

The Oneness Movement - an overview



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In his Ballad of East and West, Rudyard Kipling wrote "Oh, East is East, and West is West, and never the twain shall meet." Few people know the second line to that verse, which actually provides for ultimate reunion: "Till Earth and Sky stand presently at God's great Judgment Seat." Facing the turn of the 21st century has been much like facing Judgment. Humanity as a collective has dragged ancient ills - war, corruption, greed, competition and fear - into yet another millennium. At the same time, balancing the scales, there has been a tremendous shift in consciousness; an awakening to a greater sense of self-responsibility, an eagerness to engage a healing of mind and body and a restless urge to evoke the spirit from its hiding place within; a great yearning for union with each other and with the Divine.



Into this world fractured by divided religious and socio-political camps comes the Oneness Movement. Started in India in 1991 by twin avatars Sri Bhagavan and Sri Amma, the stated purpose of the Oneness Movement is to uplift humanity's consciousness from a state of chronic separation and suffering into a state of enlightenment - the awareness of wholeness and oneness - mainly through an energy transmission process called deeksha. Acknowledged as teachers and bringers of enlightenment and god-realization by more than 20 million adherents around the world, Sri Bhagavan and Sri Amma's goal is to bring enlightenment to a minimum of 64,000 people worldwide by the year 2012.

The primary methodology to accomplish this is deeksha, a transmission of the energy or frequency state of enlightened oneness. Deeksha has been made available to people outside the confines of the Oneness Movement's India headquarters since 2003, and often takes the form of a laying on of hands. The transmission, which is accomplished by a trained initiate, is designed to re-pattern neural functioning in the brain, and thus create a shift in thought processes and the dissolution of personal perceptual filters that foster the illusion of separateness.

Although new on the world stage, the process of deeksha has already drawn the interest of German Ph.D. biochemist Christian Opitz, who has performed extensive tests in India, scanning individual's brains before and after deeksha. Utilizing an advanced electromagnetic frequency diagnostic device called KARNAK, which was developed at the University of Milan, Opitz established individual's baseline brain functions, then retested after deeksha had been given. His tests showed significant, replicable shifts in subjects' brain activity and striking changes in certain areas of the brain.

"I checked what Bhagavan was saying against what I could measure about the deactivation of the parietal lobes and the activation of the frontal lobes," says Opitz. "And I found that this was really true; that in people who had received a substantial amount of deeksha, the parietal lobes were so much more quiet than the frontal lobes, which were so much more activated - and always with a slight dominance of the left frontal lobe. Which is exactly what you want to see, because happiness and integrated spiritual experience go hand-in-hand with a slight dominance of the left frontal lobe. Whereas when people have spiritual experiences that may actually make them more pathological, or people are even hallucinating, then the right frontal lobe dominates. This is just frontal lobes, not whole brain hemispheres."

As Opitz determined a consistent pattern, he expanded his investigations to include studying the wave forms that followers' DNA emanated. Apparently, the wave forms increase in strength as a person continues to receive the enlightened transmissions, which are described as a golden ball of energy descending into the head. He found that the reptilian brain, or brain stem, which holds much of our primitive fight or flight responses, was quieted through deeksha. He also measured growth in certain brain centers.

"In some of the dhasas (direct disciples of Bhagavan and Amma) in India, I measured their septum pellucidum, which is also called the brain's joy center, and it was huge. I mean, I've never seen anything like that. It's a brain center that's under-active in most people, and it's severely shrunk in people who are depressed. It grows when real joy becomes a basic experience of the person's life. If it's shrunk, if it's de-active, then people know only the fake joy of stimulated pleasure."

Opitz's tests also seemed to indicate that unlike results of similar investigations monitoring long-term meditators and people who do other kinds of energy work, the effects of deeksha appear to be permanent.

In three short years, millions of individuals around the world have received deeksha. Many have had 'direct experiences' of oneness, and their lives have changed significantly in terms of internal happiness and their capacity for love and peaceful coexistence in the world. According to Sri Raniji, the appointed Spiritual Leader and Founder of the Oneness Movement in North America, some have attained permanent 'enlightenment,' a non-mystical state of mind that is the constant recognition of the reality of oneness: the recognition of life as a field of unified consciousness in which individual existence and expression is purely perceptual.

Those attracted to participate in Oneness Movement workshops and experience deeksha are advised that "enlightenment" rarely happens instantly and that it doesn't automatically occur in everyone - which is in alignment with many current views of the dynamics of advanced spiritual states. As David R. Hawkins, M.D., Ph.D. points out in his book *Power vs. Force*, enlightened states calibrate between 700-1000. Before those states are achieved, individuals must move up through the stages of unconditional love (500), joy (540), and peace (600). Considering that using Hawkins' scale 80% of the world's population still calibrates below 200, it is understandable that enlightenment is a journey.

One person and one step at a time

To accomplish the goal of uplifting humanity, Sri Bhagavan and Sri Amma have established the Oneness University at Batthalavallam, 70 km outside the city of Chennai (formerly Madras) in southeast India. The Oneness University which is close to the movement's headquarters in what is now known as the Golden City, is a center for learning that is designed to teach people who they really are; to move them through meditations and inner processes that awaken them to the falseness of the separate self. Most importantly they also receive deeksha, which enables that limited condition to be transcended.

Courses are experiential and designed to set men and women free of their limited mind-self to walk the path of discovering Oneness with God. The dhasas who teach at the Oneness University are understood to have achieved a permanent state of enlightenment.

"Oneness University can be considered as the university for universities. It exists to make one into a true human being," Sri Bhagavan has stated. "The function of the University is not only to give an understanding of the human mind, human consciousness and life itself but also to bestow the state of enlightenment or Oneness. Seekers are not only given the state, but are also empowered to transfer this state to others. One is fully empowered to help others become enlightened. The effort is to create a new humanity which would have discovered Oneness."

The largest structure at the Golden City is the Oneness Temple, a mammoth three floor marble structure twenty times the size of the Taj Mahal, which is scheduled for completion in 2006. Designed for many functions, the temple includes a great hall where 8,000 people can meditate together, purposefully influencing the morphogenetic fields across the earth and helping to elevate humankind into enlightenment.

For those familiar with the work of quantum physicist John Hagelin, Ph.D. Director of the Institute of Science, Technology and Public Policy at the Peace University in Fairfield, Iowa, the number 8,000 should ring a bell. It is, roughly, the square root of one percent of the world's current population of 6.5 billion, which is the number calculated by his staff during years of research on the field effects of meditation, as the minimum number of people necessary to affect the morphogenic fields of human consciousness worldwide and trigger a paradigm shift. Because of wave amplification dynamics, having one large group meditating together, as is planned for the Oneness Temple, is ideal.

Non-sectarian followers

What is unique about this movement is that it is not a religion, nor is it a particular spiritual path or set of religious beliefs. Sri Bhagavan and Sri Amma, who are husband and wife (which is certainly a break from eastern tradition) are understood as being the outer manifestations of oneness in the twin form of the masculine and feminine expressions. They maintain they are not interested in forming a new religion, nor being worshiped as gurus. Rather they are simply here to perform their divine mission of uplifting humanity.

Pauline Baumann, a naturopathic physician from Portland who has been a spiritual seeker since age 15, went to India last year to learn how to perform deeksha. She says the meditations and the highly psychological depth processing work the movement uses, combined with the transmission of higher consciousness via deeksha makes the Oneness Movement unique in her experience. The non-religious orientation appealed to her western sensibilities.

"This is not all exotic and mystical and that sort of thing," says Baumann. "It's about becoming functionally

awakened. This is not about going into dysfunctional, mystical states, because that's not really going to help the world a whole heck of a lot. Bhagavan is very interested in people being functional, being able to be enlightened in pursuit of their own vocation; not that you become enlightened and you become a spiritual teacher. Because there's not necessarily that specific need. There is the need for there to be enlightened doctors, enlightened politicians, enlightened plumbers, enlightened landscape designers, architects, parents. There's just a need for everybody to be enlightened and bring it to their own vocation and be very functional in the world."

Baumann, admits that the promise of enlightenment was absolutely a strong pull to go to India. When she came back she was, "in a very good space."

"I don't know how to describe it," she muses. "Relatively enlightened? And that state was very, very peaceful, very relaxed. My heart was very open. My mind was just very optimistic and positive. I tend to have, historically, a critical turn of mind. I'm the kind of person that sees the imperfections in things ... I'm comparing things all the time. ... That was just sort of gone. When I came back here, we came back to a really kind of catastrophic thing with our house. Instead of freaking out, you just deal with it. It's fine, not to worry. That was kind of an interesting little test."

For Baumann, enlightenment has not come like a bolt from the blue, but rather as a steadily increasing capacity to be present and to love. As she has continued to give deeksha to Oneness Movement participants in the Portland area, (which is also a way to receive the higher energies as they pour through her) she is experiencing a gradual deepening and strengthening of her heightened original state. She mentions that, in the west especially, there is tremendous confusion and overawe about what enlightenment really is.

New York television show host of A Better World, Mitchell Rabin, agrees.

"The experiences that I had in India, I feel, opened up channels in me and reminded me of a level of a cosmic reality that I had been losing sight of," says Rabin who is also a transpersonal psychologist and acupuncturist. "It was an amazing experience, magnificent in its simplicity.

"What's going on now, is, I have to say, it's much more transitory. I personally do not feel that the full awakening, permanent state of awakening, has occurred to me, that's for sure. I have disabused myself of all considerations of enlightenment. Quite honestly I think that's actually a very healthy thing, and it's part of a very important disillusioning process that I think is inherent in spiritual practice: To become utterly, completely sober and present in the moment, instead of [chasing after] what I think enlightenment is and even what I'd wanted it to be."

Oneness Movement leaders, like Raniji, and practitioners like Baumann agree that "enlightenment" is a unique, individual process. It is also a state of mind that cannot be pursued or attained through personal effort. Rather it is attained by Divine Grace.

East meets west

On February 14, 2005, American Christian spiritual leader Ron Roth was awakened in his Illinois home by a voice chanting "Sri Bhagavan, Sri Bhagavan" over and over. As founder of the Celebrating Life Ministries, the Spirit of Peace Monastic Community and a former Roman Catholic priest, Roth was bemused by the experience. However, after inquiring amongst his staff, he learned about the Oneness Movement and contacted Sri Raniji at US headquarters in Monte Sereno, California . Despite the obvious congruencies between his healing ministry and that of the Oneness Movement, Roth was uninterested in heading to India ... until several months of contemplation brought him to an inevitable feeling that he had to go. At the Golden City he was welcomed with open arms - and recognition by Sri Bhagavan that he was an avatar in his own right and deeply aligned with the Oneness Movement and the task of bringing enlightenment to the planet.

Roth says his experiences in India, talking at length with Sri Bhagavan and Sri Amma, receiving Deeksha and undergoing spiritual "surgery" by the dhasas, were extraordinary.

"What I like about Bhagavan, is 1) he really is into Oneness. You don't even have to believe what he teaches," says Roth. "He has no doctrines. If you want to eat meat, eat meat. If you want to be a vegetarian, be a vegetarian. It's your personal life. But to recognize the beingness of God in you is very important.

2) I know of no other avatar who's ever been married. I think he broke the mold with that one. "But the interesting thing about Bhagavan is this whole idea of being devoid of doctrine. So many [religious organizations] do have their strict rules. You must be a vegetarian. You must be this. You must be that. Kind of like what people have done with

Christianity, instead of focusing on the experience. But when you go to the Golden City, you get an experience of the Divine."

Roth, whom Bhagavan named Satchitananda, which refers to the three aspects of God, consciousness, existence and bliss, is now heading up the American branch of the Oneness Movement. In addition to running Celebrating Life Ministries events, Roth also works with Sri Raniji developing workshops with the Oneness Movement. Like so many who have experienced enlightenment or even gradations thereof, for Roth everything has changed and nothing has changed.

"I told Bhagavan before I left India, 'I've never felt so complete in my life. I really feel perfectly that I'm on the path now where I belong.' He said, 'When you go back to America, do it the way you've been doing it.' People here ask me, 'Is your healing life or your prayer life changed?' I would honestly have to say, 'No.' But it has certainly deepened and expanded. I don't see it as a change. I still follow the principles I've always followed. It's just that now my consciousness is far more expanded than it was."

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