

## Chapter 2

# Spirituality in India: The Ever Growing Banyan Tree

Comparing Western and Indian knowledge, Rolland (1960, p. 91) described Western knowledge as the “science of facts” and spirituality as “the science of the soul, a peculiarly Indian science.” A major difference between philosophy and spirituality, or for that matter religion and spirituality, is that spirituality, as practiced in India, has an action bias over and above cognitive (thinking or thoughts) or value (considering something important) concerns. Spirituality has been valued in the Indian culture from time immemorial, and it is no surprise that many innovations in the field of spirituality originated in India. Since people strive to excel in areas that are compatible with their cultural values, India has seen the emergence of many geniuses in the field of spirituality even in the modern times. I combine two qualitative methods, historical analysis and case analysis, to document how spirituality is valued in India, and much like a banyan tree, how it continues to grow even today. An examination of the life of the list of spiritual gurus presented in the chapter shows that they were all practitioners, and they practiced what they preached. Also, the case analysis shows that Ramakrishna was a practitioner, and both the Maharishi and Rajneesh recommended daily practice of meditation.

A historical evolution of spirituality in India is traced by generating a list of spiritual gurus over the last 2,500 years by using published sources both in the West (Kroeber, 1944) and in India. Following this historical analysis, three case studies are presented to illustrate that spirituality is valued even today in India, and this culture continues to produce eminent spiritual gurus. The innovations made by three spiritual gurus in the last 100 years are presented to make the argument that these people were truly geniuses, since they offered thoughts or techniques that were unheard of in human civilizations hitherto, either in India or elsewhere. This demonstrates that Indian culture not only emphasized spirituality in the past but continues to do so.

Ramakrishna Paramhansa (1836–1886) practiced Hinduism, Islam, and Christianity and boldly declared that all religions lead to the same end. He might be the first person in human civilization to have attempted such an integration of religious beliefs by practicing it rather than only giving it lip service, which is often done by liberal intellectuals all over the world today. Maharishi Mahesh Yogi

(1917–2008) presented Transcendental Meditation (TM) as a universal technique, which allows people of all religions to practice meditation. Perhaps the most significant innovation that the Maharishi made is the scientification of meditation, an idea not attempted hitherto. And Osho Rajneesh (1931–1990) presented his theory, “From sex to super consciousness,” which shook the Indian culture, but also found many followers both locally and globally. Though the originality of this approach could be debated, its revival in modern times and in a modern form cannot be disputed. The objective of this chapter is not to present new information on Ramakrishna, Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, and Osho Rajneesh, since many books have been written about these spiritual gurus. Instead, a summary of their life and their unique achievements is presented to highlight their creative geniuses.

## Historical Analysis

India’s emphasis on spirituality can be ascertained from the productive constellations reported in Kroeber’s (1944) work; it received the singular distinction of being a culture that has the longest duration of evolution of philosophy, from 100 to 500, and 600 to 1000 AD (see p. 683). If we add the period of Buddha, Mahavira, and Samkhya around 500 BC, and the period of medieval *bhakti* Movement from 1100 to 1800 (reported in the literature section in Kroeber’s work, from Jayadeva to Lallu Ji Lal, see page 482–483), we can see that in India, more than in any other culture, spirituality has been emphasized for almost 2,500 years of recorded history.

Emphasis on spirituality in India can also be seen in the list of spiritual masters that was generated using various sources (Bhattacharya, 1982; Lesser, 1992; Narasimha, 1987; Sholapurkar, 1992; Singh, 1948). Most of the sources used are by Indian scholars, and the list was further corroborated by Kroeber’s (1944) work. The long list of spiritual masters over 2,500 years does support the idea that India emphasizes spirituality (see Table 2.1). A closer examination of the list shows that these spiritual gurus came from all castes and were not limited to the caste of Brahmin, the caste that had the privilege of being a teacher or a guru. They also came from many religions, e.g., Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism, Sikhism, Islam, and Sufism. Also, they were not limited to any particular part of India; they came from east, west, south, and north. Therefore, it could be argued that spirituality is an Indian cultural phenomenon.

An analysis of Kroeber’s (1944) compilation shows that in the Indian sample 49% of the geniuses were spiritual geniuses compared to 33% for literature, 10% for science, and 8% for philology. If we combine the names in Table 2.1 to those in Kroeber’s compilation, the percentage of spiritual geniuses jumps to 65% compared to 23% for literature, 7% for science, and 5% for philology. Analyzing the list of thousands of geniuses in China (Simonton, 1988) and Japan (Simonton, 1996), Simonton found that the number of celebrities in each of the categories varied tremendously. For example, of the two thousand plus Japanese geniuses studied, 14% came from politics, 13% from painting, 10% from poetry, 8% from war,

**Table 2.1** List of Indian saints and spiritual gurus

Period	Name	Period	Name
BC 600	Charvaka	1608–1681	Ram Das
BC 590–510	Mahavira	1608–1888	Mahatma Tailang Swami
BC 560–480	Buddha	1620	Singa Ji
BC 400	Jaimini	1628–1700	Sant Bahina Bai
BC 400	Kanada	1666–1708	Guru Gobind Singh
BC 400	Gautama	1703–1810	Saint Bulleshah
BC 200	Sant Tiruvalluvar	1759–1809	Gauribai
AD 600	Nammalwar	1767–1847	Shri Tyagraj
600–680	Tirunavukkararasu or Acharya Appar	1772–1833	Raja Ram Mohan Roy
660	Shri Manickavasagar or Maikkavachkar	1781–1830	Sri Swami Narayan
700	Bhakta Kamban	1785–1867	Gunateetanand Swami
788–828	<i>Adi zankara</i>	1800–1880	Swami Samarth Akkalkot
800	Bhaskara	1801–1882	Jalaram Bapa
824–924	Acharya Nathmuni	1817–1905	Maharishi Devendranath Tagore
900	Gorakhnath	1817	Manik Prabhu
953–1053	Yamunacharya	1818–1878	Soamiji of Agra
1017–1137	Ramanujacharya	1824–1883	Maharishi Dayanand Saraswati
1100	Akka Mahadevi	1828–1895	Shri Lahiri Mahashaya
1105–1167	Saint Basaweswar	1829–1897	Bhagatjee Maharaj
1135–1229	Khwaja Moinuddin Chisti	1835–1918	Sai Baba of Shirdi
1138*–1162	Nimbark	1836–1886	Ramakrishna
1172–1265	Baba Fariduddin Shakarganj	1839–1903	Babaji of Beas
1186	Baba Qutubuddin Bakhtiyar Kaki	1838–1884	Keshav Chundrasen
1173–1266	Shaikh (or Baba) Farid	1840	Tari Gonda Venkamba
1199–1278	Madhavacharya	1840–1905	Ananda Mohan Bose
1200	Jayadeva	1847–1925	Shirnath Shastri
1238–1356	Hazrat Nizzamuddin Aulia	1853–1920	Mata Sharda Devi
1253–1325	Amir Khusro	1853–1924	Shri Chattampi Swamikal
1270–1350	Nam deo	1855–1928	Shri Narayan Guru
1272–1293	Sant Jnaneshwar	1858–1948	Sawan Singhji Huzur Maharaj
1290–1381	Sharafuddin Maneri	1863–1902	Swami Vivekananda
		1865–1951	Brahmasvaroop Shastrijee Maharaj
1308–1399	Lal Didi of Kashmir (Lalleshwari)	1872–1950	Shri Aurobindo Ghosh
1314–1384	Syed Ali Hamadani		
1360–1470	Ramananda	1873–1906	Ram Tirtha
1372–1450	Shri Potana	–1910	Gjanan Maharaj of Shegaon

(continued)

**Table 2.1** (continued)

Period	Name	Period	Name
1377–1439	Sheikh Nuruddin Nand Rishi	1878–1973	The Mother of Aurobindo Ashram
1400–1499	Shri Narsimh Saraswati	1879–1950	Bhagwan Raman Maharishi
1400*	Sena Nhavi	1886–1940*	Shri Narayan Maharaj of Kedagon
1440–1518	Kabir	1887–1963	Swami Shivanand Saraswati
1440	Ravidas (Raidas)	1889–1950	Swami Sahajanand Saraswati
1449–1569	Shankar Deva Vaishnaite	1892–1971	Brahmasvaroop Yogijee Maharaj
1469–1538	Guru Nanak	1893–1952	Paramhansa Yoganand
1479–1531	Shri Vallabhacharya	1894–	Sadhu Sundar Singh
1479–1584	Soor Das	1895–1986	J. Krishnamurthy
1482	Shri Purandar Das	1896–1982	Anandamoi Ma
1485–1534	Shri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu	1896–1977	Swami Prabhupad (ISKCON)
		1897–1981	Shree Nisargadatta Maharaj
1506–1552	St. Francis Xavier	1904–1963	Thakur Shri Abhiram Paramhans
1532–1624	Tulsidas	1908–1982	Swami Muktanand
1533–1599	Eknath Maharaj	1916–1993	Swami Chinmayananda
1544–1603	Dadu	1921–	Pramukhswamijee Maharaj
1547–1614	Meerabai	1931–1990	Osho Rajneesh
1588–1644	Shri Narayan Bhattatiri	1917–2008	Maharishi Mahesh Yogi
1607–1649	Tukaram	1926–	Sai Baba

\* Indicates that the year is an estimate.

5% from each of economics and religion, 4% from philosophy, and only 2% from each of sculpture, ceramics, and medicine. The category spirituality did not even appear and might have been merged with philosophy and religion. In the Chinese sample there were only 44 recluses, who could be considered spiritual, in the 3,000 years of the Chinese history.

Simonton (1996) also suggested that one of the limitations of his study was that the findings might not apply to a civilization that has been dominated by a certain configuration throughout its history. It could be argued that the Indian culture has been dominated by spirituality, and, therefore, this domain-specific configuration might dominate any systemic or cross-domain configurations in that culture. Evidence of such a dominance can be seen in the domain of music and dance where the control of *prAna* (i.e., breath) and *dhyAna* (i.e., focus) is considered critical to be accomplished in Indian music and dance.

Embedded in the table are many clusters of gurus, and often the succession of gurus ends in a person who was an advanced spiritual master from his or her childhood, somebody who needed no initiation from another human being. For example, Paramhansa Yoganand was the disciple of Shree Yukteswar, who was a disciple of Shree Lahiri Mahashya, who was a disciple of Babajee. Babajee is considered an *avatAr*, and he did not need to be initiated by another human being. His spiritual knowledge was spontaneous, and he revived the practice of kriyA yoga, which is attributed to Lord kRSNa. Similarly, the Swami Narayan tradition traces the order of the gurus to Shree Neelkantha (from Neelkantha to Gunateetanand, to Bhagatjee, to Shastrijee, to Yogijee to the current guru Shree Pramukha Swamijee). Though Neelkantha took initiation from Swami Ramananda, he is viewed as an *avatAr* since he left home at an age of 7 and was already an advanced spiritual master when he met Swami Ramanand. As the story is told in this tradition, Swami Ramanand was waiting for Neelkantha to come to him so that he could pass on his heritage and *ashram* to him. Neelkantha is worshipped by the followers of Swami Narayan as the incarnation of God. Prabhupadajee similarly traces his spiritual roots to Lord kRSNa in his book, *bhagavadGItA As It Is* (Prabhupad, 1986, p. 34), and this list includes celebrated historical spiritual gurus like Lord Chaitanya as well as mythological spiritual gurus like Narada.

## Case Analyses

In this section, as mentioned earlier, three cases are presented to support the idea that spirituality is valued in India even today, and spiritual masters are making innovations that reflect cultural configurations.

## Ramakrishna<sup>1</sup>: One God, Different Paths

The most famous story about Ramakrishna, perhaps, is the dialogue with his favorite disciple, Narendra Dutta, who later became Swami Vivekananda. Vivekananda asked a question that was unthinkable from the traditional Hindu perspective: “Have you seen God?” Never in Indian history did a disciple ask his Guru this question – not in the *UpaniSads*, not in the *Ramayana* or the *Mahabharata*, not in the *Puranas*! The question came from a Western rationalist perspective. It behooved the philosophy student that Narendra was to ask such a question. The answer was even more unique. Ramakrishna replied calmly, without qualification: I see him as I see you, only far more intensely. But even that did not convert the rationalist Vivekananda, then Narendra Dutta, who took a rather tortuous path to

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<sup>1</sup>The biographical sketch of Ramakrishna draws from the work of Rolland (1960), Isherwood (1965), and Muller (1898).

accepting Ramakrishna as his Guru. Ramakrishna's unique spiritual journey, what he was able to do in a short life of 50 years (February 18, 1836, to August 16, 1886) and what has perhaps never even been attempted in human history, points to his contribution to the field of spirituality. Without vanity, he proclaimed:

I have practiced all religions, Hinduism, Islam, Christianity, and I have also followed the paths of the different Hindu sects... I have found that it is the same God toward whom all are directing their steps, though along different paths. You must try all beliefs and traverse all the different ways once (Rolland, 1960, p. 79).

The following is a brief account of the man and his achievements. Ramakrishna was born in the village of Kamarpukur, Bengal, India, in a middle class Brahmin family. His given name was Gadadhar Chattopadhyaya. His father, Khudiram, and mother, Chandra, were both religious people, and there are many stories about Ramakrishna's birth that suggest that he may well have been an *avatAr* (i.e., incarnation of a deity).

Ramakrishna had two brothers and sisters, and he was the fourth of the five children his parents had. He was a healthy child who did not suffer any sickness. He was restless and obstinate. He did many things that were proscribed, but did not hide the fact that he had done it, and if given a clear explanation, would refrain from doing it. He was good with drawing, clay molding, singing, and drama, but could not apply himself to arithmetic. Ramakrishna did not enjoy school and escaped whenever he could. Even later, when he was 16 years old and his brother asked him to come and study with him at the Sanskrit school that he ran in Calcutta, he decided to pursue his spiritual journey rather than join his brother at the school. He could understand but not speak in Sanskrit.

Ramakrishna saw death in the family in his childhood. His father passed away when he was 7, and his older brother's wife passed away when he was 13. His eldest brother, Ram Kumar, who was instrumental in bringing him to Calcutta, and landing him the priesthood at the *dakSiNesvar* temple, also passed away when he was only 20 years old.

He took the place of his brother as the priest of the *dakSiNesvar* temple, where he spent most of the remainder of his life. Rani Rasmani, a rich woman of a lower caste, built this temple. The temple still stands unchanged today with the idol of *kAlI* the goddess of *zakti* that Ramakrishna worshipped. He was married in 1859, at the age of 23, to Saradamani Mukhopadhyaya, to help divert his spiritual pursuits by putting on the yoke of a householder, a strategy that, of course, did not work at all. He treated his wife like a sister, and they developed a guru-disciple relationship over the years.

Ramakrishna had his first spiritual experience when he was 6 years old as he was playfully walking in the fields munching on puffed rice. He saw the sky get covered with black cloud, and then at the edge of the cloud appeared a flock of white cranes that passed over his head. He lost consciousness. Perhaps nobody took the event seriously, until it happened again when he was 8 years old. During the celebrations of *zivarAtri*, a festival in which Lord ziva is worshipped, he experienced a similar ecstasy while enacting the role of ziva. In the presence of the whole village that

was watching the play, he started crying and then became unconscious.<sup>2</sup> From this time on, his ecstasies became more frequent.

Ramakrishna's ecstasies grew in their strength and duration during his priesthood at the *kAlI* temple. And finally one day he was ready to kill himself, if he did not get a *darzan* of *kAlI*, and he "saw an ocean of the Spirit, boundless, dazzling (Rolland, 1960, p. 33)." Thus, he became conscious of the presence of *kAlI* in the depths of his being. The shock of this encounter took its toll, and he was not able to control his eyes, body, or mind. He did not close his eyes. He did not eat. Drops of blood oozed through his skin. He was nothing but a madman to those who did not know. But those who knew him, like Mathur Babu, the manager and patron of the temple (he was the son-in-law of Rani Rasmani), he was an *avatAr*. Apparently, one day when Mathur Babu was observing Ramakrishna pacing the temple grounds, he saw *kAlI* walking toward him, and *ziva* walking away from him. Ramakrishna's nephew took care of his bodily needs. To help him recuperate from this shock, he was sent to his village, and that is when he was married. But nothing helped. He returned to the temple and remained in this state of punctuated ecstasies for another 2 years until Bhairavi Brahmani came to guide him and became his first formal guru. Ramakrishna was 25 then.

Bhairavi was from a noble Brahmin family of Bengal. She was a devotee of *viSNu* and highly educated and learned in the *bhakti* as well as *tAntrik* texts, something rather unusual for women to achieve. When they met the first time, the two established mother and son relationship instantly, as if they had known each other for a long time. She helped him deal with his self-realization, his ecstasies. She also helped him practice all the 64 principal *tantra* books. He was unusually gifted in that he was able to achieve the results of each of the various practices, which takes years and sometimes a lifetime for most people, in about 3 days. As he shared with his disciples later, he never got attached to these achievements, which are hurdles in spiritual advancement (Nikhilananda, 1977).

Bhairavi called a meeting of scholars to recognize Ramakrishna as an *avatAr*. Using the criteria enumerated in the scriptures, the two experts unanimously agreed that he was indeed an *avatAr*. Interestingly, Ramakrishna himself disliked being called an *avatAr*. Years later, 2 days before *mahAprayANa* (or departing the world at will), he obliged Vivekananda and grudgingly accepted that he indeed was an *avatAr*: "He who was Rama and who was *kRSNa* is now Ramakrishna in this body lying here (Rolland, 1960, p. 273)."

Ramakrishna learned about the *advaita vedAnta* philosophy under another guru, Tota Puri, sometime around the end of 1865. He had already spent about 10 years

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<sup>2</sup> According to Isherwood (1965), this was the third incident. The second incident took place when Ramakrishna was going to the *vizAlAkSi* temple with some women from his village. As they were all singing, his body stiffened, and tears started to pour from his eyes. Sprinkling water would not bring the boy to normal consciousness. When the women started to pray goddess *vizAlAkSi*, Ramakrishna returned to normal consciousness. The second spiritual experience was important chronologically because it happened after about a year of the first one. The frequency and duration of these ecstasies increased as he grew older.

as a devotee of *KaIi*, 5 years struggling by himself, and about 5 years under the guidance of Bhairavi. The highest state of meditation, *nirvikalpa samAdhi*, was not easy even for Ramakrishna. He had no problem detaching his mind from all worldly objects, but it was impossible, at least in the beginning, for him to detach his mind from *KaIi*, his beloved deity. With the help of Tota Puri, he overcame that hurdle, and the very first time he entered *nirvikalpa samAdhi*, he was in it for 3 days. Tota Puri had to bring him to normal consciousness by chanting a *mantra*. Tota Puri was surprised to see Ramakrishna achieve *nirvikalpa samAdhi* in a short time, because it had taken him 40 years of discipline and practice to achieve the same state. Thus, Ramakrishna achieved a unique distinction of successfully following the two major spiritual traditions of Hinduism, the path of devotion and the path of knowledge. He extended it further in the next 10 years by practicing other religious faiths.

During the next year he embraced Islam, following an initiation from a Muslim acquaintance, Mr. Govinda Roy. To follow Islam, he lived outside the temple, and renounced his favorite goddess, *KaIi*. He dressed like a Moslem, ate Moslem food, offered the *Namaz* five times daily, and repeated the name of Allah. He was in this mood for 3 days. He was visited by the prophet (“a radiant personage with grave countenance and white beard appeared to him and then passed into his body,” Rolland, 1960, p. 75). This marked his experience with Islam.

Seven years after following the path of Islam, toward the end of 1874, Mr. Shambhu Charan Mallik, himself a Hindu, read the Bible to Ramakrishna. Thus, Ramakrishna started to think about Jesus. He became attached to a picture of Virgin Mary with the child Jesus sitting on her lap, which was hanging in the garden house of the temple. The picture led him to a trance, which so overpowered him that even calling for help from goddess *KaIi* did not help him. His thoughts and consciousness were filled with the Christian saints, and he remained in a “Christian mood” for 3 days. On these days, he did not go into the temple and did not worship or think of *KaIi*. On the third day, he saw Jesus, who embraced him and then passed into his body. This marked his Christian experience. It is no surprise that Rolland (1960) called him the “younger brother of Christ” (Rolland, 1960, p. 13). Ramakrishna kept a picture of Christ in his room, along with other Hindu deities, and burnt incense before it in the morning and in the evening, a part of the Hindu tradition of offering daily prayers.

An analysis of Ramakrishna’s life reveals that he started experiencing ecstasies from his childhood, and as Rolland (1960) noted, it was only because he was in India where spiritual ecstasies are not uncommon that he was not treated for schizophrenia or some other mental illness. It was also easier for him to find mentors like Bhairavi and Tota Puri, without whose guidance he might not have achieved his full potential. His family supported his spiritual strivings, and without the support of his wife, nephew, and brother, who all took care of him in times of his greatest physical need, it might have been difficult for him to survive, let alone become a self-realized person. His wife even agreed to allow him to be a celibate, and thus gave up her privilege to be a mother. Clearly, these people were not trained care providers, and derived their skills and understanding from the cultural milieu. Acceptance and understanding of spirituality in the Indian culture played a crucial role in Ramakrishna’s life, and it might have been difficult, if not outright impossible, for his genius to flourish in another culture.



His lack of aptitude for arithmetic and lack of fluency in Sanskrit, or any language other than his mother tongue, Bengali, even raises doubts about the concept of general intelligence (G) and its correlation to “spiritual intelligence.” Though Ramakrishna shunned the traditional school system, he later showed great desire and ability to learn from people of all faiths, and scholars have called him “the illiterate genius” (Rolland, 1960, p. 11). Also, his favorite disciple, Swami Vivekananda, was known for his intellectual prowess, and according to one report he could memorize tens of pages from a book in one reading (Muller, 1898). Thus, spiritual geniuses may possess quantitative and verbal skills, but they are not necessary skills. This suggests a need to reconceptualize creativity and intelligence, especially for the domain of spirituality. It should be noted that such a conclusion could not be arrived at following the mainstream Western research paradigm, thus highlighting the immense value of research in indigenous psychology.

Creativity is usually defined as a process leading to a novel idea, product, or behavior (Amabile, 1983). In the problem-solving domain it is defined as a process that leads to the unique solution of problems. In view of this definition of creativity, Ramakrishna, indeed, demonstrated creative genius in bridging all religions by practicing each of them. He may very well be the first, if not the only, person to practice the major religions of the world to come to the conclusion that they lead to the same God. His contribution to humanity is particularly significant for the world after the bombing of the twin towers of the World Trade Center on September 11, 2001. Clearly, Islam is not to be blamed for the incident of September 11, and no religion should be blamed for any act of terrorism, because we know from the life of Ramakrishna that all religions lead to the same God. Nobel Laureate Rolland (1960) described Ramakrishna’s work as a symphony that was “...built up of a hundred different musical elements emanating from the past,” which contained “...within itself the labor of generations (p. 13).” Ramakrishna, according to Rolland, was “the consummation of 2,000 years of the spiritual life of 300 million people (p. 13).” This clearly supports the argument that culture shapes geniuses and their achievements and again points to the need for research in indigenous psychology.

Ramakrishna’s biographical sketch further supports the Kroeberian and Simontonian paradigm that geniuses emerge in cultural configuration. Of course, if Ramakrishna were born a few hundred years before his time, he could not have been exposed to Islam. It could be argued that nineteenth-century India was mellowed by centuries of *bhakti* Movement, which made acceptance of other religious beliefs easier for Ramakrishna. The reason Buddha did not integrate the *vedic* ideas in his teachings or *Adi Shankara*<sup>3</sup> did not integrate Buddhist ideology in his teaching could be attributed to the ethos of the time or the cultural configurations that Kroeber and Simonton have discussed. It is likely that integration was considered second-tier and departure from tradition was valued by the culture in earlier times.

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<sup>3</sup>*Adi Shankara* (788–828) was a spiritual master, who was responsible for the revival of *vedic* principles in India. He is credited for creating institutions like the four centers named after him, which promote Hindu way of life in India.

Ramakrishna's case shows how geniuses are influenced by the *zeitgeist*, which was defined by Boring (1955, p. 101) as "the sum total of social interaction as it is common to a particular period and a particular locale," i.e., *zeitgeist* is thought that is shaped by culture. According to Boring (1955), *zeitgeist* facilitates creativity in science, and we can see from the above case that this can be extended to spirituality, and perhaps to other fields of research. Thus, we see an interaction between geniuses and the *zeitgeist*, each influencing the other.

## Maharishi Mahesh Yogi<sup>4</sup>: Bridging Science and Spirituality with TM

Mahesh Prashad Varma, who later became Maharishi Mahesh Yogi, was born in Jabalpur, Madhya Pradesh, on January 12, 1917. He hailed from a comfortably well-off family and was the third of four children. He got a college degree from Allahabad University in mathematics and physics. However, he renounced the world at an early age of 23 and dedicated himself to the service of his spiritual master, Swami Brahmananda Saraswati, the *Adi zankara* of Jyotir-Math in the Himalayas. Under the supervision of his guru, he spent many years in meditation in the conducive atmosphere of the Himalayas. Later he became the private secretary of the *Adi zankara* and was sent to lecture on the scriptures to different locations.

After Swami Brahmananda passed away in 1953, the Maharishi spent 2 years at the Gyan Mandir temple in Uttar Kashi, a small town in the Himalayas. He practiced *mauna* (or silence) and meditation. Following this rigorous practice of meditation, he left the Himalayas to visit Southern India where there were many devotees of his guru and some of them had established the *Adhyatmic Vikas Mandal* (the Society for Spiritual Development) in the city of Alleppey.

The Maharishi had his first public appearance in October 1955 at the conference, and he made his impact by connecting science and spirituality:

Electrons and protons of the modern science, seen through the Indian system of analysis of the universe, are manifestations of *agni-tatva* and *vAyu-tatva* combined. The energy of the electrons and protons is due to the *agni-tatva* and motion in them is due to *vAyu-tatva*. Thus, we find the present day science has reached up to *vAyu-tatva* in the field of analysis of the universe (Mahesh Yogi, 1955, p. 62).

The Maharishi explained the other *tatvas* (elements) as *agni* (fire), *vAyu* (air), *AkAz* (sky), *aham* (self), *mahat* (soul), and *prakRti* (nature); and *brahman* (formless God)-*tatva* as the very cause of all these *tatvas*. He argued that the meditation technique that his guru presented would help achieve *Sat-Cit-Ananda*, and implied that spirituality was superior to science, which dealt with the lower level of *tatvas*. It should be noted that unless we define elements differently, or that the Maharishi

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<sup>4</sup>The biographical sketch of Maharishi Mahesh Yogi draws from Forem (1973), Roth (1987), Chopra (1988), and Mason (1994).

was talking metaphorically, none of the *tatvas* would qualify as elements in the regular scientific definition. The Maharishi's desire to connect spirituality and science can be seen in his early presentation.

In that meeting the Maharishi attracted the attention of many people by categorically stating that *om* should not be chanted by householders, since it would increase renunciation and detachment, which are not the goals of regular householders. The householders could also achieve spiritual goals without leading the lifestyle of a monk. Here, he was stating what Buddha said 2,500 years ago, but it all sounded new.

The Maharishi propounded his philosophy as follows: Attachment results from thoughts. Therefore, we need to go beyond thoughts. To go beyond thoughts, we need to regularly chant a *mantra*.<sup>5</sup> Again, there was nothing new in the method, since part of getting initiated by a guru is receiving a personal *mantra*, and chanting of the *mantra* helps rest the mind, leading to detachment. His early genius lay in reaching a large number of people or disseminating his technique to the world.

Following the success of this conference, the Maharishi started organizing meditation camps in big cities like Bombay, Calcutta, as well as other cities. He even used mass initiation, a rather unusual and nontraditional practice. Following the success of the camps, he started establishing meditation centers across India, and 25 were opened in the very first year. He called it the Spiritual Regeneration of the world Movement (SRM). He took the movement to Burma, Thailand, Malaysia, Singapore, Hong Kong, Hawaii, and San Francisco, during 1958–1959. He started off by giving free lessons but later charged a fee in the USA to enable him to raise funds for the establishment of a meditation center.

The Maharishi's genius lay in starting a worldwide spiritual movement by keeping the individual at the center stage. Twenty minutes in the morning before breakfast and 20 min in the evening before dinner would help a normal person to achieve bliss. He demonstrated a commitment to help humankind and over the span of almost 60 years attempted to reach out to as many people worldwide as possible by using a number of media and trained meditation teachers. He went on more than ten world tours, initiated more than 4 million people, and trained more than 40,000 teachers and initiators.

The Maharishi might have been the first person to bridge science and spirituality. In 1964, "deep meditation" became "transcendental deep meditation" or simply transcendental meditation. Serious academic research was started using people who practiced TM, and results were published in scientific journals (Benson, 1969; Wallace, 1970). The major findings were that oxygen consumption, heart rate, skin resistance, and electroencephalograph measurements showed significant difference within and between subjects. During meditation, oxygen consumption and heart rate decreased, skin resistance increased, and electroencephalograph showed changes in certain frequencies.

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<sup>5</sup>The process of chanting a *mantra* begins when a spiritual guru initiates a person. Part of the initiation ritual includes the guru giving a *mantra* to the disciple, which the disciple keeps private and does not share with anybody. The guru acts like a mentor and guides the disciple on his or her spiritual journey.

Oxygen consumption decreased within 5 minute of starting meditation. Compared to sleeping condition, TM provided 5 percent more reduction in consumption of oxygen than what 6 to 7 hours of sound sleep could provide. There was a mean decrease in cardiac output of about 25 percent, whereas during sleep there was only a mean decrease in cardiac output of about 20 percent. The mean decrease in heart rate for the TM practitioners was five beats per minute. The skin resistance (measured by Galvanic Skin Resistance or GSR), which is a measure of relaxation (the higher the score the more relaxed subjects are), increased on the average by 250 percent during the practice of TM and went as high as 500 percent. Compared to this, during sleep GSR goes up by only 100 to 200 percent. Further, meditators were found to be less irritable than nonmeditators (Wallace, 1970). Finally, in TM practitioners, the regularity and amplitude of alpha waves were found to increase much more than what is found during sleep, the performance of TM meditators was superior to that of the Zen meditators in that they achieved the same result in a matter of weeks (Forem, 1973).

The credibility of TM as a science can be seen in its acceptance in schools, and Jerry Jarvis, a disciple of the Maharishi, taught the first course on the Science of Creative Intelligence at Stanford University in February 1970. In the 1980s, the Maharishi also presented experiments to demonstrate that meditators could levitate, and though this demonstration was very controversial; there were many doctors and scientists who thought that the demonstration did show the power of TM (Chopra, 1988).

Following findings that supported that TM could lead to reduction in crime, the Maharishi suggested that if one percent of the world population practiced meditation, they would carry the day for rest of humankind, and crime and violence would go down worldwide. This has been called the Maharishi Effect, which is similar to the principle of critical mass needed to achieve certain social change (Mason, 1994).

It is clear that the Maharishi dedicated his life to bridge science and spirituality. Experimental work that was started in the 1960s has now become a long tradition. The recent work by the faculty of the Maharishi University and others shows that research on TM continues to follow the experimental scientific approach and covers a wide variety of concepts and ideas related to consciousness and neuroscience (Anderson et al., 2008; MacLean et al., 1997; Rainforth et al., 2007; Travis & Pearson, 2000; Travis & Wallace, 1999). The Maharishi's fascination with science is not unusual considering that he studied physics in college. Emphasis on science is in our *zeitgeist*, and it is no surprise that the Maharishi encouraged his disciples to examine the effects of meditation on variables of interest to medical science. Of all the Indian traditions of spirituality, TM is the closest to being a science, thanks to all the empirical studies done with TM practitioners, and that is clearly the Maharishi's most significant contribution.

The Maharishi might be given credit for having started the wave of research and writing among Indologists who attempt to connect the *vedas* and the Indian philosophy to modern science or scientific thinking. For example, Murthy (1997) attempts to show how the *vedic* theory approximates the projections of earth

science and even derives methods of predicting earthquakes from the *vedas*. Vanucci (1994) examined the *vedic* perspectives on ecology and its relevance to contemporary worldview. Many researchers in philosophy have attempted to highlight the significance of the teachings of the *upaniSads* to modern scientific thought (Puligandla, 1997) and have attempted to show the compatibility of science, religion, and philosophy. Some Indologists have even attempted to show that mysticism is a corollary to scientific investigation (Prasad, 1995), and others have claimed that Hinduism laid the foundations of modern scientific search in cosmogony, astronomy, meteorology, and psychology (Iyengar, 1997). Thus, the Maharishi might be credited for starting the process of bridging science and spirituality, a field of study that may eventually gain much deserved respectability (Capra, 1975).

The Maharishi used mass initiation through his disciples, which was quite opposed to the tradition of a *guru* initiating a disciple personally. One could argue that the Maharishi was influenced by the age of mass production and applied it to spirituality. He even charged an initiation fee, driven by the need to create an organization. This decision was clearly influenced by his American disciples, which might not have happened if the Maharishi did not come to the West. Thus, one could argue that the Maharishi led to the commercialization of spirituality. The Maharishi also used the mass marketing techniques in expanding his mission and organization, which again shows the reciprocal relationship between geniuses and the *zeitgeist*, one influencing the other. Following the Maharishi, charging a fee for initiation has become almost a normal practice for Indian spiritual masters in the West, and most of them charge a fee for not only initiation but also for spiritual consultation. Their lectures are no longer free, and much like the other inspirational speakers in the United States, people pay to attend their lectures. Capitalism being an important element of our *zeitgeist*, such commercialization of spirituality is not surprising.

## Osho Rajneesh<sup>6</sup>: Bridging Sex and *samAdhi*

Rajneesh was one of the most controversial spiritual masters that India has seen in the last century. He is *Bhagwan* (God) for his followers, “Osho, Never Born, Never Died; Only Visited This Planet Earth between December 11, 1931 to January 19, 1990” says his *samAdhi* stone. However, his critics think that he created a vicious cult around himself, which would slowly wither away, now that he is gone. Khushwant Singh, a Princeton-educated famous Indian journalist, at one time said that the best way to deal with Rajneesh was to ignore him. But he also said that Rajneesh was “the most original thinker that India has produced: the most erudite, the most clear-headed, and the most innovative.” Tom Robbins, an American novelist,

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<sup>6</sup>The biographical sketch of Rajneesh draws from the author’s own readings of various published sources on Rajneesh and his work over the years, and Brecher (1993).

represents probably the majority of people who have bothered to read and think about what Rajneesh stood for. He wrote in the *Seattle Post Intelligencer*:

I am not, nor have I ever been, a disciple of Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh, but I've read enough of his brilliant books to be convinced that he was the greatest spiritual teacher of the twentieth century – and I've read enough vicious propaganda and slanted reports to suspect that he was one of the most maligned figures in history (cited in Brecher, 1993, p. 396).

Born on December 11, 1931, in Kuchwada village, Madhya Pradesh, Rajneesh was the first of the eleven children of a merchant father and a traditional housewife. His siblings were born over 27 years, which was not that unusual for India at that time. He grew up in Gadarwara, a small town of 20,000 people, with his mother's parents. Little is reported about his early childhood, schooling, or spiritual inclination. He was a professor of philosophy at the University of Jabalpur, Madhya Pradesh, and again not much is reported about his academic achievements or his role as a traditional professor.

According to some sources, he did hang out by himself as a teenager and pursued a spiritual practice. He suffered the loss of a friend, a girl named Shashi, whom he particularly liked, and who, he said years later, returned to him as a disciple. This English woman, Christine Woolf, later became Ma Yoga Vivek. He attained enlightenment on March 21, 1952, at the age of 21 (Brecher, 1993). Interestingly, in everything that I had read about Rajneesh while studying engineering in India, never a mention was made about his enlightenment. Also, never did a disciple of Rajneesh mention to me, or people I know, about his enlightenment or early spiritual experiences.

Rajneesh started by lecturing about Mahavir, the Jain prophet, in the business circles of India, which grew in popularity over the years. He continued to appreciate Mahavir and Buddha as spiritual masters in his later years. He probably received more public attention through the media by criticizing Mahatma Gandhi, by calling him a politician, and also criticizing his practice of celibacy. These were the early years of Rajneesh's fame, and he went from being simply *Shree* Rajneesh (*Shree* is an honorific like Mister in English) to *Acharya* (spiritual master) Rajneesh. Books on various topics by him appeared at bookstores all over India.

Rajneesh shocked the Indian populace by linking sex to super consciousness in 1968. He became an instant star following his declaration that sex was not to be repressed, and through it people could get into *samAdhi*, the highest state of being in yoga. However, he was not direct in responding if he himself went into *samAdhi* through sex. In fact, in one of his published lectures he suggested that one could bring any experience from his or her past lives, implying that his knowledge and experience about sex to *samAdhi* came that way. I think it would be impossible to be a guru in India where *brahmacharya* or celibacy is a minimum requirement to be a spiritual person and a guru. It is no surprise that the Maharishi used the title of *bAlbrahmachari* (i.e., celibate from childhood) for a long time, until he took the title of Maharishi. Another guru, Balyogeshwar, who enjoyed a huge following in the 1970s, quickly lost it when he married his American secretary, which clearly shows that spiritual gurus are valued for their celibacy in India. It should be noted that householders are also found to be gurus, but often in their senior years.

In 1969, Rajneesh prescribed a new method of meditation to his disciples called Dynamic Meditation. This was a four-step process. First, a practitioner would

involve in vigorous breathing for 15 minutes. Next, he or she would scream, cry, laugh, or jump up and down leading to a catharsis. After these two steps, the practitioner would contemplate on the question: Who Am I? This was to be done by keeping the fingers of the two hands interlocked and then by pushing the palms hard against each other. The final step was to be quiet and prayerful. I think this was a method of mediation that Rajneesh invented, since he did not give credit to anybody or any other source, unlike the Maharishi, who gave credit to his own guru for inventing Transcendental Meditation.

In 1971, Rajneesh decided to call himself Bhagwan Rajneesh, which was an important juncture in his life, since he chose not to be the Bertrand Russell of India, an *Acarya*, a teacher, and opted to start a new way of life, a cult. He started initiating his disciples. Following the initiation, the disciples wore saffron-colored robes or clothes, hung a *mALA* with Rajneesh's picture in a locket, and went by a new name *swami* or *ma* such and such. Traditionally, *sannyAsis* (monks) take a new name to erase their personal history, wear saffron to let the world know that they have renounced the world, live on whatever they get by begging, and take a vow of *brahmacarya* or celibacy. Bhagwan Rajneesh's new *sannyAs* (or monkhood) differed from the tradition on all four counts. The Rajneeshees, as are his disciples often called, did not take the new name to erase personal history, continued to live where they did, and do what they did before getting initiation. They did wear the saffron color, but not to practice self-abnegation or for denying good clothes. They could wear expensive clothes, leather shoes, watches, jewelry, etc., which are all prohibited for the traditional Indian monks. They did not renounce the world or support themselves by begging in the streets. They also did not take the vow of celibacy. In fact, many of them indulged in indiscriminate sex and many got divorced and remarried. Of course, one could achieve *samAdhi* through sex, according to the Bhagwan, and so celibacy did not fit with the new way of life he proposed for his disciples.

His ashram in Pune was visited by about 25,000 people every year during 1974–1978, and about 40,000 annually thereafter. He made international news during the late 1960s and through the 1970s and made a big impact on the youth in Europe. Interestingly, unlike other Indian gurus, he was one person who never went on a lecture tour abroad. All his disciples came to visit him in Pune.

He took a vow of silence on April 11, 1981. He was 50 years old. He left India for the USA in May 1981 and called India a dying civilization. He praised the USA for its openness and thriving modern culture and proclaimed that USA would be the spiritual leader of the world in the future. He changed his mind in less than 18 months.

Rajneesh was arrested for fraud in the USA on October 28, 1985, and following a plea bargain he was allowed to leave the USA without serving time. He was denied visa by 20 countries all over the world, and he returned to India in 1986. While in India, he took the title of *Osho*, and his journey from *Shree* Rajneesh, to *Acarya* Rajneesh, to *Bhagwan* Rajneesh, to *Osho* ended on January 19, 1990, at his Pune ashram.

It may be too early to say how Rajneesh's innovations in spirituality will weather the time, but to be fair about him we must concede that he did start a new way of life, gave a technique of meditation, and a theory that sex could lead to super consciousness.

He also revived the tradition of open criticism by indulging in the criticism of saints and ideas from all religions, which could be attributed to the modern Western influence on him.

It is quite plausible that Rajneesh's ideas on sex and meditation emerged from his interaction with his Western disciples or from reading about free sex in the Western countries. His model of dynamic yoga could have resulted from his desire to allow his Western disciples to express their emotion through dancing to Western tunes, or jumping, crying, and so forth. In his publications, a clear imprint of contemporary mass media could be seen in that his books had glossy covers and were generally packaged well. The titles of his books were also catchy, what would be labeled "sexy" in the United States, and were selected with a view to position them successfully in the market place. His ownership of 100 Rolls Royces and diamond studded cap earned him the limelight of television and the wrath of Ted Koppel on NightLine, a popular television (American Broadcast Corporation, or ABC) show in the United States. Thus, it is quite clear that Rajneesh's philosophy emerged from the ancient culture of India, but his expressions were shaped by the contemporary Indian and international cultures, i.e., by the global *zeitgeist*. It is quite unlikely that a guru such as him could have emerged in the past, when India was not open to the world. This further supports that culture has a role in shaping innovation and creativity, and that there is a reciprocal relationship between geniuses and *zeitgeist* in that the *zeitgeist* shapes geniuses, and geniuses in turn shape the *zeitgeist*.

## Implications for Global Psychology

In this chapter, two theoretical arguments were examined to test the idea that culture plays a critical role in the shaping of creative behaviors. The first model was derived from Triandis's (1994) work, whereas the second model came from Simonton's (1996) work. Triandis (1994) presented a theoretical framework for studying human behavior in the context of culture and ecology. He suggested that both the ecology and the history of people in a certain region shape culture. Culture in turn shapes human personality through socialization in its own unique ways, and personality determines human behavior. This is not to rule out individual differences, or to present culture as a tyrannical force, since humans shape culture, albeit slowly, as much as culture shapes humans. Adapting Triandis's framework, Bhawuk (2003a) argued that culture has a direct influence on creative behavior. Socialization is the mechanism through which cultures operate, and, therefore, it can be assumed to be implicit in a culture. He posited that depending on how a culture historically evolves in its ecological niche, people in that culture would invest their efforts in choosing creative behaviors. Though all kind of creative behaviors can be found in all cultures, it is my position that in some cultures people value creative behaviors in certain areas more so than in other cultures. And in India people seem to value spirituality so much that every domain of human endeavor seems to be shaped by spirituality to some degree.



The second theoretical argument is derived from the stream of research done by Simonton (1996), who also builds on Kroeber's works. Kroeber (1944) studied eight areas of human endeavors, i.e., philosophy, science, philology, sculpture, painting, drama, literature, and music across many literate societies, which included both Eastern and Western cultures. He concluded that since geniuses in many areas of human endeavor appear in clusters, and that they are distributed such that there is a rise and fall in the quality of what they produce, one could argue that "culture patterns" (p. 762) have a conceptual validity. Following Kroeber, Simonton (1996) concluded in a historiometric study of Japanese geniuses that genius is shaped by the cultural configuration. He found that both domain-specific and systemic (i.e., cross-domain) configurations determine how a genius or eminent achiever would be placed historically, and that these configurations operate independently and may have different loci of influence.

In the Kroeberian paradigm, a cultural configuration was also found to reach its acme and exhaust itself over a period of time. On the contrary, spirituality and spiritual knowledge and practice have grown over the centuries in India leading to many innovations, supporting the thesis that cultures continue to produce geniuses in one or more areas of human endeavor that they particularly value, and that some cultural configurations may actually never exhaust themselves, if the domains for achievement are so valued. The current innovations discussed in the three case studies could also be used as an argument to support the idea that the Indian culture is not showing signs of exhaustion with respect to spirituality.

From the work of Simonton (1988, 1996) and Kroeber (1944), it is clear that culture plays an important role in the development of geniuses. These scholars have also called into question the Galtonian view of hereditary genius. Simonton (1988, 1996) has marshaled evidence in support of the Kroeberian configurations, and the Kroeberian or Simontonian (Simonton, 1984, 1994) proposition that geniuses appear in a local configuration, or new innovations are a result of the social situation, suggests that cultures develop specialized knowledge in certain areas. Therefore, it appears that culture moderates creative behavior. This perspective allows geniuses to have innate abilities, but postulates that culture moderates the channeling of the individual abilities to certain creative behaviors, i.e., geniuses put their creativity in domains that is valued in the culture.

It is also clear from the work of Kroeber and Simonton that there are differences in the numbers of geniuses found across various fields within a culture, which supports the argument that culture favors certain fields over others and the idea that a culture may indeed "specialize" in a certain domain of human behavior. Also, such differences among India, Japan, and China, which are all collectivist cultures, show how a culture theory like individualism and collectivism is unable to explain cultural variation in creativity, and there is a need to study behaviors in their cultural contexts. Research in indigenous psychology can enrich our understanding of how human behaviors are embedded in cultural contexts beyond what cross-cultural psychology can offer.

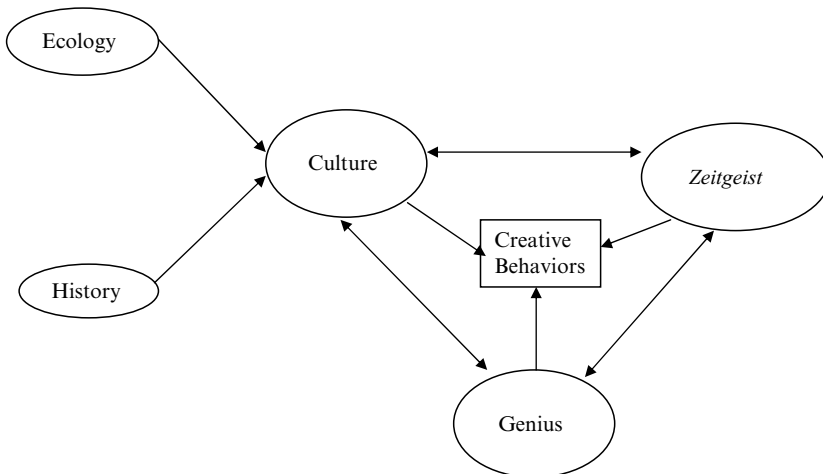
In the Western tradition of research, creativity has been a subject of much research internationally, leading researchers to talk about a creativity movement (Guilford, 1980). Much of the research in creativity has focused on intelligence and

personality (Barron & Harrington, 1981), problem solving (Osborn, 1953), genius (Simonton, 1984), organizational creativity (Amabile, 1988), how innovations are made in such domains as music and art (Meyer, 1967), and how creativity can be taught in schools (Raina, 1980). However, very little effort has gone into examining the influence of culture on creativity.

The analysis presented in this chapter shows that creativity in India is likely to be channeled in the field of spirituality, more so than in any other field. Two theoretical arguments were presented for studying the influence of culture on creativity. The historical analysis of growth of spirituality in India supported the model that ecology and history shape culture, which in turn influences creative behaviors. Considering that many of the masters have spent an extended period of time in the Himalayas, it is likely that this part of the Indian ecology influenced the growth of spirituality. It is plausible that the harsh climate in the Himalayas and the seclusion from civilization help mendicants in withdrawing their mind inward.

The case studies presented above support the argument that India continues to innovate in the field of spirituality even today. The Indian case presents preliminary evidence to support the idea that people in some cultures may value some aspect of human endeavor more than others, and thus culture moderates creative behaviors, or where geniuses will put their effort. This idea also finds support in the work of Simonton (1988, 1996), though he did not explicitly recognize this notion.

The historical analysis of growth of spirituality in India and the three case studies allows us to synthesize the two theoretical perspectives into a general model of culture and creativity. It is clear that culture provides the *zeitgeist* for creative behaviors and influences the area of creative behavior that geniuses in a culture choose. However, geniuses also go on to shape the *zeitgeist* and culture in the long term in a significant way. Thus, culture, *zeitgeist*, and genius have reciprocal relationships in shaping creative behaviors (Bhawuk 2003a; see Figure 2.1).



**Figure 2.1** A general model of culture and creativity

Kroeber (1944) concluded that culture periodically allows or inhibits the realization of genius. I disagree with the inhibition argument and posit that what people value in a culture will *never* be inhibited; rather, culture will find a way around the prevalent context to deliver geniuses. The growth of Sufism in India reflects how spirituality emerged at the confluence of Hinduism and Islam in the medieval times. The growth in the travel of the spiritual gurus from the Himalayas, the traditional home of spiritual masters, to the Western countries may be another way Indian spirituality is struggling to assert itself in the global world, which is becoming increasingly materialistic. Following this line of reasoning, it could be argued that India will continue to produce spiritual geniuses (of which Maharishi Mahesh Yogi and Rajneesh discussed in this chapter are recent examples) and may even attract spiritual geniuses from other parts of the world in its fold of which Mother Teresa may be a recent example. Mother Teresa's Nobel Prize could be argued to be recognition of Indian spirituality, since she is the only Catholic saint to receive this prize, albeit in the form that the sponsors of the Prize can relate to.

Study of genius is only one way of looking at what a culture values and where it directs (or lures!) its best human resource. The influence of culture can also be seen at the mass level (Pandey, 1998), what Kroeber (1944) referred to as the unrealized geniuses ("...eminently superior individuals [who] never get into the reckoning of history ...," p. 14). Spirituality can be seen to permeate the masses in India, and social life revolves around rituals that work as a symbolic reminder that people in this culture value spirituality. Small (e.g., weekly, fortnightly, and annual) and big (e.g., the *kUmbh melA*, or festival of kUmbh, which meets every 12 years and draws millions of people, both householders and monks, to a particular place) celebrations mark the Indian lifestyle. Everyday is dedicated to a deity and one can choose a deity to offer his or her prayer. It is no surprise that India is promoted for spiritual tourism.

Creativity is not captured by most of the culture theories (see Triandis & Bhawuk, 1997 for a succinct review of culture theories). It is not clear how creativity is related to individualism and collectivism or any of the other four dimensions presented by Hofstede (1980, 2001), i.e., masculinity versus femininity, uncertainty avoidance, long-term orientation or Confucianism, and power distance. The topic has generally not received much attention. Schwartz's (1992) universal value structure is the only one that touches upon creativity, but no effort has been made to use his theory to explain how culture shapes creativity. One could argue that creativity is a socio-cultural behavior, since creativity is applied to solve social problems or ecological problems that a culture faces. For example, when India was facing the British rule, many spiritual gurus addressed the issue of independence, and spirituality was channeled through the idea that service to the nation was part of spirituality. Since creativity can be construed as a socio-cultural behavior, as is apparent from the study of geniuses, it is important to study the influence of culture on creativity, else we may make the mistake of imposing the Western notion of creativity on other cultures and find people in other cultures not creative. Therefore, future research should examine the socio-cultural aspects of creativity.

We need to critically examine such sweeping generalizations as individualists are more creative than collectivists (Triandis, 1989), or the United States is good at inventing, whereas Japan is good at refining what is already invented (Hasegawa, 1995). It is plausible that people in different cultures value different outcomes, and hence, would encourage people to channel their creativity in different domains of behaviors.

Galton's Hereditary Genius Thesis, which conceptualizes genius as natural ability that is inherited, could be called into question using the argument that culture shapes the behavior of geniuses, which was presented in this chapter. The Indian case clearly challenges the hereditary genius thesis since a spiritual guru, traditional wisdom, as well as written scriptures have it, brings *saMskAra* (or innate abilities) from the *karma* of his or her own past life, and does not inherit from his or her biological parents. The examination of many recorded lineage of spiritual paths found in India, and captured in Table 2.1, also clearly contradicts the hereditary argument that Galton was able to demonstrate by using his long list of geniuses (Galton, 1869). The wide variation in the castes from which spiritual gurus have come also supports the traditional wisdom and contradicts the Galtonian view.

Research in indigenous psychology calls for adopting a diversity of methodologies, beyond the experimental method favored by Western psychology and social sciences. In this chapter, I followed all the four types of triangulation recommended for qualitative studies (Patton, 2002). I used "methods triangulation" (using more than one method, i.e., historical analysis and case method), "triangulation of source" (the table of saints was created by using many sources, and the cases were culled from more than one source), and "theory/perspective triangulation" (Triandis and Simonton's theoretical perspectives were synthesized to present the general model of culture and creativity). I also attempted "analyst triangulation" (Patton, 2002, p.556) by obtaining feedback from expert Indologists as well as Western-educated Indians to check if they would agree with my thesis. It was encouraging to find that they all agreed with my thesis that the Indian culture values spirituality and tends to direct geniuses to that domain.

I also used story telling, which has been accepted as a research tool, in narrating the stories of the three modern saints. Churchman (1971, p. 178) posited that "The Hegelian inquirer is a storyteller, and Hegel's Thesis is that the best inquiry is the inquiry that produces stories. The underlying life of a story is its drama, not its 'accuracy.' ...But is storytelling science? Does a system designed to tell stories well also produce knowledge?" Stories can be used for amusement or for inquiring about basic human psychology, the desires, hopes, aspirations, fears, and so forth of people. Mitroff and Kilman (1978, p. 93) argued that stories "provide the hardest body of evidence" for researchers who they labeled the Conceptual Humanist, scientists who strive to increase the welfare of the most number of people. The three cases presented in the chapter give us a better understanding of the spiritual masters, and the wide difference between what they did and how they did, which could not be understood if we did not know their "stories."

It should be noted that since only humans are known to be spiritual in the animal kingdom, by neglecting this field of human endeavor, we may be actually leaving

out one of the most important aspects of being human from social science research. We can see that an attempt to understand why spirituality is valued in the Indian culture has led to the development of a general model of culture and creativity, which was unlikely to emerge if we followed the traditional Western research paradigm. Thus, research in indigenous psychology is likely to provide new paradigms and models that cannot be developed following the Western research tradition.



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