

Rendezvous with God : A Neurologic Aspect of Transcendental Meditation

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If you are a Christian, you shall not pass this way again; if you are a Muslim and are not yet sure you will go to Heaven to meet Allah; or if you are a Hindu you may be born as a dog in your next life for your *karma*. The question is then: Who can see God? How does the idea of God come at all, and why does this idea prod our mind since time immemorial? My God here is neither Spinoza's¹ nor He has anything to do with the First Principles of Herbert Spencer².

The origin of the concept of God

Man is a thinking animal. Learning is a precursor of thinking. The process of learning begins soon after birth. As time passes, he leaves behind his napkin and cradle days and ordains himself firmly in the external world. As he thinks intently, he wonders that all his experiences are related to time and space that are seemingly infinite. He feels perplexed to imagine what this infinite is actually like. He gets some relief when he can implicitly relate his perception of the vastness of infinity to a putative concept called 'God'. He supposes that nothing can be added to or nothing can be taken away from God. He then creates in his mind God who is all-knowing and an all-powerful Being who governs everything in the universe.

He further puts upon God another speculative attribute that He is also the most beautiful. He assumes that nothing can be more beautiful than Him. His beauty is more

magnificent and awesome than can be painted by a Newton, an Einstein, or a Schrödinger. Man imagines that God is more gorgeous than the universe as a whole. Man has, as it were, carved himself out a 'God-shaped' hole in his mind which he likes to fill in without leaving there a permanent filling defect. God, thus created with all these attributes bestowed upon Him, man likes to test his hypothesis whether or not such a Being exists and can be brought into his simple comprehension.

Whether man's conceptualized God exists or is merely conjectural, is a question that probably crosses everybody's mind. Can He be grasped by the very thinking process by which man has constructed Him in his imagination? Can anybody meet Him at all, if He does exist?

How to meet God

If a man wishes to meet a girl who has been crowned for her unmatched beauty, then he must first go where she happens to live. He then can possibly find her by one of the three ways: by seeing, he can immediately identify the girl because she has been gifted with an 'unmatched beauty' or only by hearing her voice, if he had heard her before, or else, just by the fragrance she emits if she is known to use a specific perfume. In the same way, a man can test the presence of God by checking any one of the three essential attributes placed upon Him—omnipresence, omnipotence and

omniscience. Omnipresence, by definition, means God is supposed to be present everywhere, in every conceivable object in the universe, and hence, He shall also be present within our individual self³. He is certainly not present at an incalculable distance from me. For this reason, it would be worthwhile to search Him within our individual being before searching Him elsewhere. Omnipotence indicates He is capable of transforming Himself into infinite probabilities. Hence, mathematically speaking, His probability is one. If man has conjured up such a concept of God, he would like to examine Him most systematically, leaving behind any faith or belief system.

Although no referendum has ever been held, there will be on Earth a large number of people who do not believe in the existence of God. They persist that to validate God's existence, proof must come through direct personal experience through our sense organs. But perceptions through sense organs are possible within the framework of the mind. Workings of the mind have a limit. Therefore, mind is incapable of conceptualizing infinity. We must have to transcend our mind to be able to touch the Infinite. And for going beyond the mind, sages have devised a method called *meditation*.

Meditation of God

Meditation is not an outlandish concept. It is like an arrow which not only hits the bull's-eye, but also tends to penetrate the very centre of the target. Here the target is God, who was hitherto an unknown entity. To meditate upon God using a symbol or symbols for this purpose is of no consequence. Meditation is like doing a thought-experiment. One cannot do an experiment with God in a conventional scientific frame of reference as He does not

have any measurable parameter and seems to have a different paradigm altogether. Meditation is the ingenuity of or discovery by the human intellect to find out ways how effectively he can obviate this impediment of grasping a non-parametric concept.

Meditation requires a total concentration of mind or no concentration at all. Any person, who delightfully or disdainfully seeks to know God, must do it only through meditation. While we are awake, one thought arises; it stays for a few moments and then fades away. Another thought crops up, again it disappears in the same way as the previous ones, producing a stream of multitudinous thoughts. Let us now see how our thoughts that have imagined God will be left behind in the limbo while we are trying to know God. Here, one has to deeply focus one's attention upon the interval between two thoughts, called *cidākāsha*.

Cidākāsha meaning *mind's sky* is a Sanskrit word. *Cid* means mind, and *ākāsha* means sky. It represents a tranquil state between two thoughts within our consciousness. These gaps give us the meaning of the contents of our discrete thoughts. They are akin to the gaps between two words in a sentence. A sentence becomes intelligible not by the letters or the words constituting the sentence but by reading the gaps between the words. Meditating on the *cidākāsha* one will become aware of the pure consciousness as there is no interplay of mind or thought. The *Gītā* (6.7) says: 'For one who has conquered the mind, the Supersoul is already reached, for he has attained tranquillity. To such a man happiness and distress, heat and cold . . . are all the same'.

To meditate on the *cidākāsha*, the seeker has to sit as comfortably as possible in an ambient and crepuscular room, with no distracting sound or smell there and yonder. One has to avoid the stimulus from without

as much as possible; a kind of walling-up is among the instinctual sagacities of spiritual pregnancy (sic)⁴. These are the most basic conditions for him who wants to examine the existence of God. As the putative God has been thought to be equal to infinity or more, his aim in the first step will be if he can get a glimpse of the infinite in his thought experiment.

Another way to meditate is to disperse our attention completely in such a way that we can do away with all perceptions and thoughts—we will feel an endless vista of *cidākāsha* all around. The *cidākāsha* is the gateway to the realm of God. Enter the *cidākāsha* and your consciousness will morph seamlessly into the all-pervading consciousness.

Direct experience of God

If a man is keen to get an idea of the infinite in meditation, he will be able to know that every sense organ does help him to get some direct experience of God. He will need to sharpen his acuity of senses, like when someone wants to pierce something one has to apply the sharp end of a sword. In such a state of enhanced sensibilities there will be five possible scenarios of what is called *perceptual transcendence*:

1) Suppose an enthusiast keeps a rapt vigil on the flame of a candle in a closed hall where all other sensory inputs—auditory, tactile, olfactory and gustatory—have been eliminated, a time will come when the life of the candle ends and its wick becomes a tiny ember. Finally, the moment before this tiny bit of light disappears by itself, in that imminent darkness he can see, as though, He is neither dark nor non-dark, unfathomable, hyper-real and void in his being⁵.

2) Or, suppose an enthusiast is sitting in a silent hall closing his eyes with other sense perceptions like tactile, olfactory and

gustatory—excluded, then a huge bell is struck with a hammer, and with time its characteristic chime mellows down into a deep silence. At this critical moment he goes out of mind and can hear God as He⁶ asserts His presence as the *faint refrain of the primal sound AUM*, in his being.

3) Or, while an enthusiast exits from a heavily incensed sanctum sanctorum of a temple and enters dispassionately into a dark, silent, vestibule, when the smell of incense is just being beyond olfaction, at this critical moment, he goes out of mind and can smell God⁷ as the faintest *fragrance of mystic essence* in his being.

4) Or, while the enthusiast tastes a drop of honey in a dark, tranquil, neutral ambience—after a few moments when its sensation of taste approaches almost beyond perception, at this critical moment, he goes out of mind and can get the taste of God⁸ as *subtle sweetness of divine Nectar*, in his being.

5) Or, when all the other four senses are grounded to a naught, if the man touches the Holy Cross, the Ka'ba or a Jyotirlinga, a time will come when his sensation of touch becomes nearly obtunded, at this critical moment, he goes out of mind and can feel God⁹ with his hands as if *He has been quickening*, in his being.

The aforesaid five conditions point out to an important assumption that it is not vision, it is just beyond vision; it is not hearing, it is immediately beyond hearing; it is not olfaction, it is above olfaction; it is not gustation, it is next to gustation; it is not touch; it is the transcendence from touch, that respectively leads us to see, listen, smell, taste or to touch God *with attributes*. It is true to say that to others God is ineffable. The *five special* situations of sense perceptions (vide supra) lead us to know about the subtle and quintessential beauty of God. Once these individual beauties are

experienced all-at-one-instant, they will implode within our being as God—the most beautiful. All other beauties in this world appear tiring after some time and later fade away with time. But the beauty of God, once felt, will have an everlasting effect. Every beauty of the world has a name; the *supreme beauty*—a concept, has its name called God. He is the complete beauty embodied within our consciousness. All other beauties are divided, hence incomplete. Seek and you shall find the beauty of God. A man can also attain God-consciousness devoid of all His *attributes* if he can upgrade his consciousness beyond space and time.

**Space and time have
no physical reality**

Let us now see what space is and what time is. It is simple to know that space does not directly arouse any sensory perception—visual, auditory, olfactory, gustatory or tactile. For the perception of space, no dedicated receptor is present in the human body—like rods and cones in the retina for vision, cochlear receptor cells in the internal ear for hearing, and so on. Perception of space is a complex neurological process. Space is different in different perspectives. It is most noticeable in binocular vision¹⁰. Space is perceived as **aspects** in relative angular positions of different objects in a field of vision. Two apples hanging from two branches of a tree are visualized in the total composition in a visual field. But, it is interesting in that the space between these two apples by itself does not arouse any sensory perception whatsoever; so also does the space between two heavenly bodies. A blindfolded person can get an idea of space from hearing echoes. A congenitally blind person perceives space differently. He perceives space through his proprioceptive nerve endings of hands and feet.

Hence, physical space does not exist; it

is an imagery of sense perceptions received through visual, auditory and proprioceptive pathways, although it militates against our common sense that a brick occupies a space while the space is nonexistent! We have always been used to imagine that space is like a canvas when birds fly against a clear blue sky. Space is an illusion. It does not arouse directly any sense perception, as stated before, or interact with any object or energy—heat, light, sound, electricity or magnetism even though it appears to contain everything. The talk about space curvature is a bunkum—that space curves near a heavy body is not the space that really curves; it is something other than space, masquerading as ‘space’. Space, by itself, does not have any cause-and-effect relationship with anything. Space is a mathematical concept applied to measure the distance between two physical objects or its use to draw a trajectory before launching a spacecraft.

Likewise, time has no physical reality because we cannot directly see, hear, smell, taste or touch time. We get the idea of time from the sequence of changes perceived through our sense perceptions—may not be exactly the way we expect such a change would happen—a ball must or must not enter through the goal-posts at a certain moment of time. Because everything in this universe changes inexorably, time has been devised as a mathematical operator to measure the perceived gap between two *related* events, unit of time being arbitrarily taken as one second. If we can intuitively overcome our ingrained illusion of space-time we shall experience God *without attributes*.

Knowledge of God is the beginning and the end of knowledge. He tends to run the universe by only one simplest Law—the Law of Causality; between the cause and its immediate effect God has created a minutest illusion called a *moment* which is an

infinitesimal part of time; everything changes after every moment. 'This' moment is *present*, a moment 'before' was *past* and becomes a history; a moment that has 'not yet' come is *future*. We are always in the 'present'—'past' and 'future' are only the projections of the mind. If we can contemplate this '*present*' moment, we can go beyond space-time; space will cease to exist and time will stand still.

To overcome this illusion of space-time, one has to follow the same discipline called *meditation*, as stated earlier. Even, to perform a trivial thing like how to take charge of an arrow-hit felled bird¹¹ requires a special knowledge of empathy and compassion. Knowledge of God cannot be obtained by simply reading scriptures.

Neurological basis of God-realization

To acquire any knowledge, may it be most simple or most complex, we have to process and internalize all information on the subject into our brain matter. This process transforms a part of our consciousness from an unknown to the known domain with an ability to recall and reflect the knowledge when desired. Knowledge of God is of a different kind altogether. This knowledge can only be achieved by subduing all acquired knowledge and eliminating the awareness of space-time through meditation. Effective meditation demolishes all paradigms and leads to an emergent change in our consciousness called *transcendence*.

Meditation can be done only in waking state¹². It needs volition and steadfastness in the initial stages. One's mind must prepare oneself for meditation. When followed assiduously and, with practice, meditation comes in effusion. With time, as meditation progresses, sensory inputs through afferent nerves are cut down to a minimum. Minimum attention and maximum

awareness. Meditation is a silent campaign against sensory perception.

After achieving the state of an almost nil perception from each modality of sensation, a very faint impulse passes through the afferent fibers of the spinal and some cranial nerves. These nerve impulses are carried upwards through the ascending reticular formation of the spinal cord and brainstem.

These impulses then take up any of the two routes conforming to the meditational objective of the person: First, they go through the thalamus to the sensory areas of the brain—primary visual cortex, primary auditory cortex, primary olfactory cortex, primary gustatory cortex, and primary somato-sensory cortex. But they do not relay to or interact with the corresponding association areas of the brain—visual association areas, auditory association areas, and the like¹³⁻¹⁷, for actual perception. Instead, they integrate the primary sensory areas of the cerebral cortex with the limbic system. This active system gives one the realization of God with His quintessential beauty i.e. the visible, audible, olfectible, gustible and tangible God within his consciousness. Neurologically speaking, God is the subcortical experience of Super-consciousness.

Second, the weak neural impulses may take the route of ascending reticular formation system and relay on to the brainstem reticular formation, pre-Botzinger complex of respiratory centre¹⁸, cardiac centre and limbic system. From these nuclei, impulses arise and assume a super-conducting proportion and bombard through the corona radiata into all reward areas of the brain. His inspiratory and expiratory processes spontaneously stop and come to an equilibrium state called *kumbhak*. If the seeker can establish this neural pathway, which can be named as the Buddha Tract (like, lateral spino-thalamic tract), he will

immerse himself into the ecstasy of infinite joy. When the person becomes adept in meditation, the person escapes from the awareness of his self and outside world. His CNS will transform into a state of all-pervading consciousness and will realize God *without attributes*.

The wisdom

Human being is intelligent, but his nature is such that he usually flunks his true potentialities. Man has always been enabled with the knowledge of God but it is amazing that he cannot bring this knowledge into his conscious realization. We continue to live by constantly preventing death by doing what is called breathing. Similarly, we constantly refuse to accept our awareness of God by responding to the demands of our mundane actions and worldly thoughts. The knowledge of God gives us several immutable wisdoms, viz., (1) it gives us a most matured form of innocence, (2) that all creatures on Earth are intrinsically connected, (3) that Nature is always young and is pregnant with all probabilities, Herself being Her midwife, (4) every bit of change in the universe is divine, and (5) our consciousness will permanently become transformed into the timeless and boundless.

An extreme view is that ‘God’ can be taken as the antithetical concept to life—everything harmful, slanderous, the whole mortal enmity against life brought into one terrible unity (sic)!¹⁹ Quest for God cannot be embarked on holding this view in mind.

Birth-death-rebirth cycle

The faiths of Christianity and Islam have stipulated *a unit of life—only one life span*; within this time one has to attain a life full of virtue, love, empathy and compassion which are *sine qua non* to attain Godhead. This one-life moratorium has its *inherent strength* as it tries to impose a doctrinaire against

straying away from the right path of faith. But there is also an *inherent weakness* that there is no scope for redemption if there was any misdeed, more so for willful wrongdoings for which he doubts, God may not grant mercy.

Hinduism and Buddhism, by contrast, have permitted many lives for correction and finally the attainment of enlightenment. A Hindu believes he can get a complete knowledge of his Self when he finishes all his *karma*, and thus, he can free himself from the throes of the death-rebirth cycle and can unite with God. For a Hindu, death is a perfect worship when a person surrenders all his baggage to the Mother Nature from where he had taken all at the onset of his journey and to prepare for the next sojourn with greater vigour by taking a new physical body. His final mission is: to unite with God from whom he has emerged, thus completing the full circle.

Earth is a place where the Soul gets the closest encounter of most physical kind, while being born. Death is the end of all earthly events of the human beings who believe in some heavenly religions. After death their souls with their corpses will be incarcerated under the graves as *status cadavericus* and will wait there till the Day of Judgement. The souls who are unsure about their possible place in heaven, nevertheless, if they choose to assert their free will, may turn aside in their graves and will resurrect. God will gift with a mother to each of these souls to take rebirth to restart their *karma* from where they had stopped to perform, to acquire all knowledge and virtues. They will finally become the chosen ones for God’s adoration. Can one relinquish one’s body forever and unite with God in heaven without appropriate preparation?

Who is God?

The conception of heaven, in the true

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sense, is not a supra-terrestrial region of perpetual spring; it is an inner revelation of Supreme Bliss. God is not a subject of worship; He is nothing other, or lesser than any greatest philosophical concept, revealed unto a person by totally unentangling of all his thoughts up in the blue. To glorify God as the *merciful*—this *one* word is too many; He is perfectly a supreme and final state of

the consciousness which a human being can achieve at the highest phase of Biological Evolution. Voltaire said: If God did not exist it would be necessary to invent him²⁰. God announces himself to Moses²¹ in the words: 'I am who I am'. He once declared: I reside not in the Earth, nor in the Oceans nor in the Skies, I remain in the Vedas as Pure Knowledge. ■

REFERENCES AND NOTES

- 1 Spinoza: in *The Story of Philosophy*, by Will Durant; Simon and Schuster, Inc 2006 pp. 219-225.
- 2 Herbert Spencer: in *The Story of Philosophy*, by Will Durant; Simon and Schuster, Inc 2006 pp. 473-476 and 511-514.
- 3 'Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people' vide, The Holy Bible: Revelation, All Things Made New 21:3.
- 4 Friedrich Nietzsche: in *Ecce Homo, Why I am so clever*; Penguin Books (2004), p. 26.
- 5 Cf 'And the light of a lamp shall not shine in you anymore. And the bridegroom and bride shall not be heard anymore' vide, The Holy Bible: Revelation, Finality of Babylon's Fall, 18:23.
- 6 Cf 'He who has an ear let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes I shall give some hidden manna to eat'. The Holy Bible: Revelation, The Compromising Church, 2:17.
- 7 Cf 'And the smoke of the incense, with the prayers of the saints, ascended Before God from the angel's hand.' Ibid: Revelation, Seventh Seal: Prelude to the Seven Trumpets, 8:4.
- 8 Cf 'And I took the little book out of the angel's hand and ate it, and it was as sweet as honey in my mouth. But when I had eaten it, my stomach became bitter.' Ibid: Revelation, John Eats the Little Book, 10:10.
- 9 Cf 'Then a mighty angel took up a stone like a great millstone and threw it into the sea, saying, thus with violence the great city
- 10 Babylon shall be thrown down, and shall not be heard in you anymore'. Ibid: Revelation, Finality of Babylon's Fall, 18:21.
- 10 Lower mammals who have eyes on either side of the muzzle; their eyes moved to a single plane to the front of the face in primates during evolution. This produced a stereoscopic vision which allowed depth perception. Without such perception it was not possible for them to move in trees jumping from one branch to another. This evolutionary change may be cited as a proof of perception of space in primates, as in humans (*vide supra*). In: *Primate Evolution in Human Evolution and its Uniqueness*: by C. V. Rao, pp. 83-93; Ravi Publishers (2005); 201, Ravinagar, Visakhapatnam – 530047, India.
- 11 W. Woodville Rockhill: *The Life of the Buddha*; 2nd Edition, 2004; Pilgrim Publishing, Varanasi; p. 21. Website: www.pilgrimbooks.com
- 12 Waking and dream states are similar as regards instincts and reflexes; nerve impulses take both way traffic in the spinal cord, brainstem and brain (CNS). As in waking state, in the dream state the downward impulse sometimes has a predilection for S₂₋₃₋₄ segments of the spinal cord as evidenced by occasional involuntary ejaculations during dream. In the dream state a person can get all experiences available as in waking state. During deep sleep the Reticular Activating System remains inactivated—the flow of impulses is random, bidirectional and vegetative, only to

- maintain cardiac function and respiration. When deep sleep gives in to a dream or awakened state, it gets a fatal result—awareness of space and time. During meditation, nerve impulses are very faint and flows only from below upwards to the brain but has to pass through the six impediments called *chakras*. These *chakras* are not anatomically defined structures consisting of nucleus, ganglion and nerve tracts. Each of them are physiologically specific functional units (vide, *The Serpent Power*; by Sir John Woodroffe; pp. 103-180, 317-479. Shivalik Prakasan 2005, 27/16, Shakti Nagar, Delhi-7; e-mail: shivalikprakasan@yahoo.com).
- 13 Arthur C. Guyton and John E. Hall: *Text Book of Medical Physiology*; 11th Edition (2006), Saunders, in *The Eye, Visual pathways*, pp. 640-646.
- 14 Ibid: in *Sense of Hearing*, pp. 652-660.
- 15 Ibid: in *Sense of Smell*, pp. 667-670.
- 16 Ibid: in *Sense of Taste*, pp. 663-666.
- 17 Ibid: in *Somatic Sensation*, pp. 588-592.
- 18 Ganong's *Review of Medical Physiology*, Eds. Kim E Barret et al, Tata McGraw Hill, 24th Edition p. 658, 2012.
- 19 Friedrich Nietzsche: in *Ecce Homo; Why I am a Destiny*; Penguin Books (2004), p. 103.
- 20 Volltaire, cited in: *Great Treasury of Western Thoughts*, Edited by Mortimer J. Adler and Charles van Doren; R. R. Bowker Company, London 1977; 16-2-30; p. 1020.
- 21 The Holy Bible: *Exodus*, 3:14.
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