspiritual expression of a subconscious type of waking consciousness was joined then by the logic expression of human beings as self-conscious creatures. The latter is inevitable end stage and destiny of every Spirit-Ego-Being that has passed through the Human Idea and embarked on the path of evolution through the cyclical spiral of incarnations.

The Logos expresses Itself within a civilization, within a planet, at the point when human consciousness has reached such a level that makes the manifestation of the Logos possible and meaningful. The expression of the Logos within the universes is within the static condition of the Absolute. The Christ Logos is born and crucified eternally within the static condition in the universal memory of the Absolute. And this static condition expresses itself within time and space according to the level of consciousness reached by entities that passed through the Human Idea.

Whoever had been able to penetrate into this static condition within the Absolute, had been able to foresee the manifestation of Christ at the historical juncture that it took place on our planet about 2000 years ago.

One of such persons was the Buddha who prophesied that within about five hundred years the Logos Itself would descend and incarnate within a human body. Buddha had recognized that the average state of consciousness on our planet had reached such a level that at that point it made possible and inevitable the logocic expression. The Buddha had reached the heights of the third heaven, the point where he was beginning to transcend his human form. The Buddha was not an accidental self-consciousness. After entering that state he was able to foresee what was about to happen and instructed his disciples on the matter. It was his prophesy that alerted the three Magi from the East to travel to Bethlehem in order to pay homage to the newborn Godman.

Buddha foresaw a structural turning point in the evolution of humanity. It is possible for advanced masters to declare with mathematical precision what stages humanity will have to follow in its evolution toward perfection. The stages of the development of humanity are predetermined within the Divine Plan, the blueprint within which events will unfold within time and space. The incarnation of the Christ Logos in the body of Jesus of Nazareth was not just a historical incident within the time and space confines of this planet, but a *structural turning point in the evolution of human consciousness on the Earth*. It is a stage that is inevitably reached on any planet upon which human evolution unfolds, when God Himself incarnates directly to prove our own divinity. It is part of the static condition within the Absolute, eternally. The incarnation of Absolute Beingness-Logos is offered to humanity at the level of collective spiritual development to help humans realize that their destiny is to become gods themselves [12-14].

Buddha was not the only one who in his higher levels of consciousness entered into the static condition of the Absolute related to the appearance of the Christ in time and history. The rishis, the sages, of the Upanishads, being master technicians of states of consciousness, also penetrated into this static condition, describing the Christ as the Atman, both as the Divine Selfhood, and our own inmost self. Bhagavad Gita, which is also an Upanishad, is a symbolical dialogue between man's present personality self and the divine Self, named Krishna, in which the avatar (divine incarnation) Krishna explains under what circumstances God himself incarnates as a human being.

Another proof we find in the New Testament, where Jesus himself confirms the fact that Abraham was also able to enter into the static condition of the Absolute "Your Father Abraham rejoiced that he was to see my day; he saw it and was glad." (John, 8.56) and "Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I am." (John, 8.58). (Here Jesus did not say "I was", but "I am", because he was speaking as the Son of God in the Eternal Now.) In Genesis 24.1 we read "Now Abraham was old, well advanced in years" (more literally translated as "He went into the days") meaning that Abraham was shown into the age to come, including the days of the Messiah.

Exactly the same concept is found in the original term for Hinduist faith as *sanatana dharma*, "the eternal law". It is a statement constantly referred to in the Upanishads, that the Vedas were created eons before mankind. We tend to think of texts as coming at the end of the immense evolutionary process, after humans had evolved, culminating in the faculty of language. Under the term *sanatana dharma* the Hindus do not mean the literal, linguistic form of these sacred documents. They mean that the truths embodied in these forms lie so deep that they constitute *templates of reality* and that they reveal the *plan of evolution*.

Why has Christianity taken root only in the Western civilization, while the East has retained its original forms of religion? Because the essence of Eastern religions expressed the spirit of Christianity long before the appearance of the Christ in the flesh. The concept of the Atman (Self) is the glory of the Upanishads, and as described therein, it is identical with the esoteric concept of the Christ Logos. The fundamental equation in the Upanishads "The Atman is Brahman" finds its exact equivalent in the statement of Jesus, "I and my Father are one".

Christ himself has confirmed the teachings of all great religions and additionally proved them with his own life and deeds. So, Christianity in all of its aspects - practical, psychological, philosophical and ethical, had been part and parcel of the religious traditions of the East, only under different labels. ("Wherever you encounter truth, look upon it as Christianity", advises Erasmus.)

Christian Symbolism

Crucifixion. The drastic act of the crucifixion of Jesus Christ on the cross is a masterful theatrical and mnemonic device designed to be impressed deeply in our consciousness. But the real meaning of the cross is the human body with arms outstretched in which our present-day personality, our egoism, identifying itself with our body, emotions and thoughts, has crucified a living god.

Resurrection. Resurrection does not mean that on some unspecified judgement day we shall recompose our gross material body, that sack of earth, and continue to live forever thereafter in a paradise. We shall resurrect ourselves when we wake up to our real state and nature, realizing that we are not what we thought we were, a material body, which has to die, but a Spirit-Soul Self, an immortal god.

Salvation from the dead. It is often said that Christ is our Saviour, that he came to save us from the death of the grave. But that grave is not a six feet deep soil in a cemetery, where our material body will be buried one day. The grave is our very material body (made of earth) in which we, as a Spirit-Soul Self, are buried alive! Death, which does not exist in reality, is a belief that the only reality is our present-day personality which will be annihilated with the disintegration of our corruptible body. Sal-

vation is to disentangle our self from the illusions of time and place and from enchantment with matter.

Lord's prayer. Many Christians pray every day using the text recommended by Jesus himself, but without realizing the proper meaning of some key words in the Lord's Prayer:

"Our Father Who art in Heaven, hallowed be Thy Name. Thy kingdom come, Thy Will be done on Earth as it is in Heaven. Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our transgressions, as we forgive those who are transgressing against us. And lead us not in temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever."

The oldest known texts of the Gospels, that is the Greek and the first Latin translations, are much more abstract than the later translations. There is much in the earlier texts that is found in the form of an abstract idea, which in the later translations has become a concrete image, a concrete figure. One of such distortions of the Gospel text is in the well known words from the Lord's Prayer about daily bread - "give us this day our daily bread". This qualification of bread as "daily", "quotidien" (in French), "täglich" (in German) does not exist at all in the Greek, Church-Slavonic and the Latin texts. The Greek text term for the daily bread is "epiousios", and the Latin text reads: "panem nostrum supersubstantialiē da nobis hodie"; in Church-Slavonic the expression used is "nasushniy".

The Greek word *epiousios*, which is translated by the Latin word *supersubstantialis* according to the explanation of Origen did not exist in the Greek language and was specially invented for the translation of the corresponding Aramaic term. So, in no way this word meant "necessary" or "daily", because *supersubstantialis* means "super-existing" or "super-substantial", which is also confirmed by the meaning of the Church Slavonic word.

That its meaning is not bread made of flour, is confirmed by Jesus himself, when he was tested by the tempter, saying: "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God." (Matt. 4:4), which is a reference to the Old Testament when Moses reminds Israel that God "fed you with manna, that he might make you know that man does not live by bread alone" (Deut. 8:3).

Thus, it is obvious that this *supersubstantialis* is not bread which we can buy in any bakery, but *the Mind-supersubstance*, pure thought-forms, (and not the lower quality of Mind-substance with which we feed our base emotions and egoistic desires), and *Mind-vitality*, etheric vitality, prana, of which we all get a certain quantity every day.

Another most interesting transformation of this kind has occurred with the idea of evil.

"...lead us not in temptation, but deliver us from evil". In the Latin translation this phrase reads "sed libera nos ab illo improbo" - from the wicked one; in the Church-Slavonic it is "izbavy nas od lukavago" - deliver us from the sly one, in

French "mais délivre nous du Malin" - deliver us from the Evil (Wicked or Sly) one, and in with the same meaning in Italian "ma liberaci dal maligno".

In most contexts in the New Testament this sly or evil one is certainly the visible, deceptive, illusory, phenomenal world, the gross material world of three dimensions, "Maya".

The only way in which we can liberate ourselves from the enchantment of the illusions of matter offered to us through the five senses is through the use of Mind-supersubstance.

4. PSYCHIC PHENOMENA IN ESOTERIC TRADITION

Descriptions of most diverse psychic or paranormal phenomena are found in the canonized texts of every major religion of the world. Actually, the very sacred texts, the central foundation on which respective religious beliefs are based, are of supra-human origin, revealed to various portions of humanity by higher celestial beings or directly by God Himself. The Christian Bible is no exception; it is a voluminous catalogue of all kinds of miracles and supernatural phenomena, which are treated there in a manner so matter-of-fact, as a part of everyday reality.

Such phenomena in an unbroken tradition still abound in all Eastern religious practices, where yogis, lamas, arhants, and enlightened masters are in full possession of many of psychic powers. On the other hand, Christianity has become a sterile scholastic study in dogmatism, whose priests are mere functionaries ("apparatchiks") in the hierarchies of formal religious structures.

So-called occult or psychic powers are described by Patanjali in Part III of his comprehensive treatise on yoga psychology, Yoga Sutras. While engaged in explanation of samyamas - combined concentration, meditation and samadhi (attunement and at-one-ment), Patanjali refers to the way in which the mind, deeply absorbed in any particular object or thought acquires occult powers and psychic phenomena occur. Different powers are acquired as a result on concentration upon different objects.

Patanjali has listed about forty techniques - samyamas on different objects - which result in various psychic powers, some major, some minor ones. Table 11 presents the eight siddhis that are traditionally considered the major ones [15].

Table 11. *Upanishadic Psychic Powers (Siddhis)*¹⁸

<p>Numerous aspirants are attracted towards the practice of yoga, especially hatha yoga or kundalini yoga, by the thought of the extraordinary psychic powers they are likely to acquire through it. However, these powers are not to be taken for the goal. They are no criterion for measurement of one's level of spirituality, but rather the indicators of the progress the practitioner has reached.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (1) Anima - becoming as tiny as an atom. (2) Mahima - becoming as large as the universe. (3) Laghima - becoming as light as air (levitation). (4) Garima - becoming as heavy as lead. (5) Prapti - acquiring supernatural powers such as predicting future events, clairvoyance, clair-audience, telepathy, thought-reading, understanding foreign languages, and the languages of the beasts and birds, curing all illnesses, etc. (6) Prakamya - living under the water, becoming invisible, entering the body of another person, keeping a youth-like appearance for many years, etc. (7) Vashitvam - the power of taming wild animals, control of passions and emotions, mastery of elements. (8) Ishatvam - attainment of divine power, restoring life to the dead.
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The following samyama is of special relevance for the subject of mystical cognition:

III.53 By making samyama on single moments and on their sequence in time, one gains discriminative knowledge.

III.55 This discriminative knowledge delivers a man from the bondage of ignorance. It comprehends all objects simultaneously, at every moment of their existence and in all their modifications.

Our ordinary knowledge is based on sense-perception in a sequence. We learn one fact about a given object, then another fact, then more and more facts. But the yogi who possesses discriminative knowledge understands objects totally and immediately. If, for example, he meets another human being, he knows him at once in all his past and future modifications, as a baby, a youth, an adult, and an old man. This equally applies to his knowledge of life of a galaxy, from its birth, through billions of years of its existence, to its final dissolution. Such knowledge is infinite; it is within eternity, not time. It delivers a man from the bondage of karma and ignorance.

However, even this exalted state of omniscience and omnipotence should be renounced: *By giving up even these powers, the seed of evil is destroyed and liberation follows.*

¹⁸ Compare also with Table 12.

The "seed of evil" is ignorance. Because of ignorance, man forgets that he is the Atman and creates for himself the illusion of a private, separate ego-personality. This ego-personality is intent upon satisfying its desires and acquiring possessions and powers over external nature. Of all powers, the psychic powers are, from the standpoint of the egoism, the most desirable; and of all the psychic powers, omnipotence and omniscience are obviously the greatest. The yogi who has held even these powers within his grasp and nevertheless renounced them, has rejected the ultimate temptation of the ego. Henceforth, he is freed from bondage.

At several points in his exposition Patanjali warns that occult powers are the greatest stumbling blocks in the path to Truth and that they have nothing to do with spiritual life. Likewise, Buddha told his disciples very definitely never to put faith in miracles, but to see truth in eternal principles. Jesus spoke sharply against those who "seek for a sign", and he himself rejected the psychic powers offered to him by Satan in the wilderness.¹⁹

Scientific interest in the study of psychic phenomena began in 1882 with the foundation of the Society for Psychical Research in London. However, the landmark in academic experimentation is the research initiated at Duke University in the 1930's by J.B.Rhine and L.Rhine. After decades of thoroughgoing investigations of various psychic phenomena (classified in Table 12), the existence of ESP and PK phenomena has been demonstrably proved, but with little comprehension of their nature and inability to provide adequate theoretical models [16,17]. The inconclusiveness of such results is mainly due to the following factors:

- a) The subjects tested got into possession of their psychic powers *spontaneously*, without any intentional spiritual training, and thus could not exhibit them at will,
- b) As a consequence, laboratory replicability was pretty poor,
- c) Decline effect over time is manifested, when the performance of psychic powers drops down to the statistical average.

Therefore, in any future experiments, no matter how sophisticated measuring equipment, or rigorous control protocols or proper statistical methods in the *artificial* environment of a laboratory, end results will invariably prove to be of marginal significance for the conventional science.

The proper role of unsolicited and spontaneous psychic powers is in the anecdotal occurrences in *real life*, where they are manifested only when there is a *special*

¹⁹ Anyway, Western man has made a different choice, preferring to concentrate on the production of mechanical rather than psychological powers. And so, instead of telepathy, we have the telephone, instead of levitation, we have the aircraft and helicopter, and instead of clairvoyance, we have television. However, in the same way as the psychic powers can divert us from the path and cause our spiritual downfall, the technological powers also deify matter and make us more enchanted and more attached to matter, enslaving further our real Self to the illusion of the phenomenal world.

need, imparting a lesson to the persons concerned relevant for their spiritual understanding and transformation. Great masters, like Daskalos, who are in full control of their psychic powers, never display them to satisfy the mere curiosity of miracle seekers, but use them only for the purposes of serving, healing and helping.

Table 12. *A Western Classification of Psychic Phenomena*²⁰ (after Jahn)

<p>(1) Extrasensory Perception (ESP)</p> <p>Acquisition of information from sources other than through the regular channels of sensory perception.</p> <p>(A) Telepathy (thought transference between persons)</p> <p>(B) Clairvoyance (perception of remote physical objects or events)</p> <p>(C) Precognition/Retrocognition (perception of future events and events in the past not accessible by normal recollection)</p> <p>(D) Animal ESP (inexplicable capabilities of animals, such as: psi-trailing, homing, collective behaviour, communication)</p> <p>(2) Psychokinesis (PK)</p> <p>Influence of human consciousness on physical and biological systems.</p> <p>(A) Physical Systems (interaction may range from microscopic disturbances of atomic-level processes, through macroscopic distortion or levitation of objects, up to some very drastic poltergeist effects).</p> <p>(B) Biological systems (psychic healing and man-plant interaction)</p> <p>(3) Survival</p> <p>Survival of personality's consciousness upon bodily death.</p> <p>(A) Reincarnation (repeated cycles of birth, death and rebirth until final self-realization)</p> <p>(B) Apparitions (ghostly appearances of persons or things)</p> <p>(C) Mediumship (ability of persons to serve as mediums or channels of communication between living and departed humans)</p> <p>(4) Out-of-Body Experiences (OBE)</p> <p>Projection of one's consciousness outside the body, astral projection, autoscapy and bilocation.</p>
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²⁰ Compare also with Table 11.

5. WIDER IMPLICATIONS OF YOGIC/MYSTIC DISCIPLINES

The revolutionary theory of our identity, that our real Self is God, verified both in the Upanishads by the ancient Indian sages, and in the New Testament, *proved in the flesh* by the Godman Himself, provides a firm basis for implementation of this realization in our relationship with ourselves, with other people, with various social groups and with other nations.

The central value of Hinduism, expressed in the well-known Upanishadic formula *ahimsa paramo dharma*, "the highest religion, the ultimate law, is nonviolence", is also the central virtue of Christianity: "resist no evil" and "love your neighbour as yourself". First we should practice *ahimsa* with ourselves: if our behaviour is dictated by our addictive habits and our desires, whenever these desires cannot be satisfied for objective reasons, being related to objects outside us, and thus beyond the power of our control, we begin to suffer, doing violence to ourselves.

That the doctrine of *ahimsa* is very practicable and efficient in all situations of grave social turmoils was proved by Gandhi himself, physically a small man, who freed India from the colonial status by a dedicated application of non-violent resistance by prevailing against the British Empire in the height of its historic majesty.

Our economic thought operates, as social historian Ivan Illich put it, "under a paradigm of scarcity". The fundamental assumption is that there is not enough to go around, so we are doomed to fight one another (and an unwilling nature) for material, human, natural, resources; each person or group for itself. We call this evolution, and think that this is life.

It is not true, says the Isha Upanishad.²¹ That is social darwinism, based on the economics of materialism. Spiritual economics begins not from the assumed scarcity of matter, but from the veritable *infinity of consciousness*. As Gandhi said, "There is enough in the world for everyone's need; but there is not enough for everyone's greed".

The West has been a nominally a New Testament civilization for two thousand years, but we still operate on Old Testament revenge values in many sectors of our lives - not the least of which, ironically, are the relationships between different phases and flavours of our religions.

Internal laws of many countries and international laws governing behaviour between nations still contain many traits of barbarism, which bears within itself the principles of violence and destruction - the principles which cannot exist in civiliza-

²¹ "All is full. All that is full.
From fullness, fullness comes.
When fullness is taken from fullness,
Fullness still remains." (Isha, invocation)

tion. Thus, violence and evil are coded in criminal legislation - having codification of murder (death penalty) in the penal law, directly contravening the commandment "Thou shall not kill".

The savage man killed with a club. Cultured man has at his disposal every sort of technological appliance, nuclear bombs of terrible power, electricity, bomber aeroplanes, submarines, aircraft carriers, poisonous gases, ballistic missiles with war heads - but all these are means and contrivances for mass destruction and extermination, in essence nothing but evolved forms of the club. They differ only in the degree of their power. The culture of the means of destruction and the culture of the means and methods of violence are the culture of barbarism.

With the implementation of the esoteric method it will always be possible to find solutions to problems too difficult or too big for the logical mind. Real solutions can come only from higher mind possessing higher consciousness, that is from esotericism. The esoteric method is limited by nothing and always connects every given thing, however small it may be, with the whole.

The danger of the logical method in all possible spheres in life lies in the fact that at the first glance it is the easiest and the most effective way.

6. CONCLUSION

The message of esoteric teachings from the dim ages of Vedic seers, through the Old and New Testaments, and down through the many centuries to our own day, has consistently declared that the ultimate reality of the universe can be directly perceived, though never in normal consciousness. Esoteric teachings of all traditions contain four fundamental ideas:

1. God (Absolute Reality) is.
2. God can be realized (experienced, felt and known immediately in the depths of one's one soul).
3. To realize God is the supreme goal of human existence.
4. God can be realized in many ways.

As long as people are intoxicated by their pleasures derived through sense-objects, they will have no desire to embark on a path of self-realization, leading to God-realization. The New Testament story of the rich young man who wanted to follow Jesus depicts the difficulties and trials, the obstacles made by the attractions of life, of the power of the phenomenon of life over people, especially over those *who have great possessions*.

"It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God" (Matt. 19:24).

Rich in this context has primarily the idea of attachment, especially of the people possessing great knowledge, a great mind, a great talent, position, fame - all these are "riches" which close the entrance to the Kingdom of Heaven. Attachment to church religion and great theological knowledge is also "riches". Only if the "rich man" becomes "poor in spirit" does the Kingdom of Heaven open to him. Every scientist, no matter how brilliant and profound his knowledge of the nature of the gross material world, is also a very rich man, and as long as he is attached to his riches, he will not be able to enter the Kingdom of Heaven.

However, a moment will come when they will be aching with dissatisfaction with the unreality of the world, and suffering from the insomnia of the heart.

There are three basic methods through which it is possible to achieve liberation from all illusions and attain mystical union with our real Self:

1. Ethical living (abstaining from any kind of evil)
2. Practicing spiritual disciplines (meditation and non-attachment)
3. Through ingestion of special entheogenic ("lucidogenic") plants, such as sacred mushrooms (*amanita muscarina*, *psilocybe mexicana*) containing substances known as psychotropic, psychomimetic or hallucinogenic. Though they offer instant illumination catapulting one into inconceivable states of consciousness, they are not the preferred way! Their main usefulness lies in their proving to the doubting Thomases that the visible world of solid matter is not the only reality, but the real danger if used often is that the states of consciousness thus experienced are so incongruous with the state of mind of people who have not purified their personality that they can damage their nervous system.

In his revolutionary book on the nature of consciousness, "The Psychology of Consciousness" [18], Robert E. Ornstein, has shown how a synthesis of the two modes of knowledge can bring about "a more complete science of human consciousness with an extended conception of our own capabilities". His Postscript includes these sobering thoughts:

"After all our talk of synthesis, new work, new understandings, there remains a word of caution, addressed especially to those who work in science. It would be the height of absurdity if we were to settle, now, for a strictly intellectual understanding of the existence of a second mode of consciousness. The possible danger here is of a newer and more elegant reductionism, of feeling we have tasted the implications of the esoteric traditions simply by calling them 'intuitive education' or by some such term, of reducing them to words and logic once again.

The new possibility can go beyond this: to a confluence of the two streams of knowledge, the esoteric and the modern, in science and in each of us. This confluence cannot affect the contents of science unless enough scientists work in both areas of inquiry, both professionally and personally. We can achieve a more complete science

of psychology, but only if enough people make the effort to train those aspects of themselves which are usually uncultivated in Western education. This book only begins to consider some of the very radical possibilities of the esoteric traditions. If it does anything, it will be to further an organic process of synthesis of the two traditions. By its very nature, such a synthesis must draw from the personal experiences, as well as the intellectual investigations of many."

So, we have now two alternatives. Either we must decide that there is only one kind of knowledge, limited to the objects of sense-contact, and thereby resign ourselves to a permanent agnosticism concerning the nature of ultimate reality and the teachings of the scriptures. Or we must admit the possibility of another, a higher kind of knowledge which is supersensory and therefore capable of confirming the truth of these teachings through direct experience. Such is the knowledge which is obtained through samadhi and theosis. And each one of us has to find it for himself.

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