



Transactional Analysis and Spirituality: Insights from Indian Philosophy

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Abstract

In the Indian philosophical system Vedanta, the composite human being is described in terms of five concentric sheaths surrounding an inner core - the Pancha Kosha (Five Sheaths) model. This model has implications for the discipline of Transactional Analysis insofar as it sheds light on the working of the Adult Ego State and also suggests the process by which autonomy can be achieved. Other concepts of Vedanta relevant to TA are discussed and elaborated, and a Vedantic Ego States Model presented incorporating them into the Classical TA model. The natural longing for intimacy and the growth force of physis are represented in terms of insights from Vedanta. The practice implications of the model are discussed, and also how it can help for personal growth and eventually spiritual progress.

Key Words

Ego States, Cultural Parent, Autonomy, Integrating Adult, Physis, Mindfulness, Pancha Kosha, Yoga, Yama, Niyama, Shreyas, Rin, Purushartha, Bhakti Yoga, Brahman, Upanishads, Bhagavad Gita, Dharma, Moksha, Karma, Integrated Adult, Atman, Vedanta

Introduction

When Eric Berne laid the foundations of transactional analysis (TA) over 60 years ago, he described the personality in terms of Parent, Adult and Child ego states, represented by three stacked circles (Berne, 1961). He also wrote about *physis* as the growth force of nature which makes individuals want to grow and become better, as underpinning the psychological energy of the ego states (Berne, 1968). Since then, many other writers, thinkers and practitioners have explored the question of what lies beneath the ego states, which seems to be an implicit recognition of the fact that the three stacked circles are, by themselves, an incomplete description of the personality. They have described, in their own ways, how metaphysical concepts such as Self, Life Force and Spirit,

complement the overall framework of TA and present a more well-rounded view of the human psyche.

In this connection, the ancient Indian philosophical system of Vedanta offers many illuminating insights which can enrich our understanding of not just the Adult (in Berne's descriptions of it as being in the here-and-now), but the total personality. Most of the texts on which Vedanta is based, were composed more than 2,000 years ago. Although they need to be understood in the context of the times in which they were composed, there is an air of universality about them, and they provide most illuminating answers to many things which perplex us about abstract subjects such as, "What is the meaning of life?"; "How to live well/wisely?"; "How do I reach my full potential?". Vedanta literally means the end or essence of the Vedas, which are Indian sacred texts thought to have been composed around 1500-1000 BCE (although, as an oral tradition, they may be even older), and is elaborated in the Upanishads (c. 1000-600 BCE), which are commentaries on the Vedas, and in the Bhagavad Gita, which is a part of the Indian epic poem Mahabharata (c. 900 BCE?).

The Pancha Kosha (Five Sheaths) model of the human being described in Vedanta shows how the inner core of the Self is enveloped by the intellect and the mental and physical bodies. This can be related to the structural model of ego states in TA to shed light on the working of the Adult ego state. Further, the insights from Vedanta can be linked with TA concepts such as autonomy and the Integrating Adult (Erskine, 1991; Tudor, 2003).. Strengthening and developing the intellectual sheath leads, in the first instance, towards autonomy, and further, towards establishing the Integrating Adult This serves to make us better human beings; more authentic and attentive; compassionate, generous and humble; and more responsible to ourselves, each other, and the environment. Vedantic principles serve as a guide to living wisely and nobly, and point the way to the

ultimate destination in the journey of self-development and personal growth. Further, in light of the teachings of Vedanta, it can be suggested that the logical end of the integrating process in the Adult is spiritual progress, but not necessarily through following any religious doctrine.

Literature Review

Ego States

Ego states models in TA have evolved considerably since the classical structural model of three stacked circles representing Parent, Adult and Child (Berne, 1964). Now, there are several different ways of looking at the three ego states. One such way of representing the Parent ego state is in terms of the concept of Cultural Parent (Drego, 1981). Briefly, the Cultural Parent consists of Parent, Adult and Child type contents of a person's cultural background, within the Parent ego state. These have been labelled Etiquette, Technicalities and Character respectively, and succinctly summarized as what one is supposed to do, what one has to do, and what one might like to do (Berne, 1963). Culturally inherited beliefs, ideologies, values, rules, moral codes... knowledge, skills, techniques... ways of experiencing and acting out love, hatred, pleasure, pain, acceptance...(Drego, 1981) together form its content.

A model is proposed by Hay (2009), in which the Internal Adult ego state has been compared to a lightning fast data processor ideally considers external reality and internal perceptions and decides a course of action which is manifested through the exhibition of an appropriate behavioural ego state.. When we interact with others (and even when we don't), we frequently shift between the five behavioural ego states. Such shifting, as long as it is controlled by the Internal Adult, does not result in any anomalous behaviour, and the person's responses are appropriate to the situation; however, this control gets lost when we fall under the spell of messages remembered from our childhood, and our behaviour becomes impulsive, unthinking and inappropriate. Further, many of these messages are self-limiting in that they prevent us from reaching our potential, and restrict our options of feeling, thinking and behaving in any given situation.

Alternatively, Erskine (1991) and Tudor (2003) have written of an Integrating Adult, also sometimes referred to as Integrated Adult, and sometimes without the initial capital for integrating, to indicate a process of integrating the content of the Parent and Child ego states into a here-and-now, updated Adult. It is this notion of Adult that I am using to relate to Vedanta.

The goal of TA is considered to be the attainment of autonomy, which is manifested by the release or recovery of three capacities; awareness, spontaneity

and intimacy (Berne, 1964). Capacities added later are responsibility (Bonds-White and van Beekum, 1995); and integrity (Mellor, 2008). In other words, autonomy comes about when we are fully aware of and dealing with the present situation and environment, as opposed to responding by way of conditioned behaviour; when we are able to make a considered choice of the most appropriate behaviour from a range of options; when we are genuinely open, honest and authentic with each other (Berne, 1964): when we take full responsibility for our actions, and believe that we are responsible for ourselves alone and no one else: and when we are able to discover meaning in our life experiences so as to live honestly and in accordance with our principles.

However, it has also been shown through a research project that autonomy can be summarized in two variables: contact with self and contact with others (Van Beekum, 2000). Contact with self includes access to internal dialogue (e.g., between ego states), taking action, taking a stand based on own thoughts; whereas contact with others relates to attitudes formed while interacting with others, like encouraging, discounting, open minded, prejudiced, etc. To that extent the capacities originally used to describe autonomy may need a rethink, and real autonomy may only come about when we move between contact with ourselves and contact with another.

The optimal state of autonomy is one in which certain desirable qualities of Parent and Child ego states are integrated into the Adult ego state (Berne, 1960). Such an optimal state has also been described as the Integrated Adult (Stewart and Joines, 1987). However, Erskine (1991) and Tudor (2003) have written about the Integrating Adult, to emphasise that integration is a continual process and therefore, the Adult ego state is an ongoing process and not a static entity. It is characterized by emotional, cognitive and moral development, creativity, and the capacity for full engagement in meaningful relationships.

Beyond the Ego States

The concept of physis, as originally developed by the philosopher Heraclitus (c.600 BCE), meant change or growth which comes from the spirit within the person (Guerrere, 1980). In TA terms, physis is conceived of as a life force, a fundamental urge to grow, evolve, and improve, present in living organisms (Berne, 1968). At the individual level, its manifestation is the aspiration for change and human transformation (Clarkson, 1992). However, this aspiration is recognized to be a deep-seated and primal force, beyond the layers of personality formed by the ego states as the individual grows. It has been thought to be arising from the earliest, most undifferentiated Child ego state (Clarkson, 1992).

The relationship between TA and spirituality has been explored by several writers, thinkers and practitioners of TA. However, some amount of overlap between religion, faith and spirituality has resulted in diverse viewpoints on the subject and some amount of ambiguity as to what exactly constitutes spirituality. For the purpose of this paper, spirituality has been considered to be a sense of connection to something bigger than ourselves, which typically involves a search for meaning in life. It also refers to experiences that transcend normal worldly experiences, not confined to one's own identity or awareness. However, it is not possible to exactly define spirituality because to define is to limit, and this sense of connection is surely limitless in its scope. It may be loosely described as a feeling of oneness with God or the Life Principle of the Universe; however, I will consider spirituality from the philosophical point of view, i.e., without any religious overtones.

Returning to TA, an inner core of the Self has been described as existing beneath the manifested Parent, Adult and Child ego states (James, 1981) This is characterized by the urge to live, to be free, to experience newness, to make decisions, to form authentic relationships, and the urge to know the spiritual dimension. She has drawn an inner core within and connecting the Parent, Adult and Child ego states to represent the Self. On the other hand, physis, which has been represented in TA terms by the aspiration arrow of the script matrix (Berne, 1972/1975), has been placed within this core and the P-A-C order reversed (Tigchelaar, 2019) to show how the urge to become better or to evolve is a deep-seated urge, beyond and within the ego states structure. The source of physis has also been identified as Life itself, and grounding, or a heightened state of awareness, as a means of achieving physical, mental, emotional and spiritual balance (Mellor, 2017).

The application of TA in helping those religiously inclined along the path to spirituality has also been explored in terms of the Pilgrim Model (Milnes, 2017). In a subsequent paper, the same author has equated the soul with the earliest Child ego state which has formed a coherent sense of self, and has ascribed physis to the earliest mystical or religious experiences of an infant, and located it within the soul or Core Self. He further compares physis to a burning flame which can sustain those who fully experience it even in the most tragic circumstances (Milnes, 2019).

The core of the personality has been called the Guru Within, connecting with which leads one to identify with the innate OKness in all of humanity and which has the power to transform ordinary self-centredness (Chandran, 2007). It has been argued that the attainment of autonomy opens the door for achieving spirituality; further, at the level of intimacy, the human

psyche transcends normal levels of consciousness and attains spirituality (Kandathil and Kandathil, 1997).

The practice of mindfulness has been related to TA through the Mindfulness Based TA program (Zvelc, Cernetic and Kosak, 2011). Mindfulness may be defined as a mental state achieved by focusing one's awareness on the present moment, while calmly acknowledging and accepting one's feelings, thoughts, and bodily sensations. In the Eastern tradition, mindfulness is generally practised as a prelude to meditation; however, in this context, it is used as a therapeutic technique, to make the practitioner aware of (hitherto unconscious) patterns of behaviour, ego states, and transactions. A model of the Adult ego state is presented with a central core as the Mindful Adult, which interacts with the outer part of the Adult, the Parent and Child ego states, and the external world, in an accepting and non-judgmental way. The Mindful Adult generates here-and-now awareness of both internal and external environments, and, in doing so, opens the door to dealing with past trauma and repressed feelings.

Suriyaprakash and Geetha (2014) have previously written about grieving and of a philosophical perspective on how the Vedantic worldview impacts on TA practice, in that a spiritually-integrated personality responds with equanimity to pain and pleasure, to the extent that death is recognised as the "natural process of the transformation of the soul, and the living do not grieve... [at this] process of transition... Towards embracing eternity." (p.338).

Philosophy of Vedanta

The literature on Vedanta is very extensive, since many spiritual leaders, thinkers and scholars have been translating, interpreting and commenting on the ancient Indian texts in which Vedanta philosophy is found. I will only briefly introduce the concepts from Vedanta which are relevant to this paper.

The Pancha Kosha Model

The *Taittiriya Upanishad* describes the Pancha Kosha (Five Sheaths) model of the complete human being enveloping an inner core, which is called Atman or Self (Figure 1). Proceeding from the outer to the innermost, these are (Parthasarathy, 2000):

1. **Annamaya Kosha or Food Sheath:** The physical body, including the five organs of perception. It is caused by food, maintained by food, and finally ends up as food. (The body grows and is sustained through its intake of nutrition and when it finally perishes, it decays to form food for other living creatures.)
2. **Pranamaya Kosha or Vital Air Sheath:** The five faculties (Pranas) functioning within the human

being, which are directly related to breathing, together constitute the Vital Air Sheath. They correspond to the five physiological functions, and are the faculties of: perception (through the senses of touch, taste, hearing, smell and sight); excretion; digestion; circulation (of nutrition through the blood stream); and absorption of knowledge through assimilation of thoughts and ideas.

3. **Manomaya Kosha or Mental Impressions Sheath:** The sheath of impressions, filled with data from the five senses. It is also the repository of passions and emotions, feelings and impulses, likes and dislikes. It controls the outer two sheaths ,e.g., when the mind is disturbed, the physiological functions (pranas) and the physical body are affected.
4. **Vijnanamaya Kosha or Intellect Sheath:** The sheath of directed mental activity. It functions as discriminating, reasoning, reflecting, thinking, and analysing. It controls the outer three sheaths.
5. **Anandamaya Kosha or Bliss Sheath:** The sheath in which *Vasanas* or inherent tendencies alone reside. When we are in deep dreamless sleep, we experience bliss in the sense of being undisturbed and completely at peace. As we go into the dream state, the *Vasanas* manifest themselves in the form of thoughts and desires.

It may be noted that only the outermost sheath is made of matter as we know it, and the other sheaths are energy states invisible to the physical eye, though we can sense their presence inside us when we pay close attention.

The inner core, **Atman** or Self, is that which gives life to the body, mind and intellect; in other words, it is the life-principle within us, which enables our body to act and perceive, our mind to feel and think, and our intellect to reason. Without it, none of the Koshas can function. A simplistic analogy would be electricity and the electric light.

The discipline of Yoga prescribes methods for strengthening the five sheaths. Thus, the Annamaya Kosha is strengthened by *Hatha yoga*, a series of exercises and postures (*Asanas*) designed to improve flexibility and mobility; Pranamaya Kosha is strengthened through breathing exercises called *Pranayama*, which lead to increased breathing capacity, improved circulation, and increased resistance to disease. For strengthening the Manomaya Kosha, *Pratyahara* or sensory withdrawal leading to meditation is prescribed, which is said to soothe and balance the flow of mental energy, reduce tension and bring about calmness and tranquillity.

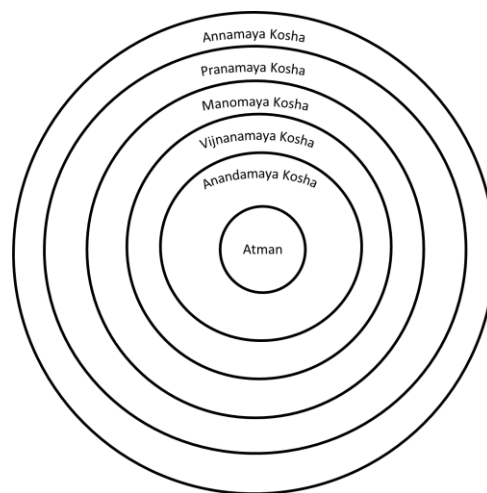


Figure 1: Pancha Kosha

Annamaya Kosha = Food Sheath
Pranamaya Kosha = Vital Air Sheath
Manomaya Kosha = Mental Impressions Sheath
Vijnanamaya Kosha = Intellect Sheath
Anandamaya Kosha = Bliss Sheath
Atman = Self

Vijnana means the power of discernment, discrimination and judgment. The Vijnanamaya Kosha is what distinguishes human beings from animals. Although translated as Intellect Sheath, it encompasses the higher functions of the mind, including morality, ethics, and will. Mental activity directed by the Intellect Sheath is a uniquely human attribute, and strengthening it is considered to be of prime importance in Yoga. This is done through observance of *Yama* (Vow) and *Niyama* (Rule of Conduct). *Yama* comprises vows of non-violence, truthfulness, non-stealing, sexual restraint, and non-covetousness. The rules of conduct to be followed (*Niyama*) are: purity, both external and internal; contentment; restraint of the senses and meditation; self-study; and surrender to the Divine.

The Anandamaya Kosha, or Bliss Sheath, is the final sheath between our ordinary awareness and our higher Self. Properly speaking, it is not a sheath at all, but rather a reflection of the Atman. In the Anandamaya Kosha the Atman experiences eternal bliss, a state of perfect peace and contentment, free from all cares. Such a state is realized in deep sleep, in the normal course. It is strengthened by *Seva*, selfless service to others, which leads us to identify our innate unity with other human beings; *Bhakti Yoga* or the yoga of devotion to God; and *Samadhi*, intensely focused meditation, which reveals the divine nature of the Atman.

A table of the five sheaths, their explanation, and the methods of strengthening them, is given in Table 1.

S. No.	Sheath	Composition	Nature	Strengthened by
1.	Food	Matter	Physical Body	Hatha Yoga (physical exercise, postures)
2.	Vital Air	Energy	Physiological functions connected with breathing. Controls Food Sheath	Pranayama (breathing exercises)
3.	Mental Impressions	Energy	Sensory data, passions and emotions, feelings and impulses, likes and dislikes. Controls Vital Air Sheath	Pratyahara (withdrawal of senses), meditation
4.	Intellect	Energy	Discriminating, reflecting, analyzing, thinking. Controls Mental Impressions Sheath	Observance of Yama (vows of non-violence, truthfulness, non-stealing, sexual restraint, non-covetousness) and Niyama (rules of purity in body and mind, contentment, restraint of the senses, meditation, self-study including study of inner self, surrender to God)
5.	Bliss	Energy (reflection of Atman)	Love, peace, contentment	Selfless service to others, devotion to God, intensely focused meditation

Table 1: Attributes of the Five Sheath

It is significant that the Intellect Sheath is considered to be distinctly separate from the Mental Impressions Sheath, and also as controlling it. This distinction is highlighted in a famous verse from the *Katha Upanishad* (trans. Easwaran, 1981):

*Know the Self as Lord of the chariot,
The body as the chariot itself,
The discriminating intellect as the charioteer;
The mind as the reins;
The senses, say the wise, are the horses,
Selfish desires are the roads they travel.*

This analogy, through its visual impact, shows how easy it is to be led astray by the horses (senses) were it not for the guidance of the charioteer - the intellect. Just as the horses are wont to go astray were it not for the reins (mind) which keep them aligned, our senses can lead us astray were it not for the mind which keeps them aligned. But the reins are nothing without the sobering guidance of the charioteer (discriminating intellect) which controls them. In Vedanta then, the intellect is treated as entirely separate from the mind.

Nature of the Intellect Sheath

The Bhagavad Gita (Song of the Lord) from the epic poem Mahabharata gives an overview of the functioning of the Intellect Sheath as discriminating between opposites; reflecting; analysing; reasoning; and judgment, in the sense of judging the correct course of action (Swami Rama, 1996): *Buddhi (Intellect) has three main functions; discrimination, judgment, and decision.*

Discrimination: Shreyas vs. Preyas

Vedanta teaches us that there are two classes of things that the mind gets attracted to: **Preyas**, that which is pleasant in the short term, and **Shreyas**, that which is good, capable of bringing about lasting happiness:

“The good and the pleasant approach a man; the wise man considers and distinguishes between the two. Wisely does he prefer the good to the pleasant; but a fool chooses the pleasant for its worldly good [benefit].” (Katha Upanishad II, 1.2 and 3 trans. Paramahansa Yogananda)

The discriminating power of the Intellect Sheath makes us aware of the difference between *Shreyas* and *Preyas* (the good and the pleasant). Since it is also the repository of the higher qualities of morality, ethics and character, it points our actions in the direction of *Shreyas*. As an illustration, consider an example from everyday life: say I am travelling in a car, and sipping water from a mineral water bottle. When I finish the bottle, I have a fleeting urge to roll down the window and throw it out on the road. I will get the satisfaction of having cleared the car of clutter. However, if I have a sense of responsibility towards the environment, I will wait until pulling up in an area where there is a trash bin, and dispose of it there. My action has been guided by the choice of *Shreyas* over *Preyas*.

The above is a mundane example; but a little reflection on the part of the reader will reveal plenty of more serious choices in life, where we could be (and

frequently are) guided by the discriminating intellect into choosing long-term good over short-term pleasure, and act accordingly.

Judgment and Decision

The Intellect Sheath receives, perceives and reflects upon information from the first three sheaths. The act of perception is important since, at any given time, there are myriad sensations that are bombarding our senses. Thus, one may hear birds chirping outside the window, the noise of traffic on the road, music playing on the radio, smell coffee being brewed, see a painting on the wall, and so on, all at the same time. All these are received in the Sheath of Mental Impressions. However, we will focus on only the stimuli the intellect wants us to focus on, to the exclusion of all else, and respond accordingly.

The judgment and decision functions, ideally speaking, are guided by the values which are inherently a part of the Intellect Sheath, such as ethics, morality, sense of responsibility, and integrity. As an example, Vedanta gives the marvellous concept of *Rin* (indebtedness); every one of us is indebted with five types of indebtedness, as follows (Chakraborty, 1995):

- *Deva Rin*, or indebtedness to supra-human powers for the gifts of air, sun, water, sight, speech, and so on;
- *Rishi Rin*, or indebtedness to the sages and seers who realized the highest truths and left them for us as a priceless heritage;
- *Pitri Rin*: indebtedness to our parents and ancestors, without whom we would not be what we are at present;
- *Nri Rin*, or indebtedness to humanity at large; and
- *Bhuta Rin*, indebtedness to all other living things and the environment.

Further, Vedanta teaches that we should so live and conduct ourselves in society that as many of these inescapable debts as possible, are liquidated before we leave this world.

The Intellect Sheath is also home to Purushartha, which can be translated as meaning or objective of life. These are four in number as follows (Chakraborty, 1995):

- **Dharma**, living a life of ethical and moral responsibility;
- **Artha**, lawful acquisition of wealth
- **Kama**, enjoyment of the pleasures of the senses
- **Moksha**, liberation or attaining a state of spiritual perfection

According to Vedantic tradition, these objectives are to be fulfilled in a mutually balanced manner, i.e., they should not be regarded as independent or mutually exclusive.

Dharma

Dharma has a whole spectrum of meanings, encompassing morals, ethics, responsibility, obligations, individual duty, natural law. However, here we will refer to Dharma in the context of moral and ethical behaviour, and duties and responsibilities, to mean rightful duty of a person. In an individual context, the earliest influence which shapes my Dharma is my cultural background: as a child, my parents and other parent figures taught me what was right and what was wrong. However, this is contained in the Mental Impressions Sheath which is subordinate to the Intellect Sheath. It is actually the discriminating intellect - the moral, ethical, thinking, reflecting, analyzing and reasoning part of the mind - which finally decides our behaviour and actions. Examples of a person's Dharma may be the proper discharge of their professional or familial roles, e.g., doctor, teacher, parent etc. It is important to note that Dharma is a flexible concept; it can also embrace a combination of things, and different stages of life may call for different Dharmas or rightful purposes (For example, a professional may need to transition to the role of a parent and then later back to being a professional). Therefore, my Dharma, then, ideally should be what makes sense to me as my duty at that time, within the framework of my moral and ethical responsibilities. This is decided by the Intellect Sheath (charioteer).

Artha

According to the Vedantic tradition, acquisition of material wealth is essential not only for living a fulfilling life, but also for attaining spiritual perfection. One cannot live a life of Dharma on an empty stomach or devote time to spiritual pursuits unless creature comforts are taken care of first. Therefore, acquisition of wealth is an essential stepping stone on the path to discovering or experiencing the Atman, and, through the Atman, the Divine. However, Vedanta enjoins us to do so with detachment, i.e., without any pride in its possession or in enjoying it.

Kama

The principle behind the enjoyment of Kama is that one's legitimate desires need to be fulfilled in one's lifetime, without harming anyone in the process. Therefore, it is just and proper to delight in the gratification of one's senses. Vedanta teaches that for a person to evolve spiritually, the barrier of desire needs to be crossed. As one comes to recognize one's desires and goes about consciously fulfilling them

without judgment, one reaches the stage of being able to transcend them, which opens the door to spirituality.

The concept of Moksha is more properly related to the Bliss Sheath, although the quest for spiritual perfection starts in the Intellect Sheath.

The Bliss Sheath and the Atman

The Bliss Sheath, a state of perfect joy and contentment, is described in Vedanta as pure consciousness beyond the intellect and one's ordinary experience. It is the final and thinnest veil standing between our life as a human being and our Higher Self, i.e., the Atman. Since it is pure consciousness unfettered by the limitations of the physical and mental bodies or by logic and reasoning, its very nature makes it difficult to describe in words. In normal life, it can only be approached in deep sleep. Those striving towards spiritual perfection approach it through intensely focused meditation.

The Bliss Sheath is a reflection of the Atman, the Life Principle within a person that causes the eyes to see and the ears to hear. According to Vedanta, the Atman can only be fully experienced when one is in the Bliss Sheath. Further, full realization of the Atman leads to identification with Brahman, the Divine Life Principle that has created the Universe, whether we call it God or anything else.

Moksha

Moksha literally means liberation and is the ultimate destination of human life, when one has spiritually progressed to the stage of full experiencing of the Atman and the inner realization that the individual Self is the same as the Supreme Self or Divine Life-Principle. This realization is beautifully articulated in the Upanishads:

"Bring me a fruit of the banyan tree."

"Here it is, Father."

"Break it open... What do you see?"

"These tiny seeds."

"Now break one open... What do you see?"

"Nothing, Father."

"My son... There is a subtle essence which you do not perceive, but through the essence the truly immense banyan tree exists... It is Truth. It is the Self. And you are that." (Tat Tvam Asi, in the original Sanskrit)

(Chhandogya Upanishad, trans. Paramahansa Yogananda)

Tat Tvam Asi is one of the *Mahakavyas* (Great Sayings) of the Vedas; the sage explains that the Life Principle within you is the same as the invisible Life Principle within the tiny seed, leading to the inescapable conclusion that:

"The Self (Atman) is Brahman" (Brihadaranyaka Upanishad, 4.4.5, trans. Paramahansa Yogananda)

No matter that the Atman temporarily occupies a perishable body; it is still a part of the Life Principle within the tiny seed that gives birth to the mighty banyan tree, and which has created Earth and the planets, the sun and the universe. We can call Atman the Self and Brahman God; names do not matter as long as we grasp the essence, that there is a little bit of God in every person; or rather, in every being, living and non-living. If a person lives a virtuous and moral life, pursuing Artha and Kama within the framework of Dharma, and at the same time strives towards spiritual perfection, she will eventually attain Moksha or liberation from the cycle of birth and rebirth, when her Atman (Soul) merges with Brahman (the World Soul). For it is an article of faith in Indian philosophy that the Atman is imperishable. It does not die when the mortal body dies, but occupies another body:

"As leaving aside worn out garments a man takes other, new ones; so, leaving aside worn out bodies, to other new ones goes the embodied Self." (Bhagavad Gita, Chapter II, verse 22, trans. Paramahansa Yogananda)

However, the journey of the Atman from one physical body to another is not random; it is dictated by considerations of Karma, or the accumulation of merit earned by living well (doing good deeds) in previous lives as well as the current life. Good deeds are those which are Dharmic, i.e., those actions taken within the boundaries of Dharma, which are in accordance with Shreyas, and those which serve to discharge one's Rin or debt. In contrast, deeds which are contrary to one's Dharma earn negative Karma, which must be expiated in the present life or in future lifetimes through suffering or by performing good deeds.

Detailed discussion of the concept of Karma is beyond the scope of this paper. It has been mentioned here only to show that it provides a rationale for the progression of the Atman over several lifetimes, during which the bad Karma is worked off and the good Karma accumulated. When finally a lifetime is reached in which the burden of negative Karma has been reduced to zero, the Atman is not born again but merges with Brahman. This, as stated above, is in Vedanta the ultimate goal of life, Moksha or liberation.

It should be recognised, however, that Moksha is the *ultimate* goal of the Atman after it has attained a state of spiritual perfection over the course of many lifetimes, having worked off all negative Karma. In an ordinary lifetime, it suffices if one can experience, even if only fleetingly, the Bliss Sheath, and gain the realization that the Atman is the same in all living beings, and that it is in turn part of the Universal Life Principle: Brahman.

Bhakti Yoga - The Yoga of Devotion

Bhakti Yoga, or the Yoga of devotion to God, is prescribed as a method for strengthening the Bliss Sheath. However, in Vedanta, it actually represents the yearning of the Atman to merge in Brahman, and devotion here means devotion to Brahman. According to this philosophy, the urge to love and be loved is rooted in the inner core of the Atman. At this level, however, it is spiritual; I consider its earthly manifestation to be love of one person for another, whose characteristic is the desire for sharing and

caring, or connecting to something higher than oneself. In the words of Swami Vivekananda,

"...love - the intense longing for association, the strong desire on the part of two to become one - and, it may be after all, of all to become merged in one - is being manifested everywhere..."(Vedanta: Voice of Freedom, 1987).

A summary of the Vedanta concepts other than Pancha Kosha is given in Table 2:

S. No.	Vedanta Concept	Meaning	Associated With	Resultant Behaviour and Conduct
1.	Shreyas and Preyas	Discriminating between long-term good and short-term pleasure	Intellect Sheath	Action in accordance with what is good
2.	5 types of Rin (Indebtedness) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deva Rin • Rishi Rin • Pitri Rin • Nri Rin • Bhuta Rin 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Indebtedness to supra-human power for the gift of the Universe and of Life • Indebtedness to sages and seers for handing down their wisdom to us • Indebtedness to parents and ancestors • Indebtedness to humanity at large • Indebtedness to all other living things and the environment 	Intellect Sheath	Reverence and worship of the Creator Following their teachings Praying to ancestors and respecting living parents Respecting other persons Care and concern for environment
3.	Dharma	Rightful duty of a person	Intellect Sheath	Acting responsibly in accordance with morality and ethics
4	Artha	Lawful acquisition of wealth	Intellect Sheath	With a spirit of detachment
5.	Kama	Sensual pleasure	Intellect Sheath	Without harming anyone
6.	Moksha	Liberation; attaining Spiritual perfection	Bliss Sheath and Atman	Experiencing oneness with the Creator
7.	Bhakti Yoga	Devotion to the Creator	Bliss Sheath and Atman	Prayer, feeling of love

Table 2. Vedanta Concepts

Insights from Indian Philosophy

The Adult Ego State and the Intellect Sheath

Whether one relates the classical structural ego States or the Integrating Adult model to the Pancha Kosha Model, it is evident that the Parent, Adult and Child ego states correspond only to the Mental Impressions Sheath and the Intellect Sheath. Also, in view of the various functions of the Intellect Sheath elaborated above – discriminating, analyzing, reasoning, reflecting, judgment, decision, rectitude- **it can be distinguished as an entirely separate system within the Adult ego state.**

For this reason, the Adult Ego State can be considered as being composed of two parts, one of which is included in the Mental Impressions Sheath. The other part is the Intellect Sheath. (The other components of the Mental Impressions Sheath are the Parent and Child Ego States, since they are also mental impressions).

The functioning of the Intellect Sheath bears a close correspondence to the structural properties of the Adult ego state, giving rise to the hypothesis that **the discriminating Intellect Sheath operates on the Sheath of Mental Impressions, which is the repository of all our subjective experience, to choose and decide how we will think, feel and act.** In doing so, however, it is guided by considerations of morality, ethics and will, since it is home to these higher qualities also. In this respect, the Intellect Sheath can be equated with the concept of the Guru Within in the paper of Sashi Chandran referred to earlier.

Since it acts as an operator on the repository of our mental impressions, a smaller circle can be demarcated within the Adult to denote the Intellect (I), as in Figure 2. The Intellect also envelops the inner core of the Self (Atman) as shown.

The horizontal arrows from the Intellect Sheath reaching outside the ego states represent the engagement of the intellect with external reality as perceived through our senses. The arrows on the right side show its operation on the mental impressions contained in the Adult ego state, whereas the semi-vertical arrows on the left into the Parent and Child ego states represent its selection of the impressions contained in them, as it judges appropriate. The arrow rising up from the Atman and extending beyond the ego states represents the yearning of the Atman to merge in Brahman, the World Soul (This aspect shall be discussed in more detail subsequently).

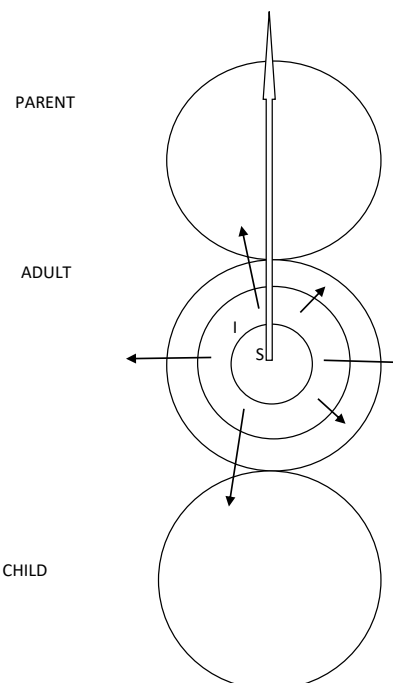
The Intellect Sheath and Autonomy

It can be postulated that **the progress towards autonomous functioning of the Adult ego state is due to strengthening of the Intellect Sheath as it**

operates on the Mental Impressions Sheath with increasing effectiveness to determine how we think, feel and act, using as its yardsticks Shreyas, Rin and Dharma. To probe more deeply into its functioning, consider the stated components of autonomy – awareness, spontaneity, intimacy, responsibility and integrity – in the light of the Vedantic Ego States Model.

Awareness: Here and Now and There and Then

The model presented by Zvelc et al (2011) of the Mindful Adult (Zvelc, 2011) shows the Adult ego state with a central core of the Mindful Adult, and, in this respect, it is similar to the Vedantic Model; surely, the Intellect Sheath possesses the quality of mindfulness, which is defined as the ability to focus on the here and now in a non-judgmental and accepting manner. However, **the Intellect Sheath also possesses the ability to detach us from the current reality, and focus our attention on something far removed from our present circumstances, when it is in our best interest to do so.** As an extreme example, consider the case of Dr. Viktor Frankl, who was able to survive horrific brutalities in the Nazi concentration camps by deliberately detaching his mind from the here and now, and imagining that he was talking to his wife. At other times he would imagine himself giving a lecture on psychology in a warm and comfortable lecture hall (Frankl, 1959).



I = Intellect Sheath

S = Self/Atman

Figure 2. The Vedantic Model of Ego States

Clearly, Dr. Frankl was able to preserve his sanity, and possibly even his life, by detaching his mind from the current reality. Or consider an example from everyday life; let us say we have to receive an injection. It is common practice to look away from the spot where the injection is to be administered, and think of something else; by doing so, we hardly feel the painful prick of the needle. Therefore, it is evident that the intellect has the power to make us detach from the external world, and focus on the internal world; **it is as if the Intellect Sheath acts as a regulator, capable not only of switching on and switching off internal and external worlds, but also of controlling how much of both engage our attention at any given moment, and of moving back and forth between the two.** To that extent, the intellect, then, in addition to the quality of mindfulness, also possesses the power to detach the mind from the immediate environment, and acts as an internal regulator (charioteer), controlling, in our own interest, how much of the internal and external worlds engage our attention at any given time. This also fits in with the research finding that real autonomy may only come about when we move between contact with ourselves and contact with another (van Beekum, 2000), with the proviso that it is the strengthened Intellect Sheath that regulates this contact.

Spontaneity

In the light of the arrows reaching into the mental impressions residing in the Parent and Child ego states in the Vedantic model, it can be appreciated how the Intellect Sheath picks up what it considers desirable from them according to its judgment and decision functions, and reproduces or exhibits the corresponding behaviour appropriately. In fact, spontaneity is closely tied to the judgment function of the Intellect Sheath. It rapidly assesses the environment and the situation, decides an appropriate behavioural response, selects from among a range of options and picks the one most suited to the situation. It is important to appreciate that this process is not automatic, as in the case of a computer algorithm, although much of the time it may be lightning fast. However, at other times it may well be slower, more deliberate because it is *deliberated* by the intellect, the reasoning, reflecting, analysing part of our consciousness.

Responsibility and Integrity

Shreyas, Rin and Dharma are also the guiding criteria for the Adult ego state to behave responsibly. In the example of the mineral water bottle referred to above, the intellect can make use of Rin in addition to Shreyas to determine my actions; if I am conscious of my debt to the environment, I will take steps to see that my actions do not degrade it. Dharma, however, is more complex: the earliest influence which shapes my Dharma is contained in my Cultural Parent (Drego, 1981); much of my behaviour as an adult is influenced

by it. However, my Intellect Sheath, ideally speaking, has the decisive say in working out my personal Dharma, i.e., my rightful duty as a person; if I unquestioningly follow the dictates of my Cultural Parent, then I run the risk of prejudices creeping into my Adult; in other words, contamination.

If I (my Intellect Sheath) decide my personal Dharma, I am actually taking a step further down the road to autonomy by examining and critically evaluating old notions contained in my Cultural Parent in terms of their relevance to the present time or my present situation.. **Therefore, the intellect is the agency which, ideally speaking, decides my moral and ethical code (Dharma).** If it doesn't perform this function, then it means that the intellect is not that strong in me, and I am prone to slavishly follow the dictates of my Cultural Parent. On the other hand, if the intellect sheath is strong, it guides me to formulate my Dharma which, no doubt, is influenced by the contents of my Cultural Parent, but is finally decided by my own analysis, reflection and judgment.

By way of an example, consider the caste system in India, which has for centuries rigidly straitjacketed people into a hierarchical structure. Not too long ago, it was unthinkable to marry outside one's caste; the Cultural Parent strongly forbade such an aberration. However, in modern times, intercaste marriages are becoming increasingly common in India, especially in the cities, and are accepted by both families. The people concerned have overcome the traditional way of thinking imposed earlier and have concluded that caste barriers are no longer relevant in today's context.

Integrity means consistency of words and action, thought and deed, as well as the quality of being honest, and having strong moral principles and ethical values. In this connection, observance of Yama and Niyama, prescribed in yoga for strengthening the Intellect Sheath, are relevant insofar as living a life of integrity is concerned. It may be recalled that Yama comprises vows of non-violence, truthfulness, non-stealing, sexual restraint and non-covetousness. Niyama comprises rules of purity in body and mind, contentment, restraint of the senses, meditation, self-study including study of inner self, and surrender to God (Table 1). In fact, Vedanta lays great stress on doing one's rightful duty, i.e., being true to oneself or acting with absolute integrity; the entire Bhagavad Gita is an exhortation to the central character of the Mahabharata, Arjuna, to follow his Dharma.

Intimacy and the Atman/Self

It remains to consider intimacy in relation to the Vedantic model. Now, intimacy can be regarded as the ability to be completely open, honest and authentic with another person, and to be able to empathise at a level beyond mere words, that of feelings and emotions. I believe that the capacity for intimacy is

essentially a desire for connectedness, as if one mind seeks to connect with another, so that the two relate to each other as one. Evidently, this bonding occurs at a level deeper than that of the intellect; we may find pleasure in intellectual discourse, and in a free and frank exchange of views, but the yearning for closeness at an emotional level springs from something more fundamental. We could think of it as a primal urge of the Atman or Self, which is manifested in the human desire to love and be loved (Swami Vivekananda, 1987). At the level of the Atman, however, it is spiritual; **the worldly urge for intimacy is a manifestation of the need to love and be loved, which is in turn a reflection of the essential longing of the Atman to merge with Brahman.** It is significant that Berne conceived of intimacy as the release *or recovery* of an ability or a capacity, as if it was already there within us. Vedanta teaches that is indeed there, present in its purest form in the Atman.

Physis and the Atman

Physis or life energy can also be conceptualized as residing in the Atman. Eric Berne described physis as some force which drives people to grow, progress, do better (1964), and the growth force of Nature, which makes organisms evolve into higher forms (1968). In other words, physis was seen as a positive life force, a force of nature seeking greater health (Cornell, 2010). In Vedanta, it is said that Atman pulsates in every cell of your body. It is the vitalising principle inherent in your mind and intellect... the life-principle, or God-principle, within you (Parthasarathy, 2000). Evidently, Vedanta considers physis as springing from the Atman, the Self or Soul.

Now, if physis is a force that drives people to progress and do better, the question arises: progress towards what? The answer in Vedanta is: progress towards the ultimate merger of the Self with the Divine (Atman with Brahman) over several lifetimes, ideally becoming better with each successive lifetime, working off bad Karma by enduring suffering, and accumulating good Karma by living and working within the boundaries of Dharma, until finally the bad Karma is reduced to zero and Moksha is achieved. Of course, it may not work in such an ideal fashion; if I am led astray in a particular lifetime to act/ behave in a manner which is outside the boundaries of Dharma, then by virtue of my bad deeds I accumulate negative Karma, which must be worked off by enduring trials and tribulations in the same or successive lifetimes, before my Atman can resume its journey towards release from the cycle of birth and rebirth through attaining Moksha and reuniting with Brahman.

I consider the ultimate goal of physis also to be attainment of a state of spiritual perfection (in other words, Moksha). This is shown in Figure. 2 by the arrow originating in the Atman and rising upward

beyond the ego states. **In worldly terms, the aspiration arrow of the script matrix, which is a visual representation of physis, can be considered to be a manifestation of the urge of the Atman to merge with Brahman.** It is relevant to mention that, in one of the TA models, this arrow is shown as located within a hollow core common to all three ego states (Tigchelaar, 2019).

What does Vedanta prescribe as the means for recovering the capacity for intimacy in this earthly life? Recall the methods for strengthening the Bliss Sheath; selfless service and Bhakti Yoga, devotion to Brahman (Table 1). Both give us a sense of connection to something higher than ourselves, as well as giving rise to a feeling of inner peace and contentment. (The third method, intensely focused meditation or Samadhi, is more a means of realizing oneness with the Supreme Being, and is considered possible only at the highest stage of spiritual evolution).

The Integrated or Integrating Adult

Integration can be regarded as a process through which we grow to become better human beings: autonomous, authentic and responsible individuals, with a clear conception of right and wrong, and a capacity for giving and receiving love and affection. We become progressively more and more aware of our inner selves, and, in the end, get in touch with our inmost core - the Atman or Self:

The logical conclusion of complete autonomy and full integration is awareness of the Soul or self-awareness of the Soul leads in turn to enlightenment, the realization that the Soul is the same in all living creatures, and further, that it is part of the World Soul, that is, God.

Such a world view serves to internalize the virtues of compassion and humility. The realization that the same soul exists in all living beings and is but a reflection of God, cannot be other than ennobling and spiritually uplifting. It teaches us to be compassionate towards other living beings because, "There but for the grace of God go I". It is humbling since we realize that we are in the presence of something bigger than us, and also feel a connection with that Agency, whatever name we choose to give it. It is in this sense that I view the end result of integration to be spiritual progress.

Beyond the Intellect Sheath

However, the integration of desirable childlike qualities into the Adult, which is also a hallmark of the Integrating Adult, remains to be explored. It is my belief that this takes place when we are able to go beyond the intellect, and penetrate the realm of the Bliss Sheath. Vedanta recognizes that reason and logic can carry us thus far but no further into the realm of the Self; to fully realize our inmost nature (Atman), we must practise sensory withdrawal (Pratyahara) and

cessation of mental activity (meditation or Dhyān). This, in fact, will come naturally when we perfect our mastery over the first four sheaths. The Bliss Sheath is said to be the abode of pure consciousness, which is impossible to describe in words, and which can only be experienced and not understood. In the language of TA, **realization of autonomy leads to the ability to experience spirituality, which resides in the Bliss Sheath.** In this sense, it has been rightly pointed out that autonomy is the open door to spirituality (Kandathil and Kandathil, 1997).

As the Bliss Sheath is experienced in fuller and fuller measure, I believe that positive childlike qualities like warmth, simplicity, affection, etc. get integrated into the Adult. This can be observed in people who have attained a high degree of spiritual perfection. In India,

the land of sages and saints, it is not uncommon to see holy men dancing and singing with gay abandon. Followers of Bhakti Yoga are usually marked by a childlike simplicity and charm in their unwavering devotion to the Divine. Of course, such endearing behaviour can be occasionally observed elsewhere also; for example, it is not uncommon to see grandparents behaving like children when playing with their grandchildren, and finding opportunities for laughter, fun, and childlike enthusiasm in tackling the most mundane activities. However, it is not usual to see childlike charm as an integral part of the personality in general, whereas it can be often observed in those who are spiritually inclined.

The correspondence between TA and Vedantic concepts is brought out in Table 3:

S. No.	TA Concept	Vedantic Concept	Remarks
1.	Ego States	Mental Impressions Sheath and Intellect Sheath	Ego States are mental impressions except the part of the Adult that contains the Intellect, which acts as an operator upon the impressions
2.	Adult	Intellect Sheath and part of Mental Impressions Sheath	Intellect operates upon external reality, remaining part of Adult, and Parent and Child
3.	Autonomy	Due to strengthening of Intellect Sheath	By using criteria of Shreyas and Rin; determining personal Dharma, observance of Yama and Niyama
4.	Awareness	Intellect Sheath	Regulates contact with external reality and internal world
5.	Spontaneity	Intellect Sheath	Through functions of judgment and decision
6.	Responsibility	Intellect Sheath	Through sense of Rin (indebtedness)
7.	Integrity	Intellect Sheath	Through working out personal Dharma
8.	Intimacy	Atman (inner core of Self) which is encased in Intellect Sheath	Desire to connect; manifestation of urge to love and be loved
9.	Integrating Adult	Intellect Sheath + Atman. Experiencing the Bliss Sheath (reflection of Atman)	Leading to spiritual experience (sense of connecting to Higher Power)
10.	Physis	Atman	Longing to merge with Brahman (World-Soul)

Table 3. Correspondence Between TA and Vedantic Concepts

Practice Implications: Psychotherapy

The objectives of TA therapy include helping clients to become more autonomous and script-free, work towards the I'm OK-You're OK position, learn to state their needs and views clearly without game playing, and take responsibility for their own feelings (Transactional Analysis.pdf). The therapist encourages them to think for themselves, and shows them that they can change if they want to. The Vedantic conception that the 'thinking' part of the mind, i.e., the intellect, acts upon the rest of our mental constructs will, I believe, make it easier for people to change the way they think about things. Appreciation of the complex functioning of the intellect as explained in Vedanta and elaborated above may simplify the process of 'clearing out the clutter' which enables truly autonomous functioning. Appreciation of the Vedantic principles, learning how to strengthen the Intellect Sheath, and working out one's Dharma, would go a long way in decontaminating the Adult and enabling autonomous functioning. The therapist can support clients in their endeavours, and guide them to practise yoga and meditation, which are of proven effectiveness in tackling various psychosomatic conditions like stress, anxiety, depression, insomnia, etc., apart from promoting all round health of body and mind.

TA Practice

The TA practitioner helps clients to identify and use their own resources in the attempt to change themselves. The practitioner encourages clients to explore alternate ways of behaving, and to make new decisions about themselves, challenging Not OK positions they may have adopted in childhood and reconstructing their scripts to make them more positive.

The Vedantic model of ego states will bring into sharp focus the resource of the Intellectual Sheath as well as guide clients to bring about positive change in themselves. Usage of this resource with encouragement and guidance of the counsellor will, with practice and time, serve to clear contaminations of the client's Adult, and lead the client progressively towards autonomy.

For example, the contracting process in counselling or psychotherapy can be viewed in terms of using the (discriminating) intellect to identify specific behaviours and beliefs which the client desires to change. Subsequently, working jointly with the practitioner, the client can be guided to examine their own beliefs, attitudes and behaviour, decide what is of value and what is not through the use of discrimination and judgment functions of the intellect (in the Vedantic sense). The decision (or redecision) to jettison an old belief is similarly made through the functioning of the intellect (cf. Swami Rama, quoted above).

The spirituality inherent in the Vedantic conception of the personality also serves to connect with a higher purpose, and should be helpful in case of clients battling with a sense of meaninglessness and similar self-defeating attitudes.

The use of TA techniques within organisations for improving communications and for building interpersonal and leadership skills is well known. Many organizations are also running guided yoga and meditation classes for their employees with a view to relieving stress and promoting their all round health. However, if we can combine the TA concepts with the philosophy behind practising yoga and meditation, as in the Vedantic model of ego states, we get a ready mechanism in the Discriminating Intellect for exploring and determining one's values and formulating a personal code of conduct based on the principles of Shreyas, Rin, and Dharma. Appreciation of the world view of Vedanta will add moral and ethical dimensions to business values, which is significant in these days of values based leadership and Spiritual Quotient. Reference needed The framework given by the Vedantic Model of Ego States can be used by itself or in conjunction with other TA models in order to improve interpersonal relationships, quality of communications and set up an OK-OK outlook within a team, a department or a company.

Within educational applications of TA, the insights of Vedanta provide a fertile ground for guiding young impressionable minds along the path of moral and ethical behaviour and right conduct. At the same time, the primacy accorded to the intellect can encourage young people to think out things for themselves, learn to discriminate, test their assumptions, and formulate a humane world view right from the start. As in the case of organizations, the Vedantic model can be used either by itself or in conjunction with other models, to serve as a guide for developing and strengthening the intellect. In TA, the Adult is recognized to be ageless; this translates into the Vedantic model as the Intellect is ageless; and children from a young age can learn how to make the correct use of its various functions and attributes, if they are provided with the permissions appropriate to their stage of development. Autonomy can be described as the freedom to think and act as the intellect (charioteer) directs. Encouragement to work out one's own moral and ethical code (Dharma) in accordance with the responsibility of discharging Rin would mark the beginnings of the process of achieving autonomy, and serve to make children learn to assume responsibility for their actions.

Similarly, adults too can learn how the combination of Indian and Western streams of thought can bring fresh purpose into their lives. The five sheaths constituting body, mind and soul, can be sensed through various

exercises (Ref. www.yogainternational.com); strengthening them through the yoga techniques mentioned in Table 1 will result in sound physical and mental health. Observance of Yama and Niyama prompts us to tread the path of ethics, morality and goodness (Dharma) and gives us a framework within which we can live and work. The Purushartha (goals of life) also give us concrete objectives towards which we can direct our efforts.

Limitations

A limitation of this article is that I am attempting to convey a complex philosophical system in an article, when there are voluminous publications about it. Likewise, I am referring to a limited number of ego state models with brief explanations although there are many variations of ego state models within TA. I invite the reader to undertake further investigation of those areas which they find of particular interest.

I am also aware that I am presenting my own perspective and interpretations, and there will no doubt be many alternative viewpoints.

Finally, to some readers the distinctions between spirituality and religion may not seem clear enough; I invite readers to interpret terms such as God and Brahman in whichever way they choose.

Conclusion

The philosophical system of Vedanta not only complements the overall framework developed by transactional analysis, but significantly deepens and enriches our understanding of the total personality of the human being. It shows how the discriminating intellect, through its various functions, acts as the controller of the mind, and leads us towards autonomy. Further, it guides us to do what is right, and helps us to develop qualities which endear us to others. As such, the intellect (*Buddhi*) is the agency which is responsible for most of the process of integration in our personality, in the terminology of T.A.

Vedanta also probes the spiritual aspect of life, viewing it as a continuum that does not start with birth or end with death. It views the inner core of the Soul/Self as part of the Universal Life Principle with which the Self longs to be merged, adding a new dimension to the meaning of intimacy. Through its ennobling and inspiring teachings, it counsels us how to live a better life on this planet, and ultimately to achieve spiritual progress through complete integration – not only of the Adult, but also of the Soul with the World Soul.

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