

Yoga Explained 17

The Astral Body – Ego

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Encinitas

[Doctor and the audience have just finished chanting “O God Beautiful.”] All the saints say, “God alone” about the beautiful, Infinite Father, when you sing that chant, more and more, you will feel the thing most beautiful, His Love, and His Compassion, and His

Tonight, going on now with our discussion of Yoga Explained; last time we took up, as you will remember, two, two parts of the Astral Body: Mind and Intellect – Mind and Intellect. There are 19 Elements of the Spiritual or Astral Body: 10 Senses, 5 Pranas, Mind, Intellect, Ego, and Feeling. Tonight we are taking up the Ego. But first just a little review on the, the Mind and the Intellect, that you can discriminate, in order to understand the Ego.

To understand the Ego, you must know that the Ego is the subject of sensations and thoughts. And sensation and thoughts are found in the Realm of Mind and Intellect, because the Mind simply coordinates the sensations, and the Intellect discriminates the sensations by considering thoughts of those different sensations that come to us. You remember we had the illustration of the, the horse in the mirror coming through the, the window, which represents the Sense of Sight. And then we, we saw the, in imagination, the horse in the mirror.

So the Mind simply coordinates the Senses. Then comes along the discrimination, which considers the thoughts about that image, which we decided was a horse – the different characteristics of it. And so, the Intellect discriminates, that’s all. It discriminates, and, of course, there is the Power of the Soul in the discrimination. That’s why conscience comes in, and we can tell right or wrong. And so, just remember, the Mind, as, as Master has given us the definition in a simple way – that Mind coordinates the Senses, and that Intellect is the discriminative faculty of the Soul.

Now, in the dictionary you will find different definitions of mind. Included in those definitions are things to do with the intellect; but they are separate. But because the process goes on simultaneously, we do not see the different parts of the process as the Mind and the Intellect. We see with our eyes and we know

what it is immediately, because the process goes on simultaneously. So, so much for the Mind and the Intellect, just as a review.

And tonight we will take up the Ego. And I've had many requests to say something about the Ego so that people could tell more about it – whether they are in its consciousness, or just how to know you're in Ego Consciousness, because it gives us lots of trouble. Ego gives us lots and lots of trouble.

Well, the Ego is none other than our Souls attached to this body. Our Souls attached to this body. That's what colors it entirely different from your Soul Consciousness. Because it is attached, through the Law of Attachment, it feels itself the body. Instead of that Soul which is free, one with the Infinite Father, it feels encased, so to speak, limited by this body. So that is what the Ego is. It is the pseudo-self, the Soul attached to the body.

But how can we know that? How can we know, through realization, just what the Soul is? The meaning of the Ego can be known "as the subject of your thoughts and sensations." Realize that. "The Ego is the subject of your thoughts and sensations."

I'm looking at that flower; my Senses are involved, and I think, "That's a beautiful red rose with little green things around it." Now, what is it that is doing that thinking? What is it that is perceiving that rose? What is it that is discriminating? It is the Ego Consciousness. So remember, that your Ego is simply "the subject of your thoughts and sensations." It can be known by the average intellect as that. Just like the image of the horse, we can understand that that which sees the image, and that which discriminates it as a horse, is the Ego. It is the Soul's Power attached to the body, that's all. Understand that. Now, that's the first dif, definition of Ego: that it is the subject of our thoughts and sensations. That's the easiest way to remember it.

But, another way is this: that the Ego, or the "I" within us, is that consciousness of sameness that remains, even when the thoughts and sensations change. When I look at those [pointing to the flowers], they're red and they're white, and, they look to me like stock – I don't know whether they are or not, but perhaps they are. I'm discriminating; but what remains the same? What remains the same? If you can look at a horse, or look at those flowers – they are entirely different – or this rose – what remains the same? It is the Ego. Therefore, that consciousness of changelessness, or sameness – the changeless consciousness that remains during the process of perceiving sensation, or coordinating thoughts, or discrimination –

that consciousness that remains the same is the Ego. Now, that's an easy way to remember.

Now, we come to another process. Sensations and thoughts change, but Ego does not. Realize that. Now, people say, "Well, there's another condition which I'd like to know about: somebody says something about me, and I think of it, and I get all bristled up inside. I don't like it; it hurts me. What is that?" Ego!

Whenever anything hurts you – whenever a thing, when anything touches you and you dislike it, or it causes that feeling of dislike within you, or mental pain – that's the Ego. Now, if somebody says something about me, and it's not what it should be, it is not encouraging; I hear it, I discriminate, but it doesn't touch me. What is that? That's your Soul. The Soul cannot be touched by any thought or sensation, because the Soul is above duality of consciousness.

When I feel hurt, what happens? Likes and dislikes enter into the picture – "I don't like it." Or somebody says something nice, and I feel good, and I puff way up – same thing. No matter what it's of: "Chains, though of gold, still bind us."¹ So understand that when anything hurts you, or puffs you up – of course, it's easier to discriminate between those things which hurt us – but, if anything hurts you, know it is your Ego. If anything puffs you up, makes you feel big, and so forth, know that's your Ego, too. But when in spite of the likes and dislikes you can remain undisturbed, untouched, that's your Soul Consciousness. Realize that.

Now, you can see that it's easy, if you want to know the truth. If you don't want to know the truth, it's very difficult. When somebody says something about you that is untruth, or does something to you, if you want to know the truth, and you feel hurt, you're in Ego Consciousness. If you don't want to know the truth, it's very difficult to get out of it. But such is the Ego, the subject of our thoughts and sensations, that's all. And because the Ego is the Soul attached to the body, it is limited – it takes on the limitations of the body, and this bodily consciousness in which we live, in which there are likes and dislikes. We take on the limitations of this worldly consciousness, and because of that, sometimes, we're hurt more easily, don't you think? But, if you feel the Presence of the Soul, and you feel the Presence of God within you, nothing can touch you, no matter what they say about you, because you are not that. You are the Soul, which is one with God's

¹ The Homilies of S. John Chrysostom, Archbishop of Constantinople, on the Epistles of St. Paul the Apostle to Timothy, Titus, and Philemon, Oxford, 1843, Page 61, "whether it be gold or iron, it is still a chain; nay the gold is heavier."

Presence – free – above all likes and dislikes. You are your Father’s child. Why should you be disturbed, why should I be disturbed, when God is with us?

So, there are two definitions of the Ego. But the Ego can be known more in a metaphysical way, if you’d like just to hear a little more about the Ego.

The Ego can be spoken of positively and negatively. First let us take up the “negative” aspect of the Ego. For instance, the Ego is that consciousness which cannot be eliminated through introspection. For instance, you sit to meditate, and your thoughts come, and, if you have a good meditation, after a while, you still the waves of the mind, and the thoughts cease, but there’s something still there. There’s some consciousness, which cannot be eliminated by your introspection. That’s the Ego, just at that point. Of course, if you fall into a nice sleep just then, you’re in the subconsciousness, and the Ego doesn’t operate there very much. But, if at that point you lift your consciousness, and by the Power of the Soul within you, you hear the Cosmic Sound, or see the Cosmic Light, or feel God’s Love, then the Ego is not the Ego – it is the Soul – or rather, I should say, the Soul loses its attachment to the body as Ego, and becomes the Soul itself.

So negatively speaking, the Ego can be known as that state of consciousness which remains when, through introspection, you eliminate all previous states of consciousness – as sensation, thoughts, memory thoughts, and so forth. That which remains is the Ego. You see, the thoughts change, the sensations change – “I see that,” “I see this,” “I think of that,” “I think of this” – but the same consciousness within me that is doing the thinking is Ego. Thoughts and sensations change; the Ego does not change, as far as thoughts and sensations go.

So, negatively speaking, that consciousness which remains after our thoughts and sensations are eliminated – now realize this – is your Ego. You sit to meditate, you...you still the sensations. And then, after a great battle, the thoughts cease, that awareness that remains is the Ego. So understand that. That’s the negative way to describe the Ego.

Now, the Ego can also be described in a “positive” way. For instance, “The ego...” Master told us many years ago, I remember, “ego is, is what’s called the pseudo-self,” which simply means the self, attached to the limitations of this body and its functions. It is the, the pseudo-self. Or another way Master spoke of the Soul, or the Ego, as “the self-appointed vice regent of the Soul.” That is, it takes over, so to speak, and because the Soul, Soul is attached to the body, it

takes on its limitations, and it thinks it does things. It thinks it, the Soul thinks it thinks, and it thinks it sees, and it thinks all those things which it does not do at all. The Soul is still the doer, but because it's attached to the body, it is known as the Ego and has lost its faculties as Soul. And so, positively spoken, the Ego is the pseudo-self – false self, that means – self-appointed viceroy of the Soul.

Another definition is this: The Ego is the Soul Consciousness forgetful of its Real self. You know when you are attached to the body, and somebody jabs a pin in you, and you feel it, that you're not the Soul – you're the Ego. And, if they jab it in good and proper, it hurts you, and you're hurt, and you know, surely then, that you're not the Soul – you are the Ego. And so the, the Soul, in a positive way of speaking is the Ego, in a positive way of speaking is, the Soul attached to the body, so that it thinks it is the body. If you really had Soul Consciousness and somebody – now don't try it – jabbed a pin into you, you wouldn't feel it.

These things can be demonstrated, just like you demonstrate as you sit in meditation, this room will disappear – worldly living will disappear – but you still are conscious of some state within you of consciousness that doesn't disappear with it. Now, as you can eliminate the consciousness of this room and your body by practice, by yoga, you can eliminate the ability to feel pain, or to feel the mental pain of someone who hurts your Ego. These are demonstrable statements, and those who meditate know that they are true.

And so, the Ego is the Soul Consciousness with a slight attachment to the bodily vehicle. It isn't too much, because in meditation you can break it, you can rise above that attachment. And in deep meditation, you can know that you are not this body. So, there, are the two ways of positively and negatively describing, or defining, Ego Consciousness. Realize those things.

Now, a word or two about the Soul, the Ego and the Soul. If you remember this simple definition. And don't think that, "Well, the minister the other night said, 'don't think.'" I don't say that at all. But I do say: to think is to be identified with the Ego; not to think, nor become unconscious, is to be identified with the Soul. Realize that. To think is to be in Ego consciousness. Not to think, nor to go unconscious, in the unconscious state, is to be identified with the Soul. So there you will easily, now, know the difference between the Ego and the Soul.

Now, this is very important, because we're here for one purpose. We're here, I'm sure, to feel and know the Presence of God. That's why we're here – to commune with God, and to commune with God, you cannot think about it.

Now, what does that mean? It means that in meditation we must rise above thought. We must still the waves of the mind, and then we can contact the Presence of God. But, you say, "Well, what am I going to do? I can't think. How am I going to know God?" Easily! The more you think about Him the less you will come near knowing Him. There's one 14th Century saint said, "Of God no man can think."² Think of it. "Of God no man can think, but He is easily known and kept...He is easily known and kept by affection and love."

Do you want to think about Him? If you have somebody you love, do you have to think about loving them? No! You love them. Same with God – absolutely. When you begin to think about how you're going to love Him and all that, you drift further away from Him. If someone you love comes in here, you don't have to think, "Well, now, how, how, how am I going to love her anyway? How am I going to...?" You love her. That's God's Love. So realize that in your meditation.

I know it's difficult to still the waves of the mind – they're terrible. They come on all sides, and you get them quiet on this side, and down come the memory thoughts – remember those wonderful days we had years ago, and all that. That's the devil in the form of duality of the mind coming into you. But I have found it helps me more when they start coming: "Get out of here and stay out. I want one thing. I want God's Love, that's all." And you can say, "Love, love, love, God, God, God." Master's poem, "God! God! God!" is one of the greatest things to one-point the mind on the Presence of God as Love, or as Soul Consciousness within you. Realize that. You know, the worst thing is to overcome the mind, because it's been in the saddle so long, as the Ego. It is rather difficult.

And so, finally, not to think by meditation, or in meditation, nor become unconscious, is Soul Consciousness. And Soul Consciousness – this is the final definition to show you what Ego is – Soul Consciousness is the consciousness remaining even after the Ego has been eliminated.

Now, there you have, if you will remember those few definitions about ego and Soul, you will never be confused, especially about, if you want to know God, get above thought. Now that doesn't mean that in your ordinary existence you don't think – you've got to think, otherwise the tide will engulf you, and you'll go

² May be attributed to a quote from Richard of St. Victor who was quote either St. Thomas Aquinas or St. Augustine from Mystica Theologia, as noted in the book The Cloud of Unknowing, by Evelyn Underhill, 1922.

down. You have to keep going in this life. But in meditation, that's different. Meditation is a definite exercise, or Spiritual discipline, to give you contact with God, and He is not known by thought; therefore, eliminate the ego. How? The best way is to do away with the thoughts – the ego has nothing to feed on. Do away with the sensations and the thoughts; ego is left, as they say, "holding the bag," 'cause there's nothing there for him. But you have to replace it by something positive, which is, after you catch on, the easiest thing – to love God.

Remember someone you love very much, you don't have to do much about it you just love them. Why not with God? He gives us everything. And our Soul is a ray of Him. If we look at it and realize that everything we have; all our friends and those near and dear to us; all the things in life which we have, we have because of God's Consciousness and His Power in us. Let us realize that.

So – so much tonight for a few words about the Ego. And next time we'll take up the 19th Element of the Astral Body – or the Second encasement which keeps us from knowing Soul, which is the Astral Body – and the last, or the 19th Elements is the Feeling. The Feeling is the worst thing. The Feeling, which injects into us likes and dislikes. That's why the Ego exists. If one can conquer likes and dislikes – likes and dislikes. Not dislikes, alone – likes and dislikes – he can know the Soul. And so, next time we'll take that up.

Now, I have a few references, at this time, about the Ego, which I'll give you. First from the Bible, from the 2nd Chapter of Genesis the 7th, first the 7th Verse; and this shows just what we are: that we are rays of the Infinite Father, atoms of His Great Body of Omnipresence, and lodged in this bodily vehicle, and then, we became attached to it: "And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living," or manifesting, "soul."³

Of course, that doesn't say, that, anything about the Ego. But when we grow up, so to speak, and become attached to the vehicle, then the Ego is developed. The Soul is free. But being in the vehicle, the bodily vehicle, the Soul takes on its limitations, and, sometimes, it thinks it is the body. Some people, if you talk about something higher than the body, well, they won't know what you're talking about, so engrossed is the Soul in the bodily vehicle.

³ Genesis 2:7, "And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul."

Now, another one from the Bible is Proverbs, Proverbs the 24th Chapter, the 21st Verse; 24th Chapter, 21st Verse. And here we read: “My son, fear thou the Lord and king: meddle not” meddle not, “with them they are given to change.”⁴ (Sic) That means meddle not with the outside worldly things. Things of this existence, because you know everything changes. But the Lord God does not change. That simply means the Christ Consciousness within us does not change. But if you meddle with the outside consciousness too much, you will never find God, because the things, the two things, do not mix. One is change. God is unchanging. One is dual; and the Presence of God is One. And so, fear that. Don’t fear the Lord. But fear that you meddle with outside consciousness too much and become attached is the real definition, or the real interpretation of this particular verse.

Now, last, in the Bible, Ephesians, Ephesians the 4th Chapter, 24th Verse. And this is why, it gives us the reason why we meditate, and why we try to rise above attachment to the body and to the mind. Although it is a little confusing in the 23rd Verse it says: “Be renewed in the spirit of your mind,”⁵ it doesn’t say, “Be renewed in mind.” That’s the point we must watch. “Be renewed in the spirit of your mind,” which is the Presence of God within you, or the Soul Consciousness behind the Mind and Intellect – be renewed in that; “And put ye on a new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.”⁶ (Sic)

I know that that man in me that is pushed here, and hither and yonder, through the Senses and the Mind is not the True Mind, because I get disappointed too much. But, that man which comes after you still the waves of the mind – superseded them – that man, so to speak, or the Presence of God in us as the Soul, is the real part of me. At least it’s the part I want to know and be one with. “...put ye on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.”⁷ That’s our heritage, the true consciousness of the Presence of God within.

So much for the Bible; a reference now from the Bhagavad Gita,⁸ which is very helpful and enlightening. In the 3rd Discourse, first the 30th Line; and this points out why and how we should be free from the Ego, because there’s no happiness

⁴ Proverbs 24:21, “My son, fear thou the LORD and the king: and meddle not with them that are given to change:”

⁵ Ephesians 4:23, “And be renewed in the spirit of your mind;”

⁶ Ephesians 4:24, “And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.”

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ The Bhagavad Gita or The Lord’s Song, Translated by Dr. Annie Besant, 1939

in that: “Surrendering all actions to Me, with thy thoughts resting on the supreme Self, from hope and egoism freed, and of mental fever cured,” that’s restlessness, “engage in battle.” That is, carry on your work. “Surrendering all actions to Me...” Whatever you do, do it to please God. I think for me is the easiest way. Do it to please God. The minute you do it and feeling, “Perhaps, I’ll benefit...something” or “this or that,” there’s a little attachment there. But the nearest you can come to pure action is to do the action to please God. “Surrendering all actions to Me, with thy thoughts resting on the supreme Self, from hope and egoism freed, and of mental fever cured...” that restlessness is the worst thing, “engage thou in battle.”

And from, and also, the 27th Line is, is very good: “The self,” or Soul, “deluded by egoism, thinketh: ‘I am the doer’.”¹⁰ I am the doer. And Jesus said, who can create one cell of the body, or raise, raise his stature one cubit.¹¹ “I am the doer,” says the Ego. “Oh, I can do everything.” But that’s not so. “The self, deluded by egoism, thinketh: ‘I am the doer’.” “But he, O mighty-armed one (*sic*), who knoweth the essence of the divisions of the qualities and the functions, holding that ‘the qualities move amid the qualities,’ is non-attached.¹² That is, he who knows duality, that’s all – good, better, and worse conditions – they are found in this worldly existence. “Those deluded by the qualities of nature are attached to the functions of the qualities.¹³” In other words, they are attached to the mind and its action.

So there, in the Gita, we have a good reference, warning us not to be attached, but to see the One Reality above this outward existence and living.

And, one more, one more reference from Guru Nanak, which is one of inspiration. Which has not so much to do with Ego, or Mind, but it is a very inspiring passage. Master used to quote Guru Nanak very much, and so, let us, as we listen, just turn your attention inward, toward the Soul, and feel the Spirit which Nanak had:

⁹ Ibid, “Surrendering all actions to Me, with thy thoughts resting on the supreme Self, from hope and egoism freed, and of mental fever cured, engage in battle.”

¹⁰ Ibid, 27th Line, “All actions are wrought by the qualities of nature only. The self, deluded by egoism, thinketh: ‘I am the doer’.”

¹¹ Matthew 6:27, “Which of you by taking thought can add one cubit unto his stature?”

¹² Op.cit. Gita, 28th Line, “But he, O might-armed, who knoweth the essence of the divisions of the qualities and functions, holding that ‘the qualities move amid the qualities,’ is not attached.”

¹³ Ibid, 29th Line, “Those deluded by the qualities of nature are attached to the functions of the qualities. The man of perfect knowledge should not unsettle the foolish whose knowledge is imperfect.”

“How...O how great is Thy might, how resplendent Thy form...” That’s why I sang, “Oh, God Beautiful.¹⁴” “How numerous Thy bounties; Who knoweth their measure?” You cannot exhaust God, His Goodness, His Love. “One word didst Thou utter...” One word God utters – what is it? The Holy Vibration, the Om. “One word didst Thou utter and, lo, the vast expansiveness sprang into existence. Out of it a hundred thousand rivers came flowing...” From the one Great Cosmic Sound, which is the Word: “In the beginning was the Word. The Word was with God. The Word was God.¹⁵” “What power have I to think or to express a thought about Thee?” Showing God is above thought. “Fain wouldst I be a sacrifice, my Lord, not once; whatever pleases Thee is good.” No matter what He does to you, don’t mind. If He is pleased, nothing else matters. Master said, “If the Guru was pleased,” and the Guru was the Voice of God, “nothing else matters.” “...whatever pleases Thee is good; Thou alone, O formless One, endureth for ever and for ever.”

So those great saints, they had the knowledge of the One Infinite Father. That’s why you feel the inspiration, as I read from them.

Next time, we will go on with a little bit about Yoga Explained, especially, in the light that we all need to do yoga – to practice yoga – to attain first, the Presence of God. Having that, we can fully surrender to His Will and be saved and liberated.

¹⁴ “O God Beautiful” is a chant by Paramhansa Yogananda:

“O God Beautiful, at Thy feet, O I do bow;
In the forest Thou art green; In the mountain Thou art high;
In the river Thou are restless; In the ocean Thou are grave;
O God beautiful, At Thy feet, O I do bow!
To the serviceful Thou are service; To the lover Thou art love;
To the sorrowful Thou are sympathy; To the yogi Thou are bliss.
O God beautiful, At Thy feet, O I do bow!”

¹⁵ St. John 1:1