

And another thing: Progoff's "Twilight Diary" [taking seriously the images surfacing just prior to and just after sleep] is, in contrast to TM's repression of all but the mantra, close to the biblical expectation of revelatory experience in reverie and dream. Hear Underhill [p.84, after her explanation of the mechanism of apperception]: "As the self reaches the first degrees of the prayerful or recollected state" [i.e., TM's goal], the "storehouse" opens and a "tone" of prayer emerges.

And another thing: TM, as a for-the-West missionary version of Vedanta Hinduism, instead of talking about yoga, which is essential Vedanta, actually gives Westerners a taste of the action which this form of Hinduism, viz. advaita, is reflection on. To put the same fact from another angle: this form of Hindu religion-philosophy is natural-rational-logical for people who practice TM. And another way: When your mantra is a single word (Sanskrit, the Hindu holy language, at that!), and your single action is to concentrate thereon, would it not be illogical for you to conclude that reality-Reality is not single? And if you do indeed conclude that reality-Reality is single, that blows the Western religions--Judaism, Christianity, Islam--which are radically anti-advaitistic, pro-dvaitistic (i.e., radically committed to seeing-living reality as dual, i.e. God/creation). What we face here, then, is not just a subtle action-pitch for Hinduism, but an equally subtle and indeed subversive attack on the biblical religions....And another thing: All forms of yoga are ascetic, i.e. deprivative. You deprive yourself of something material-"maya" in order to "realize" something "spiritual. You block out, screen out, or bracket everything except a single sight [mandala] or sound [mantra]--which is the principle operative in all forms of hypnosis, including auto-suggestion. Or you eliminate what normally goes into your mouth [food and/or drink] or nostrils [oxygen, by swallowing your tongue or--as I had it--breathing carbon dioxide]. But what are you to conclude from any or all of this depriving? In Hinduism, the conclusions are (1) the superior reality of "soul," (2) the identity of "soul" and "God" [Brahman is atma], (3) the relative unimportance of (a) the "world" and (b) history. If you are priorly persuaded of some religion or philosophy alien to the yoga experience, you may not come to those Hindu conclusions; my point is that, within the experience itself, those conclusions are natural-rational-logical. And when people--say, American highschool children in the millions--with little or no prior religious commitment, experience yoga in the TM or any other form, it would be unnatural for them to be more open than before to Western religion, which insists on taking body as seriously as soul, the world as real, and history as continuous with yet other than nature and, equally with nature, real. These Western convictions rest on Western experience not of narrowing consciousness [by mantra or otherwise] but by widening it [by intenser awareness of event and process, history and science].... And another thing: Western life has been a tension between widening and narrowing of attention/awareness/experience. "Meditation," in the TM sense, has been normal for Christianity, as one can see in any Christian classic of spirituality. Let's take one: Evelyn Underhill's THE LIFE OF THE SPIRIT AND THE LIFE OF TO-DAY [Methuen/22, the year of my old beat-up copy]. She warns against the TM type of thing [p.110: "mere quietism"] as a cop-out on the full package of Christianity, the full spiritual journey, and therefore anti-Christian, as TM certainly is [though of course Christians may profit from this discipline, as they would from almost any other attentional discipline, as an episode in their return journey back to their own faith--a fact which certainly does not recommend the practice either to Christians or to anyone else]. Notice the AND in her title: "the life of the spirit" is not to be had in isolation from "the life of to-day," but rather the narrowing is for the sake of the widening and deepening of caring for creation ["caring" both in the sense of loving and in the sense of taking care of]....Herewith are a few pages from the book, so those unfamiliar with Christian spirituality can see why Christians are incensed over TM's surreptitious Hinduism in the public schools. If the public schools were open to Judaism's and Christianity's meditation/reflection/prayer/action, alongside of Hinduism's meditation, that would be another thing, and indeed is perhaps desirable: that's another issue. But for tax money to be used to promote Hinduism in the public schools--the religion which is, among all the religions of the world, the one most dangerous to biblical religion--that is an intolerable outrage as well as a violation of our laws and customs.

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It is, then, worth our while from the point of view of the spiritual life to inquire into the conditions in which a suggestion is most likely to be received and realized by us. These conditions, as psychologists have so far defined them, can be resumed under the three heads of quiescence, attention and feeling: outstanding characteristics, as I need not point out, of the state of prayer, all of which can be illustrated from the teaching and experience of the mystics.

1 First, let us take Quiescence. In order fully to lay open the unconscious to the influence of suggested ideas, the surface mind must be called in from its responses to the outer world, or in religious language recollected, till the hum of that world is hardly perceived by it. The body must be relaxed, making no demands on the machinery controlling the motor system; and the conditions in general must be those of complete mental and bodily rest. Here is the psychological equivalent of that which spiritual writers call the Quiet: a state defined by one of them as "a rest most busy." "Those who are in this prayer," says St. Teresa, "wish their bodies to remain motionless, for it seems to them that at the least movement they will lose their sweet peace."<sup>1</sup> Others say that in this state we "stop the wheel of imagination"—leave all that we can think—sink into our nothingness or our ground. In Ruysbroeck's phrase, we are "inwardly abiding in simplicity and stillness and utter peace;"<sup>2</sup> and this is man's state of maximum receptivity. "The best and noblest way in which thou mayst come into this work and life," says Meister Eckhart, "is by keeping silence and letting God work and speak . . . when we simply keep ourselves receptive we are more perfect than when at work."<sup>3</sup>

2 But this preparatory state of surrendered quiet must at once be qualified by the second point: Attention. It is based upon the right use of the will, and is not a limp yielding to anything or nothing. It has an ordained deliberate aim, is a behaviour-cycle directed to an end; and this it is that marks out the real and fruitful quiet of the contemplative from the non-directed surrender of mere quietism. "Nothing," says St. Teresa, "is learnt without a little pains. For the love of God, sisters, account that care well employed that ye shall bestow on this thing."<sup>4</sup>

The quieted mind must receive and hold, yet without discursive thought, the idea which it desires to realize;

For it is best when it is in pure spirit, without special thought or any pronouncing of word. On the same manner shalt thou do with this little word God: and mean God all, and all God, so that nough work in thy wit and in thy will but only God."<sup>5</sup> Here the directions are exact, and such as any psychologist of the present day might give. So, too, religious teachers informed by experience have always ascribed a special efficacy to "short acts" of prayer and aspiration: phrases repeated or held in the mind, which sum up and express the self's penitence, love, faith or adoration, and are really brief, articulate suggestions parallel in type to those which Baudouin recommends to us as conducive to bodily well-being.<sup>6</sup> The

repeated affirmation of Julian of Norwich "All shall be well! all shall be well! all shall be well!"<sup>1</sup> fills all her revelations with its suggestion of joyous faith; and countless generations of Christians have thus applied to their soul's health those very methods by which we are now enthusiastically curing indigestion and cold in the head. The articulate repetition of such phrases increases their suggestive power; for the unconscious is most easily reached by way of the ear. This fact throws light on the immemorial insistence of all great religions on the peculiar value of vocal prayer, whether this be the mantra of the Hindu or the dikr of the Moslem; and explains the instinct which causes the Catholic Church to require from her priests the verbal repetition, not merely the silent reading of their daily office. Hence, too, there is real educative value in such devotions as the rosary; and the Protestant Churches showed little psychological insight when they abandoned it. Such "vain" repetitions, however much the rational mind may dislike, discredit or denounce them, have power to penetrate and modify the deeper psychic levels; always provided that they conflict with no accepted belief, are weighted with meaning and desire, with the intent stretched towards God, and are not allowed to become merely mechanical—the standing danger alike of all verbal suggestion and all vocal prayer.

3 Here we touch the third character of effective suggestion: Feeling. When the idea is charged with emotion, it is far more likely to be realized. War neuroses have taught us the dreadful potency of the emotional stimulus of fear; but this power of feeling over the unconscious has its good side too. Here we find psychology justifying the often criticized emotional element of religion. Its function is to increase the energy of the idea. The cool, judicious type of belief will never possess the life-

<sup>1</sup> "Revelations of Divine Love," Cap. 27.

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changing power of a more fervid, though perhaps less rational faith. Thus the state of corporate suggestibility generated in a revival and on which the success of that revival depends, is closely related to the emotional character of the appeal which is made. And, on higher levels, we see that the transfigured lives and heroic energies of the great figures of Christian history all represent the realization of an idea of which the heart was an impassioned love of God, subduing to its purposes all the impulses and powers of the inner man. "If you would truly know how these things come to pass," said St. Bonaventura, "ask it of desire not of intellect; of the ardours of prayer, not of the teaching of the schools."<sup>1</sup> More and more psychology tends to endorse the truth of these words.

<sup>1</sup> "A Short and Easy Method of Prayer," Cap. 21.

<sup>2</sup> Baudouin: "Suggestion and Auto-Suggestion," Pt. II, Cap. 6.

<sup>3</sup> Op. cit., Cap. 40.

<sup>4</sup> Baudouin: "Suggestion and Auto-suggestion," loc. cit.