



3

AdhyAtma or Spirituality: Construct Definition and Elaboration Using Multiple Methods

Dharm Prakash Bhawuk

I am grateful to Dr vijayan munusAmI and Professor pawan budhwAr for their insightful comments that helped me improve the chapter. Different parts of this chapter were presented at NAO P conference (2017) at IIT Kharagpur, Indian Academy of Management (INDAM) conference (2017) at IIM indore, and Academy of Management (AoM) conference in Chicago in 2018.

Introduction

The role of meditation in reducing stress has been studied since the 1950s. However, spirituality has emerged in management literature only since the 1990s (Dale 1991; Dehler and Welsh 1994; Holland 1989; Lee

Harvard-Kyoto protocol for transliteration for *devanagarI* is used for all *saMskRta* and *hindI* words and names, and the first letters of names are not capitalized. All non-English words are italicized.

अ a आ A इ i ई I उ u ऊ U ए e ऐ ai ओ o औ au ऋ R ॠ RR ऌ IR ॡ IRR अं M अः H क ka ख kha ग ga घ kha ङ Ga च ca छ cha ज ja झ jha ञ Ja ट Ta ठ Tha ड Da ढ Dha ण Na त ta थ tha द da ध dha न na प pa फ pha ब ba भ bha म ma य ya र ra ल la व va श za ष Sa स sa ह ha क्ष kSa त्र tra ज्ञ jJa श्र zra

D. P. Bhawuk (✉)

Shidler College of Business, University of Hawai'i, Manoa, Honolulu, HI, USA
e-mail: Bhawuk@Hawaii.edu

1991; Mitroff et al. 1999), and little research is devoted to the development of indigenous constructs of spirituality. *Bhawuk* (2019a, b) attempted to bridge this gap in the literature by developing the construct of *adhyAtma* from the *bhagavadgItA* and showed how it permeates the daily life of people in India. In this chapter, an attempt is made to systematically develop and elaborate the construct of *adhyAtma* using multiple methods.

Bhawuk (2017) developed the construct of *lajjA*, and presented a methodology for systematically developing indigenous constructs. Building on the proposal by Hwang (2007) that indigenous theories can be developed by synthesizing ideas from the life-world and micro-world, *Bhawuk* (2019a) posited that Indian philosophical texts like the *bhagavadgItA* and *upaniSads* constitute micro-worlds, whereas the biographical stories of saints and dialogues of knowledge seekers with them constitute knowledge in the life-world, and utilized both in developing a spirituality-based theory of creativity. Life-world refers to knowledge created by people to solve problems of daily life, and wisdom is the highest form of coded knowledge in the life-world. On the other hand, micro-world refers to theories developed by researchers that are used to explain phenomena or to solve problems in the life-world, and accumulation of a body of knowledge leads to the creation of specific or discipline-based micro-worlds that are necessarily academic in nature.

In this chapter, an attempt is made to employ both the approaches presented by *Bhawuk* (2017, 2019a) to synthesize micro-world and life-world to present a thick description (Geertz 1973) of the construct of *adhyAtma* or spirituality. First, a lexical analysis is performed on the dictionary meaning of the word. The synonyms and antonyms of the word are also examined. Following this, the meaning of *adhyAtma* is derived from a scriptural text, the *bhagavadgItA*, and how its meaning is closely related to other constructs like *brahman*, *adhibhUta*, *adhidaiva*, *adhiyajJa*, and *karma* is elaborated upon. Then, ideas relevant to the practice of *adhyAtma* are examined in another scriptural text, *pAtaJjalayogasUtra*. This allows an enrichment of the construct of *adhyAtma*. Finally, how *adhyAtma* translates in the daily behaviour of an exemplar spiritual practitioner is examined. This is done by presenting examples from the life of *pramukh swAmIjI*, past president (May 21, 1950, to August 13, 2016) of

BAPS. Thus, a synthesis of micro-world (*bhagavadgItA* and *pAtaJjalayogasUtra*) and life-world (*pramukh swAmIjI*) is employed in defining and elaborating the construct of *adhyAtma* (see *Bhawuk 2019a*, for an elaboration of this approach). The chapter ends with a discussion of the implications of *adhyAtma* for the extant Western theories and global psychology.

AdhyAtma: A Lexical Analysis

Most Indian and Nepali bilinguals translate spirituality as *adhyAtma* and spiritual as *adhyAtmika* or *dhArmika* in common parlance. *AdhyAtmika* is also contrasted with *sAMsArika*, which refers to a person who is chasing material goods and success, and so *saMsArika* may be considered the antonym of *adhyAtmika*. Thus, *adhyAtma* refers to a reflective internal life with an inward focus, whereas *saMsArika* refers to people who are following the external life or a life that is preoccupied with sense organs and material things. This difference between the external and internal focused lives is captured by the wise saints of India, which shows convergence in the understanding between lay people and exemplar practitioners of *adhyAtma* that the saints are.

ramaNa maharSI noted that “It is only rarely that a man becomes introverted. The intellect delights in investigating the past and the future but does not look to the present” (*ramaNa maharSI*, March 3, 1939). Similarly, *swAmi Chinmayanand* noted that “When I slip outside, I fall; when I slip inside, I rise.” Finally, *nisargadatta mahArAja* noted that when on an internal journey we are not grasping and holding or coveting and acquiring—“The *jJAni* is not grasping and holding” (*nisargadatta 1973*, 506). When one is on the internal journey, his or her maturity is reflected in not being selfish—“Love is not selective, desire is selective. In love there are no strangers. When the center of selfishness is no longer, all desires for pleasure and fear of pain cease; one is no longer interested in being happy; beyond happiness there is pure intensity, inexhaustible energy, the ecstasy of giving from a perennial source” (*nisargadatta 1973*, 489). The advanced pursuants of spirituality naturally feels “I am the world, the world is myself,” and lives in the “vastness beyond the farthest

reaches of the mind” (*nisargadatta* 1973, 507) and becomes that vastness, which is love, himself or herself.

The *saMskRta* to English dictionary by Monier-Williams (1899) defines *adhyAtma* as “the Supreme Spirit, own, belonging to self, concerning self or individual personality,” and the one by Apte (1890) defines *adhyAtma* as (“*Atmana saMbaddhaM, Atmani adhikRtaM vA*”) “belonging to self or person, or concerning an individual.” Thus, *adhyAtma* is related to self, the Supreme Spirit or *brahma*, and the individual being or person that we are, and we will see that these definitions are close to the scriptural texts as they are derived from these sources.

The comparison between *adhyAtma* and spirituality would be useful. According to Merriam-Webster dictionary, in English, spiritual means “**not composed of matter.**” A sceptic or a realist is likely to scoff at the very notion of spiritual entities, which includes ghosts. The synonyms of spiritual include bodiless, ethereal, **formless**, immaterial, **incorporeal**, insubstantial, nonmaterial, nonphysical, un bodied, unsubstantial. Other words related to spiritual are **metaphysical**, psychic (also psychical), **supernatural**, impalpable, insensible, intangible, invisible, airy, diaphanous, gaseous, gossamery, tenuous, thin, vaporous, and wispish. The antonyms of spiritual include animal, **carnal**, fleshly, detectable, discernible (also discernable), noticeable, observable, palpable, sensible, tangible, visible, bulky, heavy, massive, and solid. Other antonyms of spiritual include “**bodily, corporeal, material, physical**, and substantial.” The words in bold face provide shared understanding between *saMskRta* and English, and other words show cultural differences.

Spiritual also means “of, relating to, or used in the practice or worship services of a religion” (e.g., spiritual songs). The synonyms of spiritual include **devotional, religious, sacred**. Other words related to spiritual are blessed, consecrated, hallowed, **holy, sacrosanct**, sanctified, solemn, liturgical, ritual, sacramental, semi-religious, and semi-sacred. The near antonyms of spiritual include **earthly**, mundane, terrene, terrestrial, and **worldly**. The antonyms of spiritual include “nonreligious, profane, and secular.” Again, the words in bold face provide shared understanding between *saMskRta* and English, and other words show cultural differences.

AdhyAtma in the *bhagavadgItA*

BhagavadgItA is a rich source for developing psychological constructs and models, which make intuitive sense, and can be applied by lay people in their daily lives without much preparation and training (Bhawuk 2011, 2019b, in press). These models cover a variety of ideas and constructs pertaining to *lajjA* (Bhawuk 2017), *lokasaMgraha*, and leadership (Bhawuk 2019a, b), how we get angry and how we can control anger (Bhawuk 1999), what is work and how we should work (Bhawuk 2011), emotion and stress management (Bhawuk 2008), *adhyAtma* or spirituality (Bhawuk in press), and so forth.

In the *bhagavadgItA*, *adhyAtma* appears eight times in verses 3.30, 7.29, 8.1, 8.3, 10.32, 11.1, 13.11, and 15.5. *AdhyAtma* is defined succinctly in the eighth canto, though it appears for the first time in the third canto. The definition in the eighth canto follows the discussion in the seventh canto, so first the definition is presented as it appears in the context of the seventh and eighth cantos, and then the meaning of the construct is elaborated upon by discussing the verses in the other cantos.

The discourse in the seventh canto is started by *kRSNa* promising to *arjuna* that he would explain to him how *arjuna* would, beyond any doubt, completely come to know *kRSNa* by practising yoga, by attaching his *manas* to *kRSNa*, and by taking refuge in *kRSNa*.¹ Thus, at the end of seventh canto, it is only fitting that *kRSNa* succinctly explain what he had promised, and he does that in the last two verses. *kRSNa* states that those who make an effort to be free of the birth and death cycle by taking refuge in *kRSNa* come to know *brahma*, *adhyAtma*, and *karma* completely (verse 7.29²). Further, those who are one with the self or *Atman* know *kRSNa* completely in all the three forms—*adhibhUta* (or in the physical

¹Verse 7.1: *mayyAsaktamanaH pArtha yogaM yuJjanmadAzrayaH, asaMzayaM samagraM mAM jJAsyasi tatchRNu*. O pArtha, let me explain to you how beyond doubt you will know me completely by making effort to connect with me if you attach the *manas* and take shelter in me.

²Verse 7.29: *jarAmaraNamokSAya mAmAzritya yatanti ye, te brahma tadviduH kRtsnamadhyAtmaM karma cAkhillam*. Those who make effort to be free of birth and death by taking refuge in me know *brahma*, *adhyAtma*, and *karma* completely.

form), *adhidaiva* (or in the divine form), and *adhiyajJa* (or in the sacrifices); and they know *kRSNa* completely even at the time of death (verse 7.30³). Thus, in verses 7.29 and 7.30, *kRSNa* presents the six constructs (i.e., *bramha*, *adhyAtma*, *karma*, *adhibhUta*, *adhidaiva*, and *adhiyajJa*) that *arjuna* asks about in the beginning of the eighth canto.

In verse 8.1,⁴ *arjuna* asks *kRSNa* “What is *adhyAtmaM*?” But the question itself is embedded in a set of eight questions providing a nomological network for the construct in verses 8.1 and 8.2⁵: What is *bramha*? What is *adhyAtmaM*? What is *karma*? What is called *adhibhUtam*? What is called *adhidaivam*? Who is *adhiyajJaH*? How is it in the body? And how do people know it at the end of their life? So, it would be meaningful to understand *adhyAtma* in the context that is presented in verses 8.1–8.5 in the dialogue between *arjuna* and *kRSNa*.

In verse 8.3,⁶ *kRSNa* defines *bramha* as *akSaraM* or that which does not decay, is immutable, indestructible, or imperishable. Some interpret *bramha* as the “subjective Essence behind the phenomenal world” (*Chinmayanand* 1992, 545), that “which penetrates everything, which is all-pervading” (*madhusudan saraswati* translated by *gambhIrAnanda* 1998), or that which “is big and causes everything to grow in it” (*abhinavagupta*, translated by *saGkaranArAyaNan* 1985). These interpretations are consistent with the definition of *bramha* in the Indian cultural texts of the *vedas* and the *upaniSads*.

Further, *kRSNa* defines *adhyAtma* as *svabhAva* or the intrinsic nature of *bramha*. Some interpret *svabhAva* as the presence of *bramha* in each individual body (*Chinmayanand* 1992), that which exists in the context of the body as the enjoyer (*madhusudan saraswati*, translated by *gambhI-*

³Verse 7.30: *sAdhibhUtAdhidaivaM mAM sAdhiyajnaM ca ye viduH, prayANakAle’pi ca mAM te viduryuktacetasaH*. Those who are one with the self or Atman know me completely in all the three forms—*adhibhUta* (or in the physical form), *adhidaiva* (or in the divine form), and *adhiyajJa* (or in the sacrifices)—and they know me even at the time of death.

⁴Verse 8.1: *kiM tadbrahma kimadhyAtmaM kiM karma puruSottama, adhibhUtaM ca kiM proktamadhidaivaM kimucyate*. What is *bramha*? What is *adhyAtmaM*? What is *karma*? What is called *adhibhUtaM*? What is called *adhidaivaM*?

⁵Verse 8.2: *adhiyajJaH kathaM ko’atra dehe’asminmadhusudana, prayANakAle ca kathaM jJeyo’si niyatAtmabhiH*. Who is *adhiyajJaH*? How is it in the body? And how do people know it at the end of their life?

⁶Verse 8.3: *akSaraM bramha paramaM svabhAvo’dhyAamucyate, bhUtabhAvodbhavakaro visargaH karmasajjitaH*.

rAnanda 1998, 537), or “as the Lord-of-self is that which bears the name Consciousness which never ceases to be in It (*brahma*) and which is nothing but the *brahma*” (*abhinavagupta*, translated by *saGkaranArAyaNan* 1985). Thus, *adhyAtma* is defined and interpreted as the presence of *brahma* in the human body.

Finally, in verse 8.3, *kRSNa* states that *karma* is said to be *bhUtabhAvaudbhavakaraH visargaH* or that sacrifice which is the cause of the creation of all beings. All *yajJas* require sacrifice and are considered the cause of the creation and growth of beings (see *Bhawuk* 2011, 192). Therefore, *karma* refers to *yajJa*. Here we can see that even mundane activities are made into non-mundane and spiritual, implying that all *karma* is spiritual. In other words, there is never a gap between secular and spiritual; all is spiritual. Thus, we see the Indian emphasis on spirituality in all domains of life.

In verse 8.4,⁷ *kRSNa* defines *adhibhUta* as *kSaraH bhAvaH* or the perishable or changing entities. Anything that is born and dies, or all of the material world, is captured in *adhibhUta*. *adhidaiva* is defined as *purusaH* or that which permeates every entity in the world. And *kRSNa* calls himself the *adhiyajJa*. And he says he resides in every being, equating himself with *brahma*. In verse 8.5,⁸ *kRSNa* tells *arjuna* that one who leaves the body at the time of death by thinking of *kRSNa*, beyond doubt, merges with *kRSNa* or achieves *kRSNa*'s essence. This has been referred to as *mokSA* (or liberation) or self-realization, which is the ultimate objective of human life in the Indian world view. There is consensus in the interpretation of these verses among scholars from across various schools of Indian philosophy (*Chinmayanand* 1992; *madhusudan saraswati*, translated by *gambhIrAnanda* 1998; *abhinavagupta*, translated by *saGkaranArAyaNan* 1985), allowing for a convergence in the relationship among various constructs and *adhyAtma*.

In Fig. 3.1, we can see that *adhyAtma* is located between the two banks of the metaphorical river *akSara*, the immutable (or *brahman*), and *kSara*, the mutable (or physical self and all of *prakRti* or nature). On the one

⁷Verse 8.4: *adhibhUtaM kSara bhAvaH purusaH adhidaivatam, adhiyajno'homevAtra dehe dehabhRtAM vara*.

⁸Verse 8.5: *antakAle ca mAmeva smaranmuktva kalevaram, yaH prayAti sa madbhAvam yAti nAstyatra saMzayaH*.

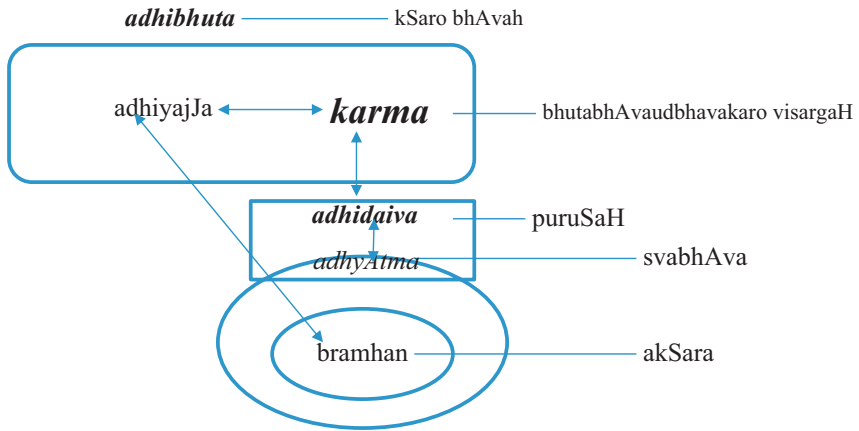


Fig. 3.1 A nomological network of *adhyAtma* and *brahman*, *adhibhuta*, *adhidaiva*, *adhiyajJa*, and *karma*

hand, *adhyAtma* is closely associated with *brahman*, which is also *adhiyajJa*, and, on the other hand, it is related to *adhidaiva*, which permeates all that is mutable or all of nature, including the human physical self. The mutable is constantly into *karma* or action, and *karma* causes mutation. But in all the mutation associated with *prakRti* (or nature) and *karma* (or actions), the unchanging self, *adhyAtma*, remains unconditioned like the immutable *brahman* itself. Thus, the objective of life is to experience this unchanging self in the flow of actions that takes place between the two banks of *akSara* and *kSara*. The other verses that refer to *adhyAtma* in the *bhagavadgItA* clearly emphasize this.

In verse 3.30, *kRSNa* asks *arjuna* to offer all *karmas* (or actions) to him by being conscious that the self is *bramba*, and to fight in the battle without any hope, sense of self, or sorrow.⁹ *Adizankara* explains *adhyAtmacetasA* as “*vivekabuddhayA ahaM kartA IzvarAya bhRtyavat karomi iti anayA buddhayA*” or having the *buddhi* (or discriminating understanding) that one is the servant of God and one always does all actions with that mindset. “To act as the servant of God,” thus, is one of the defini-

⁹Verse 3.30: *mayi sarvaANi karmANi sannyasyAdhyAtmacetasA, nirAzIrnirmamo bhUtva yudhyasva vigatjuaraH*. Offering all *karmas* (or actions) to me by being conscious that the self is *bramba*, fight in the battle without any hope, sense of self, or affliction (or anxiety).

tions of spirituality, as applied to action. *swAmi gambhIrAnand* translates *adhyAtmacetasA* as “mind spiritually imbued”;¹⁰ *swAmi prabhupAda* translates it as “with the full knowledge of the self”;¹¹ *swAmi Chinmayanand* translates it as “with a mind soaked with devoted remembrances of the Self” (*Holy gItA*, p. 234) and also as “with the mind centered on the Self” (*Holy gItA: Ready Reference*, p. 61). Therefore, the definition of *adhyAtma*, “working as the servant of God,” presented in verse 3.30 is consistent as a method to realize the presence of *brahma* in one’s self or to become one with *brahma* in one’s daily living. In other words, to be one with God, one has to work as the servant of God, and that is an Indian perspective on work and spirituality.

In the tenth canto, *kRSNa* describes his various manifestations, and in verse 10.32,¹² he calls himself *adhyAtma-vidyA* or knowledge of self among all kinds of *vidyA* or knowledge. In verse 11.1,¹³ *adhyAtma* is used in the same sense as the pious knowledge of the self. In verse 13.11,¹⁴ *adhyAtma* is used in association with *jJAna* or knowledge, and *adhyAtmajJAna* or knowledge of self alone is said to be knowledge, and all else is non-knowledge. This emphasizes spirituality as the foundation of knowledge in the Indian world view, and all other knowledge as secondary. Knowing the self becomes the *raison d’être* of human existence in the Indian world view, and it is no surprise that people who have some form of spiritual practice are referred to as *adhyAtmika* or *dhArmika* in everyday life as

¹⁰ *swAmi gambhIrAnand* translates this verse as follows: “By becoming free from desires, devoid of the idea of ‘mine’ and devoid of the fever of the soul, engage in battle by dedicating all actions to Me with (your) mind spiritually imbued.”

¹¹ Using the word meaning presented by *swAmi prabhupAda*, the verse translates as follows: “O *arjuna*, fight without desire for profit, without ownership, and without being lethargic, by surrendering all activities completely unto me (i.e., unto *kRSNa*), with full knowledge of the self in the consciousness.”

¹² Verse 10.32: *sargANAmAdirantazca madhyaM caivAbamrjuna, adhyAtma-vidyA vidyAnAM vAdaH pravadatAmaham*. O *arjuna*, I am the beginning, middle, and the end of the creation. I am the knowledge of self among all knowledge, and the debate in which truth is sought.

¹³ Verse 11.1: *arjuna uvAca: madanugrahAya paramaMguhyamadhyAtmasajjnitam, attvayoktaM vacastena mobh’yam vigato mama*. Arjuna said: “You have kindly spoken about the secret knowledge of self to me, and your words have cleared my delusion or confusion.”

¹⁴ Verse 13.11: *adhyAtmajJAnanityatvaM tattvajJAnArthadarzanam, etajjJAnamiti proktamajJAnaM adato’nyathA*.

noted above. Thus, *adhyAtma* is not an esoteric term but a commonly used construct.

In verse 15.5,¹⁵ *kRSNa* tells *arjuna* that those who are devoid of pride and delusion (*nirmAnamohA*), without the faults of attachment (*jitasaGgadoSA*), devoted to spirituality or ever immersed in the reflection on self (*adhyAtmanityA*), free from all desires (*vinivRttakAmAH*), free of duality (*dvandvairvimuktAH*), and equipoised in happiness and sorrow (*sukhaduHkhasaJjnaiH*), such wise ones (*amUDhAH*) reach the undecaying state of perfection (*gacchanti padamavyayaM*), or become self-realized. We see that *adhyAtma* or spirituality is embedded in another nomological network of five practices—(i) eradicating pride and delusion, (ii) conquering the flaw of attachment, (iii) uprooting all tendencies towards desires, (iv) freeing oneself of all dualities, and (v) remaining equipoised in pleasure and pain—that lead to enlightenment. Thus, *adhyAtma* is not only a construct but also a practice; it encompasses the state, the presence of *bramhan* in the human body, and the method that leads to realizing *brahman*, thus emphasizing the role of spirituality in the pursuit of *mokSa* or liberation.

To summarize, *adhyAtma* is related to *bramba*, *karma*, *adhibhUta* (the entity existing in the physical plane), *adhidaiva* (the entity existing in the divine plane), and *AdhiyajJa* (the entity existing in the sacrifices or all actions). *AdhyAtma* is the pious knowledge (*jAna* or *vidyA*) of self, and knowledge related to *adhyAtma* is superior to all types of knowledge. *AdhyAtma* is about centring the mind on the Self or *Atman*. It is a practice that leads to *mokSa* or freedom that goes hand in hand with other practices like eradicating pride and delusion, uprooting attachment, eradicating desires, practising equanimity, and freeing oneself of all duality like happiness and sorrow. It is to act without agency or as the servant of God in pursuit of *mokSa* or liberation. *AdhyAtma* is the inward-looking process that leads to find pleasure, contentment, and satisfaction in *Atman* (*bhagavadgItA* 3.17¹⁶) such that the person interacts energetically with

¹⁵ Verse 15.5: *nirmAnamohA jitasaGgadoSA adhyAtmanityA vinivRttakAmAH, dvandvairvimuktAH sukhaduHkhasaJjnairgacchantyamUDhAH padamavyayaM tat.*

¹⁶ Verse 3.17: *yastuAtmaratireva syAdAtmatRptazca mAnavaH, Atmanyeva ca santuSTastasya kAryaM na vidyate.*

the outside world without neglecting it or getting snared in it (*bhagavadgItA* 18.26¹⁷).

AdhyAtmic AcaraNa: yama and niyama in pAtaJjalayogasUtra

In *pAtaJjalayogasUtra*, the foundation of the eightfold path of yoga is said to be the first two steps that include *yama* and *niyama*, each of which includes five practices. *yama* includes *ahiMsA*, *satya*, *asteya*, *brahmacarya*, and *aparigraha*; and *niyama* includes *zauca*, *santoSa*, *tapaH*, *svAdhyAya*, and *IzwarapraNidhAna*. These practices are recommended for all spiritual aspirants, whatever path they may follow. Thus, they unequivocally constitute the most common denomination of all spiritual practices in India. Each of these practices is conducted at three levels—in physical behaviour (*kAyA*), in speech (*vAcA*), and in thought (*manasA*)—purifying physical behaviour being the grossest and cleansing the *manas* being the subtlest; speech lies in between these two practices.

AhiMsA calls for cultivating nonviolence towards all beings. Causing harm to others is viewed as causing harm to oneself, so one should not cause harm to others in any situation. The practice of *ahiMsA* leads to the realization that there is no other—all is self. This leads to a complete stoppage of otherization. The cultivation of *satya* is founded on the practice of speaking the truth and acting in a manner that is transparent and without any deceit. Cultivation of *satya* culminates in taking *Atman* or self as the only truth, and seeing oneself in all beings and all beings in oneself. When such a mindset is cultivated, one's behaviour, speech, and thought are purified and one has no need to speak a lie or act in a manner that is inauthentic. In other words, the practice of *satya* is cultivating authenticity.

The practice of *asteya*, on the surface, translates as non-stealing. However, it leads to the cultivation of not taking anything that does not belong to the self. The deeper meaning is the appreciation that one is the

¹⁷Verse 18.26: *muktasaGgo'nahaMvAdI dhRtyutsAhasamanvitaH, siddhyasiddhayornirvikAraH kartA sAtvika ucyate.*

Universe, one is complete; and hence, there is no need or tendency for one to take anything from anybody else. The practice of *brahmacharya* is often meant to be the cultivation of celibacy in the first (*brahmacharya Azrama*) and last two phases of life (*vAnaparastha* and *sannyAsa Azramas*), whereas it means being faithful to one's spouse in the second phase of life (*gRhastha Azrama*). It could be interpreted as the practice of seeing *brahman* wherever the senses go, thus there would be no attachment to any material aspect of *prakRti* or nature. Thus, the desire for sex would also not be there.

Finally, the cultivation of *aparigraha* is about not collecting material things and leads to non-possessiveness. When one views oneself as complete or the Universe, there is no need to collect anything. However, in the early phases of spiritual practice, *aparigraha* helps slowly weaken the desire to possess material things, one at a time, thus leading to the uncluttered life with only a few possessions that are necessary to keep the body and mind going. Both *aparigraha* and *asteya* lead one to go beyond the deficit theory of self.

The first *niyama* is *zauca*, and it calls for purifying the body, speech, and *manas*. It could be interpreted as cleaning the tendency to collect material things (*prakRti*), and so being *adhyAtmika* means withdrawing oneself from the material things. The second *niyama*, *santoSa*, is about being contented about life in general, and accepting whatever comes one's way (see verse 4.22 in the *bhagavadgItA*, especially the concept of *yadRechAlabhasantuSTaH*). Contentment in *Atman* (see verse 3.17 in the *bhagavadgItA*) instead of material things is a practice of leading a spiritual life. It is an important practice, and *aSTAvakra* asks *janaka* to practise it along with forgiveness (*kSamA*), simplicity (*Arjava*), compassion (*dayA*), and truth (*satya*).¹⁸

The third *niyama*, *tapaH*, is about cultivating austerity. We seek physical comfort, and material things make us comfortable. Austerity is giving up the material comfort and hankerings, and is considered a basic practice for spiritual aspirants. In the *bhagavadgItA*, *tapaH* is considered one of the 26 *daivik sampadAs* (see verse 16.1 in the *bhagavadgItA*) or divine

¹⁸ *muktiM ichasi cettAta viSayAn viSavattyaja; kSamArjavadayAtoSasatyaM pIyuSavad bhaja*. Son, if you desire freedom, reject material things like poison, and cultivate forgiveness, simplicity, compassion, contentment, and truth like nectar.

virtues, and it is classified as *sAtvika*, *rAjasika*, and *tAmasika* following the three *guNas* (see verses 17.13–19 in the *bhagavadgItA*).

The fourth *niyama*, *svAdhyAya*, is about cultivating regular daily study of the scriptures that helps the spiritual aspirant to emphasize the value of spiritual growth and weaken the bonds of material life. It was noted above that *adhyAtma-vidyA* is superior to all knowledge, and, therefore, studying about *Atman* and unlearning material knowledge is a spiritual practice. In the *bhagavadgItA* (verse 17.15), *svAdhyAya* is referred to as *vaGmayamtapa*, or the *tapaH* of speech.

The fifth *niyama*, *IzwarpraNidhAna*, is about constantly contemplating about *Izvara* or the controller of the universe. This practice leads to shedding our control over the material world by contemplation on *brahman* or constantly thinking about the controller of the *Atman* (which is a definition of *adhyAtma*). Thus, spirituality is about contemplation and surrender and letting go of the tendency to control things.

The following additional five *yamas* are presented in *zAnDilyopaniSad: kSamA* or forgiveness, *dhRti* or resoluteness, *dayA* or compassion, *Arjava* or simplicity, and *mitAhAra* or eating little. The *AcAra* or behaviour of a *sAdhaka* or spiritual aspirant was focused on the *parmArthika* or beyond the material world. It is what is referred to as *niHzreyasa* or called *nivrittilakSaNa*.

To summarize, *yama* and *niyama* are practices for spiritual aspirants that are consistent with the practices of *adhyAtma* derived from the *bhagavadgItA*. *AhiMsA*, *satya*, *zauca*, *santoSa*, and *tapaH* are also presented in the *bhagavadgItA* as *daivik sampadA* or divine virtues in canto 16 (verses 1–3), which are to be cultivated by all aspirants of spirituality. As noted above, *svAdhyAya* is referred to as *tapaH* of speech, and *tapaH* is also a *daivika sampadA*. Thus, there is much convergence about the practice of *adhyAtma* in the *bhagavadgItA* and *pAtaJjalayogasUtra*.

Behavioural Anchors of *adhyAtma*: *pramukh swAmIjI* as an Exemplar

pramukh swAmIjI was born on December 7, 1921, as *zAantILAl patel*, in *chAnsad, gujarAt*, India. He left the world or returned to *akSardhAma* on August 13, 2016, when he was visiting *sAlaGpur, gujarAt*. He was blessed

by *zAstrIji mahArAj*, his *adhyAtmika* or spiritual guru, at birth, and showed interest in pursuing a monastic life from early years. He was invited by *zAstriji mahArAj* to join the monastic order on November 7, 1939, and with the permission of his parents he left home right away. He received his *pArzad dikSA* at *ambliVADI pol* in *amdAbAd* on November 22, 1939, and was called *zAnti bhagat*. He later received *bhAgvati dikSA* and was initiated as a *sAdhu* on January 10, 1940, at the *akSar Deri* in *gonDal, gujarAt*. He received the name *nArAyaNaswarUpadAs* (Shelat 2005). As a *sAdhu*, he took the five vows that *sAdhus* in his *sampradAya* or monastic order observe: *nizkAma* (or celibacy), *nirlobha* (not to touch money, not to keep possessions, or have others keep them on one's behalf; complete non-covetousness), *nisswAda* (or non-taste; *sAdhus* mix food in a wooden bowl and then add a little water to wash the taste before eating it), *nissneha* (or non-attachment; not to become lovingly attached to anyone other than God; renunciation of one's native place and near relatives; the *sAdhus* never meet their mother after taking *bhAgvati dikSA*), and *nirmAna* (or humility). The *sAdhus* also commit to a lifelong service to God and humanity, which he showed in his everyday life to the end. A strict practice of *nizkAma* entails renouncing the contact of women through mind, body, and speech: (1) not to listen to talks by women; (2) not to talk about women; (3) not to talk to women; (4) not to indulge in entertainment with women; (5) not to intentionally look at women; (6) not to think about women; (7) not to attempt to secure the company of women; and (8) not to have sexual contact with women.

He was appointed *pramukh* or president of BAPS by *zAstrIji mahArAj* on May 21, 1950, at the age of 28 despite his multiple refusals, in humility, in the past. His austere practice of the vow of *nirmAna* could be seen when he was cleaning utensils in the evening the day he was appointment *pramukh* (*akAarvatsaldAs* 2007). He worked under the guidance of *yogiji mahArAj* as *pramukh*, and both as *guru* of the *sampradAya* and *pramukh* from January 23, 1971, until he returned to *akSardhAma* on August 13, 2016. During his tenure as *pramukh*, BAPS became an international organization with 3850 centres all over the world, and over a million devotees who are vegetarians practise fidelity, and do not take alcohol or other addictive substances. The devotees begin their day with *pujA* and

japa (chanting), serve regularly as volunteers, and many donate 10 per cent of their income to support the temple and its service activities.

Many biographical accounts of *pramukh swAmiji* are available. In this section, a number of quotes are excerpted from the writings of *mahant swAmiji*, the current president of BAPS, who is himself an exemplar practitioner. Key words that characterize how spiritual practitioners act in society are presented in bold face, and then synthesized and summarized at the end.

“Constantly immersed in an ocean of other people’s problems, he has **never become irritated or ruffled**. His speech has **never become rude or harsh**. On the contrary, he has become more and more **generous and friendly**.” (*mahant swAmi* 1997, 63)

“An **open, straight-forward life**. **Never egotistic**. **Never has he tried to portray himself as great; never has he tried to make a show of his talents; never has he tried to pull others down**.” (*mahant swAmi* 1997, 60)

“[N]o matter who he meets, he always **views others with respect**. He always **shows genuine love** no matter how many times the individual return[s] with problems.” (*mahant swAmi* 1997, 60)

“He honestly believes that his **work is devotion to God**. He feels that **God is watching**.” (*mahant swAmi* 1997, 58)

When the General Secretary of BAPS elaborated upon the tremendous growth experienced by BAPS, he emphasized “**greater importance of internal progress** as compared to external progress” by stating that “We must **maintain our vows**, our saintliness and a **spirit of service**.” (*mahant swAmi* 1997, 58)

“Spiritually he is of an extremely lofty level and yet he remains **quiet, non-boasting**. Yet, even with his quiet, he **can move thousands around him into action**.” (*swAmi AtmanAnanda* quoted in *mahant swAmi* 1997, 56)

“His distinguishing qualities are his **simplicity, straightforwardness, and openness**. Through such a **pure life** he is constantly inspiring others.” (*rAmaswarUpa zAstrI* quoted in *mahant swAmi* 1997, 56)

“He is the essence of **simplicity**. Even in his talks there is no show through flowery language; we don’t find complexities in thoughts; no attempts to appear big.” (*mohanbhai patel* quoted in *mahant swAmi* 1997, 57)

“He has always put aside his greatness and taken any available opportunity to **serve** others.” (*mahant swAmi* 1997, 57)

“He has **no hypocrisy or deception**. He **does not have the slightest trace of ego** (p. 51).” “He is extremely **honest**. He is absolutely **pure**.”
(*mahant swAmI* 1997, 55)

We can identify the following ten individual level or personal behavioural anchors from the above: (i) quiet, non-boasting, (ii) simplicity (straight-forwardness, openness), (iii) honest (no hypocrisy or deception), (iv) no ego absolutely pure; not portraying himself as great, (v) not showing off talents, (vi) never become irritated or ruffled, (vii) never become rude or harsh, (viii) generous and friendly, (ix) work is devotion to God, and (x) God is watching.

We can also identify five other related behavioural anchors: (i) views others with respect, (ii) shows genuine love, (iii) never pulls others down, (iv) serves others, inspires others, and (v) can move thousands around him into action. There is also an organization-related behavioural anchor—internal progress is more important than external progress. These behavioural anchors are consistent with the ones identified from the *bhagavadgItA* and *pAtaJjalayogasUtra*, thus providing convergence and enrichment of the construct of *adhyAtma*.

Discussion

The five vows that *pramukh swAmIji* practised all his life—*nizkAmi vartmAn*, *nirlobhi vartmAn*, *nisswAdI vartmAn*, *nissnehI vartmAna*, and *nirmAnI vartmAn*—closely resemble *yama* and *niyama* proposed in *pAtaJjalayogasUtra*. *nizkAmi* captures both *brahmacarya* and *zauca* of *manas*; *nirlobhI* captures *aparigraha*, *asteya*, and *zauca* of *manas*; *nisswAdI* captures *tapaH* of the senses, especially taste, and *santoSa*; *nissnehI* captures *aparigraha*; and *nirmAnI* captures *zauca* of *manas*. Thus, we see convergence between micro-world and life-world, providing credence to the practice-related aspects of *adhyAtma*. Similarly, we can find convergence between the characteristics that refer to *adhyAtma* as a practice in the *bhagavadgItA* and the daily life of *pramukh swAmIji*. *AdhyAtma* is about centring the mind on the *Atman* and *pramukh swAmIji* was always focused on *ThAkurji*. When he was recognized in the British Parliament,

instead of standing up to receive the accolade, he asked the accompanying *sAdhu*, who was carrying *ThAkurji*, to stand. When Bill Clinton, past president of the United States, commented that *ThAkurji* was a symbol of God, *pramukh swAmIjI* corrected him by saying that *ThAkurji* was not a symbol, but God in person.

AdhyAtma is associated with a nomological network of other practices like having no pride, delusion, attachment, or desire that lead to *mokSa* which are supported in the austere vows *pramukh swAmIjI* has practised all his life. Similarly, other practices like being free of all duality such as happiness and sorrow, to act without agency or as the servant of God, practices noted in the *bhagavadgItA*, are supported in the life of *pramukh swAmIjI* who always acted with a view that “God is watching.” Finally, *adhyAtma* is the inward-looking process that leads to find pleasure, contentment, and satisfaction in *Atman*, which is also supported in the life of *pramukh swAmIjI* in that he emphasized internal progress over external progress as noted above. The *bhagavadgItA* also exemplifies an *adhyAtmika* person as one who interacts energetically with the outside world without neglecting it or getting snared in it, which was amply exemplified in the life of *pramukh swAmIjI*. Thus, we can see a convergence in the construct of *adhyAtma* and its practice in the micro-world and life-world.

India has a long tradition of *adhyAtma* or spirituality (*Bhawuk 2003, 2011, 2012, 2019a, b*). Moore (1967) distilled 17 themes from a thorough study and analyses of Indian philosophical thoughts. The most important theme, he concluded, was spirituality—“a universal and primary concern for, and almost a preoccupation with, matters of spiritual significance” (p. 12). In stating how closely Indian philosophy is related to life, the general agreement seems to be that truth should be realized, rather than simply known intellectually. This further emphasizes and clarifies *adhyAtma* or spirituality as the way of living, to not merely know the truth but to become one with the truth (*Sheldon 1951*).

The Indian concept of self consists of gross and subtle elements, which can be further categorized as physical, social, and metaphysical selves (*Bhawuk 2011*). More specifically, in the Indian world view there is a social self that is ever-expanding by additions of various social roles and attributes. Though it is socially constructed, it has concrete attributes and

also psychological characteristics. The physical self and sense organs are the grossest. The internal self that consists of *ahaGkAra*, *manas*, and *buddhi* is also called *antaHkaraNa*¹⁹ or the internal organ or agent. Beyond all this is *Atman*, which is the subtlest (Bhawuk 2011). Thus, the very concept of self is affiliated to *adhyAtma* or spirituality in the Indian world view.

There is general agreement that the metaphysical self, *Atman*, is the real self. This metaphysical self is embodied in a biological or physical self, and situated, right at birth, in a social structure as a result of past *karma*. The importance of the metaphysical self is reflected in the belief that of all the living beings, human beings are the only ones that can pursue *mokSa* (or liberation), enlightenment, *jJAna* (or knowledge), or self-realization, which is presented as the highest pursuit of human life. Most Indians, including Hindus, Buddhists, Jains, Sikhs, and people of many other religious groups believe that they go through many life forms on their way to ultimatum liberation, and the pursuit of self-realization is a common shared belief. Thus, *adhyAtma* or spirituality is embedded in social life and *karma* or work in India.

Spirituality, which emerges as the highest desideratum of human living and pursuit in Indian culture, is not only captured in the concept of self, but also in the normative prescription about how to lead one's life in phases. The last two phases (*vAnaprastha* or forest-dwelling and *sannyAsa* or monkhood) of life are clearly dedicated to the pursuit of spiritual advancement, and of the four pursuits of life recommended by tradition, which include *dharma* (duty), *artha* (wealth), *kAma* (pleasure), and *mokSa* (release from birth and death cycle), both *dharma* and *mokSa* are related to *adhyAtma* or spirituality.

Bhawuk (in press) emphasized that the Indian spiritual value emphasizes the concept of *jIvanmukta* or being free while living in the material

¹⁹ See Bhawuk (2011), chap. 4, for a definition and discussion of *manas*, *buddhi*, *ahaGkAra*, and *antaHkaraNa*. The closest translation of *ahaGkAra* would be ego, which comes at the cost of much loss of meaning. People often use mind for *manas*, which is simply wrong, since *manas* is the locus of cognition, affect, and behaviour, whereas mind is only cognitive. And *buddhi* is closest to the super-ego in Freudian parlance, but without ego, which makes the similarity rather superficial. And *antaHkaraNa* is the composite internal organ or agent combining *manas*, *buddhi*, and *ahaGkAra*. *Adizankara* also includes *citta* in the definition of *antaHkaraNa* (see Bhawuk 2014 for a discussion of *citta*).

world, and so the material world is not neglected in the Indian ethos. It is this love for the material that is captured in the love for gold jewellery, silk, hundreds of varieties of food, music, movies, and so forth in India. Therefore, the focus on spirituality in Indian culture should not be construed as the neglect of material world. *AdhyAtma* is about living in the world without getting snared in it as is succinctly captured in the *bhagavadGItA* (verse 5.10²⁰).

The commonality between Hinduism and other religions (e.g., Islam, Christianity, Sikhism, and others) lies in the path of devotion (see *Bhawuk 2011*, chap. 7) followed in Hinduism and other religions. The path of devotion is a practice in which one surrenders oneself to *kRSNa*, *rAma*, *ziva*, or *durgA* in Hinduism; to Jesus in Christianity (i.e., taking Jesus as one's saviour); to Allah in Islam (praying five times and following the five pillars of Islam: *shahada* or faith, *salat* or prayer, *zakat* or charity, *sawm* or fasting, and *Hajj* or pilgrimage to Mecca); and to *waheguru* in Sikhism. Surrendering the physical-psychological-social self to the divine was noted above as a characteristic of *adhyAtma* or spirituality. In *advait vedAnta*, this is achieved through the cultivation of *neti-neti* or "I am not this-I am not this," which leads to the erasure of the physical-psychological-social self, and what is left is the *AdhyAtmika* or spiritual self or *Atman*. In Buddhism, the same process of *neti-neti* is used to achieve the erasure of self, what the Buddhists refer to as *anatta*, through the chanting of *mantra* and meditation. Thus, it is no surprise that religious diversity founded on spirituality has been the core of Indian culture for millennia (*Bhawuk 2003, 2011, 2012, 2019a, b, in press*).

The implications of *adhyAtma* or spirituality in social life can be seen in how many human hours are spent in holy places like *tirupati*, *haridwar*, *RSikeza*, *vAraNasi*, *zirdi*, *rAmezwar*, and so forth, which led *Bhawuk (in press)* to call India the spiritual capital of the world. He also noted the commingling of spirituality and social entrepreneurship as seen in the growth of spirituality-based organizations led by spiritual leaders like *ammA*, *rAmadeva bAbA*, *sadguru*, and *zri zri ravizankar*. India is also

²⁰ *BhagavadGItA* verse 5.10: *brahmaNyAdhyAya karmANi saGgaM tyaktvA karoti yaH; lipyate na sa pApen padmapatramivAmbhasA*. One who performs actions by placing his or her *manas* in *brahman* and without attachment does not get entangled in the material world just like a lotus is above water.

a wonderful destination for spirituality-based tourism, and economic reform has opened India so that people can travel to India freely, which is likely to help the spiritual aspirants visiting India for their *sAdhna* or practice. In the increasingly stressful world, meditation and yoga may provide relief and help foster well-being, and India could lead the world with its spiritual heritage. And, finally, India also offers a spirituality-based model of anti-terrorism philosophy through the integration of various religious faiths present in India and the teachings of the Sufi saints. Thus, *adhyAtma* or spirituality is a comprehensive and meaningful construct that can help us study many aspects of Indian culture, and also facilitate cross-cultural comparisons to enrich global psychology.

References

- akAarvatsaldAs, S. 2007. *Portrait of Inspiration: pramukh swAmI mahArAja. (sAdhu vivekji vandAs, Trans.)*. amdAbAd, India: zrI bhagwati Trust Publications.
- Apte, V.S. 1890. *The Practical saMskRta—English Dictionary*. pUnA: zir-Alkar & Co.
- Bhawuk, D.P.S. 1999. Who Attains Peace: An Indian Model of Personal Harmony. *Indian Psychological Review* 52 (2 & 3): 40–48.
- . 2003. Culture's Influence on Creativity: The Case of Indian Spirituality. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations* 27 (1): 1–22.
- . 2008. Anchoring Cognition, Emotion, and Behavior in Desire: A Model from the Bhagavad-Gita. In *Handbook of Indian Psychology*, ed. K.R. Rao, A.C. Paranjpe, and A.K. Dalal, 390–413. New Delhi, India: Cambridge University Press.
- . 2011. *Spirituality and Indian Psychology: Lessons from the Bhagavad-Gita*. New York, NY: Springer.
- . 2012. India and the Culture of Peace: Beyond Ethnic, Religious, and Other Conflicts. In *Handbook of Ethnic Conflict*, ed. D. Landis and R. Albert, 137–174. New York, NY: Springer.
- . 2014. *citta* or Consciousness: Some Perspectives from Indian Psychology. *Journal of Indian Psychology* 28 (1 & 2): 37–43.
- . 2017. *lajjA* in Indian Psychology: Spiritual, Social, and Literary Perspectives. In *The Value of Shame—Exploring a Health Resource Across*

- Cultures*, ed. E. Vanderheiden and C.-H. Mayer, 109–134. New York, NY: Springer.
- . 2019a. Toward a Spirituality-Based Theory of Creativity: Indigenous Perspectives from India. In *Asian Indigenous Psychologies in the Global Context*, ed. Kuang-Hui Yeh, 139–168. London: Palgrave Macmillan.
- . 2019b. *lokasaMgraha*: An Indigenous Construct of Leadership and Its Measure. In *Managing by the Gita: Timeless Lessons for Today's Managers*, ed. S. Dhiman and A.D. Amar, 273–297. New York, NY: Springer.
- . in press. *AdhyAtma* or Spirituality: Indian Perspectives on Management. In *Indian Business*, ed. P.S. Budhwar, R. Kumar, and A. Varma. London: Routledge.
- Chinmayanand, S. 1992. *The Holy Gita: Commentary by Swami Chinmayanand*. Mumbai: Central Chinmaya Mission Trust.
- Dale, E.S. 1991. *Bringing Heaven Down to Earth: A Practical Spirituality of Work*. Bern, Switzerland: Peter Lang Publishing Inc.
- Dehler, G.E., and M.A. Welsh. 1994. Spirituality and Organizational Transformation: Implications for the New Management Paradigm. *Journal of Managerial Psychology* 9 (6): 17–26.
- gambhIrAnanda, S. 1998. *BhagavadGItA with the Annotation guDhArthadIpikA madhusudana saraswati*. Tiruchirappalli, India: zrI rAmakRSNa tapovanam.
- Geertz, C. 1973. Thick Description: Toward an Interpretative Theory of Culture. In *The Interpretation of Cultures*, ed. C. Geertz, 3–30. New York: Basic Books.
- Holland, J. 1989. *Creative Communion: Toward a Spirituality of Work*. New York, NY: Paulist Press.
- Hwang, K.K. 2007. The Development of Indigenous Social Psychology in Confucian Society. In *Intercultural Perspectives on Chinese Communication*, ed. Steve J. Kulich and Michael H. Prosser. Shanghai, China: SISU Press.
- Lee, M. 1991. Spirituality in Organisations: Empowerment and Purpose. *Management Education and Development* 22 (3): 221–226.
- Mahant, S. 1997. *Divine Memories (Part-4)*. Amdavad, India: Swaminarayan Aksharpath.
- Mitroff, I.I., I. Mitroff, and E.A. Denton. 1999. *A Spiritual Audit of Corporate America: A Hard Look at Spirituality, Religion, and Values in the Workplace*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Monier-Williams, M. 1899. *A saMskRta-English Dictionary*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. Reprinted in 1960.
- Moore, C.A. 1967. Introduction: The Comprehensive Indian Mind. In *The Indian Mind: Essentials of Indian Philosophy and Culture*, ed. Charles A. Moore, 1–18. Honolulu, HI: University of Hawai'i Press.

- Nisargadatta, M. 1973. *I Am That: Talks with Nisargadatta Maharaj*. Mumbai, India: Chetana.
- saGkaranArAyaNan, S. 1985. *zrImadbhagavadgItA with gItArthasaGgraha of abhinavagupta*. Tirupati, India: zrI veGkatezwara University.
- Shelat, K. 2005. *Yug Purush Pujya Pramukh Swami Maharaj: A Life Dedicated to others*. Ahmedabad, India: Shri Bhagwati Trust Publications.
- Sheldon, W.H. 1951. Main Contrasts between Eastern and Western Philosophy. In *Essays in East-West Philosophy*, ed. Charles A. Moore, 288–297. Honolulu, HI: University of Hawaii Press.