Spiritual Symbols: The Blue Pearl
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Mike: Dear Ram, that’s very interesting and thank you. It takes me to a part of knowledge where I am very flimsy. I haven’t read the proper scriptures to know these things.

How do you relate/connect what you have written below in terms of the “seed” left by the self to that other seed, the Blue Pearl that Muktananda talks of, that lies within the sahasrara (excuse my spelling, haven’t got my books with me) which, while located at the apex of the sushumna, opens out to contain a vision of the Lord and the whole universe.

Ram: Hi, Mike. The kundalini metaphor is an artistic and mystical description of the spiritual journey, the “movement” of the subtle body (the mind/intellect/ego) back to its source, the self.

As one proceeds on the spiritual path the mind becomes increasingly subtle, still, clear and pure, i.e. sattvic. In this condition the mind is turned inward and is facing the self instead of being turned outward facing the world as it is when it is under the influence of rajas and tamas. When it is in this meditative state the self is often experienced according to subtle memory traces (vasanas) in it that best represent its vision of the self.

Blue is a common symbol of limitlessness. The ocean and the sky, which are relatively limitless phenomena, suggest infinity. I have a good friend who is a very advanced yogini and who has epiphanies in which blue in various forms consistently appears. In my own meditations and dreams, the self often uses some shade of blue to talk about itself. Krishna, who is a personification of the self, is represented by the color blue, the “Blue Boy of Brindavan.” So when the color blue dominates a psychic experience, particularly if the blue is vibrant and energetic and otherworldly, it can be taken as a symbol of the self.

A pearl is an obvious self symbol. First, pearls are treasured for their milky luminescence. Both white and light are common self symbols. White is appropriate because it is the absence of color, just as the self is the absence of attributes. And light is an obvious symbol of self-knowledge. Without physical light nothing can be seen/known. Without self-knowledge, you live in “the dark,” i.e. spiritual ignorance. Pearls are also known for their beauty. What is more beautiful than the self? And they are valuable. What is more valuable than the self?

Seeds are also very common self symbols. A seed is the ultimate cause of something, just as the self is the ultimate cause of the whole universe. It contains within it the idea of infinite possibility and potentiality. It also symbolizes non-linear time, a common self symbol.

When it is says the Blue Pearl lies within the sahasrara, what does this mean? Sahasrara means “thousand,” which is a common symbol of the self in Vedic literature and which represents limitlessness, the nature of the self. The word “within” presents a potentially dangerous problem. Why? Because it makes one
think that there is something somewhere, a *sahasrara*, within which is a Blue Pearl. But the word “within” in spiritual literature is not a spatial metaphor nor does it indicate a physical location. It means “within the scope of.” It means that by virtue of awareness, the self, this very subtle psycho-spiritual event is known. So the words “Blue Pearl” and “sahasrara” are just symbolic representations of the self.

“The apex of the *sushumna*...”: the *sushumna* represents the spiritual journey from start to finish. It starts in ignorance, the root, and proceeds to *sahasrara*, the self. In this context “apex” means the end of the spiritual journey. What is the end of the spiritual journey? It is the knowledge that “I am limitless awareness.”

“It contains the vision of the Lord and the whole universe...”: The idea as you express it is backwards. Speaking from an experiential level, the Blue Pearl does not contain the vision of the Lord (the self) and the whole universe. The self contains within its awareness the Blue Pearl. The Blue Pearl is just an inanimate form, a subtle “thingification” that seems to be conscious because of its association with the self.

It is important to understand that any spiritual experience is only as valuable as one’s ability to understand its meaning, the Blue Pearl included. It is a shame that Baba didn’t make it clear that because he experienced a blue pearl shortly before he awakened that it was only a mystic form that he personally needed to spur him on. Yes, others have experienced the “Blue Pearl” but that only goes to show that such forms exist in the collective unconscious, not that any particular form is required for enlightenment.

It is quite possible to awaken permanently without having one “spiritual” experience. It is the yogis, not the jnanis, that use this kind of potentially confusing language. If you take the words “Blue Pearl” as a symbol of the self then your statement is true. But to avoid the confusion that can happen when you take things literally you would be better off saying, “The vision of the Lord and the whole universe appears in awareness.”

The beauty of Vedanta is that it demystifies the whole spiritual idea. This is important because it is quite possible, nay common, for people to get completely confused by imprecise, unscientific, mystical and symbolical language. If you just want to feel romantic and imagine that you are questing for a great mystery, take up the *kundalini* metaphor and let your imagination run wild. But if you really want to know what’s up, you need to inquire into these symbols and see if they don’t obscure the self as much as they seem to reveal it.

~ Ram