

9 HINDU PSYCHOLOGY

by Swami Akhilananda

¹Swami is no name but means “teacher”. Akhilananda is the name he received when he was admitted to the Ramakrishna Order.

²The author started his activity in the United States in 1926 as the founder of the Vedanta Society and has been a frequent lecturer at various American universities. He calls Brahma-nanda (a disciple of Ramakrishna) his “master”.

³The teachings of the Ramakrishna Order derive mainly from Ramakrishna’s and Viveka-nanda’s interpretations of Vedanta. The Order has also adopted elements from raja, gnana, bhakti, and karma yoga to the extent that those branches of the yoga philosophy have become generally known and practised.

⁴No philosophers are able to solve the problems of reality, which Buddha made clear in 600 B.C.E. But it seems it will still take some time until the so-called intelligentsia has realized this.

⁵In the following, some fictions of the Ramakrishna philosophers are examined. There is probably a need for this as long as they go on spreading them and in so doing counteract the chances of those seeking reality to find the right reality concepts. Critique is not merely legitimate. It is necessary. Fighting lies and hatred is man’s greatest mission in life next to teaching the truth and practising love.

⁶Akhilananda points out that just as one cannot conclude that electricity is identical with the wires and electrical apparatus through which it functions and is manifested, similarly consciousness (the “mind”) cannot be identified with the instruments through which it works or has expression.

⁷Akhilananda frequently uses the term “mind”, which is overly ambiguous and vague. In the works he dictated to Alice A. Bailey, 45-self D.K. used the word “mind” exclusively to denote the mental envelope and mental consciousness.

⁸Akhilandanda rejects Freud’s assumption that man is dominated by two original urges: life urge (sexual urge) and death urge (suicide urge), generalizations from the study of pathological cases. He concurs in Spinoza’s view that the search after abiding happiness, bliss, is the real motive power behind man’s activities.

⁹Western psychologists are ignorant of the results that can be achieved through concentration, meditation, and contemplation. Nor can they explain such phenomena as telepathy and clairvoyance. Akhilananda points out that Patanjali, whom he calls the father of Hindu psychology, discourages all who want to acquire higher kinds of consciousness (“attain to true spirituality”) from using such extraordinary powers.

¹⁰The principal study of the yoga psychologists is concentrated on the superconscious and on the results that can be obtained through different kinds of trance or samadhi. However, since only the esoteric knowledge of the different kinds of consciousness makes it possible to understand the phenomena occurring in the superconscious, Hindu psychology has gone astray in this respect. The yoga psychologists deal with subjectivist speculations, since they cannot ascertain facts in mental, causal, and still higher kinds of matter objectively. They do not reach beyond emotional objective consciousness. The states of samadhi described by the Ramakrishna philosophers are part of the highest emotionality.

¹¹As esoterics explains it, these yogis succeed in activating subjective consciousness in the intelligence and unity centres of the causal envelope, but not in the will centre, which is a condition of becoming a causal self. And only causal selves can acquire mental and causal objective consciousness.

¹²Subjective consciousness in the intelligence centre of the causal envelope affords to the individual the ability to understand such superphysical problems as occupy Indian gnana yogis: the comprehension and mental analysis of superphysical concepts.

¹³Subjective consciousness in the unity centre enables communication between the highest emotionality (48:2) and the lowest essentiality (46:7). In states of ecstasy or trance the individual contacts the essential (46) world and experiences its bliss (the highest state in bhakti yoga), but not, as the samadhi psychologists think, some sort of higher insight beyond the concepts of unity of the highest emotional attraction.

¹⁴In this connection, a few theosophical or quasi-occult fictions should be mentioned. The fact that an individual has immediate understanding of such concepts as rebirth and the law of reaping does not at all imply that he has acquired subjective consciousness in the intelligence centre of the causal envelope or has been an initiate of an esoteric knowledge order. Instead, that understanding derives from the subconscious of the triad and was acquired during an incarnation in India. The two concepts mentioned are axioms contained in the life view of both Hindus and Buddhists.

¹⁵To counteract confusion of ideas and mix-ups between yoga psychology and esoterics, it should be definitively established that the yoga psychologists in superemotional respect are subjectivists, since they are incapable of objective study of the material phenomena accompanying mental, causal, and still higher kinds of consciousness. According to esoterics, only the ascertainment of objective, material facts is complete proof of the agreement of a conception with reality. Mere subjectivity is not sufficient as is indicated by the mental fictions held by the yoga philosophers in all the fundamental problems of reality. They have completely misinterpreted Patanjali's symbolic expressions as to superemotional reality (world 47 and higher).

¹⁶Also, the yoga psychologists are aware of the fact that they deal with purely subjective concepts. And just as all philosophers have done in all ages, they make a virtue of necessity. Consequently, they deny the possibility of objective study of higher kinds of reality. Akhilananda says as much: "The purely objective method cannot be adequately applied to the mind." It must be applied, however, since all consciousness expressions have their material correspondences. That is a fact which the yoga philosophers cannot realize, since they lack mental and causal objective consciousness.

¹⁷Analogously the corresponding problems recur in the sixth natural kingdom. To a 44-self, matter does not exist except as the carrier of consciousness. In his worlds, matter manifests itself as formless phenomena of motion (light, colour, sound, energy) only, but not as distinguishable material forms.

¹⁸The yoga philosophers have elaborated certain methods that have proved to entail certain results. This they take as proof that their subjectivist views are correct. Those methods, arrived at through experiments and handed down during millennia, may be valid within certain limits, but this must not be taken as proof that the hypotheses and theories (explanations) attached to them are correct. Thus it is a mistake to assume that the subjective methods of the yoga psychology "give a clear and conclusive understanding of the total mind".

¹⁹Akhilananda's description of the phenomena of emotional and intellectual life indicates that he as well the other yoga philosophers does not reach beyond kama-manas, that life of consciousness which is obtained at the coalescence of the emotional and mental envelopes. He asserts that we cannot observe a thought as separate from emotion. This is due to the fact that the yoga philosophers lack mental objective consciousness. The assertion that "thought, emotion, and will are inseparably connected" is typical of, and inescapable for, the kama-manas psychologists. They do not know that "dynamic will" can be of different kinds: emotional, mental, causal, etc.

²⁰Akhilananda says that Patanjali gives a "systematic treatise on yoga". At all events, Patanjali treats of consciousness activities that are of quite different kinds than those within the reach of the possible experience of the yoga psychologists. Modern Indian yoga deals with fictions that do not have counterparts in reality. Since the yoga psychologists have during many generations accepted these fictions as axioms, there are scant prospects that they will

realize the correctness of esoteric psychology within the next five hundred years. It takes time to eliminate modes of conception that have been engraved on public opinion. This requires a world view which is based on facts and which refutes the fictions one by one, and it moreover requires experimental proofs. Since esotericians refuse to use such proofs to force dissidents to a better realization, the hopes of effecting a correction are scant.

²¹The yoga psychologists consider the samadhi method to be the “only method of understanding and controlling the mind in order that a higher consciousness may be reached.” In fact, the yogis do not know what samadhi is about. What they call “samadhi” and regard as a state of trance is the acquired ability to leave the organism with its etheric envelope at will and to move freely about in the different regions of the emotional world and to objectively experience phenomena in those regions without being able to judge the reality content of those phenomena, which is impossible without esoteric knowledge and causal objective consciousness. They are the victims of their fictions without fail, since they always have them confirmed in the emotional world. Everybody experiences reality in that world just as he has imagined it and never has the opportunity of changing his view but only of confirming it.

²²Then we understand that “religious ideals and expressions are essential to the fulfillment and culmination of consciousness in this supersensuous state.” (“Supersensuous = super-physical.) To Hindu religion is “the very basis for the total illumination of the mind.” To a man “who has experienced *samadhi* or superconscious realization ... the whole mind appears like a mirror in which he can see the truth revealed.” The whole of this reasoning reminds one, and not a little, of Rudolf Steiner’s conjuring tricks with the Golgotha symbol after his experiences in the emotional world. They all have their different experiences but they all agree in their assertion that they have beheld the truth. There is nothing to be done about that.

²³Since they can release the “mind” from the “body”, they have proved the independent existence of the mind. In this connection it is less important that they cannot realize that the emotional envelope is not the mind. They have come to know their mind and so have acquired self-knowledge and “this self-knowledge as developed in Hindu psychology is the way to freedom, truth, and harmonious living.” The fact that in this connection unconscious auto-suggestion plays an essential part must be inescapable in a world where every figment of the imagination is confirmed and they meet the god or gods they have worshipped in living form. Moreover, those gods speak to them, telling them precisely what they expect to hear from them, and this if anything is surely a proof that they have acquired intuition.

²⁴What has a seductive effect in all this is the sense of power even perceived by anyone who has become sovereign in his emotional envelope. This power is accompanied by a magnetic radiation which is perceived by the people around him, although they cannot correctly explain it.

²⁵The concepts of reality held by the Hindus vary with the various schools of thought. Most of them, however, seem influenced by the concept of illusion (irreality), as is the case with the Western subjectivists.

²⁶“The Vedantic test of knowledge is that it must never be contradicted at any time, and knowledge or true cognition must consist in its noncontradiction and newness.”

²⁷What is regarded as knowledge in the physical world may have certain cognitive value. But “The only ultimate, uncontradicted, and unitary knowledge is the knowledge one has at the time of spiritual realization (*samadhi*).”

²⁸Here we are faced with the all too common and logical error of not letting this be this, the inability to realize that all the different worlds (the 49 different atomic worlds) can claim to be equally real, that you must never judge the perception of reality in one world according to that in another world. Also it is illogical to speak of relatively correct perception in this connection. According to the law of absolute identity this must be this and not anything else and this in each world apart, even if “this” is something quite different in any one of the 49 worlds.

²⁹To the esoterician, who knows that matter (because of its composition) is of quite different kinds in the 49 different atomic worlds and that every one of those 49 atomic matters is equally real within its respective world, the unending discussions of the philosophers about the epistemological concept of reality appear as sheer nursery prattle. What is directly given, what is the most evident, has been turned into something incomprehensible.

³⁰What Akhilananda and other yogis experience in samadhi (the state obtained when the emotional envelope with higher envelopes and with full emotional objective consciousness leaves the organism with its etheric envelope and moves freely about in the different regions of the emotional world) implies to them the highest knowledge attainable and thus the absolute knowledge and the only true one. After what has been said, the reader probably realizes that such assertions are both illogical and illegitimate.

³¹It has been the case hitherto that anyone who has succeeded in acquiring knowledge in a higher world believes he has arrived at the “absolute” knowledge, that the knowledge of lower worlds was “illusion”. Also such notions seem like childish fantasies to the esoterician.

³²Emotion is analysed by Akhilananda in a particular chapter. His assertion that knowledge is inseparably connected with emotion is erroneous, as are all absolute statements. It is 90 per cent correct at the emotional stage but is not valid to the same extent at the physical stage or the mental stage. The tendency to absolutization seems hard to eradicate not only in everyday life but also in philosophy and science.

³³We have more envelopes than the physical and emotional ones, and energies emitted from them all have effects in some respect. When it has been realized that esoterics is the only tenable working hypothesis, we shall have the explanations for countless phenomena that are still misunderstood. It is meaningless to cast pearls before a mankind that does not have the sense to appreciate them.

³⁴Freud tried to explain everything by the sex urge, Adler everything by the power urge, etc. Everyone has his patent solution. When will they realize that such absolutization is preposterous? What is five per cent correct must be one hundred per cent correct to such a tendency of absolutization. When they have discovered a cause, they believe they have found the sole cause, when in fact they are legion. The more research advances, the more causes are discovered.

³⁵The esoterician knows that each individual case requires an individual examination and this by a causal self who is able to study all the three aspects of reality in the worlds of man, study all the envelopes of man and the past of the individual. Then the “real causes” can be established in each individual case. Until then it will remain guesswork.

³⁶Ascertaining the facts remains the fundamental principle of all research. What is erroneous in most cases is the explanation, the theory, the hypothesis. They should have learnt to see this. We are in no position to explain things definitively until we have become causal selves and are able to study everything in the physical, emotional, and mental worlds objectively. This is what esoterics teaches us.

³⁷It is certainly true that inhibition of emotions with repressions and defence mechanisms is harmful and brings about functional disturbances. The psychoanalyst is certainly able to cure his patient, if he finds the individual causes and the right method. But he fails even more often and may also do his patients incurable harm.

³⁸Control of consciousness (paying attention to the content of consciousness) does not mean inhibition. The person doing this refuses to heed certain intrusive emotions and thoughts and replaces them with other ones, preferably their opposites: Anyone who has learnt to employ the “will” can decide in a definitive manner that not only “those emotions and thoughts” but also “that need” is finally eliminated. This can be the work of a moment and be done so radically that the individual afterwards is surprised that he could ever have been that dependent or cherished such emotions and thoughts.

³⁹When passing from the animal kingdom to the human kingdom, the monad receives a

causal envelope. The task of the monad in the human kingdom, its goal, is to become fully subjectively and objectively conscious in that envelope. When Akhilananda says: "The most outstanding urge in people is the search after the abiding spirit or God," he makes it clear by this that the yoga philosophers do not possess the esoteric knowledge. They deal with a complicated system of fictions which they believe gives the solution of the problem of existence. Just as the theologians misinterpret the teaching of Christos so the yogis misinterpret Patanjali. They must complicate it for it cannot be as simple as esoterics teaches.

⁴⁰In the chapter about the "subconscious mind", Akhilananda mainly sums up the different views on the pertaining phenomena held by Western psychoanalysts, and so informs us how diametrically opposed their interpretations often are. Sometimes he declares that he is of a different opinion. This might lead the reader into believing that all the yoga psychologists share his views. This is perhaps not the case. Even if the basic dogmas and the ways of looking at things derived from them are common to all yoga psychologists, their interpretations of them need not be the same.

⁴¹His account of the envelopes of man is of some interest because it is probably representative of the view commonly held by those yoga philosophers who have not familiarized themselves with esoterics, and they could still be the majority. As is to be expected, they think that man has three envelopes, since they are unable to observe more than those three: the organism, the etheric envelope, and the emotional envelope (of course giving them other names). The explanations they give in reference to those envelopes are very vague and unsatisfactory, which they must be, since they do not possess the facts requisite to an exact description.

⁴²The chapter on *Will and Personality* contains much of the wisdom of life and art of living collected in the yoga philosophy. Since esoteric knowledge is absent, the basic concepts are as always sheer fictions. It appears, however, that those who are able to distinguish between theory and practice, practical directions gleaned from experience and fictitious explanations for them, either have their own experiences confirmed to them or can learn much from those of the Indians. No nation in the world has given as much to mankind in that respect as has India.

⁴³If Akhilananda had had experience of the harm done to Westerners by breathing exercises, then he had, instead of apparently promoting them, warned against pursuing such exercises except under the guidance of an experienced teacher and pointed out that experienced teachers are rare. There are too many who believe they are called to be teachers.

⁴⁴His assertion that "some persons with tremendous will power can control even the laws of nature" is false. You can cancel the action of a force by applying a stronger force, but you cannot "control" the laws of nature. All the 49 atomic worlds are being built, maintained, and changed through the action of energies which, emanating from higher worlds, pervade lower worlds. The energies of higher worlds (energies of higher kinds) in lower worlds become energies directing the lower ones. But all of this happens in accordance with the unchangeable constant relations of primordial matter, or laws, such as they manifest themselves in the different kinds of matter. The esoterician has been taught to distinguish between forces and laws.

⁴⁵This is true of all philosophy, all speculation, all theories and hypotheses: the explanations given are all erroneous and must be so, since esoterics alone provides the correct basis of explanation. Anyone who disregards such theoretical issues, however, and keeps to the "technique", to what has been found out by means of experiments, is on the safe side.

⁴⁶In the chapter on *Intuition*, it appears that the yogis cannot give a satisfactory explanation of the phenomenon of intuition, which is impossible without esoterics. There are different kinds of intuition: causal (47:1-3), essential (46), and superessential (45). Causal intuition is employed in making discoveries and inventions, for instance. Essential intuition is due to the ability to experience the consciousness of other beings as one's own consciousness. In contrast, intuition is not rapid perception, such things as are connected with telepathic phenomena or the right use of instinct.

⁴⁷Causal intuition implies activity in the intelligence centre of the causal envelope. It is of a temporary nature until the individual has become a causal self. Essential intuition is obtained via the unity centre of the causal envelope. It can become a permanent faculty only in essential selves (46-selves).

⁴⁸Intuition is part of man's superconscious. Probably most people have spontaneous experiences coming from this some times during their lives. That does not mean, however, that they have acquired intuition. Where superconscious experience is concerned, sporadic, intermittent, and permanent occurrences are distinguished.

⁴⁹One chapter is entitled *Supersensory Experiences* and begins by addressing "conscious and sensuous experiences". This is typical both of ignorance and of the lack of terms in language for superphysical experiences. Apparently they have not understood that "sensuous experiences" are physical and "supersensuous" should be called superphysical. Such material phenomena as are observable, perceptible through man's five senses, are called "sensuous". Also physical-etheric phenomena are of this category, since they are perceived through the same sense organs. You see physical-etheric material forms by means of your ordinary physical eyes. The ability of the eye to perceive higher kinds of physical vibrations has then been increased. That is the only difference.

⁵⁰The miserable state of scientific research in this field is best seen in the fact that the first one to even bother about collecting and classifying such phenomena under the misleading term, "religious experience", was Professor William James of Harvard University. Certainly spiritists and occultists of other kinds had described their unusual experiences in their literature. But such phenomena were brushed aside by science as hallucinations or "ghost stories", and no scientist could condescend to investigate such things. There is every reason to establish that fact efficiently and indelibly. It illustrates what scientists mean by "objectivity". The dogmatic thinking in stereotypes is the explanation for such overweening narrow-mindedness. The usual idiotic slogan was that it "conflicted with the laws of nature". They knew that without investigating. They knew all the laws of nature, of course. They were all but omniscient, capable of judging everything. That is the "scientific spirit". It has nothing to do with common sense.

⁵¹It is evident from the chapter on *The Superconscious State*, if we did not know it before, that they yogis (at all events the members of the Ramakrishna Order) belong to the category called mystics by the esotericians. They deal with fictions that correspond to the stage of the saint.

⁵²Akhilananda asserts with especial vigour that the great mistake of the Western humanists is that they have forgotten the alleged commandment of the Gospels: "And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength." Whether Jeshu made that statement when speaking to the people must remain an open question. At all events, his disciples, who had a gnostic training, understood that by "god" he meant "truth and reality". Anyone who was unable to disregard anything pertaining to personality could not be initiated into any esoteric knowledge order. The concept of personality is inseparable from sentimentality and emotionality. To the esoterician, the highest concept is the cosmic total consciousness in which every individual has a share he cannot lose. All make up an inseparable unity. The entry into the fifth natural kingdom requires the acquisition of the consciousness of community.

⁵³Akhilananda constantly uses all the concepts belonging to the stage of the mystic. "A mystic feels the presence of God everywhere." Or: "The real mystic who has spiritual realizations or superconscious experiences becomes extremely interested in his fellow beings as he finds the expression of God in them." It is characteristic of the mystic that he personifies the consciousness of community and his experience of it, identifies it with a personality.

⁵⁴What the esoterician finds typical of this kind of mysticism is that all "great spiritual personalities" are placed on the same footing, reflecting the inability to discern different

stages of development. A mystic such as Ramakrishna (certainly at the verge of the causal stage) is put on a par with 43-selves Buddha and Christos without further ado, revealing a lack of understanding of the immense distance there is in developmental respect between an individual of the fourth natural kingdom and those of the sixth natural kingdom.

⁵⁵His justified criticism of the humanist shows that he by “humanists” means those at the stage of civilization who call themselves, or believe they are, “humanists”. To the esoterician, a humanist is an individual who has the stage of the saint behind him, has acquired perspective consciousness (47:5), and who was once an initiate of an esoteric knowledge order.

⁵⁶What has been said here must not be taken as criticism of mysticism. Mysticism is part of a necessary stage of development. And the information about this stage given by Akhilananda fully stands comparison with the best things said in these respects. It is valuable, too, as providing the reader with opportunities of self-examination as to his own condition. Those members of occult societies who believe they are far advanced in “spirituality” are enabled to make comparisons between their theory and practice.

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