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THE DESACRALIZATION OF HINDUISM FOR WESTERN CONSUMPTION¹



Three Hindu cults which have received widespread acceptance in the West are presented. The first is Mahesh Yogi's Transcendental Meditation. You will notice that I do not grace him with the title Maharishi which means "great saint." The second is that of Mr. Aurobindo, whose most significant spin-off in this country has been the Esaten Institute, and in the Catholic Church, the expositions of Bede Griffiths. The third is the movement initiated by Rajneesh Bhagavan who liked to describe himself as "the blessed one who recognized himself as God."

We shall start with Mahesh Yogi's Transcendental Meditation. This is one of the earlier exports - or rather re-imports-from the East. It will allow us to define a number of words which will continuously crop up in this discussion - words such as mantras, meditation, yoga, etc.

Prasad Warma, it's his original name, was born in north central India in 1911. He studied physics at Allahabad University and graduated at the age of thirty-one. He then worked in a factory for about five years, spending his spare time dabbling in yoga and the Vedas. He then spent some time meditating in the Himalayan foothills, supposedly under the jagadguru Sankaracharya of Badrikashram. Some time later, at the age of 48, he emerged from his Himalayan hideout ready to reveal his exciting new religion to the world.

His ideas found little reception in India so he took off for London because, he said, "*New ideas get better acceptance in technologically developed countries.*" Here he established the Utopian "Spiritual Regeneration Movement." During the initial phase he openly taught that his TM was a Hindu religious practice, the real purpose of which was to produce "*a legendary substance called soma in the meditator's body so the Gods of the Hindu pantheon could be fed and awakened.*" Those in his inner circle were assured that TM was "*the ultimate, absolute spiritual authority on the face of the earth,*" that TM-ers were "*the only teachers and upholders of genuine spiritual tradition on the face of the earth...*" and this because, "*were controlling the gods through the soma sacrifice.*"

Nothing much happened until in 1967 when the Beatles, emerging from their drug experiences, were seeking a new high. After a period of training with him in Wales, the Beatles returned to active life with a new vision. Others such as Shirley MacLaine, the Rolling Stones and Mia Farrow joined the band-wagon. With such an endorsement, it was only a matter of time before even the Trappist monks in Spencer, Massachusetts were inviting this individual to evaluate their

spirituality and teach them how to meditate! In 1972 Maharishi announced his World Plan of sharing his view of the Science of Creative Intelligence and his understanding of life and knowledge with the entire world.

The core of Prasad Warma's new religion was Transcendental Meditation. Now Webster's Dictionary defines meditation as "*to keep the mind or attention fixed upon*" something. It is defined by the Catholic Encyclopedia as "*a form of mental prayer consisting in the application of the various faculties of the soul, memory, imagination, intellect and will, to the consideration of some mystery, principle, truth or fact....*" The closest Hindu term is *dhyana* - the literal meaning of which is "*concentration.*" It should of course be remembered, that as the Catholic Encyclopedia says, "*the control of attention is the vital point in the education of the will.*" While Hindus are somewhat less prone to exact definitions, that of Swamy Sivananda, a recently deceased exponent of Hinduism, should suffice. He tells us "*it is a continuous flow of oil. All worldly thoughts are shut out of the mind. The mind is filled or saturated with Divine thoughts, Divine glory and Divine presence.*" Meditation of course demands both discipline and hard work. A Hindu would certainly have no difficulty in accepting the definition given by the Catholic Encyclopedia.

The followers of TM define their "*meditation*" as "*unique*" and "*effortless.*" (TM Program- A Basic Handbook) Their method "*involves no concentration ... which separates the TM technique from all other meditation ... It involves no thinking about something.*" Clearly then, unless we redefine the meaning of terms (a favorite modernist gambit), whatever TM is, it is not meditation. According to Dr. Deepak Chopra, a devotee of Mahesh Guru, the master holds that the Vedic concept that meditation can be likened to the taming a wild elephant is a fatal error. What the mind wants is to find the fourth state and this state is to be found in the pause or space between random thoughts.

What about the word "transcendental"? Webster's gives a wide range of meaning to this term. According to the TM program, it implies "*going beyond*" the usual thinking processes to the "*source of thought, that is, to the field of pure energy that underlies and supports all of creation, thus allowing the mind to contact directly the field of pure Creative Intelligence*". All this reads like the writings of the Theosophists and the Rosicrucians. Of course, such phrases as "*Creative Intelligence*" can be understood as a reference to God, but in view of the fact that TM "*involves no religious beliefs or practices*" and can be practiced by atheists, this seems most unlikely. Actually the term "Transcendental" is not religious, but philosophical in origin, and probably the best definition that can be found is again that of Webster's Dictionary: "*Kantianism, of or pertaining to the a priori necessary conditions of human experience as determined by the constitution of the mind itself; hence transcending what is determined by the contingent particularity of experience, but not transcending all human knowledge.*" If one doubts the Kantian origin of the concept, one should recall that Mahesh Yogi "*is a scientist; his contributions to the world are on the level of science, not religion.*" He is indeed a scientist of sorts, for as pointed out above, he has his degree in physics. As Jacob Needleman reports in *The New Religions*, "when the followers of Mahesh Yogi were asked if CI (Creative Intelligence) was the same as what others understood by the term God, they replied, "*but it works! ... Try it.*"

As for the term mantra, it is a time honored one which is best translated as "ejaculatory prayer." A Hindu would find the repetition of a "meaningless mantra"-and TM mantras are said to be such - inconceivable and dangerous in the extreme. (Mahesh Yogi once said ""I can bring the world to cosmic consciousness by invoking Coca-Cola.") Such a practice can only induce a state of self-hypnosis, an altered state of consciousness. One is reminded of the scriptural story of the house swept clean of one devil, like the mind swept clean of all thoughts but the meaningless mantra, to realize that something far worse-namely seven devils-can enter. To quote our

authority on TM again, the end result of this practice is that ""The 'I' is let alone to experience its own true nature."" Now from the Hindu point of view the 'I' is precisely the seat of the ego, and the ego is the seat of pride and all that separates us from the love and knowledge of God. The more this "I" is fostered, the more difficult it is for us to realize the presence of God which dwells within every soul, and which is "activated," as it were, by Baptism. As Sri Ramana Maharishi, an orthodox exponent of Hindu doctrine and universally recognized by Hindus as a saint, has said, "This sense of 'I' which arises in the body for the time being, is otherwise called the ego, ignorance, illusion, impurity, or the individual self." In full concurrence, the Catholic St. Eymard stated that the spiritual life "required that we declare war against the human ego, against the love of oneself." Let us pause a moment to consider the exact nature of a mantra. A mantra is given by a guru or spiritual director to a chela or student penitent for either temporary or permanent use. It may take the user a lifetime to fully understand the meaning of a mantra (much as it may take a Catholic a lifetime to fully understanding such an intellectually demanding prayer as the "Hail Mary"). There are of course thousands of "antras" or ejaculatory prayers, such as are listed in the Racolta of Catholicism. The use of the mantra is not an end in itself, but its function in the spiritual life is that of being a "support" or a means to an end - one among many. It is certainly never used apart from appropriate spiritual direction, or outside the framework of the traditional form from which it derives. Most Hindu mantras contain one of the Divine Names of God, or the mystical symbol OM (which is also in a certain sense a Name of God). Lest we have any doubts left, Mahesh Yogi himself tells that TM "is not a religion..." that "It involves no religious beliefs or practices ... it has added no trappings of Hinduism or of any other 'isms' to the daily practice of the TM technique." Now this strange individual who has all the trappings of an angel of light - the long white hair, the ochre robe, the benevolent smile-is in point of fact, from the Hindu viewpoint, not only a heretic, but a rakshasa or demon. He is a clear-cut manifestation of that "counter-tradition" which can typically occur only in the Kali Yuga.

The aims of TM are in no sense "spiritual" as this word is usually defined. Rather, they are "growth and self-actualization" which is defined as "*the development of the following qualities - an open, receptive, caring attitude; cheerfulness and good humor; predominance of positive thinking; spontaneity and freshness of appreciation; self-sufficiency; loss of fear of death; affective readiness for developing consciousness; discovery of opportunities for creativity; acceptance of self, nature and other; a conscious sense of destiny.*" The same source tells us: "*A new age seems to be upon us; an age in which everyone will live much closer to his or her full Potential; an age in which peace and Prosperity will dominate; truly an age of enlightenment.*" Shades of Dale Carnegie! Jacob Needleman further quotes him as saying "*thus connected with the fundamental striving of the universe, man's life would automatically improve ... permitting humanity happily to fulfill its function in the cosmos...*" Among other goals of Maheshi's World Plan are listed "*to bring fulfillment to the economic aspirations of individuals and society,*" and "*to achieve the spiritual goals of mankind in this generation.*" All this reads more like a selection of phrases culled from high school "pop" psychology and Teilhard de Chardin. What is amazing is the degree to which his ideas find acceptance in supposedly Catholic circles. However Maheshi's ideas are not all beer and skittles. He is a Darwinian evolutionist to the core. In his new TM based society "*there has not been and there will not be a place for the unfit. The fit will lead, and if the unfit are not coming along there is no place for them ... In the Age of Enlightenment there is no place for ignorant people ... Non-existence of the unfit is the law of nature.*"

The advanced practitioners of TM introduce us to the existence of spirit guides. David Hunt (The Cult Explosion) documents the association between TM "rounding" (i.e., 8 to 10 sessions a day in conjunction with others) and the presence of such guides in the form of Hindu deities and former Ascended Masters. The importance of these "angels of light" will become clear later.

What do orthodox exponents of Hinduism think of Mahesh Yogi? This question was put to His Holiness Sri Chandrasekharendra Saraswati, Sri Sankaracharyaswami of the Kamakoti Peetha, 68th acharya in the line of Kamakoti Peetha, and one of the highest authorities within the Hindu tradition. His answer was that the man is a fake! Finally, the ascetical Mahesh Yogi has done rather well for himself in this world. Every student who wishes to learn TM gets charged some 200 dollars. Those who want enlightenment pay 7,000 dollars. The net result is that he is worth over Rs. 400 Crores, owns travel agencies, an import-export firm, 35 five star hotels in India, and has established financial centers in some 140 countries. (It is of interest that in 1900 British hotel entrepreneurs could not get a single Hindu to invest in establishing a hotel chain because Hindus found making money on hospitality offensive.)

II

Our second case study this evening will be Sri Aurobindo Ghosh. He was born in Calcutta on August 15, 1872. His father, a physician trained in England, was completely enamored with Western ways. At the age of seven he sent his son to England where he entered St. Paul's School in London and distinguished himself in his studies. He returned to India at the age of 21 and became lecturer in French at Baroda College. Then in 1905 he was thrown into prison on the charge of sedition and there began to study the Bhagavad Gita. In prison he claims to have had a vision of Sri Krishna enveloping all of existence. On release from prison he once again threw himself into politics and founded the Nationalist Party in Bengal. In January of 1910 he received word secretly that he was soon to be deported, so he retired from Calcutta to the neighboring French territory of Chandernagar. From there he went to Pondicherry where he began to pursue the sadhana of yoga. Here he remained until his death in 1950. You will note that at no time did he have a spiritual director.

The next four years were spent in comparative seclusion. Sadhus who live quietly tend to attract people and over the course of time he gathered some disciples including a French couple by the name of Richard who were in search of a *Master in whom they could recognize a world teacher*". With their assistance they started an English journal *Arya* and a French one called *Revue de Grande synthese*. The pages of *Arya* were to carry most of the philosophical writings, poetry, art criticism, and essays on Indian culture that were to bring Aurobindo recognition and fame.

World War I forced the return of the Richards to France, and after the war Mrs. Richard, having divorced her husband, worked for a while as a country club hostess in this country, and then returned as "the Mother" to take over the ashram (a sort of monastic enclosure). Daughter of a wealthy Jewish banker, she was able to devote herself and her funds to this man whom she had claimed was a "seer" as long ago as 1914. She died in 1973 at the age of 96.

Mr. Aurobindo received enlightenment in November of 1926, or as it is claimed in their literature, he at that point realized the "Supermind". "*By the descent of the Overmind, the descent of the Supermind has been assured ... Sri Aurobindo ceased to see people and contact should be made with him only through the Mother.*"

Aurobindo envisaged the Supreme Reality as *Sat Chit Anand*. Such a statement could be legitimate, though in point of fact *Sat Chit Anand*, or Being-Consciousness-Bliss are but primary manifestations of the Supreme Reality. Be this as it may, Aurobindo continues to tell us that the Supreme Reality is Pure Existence, Existence that is both will and forces and above all, it is blissful Existence. The Divine is not only omnipresent, it also includes both Matter and Spirit. While supposedly anchoring his system in the Vedanta, he wove the theory of evolution into his philosophy. Man has come to the present stage of evolution through a process of evolutionary growth which is as yet still incomplete. Man has to grow in consciousness until he reaches complete and perfect consciousness, not only in his individual, but in his collective and social

life. There is at the heart of things a conscious force that is evolving to ever higher forms of being, and indeed, there is also evolution of the Divine. In fact, growth of consciousness is the supreme secret of life and the master key to earthly evolution.

Corresponding to the ascent from the material to the spiritual is a descent of the spiritual into the material. The link between the process of ascent and descent is where Mind and Supermind meet with a veil between them. The rending of this veil of *maya* is the necessary condition of the "Divine Life" in humanity. Physical evolution has brought mankind from lower forms of existence to the present stage of development, but is on the verge of yet higher stages of evolution. In the next stage man will emerge as a "gnostic being." This is our divine destiny. *"The gnostic being will have indeed an inmost existence in which he is alone with God, one with the Eternal, self-plunged into the depths of the infinite, in communion with its height and its luminous abysses of secrecy."* Ultimately Aurobindo envisaged the emergence of a new humanity beyond the present stage of human evolution. *"First a few will attain to gnostic being... Gradually the number will increase and form small islets of gnostic communities. From within these gnostic communities a Conscious Force will emanate, exercising so powerful an influence on the rest of humanity that it to may enter into the destiny that awaits it from eternity."* This is the Life Divine. (*Gurus, Swamis, and Avatars*, Marvin Henry Harper)

Aurobindo was clearly out to establish a new evolutionary religion. In his own words Aurobindo told us that *"All religions have saved a number of souls, but none yet has been able to spiritualize mankind. For that there is needed not cult and creed, but a sustained and all comprehensive effort at self-evolution."*

His admirer and follower, Dr. Shiv Das, tells us that *"the object of his mission was to usher in a new spiritual age as the next higher curve of human evolution. This is also the inviolable destiny and future of mankind. Sri Aurobindo sounded the trumpet call of the New Age."* This is to be achieved or worked out *"individually as well as in the collectivity"* by means of a *"triple transformation, viz. psychic transformation, spiritual transformation and supramental transformation."* The end result was the creation of new *"spiritual religion"* that was the *"hope of humanity,"* a religion that differed from *"the prevailing religions of intellectual belief, dogma and extraneous rites and rituals which have to be discarded in the new World Order."* (*The Vedic Path*, June 1990) Some of these strange ideas are explained by the Mother. *"Sri Aurobindo is an emanation from the Supreme who came on earth to announce the manifestation of a new race and the new world, the Supramental Man is the creation of yesterday. Sri Aurobindo came to announce the creation of tomorrow: the coming of the supramental being ... Sri Aurobindo is the future on the way to its realization ... His teachings leads us towards a better future. Sri Aurobindo's Yoga is a unique earth-transformation..."*

Aurobindo, even though he lived as a recluse, remained intensely interested in world affairs. He openly described himself as a Marxist. He received a large number of international journals and newspapers. Still later he had radio installed and spent several hours each day listening to the world news. This was all part of his "work," which was to influence world affairs through his spiritual powers. Thus, during the second world war he claimed to have prevented Hitler from proceeding with the invasion of England after the fall of Dunkirk, and then brought about the victory of Britain through Churchill whom he greatly admired, and who was his "instrument." To use his own words, *"my force is being largely used for helping the right development of the war and for change in the human world."* This force is, according to his followers, still working in an effective manner in the world.

Aurobindo's desire for world unity also had its secular counterpart. To quote him directly, *"the unity of the human race by political and administrative means implies eventually the formation and organization of a single world state out of a newly created though still loose, natural*

organic unity of mankind... To that reason two alternative possibilities and therefore two ideas present themselves, a world state founded upon the principle of centralization and uniformity, a mechanical and formal unit, or a world union founded upon the principle of liberty and variation in a free and intelligent unity."

Interestingly enough after his death, his body was not cremated. It was eventually laid to rest in a marble tomb in the Ashram at Pondicherry. According to the Mother, when she asked him to resuscitate himself he said *"I have left this body purposely. I will not take it back. I shall manifest again in the first supranatural body built in a supranatural way."* The marble tomb is the only place of worship in the ashram. That is if you call placing a flower on the monument, or kneeling there briefly, worship. People otherwise only gather on the soccer field on Thursday and Sunday evenings for 15 minutes of silent meditation. In fact, no group is even allowed to set up a place of worship or to perform religious ceremonies. Religion is a "private matter" and therefore no set forms should be forced on anyone. This is said to be in harmony with the universal spirit of Aurobindo.

Now, the spread of these gnostic communities which base themselves on Aurobindo's ideas has received considerable support from, among other organizations, the United Nations. Funding the French architect Roger Anger, the first city to be developed was Auroville, *"a model city for the whole planet,"* where a utopian and cultist One World Brotherhood is fostered whose purpose is said to be "service to mankind." The ideas developed here have been adopted by the HEW and the National Training Labs of the National Educational Association as well as a host of other international and national organizations. (*Beyond Jonestown*, Ed. Dieckmann.)

Now there is another interesting tie-in with Aurobindo and the New Age Religions. Michael Murphy, founder of Esalen, received his inspiration from Aurobindo or the Mother while living in the Ashram in Pondicherry between 1948 and 49. The Esalen Institute is one of the granddaddies of so-called "sensitivity training" - the application of non-directive group therapy as applied to normal people for the purpose of expanding the human potential. One of the courses offered at the Esalen Institute is "The Evolution of Consciousness" in which it is suggested that "a transformation of human consciousness as momentous as the emergence of civilization is under way." The techniques fostered by this Institute include music therapy, LSD experiments, and holotropic breathing techniques, yoga and the use of mantras, and intense sports activities - all aimed at altering consciousness in order to bring about that universal consciousness, or to use Aurobindo's term, contact with the evolving Supermind. In addition, from the beginning the Esalen Institute supported its own inter-house "channeler" named Jenny O'Connor, who received messages from a group of nine nonhuman entities allegedly living on the star Sirius. These "spirit guides," and I shall return to the topic of spirit guides later, were the ultimate gurus of Murphy and his band of Aurobindians.

Now what many people do not know is that the techniques used by these groups are essentially brainwashing and mind-bending techniques. A group of people gather around on the floor and embrace each other, telling each other their deepest feelings and experiences. Locked into a closed system, separated from their families, often for days at a time, those who do not accept the norm for the group - usually the lowest common denominator - and usually established by a "facilitator" and assistant whose function the other members of the group are unaware of - are browbeaten until they do. Now strictly speaking, brainwashing was developed in groups under external control such as prisoners. What is new is that Americans by the millions are rushing to accept this type of experience voluntarily. Est, Forum, Silva Mind Control, Scientology, Synanon, their name is legion. Corporations are insisting that their executives go through this type of experience. Interestingly, the fundamentals of this technique were developed by Pavlov at the request of Lenin, and were first effectively applied in the show, trials of Stalin. When

Lenin read the result of Pavlov's research in this field, he said to him "*you have saved the revolution.*"

One last spin-off of interest is Father Bede Griffiths, the Benedictine Monk who lived near Auroville in South India. He lived like a Hindu sadhu, supposedly achieving a blend of Eastern and Catholic mysticism. His guru and source of inspiration was also Aurobindo. In his book, *A New Vision of Reality*, he informs us that the world "*is on the verge of a new age and a new culture.*" The advertisement tells us he is a "*spokes man of the New Age, speaking for it from his Christian-Hindu Ashram ... He concludes his radical vision of a new society and a universal religion in which the essential values of Christianity will be preserved in living relationship with the other religious traditions of the world.*" Here once again, we have the export of evolutionary and Marxist thought to India, its adoption by a supposed Swami, and its reintroduction to the West, both by Murphy and the Esalen Institute, and also by Father Griffiths within the Catholic Church.

III

The last group I would like to discuss is that of Bhagavan Rajneesh. Raineesh Chandra Mohan was born in 1923 to a Jain family in northern India. At the age of seven he is said to have achieved *samhadi* or enlightenment. After this he began to treat his family and friends as a mental laboratory, playing elaborate and sadistic jokes on them. At the same time he loved reading, especially Russian novels. And it is probably during this period that he first was in turmoil and full of contradictions. He advocated socialism, but then became disillusioned with it. He attacked Gandhi, but then deeply mourned his death. He read the scriptures of many religions, but mocked religion. He read esoteric books, practiced magic, yoga, self-hypnosis and also learned how to hypnotize others.

At nineteen he went to college in Jabalpur where he used to sit in trees to meditate and once reported that his body fell to the ground but his "consciousness" stayed in the air, connected by a glittering silver cord to his navel. His parents thought he was insane and took him to one doctor after another in order to see if they could get him help. Talk of hospitalization and drug therapy however came to nothing. Then at the age of 21 in 1953 he claimed he had achieved complete enlightenment. Despite this experience he was outwardly unchanged and continued in his courses, receiving his BA in philosophy at Jabalpur in 1955, and his Masters at the University of Saugar in 1957. It is quite inconceivable in Hindu setting that a person who had achieved complete enlightenment should continue to study profane philosophy in college.

According to his university colleagues, he had a "golden tongue" with an excellent command of English. He had by now deeply studied Gurujieff and his follower Peter Ouspensky. He slowly gathered disciples around him, at first from the middle class, but then he dropped these and began to cater only to the wealthy.

About 1960 he began to travel around India lecturing while still keeping his university teaching position. He totally rejected Jainism, labeling it as masochistic, and soon broadened his attack to include all orthodoxies. All of India's ancient religions he maintained were now dead, the priests hypocritical, and their rituals empty forms. Many Indians were scandalized by his religious views, and others by his love for women and fast cars.

About 1966 he became a full time "guru." We will notice in all this that Rajneesh had no guru himself. Indeed, he would not even acknowledge his debt to Gurijieff and Ouspensky. He claimed that he was the sole originator and authority of his teachings. This was a new religionless religion. He moved to Bombay and began to accept Western disciples, giving them a home made initiation - often on the first meeting - by pressing his thumb on their forehead and declaring

their third eye was open. They dressed of course in ochre garments. From there he moved to Poona and established an Ashram where he lived in absolute luxury. Over the gate of the ashram was written, "*Leave your shoes and your mind outside.*"

He advocated a new method of meditation called "dynamic meditation." But meditation would not work until people undid the "knots of negativity" in their bodies, minds and emotions. Agitation and catharsis were necessary. So he combined meditation with expressive devices borrowed from Western psychology and the human potential movement. Bioenergetic exercises derived from the work of Wilhelm Reich and his pupils-"primal" screaming, crying, rolling eyes and shaking were performed in a sequence while repeating Indian mantras.

He developed dozens of meditations for different temperaments and occasions. Active techniques for the morning, quieter ones for evening; meditation with mirrors and pillows, and with infant pacifiers; indoor and outdoor meditations, meditations in automobiles and airplanes. In the dynamic form of meditation pupils were encouraged to shed their clothes while performing all sorts of antics, often in the dark. Above all, the hang up of sexual morality had to be eliminated and group sex became acceptable if not *de rigeur*. One meditation center was described as "*sweet and blissful*" and a "*continuous orgy, a gateway to the collective unconscious and an escape from all troubling thoughts.*" It was a hell of psychological and physical confrontation for some and a heaven of effortless cooperation for others. As for Rajneesh himself, he was called a saint, a demon, a lecher, a celibate, an intellectual giant and a holy fool. Local hospitals reported a high incidence of physical injuries among his followers, as well as a number of people who became openly psychotic.

It is amusing to read about this sexual attitudes. According to him, through *tantra*, passion and indulgence come to have a purpose. Natural desires should be fulfilled intelligently and attentively, as repression of desire leads to endless trouble. Needless to say, such teachings fell on very fertile soil among Westerners emerging from the revolution of the late sixties and early seventies. As one disciple said, "*He gives you the opportunity to sin like you've never sinned before.*"

A deeper consideration of Rajneesh leads us to label him a clone of Gurdjieff. Gurdjieff also came up with a new religion, called the Fourth Path. He has been called "*the Salvadori Dali of old-time holy men*". As one person said, "*Check out his Beezelbub's tales to his Grandson - a close reading of the Introduction will make it clear to the discerning that Gurdieff was laughing all the way to the bank. A true Wise Man.*" Rajneesh even called his manipulation of people "the Work", a prime Gurdjieffian term. Once again we see a patten of Western ideation exported to India and then brought back to this country in ochre garments.

Rajneesh and his followers are well known for their antics in Oregon. These eventually led to his expulsion from the United States and the forced sale of his 60 to 70 Rolls Royces. Not long after his deportation to India he died of a massive coronary.

IV

These three case studies provide us with an excellent introduction to what has come to be called "The New Age Religion." Even though only three were considered--one could easily add dozens more - a certain pattern begins to emerge. These various false brands of Hinduism are catering to and satisfying the wide open Western ideational market.

If one examines the intellectual decline of the West one must recognize certain trends. Time does not allow for a detailed exposition. Suffice it to say that Wolfgang Smith's *Cosmos and Consciousness*, Weaver's *Ideas Have Consequences*, and Rene Guenon's *Reign of Quantity*,

provide a more than adequate explanation of this process. One can however summarize the process as the increasing acceptance of nominalist patterns of thought with the resulting materialistic and mechanistic point of view which is reflected in evolutionary theory, socialism, and atheism.

Enter Freud upon the scene. A follower of Darwin, he believed in an evolving world of chance events and that humans were essentially animals driven by instincts constantly in collision with societal standards. Belief in God was a neurosis, an illusion needed by the weak. He even went so far as to say that "*the moment one inquires into the sense of value of life, one is sick.*" Despite the superficiality of this summation of Freud, it serves the purpose.

Many individuals who were unsatisfied with this view of reality insisted that there was more to life than unconscious drives. Dissention rapidly occurred. Jung, who questioned the reduction of all human behaviors to sexual impulses, preferred to relate behavior to the concept of an evolving collective unconscious, an idea that he admitted that he learned about from his spirit guide named Philomon. Religious ideas were acceptable in his view, but had their roots in this collective unconscious. Archetypes resided, not in God above, but in this cesspool of evolutionary memories.

Wilhelm Reich similarly left the Freudian orbit to develop the idea that blockages to personality development were recorded in muscular patterns of the body. Lifting the Freudian taboo against touching patients, he developed a form of bodywork to release the "orgone energy" that permeated the universe. Essentially a pantheist, he designed organ accumulators to collect and concentrate this mysterious cosmic energy.

Another important deviator from the Freudian corpus was Victor Frankl who after his concentration camp experience promoted the concept of "the will to meaning.". He could not accept the idea that a religious martyr died for nothing more than sublimated sexual urges.

Yet another figure was Skinner who saw people as highly programmed animals, and who rejected the idea that man was responsible or capable of independent action.

In the practical order, none of these men could be taken seriously by those who knew there was more to life than subconscious drives or programmed genetic responses. It was thus that in this fundamentally materialistic setting the ideas of Abraham Maslow came to the fore. Maslow, despite his personal atheism, elevated humanity above the level of animals and said that people were capable of self-transcendence and personal achievement. He introduced the concept that every person contained a "*self-actualization*" force within himself which struggled to assert itself. It was best to bring this out and permit it to guide our lives. A person who did this experienced "*being values*" such as wholeness, perfection, completion, beauty, goodness, truth, and self-sufficiency, and sometimes they even experienced these being values at the level of what he called "*peak experiences.*" He also said that "*transcendence means becoming divine or godlike, to go beyond the merely human.*" This becoming divine however had nothing to do with the supernatural or the extrahuman. It was an "*anthropological transcendence*" and he called it being "*metahuman*" or "*B-human*"- he whole process being part of man *qua man*. He was convinced mankind was coming to a brave new future as a result of increased awareness.

Maslow - who as I have already pointed out, was tied into the Esalen Institute opened the door to a host of other psychologists such as Fromm, Rollo May, and Carl Rogers who developed his ideas into what can be called the "*humanistic psychology of the self*" which is basic to the New Age movement. Rogers for instance asserted that "*God is a symbol of man's own powers which he tries to realize in his life and not a symbol of force and domination having power over man.*" He even went so far as to say that the Fall of Adam was the first act of freedom - "*the act of*

disobeying God's commandment is our liberation from coercion and the beginning of reason!" For him virtue was self-realization and not obedience. Now *"this realization involved the 'One,' for religious experience is the experience of oneness with the All, based on one's relatedness to the world as it is grasped with thought and with love."* All this led to the *"human potential movement"* which Alvin Toffler has described as *"as odds and ends of psychoanalysis, Eastern religion, sexual experimentation, game playing and old-time revivalism."*

Currently the phrases *"transpersonal psychology"* or *"fourth force psychology"* are coming into prominence. It is described as an emerging force interested in *"ultimate human capacities"* not incorporated into behaviorism (first force), psychoanalysis (second force), or humanistic psychology (third force). One New Age text defines *"transpersonal"* as *"referring to those dimensions of being or consciousness wherein individuals share a common identity; those dimensions wherein we are one."* Self-actualization is now seen as an end in itself, irrespective of its effects on others. As we discover the One within, we act so as to release its potential in whatever way is most effective. The self knows best. Because personal experience equals reality one changes reality by focusing on the self. Full awareness of my experience requires complete acceptance of that experience as it is. Any demands - by myself or others - to be different than I am, reduces my contact with what I actually experience. This is of course pure subjectivism. In common parlance it is narcissism. (All this is of course, only the application of existentialist and personalist philosophies to sociology and psychology.)

Another component of this counter-religion is openly satanic. During Alister Crowley's early experiments with the psychic world he visited Cairo, Egypt. There having placed his wife into a trance, she informed him that the spirits *"are waiting for you."* Crowley followed this up by repeating magical invocations over several days, which led to his contact with *"Aiwass"* who commanded him to write down *The Book of Law*, a kind of pseudo-esoteric scripture. In this text *Aiwass* spoke of a *"new religion"* that would be distinguished by complete self-fulfillment and the unleashing of private volition and desire. The great *"commandment"* of Crowley's New Age, as dictated by *Aiwass*, has become the leitmotif of the satanic cults: *"Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the law."*

THE NEW AGE RELIGION

How can we define the New Age religion? What are its basic ideas? Here we must be careful, for many of the words they use are borrowed from traditional religion, and especially from the more mystical or spiritual writers. Once again we have the problem of "double-speak", old words given new meaning.

The first is that of Pantheism. Everything - plants, animals, rocks - is God. Now the error of pantheism is to proclaim the immanence of God - for clearly He is immanent in all things - and to deny the transcendence of God. If Transcendence without immanence cuts us off from the Divine, Immanence without transcendence cuts the Divine off from us. Both the Transcendent and the Immanent go together because of the duality "Principle and Manifestation", Atma and Maya. While the Supreme Principle in itself is neither transcendent nor immanent, but "that which it is," on the plane of manifestation one needs a transcendent Creator and the resulting creation needs immanence for its very existence. And both are united in the theophany, in the Logos, the Man-God. From our human point of view one can say that transcendence annihilates the manifestation, while immanence ennobles it. In accord with religious expression, on the one hand, transcendence reduces man to "sinner" and "slave", and on the other hand, thanks to immanence, he is also a "child of God" and His "Caliph" on earth. These two can be said to meet in the Man-God: for if on the one hand "God alone is Good", on the other, "He who has seen me has seen the Father". This brings us back to the issue of prayer. New Agers do not pray, for one cannot pray to oneself, but only to a transcendent God. Even Sankaracharya, the most

"Absolute" Advaitist of all, wrote hymns of praise to God.

Basing themselves on this fundamental error, our New Age adherent is forced to declare that man *qua man* is God. Whoever denies the transcendence of God asserts his own divinity. As Karl Marx put it, "the denial of God is the affirmation of man". This takes various forms - one of the most classical being the declaration that man is himself the source of truth, and that his dignity derives from this ability. Another version is that man *qua man* is for all time united to God and hence saved - Whatever one means by being saved in such an expression. Swami Muktananda who has exerted a great influence on Werner Erhard, the founder of Est (now called Forum), pulls no pantheistic punches when he "*Kneel to your own self. Honor and worship your own being. God dwells within You as You.*"

When the Eastern religions authorize one to use a mantra such as *Aham Brahm*, I am Brahman, they are not proclaiming the reality of the Serpent's promise to Eve, "*ye shall be as Gods.*" But rather inculcating in qualified individuals a recognition of the immanence of the transcendent God within him. As St. Paul said, "*I live, not I, but Christ in me.*" When Westerners steeped in the confusions of modern psychology use such a formula they are confusing the lesser self or ego with Plato's immanent *daemon*. The end result is then precisely giving assent to Satan's promise. As George Leonard of Esalen says, "*We are like a God, omnipotent and omniscient.*" Clearly the error here is the confusion of the two selves - or in Catholic terminology, a confusion of personhood and individuality. A man is a person because he is endowed with, not only a body, not only with a vegetative and animal soul, but specifically because he is endowed with a spiritual and immortal soul. To develop one's personality is to utilize these special attributes which allow us to participate in the life of God. To develop one's individuality, which is what is involved in the New Age situation, means to lead a selfish existence, to become a slave to one's passions, striving to make oneself the center of everything.

Another error is the misunderstanding of the metaphysical statement that "*all is one,*" a teaching reflected in the Church's prayer "*to unite all things in Christ.*" This also results from their false pantheistic premises. There is of course Unity in the Principle, but in manifestation there is always multiplicity. As it says in the Tao Te Ching:

The Way gave birth to the One;
The One gave birth to the Two;
The Two gave birth to the Three;
The Three gave birth to ten thousand things.

We are tied to the Divine Unity or Transcendence because of the Divine Immanence but we must "realize" this immanence before we can claim to have achieved what mystics have called "The Supreme Identity." Yet another New Age confusion related to the statement of Apohatic theology that God is beyond all contraries. They argue that God in Himself is beyond good and evil. New Agers believe that cosmic unity - again the supermind or "divine consciousness," and not the transcendent unity of God - is restored by going beyond good and evil in this life. While God *in principio* may be beyond all contraries, they hold that even in this manifest world, good and evil are one and the same - evil being "the dark side of the force" as one recent movie portrays it. Once one accepts this confusion of planes, all moral limits become meaningless. There is no such thing as being good or bad. Combine this with the idea that we are gods, that we are the source of truth, and that we create our own reality, it follows that we can indeed do and be anything we want.

It goes without saying that if everyone is God, if everyone is to decide for himself what is true and false, then everyone's "religion" is valid. Actually, the New Ager, realizing this, actually believes in a super-religion which accepts the teachings of all the religions. This super religion has no fixed dogmas - indeed how could it in view of the fact that everyone is his own self-

validating source of truth and reality. And so New Agers are clearly against all fixed dogmas or objectively revealed truths. They are all ecumaniacs.

Reincarnation is also characteristic of the New Ager - reincarnation being defined as the rebirth of the ego or lesser self in another body - be it human or sub-human. The idea is that if one doesn't perfect one's ego or lesser self in this life, one can have another chance. Indeed, this second, or seven hundredth chance is part of the evolutionary process that each individual is said to go through on his way - not to the realization of God or reality, but to the merging with the "One" or "supermind" in some sort of Teilhardian point omega. What is forgotten is that reincarnation as such is not a Hindu doctrine, but rather a theosophist one and that, if reincarnation were in fact something that could occur, it would be seen from the Hindu point of view as a failure. The purpose of life from the Hindu point of view is not to be reborn and given another chance to indulge one's passions, but rather a liberation from the entire process of becoming.²

A common and most dangerous trait of all New Agers is their willingness to play around with changes in states of consciousness. If all is one and all is God and we are God, then why is it that we are not aware of this fact? The answer is ignorance combined with evolutionary backwardness. Instead of seeing ignorance as a reflection of man's sinful and fallen state, the New Ager declares that this ignorance is a result of the kind of consciousness which Western culture has imposed on him. To a certain degree he is correct, for his thinking processes have been strongly formed by the materialistic and psychologically based environment in which he has grown up. But he quickly goes off the track by holding that this false consciousness or awareness can and must be changed by altering our state of consciousness and by opening our doors to new perceptions. This can be achieved by drugs, by music, by breathing techniques, by yoga, by sports, by dance, by repeating meaningless mantras and by other forms of self-hypnosis. Once again we have a confusion of terms, or rather of legitimate mystical terms used in a new sense. Clearly prayer and spiritual life can create a changed state of awareness as can music such as the Gregorian Chant which brings tears to the eyes and melts the hardest hearts. Dance, music, yoga, and the repetition of ejaculatory prayers are used by all the traditional religions. But what the New Agers do not understand is that those who permit a change in consciousness within a valid religious culture do so with the protection which that religion provides. The initiatory sacraments and what are called sacramentals - holy water, the sign of the cross, and above all spiritual guidance and a solid knowledge of doctrine protect the individual from both self-delusion and the possible invasion of fallen angels or demons as they are usually called. New Agers who indulge in such techniques without such protections and without a life of prayer can only open themselves to what is infernal.

Changed states of consciousness are said to put oneself into contact with a higher state of consciousness-Aurobindo's Supermind. With regard to this one must be wary of such terms as Krishna consciousness, Christ consciousness, or what is called "cosmic consciousness." The linking of divine names to these states tends to lend them a false legitimacy. But of course, in reality it all depends upon just what one means by such phrases. As Rene Guenon has pointed out, this cosmic consciousness or "Great All" in which some aspire to lose themselves, cannot be anything else than the diffuse psychism of the most inferior regions of the subtle world, not unrelated to the labyrinth of the dark underworld of the "collective unconscious" that Jung postulates.³

Another important feature of the New Age religion is the conviction that we are on the edge of a new civilization where all or most of mankind will be in touch with the Supermind or superconsciousness. This is what evolution is really all about. Everything is evolving, not only man, but also the Supermind. Once again we are back to secular utopianism and Teilhard de

Chardin. This future utopia is clearly earthbound, socialist, and community - rather than family - oriented. The Age of Aquarius will have no fixed and rigid moral codes. Those who see man as an animal that can be perfected end up by making him a perfect animal. Clearly the Age of Aquarius is well upon us.

One finds among New Agers - and they come in a wide variety of aspects - almost no intellectuality at all. "Leave your shoes and minds outside," or as Marian Ferguson (The Aquarian Conspiracy) tells us, "you can't reason (her emphasis) into a paradigm shift [i.e., a higher state of consciousness], it's experiential. You either get or don't get it". According to her, intellectual concepts inhibit "getting it". Thinkers and academics therefore are the least likely to "get it." As Kevin Garvey explains, "To avoid the intelligence trap Ferguson suggests we do Est or Lifespring Training. These are, according to her, centering techniques which allow the real self to emerge."⁴ In a similar manner, we find Gestalt therapist Fritz Perls, another Esalen resident, actually preaching that rational thought had to be conquered if one was to liberate one's inner feelings, his slogan being "lose your mind and come to your senses". As opposed to such experiential approaches, all the great traditions insist on man's need to use the faculty of discrimination, namely the Intellect. The irrational is always to be eschewed. Not so with the New Agers. They depend entirely on their inner gut feelings. No fixed dogmas for them; they buy all the superstitions of the era - progress, evolution, anthropocentrism, and a hatred of everything metaphysical.⁵

And this brings us to the cultivation of spirit masters which is very much part of the New Age religion, and to my mind, one of its most frightening aspects. One individual, Mr. Silva, claims that he can teach anyone in forty-eight hours by a process of "mind control" to find his spirit master. Such spirit masters are clearly nothing else than fallen angels or demons, and it is but a matter of common sense that one should never submit one's self to the guidance of such. It will be argued that the whole idea of demons is a Western and Christian one. While Scriptural condemnations abound, it is good to recognize that Eastern religions also share the same point of view. Allow me to quote a pertinent passage from Buddha's Surangama Sutra:

After my Parinirvana, in the last kapla (age) of this world, there will be plenty of these goblin-heretics about, hiding themselves within the very personalities of the saints, to better carry out their deceiving tricks ... In such deceptive ways do they spread their false and destructive heresies.

Evolutionary thinking is pervasive throughout all these characteristics. As Marian Ferguson states in her Aquarian Conspiracy, "An evolution of consciousness [is] as significant as any step in the long chain of our biological evolution. Not only is mankind evolving towards a higher state of consciousness, not only is this evolutionary process linked to reincarnation, but in line with Teilhardian thinking, this higher state is itself constantly evolving."

SOME BACKGROUND TO THE NEW AGE RELIGION

The New Age religion is far from something new. It has been around since the Fall of man. Sin and evil can change their style, but never their nature. All the great religious traditions warn against this type of religion which is fundamentally anti-intellectual and an outgrowth of the bland acceptance of modern psychology. However, it is of some use to consider the more prominent recent historical background.

It was in 1875 that Helena Petrovna Blavatsky founded the Theosophical Society. Strongly influenced by the evolutionary thinking of that era, the Theosophists also believed in the existence of "masters" who were either "spirit beings" or fortunate men who were more highly "evolved" than the common herd. Madame Blavatsky was in "telepathic communication" with

these beings and served as a "fulcrum" for the masters from 1867 until her death in 1891.

Theosophists were, from the Start, against all orthodox forms of religion, especially Christianity which represented their own embryonic roots. They attacked it both from without and attempted to destroy it from within. Very early on they established a branch of their organization known as Esoteric or Hermetic Christianity, but the membership refused to even allow this. As one of their brochures stated with regard to the purpose of their organization: *to oppose the materialism of science and every form of dogmatic theology, especially the Christian, which the Chiefs of the Society (the spirit masters) regard as particularly pernicious; to make known among Western nations the long-suppressed facts about Oriental religious philosophies, their ethics, chronology, esotericism, symbolism (as interpreted by the spirit masters and theosophists); to counteract, as far as possible, the efforts of missionaries to delude the so-called Heathen and Pagans as to the real origin and dogmas of Christianity and the practical effects of the latter upon public and private character in so-called Christian countries.*

In another statement they claimed:

Esoteric Philosophy reconciles all nations ... It proves the necessity of a Divine Absolute Principle in Nature ... Esoteric Philosophy has never rejected God in Nature ... It only refuses to accept any of the Gods of monotheistic religions ... a blasphemous and sorry Caricature of the ever unknowable.

The leaders of the Theosophical Society believed they were under the supervision and leadership of "Adepts" and "initiates" belonging to a branch of "The Great 'White Brotherhood'". They moved to India in 1875 and were told by their spirit guides to keep their teachings secret for 100 years, until about 1975. In India Blavatsky was joined by an English clergyman named Leadbetter who was under the guidance of "Master KH (Koot Hoomi)" and by Colonel Olcott. Interestingly, Leadbetter was the first person who recommended changing the Latin Mass in order to make it an ecumenically acceptable ritual. Olcott propagated a heretical form of Hinayana Buddhism which has had devastating effects on the Sri Lankans, as this form of Buddhism was introduced into their educational curricula. As for Blavatsky, and especially her understudy Annie Besant, they concentrated on creating a new brand of Hinduism. It is these forms of Hinduism and Buddhism that have frequently been brought back to the West.

After Helena Blavatsky's death the organization fell under the direction of Annie Besant who made an abortive attempt to bring forth the antichrist in the person of Krishnamurti who they meticulously prepared for the role. However Krishnamurti, under the influence of his Hindu father, dissolved the Order of the Star in 1929 and abandoned the movement. Annie Besant remains an important influence in modern India as she was influential in founding Benares Hindu University and various heterodox Hindu movements such as the Aryo and Brahma Samaj. What few of her Indian admirers are aware of is that she was, according to Rene Guenon (*Le Theosophisme*), well paid by British Intelligence which wished to see the strength of orthodox Hinduism undermined and destroyed. As a result of Krishnamurti's defection, the Masters became angry with Annie Besant and passed the torch to a certain Alice Ann Baily, a beautiful young woman born to position in England who eventually married an Episcopalian clergyman in America. She was a prolific writer and organized the Arcane school, the New Group of World Servers, Triangles, World Good Will, and a host of other early New Age groups. She also established the Lucifer Publishing House which incidentally publishes the Aurobindo material - later changed for obvious reason to the Lucis Publishing House.

1962 was another landmark year, for this was when the Scottish community of Findhorn was established by Peter and Eileen Caddy, who meticulously followed the Baily writings and were under the influence of their own spirit guides. They were joined by David Spangler who was said to have the "Christ energies," and who became their spiritual advisor. He of course received

frequent transmissions from his many spirit guides. In 1973 Spangler left for this country to establish the Lorian Association in North America. Since then they and their associates have infiltrated almost every major organization and Church in the Western world. It is of interest to look at Baily's instructions about the orthodox religions of the world. Initially New Agers are to argue for religious liberty in their public releases. Only later will they insist on the new mandatory world religion that their books call for, a religion completely breaking with the concept of Jesus Christ and God as the Father. Those who do not go along with this are to be eliminated by means of violence - called by her "a cleansing action.". We are clearly on the way to point Omega and the reign of the antichrist.

A NOTE ON CHANNELING AND SPIRIT GUIDES

It would be useful to conclude this essay with a discussion of channeling and the methodology by means of which one gets one's personal spirit guide. My source is a small paperback written by Cathryn Ridall, Ph.D., who for years worked within the establishment as a counselor, social worker and administrator, but who has for the past seven years worked as a "psychic counselor". She defines channeling as *"the ability to connect with other beings and others levels of consciousness and to express their reality through our body. A channel acts as an intermediary between our physical world and the unseen dimensions of the universe."*

Her spirit guide, named Diya, told her when she asked him who he was that she should believe in angels. He didn't say he was an angel - though demons are indeed fallen angels. Dr. Rydell concluded that it really didn't matter where the information came from as long as the experience was valuable to her. He expanded her view of conscious life, explaining that *"we were all part of an evolutionary chain; that love is the glue of the universe, the force which holds together all form, even molecules; and that the primary function of spirit guides was to help us see the God in ourselves, to know our own multidimensional nature, to reflect our own inner nature to us and help us reach our own unique expression."*

In order to get a spirit guide one has to go into a trance. There are different levels of trance: light trance channeling where one remains conscious, medium trance channeling where the medium becomes barely aware of the world around him, and deep trance channeling where the person must have total trust and give up all control since the channeler becomes completely unconscious.

Dr. Rydell summarizes for us the essentials of spirit guide teaching based on her own and others' receptions. They include:

- 1) Consciousness in the universe continually evolves, moving towards higher levels of compassion and unconditional love.
- 2) Many different kinds of life are conscious and involved in the process of evolution. Beings who have developed beyond us, and parts of ourselves that are more conscious than our personalities, can guide human beings in their evolution.
- 3) The earth is currently at a critical point in its development. Between now and the year 2011 we will witness a major shift in values, lifestyles, and spiritual orientation as we move into greater spiritual maturity.
- 4) To reach this stage of greater maturity, the earth will need to undergo a major purification of existing values and social organization. Major changes in the earth itself such as earthquakes and volcanic activity may accompany these changes.
- 5) Many guides have now made themselves available to help us through these changes and enter a new age of harmony and world peace. New energies of a higher frequency are currently pouring into our world. However, as these energies interact with us, they may cause minor disruptions in our patterns of behavior.
- 6) The human being is one part of a multi-dimensional soul or godself. We are much, much more

than we think we are.

7) We create our own experience on all levels of reality. There are no victims. If we create a difficult situation for ourselves, we do so in order to learn certain experiential lessons.

8) Matter follows thought. Our physical reality is created and shaped by our beliefs. To change our physical reality, we first need to look at our beliefs about what we want to change.

9) Although our individual expression demonstrates much diversity, we are all ultimately one.

In these 9 teachings we find summarized and brought to their logical conclusion, all the errors of the modern world and the exact antithesis of what all the great religions teach. If one takes the evidence seriously, one can see that perhaps there is more than myth to the predicted reign of the antichrist.

A Note on Yoga (Taken from B.K.S. Iyengar's *Light on Yoga*, Shoken, NY)

The word Yoga is derived from the Sanskrit root *yuj* meaning to bind, attach and yoke, to direct and concentrate one's attention on, to use and apply. It also means union or communion. It is the true union of our will with the will of God. "*It thus means,*" says Mahadev Desai in his introduction to the *Gita according to Gandhi*, "*the yoking of all the powers of body, mind and soul to God; it means the disciplining of the intellect, the mind, the emotions, the will; it means a poise of the soul which enables one to look at life in all its aspects evenly.*"

Yoga is one of the six orthodox systems of Indian philosophy... In Indian thought, everything is permeated by the Supreme Universal Spirit (Paramatma or God) of which the individual human spirit (*jivatma*) is a part. The system of yoga is so called because it teaches the means by which the *jivatma* can be united to, or be in communion with, Paramatma, and so secure liberation (*moksha*).

Patanjali's eight means or stages of yoga are:

1) *Yama* (universal moral commandments);

2) *Niyama* (self purification by discipline);

3) *Asana* (posture);

4) *Pranayama* (breathing);

5) *Pratyahara* (withdrawal and emancipation of the mind from the dominion of the senses and exterior objects);

6) *Dharana* (concentration);

7) *Dhyana* (meditation or concentration) a

8) *Samadhi*.

Again Yoga is often considered as something that occurs in three states: *dharana* (consideration), *dhyana* (contemplation) and *samadhi* (synthesis) corresponding to the three stages of the spiritual life of western contemplatives, namely Purgation, Illumination and Union.



FOOTNOTES

[1](#) Originally given as a talk before the Department of Religion at South Carolina State University, and published in *Sophia* in honor of Fritjof Schuon.

[2](#) It is true that many Hindus believe in a vague kind of reincarnation. However, there is no mention of reincarnation as such in the Vedas and the criteria for Hindu orthodoxy requires a Vedic source.

[3](#) A concept suggested to him by his spirit guide named Philomen. The term uncon, scious is inappropriate and it would be more precise to speak of the subconscious, for the realm is in fact nothing other than the ensemble of the inferior extensions of the consciousness. Guenon discusses this in his "Tradition and the Unconscious".in *Fundamental Symbols of Sacred Science*, translated by Alvin Moore, Jr., Quinta Essentia (Englaand) 1995 - (French: *Symboles fondamentaux de la Science sacree*, Gallimard: Paris, 1962).

[4](#) Kevin Garvey, *An Analysis of Delta Force's Conference*

[5](#) As a general principle, rationalism, having rejected all that is above reason (namely intellection), and having found that isolated reason can lead nowhere, must turn to what is below reason. Hence it is that existentialism, personalism and a whole host of "inferior" philosophies have arisen in the footsteps of the rationalistic philosophies of the so-called "enlightenment". Ted Peters, *The Cosmic Self*, Harper: San Francisco, 1991. William Schutz, another Esalen teacher and developer of "open encounter" psychotechniques, reformulated Rene Decarres' famous axiom, "I think, therefore I am" to read: "I feel, therefore I am."