

THE ROLE OF THE GUIDE IN INSPIRING YOGIC CHANGE

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Abstract

Individuals and leaders in a VUCA (volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous) world face challenges at multiple levels to realize their goals. Many organizational landscapes are undergoing changes due to the triple bottom line goals of 'profit', 'people' and 'planet' underlined by the need for sustainable development and ethical decision-making. Mohandas Pai (Padmashri Awardee, ex-Director at Infosys and Chairman of Manipal Global Education) shared these words around this context in his keynote address at the conference on 'Indigenous Models of Sustainability, Good Governance and Spiritual Transformation' at Indian Institute of Management (Bangalore) on Jan 5th 2016: "We need to have truth, justice and moderation. In that moderation lies our future and sustainability. For that, spiritual questions need to be faced". This comment suggests that pertinent questioning of the origin, the goal and the purpose of humanity need to be pursued by one and all leading towards a personal experience or atleast an understanding of current assumptions of Reality (due to the lack of a personal experience). A solid personal conviction in these assumptions and experiences in today's context may hold the answer to achieve sustainable balanced existence for the human race. This brings us into the sphere of spiritual systems and/ or philosophies that may help achieve these goals. This conceptual paper seeks to highlight the role of the Guru or Guide in enabling humanity to achieve their highest potential in action based on yogic psychology and practices. The proposed methodology is an exploratory research which shall include literary research and philosophical research with the objective of bringing clarity to the concept and person called the 'Guru' with the backdrop of Yogic philosophy and literature.

Introduction

Individuals and leaders in a VUCA (volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous) world face challenges at multiple levels to realize their goals. Many organizational landscapes are undergoing changes due to the triple bottom line goals of 'profit', 'people' and 'planet' underlined by the need for sustainable development and ethical decision-making. Shri Mohandas Pai (Padmashri Awardee, ex-Director at Infosys and Chairman of Manipal Global Education) was the key note speaker at the conference on 'Indigenous Models of Sustainability, Good Governance and Spiritual Transformation' at Indian Institute of Management (Bangalore) between January 4th – 6th 2016 wherein the author presented an award winning paper titled "An Inner Source for Leadership Decision Making: A Yogic Perspective" (Viswanathan, 2016). Mr. Pai in his key note speech shared the current model for economic growth which is based on 'conquest mentality'; wherein those with power and superiority seek to control power, resources etc. which affect the weaker communities and nations. This had led to past global phenomena like colonization, slavery, world wars and superpower status of nations. The model is based on unsustainable exploitation of nature and man based on inequities to drive economic growth. Man became rich through destruction of natural resources due to the scale made possible by the industrial revolution

started in the 17th century. Business schools during the 70s and 80s were responsible for propagating this 'conquest mentality' driving executives to the 'edge' between the moral and the immoral, right and wrong, legal and illegal actions. The discipline of 'risk management' enabled leaders to act consistently on that 'edge'. As long as an executive would not go to jail and organizations could get away with a heavy penalty the behaviour was encouraged because bets on the 'edge' gave big rewards. The global sub-prime crisis and following recession is direct fallout of this behaviour and is no longer sustainable. The technological advancements that have contributed to the economic boom that made the OECD countries into world leaders was traditionally used to conquer nature and now it is turning towards conquering man. Humanity is on the verge of creating designer babies by interfering with the DNA and regeneration of body organs through stem cell research will lead to further extension of human life. The average age of a human being which was 27 years in 1900 is now approaching 100 years. Mr. Pai stated these words around the above context: "We need to have truth, justice and moderation. In that moderation lies our future and sustainability. For that, spiritual questions need to be faced". This comment suggests that pertinent questioning of the origin, the goal and the purpose of humanity need to be pursued by one

and all leading towards a personal experience or atleast an understanding of current assumptions of Reality (due to the lack of a personal experience). A solid personal conviction in these assumptions and experiences in today's context may hold the answers to achieve sustainable balanced existence for the human race. This brings us into the sphere of spiritual systems and/ or philosophies that may help achieve these goals. This conceptual paper seeks to highlight the role of the Guru or Guide in enabling humanity to achieve their highest potential in action based on yogic psychology and practices. The proposed methodology is an exploratory research which shall include literary research and philosophical research with the objective of bringing clarity to the concept and person called the 'Guru' with the backdrop of Yogic philosophy and literature.

Theoretical Framework of Human Integration

The theoretical framework seeks to establish a connection between the 'Goal of Yoga' and the 'Goal of Human endeavour (purpose of humanity)' which is the basis for Yogic change. There are resources in *Yogic*, *Vedantic* and psychological texts that help establish this connection. Leaders in any dimension (political, corporate, societal and personal) who choose to make their lives or the lives of those in their influence move towards a higher reality, may hope to gain from an experience of heightened human integration within themselves and within their societies. The *Guru* or Guide may be someone who is a key facilitator of such an influence.

The invocation prayer or mantra of the *Isavasya Upanishad* goes as below:

*Om. Poomamadah poomamidam
Poomaath poomamudachyathe
Poomasya pooma madaya
Poomameva vashishyathe
Om Shanti Shanti Shantih*

English Translation

That is Whole; this is whole
From the Whole the whole becomes manifest
From the Whole when the whole is negated
What remains is the Whole.

This mantra is a philosophical truth declaration which highlights the *Vedantic* themes of 'Transcendental Infinite' and its relationship with the finite 'whole' with small 'w'. The great 'Reality, Absolute and Infinite' is expressed here by the common pronoun 'That' which has a deep significance in Vedic literature. All Upanishads are

attempts at indicating 'That' – the Infinite Eternal Goal - through the use of a very finite language. This stanza declares that the Supreme Ultimate Infinity (That) is the only Reality which the mind and intellect conditioned perceiver (ego) does not realize or see because of the perceiver's ignorance of Reality. In the place of 'That' the perceiver sees 'a ghostly world of plurality and the phenomenon' (Chinmayananda, 1977).

The Ultimate goal of humanity is to become or rather realise one's nature as 'Whole' with a capital 'W' again. Leading transpersonal psychologist Ken Wilbur defines the word 'Integral' as 'to integrate, to bring together, to join, to link, to embrace. Not in the sense of uniformity, and not in the sense of ironing out all the wonderful differences, colours, zigs and zags of a rainbow-hued humanity, but in the sense of unity-in-diversity, shared commonalities along with our wonderful differences. And not just in humanity, but in the *Kosmos* at large' (Wilber, 2011). He says that it not enough to recognize the many ways in which we are all different; we need to go further and start recognizing the many ways that we are also similar and that is how he differentiates the 'heap of humanity' from 'the whole of humanity' (Wilber, 2011).

He goes on to explain how "The Greeks had a beautiful word, *Kosmos*, which means the patterned Whole of all existence, including the physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual realms. Ultimate reality was not merely the cosmos, or the physical dimension, but the *Kosmos*, or the physical and emotional and mental and spiritual dimensions altogether. Not just matter, lifeless and insentient, but the living Totality of matter, body, mind, soul, and spirit. But us poor moderns have reduced the *Kosmos* to the cosmos, we have reduced matter and body and mind and soul and spirit to nothing but matter alone, and in this drab and dreary world of scientific materialism, we are lulled into the notion that a theory uniting the physical dimension is actually a theory of everything" (Wilber, 2011).

The *Brahma Sūtras* refer to the nature of the Supreme *Brahman* or the Highest Self, of the individual soul and the universe and their inter-relations and gives hints on meditation on *Brahman*. Swami Sivananda, in his commentary on the *Brahma Sūtras*, shares that one must know and realise the eternal *Brahman* to attain eternal bliss, freedom, perfection and immortality. He defines the nature of *Brahman* as the 'all-pervading, eternal Soul which is above *Karmas*, which is the source of eternal happiness'. Here *Karmas* may be defined as the activities man is driven to perform to seek some gain or avoid pain

in the in the material world. A time comes when a person becomes indifferent to *Karmas*. He knows that *Karmas* cannot give him everlasting, unalloyed happiness which is not mixed with pain, sorrow and fear. Therefore, naturally, a desire arises in him for the knowledge of Brahman (Sivananda, 2008).

The goal of human endeavour according to Yogic psychology or philosophy is also on similar lines.

Swami Abhedananda, one of the earliest heads of the Shri Ramakrishna Mission, a direct disciple of Shri Ramakrishna Paramahansa and a contemporary of Swami Vivekananda, says that mankind has forgotten that the word psychology has been derived from the Greek word *psyche*, which means 'the soul'. Western psychology is mainly concerned with the problem of the mind, and does not recognize the mind as the intelligent psyche. The word psychology is not used 'in the sense of science of psyche or soul, but in the sense of physiological origin and ordering of mind' (Abhedananda, 1967).

Yogic psychology begins where Western psychology and psychoanalytics ends. Swami Krishnananda says that 'Patañjali the author of Yoga Sūtras tells us that we are confronted by the objects of the world and we are not merely in conformity with them, as ordinary psychology tells us'. Swami Krishnananda perhaps indicates that we are never in conformity with anything in this world; and that such conformity is impossible; 'because our real nature is not merely the mind. Yoga psychology does not believe that the essential nature of man is the mind, while to traditional psychology the highest reality is the mind. Sometimes they identify the mind with the soul and soul with the mind, not knowing that there can be something other than the mind which is the precursor and the precondition of the mind itself' (Krishnananda, 1973) - i.e. the greater 'Whole' from whence the mind too came.

Here is the defining *sūtra* of the 1st chapter (*sūtra* 1.2) of the Yoga Sūtras of Patañjali (YS).

YS 1.2 Yogaś citta-vṛtti-nirodhaḥ.

English Translation: Yoga is the regulation of the modifications of the mind.

(The Sanskrit transliteration and English translation of key *sūtras* are shown as per this format below throughout the rest of the paper)

This is the foundation *sūtra* (the 2nd *sūtra* from Chapter 1 of YS) as it 'defines with the help of only four words the essential nature of Yoga' (Taimni, 1961).

Yoga : As the journey of the human soul (*Jivātma*) to evolve and merge in the Oversoul / Ultimate Reality

(*Paramātma*) 'This state of unification of the two in consciousness as well as the mental process and discipline through which this union is attained are both called Yoga' (Taimni, 1961). Yoga is the ultimate journey of 'Self' discovery.

Citta : Taimni says 'It is fundamentally of the nature of consciousness which is immaterial but affected by matter. In fact, it may be called a product of both, consciousness and matter, or *Puruṣa* and *Prakṛti*, the presence of both being necessary for its functioning.' It is the mind stuff or material of the mind though not visible and not to be confused with the materiality of the brain.

Vṛtti : 'It is derived from the root 'Vṛt' which means 'to exist'. So *Vṛtti* is a way of existing. In considering the ways in which a thing exists we may consider its modifications, states, activities or its functions. All these connotations are present in the meaning of *Vṛtti* but in the present context this word is best translated by the words 'modifications' or 'functionings'. Since *Citta* has a functional existence and comes into being only when consciousness is affected by matter, the word 'functionings' perhaps expresses to the maximum degree the significance of *Vṛtti* in the present context, but the word 'modifications' is also used generally and understood more easily and may therefore pass' (Taimni, 1961).

Sūtras 1.6 to 1.11 contain the nature of *Vṛttis* of the lower mind and they are right knowledge, wrong knowledge, fancy (imagination), sleep and memory. There are innumerable *Vṛttis* of the higher mind as well which are not called out here. The difference between *Citta-Vṛttis* and mere impressions are called out by Taimni in his commentary. 'Memory is here defined as the retention of past experiences in the mind. But it is to be noted that these experiences are retained in the mind as mere impressions (*Saṁskāra*) and as long as they are present in their potential form, as mere impressions, they cannot be considered as a *Citta-Vṛtti*. It is only when the potential impressions are converted into their active state in the form of mental images that they can properly be considered as a *Citta-Vṛtti*' (Taimni, 1961).

Nirodhaḥ : Meaning 'restrained', 'controlled' or 'inhibited' and all three are applicable in different stages of yoga. Restraint is involved in the initial stages, control in the more advanced stages and inhibition or complete suppression in the last stage. I think it is important to point out here that even the term 'regulation' may be an effective translation for 'Nirodhaḥ' in this context. As the spiritual aspirant progresses and throws off the various *Citta-Vṛttis*

he or she still remains behind the *Citta* regulating it and slowly coming to master the *Citta*.

This *sūtra* introduces four key concepts and forms both the basis for further study of YSP as well as symbolic capsule representing all of the *sūtras* themselves in a seed form. This *sūtra* indicates the destination of the Yogic practitioner whereby he finally reaches the exalted state of *citta-vṛtti-nirodhaḥ*. So this *sūtra* addresses three aspects of 'what is the goal of Yoga', 'the way to reach that goal' and the final 'destination of Yoga'.

Literature Review and Analysis of various themes

The following three themes have been reviewed and analysed to meet the objectives.

1. The Science of Yoga leading to heightened human integration

I.K.Taimni explains that the mystery around Yoga is essential because the nature of the subject is related to the mysteries of life and the Universe. The '*Yoga Sūtras of Patañjali*' (YS) outlines the art and science of Yoga for the purpose Self-Realization. It is a process of systematically encountering, examining, and transcending each of the various gross and subtle levels of false identity in the mind field, until the jewel of the true '*Self*' comes shining through. When Patañjali codified, or compiled the *Yoga Sūtras*, no new system was created, but rather, the ancient practices were summarized in an extremely organized and terse way for the benefit of all Yogic seekers.

The *sūtras* within YS are 196 in number and the four chapters (*padas*), number of *sūtras* and chapter focus is as below:

1. *Samādhi Pāda* – 51 *sūtras* covers the introduction and focus on the state of *Samādhi* or superconsciousness.
2. *Sādhana Pāda* – 55 *sūtras* cover the early stages of spiritual practice (*sādhana*)
3. *Vibhūti Pāda* – 56 *sūtras* cover progress in later stages of spiritual practice where *vibhūti* means progress.
4. *Kaivalya Pāda* – 34 *sūtras* *Kaivalya* means 'being alone' in liberation and this chapter focuses on the stages that open up to the Yogi upon reaching the state of liberation and the state of his faculties at that stage.

Here are the key themes in relevance to the role of the Guru pulled from YS.

Íśvara is a special *Puruṣa*.

One key difference between *Sāmkhya* and Yoga philosophy is that the latter believes in the existence of a 'Supreme Being' or '*Íśvara*'. YS calls out how a Yogi who

has surrendered to *Íśvara* can perhaps attain *Samādhi* without taking the mainstream approach of regulating *citta-vṛttis* through only one's self effort and will power. *Íśvara* is an expression of *Puruṣa* principle as depicted in the *sūtra* below.

YS1.24 *Kleśa-karma-vipākāśayair aparāmṛṣṭaḥ puruṣa-viśeṣa Íśvaraḥ*.

English translation: *Íśvara* is a particular *Puruṣa* who is untouched by the afflictions of life, actions and the results and impressions produced by these actions.

In the above *sūtra* Patañjali shares two ideas about *Íśvara*:

- 1) He is an individual *Puruṣa* or unit of Divine Consciousness like other *Puruṣas*. The term 'individual *Puruṣa*' may be equated to the '*Jivātman*' for the purpose of understanding.
- 2) He is not bound by *Kleśas*, *Karma*, etc. like the other *Puruṣas* who are still involved in the cycle of evolution.

Sūtra 4.30 goes on to explain the *Puruṣa* becomes free from *Kleśa* and *Karma* on attaining *Kaivalya* and the vehicle through which *Karma* works (*Karmāśaya*) is destroyed in his case.

The author explains that the office of *Íśvara* is one of the highest if not the highest rung of this ladder. He is the Supreme Ruler of a Solar system or *Brahmāṇḍa*. It is in His Consciousness that the Solar system lives, moves and has its being. The different planes of the Solar system are His bodies and the powers working the machinery of the Solar system are His powers. In short, He is the Reality whom as *Parabrahman* in *Vedānta* we do not know. That such stages exist stands to reason and follows from the facts that the suns do not occupy fixed positions but probably revolve round other stars, that Solar systems are parts of bigger units called galaxies and these in their turn are parts of still bigger units called universes. Whatever the relation which subsists between Solar systems, galaxies, universes and the Cosmos as a whole and their respective Presiding Deities, the conception of the Cosmos being studded with innumerable Solar systems, and each Solar system being presided over by an *Íśvara* is in itself a tremendously grand idea whose truth is based not on mere poetic fancy but definite knowledge of Adepts of Occultism (Taimni, 1961).

Progress of the Yogi does not stop with the state of *Kaivalya*, but there are still levels and levels of evolution and *Íśvara* Himself guides us to lead us up to the stage of *Íśvara* Himself and beyond.

The real *Guruśīvara*

YS1.27 Sa pūrveṣām api guruḥ kālenāna-vacchedāt.

English translation: Being unconditioned by time He is the Guru/Teacher even of the Ancients.

The word *Guruḥ* means both the Teacher or Guide as well as the Master, but the emphasis is obviously on the former meaning. This means that He is the Supreme Guide who not only gives knowledge to the highest teachers but is also the real Teacher, behind all the teachers who are trying to spread the light of knowledge and Divine Wisdom in the world. He is beyond space and time.

Philosophy of *Kleśās*

I.K.Taimni indicates the importance of this theory saying 'The philosophy of *Kleśās* is really the foundation of the system of Yoga outlined by Patañjali..' Taimni further goes on to explain that Western scholars do not understand the importance of this theory as it characterizes the 'pessimism of Hindu philosophic thought' but refuse to accept that it is based on the hard facts of human existence. Taimni further goes on to explain the state of man in the context of 'space' as well as 'time' with the advancement of science to establish how mankind is totally enamoured within the grip of *Māyā*. Only the seekers who wish to face the realities of life and unveil the illusions of both time and space may ultimately contact the Reality hidden to view.

YS2.3 Avidyāsmīṭā-rāga-dveṣābhīniveśāḥ kleśāḥ.

English Translation : The lack of awareness of Reality, the sense of egoism or 'I-am-ness', attractions and repulsions towards objects and the strong desire for life are the great afflictions or causes of all miseries in life.

As per the *sūtra* the following are the five afflictions or *kleśās* responsible for causing all the miseries of life.

1. Lack of awareness of Reality (*avidyā*)
2. Sense of egoism or 'I-am-ness' (*āsmīṭā*)
3. Attractions towards objects (*rāga*)
4. Repulsions towards objects (*dveṣā*)
5. Strong desire for life (*ābhīniveśā*)

The key *kleśā* is *avidyā* which is also the root cause of the other four *kleśās*.

To understand the meaning of *Avidyā* Taimni says "we have to recall the initial process whereby, according to the Yogic philosophy, consciousness, the Reality underlying manifestation becomes involved in matter. Consciousness and matter are separate and utterly different in their essential nature but for reasons (which will

be discussed in the subsequent *sūtras*) they have to be brought together. How can *Ātmā*, which is eternally free and self-sufficient, be made to assume the limitations which are involved in the association with matter? It is by depriving it of the knowledge or rather the awareness of its eternal and self-sufficient nature. This deprivation of knowledge of its true nature which involves it in the evolutionary cycle is brought about by a transcendent power inherent in the Ultimate Reality which is called *Māyā* or the Great Illusion".

Avidyā is not merely ignorance as used in common Sanskrit parlance. It is caused by *Māyā* (the Great Illusion) and thereby is the reason for the involution of Ultimate Reality of Consciousness in the form of *Ātmā*.

Taimni further states that "The reverse process of evolution in which consciousness gradually extricates itself, as it were, from matter results in an increasing realization of its Real nature and ends in complete Self-realization in *Kaivalya*. It is this fundamental privation of knowledge of its Real nature, which begins with the evolutionary cycle, is brought about by the power of *Māyā*, and ends with the attainment of Liberation in *Kaivalya*, which is called *Avidyā*".

This Taimni expands on the foundation of creation and the **problem of human life** itself when connecting the key terms of Ultimate Reality, *Māyā* and *Avidyā*.

The Trinity: The Knower, the Known and Knowing

YS1.41 Kṣīṇa-vṛtter abhijātasyeva maṇer grahīṭṛ - grahaṇa-grāhyeṣu tatstha-tadañjanatā samāpattiḥ .

English Translation: In the case of one whose *citta-vṛttis* have been almost annihilated, fusion or entire absorption in one another of the cognizer, cognition and cognized is brought about as in the case of a transparent jewel (resting on a coloured surface).

The importance of this *sūtra* is due to the following reasons: 'Firstly, it throws light on the nature of *Samādhi* as perhaps no other *sūtra* does; secondly, it enables us to get some insight into the nature of consciousness and mental perception, and lastly, it provides a clue to the modus operandi of the many powers which can be wielded by the Yogi' (Taimni, 1961).

The philosophical conception upon which this *sūtra* is based is that the manifested Universe is an expression of the Ultimate Reality and at various stages or planes of manifestation of consciousness there appears the relationship between the subjective and objective aspects depending on the level of condensation or subtlety of consciousness. The subtler aspect takes on the subjective

role while the objective aspect is taken by the grosser or denser aspect and this is across all planes of manifestation. The Ultimate Reality at the base of manifestation is the only purely subjective principle so at all other planes there is a dual role played of subjective to those below (grosser levels) and objective to those above (the subtler levels). And wherever there is a meeting point of the two there is a definite relationship between the two and these three aspects are referred to here as the trinity of 'cognizer, cognition and cognized' or 'knower, known and knowing'.

The simile used by Patañjali with the transparent jewel resting on a coloured surface brings out how the mind (the jewel) if not having any flaws or colourings or *citta-vṛttis* becomes one with the coloured surface thereby the observer is unable to see the crystal jewel from a distance.

2. Perspectives of the Masters of Raja Yoga

Any author of Yogic literature needs to be an attained *Yogi* to lend credibility to the material. One who fits this description is the great Master and *Raja Yogi*, Swami Vivekananda, who has shared the way of Yoga and *Vedanta* with the world in the 19th century and started a movement wherein the world started to understand India's history in religion, spirituality and philosophy.

The work *Raja Yoga* comprehensively covers the eight steps of *Ashtāṅga Yoga* (eight limbed Yoga) with the knowledge and clarity of personal experience.

The Swami shares the state of religion across the world explaining that need to understand religion through Real experience rather than just belief. Many of the teachers and founders of the major religions had this experience but followers who survive today have only the belief and not the experience. The Swami explains that the teachers of the science of Yoga declare that religion is not only based on experience of ancient times, but that no man can be religious until he has the same perceptions himself. He then explains that the science of *Raja Yoga* proposes to put before humanity a practical and scientifically worked out method of reaching the Truth (a Real experience of God). He calls it a science because like a scientist using instruments to observe and measure physical phenomena the *Raja Yogi* also makes use of internal instruments *viz.* the mind to observe internal states of being, study internal nature, and through that control the whole – both internal and external as per the teaching of *Raja Yoga* that the external world is but a gross form of the internal, subtle world (Vivekananda, 2013). He shares a

vision of how the *Yogi* by constant and determined practice may attain that fine state of perception in which he can perceive all the different mental states including how the sensation is travelling, how the mind is receiving it, how it is going to the determinative faculty, and how this gives it to the *Puruṣa*. Swami Vivekananda was a devout disciple of his own Guide, Shri Ramakrishna Paramahansa. The Swami, himself had guided many disciples from the East and West on the ways of *Raja Yoga*, *Vedanta* in realising one's highest potential.

The Adi-Guru of the Sahaj Marg tradition

Shri Ram Chandra of Fatehgarh (affectionately called Lalaji) is the *Adi-Guru* (founding *Guru*) of the *Sahaj Marg* system of refined *Raja Yoga* which he founded in the 19th century. He has been credited for the re-discovery of *Pranahuti* (Yogic Transmission) which when received by the seeker aids in his/ her spiritual transformation as validated by the experience of practitioners.

Lalaji describes the Ultimate state as one of perfect balance and advocates a method of balancing the mind which may be achieved by meditation on the heart (Ram Chandra, 2010).

Lalaji describes the states of consciousness and shares a model describing the relationship between *Brahman*, *Jivā*, *Prakṛti*, *Para-Brahman*, Base and *Turiya* (the fourth state). The knowledge of the triad (seeing the world as composed of threes) will be realized when reaching the state of *Turiya* and only on surpassing the state of *Turiya* will one lose all defects. The relationship between these states of being may be compared to other literature for further research in the area of human integration and the Yogic pursuit.

The Founder President of the Shri Ram Chandra Mission

Shri Ram Chandra of Shahjahanpur (called as Babuji) is the founder President of the 'Shri Ram Chandra Mission' named after his own *Guru* and established in 1945. In the chapter called 'Man' in his *Sahaj Marg Philosophy* he shares that the origin of mankind's current state of grossness is the result of the slow process of evolution. He explains that the latent motion which led to the formation of the universe (Super Mind or First Mind) also contributed to the origin of the lower mind in man. At the time of Creation the soul existed in its naked form as a separate entity but with the formation of various coverings over the soul this led to a state of grossness in man's existence today. Babuji refers to grosser forms of coverings of the ego such as *manas* (psyche or lower mind), *chit* (consciousness),

buddhi (intellect) and *ahankara* (ego). This was followed by formation of *samskaras* (or impressions) on these coverings which in turn led to commencement of feelings of comfort, miseries, joys and sorrows. Our liking of joys and comforts and dislike of miseries and sorrows is a further attachment creating more complications leading to further pain and miseries. 'Man is a bipolar being. It has got its root nearest to the Base and the other end towards the world' encapsulates the range of being or existence occupied by man. So by integrating aspects of ourselves we can approach a greater higher existence closer to Centre or *Tam* which lies behind the 'First Mind'. The composition of man is exactly the same as that of the universe with layers of fine forms of existence under the solid physical body. 'The outermost form is the gross body (*sthula sharir*) behind which there exists the astral body (*sukshma sharir*) and causal body (*karana sharir*)' (Ram Chandra, 2015).

The 3rd Guide of the Sahaj Marg tradition

Shri Parthasarathi Rajagopalachari the erstwhile President and spiritual guide of the Shri Ram Chandra Mission between 1983 until his departure from the earthly abode in December 2014 is also the author of the book 'The Role of the Master in Human Evolution'. He addresses the topic in the book title for the benefit of seekers of the Divine. He says in his first talk in the book that 'if there is one thing more important than truth, than spirituality itself, it is the Master who gives it to us'. In almost all his talks he refers to his almost two decade association with his Guru *viz.* Ramchandra of Shahjahanpur the founder president of Shri Ram Chandra Mission.

The topics covered in this book include the etiquette and attitude that should ideally be observed when relating to one's spiritual Guru/Guide or Master including behaviours of obedience, faith, love and surrender that are progressively displayed. By understanding the goal and service of such Masters one may understand the phenomena of how a highly evolved Master may also bring his or her associates up to his/her level and what is expected of the follower of the Master in this relationship. The first teaching that emerges from the Master or Guru's life is 'to accept his spiritual transmission first and forget the rest' (Rajagopalachari, 2014). It is the acceptance of this highest aspect of the Guru that allows for gradual transformation in the seeker enabling him/her to understand the lower teachings of the Guru over time. This spiritual transmission is the same special energy

called as *Pranahuti* (Yogic Transmission) which was rediscovered by his *Adi-Guru*.

3. Perspectives from Transpersonal Psychology and contemporary observations

Ken Wilbur shares developments in multiple fields, including developmental psychology, evolutionary psychology and quantum physics to indicate that the time is right to arrive at an all-encompassing 'Theory of Everything'.

He refers to an eight stage level of existence that refined by Don Beck and Christopher Cowan is called 'Spiral Dynamics'. This model has the following eight levels or waves of existence with corresponding colours or memes that reflect each wave. The first six are subsistence waves which are called 'first tier thinking' while the last two are 'second tier thinking'. The 7th and 8th waves are called 'integrative' and 'holistic' waves of existence and constitute 1% to 2% of the overall population. A big remainder of the book focuses on what can be done to move the subsistence levels to the second tier levels of existence with many examples from multiple disciplines and streams. The resistance from 1st tier thinking, challenges and opportunities to convert a large section in the 6th wave (green wave which is 20% of the population) to 2nd tier thinking may tilt the balance in the favour of 'integral movement' and herald a new reality of global consciousness with multiple benefits for humanity (Wilber, 2011).

Mr. Wilbur dares to think beyond the conventional and also dares to bring in different related ideas working with leading thinkers and he has helped found the 'Integral Institute' to fund and continue research in projects of 'integral' nature. One key idea that the author calls out is the affirmation that each wave of existence is reality for those of that wave.

Contemporary observations in Guru Choice and Spiritual Seeking

Maya Warrierin her paper '*Guru Choice and Spiritual Seeking in Contemporary India*' analyses the nature of guru devotionism in contemporary India by analysing the urban mobile middle class profile of spiritual seekers; motivations for Guru seeking; approaches to choosing the Guru; comparing devotee orientations (inclusivist and exclusivist); perceived relationships between Gurus and based on these inputs draws some conclusions. Gurus and their wares are far more accessible to devotees across India, and indeed across the globe, than ever before. Rather than remain confined to particular

geographical regions or locales, gurus and their spiritual products can now travel far and wide, if not physically, then by means of modern media which freely circulate printed material, visual images, and audio recordings across time and space (Warrier, 2003). The implications of these developments are twofold. On the one hand, the more popular and successful gurus, many of whom command a vast following running into hundreds of thousands of devotees often scattered across the globe, can no longer sustain close personal ties with each individual devotee. On the other hand, devotees who readily access the promotional material produced by different guru organizations, can, for their part, develop an enhanced awareness of other available options in the world of gurus.

Conclusion

The literature review and analysis show that the human problem of life is self-created. From the time of original Creation onwards the repetitive cycle of thoughts, actions, deeds, likes and dislikes, more attachment (*Kleśas*) lead back to more thoughts, actions and so on. This has created a world of attachment and bondage for the individual, and by extension teams, organizations, communities and the whole of humanity. To break from this cycle of bondage/ *Avidyā* one strives towards freedom. Perhaps one may advance a fair degree due to self effort. But how can one move beyond one's own limitations to become the 'Whole' (as referenced in the invocation mantra) and surpass one's filters of *Avidyā* and ego? It is only with a detailed and comprehensive practice of *Rāja Yoga*, with both the preliminary *Kriyā Yoga* as well as the practice of *dhyāna* that one overcome the effects of the key *kleśa* which is *Avidyā* (Viswanathan, 2017). Perhaps in addition to this a purer, higher power through the agency of a Guru may hold the solution.

Only at the 6th and 7th wave (as per 'Spiral Dynamics' model) upon reaching a state of sensitivity does one start to appreciate the lower waves of existence and perhaps acknowledge and accept one's prior evolution through lower waves and perhaps as one reaches higher stages one starts to appreciate and come in contact with his past experiences as building blocks to one's current state of being.

The search for the Guru, establishing a relationship and following his/her teachings and practices with faith, devotion, obedience and dedication is the journey of 'Self' discovery. Receiving the Guru's transmission or *Pranahuti* becomes possible (as per the Sahaj Marg tradition). The expansion of consciousness and evolutionary purity and

alignment of various inner faculties including *manas*, *buddhi*, *ahankar* and *chit* is now possible. Overcoming the five *Kleśas* become possible. A refinement in the subtler bodies of the human being is made possible. The state of *citta-vṛtti-nirodha* is made possible. The state of *Turiya* is made possible. The many possibilities that have been highlighted as per this paper's literature review is made possible in the Yogic seeker's life.

The initial purpose the seeker may have had when starting the spiritual journey gets modified and transformed as per one's personal advancement and transformation due to his own self efforts along with the Guru's guidance. The conception and meaning of the goal becomes clearer. One feels more and more sensitive and connected to all forms of life and vibrations around oneself. Medieval and modern paradigms like 'conquest mentality' cannot stay in the heart of humanity as one feels more united with all while heading towards the personal state of One-ness. The Guru may be *Īśvara* Himself in human form enabling the seeker to connect with one's own inner Guru. Upon establishing the connection, the journey leads towards the state of merger between the 'Knower, the Known and Knowing' to be one with the *Kosmos*, the Supreme *Brahman*, the state of *Tam*.

In today's digitally connected world, we are seeing technology connect many seekers to their systems of practice and Gurus. This allows for the effective dissemination of knowledge, learning and experience to a large global pool of Yogic seekers.

Limitations

This paper deals with the goal of human life and there may be concepts that are difficult to evaluate intellectually without experience or practice. Many aspects are dependent on faith in the existence of advanced states of being based on the experience of spiritual seekers and Masters. There is the cycle of faith which is needed to practice which in turn leads to some results and gradual transformation which in turn fortifies the faith (if it is perceived as a positive or preferable change). Similarly there may be doubts which does not allow oneself to practice or feel any change which in itself fortifies the doubt. Perhaps the Guru's role is also there in dispelling doubt and promoting faith in the process, in the seeker as well as in the Guru Himself.

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