

Human Evolution and Spiritual Awakening

(Compiled by Sri. Ulpiano Manlangit)

Know Thyself

The ancient precept inscribed over the entrance to the sanctuary at Delphi in Greece: “Know Thyself “. Who is this thyself? Whom we must know? Socrates and other Philosophers have adopted this injunction. The fact is that there is no one theory of man which fully accounts for his extreme complexities. Knowing thyself is the start of man's evolution and amounts to a beginning of a psychic and spiritual transformation. He must know himself and the world completely and go beyond his own exterior self. He must dive deep below his own mental and physical surface of Nature. He can only do this by knowing his inner mental, astral, physical and higher being and its power and movements and the universal laws and processes of the Cosmic Mind and Life which stand behind the material front of the universe. He must also know the hidden Power that control the world and be able to enter into relation with the Cosmic Self or Spirit and be able to remain in contact and communion with the Supreme Being in this life now and his existence hereafter.

To know oneself is to become conscious of the different bodies and their principalities of which we are composed; from the subtlest to the most opaque; and of the inimitable need that is experienced from each body and their state of consciousness distinct in each one.

Sri Ramana teaches also that the first and foremost need for us to know is ourselves; the first person. No man has ever raised any questions or doubts about himself; that is about his knowledge (chit) or his existence (sat), “Do I exist or not?” Since all doubts rise only because of knowledge, which man has of the existence of the world and God, he has through this times been eagerly making research about these two entities unaware of himself and not about himself.

According to the philosophical school of thought and of different religions, the structure of man is composed of several parts. Hinduism, for instance consider that the human being is composed of seven component parts which is also adopted by the Theosophist with the same system. Astrology divides man into twelve parts each corresponding to the twelve signs of the Zodiac; which can be found identical in the Chinese System which uses twelve Zodiac signs of Animals. Kabbalah has ten component parts of man called, Sephiroth and four worlds, and Christianity divides man into three parts: the body, soul, and spirit.

So which system possesses the truth? All of them. Not one of them contradicts the other because each one is true in its unique elements and the notion of soul structure which solely depends on a person's point of view.

The Structures of the Soul

Everywhere on every level of the universe, matter contains energy and man's material, physical body possesses its own specific energy. It is this energy which we call the soul. But above and beyond his physical body, man has other subtler bodies and one of these subtle bodies possesses its own soul. The vital soul belongs to the physical body; the emotional or sensitive soul belongs to the astral body; the intellectual or rational soul belongs to the mental body, and the three higher bodies; the causal, buddhic and atmic possess the higher souls. Each body therefore contains its own unique soul; the body is the form or container and the soul is the energy which animates it. The two cannot be separated. Nature itself and the Cosmos as a whole is a body; God's body and its soul is the Universal Soul.

The physical body which represents strength, will and power on the material level is linked to the atmic body which represents *divine power, strength and will*. The astral body which represents our egotistical, personal feelings and desires, is linked to the buddhic body which represents *divine love*; and the mental body which represents our ordinary self-serving thoughts is linked to the causal body which represents *divine wisdom*. In Figure 1, the three large concentric circles represent the relationship between the lower and the higher bodies.

Kabbalist also teaches that man has several souls which are represented by the ten Sephiroth and are grouped into four worlds: The astral soul known as *Nephesh*; the mental or intellectual soul is *Ruah* and the three higher souls; *Neshamah, Haia and Yehida*.

The goal of spiritual evolution is to reach the point at which each of the higher bodies incarnate in the corresponding body. Only then will human beings receive full illumination, as divine nature will dwell within them. As for the boundary line between the higher and lower natures; these represent consciousness; the screen on which both regions - the individuality and the personality are reflected.

If we cultivate wisdom and light we will develop our causal body, which will become one with our mental body. If you cultivate pure and absolute selfless love, you will develop your buddhic body which will become one with the astral body and if you cultivate your inner strength and do all in your power to accomplish God's will, you will develop the atmic body, which represents the primordial power and it will become one with your physical body. The personality and the individuality therefore, will become one and man will then be all powerful on the physical plane, all-loving in his heart and all knowing in his intellect.

Every human being is linked to his higher Self which is only waiting for the day when it will be possible to enter and take possession of him. It is man who by reasons of all his impurities that places obstacles in the way. If one day, a man really manages to purify himself and reach true holiness, the Holy Spirit will descend upon him and he will be capable of doing marvellous deeds. The Holy Spirit is the Cosmic Spirit, the one Godhead and the Higher Self is of the same nature.

Purification of the Soul

If you take some quick silver and pour it out onto a clean surface, you will see that the silver will break into a multitude of minute parts or globules. However, if you gather all the globules together; pushing one against the other, you will see them begin to slowly merge and become a part of the other until one whole globule is formed. If however, you try the same experiment on a dusty surface, the droplets of quicksilver will refuse to come together.

Within us we see the same phenomenon: the layers of impurities in us prevent the Universal Soul and our own Soul from blending into one with us.

You can understand now the true significance of the need to purify oneself, as without purity, the union between our higher and our lower Self cannot take place. One must not forget the importance of being humble, as humility (particularly intellectual humility) is the first step towards purity and upon all paths that lead to the Infinite; no matter how different they are, and is also the last. Believing that the Truth is attainable, that the mind can be conquered and that the constant effort to find the Soul-light will eventually call forth its Grace. The whole Truth is found only when you find the Higher Self; as the goal of our spiritual development and it is the Truth which embraces all including the world. The whole Truth must be embraced because Truth is the Reality and the highest Truth has no beginning and no end. When you find it, you discover that it was always there. It was there in you and outside you and it was you.

The Higher Self

Our higher Self lives in the region beyond what we can properly term our being; beyond our physical, etheric, astral and mental bodies and even beyond our causal, buddhic and atmic bodies because although these are made of subtle materials, they are nevertheless bodies and therefore material in essence. Our higher Self or Overself is not a body, it manifests itself through the medium of our bodies but it belongs to the region known to Kabbalists as Ain Soph Aur (Limitless Light).

“The Higher Self exists enveloping all, unattached, yet supporting all; devoid of qualities. Without and within (all) being; the unmoving also the moving.” The Higher Self is motionless. Where can it go? It has no where to go because it fills all space. It is also the moving, because all living creatures are in motion by virtue of borrowed vitality from itself. It is exceedingly subtle because you can not hear it, see it, or touch it. It cannot be sensed by the five senses; even the intellect cannot grasp it or draw a mental picture of it.

The Higher Self is called, “The Light even of Lights,” because the primal Light is the root of the universe. It is the root of matter and of life; it is our first manifestation of God. It fills all space and since space is unbounded, it fills all possible forms. Even That has finite life in the sense that it appears and disappears. It comes into being with the creation of the universe and disappears with the dissolution of the universe. It emanates from the one Universal Self, which is one with God and all other gods derive their life from That.

Conclusion

The longest formulation of this spiritual evolution and achievement is a total liberation of soul, mind, heart and action and casting of them all into the sense of Cosmic and the Divine Reality. The last or highest spiritual attainment is the liberated man who has realised the Higher Self and Spirit within him who entered into the Cosmic Consciousness and union with the Eternal Being that is in as far as he still accepts life and action and acts by the light and energy of the Power within working through his humanity.

Spiritual Exercise

There are various methods to experience the Higher Self

1. First method: Turning one's attention towards oneself in order to find out “Who am I” who knows the mind alone is the correct first person attention. Any one who attends to oneself in this manner, whoever he may be will certainly attain the true knowledge of the Self. This is the rule to which there is no exception. If anyone (who ever he may be) directs his power of attention towards the correct first person, he will certainly attain Self-Knowledge. “All ancient Sages of India realised the truth in the end only by knowing the real nature of this first person.”

2. The second method is to use the screen of the self, one's consciousness, which is not you and yet is yourself, part of You. Start by holding on to that consciousness; cling to it, do nothing else, only that: be conscious and remain like that for several minutes, just holding on to the consciousness of your self. Your consciousness here on earth is linked to your superconsciousness above, in your higher Self. After a few minutes of attention and concentration you will gradually touch your higher Self.

3. The third method is if you want the qualities and virtues of your higher Self to be infused into your lower self, you have to use your power of imagination. You are sitting there, thinking about your Self high up above and you imagine that he is looking down at you; You are looking down at yourself, seeing yourself in the difficult imperfect circumstances of life on earth. With this thought in your mind, you keep the current flowing between your lower self down below, and your higher Self up above. In this way you will restore the link, the true link which binds you to each other: down here you are thinking of your Self up above and up above you feel the contact with the self below who is conscious of the Self above.

4. The fourth method is to try to watch the watcher of the mind, the witness. Try to find out who is that looking at the mind. You are watching your thoughts. You see them pass by. Every now and then you will find yourself immersed in your thoughts and then you bring yourself back to watching the thoughts. Try to find out who is this watcher. The next step is to transfer your awareness into the watcher of the witness of the mind.

