

ENOUGH!

CULTURE FILE / SPIRIT MATTERS **JOIN THE EVOLUTION** INSPIRE-ME-YOGI / ACTIVIST





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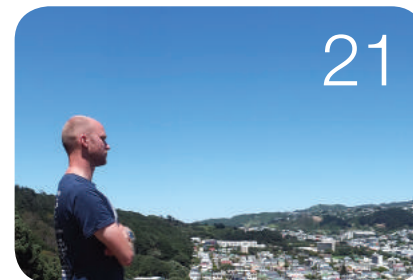
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What's Inside?

INSPIRE-ME-YOGI

03 Yoga Defined

07 Meditation with Bang

SPIRIT MATTERS

11 The Zone

21 The Body-Mind Problem

27 Adventures in Aussie Student Paradise

CULTURE FILE

17 Diary of a Wandering Traveller

33 Red Shoe Monologue

ACTIVIST

31 Go Grow Your Own

RECIPES

16 Muesli Bar Slice

“The senses are like tentacles that are always trying to grab some object so that they can derive pleasure from it.”



BALADEV NITA



Yoga Defined

Many people equate yoga with feeling peaceful. My question is, what does peace mean?

BY VRINDAVAN RAO

“Perform your duty equipoised, O Arjuna, abandoning all attachment to success or failure. Such equanimity is called yoga.” – *Bhagavad-gita 2.48*

Yesterday I went to my weekly yoga class.

At the end of the class, during the relaxation period, the instructor asked everyone to focus on their breathing. She added, “If thoughts come to your mind, acknowledge them with compassion and let them go.” I was left thinking, “What in the world does that mean? Acknowledge your thoughts with compassion.” It sounds really beautiful, but how does one actually go about doing it?

In a similar vein, many people equate yoga with feeling peaceful. My question is, what does peace mean? This is the challenge with words. Few of us actually take the time to decode the intangibles like “peace,” “compassion,” and “humility” etc. Even turning to the dictionary is often fruitless since in the end, the words themselves are coloured by our experiences and perceptions. That’s why “spirituality,”

which promotes the development of so many of these intangible characteristics, can be confusing to many.

On the other hand, bhakti yoga is not only practical but complete, as it not only gives us the process but explains the nature of the outcome. In this verse, Krishna provides a beautiful and practical definition of yoga: “Practice your duty in an equipoised frame of mind, abandoning all attachment to success or failure.” But let’s stop for a moment and really understand what this word “equipoised” means since I’m guessing it is not a common word for most of us. Simply put, it means balanced, in equilibrium.

In the context of yoga, equipoised means to do things for the sake of doing them and giving up the attitude of “I’m doing this because it will benefit me.” The thing is, we all need a motivating force to drive us to accomplish almost everything. If we don’t have one, we won’t do anything. Don’t you agree? So then, the question remains, “If I’m not doing this for me, what’s my motivation?” We might respond and say, “Well, the reasons why I do certain things are certainly not centered on me. I’m motivated because I’m doing it for my friends, family, my country,

“...when we start to experience our spiritual identity then we gradually relinquish our grip on trying to arrange pleasing situations for our senses.”

or even for the world.” To this, the *Gita* replies, “Okay. That is admittedly a step up from always focusing on yourself.”

However, it doesn't end just there. Krishna wants to help us attain the best possible goal, so He gives us something even higher to reach for. That's right, we can actually operate on an even higher motivating principle. So what is this principle?

Srila A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada, our bhakti guide and teacher for the *Gita*, explains in his purport, “Yoga means to concentrate the mind upon the Supreme by controlling the ever-disturbing senses.” Did you catch the progression here? It's subtle, so let's break it down.

In order to perform one's duties in an equipoised frame of mind (i.e. in yoga):

1. One needs to control the ever-disturbing senses. The senses are like tentacles that are always trying to grab some object so that they can derive pleasure from it. So how do we control the senses? By purifying them. We will have to keep reading to understand the instructions the *Gita* provides for this crucial step.

2. One concentrates the mind upon the Supreme. This can be a hard one for many people. However, the simplest way is to perform mantra meditation. Simply by repeating transcendental sound vibrations, the mind is immediately calmed and focused. If you've never tried it, just try repeating the *maha-mantra*.

If we apply the process of mantra meditation correctly, then we gradually start experiencing our nonmaterial identity in relationship to the Supreme. As Krishna states in the *Bhagavad-gita* (15.7):

“The living entities in this conditioned world are My eternal fragmental parts. Due to conditioned life, they are struggling very hard with the six senses, which include the mind.”



Vrindavan Rao grew up in the bhakti tradition. Her love for travel has given her the opportunity to study Vedic texts in several countries under the guidance of advanced practitioners. Vrindavan holds a bachelor's degree in biochemistry and a master's in laboratory medicine and pathobiology. She especially loves the *Bhagavad-gita* and refers to it as her “guidebook for life,” since it contains practical answers for complicated questions.

The material body and mind almost completely cover our spiritual identity. In this state of spiritual amnesia, we are naturally forced to invest our energy in trying to gratify our material senses (in the Vedic worldview the mind is considered another sense). However, since material pleasure is temporary and dependent on conditions beyond our control, the quest to obtain it is inevitably a struggle fraught with anxiety and dissatisfaction. But when we start to experience our spiritual identity then we gradually relinquish our grip on trying to arrange pleasing situations for our senses. Instead, we become motivated to act in a way that rekindles our connection with the Supreme.

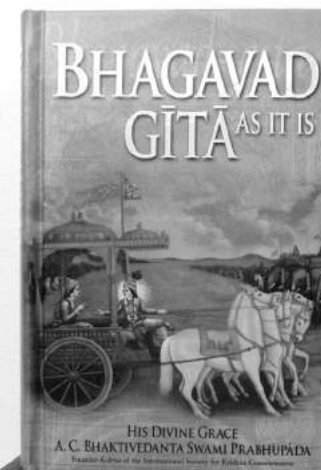
This seismic shift in motivation results in the experience of a higher consciousness. This higher consciousness reveals the worries and anxieties that normally swirl through our mind for what they really are—temporary and insignificant. This is not to imply that we don't need to take care of our worries. It means we take care of them in the proper perspective and thereby avoid anxiety.

See how the attachment has changed? Instead of obsessing over the ever-changing, transient material conditions that determine the “success” or “failure” of our attempts to enjoy our material senses, we become attached to acting in harmony with Krishna. In following these steps, we can remain equipoised and devote our attention to our prime duty of reviving our loving relationship with the Supreme. 🌿

ENOUGH! recommends...

The Teachings of His Divine Grace
A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada

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“When doubts haunt me, when disappointments stare me in the face, and I see not one ray of hope on the horizon, I turn to Bhagavad-gita and find a verse to comfort me; and I immediately begin to smile in the midst of overwhelming sorrow.”

— MAHATMA GANDHI

“
 Kirtan is freedom.
 How do we get beyond these
 covering walls of body, mind,
 and material environment,
 limitations we know so well?
 ”

MEDITATION WITH BANG

Love music, love dancing? It's an emerging style of meditation called *kirtan*—it's my best night out, non-toxic, and hangover-free...

BY KHADIRAVAN

I want to share with you my favourite thing, something real.

Usually, “meditation” sounds peaceful, low-key, and intriguingly mystical in aim; a personal-portable grounding tool, bringing resilience to the ups and downs; it's the hope for a sparkle of tantalising insight from beyond the usual time-worn experiences. In practice, however, meditation may be a tad tedious and hard to do everyday... a nice idea but...

Love music, love dancing? Try this instead: It's an emerging style of meditation called *kirtan*—it's my best night out, non-toxic, and hangover-free, and nothing ever felt better, tasted better, or left me so absolutely satisfied. I am talking a new brand of pleasure, what the yoga texts call *ananda*—bliss tasted on the spiritual platform—as opposed to just plain vanilla happiness that comes and goes on the

material plane, abandoning us to make room for its flipside unhappiness, and really not very satisfying in the first place compared to the bliss we are entitled to. (And yes, it is only easy to say this once you have tasted even a drop of the other type of happiness, like if you're a caterpillar it's hard to let go of the last branch until firmly footed on the next.)

Kirtan is...mantras sung to music. A mantra is sound vibration that frees the mind. It's an ancient yoga process, but super easy. Sit down, surrounded by sincere souls; before you the kirtan leader and musicians lead you in chant, and you all respond, back and forth; in this way, we go on for an hour or more, and it gets better and better. You don't have to be musical. Indian and Western styles and instruments combine to take you deeper and deeper into the mantra. Ultimately the freedom and bliss you experience just make you want to throw off all inhibitions,

including your meditation cushion, and dance in ecstasy. I'm not kidding!

What's going on?

Kirtan is a place the mind can rest. The sound vibration, being composed of spiritual energy, gives the shelter the mind crawls longingly through the material world for. The difference between these spiritual and material energies is chalk and cheese, day and night; in yoga knowledge, matter is composed of ignorance, temporariness, and distress, whereas spiritual energy is made of full knowledge, permanence, and bliss. We can choose to get absorbed in either—take your pick.

Kirtan is freedom. How do we get beyond these covering walls of body, mind, and material environment, limitations we know so well? Knowing the

“ Once you taste that freedom, that release beyond limitation that you get in kirtan, you’ll never be satisfied inside the stale walls of what you know now. ”

limitations so well and weary of not finding something else yet, and maybe cynical that there even is something else... but then why do we, or at least some of us, crave the taste of some fresh air beyond the “same old same old” world we are used to? Kirtan is touchdown on the transcendent self beyond body and psychology; it’s the soul, the *atman* of yoga; it’s a home hit, the bull’s-eye. Unlike many meditation methods, it is not just a psychological exercise, an observation of thoughts or breath, or an experience that still keeps you on the material plane. Once you taste that freedom, that release beyond limitation that you get in kirtan, you’ll never be satisfied inside the stale walls of what you know now.

So what does it feel like to really begin to be yourself again? It’s an experience that grows as you pursue it, and considering self-realisation is the goal of multiple spiritual disciplines throughout history, it’s not a cheap thing and not spoken for in a day. However, from the very beginning, you start to taste a loosening from the mental states that crowd your consciousness moment to moment and feel so “me,” however much you would prefer not to have them; you begin to taste a focusing of vision that clarifies the muddle of life and makes you gradually hunger to live the most for-real life. The heart opens to radiate and shine, and barriers between you and the people in your life—friends, family, and workmates start to disappear. You feel the desire to connect unselfishly, with all beings, via our Common Source. Those are just a few of the herculean shifts that are possible at the beginning of this exciting adventure into kirtan.

Ultimately, kirtan reboots our original intelligence so we start to see and act in harmony with *dharma*: the cosmic order or intelligence aka *implicit order* in quantum physics that gives rise to the natural laws and order we see in the reality around us. Effectively, we are tuning ourselves like an instrument with the Creator, creation, and other creatures, bringing us to a state of alignment with everything.

The mantras we chant in kirtan are names for that complete spiritual whole: Krishna. Supported by other mantras, the headliner is the *maha-mantra*, or great mantra: *Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna, Krishna Krishna, Hare Hare, Hare Rama, Hare Rama, Rama Rama, Hare Hare*. You can start the experiment now—try chanting this mantra to yourself for ten minutes every morning or evening, and whenever you feel like it any other time—and see what it does. This is a yoga

process to be experienced, so there is no need to believe in anything; it’s just like stepping into a yoga session to try out what it does for you.

So, try kirtan out; nothing to lose, everything to gain.

At the least you will feel a release from stress, anxiety, and boredom. At the most you will be the next fully self-realised, blissful, supercharged, intelligent, authentically and unselfishly powerful person walking the earth, a beacon of pure compassion, honesty, and deep knowledge that can contribute big time to easing the multi-problems the world shoulders.

Find it at a *bhakti-yoga* centre near you. 🌸



Khadiravan has been practising bhakti-yoga since 1997. Within that time she studied for a doctorate in yoga psychology as described in the ancient yoga tradition. She conducts yoga psychology workshops and leads kirtan nights (mantra and music meditation) at Bhakti Lounge, Wellington.

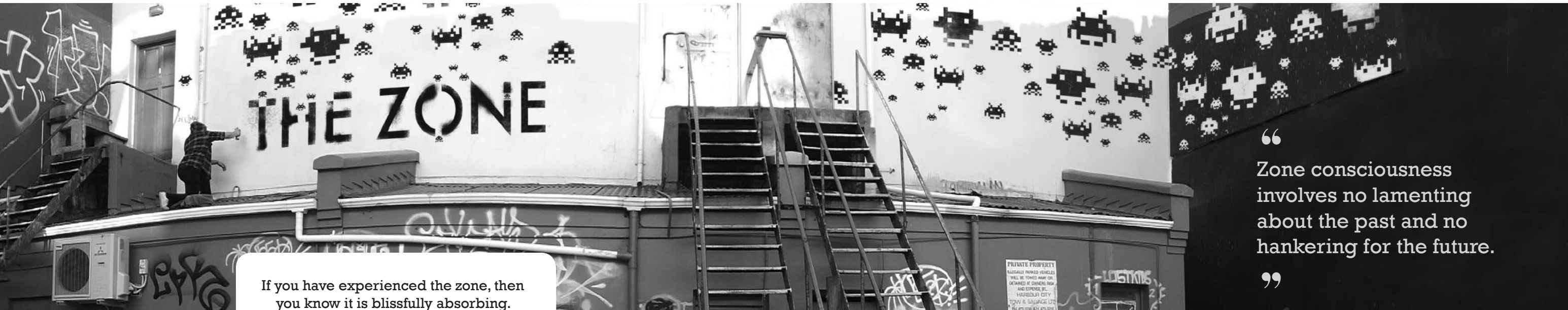


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If you have experienced the zone, then you know it is blissfully absorbing.

“
Zone consciousness involves no lamenting about the past and no hankering for the future.
”

BY CANDIDAS

Have you heard of the zone? It's a state of mind sometimes called "flow state." Humans experience this state when they get really absorbed in an activity such as sports, music, art, computer programming, gaming, and so forth. It is the mad scientist's state of mind when he is so absorbed in his invention that he hasn't eaten, washed, or slept in three days; it is the child's state of mind when she is so absorbed in playing that she doesn't realize that she is hungry or tired; and it is the Starcraft champion's state of mind when he is playing the computer game so intensely, executing ten actions per second, hammering the mouse and keyboard, ultimately defeating his opponent through superior focus and *micro*, but being forced to retire at the age of twenty-five because his reflexes are no longer quick enough. (In Starcraft, *micro* is the ability to win an otherwise unwinnable engagement by simultaneously micro-managing over one hundred units in the game to use each unit to its maximum potential. It requires extremely quick reflexes.)

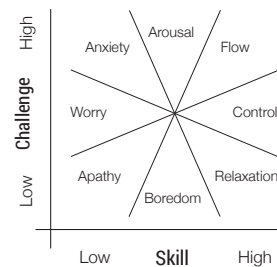
If you have experienced the zone, then you know it is blissfully absorbing. Your attention is completely removed from anything else. You are fully in the moment, outside reality or the passage of time, and your mind detaches from your body. The zone produces an inner clarity, the activity you are doing becomes its own rewards, and you feel fantastic. The following quote gives an example of someone in such a state.

“I felt as though I was driving in a tunnel. I had reached such a high level of concentration that it was as if the car and I had become one.”
—Ayrton Senna (Formula One race car driver, 1960–1994)

Scientific research, particularly Dr Mihály Csikszentmihályi's at Claremont University, has shown that the human mind can process only so much information at any one time. If we intensely focus on

one task, then there is no attention left to monitor anything else. For example, if you intensely focus deeply on Starcraft, then your mind doesn't have the capacity to worry about insignificant problems like hunger and thirst. All your problems go away (temporarily), and you feel great.

Dr Csikszentmihályi's research has shown that we can best obtain a state of flow when we are doing a very challenging activity that we are very skilled at, while other activities are less ideal for obtaining this state.



Low challenge, low skill: Suppose someone asks you to turn the lights off and on five hundred times in a row. Pretty easy to do, right? At the same time, I bet it isn't something that you have practised before or find very interesting. So, you would get very bored very quickly, doing this activity.

Low challenge, high skill: Imagine the world's fastest clapper (search for him on YouTube). The man can clap his hands faster than anyone alive. He is very skilled at hand clapping. I bet he has practised for years. Still, clapping your hands isn't something particularly difficult. The clapper finds clapping his hands easy, relaxing, and fun but doesn't easily get into the zone.

High challenge, low skill: You are the only passenger on a small airplane and the pilot has a heart attack. You have no idea how to fly a plane, and flying is hard. You are in total anxiety; no chance of the zone here.

High challenge, high skill: You are an amazing mountain climber; you can climb a cliff face with no chance of falling off. Climbing a cliff requires a huge amount of skill and focus, even for an expert. If you are such an expert, then this is an ideal activity for entering flow state.



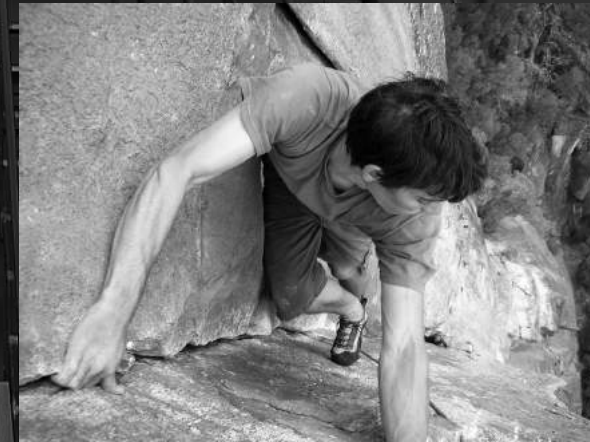
Free-solo climber climbing Half Dome in Yosemite National Park

Flow is a harmonious experience where mind and body are working together effortlessly, leaving the person feeling that something special has just occurred... This is because flow lifts experience from the ordinary to the optimal, and it is in those moments that we feel truly alive and in tune with what we are doing. Once attained, flow experiences remain etched in the memory.

– Mihály Csíkszentmihályi
(Hungarian psychology professor – born 1934)



That's me in the front running the half-marathon



Alex Honnold climbing a wall



Candidas has been practising the art and science of bhakti-yoga for thirteen years. He holds a PhD in computer science and has a keen interest in all topics scientific and spiritual. His favourite bhakti literature is *Krishna* book, as it combines intricate spiritual subject matter with heartwarming stories. You can follow and contact him via his blog at: www.deltaflow.com

I can get into the zone while running. A few months ago I ran the Wellington Round the Bays half marathon. It was a wonderfully fun experience for me; I got into the zone and was smiling almost the entire marathon. However, I observed that for most of the other runners, the experience of running seemed more of a chore, perhaps something they had to do to lose weight, a process more akin to torture than fun, something that definitely did not lead them into the zone. Such runners wore very pained expressions on their faces during the race.

(See picture above)

I've been practising the ancient scientific process of Krishna Consciousness for the last thirteen years. Part of this process involves daily meditation called *japa*, quiet chanting of sanskrit mantra on beads. Keeping the mind focused on the mantra is something that requires a lot of skill, as the mind is very difficult to control. I can also sometimes enter the zone while chanting, and, as a result, my worries, thoughts, and material desires melt away.

Many Eastern teachings, including the art and science of Krishna Consciousness, explain that we are not the body, but are, in fact, beings of pure spiritual consciousness. The zone closely resembles our original state of pure consciousness and is therefore a state of such great happiness.

Zone consciousness involves no lamenting about the past and no hankering for the future. Hankering and lamenting are great sources of anxiety for many people, and they find great pleasure in relief from such feelings. In our constitutional spiritual position, there is no hankering and lamenting, and the zone can give us a hint of that position.

The zone is not, however, automatically a spiritual experience. It can be spiritual, but, more often than not, it is simply the material mind getting absorbed in a material activity without any direct spiritual connection. Depending on one's consciousness or purpose, a zone-inducing activity can either be spiritual or material. There is nothing inherently spiritual about writing a book, for example, but when a saint writes

a spiritual tome of knowledge, then such activity is certainly spiritual. Let us look at a quote from the author of the *Caitanya-caritamrita* (a biography of the Indian saint and incarnation Lord Caitanya Mahaprabhu) where he describes how he is in the zone while writing:

I have now become too old and disturbed by invalidity. While I write, my hands tremble. I cannot remember anything, nor can I see or hear properly. Still I write, and this is a great wonder.

– Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Goswami
(Bengali saint and author, 15th century)

For all its wonders, there are some problems with the zone. For one, you can't enter the zone whenever you like, it is difficult to get into. It requires an activity that you are very skilled at and that is highly challenging at the same time. Such activities are hard to come by and require lots of time to master. Furthermore, the zone is a temporary state. You might

lose track of time for a while, but sooner or later you emerge from the zone and enter back into mundane reality—the bills, the work, the routine.

The yoga texts of ancient India elaborately describe the Krishna conscious path into the zone. The texts present a practice of meditation that leads to greater and greater absorption in relationship with the Supreme Consciousness, to Krishna Consciousness. This path starts with hearing sacred sound vibration, then repeating such sounds as you have heard them. This repetition can be done either quietly in *japa* meditation, or loudly in *kirtan* singing. The more you repeat the sacred mantras, the more they embed themselves into your consciousness. Soon, as you start to remember them throughout the day, your mood lifts. With determined practice, the mantras (sounds that represent the many names of the Supreme) become second nature, until you remember them in every situation. Prolonged practice of such Krishna consciousness leads to a state known as *samadhi*, pure spiritual trance, or fully awakened consciousness. In that state you completely understand

your relationship to the Supreme and inhabit a body made of pure spiritual consciousness. You are no longer of this material world. You are completely happy, fully and permanently in the spiritual zone.

In the stage of perfection called trance, or *samadhi*, one's mind is completely restrained from material mental activities by practice of yoga. This perfection is characterized by one's ability to see the Self by the pure mind and to relish and rejoice in the self. In that joyous state, one is situated in boundless transcendental happiness. Established thus, one never departs from the truth, and upon gaining this he thinks there is no greater gain. Being situated in such a position, one is never shaken, even in the midst of greatest difficulty. This indeed is actual freedom from all miseries arising from material contact.

—*Bhagavad-gita* 6.20
(ancient spiritual literature, 3000 B.C.)

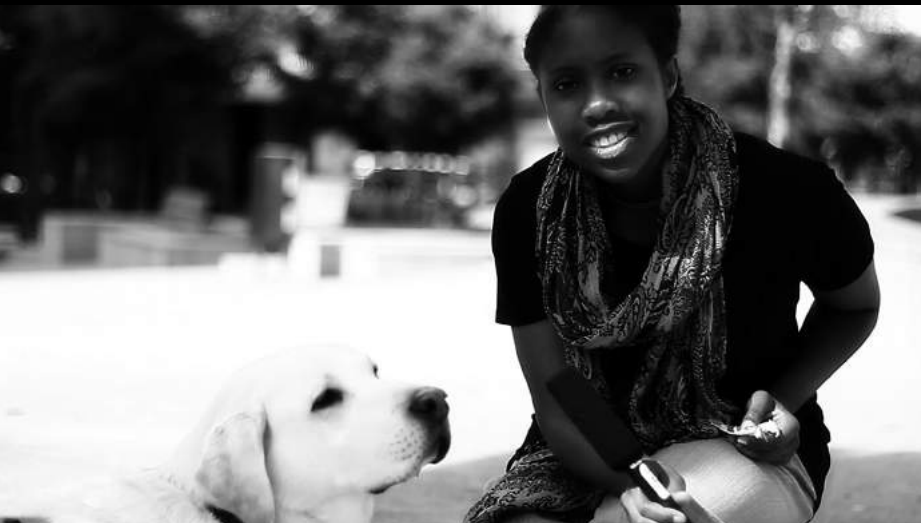
Below are links to some amazing videos of Alex Honnold, supremely expert free-solo climber. He climbs

vertical walls without any tools, ropes, or support, reliably entering into the zone when he climbs and finding great happiness in that state. Alex has an amazing skill, and I have the greatest respect for him. Still, as you watch the videos (notice your hands start to sweat as you watch), think about how you might find a safer, easier, and more accessible path into the zone by seeking out a friendly group of like-minded spiritual practitioners, practitioners engaged in a bona fide meditation practice, practitioners chanting *japa* and *kirtan*, practitioners on their way into *samadhi*. 🌸

60-minutes report on Alex Honnold:
<http://youtu.be/SR1jwwagtaQ>

Short version of "Alone on a Wall":
<http://video.nationalgeographic.com/video/adventure/featured-videos-adventure/adv-beyond-the-edge-honnold/>

Full version of "Alone on a Wall":
http://v.youku.com/v_show/id_XMjM3MTcyOTgw.html



ENOUGH!

VIDEOS

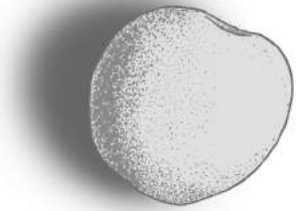
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RECIPE



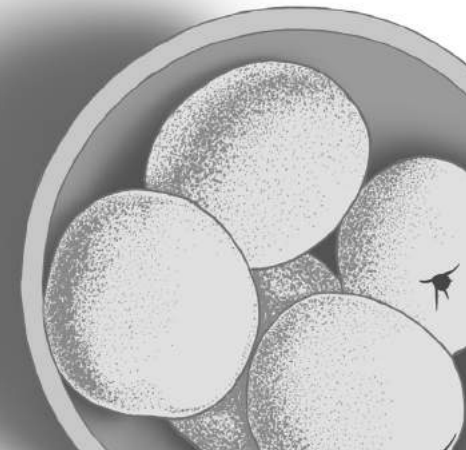
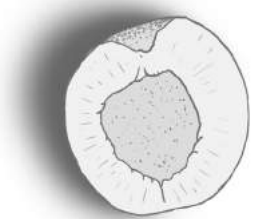
MUESLI BAR SLICE

This slice is a firm favourite in our household. Oats are high in fibre, helping you feel fuller for longer and maintaining your energy levels. With the added benefit of nuts and seeds, you can happily chow down on this tasty snack, and it's oh so quick to prepare.

BY RADHA PRASAD

- 1 cup rolled oats
- cup whole oats
- Pinch of salt
- cup raisins
- cup chopped apricots
- cup honey
- cup sesame seeds
- cup chopped almonds
- cup peanut butter
- cup brown sugar
- 1 teaspoon vanilla essence

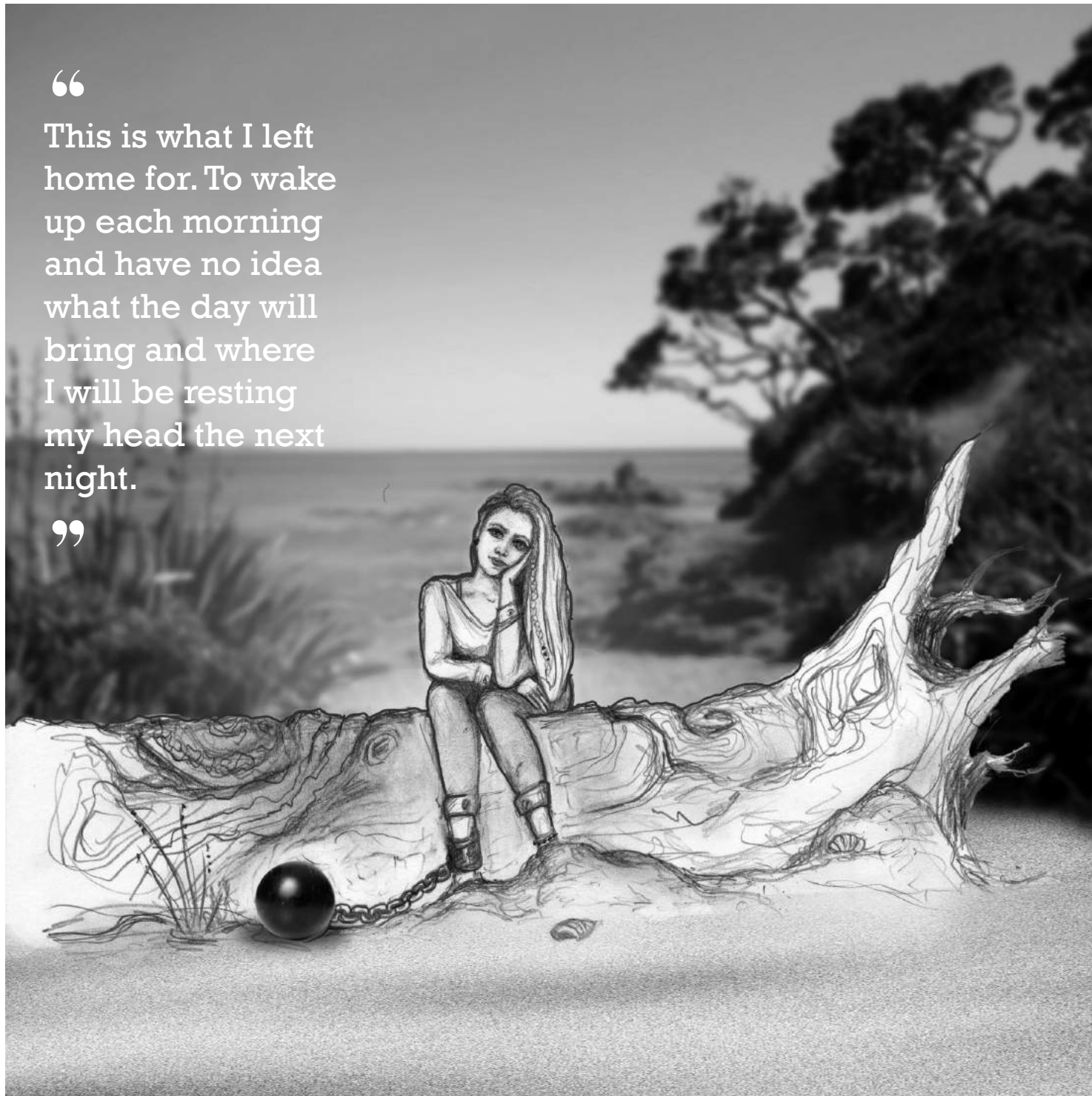
Mix dry ingredients in a bowl. Place the peanut butter, sugar, and honey in a saucepan and heat slowly, stirring constantly until ingredients are melted and combined. Add the vanilla essence, then pour the liquid ingredients onto the dry ingredients, and mix well. Press into a greased baking tray. Chill for 30 minutes before cutting into squares.



“

This is what I left home for. To wake up each morning and have no idea what the day will bring and where I will be resting my head the next night.

”



ANASUYA

Diary of a Wandering Traveller

Many of us seek freedom yet continue to find ourselves trapped.

BY JAMIE HENDERSON

Early morning sunrise down at the beach... Ahhhh, peace.

This is what I left home for. To wake up each morning and have no idea what the day will bring and where I will be resting my head the next night. After all the stress of study and work and all the drama from my friends and family, I really needed this break. Freedom.

Now here I am, sitting in a postcard. Surf, sand, sun... no plans, no responsibility, no commitments. No boyfriend, no boss, no mortgage, and definitely no kids! This is as free as I'll ever be.

But somehow I don't really feel satisfied. I almost feel kind of... empty. Don't get me wrong; I know my loved ones at home would kill to be sitting on this sand dune right now and I am grateful. I'm having once-in-a-lifetime experiences and meeting so many new people from all over the world.

Like out partying last night, the people I met were so full of colour, stories, and adventure. I wasn't drinking due to my dwindling backpacker budget, and still the music was good and the conversation was interesting.

But as the night wore on I started to feel a bit like an alien. Normally I would have been caught up in my own hedonistic haze, but being sober gave me such a clearer perspective. I could see how everyone was becoming more and more competitive and desperate in their search for laughs, booze, and sex—the boys were fighting, the girls were crying, and I couldn't get a word of sense out of anyone.

It just made me think: who's really in control here, the people or the alcohol? Are these people free if they are just controlled by their impulses? For example, people find it so hard to quit smoking. Someone could say that they freely choose to smoke, but if they couldn't

freely choose not to, then how much choice do they really have?

I guess, until you try to take away the things that you crave, you never know how much you are trapped by them. We want to be free, and even if we manage to avoid responsibility externally for a while, we are still trapped internally by our habits, our desires, and our ways of thinking.

So where is the real freedom in this world? Everywhere I go I still have to deal with difficult people, work hard, and do my laundry. Not to mention my thoughts, moods, and emotions. Sometimes life just feels like an upward treadmill; even when you try to jump off, it just keeps going.

As always, I'm thinking too much. I just need to keep busy and keep moving on.

I'm off for a swim. Carpe diem! 🌺



Jamie developed a taste for travel in her childhood, hopping between the United States and the United Kingdom, where she now lives in Cardiff, Wales. Upon finishing college she took a “gap year,” which unexpectedly lasted four years and led her to Australia and New Zealand. Her adventures and questions led her to bhakti-yoga, which she continues to pursue along with other interests including writing, reading, dance, and music.



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THE BODY-MIND PROBLEM

BY SACHI DULAL

“ The heinous crimes of a despotic dictator would surely cease to move us to indignation if we learnt that factors beyond his control entirely predetermined his behaviour. ”

The following excerpt is from a blog by a student who attended one of Devamrita Swami's talks at Melbourne University. It raises a common objection to the existence of spiritual reality.

“Reincarnation is a really common part of Vedic and Sramanic religions (Buddhism, Jainism, Sikhism, and Hinduism, which is broadly speaking the heading that ISKCON falls under), which holds no water with me. Unsurprisingly, reincarnation faces many of the same philosophical problems as heaven.

“The biggest one is that it requires a soul...This is essentially the same as classic Western dualism, at least as far as I can see. The idea is that our physical bodies are really only one aspect of ourselves. When we die, our soul/atman carries on and with it our identity, in some sense at least.

“This is the sense in which we are reincarnated – our bodies don't move on, just this atman. There are many questions that this raises: how does it relate to the body? How does it relate to the mind?...”

“...if my body and my atman do have a causal relationship (that is, that one can cause changes in the other), they must have some common ground. Descartes thought this connection was in the pituitary gland, but that doesn't really solve the problem. How can the physical and the spiritual interact?”¹

A Response by Sachi Dulal

Most of us live our lives under the influence of the thesis that our thoughts, ideas, and emotions have causal power. Every self-help book that has been written is based upon this principle: By changing our intentions we change our behaviour. The heinous crimes of a despotic dictator would surely cease to move us to indignation if we learnt that factors beyond his control entirely predetermined his behaviour. Yet this was the claim of classical physics—the worldview that achieved prominence during the seventeenth century due to the work of Sir Isaac Newton. Pol Pot could hardly help himself from murdering thousands of his fellow Cambodians, because the interactions of microscopic mechanical elements in his brain completely determined his actions. The upshot: Human beings are mechanical robots. Our thoughts, feelings, and ideas are causally inert and cannot influence our behaviour.

More than eight decades of cumulative evidence in quantum mechanics have long since falsified this central claim of mechanistic determinism.² But the fact that the materialistic precepts of classical physics still hold sway in the general intellectual milieu is hardly surprising to anyone familiar with the trails of human thought. Evidence rarely changes our paradigm—we see what we want to see.

In responding to this student's questions, I will briefly highlight the evidence for reincarnation before addressing the deeper issue at hand: How can the physical and the spiritual interact?

The Evidence for Reincarnation

Doctors at the University of Virginia Medical Centre have uncovered some of the best evidence for reincarnation. For the past forty-five years they have conducted exhaustive investigations into young children's reports of past life memories. The pioneering founder of this work, the late Canadian psychiatrist Ian Stevenson (1918-2007), served as head of the Division of Personality Studies at the University of Virginia. With the scientific community his target audience, Stevenson spent forty-five years investigating cases of small children who claimed to remember previous lives. Stevenson complained that these cases were reported so frequently that his staff could not keep up with them.

In almost 3000 cases collected from every continent that they did manage to keep up with, Stevenson was able to confirm the existence of a deceased person who corresponded with a particular child's memories. The staggering details of these memories allowed Stevenson to track down the identity of the child's previous birth and confirm the details. On some occasions he was able to take children

to the exact location they talked about—where his investigation had already uncovered a person who lived and died exactly as the children described. The children effortlessly made their way through a foreign neighborhood, and correctly identified their previous house, possessions, relatives, and friends.

For Stevenson, the cases that provided the strongest empirical evidence for reincarnation were ones involving biological correlation. To demonstrate this conviction, he published *Reincarnation and Biology: A Contribution to the Etiology of Birthmarks and Birth Defects*, a mammoth work of more than 2200 pages, which detailed 225 cases in which children who seemed to remember a previous life had birthmarks or birth defects that corresponded to features from the life of the “previous personality.”

Stevenson's impeccable academic reputation for meticulously detailed research has been difficult to ignore, and scientific periodicals such as the *American Journal of Psychiatry*, the *Journal of Nervous and Mental Disease*, and the *International Journal of Comparative Sociology* have published his work. Even the American Medical Association, undisputed in size, influence, and tradition stated in its journal that Stevenson had “painstakingly and unemotionally collected a detailed series of cases in which the evidence for reincarnation is difficult to understand on any other grounds...He has placed on record a large amount of data that cannot be ignored.”³

Dr. Jim B. Tucker, a child psychiatrist at the University of Virginia, is now directing research into children's reports of past-life memories at the Division of Personality Studies. In his book *Life Before Life: A Scientific Investigation of Children's Memories of Previous Lives* he explores the various features of this worldwide phenomenon, describing a number of such cases from around the world. At the end of the book, Tucker concludes:

“Our cases contribute to the evidence that consciousness can survive death in at least some situations, and this is surely a more important finding than any specific ones that we may discern. This means that each of us is more than just a physical body. We have a consciousness as well that is capable of surviving the death of that body. If we change the terminology from consciousness to spirit, then we can say that we all have a spiritual component along with our physical bodies.”⁴

In his 1995 publication, *The Demon-Haunted World*, eminent cosmologist Carl Sagan wrote, “At the time of this writing there are three claims in the ESP field which, in my opinion, deserve serious study: (1) that by thought alone humans can (barely) affect random number generators in computers, (2) that people under mild sensory deprivation can receive thoughts or images ‘projected’ at them, and (3) that young children sometimes report the details of a previous

life, which upon checking turn out to be accurate and which they could not have known about in any other way than reincarnation.”⁵ Given Sagan's materialistic convictions, the remark is gracious. It will not be impudent of you to observe that there are other kinds of evidence worthy of serious study, the most important of which—our own self.

The Soul is Not the Mind

In his first book, *A Treatise of Human Nature*, Scottish philosopher David Hume narrated his experience of trying to discover his self. Looking within, Hume reported witnessing a collection of sensations, images, emotions, and thoughts—a collection in a perpetual state of flux. Failing to discover an enduring entity within all that he witnessed, Hume declared that the idea of an unchanging self was a chimera, a palliative fantasy meant to relieve the anxieties of philosophical toddlers. If you happen to belong to the camp of toddlers then don't fret. Help is at hand. Krishna scholar Ravindra Swarupa Dasa argues how:

How could Hume have missed himself? Was he being wilfully obtuse? Imagine him conducting an inventory of his mental contents, like an auctioneer appraising the contents of an estate up for sale. He walks through each room, examining each object. Picking it up, setting it down. Looking for some-

“...many philosophers misidentify the contents of consciousness—the transformations of the physical and the mental—with consciousness itself.”

thing in particular. “Is this myself? Is this? Is this?” After an exhaustive search, he reports—truthfully enough—that he didn’t find it.

But *who* is looking? Who is inspecting this memory, this joy, this love, this fear, this regret, this ambition, this or that train of thought? David, you could not find your *self* in all that because none of that, taken separately or all together, is your self. The self is not the seen but the seer, not the experience but the experiencer. You are not even David Hume, but rather the experiencer of being David Hume...we are no more to be identified with our minds than with our bodies. The mind belongs to the category of the not-self as much as the body does. Both mind and body are material, the former being merely finer or subtler than the latter. Vedic seers know this, but Western philosophers have conflated the spiritual and the mental; “mind” and “soul” are synonymous. David Hume discovered in the *Treatise* that the mind was not the self, but he drew a false conclusion: there was no self, no soul, at all.⁶

misidentify the contents of consciousness—the transformations of the physical and the mental—with consciousness itself. But the Vedic texts hold that consciousness is the ground of all content—whether physiological, psychological, or combinations of both.

The Supersoul

Having brought the soul in from the cold, we might as well invite Krishna, the Supreme Soul, in too—an invitation made all the more necessary to understand how the physical and the spiritual interact. As the source of all energies, Krishna is all-pervading in space and time, yet, is simultaneously transcendental to space and time. In the *Bhagavad-gita* (9.4 and 9.5), Krishna explains His simultaneous immanence and transcendence:

By Me, in My unmanifested form, this entire universe is pervaded. All beings are in Me, but I am *not* in them. (Italics added)

And yet everything that is created does not rest in Me. Behold My mystic opulence! Although I am the maintainer of all living entities and although I am everywhere, I am not a part of this cosmic manifestation, for My Self is the very source of creation.

Krishna’s all-pervading presence in the material realm is known in Sanskrit as the *Paramatma* or the Supersoul—the presence of the Supreme, the Complete Whole, within the finite. The Upanishads describe the role of the Supersoul:

“The one Supreme Lord lives hidden inside all created things. He pervades all matter and sits within the hearts of all living beings. As the indwelling Supersoul, He supervises their material activities. Thus, while having no material qualities Himself, He is the unique witness and giver of consciousness.”⁷

“Two companion birds sit together in the shelter of the same tree. One of them is relishing the taste of the tree’s berries, while the other refrains from eating and instead watches over His friend.”⁸

Krishna, as the Supersoul, resides in everything, from subatomic entities to the universe as a whole, but material conditions do *not* affect Him. In the Upanishadic analogy quoted above, the two birds are the soul and the Supersoul. The tree is the body, and the tastes of the berries are the varieties of sensual pleasure born of the body that are available to the soul in the material cosmos. *Paramatma*, the Supersoul, is the watching bird, the detached observer, who witnesses the activities of embodied souls and supplies them with the knowledge, memory, and forgetfulness they need to enact their desires.

The Body-Mind Problem

The French philosopher and mathematician, Rene Descartes, speculated that human beings possess a non-physical mind that directs the actions of their bodies. Descartes went on to propose that matter has the properties of extension and location in space, but mind does not. Consequently, many people have rejected the Cartesian duality of mind and matter because it is impossible to see how an entity with no spatial properties could interact with something located in a particular position in space. However, a “nonphysical entity,” as mathematician and Vedic scholar Richard Thompson pointed out “does not have to be devoid of all physical properties. We have tried to formally define what is meant by ‘nonphysical’ by...the idea of numerical indescribability. We say that an entity is numerically indescribable if significant features of the entity cannot be represented in numbers. Yet this does not imply that the entity cannot have any measurable properties at all. Consciousness provides our archetypal example of numerical indescribability.”⁹ Indeed, according to the Vedic version, the conscious self is localized within the body. The Mundaka Upanishad (3.1.9) states thus:

“The conscious self is atomic in size and can be perceived by perfect intelligence. This atomic self is floating in the five kinds of air [prana, apana, vyana, samana, and udana], is situated within the [region of

the] heart, and spreads its influence all over the body of the embodied living being. When the self is purified from the contamination of the five kinds of air, its spiritual influence is exhibited.”

Mind-Matter Interaction

Nicolas Malebranche and Arnold Geulincx, two of the principal followers of Cartesian philosophy, developed a model of how mind and matter, two distinct entities, could interact. They did this through the philosophical principle of *occasionalism*. Philosopher David Ray Griffin writes:

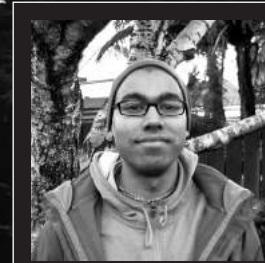
“According to this doctrine, on the occasion of my hand’s being on a hot stove, God causes my mind to feel pain, which leads me to decide to move my hand. My mind, unfortunately, cannot cause my body to move any more than my body could cause my mind to feel pain. On the occasion of my deciding to move my hand, accordingly, God obliges, moving it for me. All apparent interaction between mind and body is said to require this constant supernatural intervention.”¹⁰

The Vedic model of consciousness-mind-body interaction is similar to the one proposed by Malebranche and Geulincx. Philosopher of science and author of *Human Devolution*, Michael Cremo explains:

In the Vedic model, mind (a subtle kind of matter) is placed along with ordinary matter on one side of the Cartesian divide. The soul, a unit of pure consciousness, is placed on the other side. The question still arises, how can any connection between the soul (consciousness) and matter in its two forms (ordinary matter and the subtle material mind) be established? The key is the Supersoul. The Supersoul is the ultimate source of the souls of living beings as well as the mind element and ordinary matter. The Supersoul monitors the desires and intentions of the souls of living beings and causes mind and matter to transform in response to those desires. The Vedic model also incorporates the property dualism of Spinoza, who proposed that there is actually only one substance, spirit, that is perceived differently according to its application, just as electricity can be used to heat or cool. The Supersoul possesses a spiritual potency which it can deploy in different ways. The spiritual potency when deployed to cover the original spiritual consciousness of the individual soul is known as matter. But the same potency can be changed back to its original spiritual form by the Supersoul.¹¹

Sentient beings inhabit bodies composed of many atoms, each with soul and Supersoul. But in this condition the manifestation of the soul’s consciousness is heavily obscured. However, the bodies of living

“The Supersoul monitors the desires and intentions of the souls of living beings and causes mind and matter to transform in response to those desires.”



Sachi Dulal has a background in mathematics, economics, and environmental science. He loves to study and write about the intersect of science and Krishna philosophy.

beings also contain a dominant soul-Supersoul pair which is the soul and Supersoul not of a single atom but of the complete organism, giving the organism as a whole a developed individual consciousness connected to the universal consciousness of God.

Explanatory Power

“Explanatory power,” mathematician John C. Lennox has observed, “is just as important, if not a more important criterion for the validity of a scientific theory, than simplicity. Sometimes simpler theories have been discarded because they did not have sufficient explanatory power. It was, after all, Einstein who said: ‘Explanations should be as simple as possible, but no simpler.’”¹²

How much explanatory power, then, does the Vedic model of consciousness-mind-body interaction have?

Dean Radin, senior scientist at the Institute of Noetic Sciences, and many other researchers have proposed that living systems participate in a reality which includes both upward and downward causation—one in which states of matter can influence states of consciousness and vice versa. Radin suggests that a model of this system “might place quantum or subquantum physics at the bottom and a ‘spirit’ or ‘superspirit’ at the top.”¹³ In his book *The Conscious Universe: The Scientific Truth of Psychic Phenomena*, Radin describes what an adequate physical theory of living systems might look like:

The theory will have to explain how information can be obtained at great distances unbound by the usual limitations of space or time...Such a theory must also explain not only how one can get information from a distance in space or time, but also how one can get particular information... The theory must account for why we are not overwhelmed with information all the time...The theory must also explain how random processes can be tweaked by mental intention...The theory of psi should explain phenomena associated with evidence suggesting that something may survive bodily death. These phenomena include apparitions, hauntings, out-of-body experiences (OBE), and near death experiences (NDE)...The theory may need to account for poltergeist phenomena, which provide the primary evidence for large-scale mind-matter interaction effects.¹⁴

Michael Cremo has explained:

A theory based on the Vedic model of the cosmos, could account for all of the above. Matter, mind, and individual spirits emanate from God. God enters into each atom and accompanies each individual spirit as the Supersoul, or Paramatma. The Supersoul, by definition, is present in all phases of time and space, and is simultaneously beyond time and space. The Supersoul is also all

knowing. Therefore, through the medium of the Supersoul, knowledge can be transmitted from one spirit to another beyond the usual limits of time and space. There are many examples of this in the Vedic literature. The *Bhagavad-gita* (15.15) says that it is from the Supersoul that each individual soul gets memory, knowledge, and forgetfulness. The Supersoul can therefore control the kind and amount of information that comes to each individual soul, whether through normal or paranormal means. Since the Supersoul is present in each atom of matter and is at the same time aware of conscious intentions, it is possible for the Supersoul to produce the effects associated with random number generators. Responding to the desires of experimenters and the intentions of subjects, the Supersoul could cause more ones or zeros to come up in the course of the experiments. The Vedic model, which posits the existence of an eternal conscious self (*atma*), would explain evidence for survival of bodily death. According to the Vedic model, the eternal conscious self, if it does not return to the spiritual level of reality, remains in the material world covered by a subtle mental body. This mental body is composed of a subtle material element (mind) that can, by the agency of Supersoul, affect ordinary matter. This would explain poltergeist effects and apparitions. The mental body also includes a subtle sensory apparatus, capable of operating without the assistance of the ordinary bodily sense organs. This would explain the visual perceptions that subjects report during out-of-body experiences.¹⁵

The mental body described in the Vedic texts actually consists of three elements—mind, intelligence and *false ego*—the most subtle material element, which acts as the interface between consciousness and matter. Readers wishing to acquaint themselves with the entirety of the self-mind-body interaction described in the Vedic texts may turn to the pages of *Human Devolution* where Michael Cremo draws upon the ancient spiritual encyclopedia *Shrimad Bhagavatam* to depict a more thorough version. The detailed version provides an even more subtle and refined model of self-mind-body interaction in the environment of a multilevel cosmos, divided principally into regions of gross matter, subtle matter, and spirit. It also allows one to integrate evidence from the entire gamut of human experience, including humanity’s wisdom traditions, into an exhaustive synthesis, offering fruitful lines of research confirming and refining a complex model of self-mind-body interaction.

The explanatory potential of the Krishna model has not gone unnoticed. “The possibility that this ancient way of viewing Nature might be useful in science,” distinguished quantum physicist Henry P. Stapp has remarked, “arises in the context of contemporary efforts to understand the empirically observed correlations between conscious processes and brain processes.”¹⁶ Noting that modern science’s concepts of mind and matter constrain such efforts, Stapp finds it helpful that the self-mind-body triad described in the Krishna ontology, more technically known as the

Gaudiya Vaishnava Vedanta (GVV) ontology, clearly distinguishes between the knower and the known:

“GVV accommodates these ideas in a straight-forward way by making a clear distinction between the subjective conscious knower, the spiritual ‘I,’ and a mental realm that contains certain things that he can know directly. This mental realm, in contrast to the Cartesian realm of mind, is material: it is constructed out of a subtle kind of matter. The introduction of this second material level, mind, provides...a basis for coherently extending the mathematical methods of the physical science from the gross physical world into the realm of mind, while leaving intact the knower, or self.”¹⁷

Overall, Stapp considered GVV ontology to be “internally consistent and compatible with the available scientific data.”¹⁸ 🌿

Notes

¹ The entire blog entry can be found at <http://whitedevilsophistry.com/tag/devamrita-swami/>

² For an elaborate discussion of this topic see Henry P. Stapp, *Mindful Universe: Quantum Mechanics and the Participating Observer* 2nd Ed. (Heidelberg: Springer, 2011).

³ *Journal of the American Medical Association*, 1 December 1975, as quoted in Cranston and Williams, *Reincarnation*, x.

⁴ Jim B. Tucker, *Life Before Life: A Scientific Investigation of Children’s Memories of Previous Lives* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 2006), 229.

⁵ Carl Sagan, *The Demon-Haunted World* (New York: Random House, 1995), 302.

⁶ Article first published in *Back to Godhead* magazine in 1991; Available at: <http://soithappens.com/2008/11/18/pointing/>

⁷ *Shvetashvatara* (6.11), *Gopala-tapani* (Uttara 97), and *Brahma* (4.1) Upanishads.

⁸ *Shvetashvatara Upanishad* (4.6), *Mundaka Upanishad* (3.1.1-2)

⁹ Richard L. Thompson, *Mechanistic and Nonmechanistic Science: An Investigation into the Nature of Consciousness and Form* (The Bhaktivedanta Book Trust, 1981), 44-45.

¹⁰ David Ray Griffin, *Parapsychology, Philosophy and Spirituality: A Postmodern Exploration* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1997), 105.

¹¹ Michael A. Cremo, *Human Devolution: A Vedic Alternative to Darwin’s Theory* (Torchlight Publishing, 2003), 240-241.

¹² John C. Lennox, *God’s Undertaker Has Science Buried God?* (Oxford: Lion Publishing, 2007), 173.

¹³ Dean L. Radin, *The Conscious Universe: The Scientific Truth of Psychic Phenomena* (San Francisco: Harper Edge, 1997), 261.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 278-280.

¹⁵ Michael A. Cremo, *Human Devolution: A Vedic Alternative to Darwin’s Theory* (Torchlight Publishing, 2003), 239-240.

¹⁶ Henry P. Stapp, *A Report on the Gaudiya Vaishnava Vedanta Form of Vedic Ontology* (Berkeley: Bhaktivedanta Institute, 1994), 1.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 9.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 3.

YOU OFFENDED ME



BALADEV NITAI

ADVENTURES IN AUSSIE STUDENT PARADISE

Reminding ourselves that not one scientific instrument in the world can directly detect the presence of consciousness, we humbly scale back our matter-centric hopes.

BY DEVAMRITA SWAMI

“You offended me,” the young university student leaned into my face and charged. Sitting with students at the University of Melbourne, Australia’s premier tertiary institution, I had just finished a presentation: “Consciousness: Pleasure Beyond Time and Space.”

Earlier, the same student had challenged me, during the questions following my lecture. Turning to face the audience, she had triumphantly asserted that since the awareness of a baby differs from an adult’s, we know, as fact, that consciousness is a biochemical product, emerging from the body’s various phases.

Patience and gently, I sought to deal with her fuzzy logic and fiction-science. “Let’s just consider a baby. Exactly when and how does the baby body suddenly manufacture consciousness? Or does it arrive from the mother, through the umbilical cord?”

“Moreover, what are the biochemical catalysts for consciousness—what none can demonstrate is a material substance, whether in a newborn or an adult? Conscious, subjective awareness arising from inert matter—isn’t this a faith?” I reassured her, though, that many academics now agree, myth and legend play a psychologically positive role in human society.

“Enter the laboratory of *Bhagavad-gita*,” I invited. Explore Krishna’s presentation of consciousness as the sure indicator of the nonmaterial self, the *atma*. Krishna explains, “In the same way that the sun illuminates this entire world, similarly the nonmaterial spiritual particle, the *atma*, illuminates the entire body by consciousness.” (*Bhagavad-gita*. 13:34)

Offering time-tested techniques for verifying His spiritual information, Krishna, the Supreme Scientist, is open and magnanimous—like any respectable university, to a qualified applicant. On the other hand, where is the research institute that can provide us any methodology allowing even the slightest experience of matter producing consciousness? Reminding ourselves that not one scientific instrument in the world can directly detect the presence of consciousness, we humbly scale back our matter-centric hopes.

“Some perceive the nonmaterial self, the *atma*, as wondrous; some describe it as amazing, and some hear of it as incredible. Meanwhile, others, even after encountering knowledge of the *atma*, cannot comprehend the subject at all.” (*Bhagavad-gita* 2:29)

“ Conscious, subjective awareness arising from inert matter— isn’t this a faith? ”

The provocative student resuming silence, another student quite politely requested me to resolve something he said puzzled him. “We all know that gorillas are not conscious, whereas humans are. Since it is a fact that everything develops through evolution, why this difference between humans and animals?”

“When did you last visit the world-class Melbourne Zoo?” I nudged. Then, maintaining a straight face, I asked the young man had he noticed any difference between the behaviour of the gorillas sporting under their trees and the frolics of students strolling to their classes. “Both creatures lustily cavort in public.” The audience smiled knowingly.

“More importantly,” I continued, “leaving aside evolutionary controversies about entire bodies developing completely by random selection from who knows what, I would like to hear the proposed evolutionary phases for the gradual biological appearance of consciousness.”

After the final questions, the students lined up to achieve an exquisite lunch of Krishna food. Immediately the young lady challenger pounced upon me, positioning herself a few centimetres from my nose. “Your lecture has offended me!” she accused.

Why? I thought, quickly scanning her for a clue. Certainly, she may not have digested everything in the lecture, but why the inner tempest and torment?

She enlightened me on the spot:

“I am a rational atheist. You should be more careful and sensitive, to not disturb our kind. You obviously fail to comprehend that rational atheists are an important sector of society; their presence should be duly acknowledged and respected by all.”

I always tell our *bhakti* outreach staff at universities that we are not a debate club. Argument-mongering is not our business; friend-making is. Surrounded by the slurping, munching sounds of eighty happy students processing Krishna’s presence as spiritualized food, I chose to duck the young lady’s lance, complimenting her on her courage to be broad-minded.

But she wasn’t finished.

“One minute you quote scientific research, and the next, *Bhagavad-gita*—it’s not fair! What’s more, the *Gita* was spoken by Krishna—a *guy!* And all those Vedic sages you Krishna people adore—they’re *guys!*”

I edged back a bit, to create some breathing room. Suddenly my voice dropped, my eyelids drooping. “Sorry for my fatigue,” I softly lamented. “I guess the long lecture I gave plus the fascinating questions the audience asked combined to wear me out.”

Much as she tried to press me, definitely I was not going to do battle with her extremist feminism. Especially since I knew that she could visit our *bhakti* centres, such as the Loft in Auckland and Bhakti Lounge in Wellington, and hear lectures by so many astute female *bhakti* practitioners.

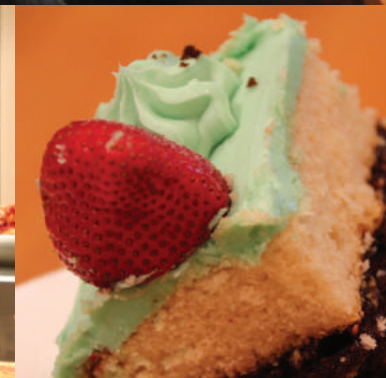
“Oh well,” she relented. “I’m going to get some food. Actually, I just attend the weekly Bhakti Club gatherings here simply and only to eat.”

I nodded in agreement: “Yes, me too.”

Later, across the room, I spotted her among the crowd, heartily devouring Krishna’s lunchtime mercy. Walking over, I submissively inquired if I could bring her more, and encouraged her to keep coming—only and just to eat. 🌸



Devamrita Swami is an international speaker, author, Yale graduate, and monk. Travelling extensively on every continent of the planet, he has been sharing the path of bhakti-yoga with others for over 40 years. He advocates spiritually based economics, sustainability, and environmentalism. When he is not travelling, he calls New Zealand home.



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GO GROW YOUR OWN

Any gardener can tell you about the taste of a sun-warmed tomato straight off the vine or freshly picked and cooked corn on the cob.

BY BHAVA SANDHI

Four years ago, when we moved to Otaki on the Kapiti coast, my husband started his organic veggie garden. Now, after the first year, 100 percent of the veggies we use are from our own backyard (and that's a lot of veggies for a vegetarian family of three).

Nothing tastes better than produce freshly picked from your backyard. Any gardener can tell you about the taste of a sun-warmed tomato straight off the vine or freshly picked and cooked corn on the cob. Even if you purchase "fresh" organic vegetables, you don't know how long they have been on the shop's shelf. If you don't have much backyard, herb boxes are great; fresh parsley and coriander are not only good for you, but make a tasty addition to any meal.

From the ecological and economical standpoints, with your own garden, you don't have to fill your car with gas to drive to the shops to purchase food that has been sent from halfway across the world, thus saving you money, and the environment its vital resources. Gardening is also good exercise and a great way to de-stress. In fact, a study from the University of Bristol in 2007 showed that exposure to soil stimulates the serotonin-releasing neurons in the brain—the same neurons activated by the use of Prozac!¹ Happy gardening!

Moreover, as a mother, I am reassured when I can feed my daughter her first foods knowing they are free from chemical fertilisers and pesticides. Also, when gardening is part of a child's life from an early age, even if one parent gardens while the kids make mud pies, they learn so much. They learn about photosynthesis, how food is grown, compost making, healthy eating, respect for the environment, and that food comes from the earth, not a plastic packet. They

learn to focus on a task,² and they develop a love for the outdoors. When I was young, I didn't know if a potato came from a bush, a vine, or a tree, let alone that different vegetables are grown in different seasons! My three year old loves showing off the beans she grew from seed this winter, and in the summer she was so proud she could pick cherry tomatoes from her own plant to give to her grandpa.

Often, people who have tried their hand at gardening ask, "What do you eat in October other than broad beans?" Before the summer seedlings are producing, and after the winter crop has died off, people often get caught out with just broad beans. To enjoy a variety of vegetables all year round, consider the following tips:

- Use a glasshouse to prolong your seasons; last year we had tomatoes and capsicums from late December to August.
- Grow vegetables and fruits that will store; there's nothing better in winter than pumpkin soup or kumara wedges.
- Dehydrate, freeze, bottle, or use the ever increasingly popular and healthy process of fermenting to keep a variety of vegetables for use all year round.
- Look around for edible weeds; you may have chickweed growing in abundance, an invigorating addition to a salad, or your local stream may have some puha.
- Get to know your neighbours; so many people who have fruit trees just let the fruit fall to the ground, and they probably won't mind you taking some.



Bhava Sandhi lives on the Kapiti coast with her husband and four year old daughter. She loves experimenting in the garden, cooking fresh from the garden, and travelling. Taking her inspiration from bhakti-yoga, kirtan (ancient yoga chants), and her off-the-grid friends, her motto this year is "simple living, high thinking."

- If all else fails and you get left with a rather heavy amount of broad beans, be creative in your cooking. Use broad bean leaves in your salads, cook leaves as you would do spinach, use young pods in stir-fries or larger beans in casseroles and dips, or as my daughter loves to do, eat them right out of the pod!

The purpose of food is to increase the duration of life, purify the mind, and aid bodily strength. Food also plays a vital role in our spiritual evolution. In the *Bhagavad-gita*, Krishna recommends a compassionate diet that excludes the needless slaughter of animals. In a world where confusion and anxiety increasingly affect the joyful act of eating, what could be more empowering than growing at least part of what you eat? 🌺

Notes

- ¹ Josie Glausiusz, "Is Dirt the New Prozac?," Discover Magazine, (June 14 2007), <http://discovermagazine.com/2007/jul/raw-data-is-dirt-the-new-prozac#.Uh0iAY6G-21>
- ² Frances E. Kuo and Andrea Faber Taylor, "A Potential Natural Treatment for Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder: Evidence From a National Study," American Journal of Public Health, (September 2004), <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC1448497/>



A 2009 National Gardening Association study in the U.S. found that the average family with a vegetable garden spends just \$70 a year on it and grows an estimated \$600 worth of vegetables.



There has to be more to the picture, much more than just randomly buying red shoes... But what is that more?

BY MUNJARANYA

Once a week, I volunteer to serve out food at "Krishna Food," the karma-free food kiosk at Victoria University in Wellington. Last week, I saw a guy in red shoes walk up to our kiosk. Spontaneously I exclaimed, "Red shoes!" and he replied resignedly, "Yeah, yeah! Red shoes...I felt like buying red shoes, so I got them." I smiled. It was obvious from his tone that he was no longer excited about his bright red shoes. Maybe he didn't think it was quite intelligent of him to have bought them in the first place. But I think he consoles himself with the thought that he did what he felt like doing. Whether now it makes sense or not is of hardly any importance.

I recently completed a thesis on trying to understand why people binge drink in New Zealand. I found that most people binge drink simply because they feel like it. They don't think it wise to binge drink, but because they feel like it, they still do it.

Innumerable times, I have made decisions based on my feelings alone (especially while shopping!) It also seems to be the modus operandi these days. "Just do what you feel like." So what do we do with our intelligence then? Do we lock it up and throw away the key? That way we would be free to do what we feel like, without having to worry about rationality, logic, objectivity, fairness, and responsibility. We would be free, just like animals. Free to do whatever we want, wherever, whenever, and however.

But wait a minute. If I'm not an animal, why should I act like one? Why should I lock my intelligence away? Without a doubt, our intelligence is much higher and more developed than an animal's, so we owe it to ourselves to inquire into the purpose of this higher intelligence. Surely our intellect is not meant just for finding

elaborate and elite ways of satisfying our necessities of food, shelter, and security. There has to be more to the picture, much more than just randomly buying red shoes or binge drinking. But what is that more?

Now that's a question that truly deserves your intelligence. 🌸



Munjaranya has a background in engineering, management, communications, and counselling. She loves the simple things in life: conversations, laughter, and lots of fun. Munjaranya enjoys singing her heart out and dancing in kirtans, her shelter for joy and peace.



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