

AN INTRODUCTION TO HINDU INDIA'S CONTEMPLATIVE PSYCHOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE ON MOTIVATION, SELF, AND DEVELOPMENT

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Increasingly, psychologists are finding the contemplative spiritual traditions of Asia to be sources of interesting scientific hypotheses and potentially useful clinical and educational practices (e.g., Coward, 2002; Davidson, Ricard & Lutz, 2004; Gaskins, 1999; Goleman, 2003; Nisbett, Peng, Choi & Norenzayan, 2001; Roeser, Peck & Nasir, 2005). Consistent with this developing area of psychological inquiry, the purpose of this chapter is to present ideas concerning human motivation, self, and development that are found amidst India's vast spiritual-philosophical traditions collectively referred to as *Hinduism*. The chapter has three aims: (a) to expose readers to a non-Western, contemplative spiritual view of motivation, self, and development; (b) to discuss correspondences between such a view and certain related concepts in psychology; and (c) to highlight implications of Hindu ideas on motivation, self, and development for the psychological study of human happiness and the practice of education. No effort is made, nor in many cases could be made, to anchor the ideas presented here in scientifically validated facts. Rather, I

highlight conceptual correspondences between the ideas of Ancient Hindu India and modern psychology with the aim of stimulating scientific inquiry in the future.

BACKGROUND

Defining Hinduism and Yoga

The term *Hinduism* is applied to a diverse array of spiritual-philosophical systems developed over at least the last three to four thousand years (Raju, 1995). There is no single system of thought or set of religious practices denoted by the term *Hinduism* however, and truly speaking, no single religious tradition with that name (Feuerstein, 2000). Some attribute the origins of the term *Hinduism* to the Ancient Persians who mispronounced the word *Sindhu*, the Sanskrit name of the River Indus, as *Hindu* (Raju, 1995). The Persians were therefore said to attribute the name *Hinduism* to the religion of those living across the Indus River from them in what is modern day Pakistan. Several thousand years ago, this area was the cradle of the Indus-Saraswati civilization from which the traditions now collectively called *Hinduism* are thought to have originated (Feuerstein, 2000).

Similarly, *Yoga* is sometimes used as a comprehensive term to denote the diversity of spiritual-philosophic ideas and practices that India has evolved over the millennia to assist human beings in their spiritual development (Feuerstein, 2003). There is no single system in Indian tradition called *yoga* either, however. Rather, *yoga* is a generic term meaning *spiritual path* or literally “*yoke*” or “*to yoke together*”(Feuerstein, 2003). As such, it refers to any number of spiritual methods and wisdom teachings that assist

individuals in *yoking* their individual consciousness with the transcendental Reality, or what is variously called Brahman, Tao, Godhead, Dharmakaya, Allah, and so on across the religious traditions of the world (Feuerstein, 2003; Smith, 1992). In sum, despite the fact that Indian spirituality and philosophy are commonly referred to as *Hinduism* or *Yoga*, these terms mask a diversity of traditions, evolved over the past several thousand years, that defy any single condensation that explicates their meaning wholly (Hamilton, 2001).

The Contemplative Spiritual Psychology of India

Although diversity of thought characterizes the spiritual-philosophic traditions of India, there nonetheless exists throughout these various traditions an implicit but commonly understood contemplative psychological theory that consists of certain basic motifs (Chaudhuri, 1992; Coward, 2002; Feuerstein, 2000; Kuppaswamy, 2001; Radhakrishnan, 1988; Raju, 1995; Smith, 1994). These motifs include descriptions of a multilevel personality characterized by different psychological faculties, the hypothesis of *karma* (mental impressions associated with previous thoughts, words, deeds), and a developmental cycle called *samsara* (an endless cycle of birth and death), a perspective on life goals and stages, and the conjecture that human beings have the potential to realize profound wisdom, inner bliss, and peace of mind. It is aspects of this common contemplative psychological theory that I describe in this chapter.

CHARACTERIZING RELIGION AND PHILOSOPHY IN INDIA

*All knowledge begins and ends with wonder; but the first wonder is the child of ignorance;
the second wonder is the parent of adoration.*

Coleridge

Religion as Philosophy in Practice

Religion and philosophy have traditionally been defined and practiced in India in ways that differ from their commonplace definitions and practice in the Western world since the Enlightenment (Hamilton, 2001). In contrast to the West where religion and philosophy are separate domains, religion and its concern for salvation and philosophy with its twin concerns for epistemology (e.g., the nature of knowing) and metaphysics (e.g., the nature of reality), commingle in India in ways that prescribe a *way of life* (*dharma*). One can conceive of *Hinduism* as consisting of a diversity of practical spiritual-philosophical systems. These systems are all designed to assist individuals in attaining the means of their own salvation by prescribing particular physical, emotional-devotional, intellectual, social-moral and contemplative (meditational) spiritual practices. These practices gradually lead individuals to (a) attain insight into the essential nature of self and reality (*darshana*)¹ and thereby (b) realize an unending happiness that is their essential nature (*anubhava*; Radhakrishnan, 1988). Whether or not such systems constitute philosophy proper as understood in the West has been an on-going debate among Western scholars (e.g., Hamilton, 2001; Zimmer, 1951).

¹ Sanskrit terms that refer to the concepts being described in the text are placed in parentheses and *italicized*. These terms are presented in the standard scholarly transliteration style.

Religion as Education

Education is the manifestation of the perfection already in human beings.

Swami Vivekananda

Historically, religion in India was seen not only as a way of life but also as a process of formal and informal spiritual education (Mookerji, 2003; Raju, 1995; Scharfé, 2002). According to Mookerji (2003), ancient Brahmanical and Buddhist educational institutions took as a point of departure the fact that “Life includes Death and the two form the whole truth,” thus, the “one aim in life is to solve the problem of death by achieving a knowledge of the whole truth of which Life and Death are parts and phases” (p xxii). The resultant aims of these formal institutions were to educate young people about this whole truth by teaching them philosophy and practices that enabled them to transcend suffering, attain peace, and serve others selflessly. The first aim involved *chitta-vritti-nirodha* –“the inhibition of those activities of the mind by which it gets connected with the world of matter and objects” (Mookerji, 2003, p. xxii). The second aim involved developing ways of knowing other than reason and use of the senses, specifically the development of concentration and intuition (Bhajananda, 2004). The third aim resulted from the first two.

Religion as an *informal* form of spiritual education in which one comes to *see* or *realize* new insights into the nature of self and reality through various spiritual practices also represents a widespread cultural view of religion in India (Vivekananda, undated). This view of religion is reflected in the fact that Indian spiritual-philosophic systems are often referred to as *darshanas* (“to view or see”) that were originally developed by spiritual adepts called *rishis* (“seers”). What is to be “seen” by individuals in the process of their own spiritual development, through the eye of intuition (Wilbur, 1998), is the

transcendental reality of self and universe (Huxley, 1970). Through the development of concentration, the faculty of intuition is said to be disclosed (i.e., opened) and access to transcendental truths is said to be possible (Ranganathananda, 1988).

The notion of religion as a process of education has supported the longstanding view in India (if not always its realization in educational practice—Scharf, 2002) that the pursuit of spiritual knowledge through the eye of spirit (i.e., intuition) and the pursuit of scientific knowledge through the eyes of reason (i.e., intellect) and the body (i.e., the senses) are complementary (Goleman, 2003; Ranganathananda, 1988; Wilbur, 1998). Both pursuits are seen as having their roots in the human capacity for awe and wonder. Furthermore, both are seen, in the best case scenario, as involving a critical and sincere pursuit of truth and the application of the knowledge and power so gained to the alleviation of human suffering (Ranganathananda, 1988).

The Primary Aim of India's Diverse Spiritual-Philosophical Traditions

Religion is the manifestation of the divinity already in human beings.

Swami Vivekananda

Whether conceived of as a way of life or a process of education, the primary aim of almost all Hindu traditions is to show the way to *salvation* or what is referred to in India as *spiritual liberation (moksha)* (Raju, 1995). The word *salvation* has a particular connotation in India –one linked to a particular view of the essential nature of the human being, reality, and their interrelationship. Etymologically, the word *salvation* is related to the Greek verb *sozein* and the Latin verb *salvare* (“to save”). Both of these words are derived from the Indo-European root word $\sqrt{\text{sol}}$ (“whole”). Indian spiritual-philosophic

traditions are fundamentally concerned with assisting human beings to become *whole* (Fields, 2001). According to Hindu philosophy, salvation involves the release from suffering (*dukhha*) and a corresponding attainment of wholeness through the realization of one's true nature—what is called the *Atman* or *Self* (with a capital 'S'). The teachings of *Advaita Vedanta*, a spiritual-philosophical system of thought that has had one of the most enduring impacts on Hindu culture and religion, posit that the essential nature of the human and the entire universe are the same, and both are Spirit (Feuerstein, 2000). According to the monks of the Ramakrishna Order, a modern monastic community responsible for the spread of *Vedanta* to the West in the 20th century:

“...the essence of all beings and all things—from a blade of grass to the Personal God—is Spirit, infinite and eternal, unchanging and indivisible. Vedanta emphasizes that human beings in their true nature are divine Spirit, identical with the inmost being and reality of the universe. There is, in short, but one reality, one being, and, in the words of the Upanishads, “Thou are That” (Vedanta Society, 2002).

Advaita Vedanta constitutes a version of what Huxley (1970) referred to as the *Perennial Philosophy*. The Perennial Philosophy is defined by four essential ideas that Huxley believes form the foundation of every metaphysical tradition. These ideas are: (a) that the phenomenal world of matter and humans' individualized consciousness are but manifestations of a Divine Ground (Brahman, Spirit, Godhead, Tao, Allah, etc.) from which they gain their very existence; (b) that human beings can go beyond inferring the existence of this Divine Ground to experiencing it directly through the faculty of intuition, a faculty that is superior to reasoning in that it immediately unites the knower

and the known; (c) that human beings are of a double-nature, with a phenomenal ego and a spark of Divinity at their core; and (d) that the realization of one's core (divine) nature through spiritual practice is the highest purpose of life. These four ideas form the foundation of the non-dualistic² philosophy called *Advaita Vedanta* that is at the heart of much Hindu thought. They also form the basic outline of the contemplative spiritual psychology that runs through most Hindu traditions.

The idea that *Atman is Brahman* (essential nature of the human is the transcendental reality) and that the realization of this inner Divinity and its use for the good of the world are highest goals of human life may seem to many psychologists like a throw-back to pre-Enlightenment times when the values spheres of science, religion, and art were not clearly differentiated (Wilbur, 1998). That is, such ideas may be an anathema to psychologists who see the emancipation of their science from theology as extremely positive. However, when one looks at what India does *psychologically* with this notion of *Atman is Brahman*, one finds a rich and sophisticated set of ideas bearing on important psychological questions, including: What constitutes the personality? What kinds of motives do human beings pursue and why? What are the stages of human development? What is the nature of happiness and suffering and more importantly, how can human beings attain a lasting happiness and freedom from suffering? Thus, almost 35 centuries before the science of psychology turned from a focus on the pathological to the positive dimensions of human experience (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000), India had already developed sophisticated ideas about human personality, purpose and happiness.

² Non-dualistic simply means that in essence, spirit and matter, human and divinity, are ultimately, in reality, *one* even though from the psychological vantage point of everyday normal consciousness it *appears* that we have a phenomenal ego that is separate from conceptions of Divinity within *or* without.

After a brief description of the different historical periods in which these ideas were developed, I present aspects of Hinduism's contemplative spiritual psychology.

In sum, salvation, as the primary aim of Hindu traditions, can be conceived of as a way of life and a process of spiritual education that leads a seeker to become *whole* by merging their individual consciousness (*Atman*) with the transcendental reality (*Brahman*) thereby realizing the essential unity between Self, others, universe, and Spirit (Muktananda, 1980; Smith, 1994).³ Although the vast majority of individuals will not concern themselves with attaining salvation in any given lifetime, the goal of spiritual liberation (*moksha*) constitutes what can be considered the highest religious ideal in *Hinduism* (Raju, 1995). This view of human salvation first appears in the philosophic texts called the *Upanishads* (BCE 1500-500) and constitutes an enduring theme that is carried forward in almost all succeeding ages of Hinduism (Eliade, 1978; Smith, 1994).

A Brief History of India's Spiritual-Philosophical Traditions

Indian spiritual-philosophic traditions can be described in terms of eight different ages, dating back to the Indus-Saraswati or Harappan civilization (Eliade, 1978; Feuerstein, 2000; Raju, 1995). In the first period, the Vedic Age (4000-2000 BCE), the *Samhitas* (hymns) were developed. These hymns were primarily concerned with the worship of nature in order to maintain the cosmic order and were four in number: *Rig*, *Atharva*,

³ This view is somewhat different from the way the term *salvation* is used in many contemporary Christian communities in which a fall/redemption theology is prominent (Fox, 1983). In such communities, salvation is seen as something that is granted by a specific savior, Jesus Christ, who redeems individuals from their *fallen, sinful natures*. Although there are interesting and important commonalities between Hindu and Christian thought on the nature of salvation, especially at a contemplative level of analysis, this accent on *salvation from a sinful nature* is not one of them (see Fox, 1983; Pagels, 1979; Prabhavananda, 1985).

Yajur, and *Sama Vedas*. The second period, the Brahmanical Age (1500-500 BCE) is associated with ritual texts called the *Brahmanas*. These texts interpreted the *Samhitas* and addressed how Brahman priests should carry out sacrificial rituals in order to maintain the cosmic order. The psychological concepts that I discuss from these periods involve a conception of the personality and the goals and stages of life.

The third period, the Upanishadic Age (1500 to 500 BCE) was a major period in the development of India's *inward-looking* contemplative psychological ideas and practices. During this age, the *Aranyakas* ("forest treatises") and *Upanishads* ("to sit close to one's teacher") were composed. Collectively known as *Vedanta* ("Vedas end"), these texts represent a psychological interpretation of the *Samhitas* and were overtly critical of the ritualistic religion of *Brahmanism*, particularly the notion that the performance of rituals could lead to spiritual liberation (Hundersmarck, 1995). According to Raju (1995), the teachings of *Vedanta* arose because after a time "the people seem to have realized the meaninglessness of the ritual and became reflective" (p. 211). *Jnana and Raja yoga* were developed in this period – spiritual disciplines that utilize reason and the development of intuition to attain salvation, respectively. The ideas of *Vedanta*, systematized during a later period (see below), constitute the most well known school of Indian philosophy. Thus, *Vedantic* ideas on personality and motivation permeate this chapter.

During the fourth period, the Epic Age (500-200 BCE), the Hindu scriptures called the *Mahabharata* (Great Story of the Bharats) and its sub-epic the *Bhagavad Gita* (Song of the Lord) were composed. This was a time when *karma yoga* was popularized—a path to spiritual liberation through *dharmic* (morally upright) living and the conscious consecration of everyday actions to God as an *inner* sacrifice/offering (Feuerstein, 2000).

The fifth period, the Age of Classical Yoga (200 BCE to 800 CE), was marked by two key events. The first was the composition of Patanjali's *Yoga Sutras*, an influential but controversial work positing a fundamental dualism between Spirit and Matter. This work addressed itself to the problem of how to awaken the slumbering transcendental Self (*Purusha*) that was seen as trapped within the unconscious world of matter (*Prakriti*) (Feuerstein, 2000). The second major event was the systematization of *Advaita Vedanta*, described above, by the philosopher Shankara (Gupta, 1995).

The sixth age is called the Tantric Period (800-1200 CE). *Tantra* means to *extend* or *expand*. Tantric teachings focus primarily on (a) the feminine energy that is said to create the human being and the whole universe (called *Kundalini Shakti*) and (b) the relationship of this energy to the body, motivation and personality, and salvation (Feuerstein, 2003; Goleman, 1988; Muktananda, 1979; 1980a; Saraswati, 1996). *Kundalini yoga* describes the body/personality as being constituted by seven centers of consciousness (*chakras*) and prescribes how human beings can expand their consciousness and attain salvation by (a) awakening the *kundalini shakti* energy that lies in a contracted state at the base of the spine and (b) raising (extending) it upward through these seven centers of consciousness. This perspective is described in detail below.

Hatha yoga also developed during the Tantric Age. Hatha yoga is a system of physical postures (*asanas*) designed to lead a seeker to spiritual enlightenment by means of perfecting the body. Hatha yoga is very popular in the West today and is often mistaken as what yoga *is* in its entirety. This is an incorrect understanding, however, as hatha yoga is only one discipline among many leading to the true aim of all *yogas*—the realization of the transcendental reality (*Atman*; Feuerstein, 2003). The postures of hatha

yoga are said to accomplish this aim by: (a) purifying the body and strengthening it for sitting in meditation for longer and longer periods; (b) regulating the breath in various ways and thereby stilling the mind; and (c) training the awareness to attend to a single object for extended periods of time (e.g., the physical poses) thereby disclosing the faculty of intuition by which one *sees* the transcendental reality within.

The seventh period, the Sectarial Age (1300-1700 BCE), was a period of reform within Hinduism that swept across all of India and involved the worship of Lord Shiva (i.e., the Shaivite community) and Lord Vishnu (i.e., the Vaishnavite community). Reforms at this time were associated with *Bhakti yoga*—a spiritual discipline in which intense love of God and ritual devotional practices such as chanting God’s name, constant remembrance of the Lord, and service to others as an offering to God and Guru are the means of salvation. *Bhakti yoga* was popularized during this age through the rendering of spiritual teachings, traditionally accessible only to Sanskrit-literate Brahmins, into vernacular languages—often in the form of songs and poems (Feldhaus, 1983).

The eighth period, the Modern Age, begins with British rule in India (circa 1700 CE) and continues to the present. During the late 19th and early 20th centuries, Hinduism underwent a renaissance that was heralded by important spiritual figures such as Ramakrishna and Vivekananda, Aurobindo, Gandhi and others. These figures helped to export Hindu teachings to the West, eventuating in a broad range of global consequences (Merton, 1991; Weightman, 1991). These consequences included the advancement of the study of comparative religion and mythology (Smith, 1958; 1994; Zimmer, 1951), the development of transpersonal psychology (Tart, 1992), the spread of the practices of meditation and hatha yoga to tens of millions of people worldwide (Feuerstein, 2003;

Weightman, 1991), and the translation and proliferation of Indian spiritual texts that make possible a chapter such as this. In the next section, I describe aspects of the contemplative spiritual psychology that has been a rather constant undercurrent in Hinduism throughout most of these eight ages.

CONTEMPLATIVE PSYCHOLOGY

Contemplative psychology is a domain of theory and knowledge derived from the collective psychological insights, ways of knowing, and methods of personal experimentation and inquiry that are embedded within the world's great contemplative spiritual traditions. Such traditions include Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism, Sikhism, Sufism and mystical branches of Judaism and Christianity (de Wit, 1991). The goal of all contemplative psychologies is to assist practitioners of such traditions in attaining spiritual insight into self and reality, and in using such insights for the benefit of all.

Conceptually, contemplative psychologies are concerned with first-person images of self, phenomenological states, and stages of development characteristic of individuals who practice a particular spiritual path. These psychologies take as a point of departure an explicitly spiritual view of the human being and reality and are intimately concerned with issues of human suffering and salvation (de Wit, 1991). Methodologically, contemplative psychologies are derived from the insights of the practitioners of contemplative spiritual traditions themselves (e.g., Brooks et al., 1997). They rely upon what can be called *first-person methods of experimentation and inquiry* (e.g., meditation) that disclose forms of subjective experiential evidence (e.g., stilling of the mind). Such evidence or insights can be personally verified by a community of individuals who

practice the same methods of experimentation (Wilbur, 1998). The methods of inquiry and evidentiary warrants of contemplative psychology are different from, but complementary with, the methods and warrants of *third-person* empirical branches of psychology (Wilbur, 1998). This can be seen, for example, in the contemporary the study of the effects of meditation on health and well-being (Benson, 1983; Davidson et al., 2004; Goleman, 2003; Murphy & Donovan, 1999).

Contemplative psychology not only *describes* psychological insights into the nature of human experience and development, but it also *prescribes* the kinds of purposes, views of self and modes of being that are hypothesized to enrich, enliven, and satisfy the deepest longings of the human being (de Wit, 1991). Thus, contemplative psychology is similar to humanistic, existential, and transpersonal psychologies that developed in the middle to latter half of the 20th century. In its outlook and areas of interest, it is also complementary with the tradition of positive psychology that emerged from these traditions at the beginning of the 21st century (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). In the next section, I describe the spiritual view of a human being that forms the core of all contemplative psychologies.

DEFINING HUMAN BEING

The Great Nest of Being

What is a human being? Throughout much of human history, the human being was conceived of as part of a “great chain” or a “great nest” of interpenetrating layers of being—material, mental and spiritual in nature (Smith, 1992). Traditionally, the core or ground of being was seen as Spirit. Wilbur (1998) characterized this view as:

“a rich tapestry of interwoven levels, *reaching from matter to body to mind to soul to spirit*. Each senior level “envelops” or “enfolds” its junior dimensions...and all are ultimately enveloped and enfolded by Spirit, by God, by Goddess, by Tao, by Brahman, by the Absolute itself.” (pp. 6-7).

In this conception, the human being is viewed as the nexus or crossing point between the world of matter and the world of Spirit, being comprised of both (Smith, 1978). In Hindu Indian thought, one version of the Great Nest of Being is found in the *Taittiriya Upanishad* (Swami & Yeats, 1937). In this text, human beings are described as consisting of five coverings or sheaths (*koshas*) that represent different dimensions of consciousness or being (Kuppuswamy, 2001). These layered *koshas* are often likened to an onion (Wilbur, 1993). They include the gross, outer material layer of consciousness in the form of the physical body (*annamayakosha*); the subtle, inner psychological levels of consciousness in the form of the vital-emotional (*pranamayakosha*), mental-rational (*manomayakosha*) and intuitive-awareness (*vijnanamayakosha*) bodies; and the causal, spiritual ground of Being that is described to be of the formless nature of pure consciousness and bliss (*anandamayakosha*).

Similar conceptions of the human being are found in Judeo-Christian-Muslim and Buddhist traditions (Wilbur, 1993). For instance, Christian tradition sometimes describes human beings in terms of a physical body (e.g., animal nature), a heart (e.g., emotional nature), a mind (e.g., uniquely human nature characterized by reason, language and imagination), and a soul (e.g., spark of Divinity, often associated with will; Issler & Habermas, 1994). Contemplative Christian perspectives such as Meister Eckhart’s add

another dimension that transcends and includes all of these—that of the Godhead as the ultimate ground of being (Fox, 1983).

The view of the human as enfolded within a Great Nest of Being was abandoned as the science of psychology developed in the West during the post-Enlightenment period (Smith, 1992; Wilbur, 1998). This resulted in what de Wit (1991) calls a *profane view of the human being* in psychology, one in which the material level of the body-brain, and the psychological level associated with sensation-perception, emotion and cognition became definitional of a human being (e.g., Damasio, 2001). Nonetheless, research on what Weiner (1992) metaphorically called “animal-like” (e.g., physiological drives, emotions) and “God-like” motivational processes (e.g., attributions, beliefs, goals); as well as research on *self-regulation* or *conation*—those aspects of the human being historically associated with the spiritual level of *soul* (see below) and studied today in relation to notions of the I-self, agency, awareness, attention, and meta-cognition (Boekaerts, Pintrich & Zeidner, 2000; Derryberry, 2002; Harter, 1999; Peck, 2004; Roeser, Peck & Nasir, 2005; Ryan & Deci, 2000; Snow, Corno, & Jackson, 1996) – still echo this now-abandoned notion of the Great Nest of Being.

The Notion of Hierarchy in the Great Nest of Being

The Great Nest of Being describes a hierarchy in which each level of being is said to be transcended by and included within its senior levels. Wilbur (1998) describes this notion of “transcend and include” in a more elaborated version of the Great Nest:

“... the vital animal body *includes* matter in its makeup, but it also *adds* sensations, feelings, and emotion, which are not found in rocks. While the human mind *includes* bodily emotions in its makeup, it also *adds* higher cognitive faculties, such as reason and logic, which are not found in plants or other animals. And while the soul includes *mind* in its makeup, it also *adds* even higher cognitions and affects, such as archetypal illumination and vision, not found in the rational mind” (pp. 8-9).

A basic premise of contemplative psychological traditions is that most human beings do not develop faculties higher than reason and logic (if these, Pearce, 2003) and tend to misidentify themselves with their physical body, vital-body (e.g., sense desires and emotions) and mind (e.g., thoughts, goals and roles; de Wit, 1991). By (mis)identifying Self with these levels of being, suffering is said to result because the realization of Spirit as one’s (and everyone’s) true nature and as the true source of happiness is not attained. Spiritual development, from this perspective, involves a struggle to extricate one’s awareness from identification with levels of being that constitute the profane view of self (body, sensation-perceptions, emotions, thoughts), and to gradually (re)identify oneself with the spiritual level of being variously described as Spirit, Tao, Brahman, Buddha nature, etc. This developmental process releases one from suffering, heralds salvation and eventuates in a life totally devoted to serving others selflessly.

PERSONALITY AND MOTIVATION IN HINDU INDIA’S CONTEMPLATIVE PSYCHOLOGY

Personality in the Rig Veda

A simple contemplative psychological view of personality in Hindu Indian thought is given in the *Rig Veda* and again in the *Mundaka Upanishad* (Kuppuswamy, 2001). It is presented as a story of two birds, each symbolizing a different aspect of the personality. One bird reflects individual consciousness associated with ego or the personal self, and the other symbolizes pure consciousness associated with Spirit or the impersonal Self.

“Two birds knit with bonds of friendship perch on the self-same tree. One stares about, one pecks at the sweet fruit. The personal self, weary of pecking here and there, sinks into dejection; but when he [sic] understands through meditation that the other—the impersonal Self—is indeed Spirit, dejection disappears (Swami & Yeats, 1937; pp. 54-55).

Psychologically, one can understand this story as describing the personal self or ego as involved in and attached to the field of action. It chases after the sweet fruits of bodily, emotional, cognitive and social desires. The Upanishads teach that when, due to spiritual ignorance, individuals identify themselves completely with this aspect of self and its attachments, desires, and actions, they forget that there is anything more to their personalities. They rise with the transient fulfillment of ego desires, and fall with transient worries about, and actual frustrations of, such desires (Kuppuswamy, 2001). It is one’s psychological attachment to the pleasurable and aversion to the painful as the ultimate source of happiness that is said to cause suffering. This is so because all manner

of sense pleasures, worldly statuses and material prosperity, and even contributions to community are said to be ephemeral and limited: pleasures quickly fade; statuses are often unstable due to their scarcity, exclusivity, or competitive nature; material prosperity cannot be taken to the grave; and despite all our best efforts, communities change ever so slowly in history (Smith, 1958). Individuals attached to (identified with) their ego-selves and related desires and fears are said to experience no lasting peace of mind or freedom from anxiety. As the *Chandogya Upanishad* puts it: “Humans get happiness from the unlimited, from the limited, none. Find the Unlimited” (Swami & Yeats, 1937; p. 105).

It is the impersonal aspect of self called *Atman* that is described as unlimited and unchanging and therefore the source of true happiness. This impersonal Self is described as the witness in human consciousness that is aware of, but not attached to, (ego-) desires, worries, and outcomes of action. This aspect of consciousness is said to exist in all of the four states of consciousness described in the *Upanishads*, including the waking, dream, deep sleep, and unlimited bliss (*turiya*) states. It is said to be non-reducible (*badha*), stable and ever awake (even as we sleep this “witness” is awake such that it may report on our dreams in the morning; Gupta, 1995). Identification of one’s awareness with this aspect of personality leads to what is called “witness consciousness.” This is a state in which individuals experience themselves as *in the world*, functioning to pursue goals and perform necessary actions, but not *of the world* in that their inner state is not dependent upon outer contingencies and outcomes. This state is associated with great equanimity, effortless compassionate action, and bliss (Dass, 1999; Muktananda, 1980).

A more elaborated version of personality that reflects the Great Nest of Being is given in the *Katha Upanishad* (Kuppuswamy, 2001; Zimmer, 1978). In this treatise, personality is described as a chariot that is being pulled by five horses over particular grounds and roads. The chariot holds a divine being and is driven by a charioteer who holds the reins of the five horses. The chariot represents the physical body (*sthula sarira*), the Lord of the chariot is the supreme Self or indwelling Spirit (*Atman*), the charioteer is the discriminating awareness (*buddhi*), the reins represent the ego-mind (*ahamkara or manas*), the five horses represent the organs of sense-perception and action (*indriyas*), and the roads and fields (*gocara*) represent the objects of sense-perception (*visaya*). A summary of this view is given in Table 1.

Insert Table 1 about here.

The view of personality in the *Katha Upanishad* both *describes* the normative condition of the personality and *prescribes* how personality should be developed to attain salvation. First, it describes how the organs of sense perception and action (the horses), when unrestrained by ego-mind (the reins) due to a lack of discriminating awareness (the charioteer), tend to race after the external objects of sense desire (fields and roads) pulling the body along (the chariot) in an instinctive, non-conscious and potentially destructive manner. Psychologically, this is a description of the state of mental restlessness and ceaseless activity, arising from an uncontrolled and unsteady mind and its extension through the senses, which afflicts most individuals on a daily basis. It

suggests that without volitional control over the mind, ego desires and worries will tend to motivate an unending stream of behaviors aimed at the attainment of desired (pleasurable) objects and experiences and the avoidance of aversive (painful) ones. Although necessary for daily living, such pursuits, when unregulated and when completely identified with as the source of one's happiness, result in suffering. According to Hindu thinking, thoughts, words, and deeds to which we are attached in a psychological (ego) sense and that are aimed at limited fulfillments (e.g., sense pleasure, power, wealth, etc.) create moral consequences called *karma* that leave impressions in the mind (*samskaras*). These impressions are described as binding the individual to desired/feared aspects of the external world and are likened to the creation of mental habits. Such habits produce similar ego-desires in the future in an unending cycle. In this way, ego-attached and egocentric goals and behaviors produce habits (*karmic samskaras*) that necessitate birth after birth (the wheel of *samsara* or reincarnation) insofar as the individual must be reborn to experience their meritorious and retributive fruits of their previous actions aimed at securing happiness from without (Nirvedananda, 1944/2001). The result is that the "impure, self-willed, unsteady person misses the goal and is born again and again" (Swami & Yeats, 1937, p. 32). The goal referred to here is realization of *Atman* as *Brahman* or salvation (*moksha*).

On the other hand, the view of personality presented in the *Katha Upanishad* also prescribes how individuals can develop personality and attain salvation. Specifically, the model suggests that the body (chariot) and organs of sensation and action (the horses) can be brought under the control of ego-mind (the reins) when a discriminating awareness (the charioteer) is applied to one's thoughts, words, and deeds. Psychologically, this is a

prescription of how personality should be volitionally self-regulated if salvation is to be attained (Kuppuswamy, 2001). The means of regulating the personality towards this end includes the individual's volitional use of the law of karma to create positive, selfless mental habits, and gradually, the expansion of awareness to *witness consciousness* in which non-attachment to goals and their outcomes is realized (Nirvedananda, 1944/2001). As the sage Shankara explained, actions in this *relatively* (but not *absolutely*) *real world* have real consequences up until the moment of enlightenment. Morally good thoughts, words, and deeds are said to reveal (lead one to *dis-cover*) the divine inner nature of universe, others, and Self (*Atman* or Lord of the Chariot); whereas morally bad actions tend to obscure or cover up this implicit, ever-present divinity (Gupta, 1995). Thus, the exercise of moral restraint in the pursuit of material desires and the gradual choice of selfless rather than selfish aims and actions are the first prescriptions in the development of personality towards the goal of salvation (Ajaya, 1978). In these ways, the individual gradually transforms the iron chains of karma (associated with ego-attached, ego-centric and often non-reflective actions that engender mixed moral consequences and therefore tend to obscure *Atman*) into the golden chains of karma (that hasten the dis-covering of *Atman*). As the non-conscious pursuit of desires and selfishness are brought under control and the mind becomes still, individuals' capacity to discern what is *Atman* (i.e., the Self) from what is *Anatman* (i.e., the non-Self) is said to increase, as is their ability to concentrate the mind inwardly in salvation-related goals (see below). By practicing meditation, a process in which one's awareness is choicefully focused on a single object for extended periods of time (rather than automatically extended outward through the mind and sense toward desired/feared objects), the

individual discloses his or her intuitive capacity. This is associated with a gradual expansion of awareness from identification with ego-as-actor to witness consciousness in which one is aware of one's ego-self as actor (Muktananda, 1980). The onset of witness consciousness is said to gradually create non-attachment to ego, desires and the fruits of action, and to facilitate the ability of one's awareness to penetrate deeper into one's being toward the *Atman* (e.g., the Lord of the Chariot). The *Katha Upanishad* states that the one who restrains his or her mind and senses in these ways “goes to that goal from which he [*sic*] never returns...he reaches the end of the journey, and finds there all-pervading Spirit” (Swami & Yeats, 1937; p. 32). This re-identification of awareness with the *Atman* is the supreme goal of life according to the *Upanishads*. It is salvation and bliss, and releases one from the chains of *karma* and the wheel of *samsara* (Smith, 1958).

Description of Levels, Dimensions, and Functions of Personality in the Upanishads

The model of personality in the *Katha Upanishad* describes three basic levels of being: spirit, psyche, and matter. Table 1 presents an integrative summary of these levels and their associated personality dimensions and functions (Chaudhuri, 1992; Kuppuswamy, 2001; Feuerstein, 2000; 2003; Raju, 1995; Wilbur, 1993; Zimmer, 1951). The spiritual level of being is associated with the *Atman* (Spirit). The mental level of being is associated with *buddhi* (awareness), *ahamkara* (ego), *manas* (mind), and *indriyas* (organs of sensation and action). The physical level of being is associated with the *sthula sarira* (material body). This view of personality shares certain commonalities with contemporary psychological perspectives on self and motivation that are discussed below.

Atman or Self

The most encompassing and subtle dimension of personality symbolized by the Lord of the Chariot (*Atman*). All “lower” dimensions of personality are said to be evolutes of *Atman* as pure consciousness or creative intelligence (*kundalini shakti*). The *Atman* is said to be the ultimate subject and cannot, therefore, be made an object of knowledge or described. Thus, the *Brihadaranyaka Upanishad* describes it negatively as “not this, not that (*neti neti*)” (Zimmer, 1951). The *Kena Upanishad* says “That which one cannot think with the mind, but that by which they say the mind is made to think, know that alone to be *Brahman*” (Swami & Yeats, 1937). Elsewhere in the Upanishads the *Atman* is likened to a self-luminous “inner light” akin to the light of ten million suns that does not burn (Eliade, 1978). The *Atman* is also said to be the source of motivational energy as well as the ultimate motivational aim that is implicitly being behind all other aims individuals pursue in the external world. This true aim is sometimes described in Hinduism as the attainment of an infinite sense of wholeness, peace, and perfection (Muktananda, 1980) or being, knowledge, and joy (Smith, 1958). Why is the realization of *Atman* seen as the ultimate motivational aim?

In Hindu philosophy, this world is called the land of action (*karmabhumi*) and our life on earth is seen as the burning ground of our *karma*. We are said to be born to experience and exhaust the meritorious and retributive moral fruits of our past actions, and find the way to salvation that liberates us from the chains of *karma* and the wheel of *samsara* (Nirvedananda, 2000). If the way to salvation is not found, our life on earth is said to be one in which we search for a lasting happiness outside of ourselves and thereby generate

more karma in the form of attachments and the moral consequences of our actions. The resultant karma from this “unexamined life” is said to produce subsequent births.

On the other hand, the realization of Atman is said to fulfill all of the goals, and grant all of the happiness that we seek in our pursuits in the external world. Why? According to Indian philosophic tradition of *Kashmir Shaivism* (Kripananda, 1995), the process of our actual incarnation is one in which Spirit as the universal energy called *kundalini shakti* (or *Atman/Brahman* in Vedantic philosophy) condescends into matter and creates our form as a human being so that we may exhaust our karma and attain salvation. From the perspective of the individual who has been incarnated, this condescension of Spirit into matter is said to involve a contraction of Spirits’ inherent and unlimited powers (Kripananda, 1995). This contraction is described in terms of five veils placed over Spirit that obscure its true nature (*maya*; Gupta, 1995). These veils (*kanchukas*) function to: (a) limit Spirit’s omnipotence, so there are things we can do and those we cannot do; (b) limit Spirit’s omniscience, so there are things we know and things we do not know; (c) limit Spirit’s perfection and completeness so that we are constantly making an effort to feel perfect and whole again; (d) limit Spirit’s eternal nature so that we experience ourselves within a limited field of time and fear aging and death, and (e) limit Spirit’s omnipresence so that we experience ourselves as located in a particular space (Kripananda, 1995). In sum, these veils contract the powers of *kundalini*. In so doing, they create a sense of limitation and lack of wholeness in the unenlightened individual.

This sense of limitation and lack of wholeness is said to unconsciously motivate human beings, through their daily activities in the world, to re-establish the sense of expansiveness, wholeness, and perfection that was lost in the creative contraction of

incarnation (Muktananda, 1980). The pursuit of various personal-material and social-moral goals all provide individuals with relatively genuine, but never absolutely genuine, experiences of wholeness and fulfillment insofar as these pursuits represent imperfect approximations of what human beings truly want (Ajaya, 1977). According to Hindu thinking, the kind of happiness that we truly want can only be attained by *dis-covering* the original expansiveness, wholeness, and perfection of our essential nature that has become contracted and concealed. When individuals awaken, unfold, and expand the *kundalini shakti* energy through various means and spiritual practices (see Muktananda, 1979; 1980) they gradually re-establish their identity in this energy's fullness as *Atman*. The expansion of consciousness associated with the unfolded kundalini is said to lead to a cessation of attachments to ego-self as actor, ego-desires and outcomes of actions (Feuerstein, 2000). From the perspective of *witness consciousness* associated with the expanded *kundalini energy*, spontaneous and egoless compassionate action is said to arise (Dass, 1999); and a sense of wholeness, peace, and perfection is (re)attained (Muktananda, 1980).

What is said to be given up in this process of pursuing salvation is not participation in or performance of goal-directed actions in the world per se, but rather one's *ego-attachment* to goals, thoughts, feelings, behaviors, and the outcomes of actions. This is the true meaning of spiritual liberation (moksha) in *Hinduism*. It is an inner and psychological, not necessarily an outer and worldly, process of renunciation (Prabuddhananda, 2004). What is said to be realized in the process of salvation is the experience that is sought through all other forms of human activity. The sage Shankara says that the nature of *Atman* is *Sat-Chit-Ananda* (Dayananda, undated). *Satchitananda*

means that the *Atman* is of the nature of: (a) infinite truth (*sat*) that exists in all places, in all things, at all times; (b) infinite awareness (*chit*) that illumines the existence of all places and all things at all times; and (c) infinite love and bliss (*ananda*). Thus, the realization of the *Atman* is sometimes likened to the direct apprehension of the ultimate values of Truth, Goodness, and Beauty (Bhajananda, 2004), or the experience of infinite being/existence (as all pervasive truth), infinite knowledge/consciousness (as all pervasive awareness) and infinite love/joy (as all pervasive bliss) (Smith, 1958; Vedanta Society, 2000).

The notion of *kundalini shakti* (or *Atman, Self*) as the motivational energy of life whose true nature is that of infinite truth, existence, and bliss suggests an interesting correspondence to the three core needs of self (competence, autonomy, and relatedness) that are hypothesized to be the energy behind *intrinsically* motivated behavior in Self-Determination Theory (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Specifically, the intrinsic need for *competence* corresponds to the exploration and mastery of particular *truths*, the need for *autonomy* corresponds to developing awareness of and freedom with regard to one's *existence*, and the need for *relatedness* corresponds to the experience of *love and bliss*. From a Vedantic perspective, the pursuit of external activities that fulfill these ego (self) needs are intrinsically motivating because such activities disclose psychological experiences and related forms of happiness that are imperfect but close approximations of the nature of our true *Self (sat-chit-ananda)*. This may explain why the fulfillment of these three needs are more vitalizing and energizing than the pursuit of other needs that correspond less to the nature of Self (*Atman*), pursuits such as the accumulation of material wealth, status, or fame (Czikszenmihalyi, 1999; Kasser, 2002).

In sum, according to Hindu teachings, our search for happiness through our daily activities in the external world is forever only *relatively* fulfilling. The wholeness and happiness we seek from such pursuits can only be attained *absolutely* through the rediscovering and unfolding of our inner divine nature. In the *Katha Upanishad*, the aspect of personality represented by the charioteer and described as the discriminating awareness (*buddhi*) is said to be the organ of wisdom that can lead us back to this source of true happiness that forever lies within.

Buddhi or Awareness

After the *Atman*, the next most encompassing and subtle dimension of personality is called the *buddhi*. Whereas the *Atman* is said to be self-luminous, *buddhi* and all of the other personality dimensions at lower levels of being are said to be evolutes of *Atman* that reflect and refract its supreme light. The most parsimonious definition of *buddhi* is the light of awareness (*svayamjyoti*) or the organ of wisdom (Feuerstein, 2003). *Buddhi* is also sometimes called *soul* (Abhedananda, 1946/1992) or *intellect* (Feuerstein, 2000). Functionally, it is associated with a receptive and intuitive intelligence that serves volitional self-regulatory (conative) functions. For instance, the *buddhi* is said to have the capacity to discern (*viveka*) the true (rational discernment), the good (moral discernment) and the beautiful (aesthetic discernment) from their opposites (Abhedananda, 1946/1992; Raju, 1995; Feuerstein, 2000). The *buddhi* is also characterized by the ability to *willfully* direct and sustain attention in ways that allow for the regulation of the mind, the senses, and awareness itself (Goleman, 2003; Kuppaswamy, 2001). In Hindu thinking, these powers make *buddhi* the instrument of salvation because they afford individuals a

capacity to discern what is real (*sat*) from what is unreal (*asat*) and ultimately, what is the transcendental Self (*atman*) from what is the non-Self (*anatman*). Such powers afford a means of stilling the mind so that it can be made a perfect surface that reflects the pure light of *Atman* (Eliade, 1976).

Despite the fact that *buddhi* is closest to Spirit (*Atman*) in the Great Nest of Being, it is nonetheless conceived of as a contraction of Spirit and often likened to a *knot* that must be dissolved before it can transcend itself and merge back with Spirit (Wilbur, 1980). This *knot* of *Spirit* forms the subjective pole of individual consciousness—the “I am” (*aham*). It appears that William James (1890) described this dimension of consciousness in different places as *Pure Ego*, the *pure principle of individual existence*, *Thought*, the *I-self* and *the knower* in consciousness (see Peck, 2004; Roeser et al., 2005). James (1890) wrote that “each of us is animated by a *direct feeling of regard for [our] own pure principle of individual existence*” (p. 318); and called this pure principle the *I-self* or the *knower* of me and world. This *knower* in James’ (1890) work seems to be synonymous with what is called *buddhi* in contemplative Indian psychology.

Ahamkara or Ego

James (1890) distinguished between the subject in consciousness that reflects pure existence (I-self) and the objects of consciousness. In relation to self, these objects reflect what is known about oneself—what James (1890) called the *empirical me-selves* or what others have called *ego*, *identity* or the *representational self* (see Peck, 2004; Roeser et al., 2005). From a contemplative psychological perspective, when awareness (volitionally or automatically) identifies itself with objects that exist at levels lower in the Great Nest of

Being, those such as thoughts, feelings, sensation-perceptions, actions, or the form of the physical body, an objective pole of consciousness — an ego-self—is produced. In Indian contemplative psychology, this ego-self is called *ahamkara*.

The production of the *ahamkara* appears to be described by modern psychological accounts of self-development. Perhaps at or very near birth, infants begin to construct mental schemas and scripts based on their sensory, affective, and motor experience in the context of close relationships with others (Case, 1991; Stern, 2000). This involves a basic subjective awareness of experience (“I”), and an identification with or reification of subjective experience into enduring mental forms (i.e., “me”; Damasio, 1999). The consequent objective pole of consciousness is first reflected in a *perceptual, affect-laden model of self-with-others* (Case, 1991; Damasio, 1999). Later, with the onset of language, the growing child develops a rich repertoire of symbolic beliefs about his or her (me-) self that are imbued with higher-order affects (Harter, 1999). Thus, the objective pole of consciousness now reflects a *conceptual, affect-laden model of self* (Case, 1991). In the language of modern psychology, the objective pole of consciousness consists of an enduring system of mental representations called the me-self that exists in long-term memory and serves automatic motivational and regulatory functions (see Peck, 2004; Roeser et al., 2005).

Manas or Mind

Although ego (*ahamkara*) and mind (*manas*) are discussed separately in different Indian scriptures concerning the personality (see Feuerstein, 2000), it is psychologically and pragmatically useful to consider them collectively as *ego-mind* and to see this aspect of

personality as symbolized by the horses' reins (Kuppuswamy, 2001). Collectively, ego-mind is associated with the psychological functions of memory, habit, cognition, emotion, and sensation-perception.

In the contemplative psychology of India (both Hindu and Buddhist), the ego-mind is conceptualized as having higher and lower levels. The higher ego-mind (called the *alayavijnana* in Buddhism) is most often associated with the assertive faculties of logical analysis and linguistic capacity (Feuerstein, 2003; Hanh, 1990). It serves to integrate information coming through the senses and functions to frame and orchestrate actions based on these inputs. Basic cognitive (e.g., goals and expectancies) and emotional processes that motivate behavior are associated with ego-mind (e.g., Ford, 1992). In the Indian view, such processes do not reflect volitional but rather automatic forms of motivation and regulation that often operate non-consciously (cf: Bargh & Chartrand, 1999). Furthermore, although the higher ego-mind is associated with the power of reason, it is the integration of reason with the *buddhi's* powers of discernment that leads to deeper forms of knowing involving the apprehension of the good, the beautiful, and the true (Ranganathananda, 1988). There is a correspondence here to the difference between *intellectual intelligence* that encompasses reason and worldly knowledge (e.g., cognition), and *emotional intelligence* that encompasses awareness, discernment, and self-knowledge (e.g., cognition + conation, Goleman, 1995).

The lower ego-mind (called the *manovijnana* in Buddhism) operates largely non-consciously and is associated with sensation-perception, emotion, habit and memory (Hanh, 1990). The lower ego-mind automatically directs and energizes behavior toward or away from particular sense-objects that are perceived (i.e., sounds, sights, smells,

tastes, physical contacts). This automatic form of motivation and regulation is similar to the description of the basic emotions and their related action tendencies given in psychology in which particular environmental features activate emotion-behavior scripts that can automatically energize and direct the organism toward life-enhancing benefits or away from life-threatening harms (Lazarus, 1991). The lower ego-mind is also described as a storehouse of individuals' habits (*samskaras*), accumulated from experiences in both previous lifetimes (*karma*) and the current one, in which individuals become identified with (attached to) certain ideas, feelings, and sense-objects. When activated, these impressions are said to unconsciously motivate behaviors in which the aim is either the confirmation / consumption of desired or valued things (ideas, feelings) or the rejection / avoidance of feared or disliked things (ideas, feelings) (Hanh, 1990; Kuppuswamy, 2001). There is a conceptual correspondence between the upper and lower dimensions of ego-mind described in Indian thought and what can be considered the symbolic or rational representational self and the iconic or emotional representational self, respectively (see Case, 1991; Epstein, 1990; Harter, 1999; Roeser et al., 2005).

Indriyas or Sensorimotor Organs

The sense organs of knowing (*jnanendriyanis*) and organs of action (*karmendriyanis*) are ten in number and are said to be among the most powerful *psychological* functions in the life of an individual (Feuerstein, 2000). The five organs of sensation include hearing (effected through the ear); seeing (effected through the eye); smelling (effected through the nose); tasting (effected through the tongue); and touching (effected through the skin; Kuppuswamy, 2001; Zimmer, 1951). In certain individuals, it is said that the subtle,

inward aspect of these sense organs function in ways that transcend their associated bodily organs, as for instance, in the phenomena called extra-sensory perception or *psi* (Bem & Honorton, 1994). Closely linked to these sense organs are the organs of action such as those of speech, grasping (e.g., hands), locomotion (e.g., feet), etc. (Zimmer, 1951). Together, the organs of sensation and action were symbolized by the five horses that run after what is pleasurable and away from what is painful.

Sthula Sarira or Body

The final level of the personality is the material level associated with the physical body. The body is symbolized by the chariot, and like a chariot, is ultimately controlled in its movement by various other forces “higher up” in the Great Nest of Being. According to Shankara in his treatise *Tattva Bodha* (Dayananda, undated), the gross physical body is a product of karma from past births and represents the karmic effects of past good deeds. The attainment of a physical human body is seen as particularly auspicious in the Indian traditions because it houses self-reflective awareness and discrimination (*buddhi*) and thereby, the means of salvation. In addition, similar to other spiritual traditions, the physical body is seen as holy insofar as it houses indwelling Spirit (*Atman*).

The Chariot in Freudian Thought

Freud used a similar metaphor—that of a chariot, charioteer, and three horses to describe his (profane) view of the human personality as consisting of id, ego, and superego (Schultz & Schulz, 1996). Whereas the *Upanishads* posit that the dimensions of

personality are evolutes of Spirit, Freud viewed the ego and super-ego ultimately as evolutes of the basic biological energy of the body. According to Freud (1915/1947), the infant's ego arises from a discrepancy between two sets of experiential conditions. The first was said to involve the ability of the infant to produce actions that reduced uncomfortable stimuli impinging on it from without (e.g., turning away from a bright light). The second was said to involve the infant's initial inability to produce actions that reduce discomforts arising from within itself (e.g., id drives). Freud hypothesized that this discrepancy between agency under the first condition, and a lack of agency under the second, gave rise to the infant's ego-awareness as distinct from but derivative of its id drives. Subsequently, Freud described the development of the super-ego in relation to children's anxiety over id drives (associated with the Oedipal and Elektra complexes) and their identification with the same-sex parent as a means of reducing this anxiety. In these ways, Freud viewed both the ego and super-ego as evolutes of the biological energy of the body.

With respect to the chariot metaphor, the chariot also represented the *body* for Freud. Within it, the charioteer represented the *ego* with its reality orientation (e.g., Freud, 1953). Like a charioteer trying to control the horses that drive the chariot, Freud saw the ego as mediating between the demands of the irrationally selfish id (that operated via the pleasure principle), the irrationally moral super-ego (that operated via socialized anxiety), and the affordances and constraints of reality itself with respect to the satisfaction of id drives. The three horses represented these three inputs to behavior. They were conceived of as often pulling the body in conflicting directions down the fields and roads of instinct gratification. According to Freud, behavior was always a result of the ego's compromises

in meeting id demands, and therefore was always marked by an incomplete gratification of the initial demand. Individuals were never able to travel down the roads they truly wished. A restlessness of mind borne of an unending stream of only partially fulfilled id demands was “as good as it gets” according to Freud. All behavioral pursuits, in this perspective, were only imperfect approximations of one’s true biological urges and therefore produced no lasting sense of fulfillment.

UNCONSCIOUS MOTIVATION

In both the Hindu and Freudian models of personality, the unconscious mind is seen as playing a powerful role in motivating approach and avoidance behavior (Freud, 1915/1986; Kuppuswamy, 2001). Both models describe how non-conscious urges drive cycles of behavior in rather automatic ways with the aim of either reducing cravings (Hinduism) or tension (Freud). A description of unconscious motivational processes in these two perspectives is presented in Figure 1.

Insert Figure 1 about here.

In the Indian view, the lower ego-mind is the source of unconscious motivation in that it houses habits formed from pleasurable and aversive experiences and their moral consequences in this and past lifetimes (Hanh, 1990; Kuppuswamy, 2001). These habits (*karma or samskaras*) are described as ego-attachments (desires, likes) and aversions (fears, hates) to ideas, feelings, and sense-objects. Such habits are said to be activated by bodily needs or external perceptual stimuli and, once activated, give rise to mental

cravings that automatically engage the conscious ego-mind and the organs of sensation and action to pursue something that is desired (attachments) or to avoid something that is disliked (aversions). Such habits are constantly being activated in daily life, producing a restlessness of the mind in the form of cravings and related cycles of activity. Because these habits are implicitly aimed at the attainment of an unlimited satisfaction from objects of the external world that confer only limited satisfaction, the behaviors these tendencies motivate never fully satisfy the initial state of craving. This leads to a self-perpetuating cycle of craving—behavior—craving unless the cycle is cut by the application of a restrained mind (*manas*) and discriminating awareness (*buddhi*).

This description is very similar to the one given by Freud (1915/1947) in relation to drive motivation. Freud posited that the unconscious id was a storehouse of two main biological drives, one for self-gratification (i.e., pleasure) and one for self-preservation (i.e., aggression). He believed that most behavior consisted of a mixture of these two basic drives. Id drives were conceptualized as having five main components: (a) a *source of tension* (usually a part of the body) that gave rise to (b) an *impulse* of a particular kind and intensity. The impulse, in turn, gave rise to (c) a *mental wish* that oriented the individual to (d) behaviorally approach or avoid a particular *object in the environment* that could satisfy the impulse and wish and thereby (e) achieve the *aim* of reducing the tension that began the entire motivational sequence. Because behavior was always a compromise between id demands and the constraints of super-ego and reality, it reduced tension but never in a total or lasting way in Freud's view.

Figure 1 presents both the Karmic and Freudian models of non-conscious motivation in terms of negative feedback loops. An activated craving/wish motivates behaviors that

are aimed at reducing the initial state of craving or tension that started the sequence. This is accomplished through the approach or avoidance of particular objects, experiences, or individuals. The depiction of these motivational cycles as *circular* is meant to convey the point that in both systems, an endless cycle of dissatisfactions associated with external behavioral pursuits is postulated. Furthermore, the ego-mind, despite its capacity for reason, is seen as co-opted into the automatic pursuit of non-conscious (karmic) habits on the one hand (Kuppuswamy, 2001) and id drives on the other (Freud, 1915/1986). This view of ego-functioning shares a conceptual correspondence with contemporary social-personality research on the “unbearable automaticity of being” in which evidence shows that non-conscious processes, albeit processes unlike Freud’s notion of the id, play an important role in the motivation and regulation of everyday behavior (Bargh & Chartrand, 1999).

In summary, Freud saw dissatisfaction as arising from individuals’ inability to ever fully express their biological urges in the context of society. He saw the application of reason in producing “good-enough” drive satisfactions as “as good as it gets” (Schultz & Schultz, 1996). The Hindu model, by contrast, stresses that dissatisfaction arises from individuals’ lack of knowledge of their spiritual nature and their consequent ill-informed habitual pursuits of unlimited happiness from the limited world. The Indian model of personality (see Table 1) views the application of a discriminating awareness (*buddhi*) plus reason (*manas*) as the means of transcending this cycle of craving and dissatisfaction through control of desires, choiceful pursuit of higher life goals, and eventually and perhaps paradoxically, the practice of an inner renunciation of (i.e., a non-attachment to) ego-desires. Nevertheless, like Freud, Indian spiritual adepts viewed the volitional control

of the unconsciously driven ego-mind and the senses as a *struggle* and likened it to walking “a hard path...like the sharp edge of a razor” (Katha Upanishad, I, 3).

HIERARCHIES OF HUMAN MOTIVES

There is a kiss we want with our whole lives, the touch of Spirit on the body.

Rumi

The contemplative psychology of Vedic and Upanishadic thought also includes a hierarchical conception of conscious human motives conceived of in terms of four basic classes of goals. This hierarchy begins by assuming that the most basic goal of all, physical survival, is secured (Raju, 1995; Smith, 1994). The subsequent four classes of goals correspond to the physical, mental, and spiritual levels of the personality, and the physical, psycho-social, and transpersonal dimensions of selfhood associated with these levels, respectively.

The first major class of human goals in Hindu thinking is associated with the *physical self* and involves the pursuit of sensual pleasures of every kind (*kama*), with the most prominent being sexual love. The second major class of human goals is associated with the *psychological self* and involves the pursuit of worldly prosperity in various forms (*artha*), including material wealth, fame and social recognition, and power. The attainment of goals associated with worldly prosperity are viewed as the instrumental means of attaining goals associated with sensual pleasure. Collectively, these two classes of goals are said to address the *material needs* of the human being (Raju, 1995).

Of course, material needs associated with pleasure and prosperity are in principle different from moral concerns associated with participation in community life, and the

psychology of ancient India has always made this basic distinction in relation to human motivation whereas the science of psychology has not (Kagan, 1996). Thus, the third major class of human goals is Hindu thinking is associated with the *social self* and involves ethical conduct and the fulfillment of various social duties (*dharma*) across the life course. These duties include fulfilling one's role as a student (e.g. learning a profession), a householder (e.g., getting married, raising children, honoring ancestors and performing rituals), and a community member (teaching and serving others beyond one's family; Kakar, 1992). This class of goals addresses humans' *moral needs*.

The contemplative psychology of India goes on to suggest the existence of a plane of ultimate spiritual concerns lying beyond those associated with the material and the moral. This fourth class of human goals is associated with the *transpersonal self* and involves the pursuit of the spiritual wisdom, enlightenment, and release from the cycle of reincarnation (*moksha* or salvation). According to Hindu thinking, these represent the highest goals of human life. If attained, they are said to confer a lasting joy, happiness, and contentment on the individual. Although this class of goals is sometimes said to address humans' *spiritual needs*, there is no true need behind these goals insofar as they involve the attainment or realization of what we already are but have "forgotten" (Prabuddhananda, 2002). That is, the goals associated with *moksha* involve a subtractive process that reveals what we already are, rather than an attainment of something that we do not already have. These goals are not about "filling holes" (i.e., lacks or wants), but rather are about rediscovering our inner wholeness (Leifer, 1977).

Although *moksha* is often described as the *ultimate* purpose of human life in Hinduism (e.g., Raju, 1995; Smith, 1958), it is actually is the second highest purpose of

life (Prabuddhananda, 2004). The highest goal is the application of one's spiritual realization in compassionate service to all beings. In Buddhism, this ideal is enshrined in the concept of the enlightened one (*arahat*) who foregoes entry into paradise and turns back to serve all beings (*bodhisattva*). In Hinduism, this ideal is described by the *jiva-mukti* ("liberated soul") who chooses to remain on earth to serve others as the *jiva-bhakta* ("loving-kind servant of God and therefore, of all creation").

The Hindu hierarchy of motives reflects the view that all of these goals are valid, including the pursuit of sense pleasure, insofar as they address the diverse needs of the human being. The hierarchy itself *describes* the relative amounts of life satisfaction and happiness that each goal grants. Therefore, it also *prescribes* which goals an individual *should* pursue if he or she wishes to attain the greatest sense of satisfaction and happiness that life has to offer (Smith, 1958). Specifically, one can and should pursue pleasure and worldly prosperity without guilt or remorse, but these pursuits should be anchored in moral concerns and ethical behavior. Furthermore, one can and should fulfill one's moral duties and social responsibilities, but these duties and responsibilities should always be seen in light of an even greater plane of ultimate spiritual concerns. Looking at this hierarchy in reverse, it suggests that spiritual attainments confer an experience of peace, perfection, and wholeness that *transcends and includes* all of the satisfactions and joys attained through all other pursuits. Inner realization is said to be associated with the experience of inner *delights* far beyond those of the senses, the attainment of spiritual *powers*, and the capacity to fulfill the greatest *duty*—being a loving-kind servant to all (Muktananda, 1980). This viewpoint is expressed in Jesus' saying *Seek ye first the Kingdom of Heaven, and all things shall be added unto you* (Prabhavananda, 1985).

Furthermore, the hierarchy describes how the fulfillment of moral and social duties confer significantly greater degrees of life satisfaction and happiness than the pursuit of wealth, fame and power because it transcends and includes such aims in that true worldly prosperity involves love and respect for and from others (Muktananda, 1972). Such moral concerns, however, do not quite afford the peace, perfection and wholeness that come from spiritual liberation and its application toward the well-being of the entire creation. The attainment of worldly prosperity confers significantly greater degrees of life satisfaction and happiness than the running after of sensual pleasures because it transcends and includes them – for worldly prosperity is but the means for accessing pleasures (Smith, 1994). Such pursuits, however, are not believed to confer as much satisfaction and happiness as the fulfillment of moral and social obligations. Finally, the running after sense pleasures is fine, but the satisfaction and happiness they provide is viewed as smaller in scope than that conferred by the other life goals.

LIFE GOALS AND STAGES OF LIFE

The contemplative psychology of Vedic and Upanishadic literature also prescribes a view of the major stages of life in which each of these four goals should be pursued (Raju, 1995). The stages of life in Hinduism begin at around age 8. The early years of development were traditionally viewed as indicative of one's past karma and, as such, were regulated by one's karma-determined caste membership (Kakar, 2002). Furthermore, chronological age is viewed as different from one's spiritual age, and thus individuals are said to begin life with different levels of spiritual maturity (Smith, 1958).

This level of maturity is said to be reflected in the kinds of life goals one pursues most wholeheartedly in life, as well as in one's caste (Smith, 1958; Kakar, 2002). In late childhood the individual is ritually welcomed into the community (Mookerji, 2003) and the formal stages of life begin. These stages include that of: (a) the student—stretching from puberty through adolescence (*brahmacharya*); (b) the householder—stretching from young to late adulthood (*garhasthya*); (c) the retiree during late adulthood (*vanaprastha*); and (d) the elder-as-renunciant during the twilight of life (*samnyasin*). In the stage of *brahmacharya*, young people are prescribed the goal of learning the *dharma*. This includes the ethical standards of behavior and social obligations that they will abide by and fulfill as adults, as well as the meaning and functions of their caste identities (Kakar, 2002). From this perspective, adolescence is a time of committing oneself to caste, as well as a moral and spiritual life as a precursor to the pursuit of pleasure and prosperity in the next stage (Kakar, 2002). It is during the stage of the householder during early adulthood when one marries and takes up their occupation that the goals of pleasure (*kama*), worldly prosperity (*artha*) and the practice of social responsibility (*dharma*) in relation to family and work become focal (Raju, 1995). In later adulthood, Indian tradition prescribes that one's social responsibilities (*dharma*) expand to include the teaching of others beyond the family in the community. Finally, in old age, the core goal of the individual is seen as the wholehearted pursuit of salvation (*moksha*).

Comparisons between this Hindu view of the human life-course and Erikson's eight psychosocial stages of human development have been made previously (see Erikson, 1969; 1973; 2002; Kakar, 2002). In Table 2, I have re-rendered a chart from Kakar (2002) that describes these two views of the stages of life. I do not discuss this table here

but refer readers to the sources just cited. I note, however, that the concepts of *karma* and *varna* (caste) have profound meta-theoretical implications for a theory of human development, contemplative or traditional, and make a cross-cultural comparison such as the one presented in Table 2 more complex than it may appear. Furthermore, the ancient notion that the goals of life should be pursued successively is not endorsed by most contemporary Indian spiritual teachers. Rather, these teachers prescribe the pursuit of *moksha* throughout the life course in conjunction with all of the others goals of life, and in the context of worldly life and responsibilities as householders (Ajaya, 1976; Muktananda, 1980; Vivekananda, undated).

Insert Table 2 about here.

CENTERS OF CONSCIOUSNESS AND HIERARCHIES OF HUMAN MOTIVES

Within this earthen vessel are bowers and groves, and within it is the Creator:

Within this vessel are the seven oceans and the unnumbered stars...

Kabir says: 'Listen to me, my friend! My beloved Lord is within.'

*Kabir*⁴

Teachings developed during (and before) the Tantric Age provide a framework for drawing together Hindu Indian notions of personality, motives, and salvation. According

⁴ Translation by Radindranath Tagore (2003).

to the teachings of kundalini yoga, there is a universal creative energy called *kundalini shakti* that exists within every human being (Muktananda, 1979). In its limited gross aspect, this energy is said to reside at the base of the spine in the middle of the body where it motivates and regulates everyday thoughts, words, and deeds. In this aspect, the kundalini is *the* motivational energy. When its subtle aspect is awakened and unfolded, *kundalini* is said to greatly expand individuals' consciousness/awareness and to lead to the realization of the Self (*Atman*) and salvation. The unfolding of *kundalini* after its awakening involves a process of gradually raising the energy from the base of the spine to the crown of the head where it is returned to its original power and qualities described earlier. This "ascent" is associated with transformations in individuals' motivational pursuits and associated views of self. According to the adepts of *kundalini yoga*, the awakening and unfolding of *kundalini* can be accomplished in any number of ways (Kripananda, 1995), but the surest way to do this is to find a competent teacher who can assist and guide one in this process (see Muktananda, 1979; Saraswati, 1996).

Universal knowledge of the *kundalini* energy as a force of spiritual upliftment and salvation is suggested by its presence and symbolic depiction in religious traditions and cultures separated by wide spaces of geography and history (Campbell, 1978).

Kripananda (1995) notes:

Almost all religious or spiritual traditions speak of Kundalini, the inner spiritual power, in one form or another. The Japanese call it *ki*, the Chinese *chi*, and in Christianity it is known as the *Holy Spirit*. In Mexico, Kundalini was once worshipped as the serpent-god *Quetzalcoatl*; the Kung people Kalahari desert call this same power *n/um*. (p. 3).

In the West, the knowledge of Kundalini has been transmitted by the esoteric or mystical branches of all of the great religious traditions. The knowledge of Kundalini is clearly present in the mystery religions of ancient Egypt, Greece, and Rome; in the teachings of both the Gnostic and Neoplatonic traditions; in the Kabbalistic tradition of Judaism; and in the testaments of the great Christian mystics. In addition, various secret societies or “brotherhoods”-such as the Rosicrucians, the medieval alchemists, and the Freemasons-emerged to pass on the knowledge of Kundalini (p. 4).

Tantric philosophy teaches that the *kundalini* energy is associated with seven major centers of consciousness (*chakras*) in the human body that fall along a subtle (non-physical) axis running from the crown of the head down along the length of the spinal column to its base. These *chakras* are sometimes described as being related to particular glands and nerve bundles in the body although the chakras themselves are said to be non-physical and invisible (Saraswati, 1996). The function of the *chakras* is described as akin to power transformers which “step down” a high level of energy into more usable forms (Dass, 1999). In this case, the *chakras* “step down” or contract the energy of *kundalini shakti* (*Atman/Brahman*) from its more universal and expansive form to more limited contracted forms ranging from subtle to gross. This stepping down produces the various sheaths (*koshas*) that comprise the human being (*causal-spiritual; subtle-psychological; gross-physical*), the four states of consciousness associated with these sheaths (*turiya; deep sleep and dream; waking*) and the dimensions of personality that operate within these sheaths and states (*awareness; ego-mind and organs of sensation/action; body*),

respectively. The contraction of *kundalini energy* into these sheaths, states and personality dimensions is said to create our very existence and our ability to function in the three-dimensional physical world with the aims of burning up karma and attaining salvation (Dass, 1999; Kripananda, 1995; Muktananda, 1979; Saraswati, 1996).

What is interesting from a motivational perspective is that each of the seven major centers of consciousness which “step down” the universal energy are associated with particular kinds of regulatory functions and motivational aims reflective of the *self* as a spiritual; a social and psychological; and a physical being, respectively. This process of stepping down the kundalini energy was discussed earlier in terms of the veiling of kundalini and its powers and properties. The more the *kundalini energy* is stepped down by the chakras, the more gross (material) and contracted (ego-centered) its motivational aims become. Figure 2 provides a visual-verbal depiction of these seven centers and their associated life goals.

Insert Figure 2 about here.

Beginning at the lowest level, the first center is named *muladhara chakra* (*mula* = root, *dhara* = support) and is located in the pelvic floor at the base of the spine. This center is said to be associated with the coccygeal plexus of nerves; the regulation of excretion and reproduction (Saraswati, 1996); and the motivational aims of physical safety and survival (Campbell, 1986; Goleman, 1988). Healthy motivation in relation to this center is often described in terms of appropriate concerns for physical health and

safety, whereas unhealthy motivation is described in terms of excessive concerns with health, fears of death, aggressiveness, and possessiveness (Goleman, 1988).

The second center, called *svadhisthana chakra* (“own abode”), is located at the lowest point of the spinal column and is said to be associated with the sacral plexus of nerves. This center is described in relation to the regulation of the non-conscious mind (Saraswati, 1996) and the motivational aims of sexual love and sense pleasure (Campbell, 1986; Goleman, 1988; Zimmer, 1951). These aims reflect the class of goals described earlier as *kama* (pleasure) that are discussed in the well-known text by Vatsyayana called the *Kamasutra* (Smith, 1994). Healthy motivation in relation to this center is often described in terms of the enjoyment of sex and sense pleasures in moderation, whereas unhealthy motivation is described in terms of excessive hedonism and addictions to sense pleasures of all kinds (e.g., lust, greed, substances). Together, these two lower centers are said to reflect the physical level of human personality insofar as they reflect basic concerns with safety, survival, and sexual reproduction that often operate *non-consciously* (Freud, 1915/1986).

The third center, called *manipura chakra* (“shining jewel”), is located at the navel center and is said to be associated with the solar plexus. This center is described in relation to assimilation of the external world through digestion and accommodation to it through temperature regulation (Saraswati, 1996). The motivational aims of the navel center include wealth, fame and social recognition, and power and personal control (Campbell, 1986; Goleman, 1988). These aims reflect the classes of goals described earlier as *artha* (world prosperity and success). Healthy motivation in relation to this center is described in terms of social adjustment and success, whereas unhealthy

motivation is associated with excessive strivings for power and social recognition, addictions to symbolic incentives like money and fame, excessive perfectionism or egotism, and manipulation or control of others for one's own ends (Goleman, 1988). The material and mental aims of the first three centers collectively are referred to as the outgoing path (*pravritti marga*), the *Path of Desire* (Smith, 1994) or the *Path of Activity* (Feuerstein, 2000). This is the path of ego-centered development and goals (Wilbur, 1980). In Hinduism, it is said that the aims of the Path of Desire occupy individuals for countless lifetimes before they are karmically ready to pursue the next set of goals associated with spiritual wisdom and salvation in a wholehearted manner (Smith, 1958).

The fourth center, called *anahata chakra* ("unstruck sound"), is located at the level of the heart and represents the crossing point from concerns that are self-centered (i.e., concerned with *me and mine*) to those that are other-centered (i.e., concerned with *thee and thine*). This center is said to represent that place where the *knot of Spirit (ahamkara)* that produces ego is beginning to be dissolved and transcended and the individual is moving into a plane of life concerns that are interpersonal and transpersonal in nature (Dave, 1977; see Figure 2). In Indian symbolism, the heart center is depicted by two triangles that are juxtaposed in the form of a star (akin to the Jewish star or the Seal of Solomon). This star symbolizes the qualitative difference between ego-self and motives associated with the three lower centers of consciousness (symbolized by the down-turned triangle) and Self and motives associated with the three higher centers (symbolized by the up-turned triangle). Campbell (1986) likens the raising of conscious awareness to the heart center and thereby to the virtues, universal love, and service to others in one's life as that which is described in religion and mythology as being "born again" insofar as the

individual dies to their lower (animal/selfish) nature and is reborn in their higher (spiritual/selfless) nature.

The fourth center is said to be associated with the cardiac plexus and the regulation of respiration, circulation and other vital life functions (Pearce, 2002; Saraswati, 1996) The motivational aims of the heart center are associated with social duty, ethical behavior, selfless love, and selfless service to others (Campbell, 1986; Goleman, 1988; Smith, 1994). These aims reflect the third class of goals described earlier as *dharma* (virtue). The level of the heart heralds the beginning of the in-going path (*nivritti marga*) referred to as the *Path of Renunciation* (Smith, 1994) or the *Path of Cessation* (Feuerstein, 2000). This is the path of ego transcendence that leads to salvation (Wilbur, 1980).

The final three *chakras* are associated with interpersonal and transpersonal aims that redirect the outflowing of consciousness *inward* by raising the kundalini energy *upward* toward one's true nature with the aim of spiritual liberation (*moksha*) and selfless service to others (*seva*). As such, these chakras reflect a motivated inner renunciation of attachment to goals that many associate with *the* good life if not *a* good life today (Czikszenmihalyi, 1999). Thus, it is typically difficult to comprehend their value from the perspective of exoteric (outward looking) cultures that do not respect inner transcendental states and the realization of spiritual wisdom as rational or viable goals (Goleman, 1993; Leifer, 1977; Zimmer, 1951). In Hindu thought, however, these three centers reflect that class of goals described earlier as *moksha* (liberation), and these are seen as the highest purposes of life. Almost all of the texts and teachings associated with the terms *Hinduism* and *Yoga* from the *Upanishadic* period forward are designed to assist individuals in realizing the goals associated with *moksha* (Raju, 1995).

The fifth center, called *visuddha chakra* (“pure”), is said to be associated with the cervical plexus of nerves and the regulation of articulation (Saraswati, 1996). The motivational aim of the throat center is the purification of the five senses (Campbell, 1986), which, collectively, are sometimes associated with speech insofar as humans express what they sense and perceive (Feuerstein, 2003, p. 244). The purification of the senses is accomplished by engaging the manifold practices collectively known as yoga (“to yoke”); and is a preparation for the realization of *Atman*. The practices of yoga that serve to purify the senses begin with the observance of various moral constraints (*yama*) that serve to harmonize individuals’ social relationships. This produces an atmosphere in the individuals’ life (and consciousness) that is conducive to further spiritual practice and growth. These observances all revolve around the concept of non-violence and the non-harming (*ahimsa*) of others through deeds, words, or thoughts (Feuerstein, 2003). The observance of *yamas* means refraining from violence, stealing, lying, gossiping, and even thinking ill of others in any way. A second stage of practices designed to clarify the senses are aimed at deepening the individual’s orientation toward the ultimate reality. This involves the cultivation of moral purity (*niyama*) through body cleansing practices; the practice of non-attachment to outcomes; ascetic practices such as fasting, maintaining silence, and contemplation of self through intense self-study; and the study of the scriptures. Finally, the practice of the physical postures (*asanas*) that strengthen, purify and prepare the body for meditation; the practice of breath control (*pranayama*) that stills and purifies the mind; and the withdrawal of identification with the objects of sense perception (*pratyahara*) through the practice of witness consciousness are all additional means for attaining the motivational end of the purification of the senses.

The sixth center, called *ajna chakra* (“authority”), is located in the center of the forehead between the two eyes and is often called the *third eye* or the *eye of Spirit* (Wilbur, 1999). This center is associated with the endocrine gland, the pre-frontal lobes, and therefore physical and mental control of many aspects of our being (Pearce, 2002; Saraswati, 1996). The motivational aim associated with the *ajna chakra* can be described as the realization of divinity with form (*saguna Brahman*) through one-pointed concentration (Campbell, 1986). This realization of divinity is said to occur in the ideational form most conducive to the seeker’s own spiritual inclinations (*savikalpa samadhi*) and is associated with intense ecstasy and bliss. The major practice necessary to realize this aim is meditation.

All contemplative spiritual traditions, whether of the East or the West, converge on the unavoidable practice of meditation in the realization of higher states of awareness and ultimately enlightenment (Ajaya, 1976; Muktananda, 1980). What is meditation? Ram Dass (1999) describes the first stage of meditation as concentration practice and likens it to the willful and conscious focusing of awareness on a single object for sustained periods of time. As described earlier, the *buddhi* can be conceived of as the *light of awareness*. In its undisciplined state, the *buddhi* tends to focus on this and that, illuminating whatever it shines on (e.g., the objects of awareness). Meditation can be conceived of as a process of extricating the awareness from being caught in the “this and that” (e.g., thoughts, feelings, sensation-perceptions, actions) of normal waking consciousness. This is accomplished by cultivating a conscious focus of awareness on a single thing (called the “primary object of meditation”) rather than allowing the awareness to constantly identify with each passing thought, sensation, feeling or action.

The practice of training one's awareness on a single object for extended periods of time is often accomplished in an introverted manner, as in the practicing of sitting silently with eyes closed and focusing on a particular object of meditation such as the breath.

However, this training can also be done in an extroverted manner (e.g., focusing on a candle flame). Alternatively, the practice of *japa* refers to the silent repetition of a mantra on the tongue of the mind in appropriate situations of daily life. Such situations exist anytime we are awake but are letting our minds wander or are ruminating on particular (often negative) thoughts. *Japa* is a simple meditation practice that takes the natural activity of the mind as its point of departure and focuses its activity on a single, uplifting "primary object of meditation" such as a sacred phrase or word. When engaged in the practices of meditation or *japa*, it is common for the awareness to wander away from its primary object of focus. As the individual notices that their awareness has wandered in this way, he or she is instructed to gently return their focus to the primary object without engaging in any self-judgments concerning lapses in concentration. Slowly, this training of awareness gives it a concentrated quality that begins to disclose deeper levels of being.

According to Ram Dass (1999), the second stage of meditation practice is called *mindfulness*. Mindfulness relies on individuals' capacity to sustain their concentration for at least some period of time. The practice of mindfulness involves focusing awareness not upon a single thing, but gradually upon more and more of everything, including the fact that we are aware. This leads the individual to participate with full consciousness / awareness in every aspect of their lives, including those aspects that were formally denied or suppressed (e.g., the experience of pain among chronic pain patients). This practice of mindfulness is said to involve a simple perceptual shift in which one remains aware of

the fact that one is aware of what one is doing. Ram Dass (1999) likens this to adding another plane of consciousness to our everyday waking consciousness—one that is signified by a meta-awareness of what we are doing. He gives the example of mindful eating. When we are eating, we are enjoying and tasting the food and can be aware of this. The practice of mindfulness adds to this awareness of eating an awareness of being aware of enjoying and tasting the food as we eat. Adding this dimension to our everyday waking experience is called the practice of “witness consciousness” (Muktananda, 1980).

By practicing concentration meditation and mindfulness, individuals are slowly able to extricate their awareness from automatically identifying with and becoming attached to the objects of awareness. These two practices eventually disclose a state of awareness unconditioned by any objects. This perfect state of awareness is none other than the Self (*Atman*), and is said to be characterized by emptiness, peace, clarity, joy and truth. In this state, Ram Dass (1999) says that “a new life pattern emerges in which we don’t identify with this and that of experience. The virtues flower. We are no longer afraid. Peace unlimited comes.” The final goal of liberation is said to be attained in the seventh center.

The seventh center, called *sahasrara* (“thousand petaled lotus”), is located in two different places, the *bindu* at the top back of the head (associated with the optic system) and the crown of the skull (associated with the pituitary gland; Saraswati, 1996). When an individual is able to raise their awakened kundalini energy to and stabilize it within the *sahasrara*, an experience labeled *enlightenment* that is beyond verbal description is said to occur (Kripananda, 1995). Such an experience is said to be ineffable because it involves the dissolution of the subjective and objective poles of consciousness into a sea of brilliant light / sound. It is said to be an experience unity consciousness, of every-thing

and no-thing at the same timeless moment (Muktananda, 1972). Conceptually, it is described in the Indian scriptures as undifferentiated absorption (*nirvikalpa samadhi*) in divinity without form (*nirguna Brahman*). This is the final goal of life and is often symbolized by the depiction of the individual in a beatific state with a halo of light around their head and body. Quite literally, the individual who attains this state is said to become *enlightened*. Although this state does not lend itself to description, the poetic words of realized beings are nonetheless useful here to get a flavor of it. The Hindu poet-saint Tukaram described his realization of the primary aim of all Indian philosophy, the discovery of the nature of the “I” (Raju, 1995), when he wrote:

As I meditated on the Lord, my mind and body were transformed. What can one say about that state? My sense of “I”-ness has become the Lord. As my mind subsided, it became pure Consciousness, and I saw the entire creation as the Lord’s own form... What can I say? There is only one, only one.

(Muktananda, 1983; p. vi).

The Sufi poet-saint Rumi alluded to the alteration of his motivation after experiencing the ineffable primary manifestations of divinity (sound and light) in the *sahasrara* when he wrote:

A fire has risen above my tombstone hat.

I don’t want learning, or dignity,
or respectability.

I want this music and this dawn...

TWO IMPLICATIONS

In this final section, I briefly describe two implications of the contemplative psychological concepts of Hindu India presented in this chapter. The first concerns research on life satisfaction and happiness; the second concerns what we recently called I-self education, education that aims to cultivate aspects of individuals' awareness (Roeser et al., 2005).

Implications for Research on Life Satisfaction and Happiness

The field of positive psychology is actively pursuing research on some of the concepts concerning human motivation and happiness presented in this chapter. For instance, in an article entitled "If we are so rich, why aren't we happy?", Csikszentmihalyi (1999) reviews hypotheses on why gains in economic development and wealth in a country do not seem to produce greater levels of subjective well-being among younger generations compared to their ancestors. The first hypothesis is that growing disparities in wealth between the well-to-do and the rest of the population in these societies make even the relatively affluent members of the middle classes feel "poor" relative to those at the top of the economic ladder. This represents a "keeping up with the Jones'" phenomenon in which individuals make upward rather than downward social comparisons in regard to their monetary wealth, with consequences for their egos. Such comparisons reinforce the ego's habitual sense of lack and limitation. In this case, this sense of lack among relatively well-off individuals is reinforced by comparisons with wealthier individuals who, paradoxically, do not themselves report that their (considerably greater) wealth

makes them any happier (Myers, 2000). A second hypothesis is that a paucity of lifestyles by which individuals can claim a “good life” and a “life of worth” independent of the accumulation of material wealth is a cause of why people growing up in nations that have increased their wealth are not happier than their ancestors. A third hypothesis is that individuals experience “escalating expectations” whereby they habituate quickly to a given level of pleasure, wealth, achievement or fame, and thereby desire ever more. Smith (1994), reflecting on the Hindu view of why materialistic pursuits fail to produce lasting happiness said, and I paraphrase, humans can never get enough of what they really do not want insofar as their wants serve to enslave them and rob them of true inner freedom.

Theoretically, the hypotheses developed in positive psychology regarding why the materialist pursuit of happiness in external conditions does not confer a lasting happiness were presaged by the contemplative psychologies of Hindu India. Although the explanations for why such materialist pursuits do not “pay off” are different in Indian contemplative psychology, they rather complement the hypotheses offered in traditional psychology. The contemplative psychology of Hindu India suggests that wealth doesn’t produce a lasting happiness because: (a) human beings misidentify themselves with their material needs due to spiritual ignorance and in doing so, project the locus of their freedom and happiness outward and away from its true inner source (*Atman*); (b) the *Atman* exists in a contracted state that produces a sense of limitation, lack of wholeness, and unworthiness that human beings attempt to dispel through worldly pursuits such as power, wealth, and fame; (c) material pursuits dissuade the pursuits of other goals up the motivational hierarchy that could bring more happiness (time is limited); and (d) such

pursuits create self-perpetuating cycles of behavior in that the attainment of material objects only provides a partial and transient fulfillment that produces more craving ad infinitum.

These explanations also provide a spiritual description of why so many individuals are prone to various forms of addictions (NIDA, 2004). Such addictions are not just related to alcohol and drug abuse, but also rampant consumerism (and its destruction of the physical environment), obsessions with physical beauty and style, abuses of power, and the amassing of unneeded amounts of wealth (e.g., Kasser, 2002). Similar to positive psychology, India's contemplative psychology focuses attention factors like: (a) ignorance of the true nature of happiness as an inner attitude towards conditions and not conditions themselves; (b) impoverished views of self and concomitant feelings of unworthiness; and (c) impoverished cultural views of the "good life" and the goals that bring it about.

In addition to providing an understanding of what fails to produce happiness, contemplative psychology also provides a complementary set of ideas on why other kinds of experiences researched in traditional psychology do seem to produce lasting satisfaction and happiness. For instance, evidence shows unequivocally that life experiences characterized by flow (Csikszentmihalyi, 1999) or intrinsic motivation (Ryan & Deci, 2000) produce states of relatively deep and lasting satisfaction. From the perspective of Hindu contemplative psychology, these effects are a result of the fact that such experiences provide close approximations of the experience of Self (*Atman*) as sat (truth), chit (awareness), ananda (love-bliss). Specifically, these life experiences involve the realizing or mastering of some kind of truth-in-activity, are associated with clarity of

awareness and felt inner freedom, and often involve intense emotional and social-emotional experiences associated with joy/bliss.

The complementary nature of contemplative and positive psychological insights into what cultivates lasting happiness be useful in informing the training of educational, health, and mental health professionals. Many of those who become teachers, nurses, physical therapists, social workers, and counselors do so for spiritual (and not usually financial) reasons. These individuals often see their work as a spiritual calling or as a means of serving their conception of Divinity. Much of the work individuals in these fields do concerns the creation of social and physical environments that aim to promote learning, health and healing in their clients. Thus, there may be times when a judicious and open-minded dialogue that explores the spiritual dimensions of this work is helpful in the cultivation of motivation and professional identity development among these individuals. Specifically, those who educate and train these professionals can initiate dialogues on how the creation of competence-enhancing/truth-revealing; autonomy-supportive/awareness-expanding, and socially supportive/loving-kind environments (in non-sectarian ways) is good for both the psychological and spiritual health and development of students or clients. Drawing together insights from contemplative and traditional psychology may be useful for tapping into the very motivations that bring individuals into these fields and assisting them in seeing their work in a clear and non-sectarian spiritual light.

In the end, it is the *practices* prescribed by Indian philosophic-spiritual traditions that have the most to offer individuals in their pursuit of happiness rather than the metaphysical ideas that characterize these traditions. As millions of human beings already

know through their own experience, one does not have to believe in God or Spirit or anything at all to realize the health and psychological benefits of *hatha yoga* and meditation. These practices disclose their own truths and stress-reduction benefits to the practitioners who take them up. Thus, they need no spiritual embellishments at all to produce beneficial outcomes for practitioners. In the future, more attention needs to be given to the non-metaphysical dimensions and practices embedded in Hindu and Yoga traditions that can inform the scientific work in positive psychology in a manner similar to the ways that Buddhist traditions are doing now (Goleman, 2003).

Implications for I-Self Education

Recently, we drew attention to the basic and applied scientific aims of discovering more about the regulatory functions of the I-self and applying such discoveries to the creation of new forms of (I-self) education aimed at developing aspects of students' awareness (Roeser et al., 2005). For instance, over 100 years ago, William James (1890) noted that the educability of the regulatory capacities of the I-self would be significant when he wrote:

the faculty of voluntarily bringing back a wandering attention, over and over again, is the very root of judgment, character, and will.... An education which should improve this faculty would be *the education par excellence*. But it is easier to define this ideal than to give practical directions for bringing it about. (p. 424).

The traditions of India and their instantiation in classical Brahmanical and Buddhist modes of education have traditionally concerned themselves with the development of concentrated (sustained) attention as a central education aim (Bhajananda, 2004; Mookerji, 2003). Thus, one wonders if the contemplative traditions of India may have something to offer educators with respect to the development of students' powers of concentration, mindfulness, and intuition (e.g., Gaskins, 2001). Modern medicine and neuroscience have begun to document how contemplative-educational practices that train attention-awareness such as meditation can have positive influences on individuals' psychological well-being and self-regulatory capacity (Benson, 1983; Davidson, Ricard, & Lutz, 2004; Goleman, 2003). Furthermore, studies are also beginning to examine how attentional-training can enhance concentration and cognitive performance among children with attention-deficit disorder (see Posner & Rothbart, 2000).

The ways in which ancient theory and modern research on the I-self can be applied in schools on a wider scale remains an open but interesting question. Can educators cultivate aspects of young people's I-selves (*buddhis*) and thereby enhance their concentration, well-being, and intuitive capacity? Practices such as the martial arts, various forms of *hatha yoga* (e.g., body postures), enlightened use of memorization, and meditation are the traditional means of cultivating I-self potentials. Some schools in the United States already are already beginning to experiment with these practices and research should address the efficacy and effectiveness of such efforts in the coming years. Over 15 centuries of educational practice in India suggest the possibility of cultivating concentration, well-being, and intuition in young people, but the use and effectiveness of

practices aimed at these ends awaits both practical innovations and their scientific validation in modern public school settings.

CONCLUSION

The purpose of this chapter was to describe several ideas concerning human motivation, self, and development that are found amidst India's vast spiritual-philosophical traditions collectively referred to as *Hinduism*. A description of Hinduism, its eight ages of development, and its primary aim of assisting individuals to attain salvation was presented. This was followed by a description of contemplative psychology (de Wit, 1991) and its spiritual view of the human being that is captured by the historical concept of the Great Chain of Being. I discussed how contemplative psychologies both describe and prescribe aspects of human personality, purpose and development. I then presented several aspects of the contemplative psychology that runs through the different ages of Hinduism. These aspects included models of personality, perspectives on non-conscious and conscious forms of motivation, and a view of the stages and associated goals of life. I ended the chapter with a very brief set of implications for the study of human happiness and the practice of education. The ideas presented here also have relevance for research on ego-attached vs. non-attached forms of motivation, mindful learning, intuition and wisdom. As the contemplative traditions of Asia are increasingly seen by psychologists as sources of interesting scientific hypotheses and related-clinical and educational practices, motivational psychologists may wish to further explore what the contemplative psychology of Hindu India has to offer in these regards.

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Table 1. Levels of Personality and Associated Self Dimensions and Functions in Upanishadic Thought

LEVELS OF PERSONALITY	SANSKRIT TERMS	DIMENSIONS OF SELFHOOD	PSYCHOLOGICAL FUNCTIONS
<i>SPIRIT</i>			
	Purusha / Brahman / Kundalini		
Pure awareness	Atman	Impersonal Self	
<i>Veils of ignorance</i>			
	Maya / Kanchukas		
Individual awareness			
<i>PSYCHE</i>	Buddhi	Subjective self (I)	Conation
{ Ego	Ahamkara	Objective self (me)	Cognition Language Memory
{ Mind	Manas		
{ Sub-conscious mind	Samskaras	Physical self	Habit Emotion Sensation-perception
{ Organs of senses	Jnanendriyas		
{ Organs of action Body	Karmendriyas Sthula sarira		Behavior
<i>MATTER</i>			
	Prakriti		

Table 2. Stages of Life and Life Goals / Virtues in Hinduism and Eriksonian Theory

ERIKSONIAN THEORY OF LIFE STAGES		HINDU THEORY OF LIFE STAGES AND GOALS	
<i>LIFE STAGE</i>	<i>TASK and VIRTUE</i>	<i>LIFE STAGE</i>	<i>LIFE GOAL</i>
1. Infancy	Trust vs. Mistrust	Hope	0. Karmic history and caste
2. Early Childhood	Autonomy vs. Shame and doubt	Will Power	
3. Play Age	Initiative vs. Guilt	Purposefulness	
4. School Age	Competence vs. Inferiority	Competence	
5. Adolescence	Identity vs. Identity Confusion	Fidelity	Caste identity
6. Young Adulthood	Intimacy vs. Isolation	Love	Practice of <i>Dharma</i> : <i>Love and care</i> Pleasure (<i>kama</i>) Prosperity (<i>artha</i>)
7. Adulthood	Generativity vs. Stagnation	Care	Teaching of <i>Dharma</i> : <i>Extended care</i>
8. Old Age	Integrity vs. Despair	Wisdom	Salvation (moksha)

Adapted from Kakar (2002).

Figure 1. Freudian and Karmic views of non-conscious motivation

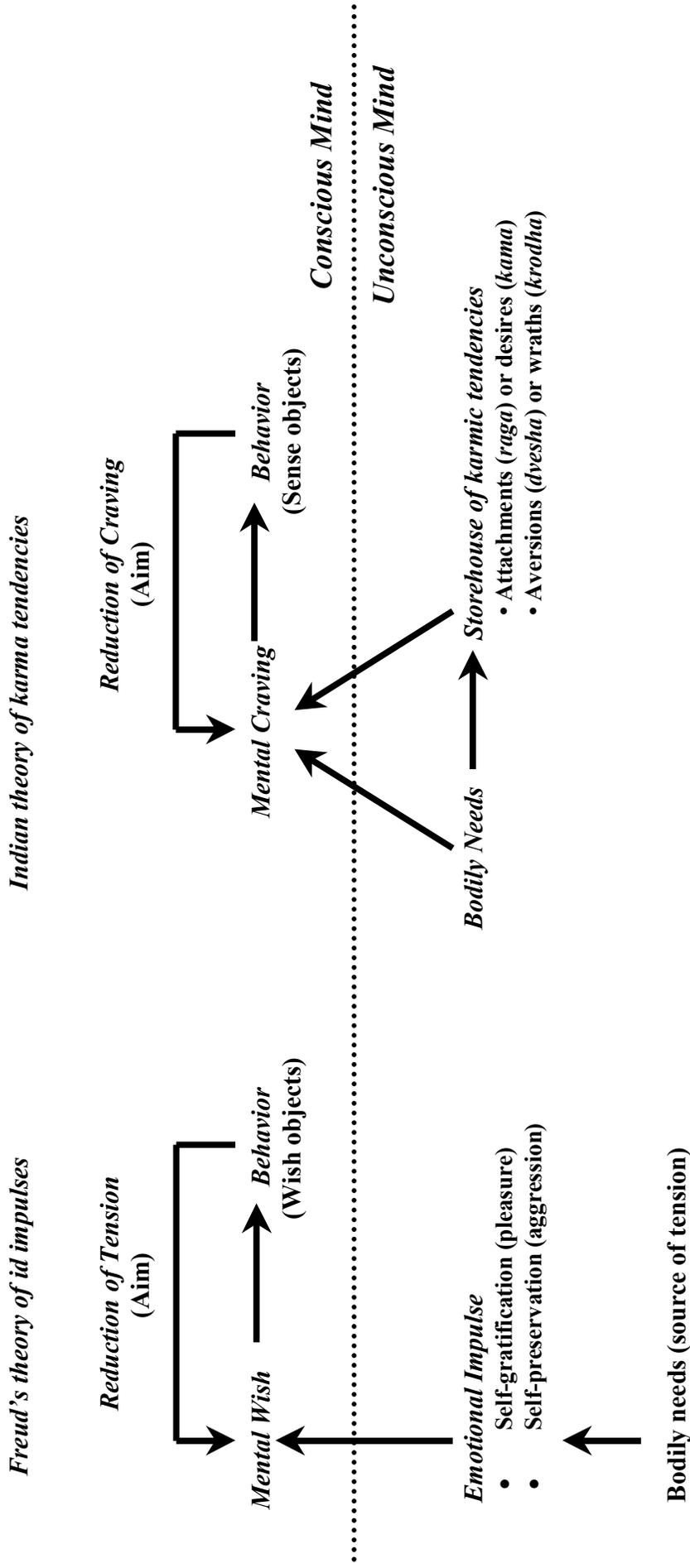


Figure 2. Association Between the Goals of Life and the Centers of Consciousness in the Body

The in-going path of renunciation

- (7) **Sahasrara chakra**
- (6) **Ajna chakra**
- (5) **Visuddha chakra**

Love and service **Anahata chakra**

Anahata chakra
(*ahankara or ego*)

Social duty and ethics

- (3) **Manipura chakra** *Worldly prosperity*
- (2) **Svadhishthana chakra** *Pleasure*
- (1) **Muladhara chakra** *Safety and survival*

The out-going path of desire

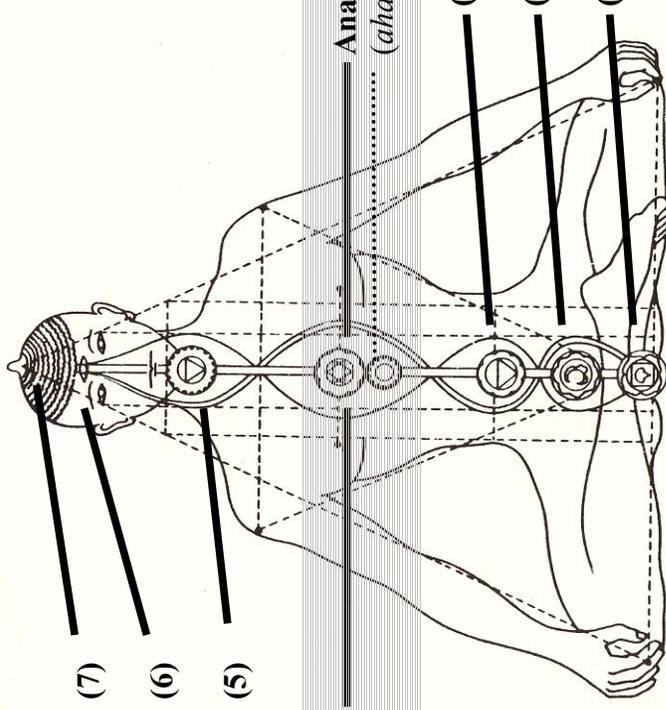


Figure of Yogi from Danielou (1955).