

The Upper Triad Material

Articles II

Edited by Peter Hamilton

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The Full List of Upper Triad Books:

December 2008

The Upper Triad Material 3rd Edition

Articles	3 volumes
Commentaries	15 volumes
Miscellany	2 volumes

The Upper Triad Material 4th Edition

Introduction
1 Purpose
2 Consciousness
3 Truth and Reality
4 Karma
5 Knowledge
6 Religion
7 Manifestation

A Personal Journey 4th Edition

Through the Grace of God 1st Edition

Preface

The Upper Triad Association is a non-profit educational organization, formed in 1973 and formally organized in 1974 by a small group of Christian students dedicated to spiritual growth through the study and practice of various ethical, metaphysical, spiritual, and theosophical principles.

The Upper Triad Material is a collection of over 1,500 articles and commentaries, plus various prayers, mantras, meditation outlines, quotations, synthetic triangles, and keywords relating to various aspects of metaphysics, religion, philosophy, psychology, and theosophy.

Since 1974, the Upper Triad Material has been published and distributed incrementally through the sometimes monthly, sometimes bi-monthly Upper Triad Journal, and has been reprinted as needed in various forms, most recently in a series of topical issues that cover the entire range of material and through the Association's website.

The Upper Triad Material is written by members of the Upper Triad Association. There is generally no author attribution, as most of the material is evoked through prayer and meditation, and the writers have no need of recognition. The material is augmented by a number of articles written by and attributed to associate members, e.g., two series of articles by K.M.P. Mohamed Cassim and an article by Robert L. Moore.

The various articles are relatively easy to read. The various commentaries are relatively more technical and not as easy to read due to the style of writing and the numerous correlations suggested via parentheses. This style of writing is not contrived. Commentaries are simply written according to the flow of consciousness of the writer.

The commentaries are not intended for the casual reader, but for the more serious student who is willing to invest the time and attention to understand both the semantic context and meditative import. Neither articles nor commentaries are intended to be read in any intellectual sense. Many of the

commentaries are incidentally intended to discourage casual reading and to encourage a more deliberate-but-non-linear approach that allows and stimulates a more intuitive reading.

The Upper Triad Material is not prescriptive, but it is suggestive. It is what we understand, at the moment it is written. It is intended to stimulate constructive thinking and foster spiritual growth. Each thought may be accepted, deferred, or rejected, in whole or in part, according to the framework, perspective, values, and consciousness of the reader. The challenge is for the student to read the material meditatively and intuitively rather than intellectually. We believe that self-realization occurs not through any rational or intellectual process, but rather through grace and through the meditative quality of higher consciousness. In the final analysis, it is up to the reader to discern the truth, according to his or her own consciousness.

Third Edition

This third edition is organized functionally and chronologically, in three titles, namely *Articles*, *Commentaries*, and *Miscellany*. The articles are written without much regard for format or length. Commentaries are naturally constrained to one page as originally published. The miscellaneous material is fairly diverse, but complements the various articles and commentaries.

In this third edition, the material is presented with articles and commentaries numbered according to their original sequence, except in the case of some series, where there are intervening articles or commentaries that would disrupt the series, in which case the series of articles and commentaries are presented in their more natural order.

Notes

Psychology and Sufism. Two series of articles written and originally published by K.M.P. Mohamed Cassim of Sri Lanka, and were reprinted in the Upper Triad Journal by permission of the author, and are widely available in other forms. The first series consists of Article Nos. 9 through 24 and the second series consists of Article Nos. 44, 46, 48, 51 through 53, and 60. The first series appears in Articles I and the second series appears here in Articles II.

Introductory Material. Two series of articles serve as an introduction to theosophy. Article Nos. 26 through 32 are a series entitled "The Spiritual Path" while Article Nos. 39 through 43 and Nos. 45, 47, 49, 50, and 54, are a series entitled "The Purpose of Life."

Article Nos. 61 through 66 were originally published by the Theosophical Society and seem to be without copyright. These are not in any way attributed to the Upper Triad Group, but are nonetheless central to the Upper Triad philosophy.

More information on the Upper Triad Association and a complete index of the Upper Triad Material are also provided in Miscellany II and in the Introductory volume of the fourth edition.

Additional Caveat

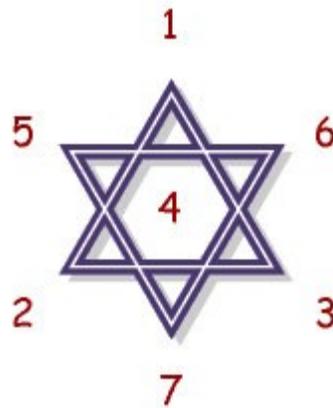
Peter Hamilton is the editor's pseudonym. For questions and comments on the Upper Triad Material, he may be contacted via the following email address.

peter@uppertriad.org

There is a place, deep within the heart, where we touch God, and where God touches us, where human hearts achieve communion, with God, and with one another, there being no difference, no space between us.

The challenge, for human beings, is to find our way to that place. There are signs along the way, left by those who have passed this way and found that place.

In that place, there is no having, no doing, there is only being. What we have, thus has no hold upon us. And what we do, likewise. As stewards we have things. As servants we do things. But in God we are simply being.



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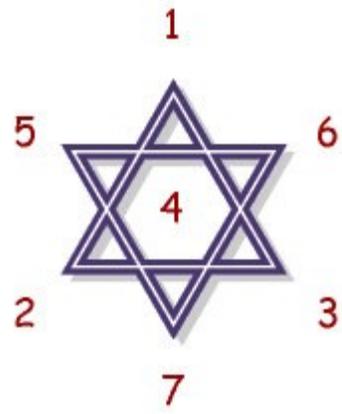
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The Seven Planes of Consciousness

As man seeks to understand more about the purpose of life (the evolution of consciousness), he eventually realizes that human life functions on more than the physical plane of consciousness, that there exist more subtle levels of consciousness.

There are seven planes or levels of consciousness, each one less dense and of a higher vibration and finer quality than the lower one. The matter that composes the seven planes accordingly is progressively less dense and more refined. When a person is in physical incarnation he is normally aware of only certain physical plane matter (solid, liquid, and gaseous matter). But the other less solid levels (dimensions) are there also, as they interpenetrate the physical plane (to whatever extent the physical plane is being manifested). To function on these additional levels of consciousness, a person utilizes a vehicle or body of matter corresponding to each plane.

Each of the seven planes of consciousness can be considered a world or dimension in itself, with its own distinct polarization and vibration, yet each plane or level coexists with the other six planes as well. Because the matter within each plane is vibrating at a frequency different from the other planes, the various planes do not interfere with each other. This is similar, for example, to the different frequencies of radio waves which are unseen and which can be individually tuned into if one has a receiver set to the right frequency (or vibration). They, like the seven planes, also exist together but can be differentiated. In reality, all is energy (and resulting vibration). Spirit and matter represent the two opposite poles of energy, with spirit being the highest point of matter, and matter being the lowest (by degrees of density) point of spirit.

Accordingly, just as man, the microcosm, wears seven sheaths of matter and consciousness, so does the earth itself. The earth thus is comprised of seven concentric planes, worlds, or dimensions of matter and consciousness. The more refined matter (on the higher planes) is thought of as having greater spatial

extent or being “above” the denser matter (the denser, less refined or lower planes), but in fact there is no spatial extent or “altitude” except for perspective convenience. In this context, the word “lower” denotes substance (or consciousness) that is more dense and less pure in quality, with a lower rate of vibration.

Of the seven planes of consciousness, an average man typically expresses himself only on the lower three planes of consciousness. He does not have access to the higher four planes until he has achieved additional development of consciousness resulting in the building of the appropriate higher vehicles of consciousness.

The three lower planes of consciousness (commencing with the lowest, most dense) are: (7) the physical plane, (6) the emotional (or astral) plane, and (5) the mental plane, known also as the manasic plane. These correspond to the physical body, the emotional nature (or emotional body), and the mind (or mental body), comprised of the concrete and the abstract mind.

Most of ordinary man’s mental activity consists of concrete thinking on the (lower) concrete region of the mental plane. It is only as man embarks on developing and expanding his mind that he begins to utilize his (higher) abstract mind and functions in the abstract region of the mental plane. These three bodies (or vehicles) of man, excluding the abstract mind, compose man’s personality or lower self.

The two higher aspects of man, his soul and his monad, which in reality comprise the real man, dwell on the higher planes of consciousness. The four higher planes consist of: (4) the intuitional (or buddhic) plane, (3) the plane of spiritual will, known also as the atmic or nirvanic plane, (2) the monadic plane, and (1) the world of God, from whence all the lower planes of manifestation are derived.

A man’s soul or higher self dwells in the realms of the abstract mental plane, the intuitional plane, and the spiritual plane, utilizing the causal body. The monad, man’s spirit or divine aspect, is found on the monadic plane. To achieve direct contact with the soul, a man must raise (develop, purify, and refine) his consciousness to at least the abstract mental plane, which is the lowest region

of the soul. As he purifies the vibration of his lower self (the personality), it becomes more in harmony with and responsive to his higher self (the soul), and the bridge of consciousness between the two is gradually built.

To link with his monad or divine spark, man must first have progressed and evolved in spiritual quality to the point of achieving lasting (continual) soul consciousness. Only after that, developing access to the monadic plane of consciousness becomes possible. As this is accomplished, man can then actually realize and express the true divine nature that is the ultimate basis of who and what he really is.

Each of the seven major planes of consciousness is divided into seven sub-planes, with every sub-plane characterized by a specific polarization and density. On the physical plane, for example, the three lower sub-planes consist of solid, liquid, and gaseous matter (not respectively), which compose the dense physical region. Interpenetrating and extending beyond that is the (higher) etheric region of the physical plane, comprised of four etheric, less solid sub-planes, invisible to normal human perception. The etheric region is the realm of physical plane forces and energies.

This consistency is reflected in the human body. The dense physical body is only an outer shell of dense physical matter which is actually energized by an inner etheric body (also called the energy body, the vital body, or the etheric double) comprised of etheric matter. The etheric body, which permeates the physical body and normally extends approximately one-half inch beyond it, is a web of vital energy responsible for the function, health, and well-being of the physical body.

A system of energy centers or chakras (a Sanskrit word for "wheel") exists within the lower bodies of man which helps provide a means of interaction within the various planes and bodies of consciousness. The chakras (as manifested on etheric levels) correspond in finer matter to the endocrine glands of the physical body and develop naturally as man spiritually purifies himself. The chakras, however, are not intended to be tampered with by the curious, as serious dangers including mental disorders and insanity exist for the unaware and unrefined person. With spiritual refinement, the chakras unfold gradually, naturally, and with safety.

Coexistent with the physical plane is the emotional (or astral) plane. This is the fluctuating world of emotions, feelings, and desires. It too is divided into seven sub-planes with the lowest sub-planes being the region of coarse emotions and desires such as hate, anger, fear, pride, selfishness, lust, and greed. The higher astral sub-planes which are made up of more refined matter are the field of higher emotions and desires such as impersonal love, devotion, compassion, and spiritual aspiration.

The quality or purity of the emotional energies can be indicated by their color. However, an individual who has astral vision must perceive these energies looking out through his own emotional nature which will color his perspective. The effects of the emotional (astral) body or aura extend beyond the physical body (and the etheric double) and reflect through its hue and luminosity (or lack thereof) the quality of emotion being expressed by an individual. The law of attraction operates to a high extent on the astral plane, with like (emotions and desires) attracting like. Therefore if one is filled with coarse feelings and yearnings, he will attract additional coarseness to him, while repelling purer, more noble emotions and inclinations (or vice versa). Thus it benefits a person to watch carefully that which he allows himself to feel and desire.

The next plane of consciousness is the mental plane with its two divisions of thought, the region of concrete thought composed of the four lower sub-planes, and the region of abstract (formless) thought found on the higher three sub-planes. Man builds and vivifies his mental body by right use of thought and by an ever higher order of thinking. The process of development, purification, and refinement leads man ultimately from the lower planes of consciousness and the worlds of the personality to the higher planes and the worlds of the soul and monad.

Ordinary man in actuality is much more active on some of the lower planes of consciousness than he generally realizes. For at night during sleep, one's focus of consciousness leaves the physical body while it is being rested and restored, and dwells on the emotional (astral) plane, or in atypical cases, on the mental plane. An individual on occasion may remember part of these experiences as dreams, but usually the dreams are jumbled and distorted. Only later as he is more developed will a person have achieved continuity of consciousness which

will allow him to recall clearly and accurately all of his activities on the inner (more subtle) planes of consciousness.

Besides during nightly periods of sleep, an individual also dwells for longer segments of time on the inner planes when he releases the physical body at death and leaves the physical plane. From another perspective, with the death of the physical body, man is born into another world, dimension, or plane of consciousness. The next higher plane, the astral (emotional) plane, becomes his focus as he continues the journey through the lower planes, before eventually being drawn back again to the physical plane in another incarnation. Thus is the cycle of life as man grows by repeated opportunity for experience, knowledge, and progress on the various planes of consciousness until he achieves human (relative) perfection, thereby fulfilling (in the earth scheme at least) the intended purpose of life.

† Article No. 42

Death and the Afterlife 1

Learning about the purpose of life brings into consideration the subject of death and what happens after one dies. Within Western civilization, the inevitable approach of death generally elicits fear and misunderstanding, with many vexing questions: When a person dies, is he annihilated, or does he survive? If he survives, what is life after death like? Is there a heaven? Is there a hell? Is there eternal life?

For those with awareness of theosophical teachings, greater insights into the transition process may be more easily achieved and misunderstanding and trepidation alleviated. At death only the physical body is released, and man persists, remaining clothed in his several less dense bodies or vehicles of consciousness. In these he moves on to the next higher plane of consciousness, the astral (or emotional) plane. Indeed he does survive and continues in the process of transition, advancing on after periods of refinement and assimilation at each stage through the astral and then mental planes of consciousness, until he has eliminated his lower (astral and mental) vehicles and is clothed only in his causal body, the vehicle of his soul.

During this period, the wisdom, virtues, talents, and quality developed from the experiences on the lower planes (dimensions) of consciousness are extracted, while eventually preparation is made for future incarnation (rebirth) in the physical world. Each stage is a significant part of the recurring cycle of life, filled with potential for continued growth and evolution.

Although the dense physical plane seems to the average man in physical incarnation as the most real, the other more subtle planes of consciousness do exist and provide valid experiences and opportunities for the inhabitants of those planes as well. As an individual moves on toward the higher planes of consciousness and the realm of the soul, he advances closer to reality.

From this perspective, there is no death of the human consciousness. The releasing of (or death of) the physical body which is the outer coat or sheath just signals a commencing of the process of transition. But man is not his physical body (nor his emotional body, nor his mental body); he is the soul, and the beginning of this transition process takes place according to the determination of the soul.

The soul is linked to the physical body via a silver cord (also referred to as the sutratma). The silver cord is divided into two threads; one called the consciousness thread is attached in the head region of the physical body, and the other called the life thread is secured in the heart region. During sleep, the consciousness thread and the higher bodies of consciousness leave the physical body, and an individual's focus of consciousness dwells in the astral plane of consciousness (generally), to be recalled to the physical body as one awakens back into the physical plane. All the while the life thread which provides for the continuity of life within the physical body remains secured in the heart.

At physical death, however, the life thread joins with the consciousness thread as both are recalled by the soul, through the breaking of the silver cord link with the physical form. As a result, the physical body no longer can maintain its cohesion and vitality. The higher bodies of consciousness are liberated from the dense physical vehicle and are drawn into the next world of the astral plane. The etheric double is also disengaged from the dense physical body; however it continues to hover over the dense body while it decomposes.

Also withdrawn by the soul to a higher plane is the permanent physical atom in which is found the archetype for the physical body containing the physical attributes developed. The permanent physical atom will be used again in forming the dense body for future physical incarnations.

Left behind at death then is the dense physical body which traditionally in Western culture has been buried. Cremation, however, used often in Eastern cultures, holds many advantages and is the preferred method for spiritual reasons. This avoids the blight of slowing decaying corpses in cemeteries which effects the etheric and psychic atmosphere of our planet. Instead, cremation quickly releases the physical elements to return to their source to be used again in future manifestations. It also disperses negative energies that may be attached to the corpse, and brings about proper release and restitution.

Memorial services which focus on the continuity of life and the uplifting release of the individual to the higher planes of consciousness provide a source of encouragement to loved ones, and are helpful in preventing an extended period of mourning which distracts and detains the transitioning individual. With an understanding of the recurring cycle of life and death and the realization that there is no actual death of human consciousness, attachments can be released which might impede the progress of one whose time it is to move on and who no longer has a physical body in which to function.

The experiences and quality of life after death are directly related to the quality of life lived in the physical world. The quality of matter (energy) that he has built into his astral and mental bodies during physical plane life draws him to the corresponding astral sub-plane. The more purified his emotions and desires, the higher is the matter that composes his astral body, and he will naturally be attracted to a higher astral sub-plane. The lower his desires and feelings, the lower the corresponding astral sub-plane.

Onto whatever astral sub-plane an individual is first drawn, there occurs a review of the just completed life experience on the physical plane to learn the lessons that it contains. If one had engaged in the process of retrospection (regular review of one's life) while still in the physical world, he may have already abstracted much of the meaning and learning contained within his

experiences. Additionally, because he still had a physical vehicle in which to function, he could also have taken immediate steps to right any wrongs committed, thereby helping to balance his karma as well.

On the astral plane, the lowest three sub-planes are referred to as the region of purgatory because the energy and experiences there are rather coarse. A very coarse individual will dwell there until he has dissipated (overcome) some of his lower desires and emotions. As he does so the coarser matter will be released and eventually he will move on to the next higher astral sub-plane.

Addictions to such impediments as alcohol, drugs, tobacco, or inappropriate sexual activity will after death hold a person in bondage on the lower astral sub-planes until they are overcome. The individual will still retain these cravings, but will no longer have a physical vehicle in which to satisfy or deal with the longings. Therefore it is even more challenging to overcome such addictions after leaving the physical plane and thus is beneficial to sublimate such desires while still in incarnation.

Is there a hell? Not really. But by his own gross consciousness, harmful projections, and negative quality of energy, an extremely coarse individual will create and attract his own hellish environment on the lower astral. With more enlightened consciousness, an individual can instead create his own version of heaven in the astral. The higher astral planes reflect the aspirational life and representations of mankind's concepts of paradise, utopia, or heaven. A heaven or hell experience is dependent upon the quality of an individual's consciousness and the expectations one has about the after life. The world of desire simply reflects and corresponds to what is in one's consciousness.

Death and the Afterlife 2

The region of the astral plane involved in the after-death transition process is referred to as kamaloka. The three lowest astral kamalokic sub-planes comprise the region of purgatory, characterized by coarse energies and experiences. The fourth astral kamalokic sub-plane is frequently called the borderland, and the highest three kamalokic sub-planes are designated the first heaven, embracing purer, more noble aspirations and beauty.

The law of attraction holds sway on the astral plane. Each person's experiences on the plane differ according to the person's quality of consciousness, desires, feelings, and thoughts. By one's desires and thoughts, an individual of average spiritual consciousness can create in the fluidic astral environment of colors and shapes anything he wants, and he can remain absorbed in his seemingly real creations and pleasures for quite some time.

If one's desire is for riches, power, or sensual pleasures, one can create them. Or if one desires instant spiritual awareness or a specific perspective of the kingdom of God, the illusion can be manifested. If a person is expecting to see a beloved religious figure when he passes into the astral plane, his desire can create that very experience as well as creating lifelike thought-forms of family or friends. Eventually he will realize the illusion of it all and through detachment overcome his attraction and desire for such experiences. Only then will he move on to higher sub-planes and more meaningful activities.

Contributing to the general realization of the continuity of life after death are investigations of near-death experiences in which a person is clinically dead yet medically revived and brought back to life. A number of people from all walks of life have reported comparable experiences, with most encountering instead of pain or suffering a great peace and love (on the astral plane), after which they reportedly become aware that their work in the current life is not completed and they must (karmically) return to their body.

Frequently the experience brings increased spiritual awareness and a desire to help others as well as a definite release from the fear of death for the individual realizes that life does continue. Individuals involved in near-death experiences may interpret the occurrences in whatever religious or philosophical terms to which they ascribe, but overall similarities are notable.

For persons on the physical plane overwhelmed by misery and pain, the concept of escape through suicide may seem like a way out. But that is an illusion. One cannot escape one's problems in physical life or physical death for the law of karma holds each accountable. In death one only drops the physical body; the problems remain and often seem more intense and challenging to deal with when one lacks a physical body. The distraught suicide individual is usually held in limbo on the lower astral planes for the interval his normal physical plane life would have been had it not been inappropriately interrupted. The karmic consequences and arrogance of taking one's own life and thwarting the soul's purpose are great (unless there are significant mitigating circumstances such as no longer preserving forms which haven't any remaining coherent purpose to serve).

Death at the appropriate time is a beneficial release from crystallization and limitation of physical form and consciousness and results in restitution. It involves "the destruction of form in order that the indwelling life may shine forth in fullness." Physical death commences the transition process of advancing from one state of consciousness to a higher one.

A person may not be immediately aware that the process has begun. In cases of sudden death which occur through accident, violence, or sudden health failures such as heart attack or stroke, a person initially may not even realize he is physically dead because parts of the astral plane of consciousness superficially appear like the physical earth plane. Eventually the disincarnated person becomes aware of inconsistencies which he realizes could not be of the physical world. The newly deceased individual also will receive assistance in the transition process from those who serve on those levels.

For the average person, the immediate after-life experience is a continuance of the physical living interests, consciousness, and awareness. For the spiritual

student, death is a continuance of the spiritual service and learning activities which he has been participating in during intervals of sleep.

However for the extremely coarse or cruelly selfish individual, intense desire for physical plane sensuality can temporarily bind him to the physical earth after death. These earth-bound individuals who no longer have a physical body seek by whatever means to experience physical life again and may even attempt to appropriate another person's physical vehicle in which to experience physical sensations and appease cravings and addictions. Only when the desires are somewhat overcome and dissipated can they free themselves and move on into the transition process on the astral plane.

Another category of people who may remain for a period bound to the earth after physical death are those who are strongly attached to physically living persons and cannot reconcile leaving them, or individuals who greatly desire to accomplish unfulfilled earthly duties even though they no longer have a physical body. These disincarnate persons may at times appear to those on earth as ghostly apparitions. Moreover, strong attachments by those living on earth to loved ones who have died may distract them or hold the loved ones temporarily earth-bound. Attempts to contact the deceased through séances or other means are counterproductive and possibly harmful to all parties involved. More appropriate is to send loved ones light, love, and encouraging thoughts which can reach them on the astral plane and be of benefit to them in transition.

The after-life stages, if the individual is properly motivated and developed, offer much opportunity for growth of consciousness and spiritual service. As always the law of karma governs persons whether in or out of incarnation, and wisdom in choices results in a more timely transition through the subtle planes and increased current and future opportunity.

Detachment and refinement of desire ultimately allow the transitioning individual to free himself and pass through the astral plane. Those who are more spiritually aware will consciously and mentally assist in the process, and because their attachments are fewer (detachment being a focus of their physical plane life as well), the process is expedited. The astral body becomes so purified and refined that the astral particles composing it are gradually released. As the

astral plane lessons are extracted and the pull of the mental plane increases, a second death occurs and the astral body is released.

There ensues a period of gestation in which the astral quality is withdrawn into the astral permanent atom for future use and the mental body is vivified. Upon awakening into the mental plane, the individual finds himself in what is known as devachan, the second heaven region. Using his mental body, he functions on the concrete sub-planes of the mental plane to the degree of his development, assimilating the mental experiences of his previous incarnation.

There is potentially much bliss in the second heaven experience, of an even more refined quality than that the first heaven of the astral plane. However, for average man who is more emotionally oriented than mentally developed, participation is limited. Unless he led a more substantial mental life previously, developing the concrete and the abstract mind, the ability cannot be developed during the interlude between lives.

The more mentally developed person may dwell on the mental plane in devachan for considerable periods, participating in the fruits of earlier planted mental seed-thoughts. There the individual also learns the technique of building his vehicles of consciousness for future incarnation. Spiritual students who are mentally polarized and aligned to a considerable extent with their soul frequently forego the devachic experience to instead reincarnate for purposes of service. Generally they have already assimilated much of their mental experience while in physical incarnation so there is little further need for reflection. They also sense that the bliss of devachan cannot compare to the greater joy and bliss of nirvana, achieved at a higher state of consciousness after more evolutionary progress (not that any such bliss is part of the goal), nor with the joy of service even in the lower worlds.

When (as) learning and wisdom are assimilated from mental experiences, the concrete mental particles of the mental body are released and the third death occurs. The individual remains clad in his higher formless sheath, the causal body, which is the vehicle of the soul. This concludes the transition of the personality. The physical, emotional, and mental permanent atoms are recalled along with the sutratma into the causal vehicle. The causal body is the

repository of all talents, virtues, and wisdom developed by the individual in his long course of incarnations.

The period between death and rebirth is not complete until the individual experiences to whatever degree possible the higher abstract (formless) mental sub-planes in which he contacts or touches his soul. For the unevolved person, this may be a brief, limited, unconscious or semi-conscious experience while for the more highly evolved individual who has developed more of his abstract and spiritual abilities, the experience will be of longer duration and more conscious. A more insightful overview of the just completed life, its purpose, and quality may be obtained in that state of consciousness, while a brief insight into the next incarnation is given by the soul as a means of understanding the future learning opportunities, and as a way of connecting all the previous incarnations so that common evolutionary threads may be more apparent. Certainly the karmic learning experiences of the future lie in the roots of the past.

Soon the urge to reincarnate occurs. The typical individual, sensing imperfection and the lack of development of his vehicles of consciousness which prevented him from participating more fully on the higher planes, desires to return to the physical plane for further experience, development, and refinement. The call of karma and evolution cannot be ignored.

The after-life period between death and rebirth is sometimes called bardo. The length of the bardo experience can vary considerably (from months to thousands of years) as there is no set timeframe valid for everyone. The bardo cycle may be relatively short for the unevolved person who has limited consciousness on the higher planes, and limited mental experiences to assimilate. On the other hand, it may also be brief for the more highly evolved and developed serious spiritual student mentally polarized and aligned with his soul who undergoes much of the assimilation process while still in physical incarnation and chooses to return to incarnation sooner. Additionally the bardo interval may be short for the individual who died during childhood with less experience to assimilate. The longest bardo periods often correlate with a person who is emotionally and mentally quite developed but with much experience to reflect upon.

In physical life and in death, it is apparent that nothing stays the same and the only constancy is change (growth). There are cycles of manifestation and

unmanifestation, periods of activity and seeming inactivity, day and night, but life never ends and however it may change and clothe itself, it continues evermore on an upward spiral of magnificent and expanding evolution.

† Article No. 45

Dwelling Within the Good

What a person repeatedly thinks about, lives (in some dimension or plane of consciousness). The reason for this is that energy follows thought and a relatively focused individual thus necessarily energizes his thoughts and feelings. The thoughts may exist as thought-forms visible on the astral or mental planes of consciousness, on the etheric sub-plane, and if they are potent enough may even be manifested in some form on the physical plane. Indeed, thoughts are things.

This has significance for spiritual students tasked with the responsibility of encouraging the good and the potentially good within all lives. And in actuality, what in life is not potentially good? For all life is part of the One Life which is God (Absolute Goodness). Any particular small aspect of God (individual or group) may not be currently manifesting much of its inherent goodness because of selfishness, separateness, and ignorance (lack of development, refinement, and awareness). Accordingly, one should, in honesty and truthfulness, necessarily acknowledge such, for imperfections and shadows should be recognized to the best of one's ability.

But one must also look for the good however flickering or subtle or transient in appearance it may be. For therein lies the power of transformation. The currently insignificant expressions of goodness, however seldom and weakly they may occur (within ourselves or others), should be nurtured and encouraged.

To actively participate in this endeavor, a person must be aware of his thoughts and thinking habits. For as he goes about daily life, an individual is continually thinking, whether unconsciously (as with most people) or consciously, and his thoughts, however weak or strong the thought currents may be, however

apparently beneficial or harmful, nonetheless impinge upon and impact others for whatever appropriate measure of good or ill. Thought-forms which are rather feeble and incoherent won't be projected much beyond the thinker's own aura.

But as man evolves and his mental potency grows, the ability to benefit or harm others likewise increases. Thus in one's thought life, a man (woman) of goodwill should consciously and constantly dwell within the good, looking for it within himself, in others, and in the world at large, and as he gives energy to that good that will encourage it to flourish.

The power of thought is one that humanity is only on the threshold of beginning to understand. An individual or group (humanity) creates within the bounds of karma its own reality to a large extent by its thoughts, feelings, and desires, which are necessarily reflected in its actions.

If an individual would like to help change (improve) the world, then he must first begin to change himself. Persons who are serious spiritual students are more concerned with improving the (inner) quality of consciousness which will eventually result in improved outer physical expression and right human relationships. Being relatively less self-centered and less selfish, they are not particularly interested in acquiring physical possessions or manipulating the form aspect as they are more focused on the inner world of spiritual realities and less concerned than average man with material things.

However if a spiritual student in physical incarnation is concerned with only the higher dimensions (and desirous of escape to them), thinking the physical world is a dreadful place, then probably it will be to him (her), and by energizing those thoughts he will not attract to himself as much of the good and beauty that is possible (albeit on a lower turn of the spiral). If one is in physical incarnation, then quite likely part of his work lies within the physical plane regardless of its lower vibration and coarser energies, and no matter how seemingly discouraging are its imperfections.

A spiritual student's service (work) and activities (calling) may frequently include helping to receive, transform, and anchor on the physical plane higher spiritual energies, and through this there can be no real discouragement. In reality, a spiritual student needs to appreciate (with detachment) the value of

experience and opportunity for service on each plane of consciousness, and on whatever plane he finds himself see the good so that he may encourage its expression.

To begin to consciously change himself, any individual first must have the aspiration to do so and believe it is possible to improve. Then through self-observation and self-examination, it will become apparent what quality within himself most needs improvement and what virtue is appropriate to develop. By utilizing the power of thought, he can affirm and visualize the virtue and then "act as if" the improved condition of consciousness was currently already in existence within himself.

The powerful pull of continually revitalized thoughts and visualizations (concentration, affirmation, visualization, and projection) of self-improvement will facilitate (within the limits of karma and to the degree of his mental ability and self-discipline) the manifestation of that which is dwelled upon. As one's spiritual consciousness and awareness evolve, more direct means of transformation and mental energy projection are realized.

One should endeavor to improve consciousness and higher realization rather than to change specific circumstances or events which might be intended by karma for a person's highest good as a means of learning. Quite specific thought projections also may not take into account unexpected complications which are provided for by more general, appropriately qualified projections. Also, specific projections which are personality-centered or colored by personal energy (desire) only strengthen the lower self and may inhibit spiritual awareness. Proper (selfless) motive is of increasing significance as one evolves.

Although a person has the responsibility to change himself, taking the same hands-on action without invitation in regard to another person is interference and imposition. A general disposition of positive thinking and an overall qualification encouraging spiritual growth are helpful and can be shared with others without imposition.

By dwelling within the good (as an expression of harmlessness), while having first clearly acknowledged that which is not yet good, one can help to encourage the unfoldment of that greater good (God) which he desires. Dwelling for a

very long, extended length of time on that which is not yet good often is counterproductive, for one is giving energy to that which he really does not want to strengthen. The concept of sin and the sinful nature of man, as well as an individual's low self-esteem both when emphasized also may create a sense of worthlessness that undermines efforts to improve oneself and bring forward the potential (God) within.

The concept of good is a relative one, dependent upon the degree of evolution an individual (or group) has attained. What may be considered "good" behavior or right action (right thinking, feeling, and desiring) for one individual may be insufficient for another who is more evolved, of which more is required. The upward spiral of evolution continually raises the standards of appropriateness and goodness, so one must recognize that what once was considered appropriate and "good" for him or her may no longer be so.

In addition, the standards for one well established on the spiritual path (of accelerated evolution and service) are accordingly more demanding (higher and stricter) than for humanity as a whole. Thus there should be no attachment to specific expressions of goodness, but rather there should be a whole-hearted commitment to the concept of goodness, embracing whatever appropriate manifestations it may take.

The heart aspect of the transformation process is as necessary to the unfoldment of goodness as the head aspect. The head aspect of light (enlightenment) and power (will, self-discipline) can bring forth the realization of imperfections (shadows) in an individual and provide much of the directing power for a person to achieve improvement. But the heart, with its qualities of love, compassion, goodwill, humility, consideration, gentleness, and thoughtfulness, provides the encouragement, qualification, and nurturing so necessary for a person to achieve success himself or to properly encourage another person.

Within the head quality, the analytical aspect of the concrete mind in its evaluation process lends itself to divide and separate and to criticize. The heart quality through compassion and recognition of oneness unifies and sees the failing as a temporary (however long enduring) stage through which the individual must pass for learning as a result of karmic growth opportunity. The

attitude (type of energy) with which one views a particular situation will make it seem to be a bitter pill to swallow, or (more properly) a meaningful opportunity for learning. With a higher awareness, man will realize that he is fortunate for his opportunities (challenges) whatever they may be, for in them lie possibilities of greater goodness.

Within any transformation process, there needs to be the proper balance of head and heart. A too soft (immature) heart, one that is emotionally oriented, or not cognizant of the requirements of the law of karma (or later the requirements of the spiritual path), may ascribe to unrealistically easy standards and condone coddling and excuses in which little real progress will be achieved. A too harsh head (critical, belittling, separative) will be discouraging and equally limiting. As one is able to draw upon the soul, through development, refinement, and selfless service, greater will be intuitive realization and the proper unfoldment and balance of head and heart.

And more encompassing will be the sense of oneness in which a person sees the greater, more evolved lives not as separate from himself, put on a pedestal of unattainability by one as "lowly" as he knows himself to be by comparison. Rather, they may be viewed as elder brothers and teachers deserving of respect and love (appreciation), as those who have traveled a similar path at an earlier time and through their own efforts now demonstrate what is possible someday for those who follow. That in itself can be of immense encouragement, drawing one forward along the path of evolution.

Encouragement should be shared with others without expectation or judgment, and with the realization that the course of evolution for humanity as a whole is slow but true. One should not expect specific results, nor expect to see results within a certain timeframe. The spiritual student should radiate encouraging energies with detachment and simply because it is a reflection of his consciousness.

The method one uses in encouraging those in one's life who are drawn to one's environment should not involve imposing upon other people. Much is dependent on circumstances and relationships which affect appropriateness. For example, the degree and method with which a person actively encourages

his child will necessarily differ from the degree and method of encouragement he utilizes in sharing (energy and encouragement) with a neighbor.

The appropriate method of encouragement is also affected by the ray make-up (type of energy of which a person is composed which indicates lines of approach and rapport), and the general stage of evolution of the individual one seeks to help (the younger ones might need more explicit encouragement while for the more evolved a subtle encouragement (presence) may suffice). Not that one should necessarily "seek" to help others in any particular sense. One should simply be helpful as appropriate, focusing primarily on general goodwill rather than particular people and their particular problems.

It is not the role of the spiritual student to judge others. But it is the role of the spiritual student to be helpful, with due consideration for the karmic factors and freedom of expression. An individual's responsiveness to encouragement is a significant factor. Each person's free will and right to choose for himself must be respected in order to prevent interference and inappropriately imposing one's will upon another. A general qualification containing good and uplifting energies (light, love, and goodwill) may be appropriately shared with all.

A person can (better) be a source of encouragement to others indirectly (inductively) by his own example of livingness (presence, quality of consciousness). Even an act of simple kindness (gentleness, courtesy) such as a smile or helping hand may convey encouraging energies, just as the giver is also a receiver of much (silent, selfless) encouragement himself. For there exists an unbroken chain of light, love, and encouraging energies streaming from the Absolute God (Creator) through His countless differentiations, from greatly evolved beings down to the most primitive type of life.

All contain intrinsic goodness responding in various ways to stimulus and gradually unfolding toward eventual self-initiative (more conscious development, refinement, and selfless service) which brings them to their next step of unfoldment of the God-self within. The chain is unbroken and enduring and all aspects of the One Life have their place. Thus in our thinking, may we consciously endeavor to dwell within the good, thereby lovingly and respectfully giving energy and encouragement to the good inherent in all.

Cosmogogenesis

Just as there are cycles of manifestation and unmanifestation for man the microcosm (e.g., physical life and death), so it is with the macrocosm. Throughout the entire universe, cycles and periodicity exist. Some familiar examples are day and night, waking and sleeping, breathing in and breathing out, the ebb and flow of tides, the four seasons, the cyclic migration of birds, geological cycles, the rise and fall of civilizations, the periodic revolution of planets around the sun, and the cycle of constellations moving (relatively) through the zodiac.

All reflect the Hermetic axiom "As above, so below." Correspondences to the physical plane cycle of day and night are the periods (of immense duration) of activity and rest known as universal days and nights, cosmic days and nights, and solar days and nights. There are days and nights of Brahma, each of which is equal to millions of actual years, with each year of Brahma consisting of 360 days and nights of Brahma. The numbers of years are somewhat misleading, because of their symbolic value and because the concept of time is illusive and existent mainly on the physical plane and involving physical plane consciousness. ("An hour of objective time today is not of the same actual duration as an hour of objective time a hundred years ago. Objective space-time is neither absolute nor constant" because it is affected by the polarity, degree of manifestation, and by perspective).

After an enormous, almost inconceivable period of manifestation, even the universe itself will be withdrawn for a cycle of rest and assimilation. The Sanskrit concept of manvantara refers to a period of manifestation, while pralaya denotes a period of unmanifestation (obscuration), rest, and assimilation. The progressive cycles (spirals) occur entirely naturally as an essential element of the divine plan of evolution. The universal law of periodicity thus is reflected in both the microcosm and the macrocosm.

For individuals unfamiliar with the ancient wisdom or theosophical teachings, the concept of a period of universal obscuration may be surprising, but upon reflection the concept is quite consistent, and provides for the rest and assimilation proffered the microcosm. One may achieve increased understanding through a study of cosmogenesis regarding the origin and development of the universe (the macrocosm); likewise anthropogenesis deals with the origin and development of man (a microcosm).

From the Absolute God, the unmanifested, boundless, ultimate divine being of which the universe is only a reflection, proceeds the periodic manifestation of the universe (and other universes). The Absolute God differentiates Himself into a hierarchy of beings and consciousness varying greatly in awareness and abilities from supreme, vastly intelligent, godlike quality on down to microscopic lives of very limited awareness, yet latent with potentiality. "Having pervaded this universe with a fragment of myself, I remain."

The Absolute God is unknowable to man as He is beyond our powers of comprehension. By His reflection and through correspondences, one may begin to approach an understanding. From the Absolute God comes forth (by differentiation) the Supreme Being, the "architect of the universe." The Supreme Being manifests as a supreme Trinity, variously referred to as The Father, The Son, and The Holy Ghost; or The First Logos (another name for God in the descending hierarchy of godlike consciousness), The Second Logos, and The Third Logos; or the first three Rays; or Shiva, Vishnu, and Brahma.

The three aspects embody certain divine essences (energies) and qualities on the highest level: (1) (The First Ray) -- pure spirit, characterized by the power, will, and plan of God; (2) (The Second Ray) -- consciousness in its many expressions, distinguished by the love and wisdom of God; and (3) (The Third Ray) -- matter or form, characterized by the intelligent activity of God. The higher Trinity is differentiated into seven types of energy and quality, the Seven Rays, and is reflected (by correspondence) through "differentiation by threes and sevens" into other lives and consciousness.

The Supreme Being manifests first as a Trinity and then as seven Supreme Logoi. A Supreme Logos exists as a Trinity and then as seven Universal Logoi. Downward through the seven cosmic planes of consciousness, the panorama of

manifestation unfurls: a Universal Logos into a triplicity and then seven Cosmic Logoi; a Cosmic Logos into a triplicity and then seven Solar Logoi; a Solar Logos into a triplicity and then into seven Planetary Logoi. Divine manifestation proceeds deeper and deeper into denser matter ultimately reflecting itself in a myriad of lesser lives and consciousness. It is achieved in a complex process of cycles within cycles, involving planetary schemes, chains, globes, rounds, lifewaves, kingdoms, and lesser days and nights of activity and rest.

At the heart of the divine plan is the evolution of both consciousness and form. The physically visible heavenly bodies and the light they emit are merely a dense, dim reflection of their exalted, inner consciousness and divine quality, analogously as man's much lesser physical body is a limited physical vehicle and a lower reflection of his divine spark or monad (the God within). Man is not even aware of the heavenly beings who express only on more subtle, less dense planes of consciousness. Although form (matter) appropriately serves a purpose of providing a needed vehicle of interaction, truly it is not the form aspect which should be revered (e.g., the physical sun), but rather the divine consciousness (e.g., the solar logos), a reflection of which inhabits the form.

Indeed because the universe and all that comprises it is part of God, everything in the universe from the greatest divine being down to an atomic or sub-atomic particle is alive and conscious on some level; there is no such thing as dead matter. Matter is simply "crystallized spirit," and spirit is "liberated matter"; both are energy, which is the essence of the universe and is life itself. Energy can be modified and changed into one form or another, but it cannot be destroyed.

The multi-dimensional universe is not primarily the result of chance, but rather is the outer expression of an inner divine purpose and plan of the great divine intelligence (the Absolute God) resulting in cosmic (solar, planetary) laws and interrelated order. The universe is manifested and preserved that the purpose of evolution may unfold, just as the lives within each cosmic unit are qualified by the will and purpose of the divine consciousness. The evolutionary plan consists of general and specific guidelines which may be adapted in some of the lesser specifics as needed to meet the overall objectives. Even the need and

freedom to be innovative (within limits) is planned for, as epigenesis itself is an aspect of the encompassing design of the teleological (purposive) universe.

Within each planetary scheme, as a lifewave is created (differentiated from (within) God) it begins the descent into matter to gain experience and development. At first the lives are unconscious, lacking any self-awareness, yet possessing the inherent potential to develop God consciousness (after eons of development). The first stage of the evolutionary cycle is referred to as involution during which the (subhuman) lives descend and become indwelling in matter, and eventually progress to (human) self-consciousness. When that happens, the second stage of evolution proper commences involving ascent or liberation from matter, returning to the Logos or God source.

In the process of manifestation, both creation and evolution occur. Creation takes place as God differentiates the various lives to be manifested while evolution occurs as the lives develop, and progress. As the powers and consciousness latent within the lesser lives are evolved and brought into fruition, so do the lesser beings contribute to the progression of the greater lives. When the divine purpose in the grand evolutionary cycle for all life is (ultimately) achieved within the universe, so will the need for manifestation be fulfilled. Accordingly will commence a corresponding cycle of universal pralaya with a resulting period of assimilation and rest.

Over the ages the story of the creative manifestation of the universe has been related symbolically in exoteric religious teachings and Scriptures. The teachings generally are layered with many levels of meaning, and the interpretation an individual ascribes to them is dependent upon his stage of evolution and degree of understanding. In the Book of Genesis in the Old Testament Bible, for example, the progressive spiral of manifestation is symbolically told as the cosmic (solar, planetary) days and nights of creation unroll. There is periodicity of the macrocosm and microcosm. From the void of inactivity comes a new cycle of emergence and an emanation of the cosmos. From the One God issues forth the many. And thus the process of evolution begins anew.

Involution and Evolution

In the broad framework of evolution, both involution and evolution proper occur and in the human evolution encompass the development and progress of subhuman, human, and superhuman lives. Involution is the first part of the cycle that commences after an outpouring of lives called a lifewave is created or differentiated by (within) God. Each lifewave contains divine sparks of God or monads which are spirit and beyond consciousness. Latent within each monad, however, is divine consciousness and the potentiality of godlike qualities and powers. Through the process of evolution after eons of growth and refinement, these potentialities are eventually developed and actualized.

Involution occurs as a new lifewave (spirit) descends deeper and deeper into matter in order to gain needed experience and expression. The descent continues down the various planes of consciousness until the lifewave reaches the lowest plane of manifestation, wherein evolution proper and the upward path of return to the God-source is then embarked upon. The process of involution is one of unconscious evolution by the lifewave in which greater lives and involutory forces work on the lifewave externally.

The lifewave in its involutory journey expresses itself and moves through a variety of forms and kingdoms. It does so as a group having a group soul (not individual souls) as the various lives move through the involutory (subhuman) kingdoms within our planetary aura: the elemental, mineral, plant, and animal kingdoms. Each kingdom with its many diverse forms and expressions is a step forward in consciousness; although the consciousness may be primitive, it is nonetheless evolving. The forms of each kingdom are also involved in a slow process of evolution and change to provide improved vehicles for the incarnation of a lifewave. When a form becomes too limited or crystallized, the species may become extinct. The form has ceased to adapt; however, the life (consciousness) inhabiting the form will reappear in other, improved forms.

As a lifewave completes its involutory, subhuman cycle, it undertakes the transition into the human kingdom through the process of individualization. Accordingly, the group soul of the lifewave is differentiated into (seeming) individual souls and appropriated by the monads for utilization on the path of ascent. Thus in the human kingdom there is individual self-consciousness, and progress is achieved by conscious effort from within as the lives themselves each endeavor to achieve greater awareness and liberation from matter.

In the process of evolution, a lifewave indwells in each successive kingdom to gain additional experience and growth of consciousness. Currently the human lifewave has progressed through the elemental, mineral, plant, and animal kingdoms and presently resides in the human kingdom. The forms of each of the previous kingdoms in the past were quite unlike their appearances today, for the forms also have been evolving.

Once transitioned into the human kingdom, a lifewave evolves (in the current major cycle) through seven lengthy epochs of seven root-races. A root-race provides a distinct type of human form for the human lives to inhabit. Each root-race may be divided into seven sub-races, which may further be divided into branch races. Each division reflects modifications of the basic root-race pattern, which eventually overlap and blend until pure distinction is no longer apparent. Even though in the human kingdom there are and have been many diverse racial forms, the lives that indwell them generally comprise one lifewave. From that perspective, there is only one human race (inhabiting many racial forms).

Each racial pattern contributes certain characteristics and qualities and adds to the overall progress of the human race. A soul incarnates in many root-races, sub-races, and branch races in its long course of evolution. It does so without attachment, as the soul is beyond race, color, nationality, or sexual distinction.

Humanity's passage through the various root-races has included the first root-race, the Polarian; the second root-race, the Hyperborean; the third root-race, the Lemurian; the fourth root-race, the Atlantean; and the fifth root-race, the Aryan. (The term Aryan should not be confused with any (misleading and separative) concept of racial superiority.) The first and second root-races, which did not utilize dense physical forms, are today extinct, and the third root-race has almost disappeared. Currently the fourth and fifth root-races are in active

manifestation, while the sixth and seventh root-races will emerge in the distant future.

For each root-race, there is generally an achievement in consciousness to be developed by the majority of the inhabitants. For the Atlantean root-race, this was the full stimulation of emotional consciousness (to be refined and overcome or integrated by the mental development of subsequent root-races), and for the Aryan root-race, it is substantial mental development. However, the level of consciousness does not directly correspond to the root-race because consciousness and form evolve somewhat independently of each other. For example, most humans currently in Aryan forms are emotionally polarized (Atlantean) in consciousness.

The goal in this the fifth epoch is for the majority of people to achieve greater mental development which will lead to integration of the personality and eventual mental polarization. When this is accomplished, one (an individual) functions as a stable, non-fragmented unit, and one's mind non-reactively controls and directs one's thoughts, emotions, body, and actions. The next step possible for a person is then the achievement of a consistent alignment in consciousness with one's soul or higher self, thus being able to access the wisdom, virtues, and guidance therein. This expansion in consciousness is accomplished only after extensive development, purification, and refinement of the lower self, the personality.

Naturally, within a lifewave, not all lives evolve at the same rate. There are forerunners who respond more rapidly to evolutionary forces than does the bulk of the lifewave which (the bulk) is generally advancing at the intended or more or less average rate. Additionally there are the stragglers who produce resistance and are slower to respond than the majority. Hence a bell-shaped curve reflects the evolutionary progress. This is natural as the pioneers serve as a source of encouragement and leadership for the lifewave, while the stragglers serve as a balance to prevent an unqualified and hasty development of the lifewave.

Overall, however, a lifewave should achieve appropriate, intended progress. At vast periods of time (eons), a lifewave undergoes significant tests of consciousness to measure growth. Those lives who fail to pass the major tests

of consciousness are separated from the lifewave and held over as a group for further development in the succeeding lifewave.

In the earth system, there is another major evolutionary group which parallels the human evolution, called the deva evolution. It, too, evolves as a chain of livewaves expressing through various deva or angelic kingdoms which are the correspondences of the subhuman, human, and superhuman kingdoms. Although the deva evolution is complementary to the human evolution, it is quite different. While the human evolution is an objective one, the deva evolution is mostly subjective. Likewise, while the polarity of the human evolution is positive (masculine) and active, the polarity of the deva evolution is negative (feminine) and passive.

In the deva evolution, there is no objective incarnation or any apparent separation from the God-source. Rather, there are stages of slow transformation in which the devas transition through their lifewaves, kingdoms, and races as they “embody the forces of evolution and provide for the maintenance of the various human [evolutionary] kingdoms ... as the dynamic sustaining forces of all (lower) manifestation.” Lower order devas exist mainly as matter while higher order devas do not even manifest in form.

For average man, there is considerable misunderstanding regarding the deva or angelic evolution. Over the years, man has tended to ascribe human forms to angels because he has misinterpreted their unusual (foreign), subtle energies. However, angels do not express human characteristics nor are they self-conscious in any human sense. Many devas assist humanity or the plant or animal kingdoms and encourage healing in spite of the fact that humanity has little awareness or understanding of them. But because of the difference in polarity, it is dangerous for untrained and unaware individuals to directly contact the devas. The higher order devas exist beyond the planes of lower manifestation and have evolved great consciousness and potency (albeit markedly different from that to be attained along human lines).

As with the human evolution, the deva evolution completes its unfoldment and transformation moving through the various deva kingdoms and stages and then attains a synthesis and concluding assimilation within the greater divine life

from whence it came, to await another great cycle of manifestation (experience and expression).

† Article No. 50

Learning From Experience

In the human kingdom, individual lives or souls are expressed as personalities currently on the physical, emotional, and mental planes of consciousness. The personality (or lower self) is the vehicle of incarnation for the soul (the higher self), and consists of the physical body, the emotional body, and the concrete mind. Although the soul consciousness is beyond such worldly considerations, the personality or lower reflection manifests in form as either male or female, within a particular race (sub-race), nationality, tribe, religion (non-religion), philosophy, and culture, generally ascribing to specific customs, beliefs, and activities. In this capacity, experience of all types is engendered, and by learning from these experiences, an individual eventually gains knowledge, understanding, and wisdom.

In each incarnation, the particular situational factors change as the soul creates a new environment with new specifics for the personality to experience. Accordingly in the school of life, each new incarnation means a new classroom in which to learn. For example, the soul which earlier may have expressed itself as a male personality may next express as a female; or incarnate as a white person followed by being a black person; as an Arab and next as a Jew; as a Christian and later as a Hindu; as an American and next as a Russian or Chinese. The changes provide for a rich learning environment, and help to balance and prevent crystallization and over-identification by the personality with any one aspect of form, be it a particular sexual identification, nationality, religion, etc. Because all life is one life, emphasizing these lesser perspectives will inhibit true growth and progress.

At first (in earlier epochs of human development), the new life (which had recently individualized and become self-conscious) has little past experience, knowledge, or wisdom from which to draw upon for understanding and insight. Thus many lives are initially spent simply gaining experience. Gradually the

conscience is built as the personality learns through trial and error what is appropriate at this elementary stage. Karma, the law of cause and effect, serves to indirectly teach as the person experiences the consequences of his actions. This learning of basic appropriateness is stored in the conscience and is available on unconscious or conscious levels, depending on the personality's responsiveness.

As the many and various personality incarnations occur, the life experiences are assimilated into the soul. This means that the essence of each incarnation is incorporated into the soul consciousness. The details of any particular incarnation are not that important, but what is learned is significant, as well as the virtues and talents developed. Knowledge is transmuted into wisdom, and these essences are stored in the reservoir of the soul consciousness to be used in future personality incarnations (or in other levels of expression).

The process of assimilation of life experience happens in two ways: unconsciously, and long after the experience; and consciously, as the experience is occurring or shortly afterwards. The majority of humanity assimilates experience in the first way, generally doing so mostly after death during the after-life transition on the more subtle planes of consciousness. During physical incarnation, most people are not able to extract the meaning and understanding of their life experiences at a fast enough rate. Therefore a great deal of unprocessed experience accumulates which must be reviewed later, after which the essence of knowledge and wisdom is incorporated into the soul.

The second method of assimilation is undertaken by serious spiritual students who are consciously endeavoring to learn life's lessons, as well as (to some degree in general) by people who have developed a good intelligence and have some awareness. Awareness is key to the process, for in the second method one must first be open to learning from experience, and then must be relatively aware of many factors such as one's motives, relationships, abilities, and past experiences. Honesty, humility, detachment, and impersonality are significant qualities necessary for seeing clearly. Because so many numerous and diverse factors frequently must be correlated and evaluated, it is often difficult to understand the meaning and significance of life experiences without intuitive insight.

Frequently, evaluations are made superficially, using faulty observation and reasoning. While a person should not over-simplify the assessment process, he (or she) should not over-complicate it either, seeing significance where none exists. Even where experience is not strongly biased or diffused by the emotions, if the individual utilizes only his concrete mind and rationalization, he will fail to discern the greater insight available through the higher abstract mind and (soul) intuition (as he develops these). He also will be unable to properly correlate the many diverse factors and inputs to achieve proper understanding.

Each experience a person participates in is related to every other of his experiences in all timeframes, as well as to the experience of other people and other lives. The abstract mind and the intuition of the soul can provide some correlation and understanding of current experience while the individual is still in physical incarnation and thus able to learn from and make appropriate adjustments in the present life situation. The conclusions formed, however, should be tentative and subject to further review after more experience, growth, and insight.

Retrospection, a period of review, reflection, and evaluation, if done at the end of each day, helps an individual learn from current experience and prevents a large accumulation of experience having to be processed later. By regularly allowing time each night, an individual can quietly withdraw from outer activity, become poised and centered within the inner consciousness, and meditatively and reflectively review the day's events. With honesty, humility, and detachment, a person looks for significance and meaning within the day's manifold experiences.

Sometimes reviewing the day's events in reverse order assists in achieving a more impersonal perspective and allows the thread of cause and effect energies to become clearer. Special attention should be given to one's motives, attitudes, thoughts, and feelings during the day, as well as to one's actions.

In the assessment process, one can ask one's self: "How could I have better handled a particular situation or response? What can I learn from this? What was the quality of my motives, my thoughts, and feelings? Do I need to make any compensation for inappropriate energies (or actions) that I have created and

sent out? Do I need to forgive others for any wrongs directed to me? Have I utilized the opportunities for learning presented to me today? Have I met all my obligations and duty? What have I done to help others? What has been the over-all quality of my life expression today? What is the quality of my physical, emotional, and mental bodies, and is there anything I should do to help restore vitality, health, balance, and purity? Am I ready to meet tomorrow as another opportunity for growth, determined to make it an even better day of livingness?"

In this evaluative process, the individual (preferably the soul) is the judge of these factors according to one's values, understandings, and abilities. Through daily retrospection, one can identify and overcome weaknesses, while strengthening the good, as well as taking steps to balance and fulfill one's karma.

Of the two methods of assimilation of life experience, obviously the second method of consciously and timely processing experience provides greater opportunity for learning and progress. As one is able to discern the meaning and significance of life experience and learn the lessons therein in a timely fashion, he is able to make compensations for the misplaced and inappropriate energies he has expressed and to become a relatively conscious co-creator (within the bounds of karma) in his current life unfoldment. A person realizes that events in life aren't experiences that just happen to him (or her); rather he understands they are the results of his previous behaviors, thoughts, and feelings. They are opportunities in which to demonstrate new-found learning (and even the wisdom of past assimilation) and discerned insights into spiritual laws and processes of life.

Consciously learning from life experience leads to the realization of the importance of consistently expressing right thoughts, right feelings, and right actions in one's daily life, and of becoming more inclusive in one's perspective, concerned with helping others, and learning about God and the spiritual life. These realizations inevitably come with growth in consciousness.

However, the personality in the early and intermediate stages of development generally is focused predominately on physical and emotional living and mundane/personal concerns. Most individuals in incarnation today live mainly for day to day pleasures and material pursuits. The majority of people are not

aware of their higher self, the soul, and their spiritual aspect, the monadic spark of God. They see themselves (by default if not consciously) as being separate from God, and from other men and women, and from other life. They believe they exist only as their physical body, emotions, and mind. They are unable to grasp the purpose of life in general, and their own purpose specifically. This, consequently, results in much confusion, conflict, and unhappiness, as well as the unfocused, selfish, and inappropriate activity expressed by so many who are in incarnation.

In separateness lies the seeds of the selfishness, disharmony, and misery in the world today. By identifying only with the separate form aspect of himself, man overlooks the divine aspect and fails to realize what he really is and what is possible for him to achieve as part of the one life. Lack of realization of the oneness of all life and the great potentiality that lies within each of us serves as a limiter to development and progress to the fullest.

There are many different ways and different rates in which the various human lives incarnated as personalities grow and evolve, depending upon their consciousness, awareness, and responsiveness to stimuli, both external and internal. At first, an individual unthinkingly reacts to external stimuli rather than intelligently (considerately or intuitively) responding. In most persons, the emotions and desires still dominate, and the concrete mind, without refinement, tends to be reactive, as well as being separative, subject to biases, close-minded, and critical.

Through conscious efforts toward purification and refinement, levels of emotional and mental improvement are achieved and eventually the abstract mind begins to be developed also, but the mind is still vulnerable to mindsets, limitations, and illusions. For example, the general human perspective of life is a self-centered one and focused only on human experience, giving it extreme importance instead of thinking in more universal terms. There is a tendency also to anthropomorphize God, viewing God in human terms. Anything expansive that is beyond a typical individual's understanding is usually interpreted in familiar human terms. Because this is a common misunderstanding of most humanity, these mistaken perceptions are reinforced and blindly accepted, until at some point they are inwardly challenged.

Interestingly, the mind, for all its initial limitations, after development, purification, and refinement, becomes the tool for the overall development, refinement, and self-discipline of the entire personality. It is the mind, responding to evolutionary pressure and the promptings of the soul, which institutes measures of control, balance, and purification over the physical body and the emotions of the personality. And it is the mind which finally unifies the three competing and fragmented aspects of the personality (physical body, emotions, mind) into one coherent, functioning unit. The achievement of personality integration is one of the many significant accomplishments for the evolving human life. Additionally, development of the abstract mind is essential for the personality to achieve a measure of alignment in consciousness with the greater soul consciousness.

Though the outer world of the senses provides a myriad of stimuli and experiences to process, ultimately, it is the responding to the internal stimuli of the soul that provides any real expansion of consciousness. As the personality is properly cultivated, developed, and purified, it becomes more in tune to the inner soul promptings. With self-discipline and refinement, the personality is elevated and becomes a better, purer instrument with which the soul can then work by qualification in the lower worlds. Thus the soul is able to incorporate within itself more wisdom, virtue, and quality assimilated from the personality life experience, and true spiritual progress is eventually achieved. As the personality is developed and refined, it moves from the darkness and separation of the lower world into the enlightenment and oneness of the soul, and the constraints of limited awareness, glamour, and illusion are gradually overcome.

† Article No. 54

Progress in the Human Kingdom

The original (human) lifewave that left the God-source on the path of descent into manifestation and form was unconscious and lacking development. It moved through the various involutory kingdoms, the elemental, mineral, plant, and animal kingdoms. From the animal kingdom, the lifewave individualized, and the lives became self-conscious as the lifewave progressed

into the human kingdom, and thus began the path of ascent or return to the Godhead.

Today virtually all of humanity are on the path of return. This path of evolution will eventually lead humanity (after eons of more development and evolution) from individual self-consciousness to an enlightened group consciousness found within the super-human kingdom of souls, the next highest kingdom. Man will have achieved self-mastery, liberation, and human perfection. It is not an absolute perfection, however, as the path of evolution continues ever onward to even greater heights.

In the school of evolution, just as in conventional schools, individual lives learn and progress at various rates. Within the human kingdom, some lives are more responsive to evolutionary energy and stimulus and develop more quickly and in advance of the majority of the lifewave. The exceptionally responsive lives naturally move to the leading edge of the lifewave and become the pathfinders for the majority who follow. To some degree, the lessons they learn are passed on in a more understandable form to those who are progressing at the average rate.

The pioneers of the lifewave face great evolutionary pressures, for they are on a path of accelerated evolution. This means that they are consciously endeavoring to achieve all that is required for graduation from the human kingdom in a much shorter time period than for most of humanity. Thus the requirements, tests, challenges, duties, and stresses they meet are intense and demanding. The path of accelerated evolution is known as the formal spiritual path. Within this advanced path, there are certain definite stages, and certain abilities, virtues, quality, levels of consciousness and awareness, responsibilities, and service which comprise the formal spiritual path. There are also specific progressive standards for advancement upon it. Although the accelerated formal spiritual path is open to all, few can meet its requirements and go on to meet those intense evolutionary forces.

The bulk of humanity are on the gradual spiritual path. Within this large group are found people of average consciousness and awareness who are less responsive to evolutionary energy. They will eventually achieve what the pioneers accomplish, only much less directly and over a much longer period of

time. Included in this large group also are the men and women of goodwill who have developed considerable heart energy, and express themselves in various ways, such as through religion, metaphysics, or humanitarian work. Even though these activities may be quite helpful, they do not automatically indicate that the participants are on the formal path of accelerated evolution. For even the normal path of evolution is itself evolving, and more is required of average individuals to keep up with the bulk of the lifewave than was long ago. Within the human kingdom, no matter where one is in one's evolutionary development, each person is intended to live as spiritual a life as possible according to his or her abilities, understandings, and consciousness. This not only benefits the individual, but the contributions of all people aid humanity as a whole and are valued, as they contribute to humanity's progress as well.

It is consistent with the divine evolutionary plan that only a relatively few lives are drawn to the accelerated formal spiritual path. Conversely and as intended, a group of stragglers are found (by contrast) at the opposite end of the spectrum, who are not keeping up with the average pace of evolution. The stragglers act as a balance to the pioneers and prevent unqualified development of the lifewave. The gradual path of evolution is intended for the majority of the lifewave. However, as the normal path of evolution itself evolves, the result is that knowledge which was once esoteric and hidden from the masses of people becomes exoteric and more readily available. Thus, opportunity for greater knowledge increases as man's capacity for understanding and properly handling such knowledge grows.

Although most of humanity are evolving slowly and without much conscious effort, a growing number of people are in the process of awakening to higher promptings. As a person gains (some) awareness, the individual should endeavor to know himself (herself) through self-observation, reflection, and meditation, and to determine what is appropriate for him (her). Each person with a degree of awareness should seek understanding of what is the next step in development and refinement awaiting him or her to take on the path of return.

If an individual is drawn to the formal spiritual path of accelerated evolution, then the person should undertake to learn as much about the formal path and its requirements as possible. By doing this, the person can help clarify in his (her) own waking consciousness what is the source of the new prompting and if the

individual is casually interested in the formal path, seriously interested in it, or committed to the effort.

There is much spurious information publicly associated with the formal spiritual path, and it requires definite discernment on the part of the aspirant to the formal path to recognize what is valid, and what is misleading. Some aspirants are drawn to would-be teachers in the public arena who suggest the formal spiritual path is a means to obtain the material (external) objects they desire and to solve personal problems. These individuals are unaware that personality interests and selfish seeking are actually impediments to the formal path. Other inexperienced seekers are attracted to glamorous (self-deceived), magnetic personalities who (falsely) offer instant enlightenment, rather than guidance toward the true path itself.

Some misguided aspirants are drawn to the idea of approaching the accelerated spiritual path because of the illusionary and separative thought of being special or elite, which appeals to their egos. It indicates they lack the necessary spiritual qualities of humility, desire to serve, and oneness with all life. Other individuals are simply curious, or perhaps interested in dabbling in phenomena, which distracts them from the real spiritual path. Some aspirants are kind-hearted and concerned with helping other people, but are so self-focused and attached to their own ideas, methods, and activities regarding the path, that they are blind to higher realizations. Other individuals believe they must locate the right external teacher (guru) or important group to convey upon them special outer initiations to advance along the formal path, not realizing spiritual growth is an internal process. These are but some of the illusions (mental distortions and untruths) and glammers (illusions on the emotional, desire level) about the formal spiritual path. Additionally, few aspirants have any clear understanding of how rigorous and challenging the accelerated path really is.

The formal spiritual path lies within an individual. No one is chosen for it; instead, an individual's soul at some point in time (which varies considerably among souls according to the quality of consciousness) hears the inner call of the spiritual path and responds to it. The soul chooses to tread the formal path, and then endeavors to gain the personality's cooperation and commitment in the undertaking.

Only the soul can first commit itself to such an arduous spiritual undertaking. The personality, without the greater soul commitment, lacks the ability to achieve such accomplishments. With humility, aspiration to serve God and humanity, desire to realize greater truth and oneness, and in response to higher soul prompting, the true aspirant thus embarks upon the path of steep ascent, and begins to experience the challenges and the inner joy that result.

The soul with its spiritual quality and wisdom becomes the true teacher for the personality on the formal spiritual path. On the lower stage of approach to the formal path, there are many external sources of preliminary information from which to choose. Books, periodicals, groups, and lectures are some resources which provide outer information which must be carefully evaluated for validity, using discrimination and discernment, and drawing upon the developing intuitive guidance of the soul. Preliminary spiritual teachings (the lesser mysteries of the ancient wisdom teachings), which were once secret, are now openly available, and the aspirant on the path of approach is expected to read, study, discern, meditate, and teach himself the true basic teachings.

Through this process, the serious aspirant will begin to develop self-reliance and the inner approach to discerning truth. Because of his own realizations, the aspirant will eventually institute certain self-disciplines and begin to develop certain qualities which will ultimately qualify him for treading the formal spiritual path. For it is only through unceasing, strenuous self-effort that one travels the formal path of accelerated spiritual evolution. And it is only through right motive, determined aspiration, and beginning to live a more spiritual life that one achieves soul insight, discrimination, and awareness into what actually constitutes the real spiritual path. Thus, for the true dedicated spiritual seeker, the light that shines upon the way is from within.

Meditation 1

The Pathway to Perfection

In our civilization though seemingly there is order, in fact, there is slow decay and destruction. Man is tired and worn out with much mental activities because his relationship with people and events is not governed by the spontaneous and harmonious flow of spiritual energy, but by the pressure and tension. What we need is a new vision of reality, a fundamental change in our perceptions and values. Silence regenerates and heals the worn out mind. It washes and cleans of every manner of fear.

We miss the beauty of life because the human mind works in such a way that some of the old psychological memory and desires which have been buried in the subconscious mind come up to the surface level of the mind, causing mental agitations and preventing us from living in the present. In this age while physical and biological sciences have progressed enormously, spiritual development has lagged behind so that man is unable to tackle various psychological problems adequately and effectively. The spiritual life is compatible with ordinary existence as we can enter a new dimension of spiritual consciousness while still living and working the day to day affairs.

Meditation cannot be learned like a school subject, because it has to begin with the individual and it is a life process. Since all of us can concentrate, we have acquired some skill in using the brain. But very few of us have the capacity of understanding the very structure of the mind, and this is the indispensable qualification to begin meditation. Meditation is not an intellectual discovery, but a spiritual journey of inward penetration beyond all conceptual thinking. The aim of meditation is to empty one's mind so that one can touch the spiritual magnetism which will bring tranquility and harmonization.

The mental process needs to be understood properly because spiritual transformation implies the definite ending of thought process and the beginning of another dimension where perfect silence prevails. Meditation is vital in

leading a pure life because it is through meditation that the secrets of the mind can be unlocked. It sharpens the power of observation and assists us to lead peacefully. Without meditation it is not possible to maintain mental equilibrium in this confused world where so many people suffer from mental conflict. Even some psychosomatic ailments can be cured by meditation. It is a total way of living and not a partial activity. It aims at developing man as a whole which brings about a harmonious integration and spiritual transformation in our personality.

Human life is the oscillation between joy and sorrow, hope and frustration, attachment and separation. Mind can never meet the present, and it cannot transform us spiritually because mind is based on the embedded conditioning of the past experiences. What really exists is the eternal present and to contact that eternal now we must have an unrestricted awareness and the ability to live fully without the burden of psychological memory. It is the human mind which is the repository of burden that we carry throughout our life.

It creates the illusion of the ego which gives rise to the phantom of a separative self. Treading the spiritual path requires the shedding of the false images of ourselves that we have built up. This process of emptying the contents of the mind is the best way not only to remove thought coverings through which we are responsible for various problems in life, but also to reach the state of serenity.

Living in the world, yet not clinging to attachment is the best way to attain perfect peace and this state is the inner dimension of man which flowers and blossoms only in the atmosphere of love, harmony, affection, and cooperation.

We are all on a spiritual journey away from worldly excitement and involvement, and into self-discovery. The main obstacle that prevents us from gaining self-knowledge is ignorance, and this ignorance does not denote lack of information or book learning. Man is divided within himself as the different parts of his (unintegrated) being keep on pulling him in various directions, and thus in man there are conflicts and contradictions. The activities of the mind can never provide a bridge to the other shore where spiritual freedom lies, because the narrowness of the mind cannot unfold or embrace the limitlessness of liberation.

It is to be realized that this spiritual illumination is not only beyond the field of thought, but is rather a phenomenon that takes place outside the world of causation. What is far more important is to watch the mind at work very closely and objectively. This kind of intensive observation will reveal hidden motives and uncover all the contents of the dark and mysterious unconscious mind, ultimately leading to the dissolution of the ego. A heightened sensitivity and creativity emanate when the ego has ceased to operate. In that silent meditation, the ego is not in operation at all, as its ratiocinative thinking has stopped spontaneously.

We must observe carefully and probe into the origin and end of each thought with ever increasing attention so that we can delve deeply into the unconscious levels of the mind. The existence of the subconscious and the unconscious is not a theory or a concept but a fact of life. Actually, the conscious, subconscious, and unconscious are not watertight compartments, but one indivisible whole in several aspects. The intimations of the subconscious are thrown up in the forms of dreams, instinctive responses, and fears unrelated to any objective situation or cause. Through self-observation it is possible to explore and understand various levels of both the subconscious and the unconscious. In other words, the psychological havoc caused by the turmoil of subconscious and unconscious urges can be eliminated by the practice of silent meditation.

All efforts to bring lasting peace by modifications in the external world will fail so long as man has failed to resolve his inner psychological conflicts. Every relationship in a disordered mind causes hurt. It does not give one a sense of serenity and a feeling of harmony. The fabric of man's unhappiness is woven from the varied threads of his desire and greed. The craving for passion, for pleasure, for wealth, and for self-aggrandizement ends in misery. Man tries to satisfy his desire by attaching himself to worldly things. But it is to be realized that by raising our consciousness to the spiritual dimension alone we can bring a real solution to the problems of the modern world and for which our life should be a blend of meditation, wisdom, and service.

Wisdom consists in understanding one's psychological reactions to objects, ideas, and persons correctly. An agitated, disorderly, or restless mind is

incapable of facing the challenges of life. Mental disturbance is obviously due to the pressure from subconscious and unconscious levels. If the mind resists, it will lose its pliability. In order to create space in the mind, one must practice meditation, so that the resisting elements in the mind can be eliminated. As the mind is inattentive and insensitive, owing to the psychological distractions, man oscillates between or within the past and the future, and he thereby never meets the present eternal now. Actually, human beings are essentially condensed cosmos and contain divine consciousness in an infinite spiritual continuum.

Ordinary man is swayed by the excitements of the senses, whereas the spiritually mature seeker endeavors to throw off the bondage of sensual cravings and all kinds of limitations pertaining to his body and mind. Further, he seeks to go beyond the mental complications so as to reach the state of serenity and freedom, because the entire history of man's evolution is nothing but an expression of his struggle to be spiritually free. Needless to say, that attainment of spiritual emancipation is the goal of entire humanity. The difference between a man of meditation and others lies in his attitude to daily living. He works enthusiastically but with a sense of detachment.

When the ego disappears, when the mind is emptied, pervasive love for all life comes welling up. The livingness and the benediction of spiritual strength can be perceived only in the moment of the present. This state of experiencing here and now implies the awareness of the movement of our thought process in a detached way, which means to observe one's mind without motivation and identification. In this profound level of understanding, life and death are realized as essential to each other, which means experiencing the end in the beginning and beginning in the end.

Silence should be practiced for some time every day, for the purpose of mental relaxation. Those who observe silence for a few hours will have the ability to solve many psychological problems. Further, if we cultivate the habit of maintaining silence we will find that it gives a good deal of health-building elements, and as a result our mind is more calm and tranquil. Needless to say, too much of thinking or talking keeps the nervous system in a state of tension and excitement. The moment our thought stops we are full of energy because

mental power has not been dissipated and there are no problems. In that state of deep silence there is neither the thinker nor the thought.

As desires and pleasure are not associated while we are in the blissful state of silence, we find a spring-board from which to take a plunge into the realm which lies beyond the frontiers of the mind. If there is right perception, then right action will emerge naturally and spontaneously. The right action implies the ability not to hold anything in our mind and also not to cling either to a positive or negative idea. In that moment there is neither time nor causation. There is only the eternal present and this is the pathless path in which we discover divinity.

Life is not the unfoldment of an already determined plan. It is not a fixed pattern. It is a grand totality fulfilling itself from moment to moment with new values, meanings, and joy. Since life is a unitary process, total life cannot (properly) be divided into the subject and object and into the inner and outer. Life is a constant movement, not an accumulative continuity. Each movement is an eternity. The human intellect, however superior it may be (to lesser things), has limitations to comprehend the ultimate truth in its totality. Hence a direct experience of the ultimate reality is possible only by transcending human intellect and reasoning.

Further, mere academic learning cannot give us the capacity to understand the living reality. Out of pure awareness alone intelligence flowers. This intelligence is different from thought and it is an effortless understanding devoid of conflict and confusion. If we could constantly follow the path of meditative awareness, our life would be blissful and we would develop a state of serenity and vitality. Then our life would be brimming with love, innocence, and purity, and freed from the shackles of egoism.

There is so much sorrow and misery in the world. If there is complete order (silence) in our mind then we can face all problems without mental resistance. The main cause of suffering is the inability to bring the bliss of freedom through meditative awareness. The rigidity of fixed ideas and routines (rather than responsive and dynamic self-discipline) frustrates the spontaneous flow of life and diminishes the joy of living.

The secret of real freedom is to hold on to nothing, but to act with full attention without emotional involvement, because spiritual maturity lies in the readiness to let go of everything. As a matter of fact, both bondage and the resulting suffering are purely conceptual and based on false identification with the fictitious entity (ego). When once we realize the false as false, it is not necessary any further to seek the truth, because that truth cannot be conceived as an object (truth can simply be realized). Once we realize that the thinking mind is merely a shadow of that reality, but not reality itself, then we cease to fret and worry, because in the absence of the ego we take the sacred pilgrimage towards the pathway to perfection.

The goal of meditation is to reach the motionless part of our lives where the unconditioned state of absolute reality comes into play. This immensity of inner space is not something to acquire or to store, as it is always there. But what is required is the dispersal of all the mental impressions that have been gathered and the dissolution of the ego. This spiritual awakening has no beginning or end. Spiritual freedom is a state of being which is not based on any mental images. Meditation brings with it an inner unity and a sense of absoluteness which bestows strength and stability. During meditation the mind is open to the awareness of absolute reality (the higher, divine self) which is a state of timelessness.

Meditation enhances efficiency and effectiveness in daily living. It leads to the cultivation of egoless love in human relations as well as to that deeper inner poise which manifests as consistent cheer and courage. It calls out the best that is in us. This spiritual awakening is a perfectly blissful state and it is something to be discovered by each person. Just as we can know the external fact in the outside world, and in a similar way, it is possible to observe various modes and modifications of the mind, inwardly, through meditation. Since in meditation we live in a higher state, we are aware of the appearance and disappearance of mental happenings. In the process of self-observation it is possible to eradicate old habits, wrong tendencies, sense desires, passion, and prejudices that often vitiate and retard one's spiritual progress. The whole purpose of meditation is to keep our mind in a state of inner silence, and when that blissful stage is reached we need not exert any mental effort. If we prolong in that state of inner space, which means the interval between two thoughts,

then there is the possibility of experiencing the non-dualistic transcendental state of liberation.

† Article No. 46

Meditation 2

The Science of Synthesis

The complex problems of modern life can be solved easily if people know the science of meditation. It is only when the mind is tranquil that it can really observe the immense activity of the brain without creating psychological complications. Great importance should be given to the correct understanding of the working of the mind. As long as we are ignorant of the ways of the mind, there is likelihood for taking its fancies, vagaries, and distortions for reality. But when we discover its many methods of creating illusions and aberrations, we see them as unreal and they no longer bind us.

Meditation is really a technique for the attainment of spiritual tranquility, since the practice of meditation brings about the transformation of the body and mind by progressive reduction and elimination of the noxious stimuli which ordinarily excite and disturb. Regular meditation creates a new type of disposition in the mind which gradually eliminates the impressions gathered both in the subconscious and unconscious mind. Thus the mind is purged or emptied of all the factors likely to disturb its inner composure. Then meditation ripens into a higher state in which the aspirant rises above the usual duality of subject and object and perceives the infinite.

Meditation implies a constant awareness of every moment, and we need the capacity to detach ourselves from everything. In meditation the marks of all impressions that are stored in the mind are wiped away and thereby we experience the fullness of life and benediction. A conditioned mind which is crippled by the psychological memory always breeds fear and insecurity. Suffering is the dominant characteristic of the human condition. Physical ailments rack the body and old age brings a variety of disabilities. The main

cause of pain is traceable to craving and attachment as the individual is the prisoner of his misconceptions, of mistaking the unreal for the real.

When one disciplines the mind, destroys the shackles of desire, and achieves inner peace, then only is one free from mental anguish, frustration, and disappointment. Meditation is an effortless state that leads us beyond the psychological confusion into a state where the mind is at perfect peace. Meditation is a delicate discipline to observe our thought processes as they are, without the burden of our past memory and preconceived ideas. It provides practical methods of holistic living that foster inner balance and outer harmony. Inner freedom is a state of being alone in meditation, which means being not dependent on others.

Perhaps there comes a moment for all of us when we meditate quietly in the inescapable state of solitariness, and in that meditative awareness, fear and sorrow drop away and the real surrender of ego takes place spontaneously. The only way to solve these conflicts is by losing our ego, which is the veil that hides the vision of truth. Hence, the giving up of the false self is the first step towards the realization of reality which is the culmination of meditation.

Meditation cannot be superimposed from outside and it wells up from inside when our mind is not the battleground of contradictory and conflicting desires. It is a state of awareness into which we take the plunge which leads to the realization of the supreme. Actually, meditation implies unconditional, total change and radical transformation of the human mind. We reach this creative silence when the entire energy is gathered, when we are alert and do not allow mental faculty to be dissipated. The enquiry of truth becomes an all-consuming flame within, when we start living every moment with choiceless awareness.

It is futile to embark upon the spiritual journey with a selfish mind and an impure heart. All the teachings of the great saints can be summarized to this, that our primary need is to attain a silent mind, and this emptiness of mind is indispensable for the realization of truth. Generally, our mind is like a mirror. It gathers dust while it reflects and the dust must be blown off again and again, and this constitutes the process of the dissociation from our ego, because it maintains a screen between oneself and reality. We must get rid of all our disturbances, both outer and inner, in order to perceive the reality, as the right

perception is possible only with the help of a silent mind, and without right perception there cannot be right action.

It is very necessary to develop the divine qualities of mental alertness and purity of heart. There is no short-cut to enlightenment. What is required is a transformation of our consciousness, a reshaping of every aspect of thinking (which results naturally into a reshaping of feelings and behavior). The content of human consciousness is the whole movement of thought and the desire for power, position, and the pursuit of pleasure, in which there is fear. Without understanding the subtle activities of our mind we cannot progress in spiritual life.

Meditation means choiceless awareness, which implies the ability to drop a thought when it is complete and not to entangle it with succeeding thoughts. If we can sustain this state of non-reactive observation naturally, the momentum of the past psychological confusion goes into abeyance. Then there is nothing more to observe, consequently the division between the observer and the observed withers away by itself. In this divine synthesis, we experience the bliss of the infinite, in which state the last activity of ego goes voluntarily, effortlessly. This is the beginning of inner freedom and the sweetness of silence.

In meditation, all the complications that the ego weaves around, the network of complexities, as well as all the inhibitions, drop away. At present the mental energy in its totality has no opportunity to function properly since the ego is dividing and pulling it in so many directions. In meditation the mind is completely silent, as it is not moving in any direction because the ego is in abeyance. The usefulness is meditation. Although the mind has all the talents and capacities intact, in meditation there is a total cessation of mental activity (but not awareness), which means energy which divides into contradictory desires and conflicting intentions, and scatters into various directions, comes back to its original source.

This is something which we can really experiment with when we practice meditation. Every thought or feeling disturbs or gives a jerk to the whole chemistry of the body, but when we are in meditation there is perfect rhythm, which means the digestive process, the glandular and nervous systems, all are in

a harmonious state, thereby the biological and psychological processes are beautifully synthesized.

We live in a world full of stressful situations, and to run away from stress is to run away from life. By changing our mental responses we can easily learn to manage mental confusion, because virtually all psychological stress comes from the rush and hurry (and attachments) of a frantic mind, which jumps recklessly to unwarranted conclusions and rushes to judgment. Such a mind subjects the body to continual stress because it is always moving, desiring, worrying, and/or fearing.

Simply by slowing down the (superficial) mind, the first purpose of meditation, much of this kind of stress can be removed from life. As long as there is a division in consciousness between like and dislike, that division itself will be a breeding ground for frustration, insecurity, and anxiety. Psychosomatic factors relate to most damaging physical diseases and unhappiness.

It is not so much an event or circumstance that brings on an attack of anxiety. It is the significance we ascribe to that event, the way we react to it in our own mind, that triggers anxiety or tension. We can attain real freedom by transcending our mind which is limited and conditioned by various factors. Meditation is the correct method to contact the cosmic consciousness. Without understanding the very structure of the mind it is impossible to go beyond the mind, because the movement of the mind, which functions within the limitation of psychological time, brings fear and deception. The meditative awareness increases the capacity to understand the totality of the mind. Then there is freedom and divine bliss.

Philosophically speaking, there is only eternal present and there is neither past nor future. So long as the ego is there it creates fear or frustration (however subtle or obvious that might be). The element of fear (deception) is introduced by the ego when it thinks about the future or when the mind dwells in the past. The best way to overcome fear or insecurity is to observe the movement of the mind, through meditative awareness. Then the agitation of the mind stops, as the ending of the (independent) activity of the mind is the beginning of the sweet state of silence and serenity. Till we reach the state of internal silence we

cannot be liberated from the influence of fear which always brings sorrow and misery.

Nowadays man has lost the charm and beauty of living totally every moment, as in life he passes through half-lived (unresolved) experiences. Therefore the challenges of life are half-met and half-resolved. Obviously, the challenges unmet and the tension unresolved go down to his subconscious mind and torture him, as every experience which is not lived totally (fully resolved) brings various psychological complications. Fragmentation of attention is the main cause for misery and sorrow in life. Hence, the aim of meditation is the complete integration of the human being. When the psycho-physical energy of man is directed by enlightened intelligence, something wonderful happens and he experiences bliss and harmony in his relationship.

Meditation does not mean a state of oblivion nor is it a condition of stupor. Meditation is possible when there is no thought interference, which means psychologically the mind becomes a witness to thought activity. In meditation there is cessation of the variations of the mind, then mind becomes calm and serene, and in that silence there is no agitation of any kind, no stir mars the perfect stillness. In meditation the feeling of separation vanishes, the ego barrier is dissolved and transcended. True spirituality is harmonious and holistic living, free from greed, ambition, and competition. To live a life of freedom is the aim of meditation, because man is born to live a perfect life.

The major obstacles to man's liberation and total transformation are memory, habit, and attachment to fixed ideas and images. In order to understand the nature of ourselves, it is necessary to focus our attention on the working of our mind. With a view to having this self-knowledge, the mind must be aware of itself from moment to moment, of its own movements, urges, motives, and operation of psychological memory. If the mind can be aware of all that within itself, then there is a possibility of being free from all (unwarranted) conditioning and misery.

When one realizes that it is one's thoughts that cause unhappiness, then there is the right foundation, the correct starting point for investigation, which means that for the first time one becomes wholly (consciously) responsible for one's own sorrow and not (focused) on something external. At this stage what is

immediately meaningful and relevant is that one should unceasingly enquire into various activities and psychological reactions of the mind, with ever increasing attention. This method of carefully watching the origin and the end of each thought will give the capacity to probe into both the conscious and unconscious aspects of mind and thereby not to get entangled in thoughts.

There is in every man an inherent urge to grow, develop, and expand, because each soul is potentially divine. The importance of spiritual discipline cannot be neglected, because the development of life truly means the cultivation of calmness of mind. Man's achievements in various fields are but the manifestations of his inner attainment. He who is master of his mind is capable of entering into the ocean of the infinite. Although the real freedom is within us, it has to be rediscovered by persistent efforts in the right direction, despite repeated failures. The secret of every great achievement lies in devoting one's life in the art of meditation in an atmosphere of freedom, fearlessness, and solitude. The key to self-mastery consists in discriminating the real from the unreal.

The more a person is aware of his divine nature the greater his capacity to observe all his mental happenings in a detached way, as a witness, and thereby he is in tune with the infinite. Better life, happier life, peaceful life. All these are by-products of the personal discovery of truth. Life is new at each moment, and therefore one must live in the living present by dropping the dead past so that we can enjoy the beauty of meditation, and for which one should be totally open, spotlessly pure, absolutely frank, and fully receptive. A delicate, sensitive, and silent mind, when combined with a tender heart, has a divine quality to comprehend the contents of consciousness and the immediate condition of the psyche.

Human mind is constantly exposed to a variety of stimuli both internal and external, and these stimuli acting through various sense organs cause an incessant series of changes in the subconscious mind. Some of the fluctuations appear to be pleasing while others are painful, and these sensations invariably create a mental tension which disturbs the equilibrium of the mind. It is apparent that our attachment to pleasure and aversion to the pain are the real causes of the psychological conflict. Although science and technology have piled comfort upon comfort, yet we can see in the present day greater and

greater incidence of neurosis and psycho-somatic illnesses and a large number of problems arising from psychological maladjustments.

One of the most acute problems of our society is indeed the problem of strained human relationships, because man seems to have lost the art of living together peacefully. Man has been continuously engaged and primarily concerned with the search for happiness. Yet the happiness that most of us are searching for cannot be had in sensual pleasures, because one's miseries and moods of depression simply stem from the persistent pursuit of wrong and unreal excitements.

What the scientists have been trying to prove nowadays on an experimental basis has been intuitively perceived by sages all along. The sages have gone further and declared from their own intuitive experience that what we call the individual soul is the part of the cosmic being or absolute reality. In other words, each soul is like a wave and is only a part of the ocean of infinity. The beauty and the bliss of oneness of microcosm and macrocosm can be experienced in deep, silent meditation. Unless a man rises above the allurements of his senses, he cannot expect substantial progress and development in the spiritual path. The lifting up of the mind to the realm of divinity is the aim of meditation.

Meditation is really the blissful state one experiences when the mind is absolutely calm and quiet, without any mental agitations. And in that state of divine ecstasy one is free from the conditioning factors of time, space, and causation. Meditation is really a divine art of enjoying bliss in the infinite. The seeker who knows that all life is one in essence, treats all living things with reverence and respect. For him, service is love in action, as he derives greatest satisfaction in sharing his knowledge, understanding, and spiritual energy with others.

To lead a spiritual life one must have the divine quality of fearlessness, so that one can face all the difficulties and problems boldly. To establish inner harmony through self-discipline is very important, as otherwise there is the possibility of deviating from the central aim of meditative awareness. Enlightenment is indeed a culminating point in the process of realizing the truth and for which one must have the capacity to observe and understand various layers of the

mind through deep and silent meditation. It is very essential for an aspirant to dedicate his life not only in the service of humanity, but also in liberating himself from the limitation of his mind, so that he is quite capable of experiencing the sweetness of meditation. Real love is purely a divine attribute and can be enjoyed only when a seeker transcends his mental realm to the state of cosmic consciousness. To live in that state of infinity one must discard all the petty desires and purify one's heart so that spiritual energy can be released for the spiritual elevation of humanity.

Our civilization seems to be sinking under the burden of conflicts and controversies. Modern industrialization and scientific progress have of course brought about material prosperity, but man has moved away from real peace and happiness. He seems to have lost his spiritual roots and the world seems to be moving on the wrong track. Great saints have appeared from time to time in all countries and have tried to awaken and enrich the spiritual and divine heritage of humanity. Their teachings are of great practical value and relevance in solving the problems of modern man because they realized truth themselves first before preaching it to others. These great teachers found their identity with the essence of reality, which is the substratum of all existing things.

Realization of absolute reality is direct and immediate experience, as that truth reveals to us in our inmost being when we transcend our mind. But we get the knowledge of the objects of the world indirectly through the senses and the mind. A real seeker is he who is not a slave to his senses and mind, but on the contrary, has made them his instruments and thereby he has the capacity to lift the mind up from sensual concerns towards divinity. When the mind rests in the infinite, one enjoys bliss and liberation.

Although our physical bodies and minds are limited and conditioned, the soul is capable of infinite expansion and can become one with the cosmic consciousness through the practice of meditation. There is a direct and intimate relationship between the individual part and the cosmic whole and it is the awareness of that relationship that is the foundation of a spiritual life. The soul is the center around which the whole personality is to be integrated. If we wish to make spiritual life natural and continuous we should attain the harmonious integration of the personality, because in many people their emotions, intellect, and actions go in different and various directions.

Spirituality is neither emotion nor reasoning nor action. It is something connected with divinity, in which the mind is free from superficial imposition, conditioning, and ego distortion. Real meditation consists of choiceless observation of one's thoughts and feelings from moment to moment. In this state of watching the thought process one makes no attempt whatsoever to interfere with the psychological reaction towards people, events, situations, ideas, and so forth. It is an unprejudiced observation of the mind in the sense that there is no repression or condemnation (just detachment). Then there is the possibility of allowing the contents of the subconscious and unconscious desires to be exposed and transcended. When the noise of the petty mind has been silenced, when the death of the ego and the psychological past has taken place, when the clamor of the senses has ceased, then only there occurs the full flowering of divine love, compassion, and freedom.

† Article No. 48

Meditation 3

The Awakening of Wisdom

Human affairs all over the world seem to be in a state of crisis and what is needed first and foremost is a complete change of heart in man, because crisis is only in consciousness. Only through such individual transformations can we usher in a new society. As long as man is not at peace with himself, he creates many psychological problems. The acceptance of one's own responsibility is the first step to liberation. If one has realized that the cause of all the chaos in the world lies within himself, then one is ready to examine the structure and motivation of the mind with a view to understand it and thereby to be free from it. Man is not only flesh and bone or an amalgamation of psychological conditioning, but he has a depth potential that has to be unfolded through meditation, where there is perfect rest and the intuition functions with total awareness.

Both bondage and salvation are within each individual. Freedom cannot be obtained from sources external. As each person is unique, liberation can come

only from one's own understanding, awareness, and meditation. The aim of spiritual life is not only to understand the subconscious and unconscious levels of our mind, but also to gain super-conscious experience through meditation. It is impossible to go beyond our conscious mind as long as we remain imprisoned by the impact of our unconscious urges. There are two major obstacles in our spiritual life and one is the presence of large areas of the unconscious in the mind which we have not explored and the other is the hold of the past experiences of our conscious mind.

As a result of this psychological condition, our so-called awareness is only an identification with the false images that are projected by the unconscious instincts and impulses. There are two types of memory. (1) The psychological memory is a combination of old impressions, likes and dislikes, and prejudices. (2) The technical memory is the know-how of things and scientific knowledge. Such technical memory is not so much of a hindrance, but the psychological memory is a major obstacle for a seeker in realizing reality.

Since the human mind is like a monkey jumping from one subject to another, unless it is brought to rest it becomes a troublesome hindrance to the realization of reality. Ignorance is the fundamental cause for bondage and misery. So long as there is the agitation of the mind, as repetitive process, one cannot establish inner peace and harmony. When there is attachment, fear, jealousy, guilt, and hatred, there cannot be love and freedom. Being spiritually awake means being aware of every movement of thought. If we are watchful, alertly observant, then our mind no longer gets caught in fear and frustration. Then there is a possibility for reaching the state of sweet silence, and on the basis of which one can discover divinity, which is unknowable to the ego.

Our mind is very elusive and restless. It can make a heaven of hell and hell of heaven. Only a person who has freed himself from every trace of psychological conditioning and mental deception is fit to undertake the journey towards spiritual liberation. And such a person deserves to be called as a real seeker. Each seeker has to experience an initiatory death on the spiritual path, which means the annihilation of the lower self or ego. But this does not involve the death of the body, but the gateway to spiritual illumination. Man must be born again of the spirit and only he who gives up his (mundane) life shall find it.

As man has forgotten to rediscover his eternal spirit we find various complications in our modern civilization. Until and unless we aspire to reach our original state of divinity we cannot enjoy the beauty and the fullness of love.

Truth will remain abstract, remote, and totally irrelevant to one's life until one has realized for oneself. Truth becomes a liberating factor only when one has personally rediscovered it through meditation. Meditation is a direct method of finding the truth, and only by losing one's egoism is it possible to awaken the intuitive wisdom. Until we realize that we are essentially divine we cannot attain spiritual liberation and deliverance. In meditation both the subjective and the objective are blended together, and in this state of meditative awareness, when one's mind is absolutely silent, then it is possible to view everything in an all-comprehensive manner. Meditation is a divine art of observing one's mind without any interference of thought. In that total observation there is not only the emptying of all the images that thought has put together, but we also realize there is no duality as meditator and meditation. In other words, there is no division between the observer and the observed. When the ego is inoperative, there is the ending of thought process and then we experience the bliss of silence.

Actually, in meditation the mental activity is set aside and this helps us to break down the psychological complications. And at that moment the wandering of the mind stops and there is stillness. It points to a state of choiceless awareness in which all duality is non-existent. Meditation is the golden means whereby the conditioned mind becomes unconditioned. It helps us to release the grip of the ego. It gives opportunity to penetrate and observe our thoughts without emotional involvement in them. The aim of meditation is to transcend the ego-sense and to turn man's consciousness towards that which is eternal. It offers a rewarding spiritual exercise of negating the ego and in the absence of ego it is possible to awaken divine wisdom which will guide us to become one with absolute reality, which alone exists.

The attitude of an aspirant should be spiritually uplifting to humanity, and for this he must dedicate his entire life in the pursuit of truth by leading a life of purity, humility, and serenity. One must lead the spiritual life not in isolation, but in the midst of society in order to encourage others towards divinity and thereby bring about transmutation and divine elevation. The application of

mystical wisdom is the only solution for the modern man who is confronted with various psychological pressures and problems. The utility of mystical knowledge will pave the way to reaching perfection and blessedness.

The practice of meditation is the master key to opening the inner door of the kingdom of heaven which is within us. Spiritual life is not a matter of mere subjectivism denying all reality of objective conditions or circumstances, but on the contrary, the world in which we live is an ideal place for a seeker to practice meditation and to develop divine faculties. One of the most baffling problems of spiritual life is the sustenance of one's interest and enthusiasm in the midst of endless difficulties and severest trials. Our civilization seems to be in a state of terrific hurry, although it does not know where it is hurrying to.

Now, superficial life is in constant need of excitements. There is a craving for more and more sensations and entertainments. A mind which functions at superficial levels cannot comprehend the beauty of bliss, love, or meditation. The happiness we are searching for is not superficial happiness determined by circumstances, attractions, repulsions, and various other conditioning factors. But real happiness is something that gives us complete satisfaction and inner freedom that allows us to live and act without any form of craving for stimulation or excitement. This blissful liberation bestows clarity of vision and awareness through which it is possible to perceive the timeless moment.

Further, this experience of inner perception deepens our understanding in the discovery of our reality which reveals itself increasingly in this process of eternal exploration. Our physical body, feelings, emotions, and above all our mind must become increasingly pure, if we are to make spiritual progress. Unless our total consciousness is calm it cannot reflect truth and the beauty of the perfect peace. The search for truth is a pilgrimage within, and it is a divine vision which must be awakened by rising above the illusion of egoism. Purity is the shedding of ignorance. It leads to harmony, rhythm, a living stillness, and a compassion for all life. It is in such a state of purity that we experience the beauty of unfathomable silence.

In (proper) scientific thinking, spirit and matter are no longer separate categories, but different aspects of the same universal process. In the recent development of transpersonal psychology, the transcendent and mystic stages

of consciousness are studied more and more. There is an attempt to build bridges between psychology and spirituality. There are many levels of consciousness in the mind, of which mankind is not normally aware. The individual human mind is part of the absolute reality. Behind every human being there is an infinite spiritual dimension, because life is one non-fragmentable, indivisible wholeness. The ignorance of man regarding the essential nature of his divinity is a basic cause of the present world crisis. This problem cannot be solved by any amount of rationalization, but only through intuitive wisdom.

Meditation is awareness of perfect peace and it is a process of eliminating the false ego. It establishes a living and uninterrupted link with the absolute reality. Psychologically, it brings about an integration and unitary holistic consciousness, a state of rapport, and harmony in our relationship. Actually, in meditation the energies flow inward and thereby there is unbroken silence. In meditation we experience not only the sweetness of bliss, but also develop the capacity to solve problems in a completely different way and this leads us to freedom. Awareness is a state of self-knowing, a silent mirroring of things and events as they are, without mental deception. Every experience leaves an imprint on the mind, the strength of which is according to the intensity of pain and pleasure involved.

This imprint, the residue of the past, becomes the seed around which thought in the present crystallizes and grows (in attachments). This means that everything is immediately translated by the mind in terms of pain (repulsion) and pleasure (attraction or interest). The mind itself does not know how to be neutral. Then with repetition there is habit formation and ultimately bondage (complete egoic self-deception). Thus the mind continually craves attachment, and if it drops one habit it soon picks up another. Within the pattern of duality there is no release from habit, and there can be cessation of habit only when we go above and beyond the conflict of duality. Only through understanding the whole mechanism of habit formation and seeing it in actual operation, which requires great alertness and patience, can thought free itself from habit.

The superficial conscious mind is occupied with various problems. We must have the capacity to watch what is going on without any distortion or resentment. In order to understand our hidden motives, responses, thoughts,

and feelings, there must be mental detachment and tranquility so that the deep layers of the subconscious mind are projected at the conscious level and then transcended. So long as we are preoccupied with our attachments and prejudices (likes and dislikes) we cannot perceive the beauty of truth.

The spiritual life involves the incidental opening of all the hidden faculties and potentiality for sensitive awareness without fragmentation and divisions. A sensitive response to life, refinement and subtlety in the faculties of consciousness are essential to the discovery of truth. Every emotion or frustration has a direct physiological consequence as well as a psychological one.

When emotions are repeatedly unexpressed and conflicts remain unresolved then there is the possibility for a person to develop neurotic symptoms, chronic stresses, and mental disturbances. Meditation gives us the capacity to express, resolve various mental or emotional conflicts, and thereby restore the inherent natural power of self-healing and self-regulation. The purpose of meditation is to assist the individuals to regain the lost capacity for self-development and to reach the state of serenity and mental security.

To become physically and mentally pure is the first step towards spiritual life. If one's life is chaotic and aimless then one cannot expect progress in the spiritual life. It is very necessary to maintain inner discipline and orderliness so that a seeker can enter into the vast and profound vistas of spiritual dimension. If one can perform one's duty with detachment, without thinking about results, then the very action will purify one's mind. Devotion is really an art of surrendering oneself to the inner power which restores the mental equilibrium and provides renewed energy to cope with worldly responsibilities.

The spontaneous joy which one experiences in meditation is not of the mind, but abidance in the pure awareness of divinity. This harmonious flow of divine grace and the resultant creative silence operates when the entire field of the mind is kept free from the weeds of thought. This unique and universal method of meditation is in line with the eternal teachings of the great sages of mankind, because it does not insist on any particular form of religious belief. It has nothing to do with sectarian cult.

All the mystical paths proclaim that something wonderful happens when man succeeds in stilling the sense organs and the mind, because it brings him face to face with the mystery of his own true self, total illumination, and the state of spiritual liberation.

Physical death is not the cessation of the life energy, but on the contrary, the continuation of life. It gives an opportunity for the soul to express itself in a different dimension of consciousness, in its onward march to the ultimate goal of perfection and liberation. Life is a constant movement, and that which lives from moment to moment carrying no burden of the psychological past is ever free. Therefore, it is ever unburdened. This state of living in the eternal now is possible by eliminating the selfish ego which is the source of misery. So long as the ego-sense endures, there will be no end to ignorance and bondage. We shall become free only by becoming egoless, and in this state we are aware of our soul, a transcendent principle of supreme consciousness.

The soul has no limit and it is ever pure. But somehow through ignorance the soul has been (falsely) associated with the physical body and mind and this wrong association and false identification can only end by spiritual wisdom. Life is a process through which we must experiment with the living realities of soul energy. If we can experience the sweetness of serenity in our daily life then there is the possibility of contacting spiritual magnetism which will definitely and profoundly transform our outlook and attitude towards life. This meditative awareness gives us ever renewing and refreshing divine energy.

Spiritual transformation implies unconditional and total change of the human mind. It takes away the ego in man and purifies the whole human consciousness. It enables the human being to emerge in such a way that all the animalistic habits and tendencies are dropped completely. Thereby he is in a better position to function in a new dimension of awareness in which state, direct perception of reality is possible.

Material things do not give us complete satisfaction and it is the joy of the soul energy that percolates through our senses and mind and which sustains us with strength, stability, and happiness. When we take our stand on our divine self and act in a spirit of detachment and dedication, then all our activities lead to mental relaxation.

To be truly successful is to attain peace of mind and inner freedom through meditation, because man is a spirit endowed with a mind and physical body. Man's relative superiority lies in understanding and transforming the mind. Actually, the only instrument man has to tackle any problem is his mind. We consider meditation as a discipline of the mind and the goal of meditation is enlightenment and liberation. Since we are essentially the infinite, not the finite at all, nothing less than the attainment of the absolute can satisfy and liberate us. If we can look at everything without the image-making ego, then it is possible to live a life that is completely free from psychological conflict and confusion.

We can realize the essential unity of existence only when we assimilate the divine qualities of compassion, contemplation, insight, and intuition. Eternal vigilance is needed at all times to discover that divinity. When a man reaches the highest state of meditation, he has transcended mental conflict and confusion. When our consciousness is at total rest, then only we can enjoy the perfume of ecstasy in which state alone we are lifted to the culminating point of the blissful awareness and wisdom.

† Article No. 51

Self-Awareness 1

Man is in search of happiness. He thinks by earning a lot of money as well as by enjoying sensual pleasures he can attain happiness. But the fact is he is dissatisfied after every form of enjoyment. Where can we get real happiness? The real state of happiness or complete satisfaction is an inward state which means we are happy or experience the bliss of contentment only when our minds are peaceful. When our minds are agitated by contradictory desires we feel mental disturbances and worries. Therefore a person who understands the various functions of his mind correctly will certainly have the ability to control the mind and thereby enjoy the beauty of life without distractions.

We should not depend on others or environment for our happiness because by depending on others we create unnecessary attachments which in turn produce

untold miseries and psychological complication. The beauty of living peacefully and freely is paralyzed by abnormal attachments. The balance of mind is shattered by clinging to a person, thing or place because our minds are very sensitive to outward reactions and these reactions increase mental disturbances immensely. On the contrary, if we can maintain mental equilibrium all the time with our relationships, then there is the possibility of achieving the real happiness in which we are not depending on others.

We always want to be a strong man or woman. What is the significance of real strength? Can a person who is strong physically face all problems? No, because the actual problems in life affect and attack directly our minds and not our physical bodies. Hence, only a person who is mentally strong alone can overcome all difficulties. How do we develop our minds so as to increase the mental force? We know from our daily experience that when our thoughts are scattered we are immediately disturbed. In other words mental weakness follows as soon as our minds get agitated. Real mental strength can be obtained by keeping our minds concentrated. Concentration consists in doing our work with full attention without being disturbed by outward circumstances, then only can we do our job efficiently. Without having learned to concentrate we cannot live in this world happily. The greatest achievement and advantage of having a strong and concentrated mind is that we are not mentally affected by contact of people, things, or places. This mental force gives tremendous power to solve all problems which means we have the ability to participate in daily activities and at the same time we are not disturbed by reactions. A man of concentration acts freely by paying complete attention and he is not bothered about consequences of failures or success. The highest happiness is to keep the mind pure and peaceful under all circumstances.

Whether we like it or not we have come into this world and have taken a human body. We live in this physical world only for a short period. One day or another we shall have to leave this earth which means we have to experience the nature of death directly. No one can avoid death because death may at any time come without prior notice. The best way to solve the mystery of death is to experience the real nature of death while we are living in this physical world.

Normally many people are afraid of death because they are strongly and blindly attached to worldly pleasures, persons, and things and hence they are not

willing to separate themselves from the world to which they are so fervently attached. But at the time of death they are transported to the astral world by completely disconnecting their relationships of the physical world. In the astral or emotional world they feel the agonies of loneliness and further they are much disturbed because they are unable to fulfill their desires. So it is very necessary that we prepare to face death calmly and peacefully which means we must be ready to part with anything and everything in this world.

How do we attain that state of divinity in which the mind cannot drag us down to the lower level of physical and sensual pleasures? Through meditation alone we can reach to the divine plane in which we are free from emotional excitements. Even our ordinary experience amply proves that we are happy only at the time of meditation which means when the mind is stopped. Meditation is a method by which we proceed to the divine plane and if we can live in that pure state of meditation, then we can easily drop our physical bodies at the time of death and further we can also free ourselves from the agonies of mental complications. The purpose of coming into this world is to realize our divinity in which alone we can have real happiness and liberation.

It is very essential for an aspirant to understand the importance of mental purification without which no one can improve in the sphere of spiritual life. Anyone can practice meditation, but to study and be aware of the subtle processes of thought is really a tremendous task which needs careful attention and right living. In the world where there are so many distractions, owing to the pressure of modern civilization, it has become of paramount importance for the sincere aspirant to understand his psychological reactions correctly and completely.

To penetrate into the deeper layers of consciousness by quieting the emotions is the best way to purify our thoughts; in other words, to watch and study the reactions of thought critically without being psychologically disturbed. Lower emotions are intensified by the interplay of reactions through the association of outward sensations. The reaction implies the incomplete experience of a particular sensation. It is an established fact that no one can have complete psychological satisfaction by indulging in sensual pleasure because sensation is another form of strong reaction which is always incomplete experience.

Owing to the emotional urge, one clings to certain sensations and then only reaction follows, and hence to stop reaction, which is disturbed state of mind, one has to watch the reaction of thought from moment to moment constantly so that there is a possibility of maintaining mental purification in daily life. Mental purification gives strength of character and spiritualization of living through which one can face every challenge in life smoothly. One cannot establish peace and harmony in the world until and unless one realizes the dire necessity of leading a life of purity.

If one is capable of concentrating his or her thought on a focal point by strict inward observation one can certainly succeed in understanding the emotional structure of thought without reaction. The cultivation of mental purification will be immensely helpful for practicing meditation, for higher meditation is an effortless and spontaneous state in which one communes with reality blissfully.

It is a matter of vital importance for all intelligent people to make every effort to build a new world where people can live harmoniously, in their interpersonal relationships, without psychological fears and conflicts. The lack of purity in life is the main cause for nervous break-down and insanity, which are quite common nowadays. Lower impulses and emotions are nothing but reactions of thoughts. If one can control his thoughts by certain discipline only then is one fit for the practice of meditation. One thinks (or feels and then thinks) first and then reacts, hence thinking is the cause and reaction is the effect. To stop reaction one has to understand the thinker who is thinking.

It is an obvious fact that to stop the disturbances of reaction one has to put an end to the processes of thinking itself and ascend to the level of intuition. To live in the midst of intense activities and at the same time to be detached from the clutches of attraction and repulsion is the practical usefulness of mental purification which is the necessary qualification for the aspirant to develop the divine faculties.

The nature of the mind is such that it seeks excitement in various ways, because it cannot exist seeking external stimulations. The question is, can the mind be peaceful and happy by enjoying the emotional aspects of pleasures. If we analyze the mind we will find that its very structure is based on contradictory desires and because of this contradiction even after fulfilling certain urges there

is a psychological dissatisfaction with mental conflict which results in physical exhaustion.

Since the human mind is a playground for various lower and higher forces, there are confusion and difficulties in establishing harmony and peace. Animal instincts and human qualities are dashing against each other at a tremendous speed inwardly in an invisible way in the human mind. This inner struggle can be easily observed if we are sensitive in understanding our reactions and these reactions are mainly the cause for perpetuating internal struggle. In life, while we live in the physical world we are dragged by momentary pleasures, and because of these distractions we are deceived and the after-effects of sensual gratifications are always accompanied by mental weakness and bodily ill health.

We have come into the physical world to exercise our spiritual faculties by resisting the physical force. The direct contact and clash of physical environment bring the additional capacity to strengthen the divine qualities. If we identify the physical body as oneself then we are automatically governed by the blind force of passions and more or less become an entity affected by physical and biological laws. If we can attune our mind to the spiritual world then we will be able to be transported to the finer state of divine vibrations which brings health, happiness and harmony. The ability to elevate our mind to the height of spiritual magnetism is within us. The spiritual consciousness can be awakened by contact with highly evolved souls.

Our mind is in a state of disturbance owing to its habitual activity and this disturbance is not the function of the mind, but it is due to the association of sensual influences as well as environmental pressures.

Mind is merely a force that can be directed either to higher or lower levels. When the mind descends into the lower level it is restless because of contradictory desires and if we can concentrate our mind on higher spiritual pursuits then it will become a clear mirror to reflect the radiation of divine energy. The mind by itself is neutral and it is we who are corrupting it by giving in to sensual or personal desires. We must have a cheerful and optimistic attitude to overcome all our shortcomings and weaknesses by exerting our will power as well as uplifting our minds to spiritual realms.

We cannot have real happiness by just improving the standard of living or by acquiring wealth. In other words, mere material prosperity alone will not provide the right condition for happiness and peace. The modern way of living is not suitable for elevating us to the spiritual place which is very essential to harmonize our lives.

By satisfying our sensual pleasures we are depriving ourselves of the spiritual power which is necessary to lead a healthy and peaceful life. Our lower life consists of enjoying the pleasures of emotional nature, but the higher life involves developing the faculties pertaining to divine aspects.

† Article No. 52

Self-Awareness 2

The problem is whether we are satisfied with the lower excitements. The human constitution is such that by wasting our energy in the avenues of sensualism one cannot have mental equilibrium, because the purpose of taking the physical body is to attain perfection in the art of mastering various diverse forces and then to utilize the purified energy in the realization of reality. It is an interesting question to ask ourselves why we are disturbed mentally and emotionally very often, and this disturbance causes a complication in our nervous system and thus introduces obstacles in maintaining the stability of mind which is indispensable if we wish to lead a sane life.

The reasons for such disturbances may be due to energy running in a wrong channel. The urge for the energy or the desire is to flow in the lower direction which brings mental strain. Whenever we think we are manipulating certain mental force, if our thinking is based on the higher aspects of life then the energy is well concentrated and conserved for the utility of higher aims, but if our thinking is stimulated by the impacts of lower sensations then the mental energy is dissipated and deteriorated by going in the wrong channel. When the energy is rightly focused by the correct process of concentration, then only is there the possibility of increasing and developing the spiritual power which is required to realize reality.

People have very vague and fantastic ideas of the spiritual life. To live happily and harmoniously, it is very essential to have a clear conception of our spiritual life. Spirituality indicates certain dynamic forces that can vitalize and purify the physical body and mind. The force of spirituality is so powerful that it can heal not only the diseased body, but also bring freshness of purity to the mind. The beneficial radiation of spiritual energy can be contacted by communion with higher divinity through meditation. To receive pure energy of divine grace we must keep our mind undisturbed so that the healing balm of spiritual power can flow abundantly. Emotional reactions are obstacles for the supply of spiritual current.

A man functions within the circle of his own thoughts which prevents him from seeing the light of spiritual illumination. We must have the intuitive faculty to realize the fact that mere mental activities will not give the power to perceive the reality of spiritual life. Since the mind is capable of deceiving us with various images, we should therefore keep our mind firm enough not to be deluded under any circumstances. Any disturbance indicates inability of paying full attention to what we are observing at a given moment or rather, the distraction of the mind signifies that it has been dragged down to the level of environmental pressures.

We must always cultivate the habit of studying everything with a concentrated mind. The ability to attend to everything unemotionally is a quality one must develop in order to increase the power of self-discipline, a discipline which comes spontaneously to safeguard us from psychological complication. We are constantly reacting to various sensations, and therefore, the mind clings to an urge or a strong desire to fulfill those desires to which it is attached. This attachment to a particular desire by the mind is deceptive because, as soon as a desire is satisfied, the mind is not restful or appeased. It is followed by another desire and thus causes mental conflict and dissension. This inner struggle goes on constantly to such an extent that we are not aware of this vicious circle.

Craving for desires cannot be satisfied by indulging in them. The human mind so operates that by satisfying one desire, the craving for further desires arises. The urge for repeated experiences is intensified.

It is an observable fact that to gain real freedom we must mentally dissociate ourselves completely from desire which induces us to undergo the same old routine of sensation. The mind is only a bundle of desires and these desires are accumulated as a result of incomplete experiences. We must develop the faculty of discrimination to perceive everything dispassionately. This quality of discrimination will give us the right vision to verify the movement of mind without being involved in its reactions. Full awareness and complete control of the mind is the only process through which we can attain a peaceful state of meditation which paves the way for spiritual liberation. The mind must be pure without the contamination of emotional disturbances so that the dynamic quality of meditative awareness can be developed.

The conception of spiritual life cannot be explained by the mind. The attainment of God-realization is a direct approach which transcends the intellectual plane. The delight of spiritual life and the sweetness of silent communion with divinity can be realized by training the physical body and mind by the practice of meditation.

To lead a happy and peaceful life, it is very important that we study the mind, because it is through our mind that we are affected. If we observe the mind we will find it reacts constantly and it is the reaction which gives us either painful or pleasant experience. We can say that the mind itself is a bundle of reactions and impressions. Why is there reaction in our action? When we act why do we feel a psychological disturbance? Since our action is incomplete the reaction comes in the shape of mental disturbance.

Why is there incomplete experience in our action? The incompleteness occurs in our action owing to the distraction of the mind because of past psychological memories which prevent us from paying full attention to the work in which we are engaged. Are we living in the present all the time? Whenever we approach a problem with emotions we are not living in the present. We are driven to past incidents through the screen of memories, which causes distraction.

We must react or respond to every situation as otherwise we are not living. What is indicated here as reaction is not mere reactionary process through which we gather factual information but something of a psychological nature. Most of us are living either in the past or in the future because of this

psychological memory. Since we are conditioned by our past memories, we are unable to enjoy the beauty of life in its purest form. We are not contacting the real. On the contrary, we experience only the past scars and impressions. We are actually disturbed by our past experiences and these accumulated impressions are the factors which prevent the realization of reality.

To solve a problem we have not to run away from the fact of these psychological complications, but rather face them directly and free ourselves from them completely. Desire cannot be controlled either by indulgence or by suppression. The reason is that by every act of indulgence the psychological impressions are strengthened and thereby the craving is intensified. By repeated acts of indulgence we cannot have satisfaction. On the contrary, we feel physically and mentally exhausted.

By adopting the method of suppression, desires instead of being properly understood are concealed in the dark corners of our subconscious mind. The same desires will appear again when we have a strong emotion or in a dream. When we have a strong emotion or impulse, we either indulge in it or suppress it. The result is, we are not free from cravings even though we are temporarily relieved from tensions. We must find a better and more practical direction.

Whenever we have a strong desire we should not react immediately, because by acting in the shape of indulgence, or by suppression, we are fabricating more desires which will always disturb us. The desire projects itself into the conscious or unconscious level of our mind and therefore it becomes necessary to watch our desires closely.

To come to conclusions of our desires through past impressions is not a healthy way of correct observation. Our psychological make up is such that by dwelling on the desire with the help of past experiences we are prevented from having a direct perception of our problems. Study the desire in a detached manner without projecting past impressions. In the process of awareness, desire is understood and ultimately dissolved. The past memories would be there only as factual reference without disturbing our conscious or unconscious mind. When the disturbing elements of psychological complications are eradicated, then only we are free.

The blessing of perfect peace is a divine attribute which is neither individual nor universal, but spiritual in essence which manifests as a result of mental purification and deep contemplation. The bliss of peace is not a product that can be manufactured by the mind, but it is a heavenly flower which has to blossom silently and spontaneously in the heart of meditative man.

The worldly experiences which we accumulate are imaginative in character and as soon as we awaken from the slumber of ignorance we come to the real existence in which state there is no identification with illusion. The disintegration of the physical body is in no way going to alter the spiritual journey in which we are presently engaged. Our endeavor is to break the chains of material limitations so as to reach the land of inner freedom.

The blessing of divine understanding provides the spiritual magnetism so as to enable us to face all worldly problems fearlessly. The mind must be undisturbed emotionally in all circumstances, so that we can perceive everything without mental confusion. Peace is not the negation of war, but a dynamic state of purified heart which generates spiritual radiation for the benefit of humanity. We cannot create peace in the physical world until and unless we enjoy the blissful serenity within us inwardly.

The guiding force of divine grace is all the time protecting us mysteriously and therefore, let us do our allotted duty cheerfully and peacefully in a detached manner. The most lovely spot is within us which can be opened and spiritually settled by the key of self-knowledge. The duality of the objective world and other mental worries have to be eliminated by meditative awareness, so that we can enjoy the unity of divinity.

The sweetness of silence can be obtained by transcending our minds to the divine realm of reality. The delight of devotion can be achieved by dedicating our lives in the service of the supreme master. The beauty of purity can be had by liberating our minds from the clutches of worldly attachments. To perceive the reality we must approach everything calmly and quietly with meditation.

To receive the divine magnetism we must purify the mind by self-observation. The radiation of spiritual power is the only remedy for the disease of the mind. To live sanely and harmoniously it is very essential to have a clear conception of

the spiritual life, because the divine energy is so delicate that we must keep our physical bodies and minds absolutely pure and clean, so that we can utilize them to regenerate the spiritual force for the benefit of all.

The state of meditation is full of creativity as it generates living vitality and dynamic divinity with bliss. To contact the beauty of reality, the mind must be calm and alert. The ability to understand, to observe the function of the mind can be gained by studying the reactions of thoughts dispassionately or by watching the thought process in a detached way with intensive awareness. To discover something which the mind cannot grasp is meditation -- a meditation in which the meditator is completely absorbed in reality.

If we study our minds very deeply, and dispassionately we will find that our minds are only a bundle of desires and sensations with incomplete experience, because our minds are conditioned and influenced by the impacts of outward circumstances. Generally, our minds are thinking about a problem, a person, or an idea.

The reason is that the structure of the mind is based on sensual experience and hence, the task before us is to keep the mind in a state of stillness and silence. If we can have the capacity to look at people, ideas, and things in one pointed concentration, then only can we live in this physical world freely, happily without psychological disturbances.

The most important problem that we face is to free ourselves from the confusions that exist in our minds. Since we are all confused owing to wrong thinking, it is very essential to understand clearly the activities and tricks of our minds because if we study our minds closely, we will see that the very nature of the mind is to create complexes in our relationship with people. It is our own minds which fabricate innumerable attachments and anxieties, therefore our relationship becomes impure and sometimes complicated.

The question is why we are unable to pay full attention to the job to which we are engaged. The reason for such inability for concentration is due to distraction of the mind which indicates lack of interest in the work to which we are attending. What are the factors which introduce distractions? The reactions of past experiences which are suppressed in the unconscious mind are the main

cause for such mental agitations, and these distractions are pulling us in different directions which produce emotional upsets and conflicts.

The next question we have to consider is whether we can control the mind, and we must also determine whether the controller who controls the mind is really a spiritual entity or another aspect of the mind. The observer who examines desires is also conditioned by the desires and therefore, his decision is actually not acceptable in view of the emotional coloring. The dual process of analyzer as well as of the function of analyzing our desires proves the difficulties as the analyzer is also a part of the mind and hence the observation of its psychological reactions cannot be relied on. We think or rather react to various excitements by means of words and these words stimulate sensations and accordingly the process of thinking is manipulated. Can we think without words? Sensations and the connected words are inter-related so closely that we do not know how to separate the words from the feelings. At first the words start and then thinking commences [?] and after that the chain of thinking follows. When the mind is calm and quiet, you will find there is no disturbance which indicates the absence of words. When we say we want to concentrate, we indirectly refer to the stoppage of sensational activities of the mind.

Disturbance is due to the distractions of mind and contradictory desires. The mind is always evading the fact of understanding its own function by various images which it creates in attending to self-contemplation. Instead of concentrating our minds on a particular object, we must turn our minds inward and observe each and every thought constantly under all circumstances and then we will have tremendous spiritual power to dissolve the centre of distraction.

We can drive away evil thoughts by watching them silently in a witness-like state without giving importance to them. This detached observation is very necessary. Just to be aware of our thoughts without introducing our psychological likes and dislikes. To lead a peaceful life we must understand our minds without deception. To understand the agitation of the mind correctly is the ladder up which we have to climb in the path of concentration.

The point we have to understand before we undertake the journey of self realization is that we should not suppress the desires or act according to the desires, but we must understand them correctly. We have discovered that the

mind is only a collection of desires and these desires exist because of certain reactions which have not been completely understood. When we meet an experience in life we approach it with the background of past impressions and as a result we are quite incapable of facing the situation without projecting these old impressions. Now when we act like that, it is obvious that our actions are mechanical in character or emotional in approach.

The mind consists of various instinctive impulses and these cravings bring disturbing elements. The cravings cannot be satisfied by indulgence because dissatisfaction and incomplete experience is intensified. The make up of our minds is to a great degree influenced by the environment in which we are living as well as by the books we read and the people we move with. The mind is also molded by the education we receive. All the time we are conditioned by these outward impacts and the inward reactions which form the mental attitude through which we judge everything. In the unfoldment of our minds we must take into consideration all these psychological implications and impediments.

In meditation we observe the mind with full attention and then the series of mental images are annihilated and as a result of this emptiness we are able to perceive the Reality which provides perfect peace and bliss. The purpose of spiritual life is to be in the state of meditation which gives strength to performing our daily duties cheerfully and gracefully. Meditative awareness is the best method of discovering Reality and on this pathless path alone we succeed in the art of Self-Realization. In the transcendental state of Self-Realization what one experiences is not the knowledge of "I am" in the limited sense, but an awareness of liberation from the limitation of the mind.

Meditation 4

The Art of Holistic Living

Today the world may appear to be in a state of chaos on every side. We may see fragmentation of humanity according to race, creed, and color. Therefore it is necessary to find some way in which we can lift humanity towards spiritual holistic living. In this modern world of science and technology man is ever running after pleasures of the senses. He has no time to look within and observe for himself what is wrong with his mind. In spite of all the pleasurable things at his command, he has no satisfaction. He struggles for mental peace and cannot get it. It is only when the mind is motionless that the bliss of perfect peace can enter. Then there is spiritual communion, divine love in action.

Our mind has been subjected to countless influences and pressures which have the effect of distorting our outlook and character. That being our plight, what is urgently required is freedom from all psychological conditioning. It is only when the mind is quiet, when we are no longer engaged in struggle, strain, and stress, when we are not allowing the inner energy to externalize itself, that there is the possibility of re-establishing inner harmony.

Meditation is a fundamental spiritual discipline of all religions and it is a technique of mind control for turning inward away from sensory images that bombard us every moment of our waking hours. Meditation is an important part of spiritual practice because meditation will help a person to gain more awareness of himself as well as to have more self-control. In meditation we first try to understand our own mind so that we can observe its activities. If we proceed further in our meditative awareness we will discover that the mind itself does not exist and at that time we directly experience the inner freedom.

Truth cannot be preconceived; when we conceive it, we generally do so with a mind that has been conditioned by various psychological forces. We carry the memory of yesterday and it darkens our being. As long as the mind is a

mechanical machine of memory, it knows no rest, no quietude, no silence, because the un-known divinity cannot be experienced by the mind which is the outcome of the known, of past psychological memory. When the mind is empty, we begin to appreciate not only the art of holistic living, but also we experience everlasting happiness of the boundless ocean of super-consciousness.

We enjoy the silence of meditation only when we are unhurried and mentally undistracted. Meditation implies a constant awareness of every moment. We need the power to detach ourselves from everything so that we can contact inner reality. Meditation is not escapism or running away from life and society. It should be applied to the daily affairs of life as it is not separated from the work-a-day life. It is part and parcel of our life (as spiritual students); (some of) its result is obtained immediately because meditation emphasizes the importance of mental discipline and mind culture.

Meditation can relax the nervous system and reduce the mental pressure and improve our health and keep us fit physically, emotionally, mentally, and spiritually. Meditation is a very meaningful mental therapy for the problems of modern life. It gives us the capacity to perceive the things that are beyond the range of normal senses and thereby affords the opportunity for us to contact divinity. There are regions of human consciousness beyond the sphere of mind and that can never be realized by mere mental process. Some faculty higher and more comprehensive than the mind is essentially needed for experiencing the bliss of integration.

The aim of meditation is to pare away the chatter of the mind so that we can establish inner peace and creative awareness. Meditation is a device to help the mind to release its grip on various desires which distract it. Certainly, understanding the mechanistic nature of mental activity will release human beings from many unwarranted (warranted?) complications, miseries, and sorrows of life.

In this connection, the mystical instruction is to “die before death” which implies the ending of everything that one holds. Dying to attachment every minute, one will find the holistic state of timeless dimension. When each thought and feeling is fully experienced and not just partially, the image building process ends of its own accord. That is the art of dying psychologically

from moment to moment. Images that have not been understood fully in the light of awareness tend to reappear in dreams. The mind that is not preoccupied with images is truly alert and supremely awake.

Living and dying are inseparable. It is by dying from moment to moment that one discovers the significance of holistic living. In meditation the mind is completely silent and harmonious without fragmentation. Real meditation is possible only when the mind is calm and quiet; then there is the opening of the immense vastness of inner space in which we contact the infinite imageless state of spiritual liberation.

Normally, we cling to the physical body and the psychological entity known as ego. Our experience in life is limited within body and mind. Meditation is essentially a technique which gives us the capacity to dissociate ourselves emotionally from the ever-varying conflicts of the ego and establish ourselves in our spiritual center. Meditation leads to wisdom and self-knowledge. All that is needed is a capacity to penetrate and explore the unconscious mind in which we uncover hidden motivations, urges, and fears, through impersonal awareness.

Psychologically, meditation is described as being a fourth state of consciousness, which means that it is neither waking, dreaming, nor sleeping. The common core of all meditative experience is a blissful state of awareness which leads to the extinction of the ego. The goal of meditation is not only enlightenment, but also its beneficial effects which are many and varied both upon the physical body, the emotions, and the mind. Meditation brings a freedom from pressure in day-to-day living, an avoidance of the tired feeling, and a reduction of physical symptoms of stress.

A large part of illness results from the disturbance of bodily functions through some type of psychological stress, and all (non-occult) tension causes obstruction to the natural flow of vital energies which sustain health. The practice of meditation provides an opportunity to reduce the mental pressure within a disturbed person (personality) and thereby to establish a harmonious relationship between various (otherwise) discordant factors.

Meditation is an answer to many emotional problems that are rampant today. Meditation will improve our health, our vitality, and even our physical appearance. Meditation gives correct value and spiritual significance even to most ordinary incidents in life. It is fairly easy to meditate in a calm moment. But we must be careful when our meditative awareness is suddenly put to the test, when our mind is swept away by a huge wave of lust, anger, or greed (or any aspect of self-interest). As we progress and gain increasing self-mastery in the divine art of meditation, we shall certainly observe that we are freeing ourselves from the clutches of imaginary cravings and psychological needs. In meditation we go inward, seeking always the secret behind the appearance of the manifested world, until the inner-most reality is reached.

We should not split life into spiritual and secular as two opposing forces (but rather think of spiritual and secular aspects of the interdependent whole; as one proceeds spiritually, one is naturally freed from the secular values). Because man is endowed with the ability to discriminate between the true nature of the divinity and the false value of egoistic appearance, when the ego is eliminated, then we move into the inner freedom in which we realize that the thinking brain or mental perception is an excellent instrument to apprehend spiritual unfoldment.

Freedom is the birthright of every human being and no man likes his freedom to be curbed, curtailed, or suppressed. All human activity is an expression of this struggle to attain freedom. The urge to freedom in the human heart will not die until man realizes the highest of all freedoms, spiritual liberation. Real freedom consists not only in the discovery of the origin of our thinking, but also in transcending our minds so that we can have the capacity to use our minds whenever possible and keep them unoccupied and restful, without any mental conflicts.

In meditation alone we can find new freedom which is not conditioned by the impacts of psychological memories. When the human mind is filled with meditative awareness, it generates spiritual magnetism and activates a beautiful atmosphere of perfect peace, divine attunement, and universal love. Actually, the divine illumination is not born of metaphysical speculation or mere intellectual ratiocination, but of personal direct intuitive experience which takes place silently when all mental deception (activity) has ended. Meditation

is silently watching the movement of the mind in relationship, which creates a great beauty when we discover the perfume of perfect peace in all our activities.

Hence, meditation is a new approach to total life and the practice of meditation does not demand any withdrawals from activities, isolation, or retirement (but it does demand an adjustment in values and freedom from attachments and entanglements). It is the using of every relationship or situation as a mirror to understand and appreciate the working of the mind. Inspiration comes or takes place spontaneously in the realm of silence when the mind is unruffled and undisturbed. The feeling of calm and inner poise will come to us unknowingly when we have the capacity to perceive things as they are. Without experiencing the serenity of silence, inward stillness, all our speculation about reality has very little meaning, because meditation is a spiritual journey of inward penetration beyond all our conceptual thinking.

Spiritual freedom is a state of being which is not based on any mental images. It brings with it an inner unity and a sense of absoluteness which bestows strength and happiness. This spiritual awakening is a perfectly blissful state and it is something to be discovered by each person for himself. Meditation is a way of stilling the mind and the capacity to understand completely the inner working of the mind. It brings choice-less awareness and thereby there is no craving for repeated enjoyment. In meditation the marks of all impressions are wiped away and as a result the mind which is a store house of the psychological past becomes quiet and without reaction, as the death of the ego brings the true state of meditative awareness which can be experienced here and now.

To live in the eternal moment is possible when our mind ceases to chatter. In meditation, every moment is refreshing and it takes us beyond mind and releases us from our repetitious past and is always the source of unfolding a new dimension which transcends time. When one views the entire universe from the depth of silence it is seen with new meaning, deep penetration, and completeness, and in that state of silence one observes each thing as it really is and thereby the auto-projections which disfigure reality are withdrawn.

It is very essential that we rediscover our real self through meditation. As long as a person is restless, agitated, and rootless (or has desire and/or opinions), his vision of life and the world is distorted, disoriented, and superficial.

Meditation is a method of curbing the mind and channeling its energy towards divinity. Benefits of meditation are directly received, for it is operational and experimental, since in meditation the emphasis of life is shifted from the external to the internal state of mind, as it gives certainty of truth through (im)personal experiences. This spiritual discipline of emptying one's mind gives a man the opportunity to arrive at a new dimension of divine consciousness, and at the same time solving mental stress and tension because this meditative awareness brings inevitably the unique magnetism of spiritual power together with the liberating and tranquillizing effect. This inner purity is very important not only for our own happiness and peace, but for society as a whole.

Until we establish perfect peace, a sense of unity and oneness within ourselves, we cannot solve human problems. Humanity is distressed as the sufferings and sorrows and worries form part of life's game. There is none who has not undergone pressing agonies in life, either physically, emotionally, and/or mentally. Modern man instead of searching for any radical solution and specific cure for this peculiar psychological disease collects around him various kinds of escape mechanisms. Yet human problems and their solutions are basically psychological and hence the solutions are to be found not by running away from them but by facing the problems directly without pretense.

All our psychological problems are rooted in ignorance. Hence, through meditation, we can enter into the divine state of supreme consciousness which will definitely help us to transcend the limitation of ignorance. Meditation gives us the capacity to refrain from all psychological reaction and thus maintain calmness of emotional non-involvement in the midst of a variety of experiences whether pleasurable or painful. An academic understanding of abstract concepts is useless (by itself) as it does not help us to live and experience life in all its relationships. There is a difference between mere intellectual understanding and meditative awareness. While conceptual understanding can be partial, the meditative awareness is not only total and all-embracing, but also fully awake with all the faculties so integrated in the discovery of truth.

For a person who is well-established in meditative awareness, life is not a complex network of various psychological forces, but a field of action in which

one expresses the creative intelligence and thereby eliminates the chain reactions of cause and effect as well as of psychological complications. Since all reactions produce and provoke various disturbances, freedom from the psychological conditions and the compulsion of opposite forces, like and dislike, is possible by observing the whole current of thought up to its very source. This meditative awareness is not passivity but it is an extraordinary and alert state of meditation where the depth of the mind is probed and thereby binding forces of psychological contradictions are completely broken as the aim of spiritual life is not only to liberate ourselves from the bondage and limitation of the mind, but also to dwell in the divine state of reality.

It is very necessary for a seeker to reconstitute the whole pattern of his thinking so that he can comprehend the beauty of cosmic consciousness, because the real transformation consists in awakening the faculty of meditative awareness. The hidden meaning of renunciation is not withdrawal or the abandonment of action, but essentially to have a new mode of enlightened understanding and thereby come into a harmonious working relationship with life so that we become a channel for the endless ocean of divine energy to flow through us.

In today's busy world, it is important to achieve our goals by establishing contact with that divine power which is higher than our mind and which is always a source of support. All we have to do is open the windows of the soul and surrender to the infinite so that we experience the unlimited blessings and benediction.

The aim of meditation is not merely to live a quiet life, but also to gain super-conscious experience in which state we attain real freedom. As long as one is entangled and imprisoned by unconscious urges of lust, anger, greed, selfishness, and violence one cannot enter into the realm of spiritual life.

Therefore, one must have the capacity not only to understand the various activities of the superficial mind, but also to penetrate into the dark corners of the unconscious mind and thereby transcend it to the higher level of intuition in which alone all the contradictions, pull of various desires in different directions, are completely annihilated. In meditation all our mental powers are beautifully balanced and integrated and the many layers of our consciousness move in harmony. In meditation the wall between our desires and the opposing ideas is

no more, and in that state we feel completely free, and yet we are quite capable of participating in any activity without being affected.

Meditation gives us a new insight into the unknown and brings in a great silence which is also extreme alertness. In meditation we have a view of the whole existence in a manner we could never have expected, because things, events, and life itself are seen in their naked truth without the covers our illusions throw over them. Meditation is an act of calming down or tranquillization of the mind. Meditation removes the mental strains and stains, cleanses and composes the mind, brings about unification of all the faculties and develops the divine potentials with which our soul is endowed.

As one meditates regularly one experiences an inner stillness and silence whereby one's spiritual perception and discernment grow clearer. Meditation does not mean inhibition of any kind nor does it imply any suppression or repression of mental urge, but it is essentially a process of self-discovery which brings about a synthesis, a total unification and integration. At the time of meditation we discover that the mind, which is a bundle of thoughts, does not exist. Then we experience inner solitude. Meditation is the breaking of all bondage. It is a state of inner freedom. Meditation gives us the capacity to live with full awareness in the present here and now.

† Article No. 60

The Essence of Esoteric Philosophy

Esoteric philosophy is a subject that one has to study not merely by the help of intellect but by intuitive understanding, because esoteric philosophy indicates the path of direct realization of divinity to which meditative awareness alone is the correct approach. Our physical eyes can see only the exoteric side of the manifested world, but to contact the unmanifested spiritual realm we have to train our minds by undergoing the tedious process of self-discipline and self-observation, as otherwise we will not be able to realize the planes of spirituality to which the esoteric philosophy points.

To discover the essence of reality, what is essential is the purification of the mind so that we can maintain meditative awareness through which we can get in touch with the divine energy. This energy is so delicate and swift that we must keep our physical bodies and minds absolutely clean and pure so that we can utilize the divine energy for beneficial purposes. By the attainment of meditation we can be a center of dynamic spiritual force and purify the physical bodies by the radiation of divine force. The reality which the esoteric philosophy explains is a living and dynamic supreme power that has to be realized by transcending the mind through meditation and contemplation. We are all influenced and conditioned by the sensational pressure of mind.

The mind is all the time in movement, chasing desires. The nature of desire is such that it is deceptive because it operates on the mind unconsciously and modifies itself by the association of other desires and thus we are unable to check them then and there. It seems that the human mind is a field for exploring various urges and contradictory instincts. The philosophy emphasizes the necessity of observing the subtle activities of the mind with alertness, so that we can establish a vital link with the supreme power of reality.

The world seems to exist only on the relative plane for the mind. If the mind, instead of seeing the objective world, watches subjectively its activities, then we find that what we call "mind" is negated and in its place something else shines in its full glory, and this reality is unrelated to the mind time, space, and causation. The reality to which we refer cannot be perceived in the dualistic approach of the mind because the time-bound mind withers away as soon as the illumination of divinity is realized. The esoteric philosophy guides us to direct contact with the supreme power which alone exists from the absolute point of view. We see the contradiction only in the relative plane in which the mind is involved in fabricating various complications.

If the mind can be kept silent by observation then there is no room for any emotional conflicts and psychological tensions. Every desire that operates in the mind brings the seed for the manifestation of mental conflict. The desire itself is a product of disturbance and therefore, any attempt to suppress it or indulge in it is also a desire.

The alternative, to be free from the desire, is to observe it calmly and face it without introducing personal reactions. This capacity to watch the desire will ultimately end in dissolution of the desire. The fact is that desire by itself is not the disturbing factor, but our individual likes and dislikes based on our past experience are the main cause for distraction. A desire is a kind of mental energy that is focused, and by giving coloration to it in the form of identification, condemnation, and justification we intensify the particular desire, instead of paying full attention to it. Perhaps it might have come with a certain message from the unconscious layers of the mind. By listening to the message attentively, which the desire symbolizes, we give the opportunity to the desire to express the idea and thus we do not suppress it or indulge in it.

If we can attend to each and every desire in this manner of prompt and concentrated attention, then life will be happy and peaceful. Esoteric philosophy stresses the need for undertaking the journey of self-discovery because only by understanding the activities of the mind through meditation alone can we eliminate the impurities of the past, impressions which are deeply rooted in the unconscious mind.

To investigate and explore the explosive regions of unconscious mind is not an easy task because the observer who is watching the impulses of the strong urges can be disturbed by the influence of the desire. Hence it is necessary that the observer must be extremely alert and attentive in observing the desire. As soon as the mind is stopped by the process of meditation we are capable of dissociating ourselves entirely from the disturbing elements which prevent us from realizing reality. In deep meditation the mind is still and in that state of stillness comes the alertness and clarity to perceive the reality. It is an extremely difficult task to achieve the profoundest state of meditation. We must observe the reactions of our mind all the time and this self-observation will bring extraordinary freedom to tackle the problem efficiently. Freedom can be discovered in transcending our mind to the level of the divine plane.

To have any conception of the supreme state of absolute reality by the mind is unreliable because the mind cannot gauge the subtle state of super-consciousness. The only alternative for the mind is to watch the operation of its own activities. In the relative plane where the mind is functioning we don't see objects as they actually are, but according to our likes and dislikes. In view of

this psychological difficulty we must transcend the mind to the absolute plane by the process of self-observation. The relative plane exists because of the mind and in the ultimate analysis the mind itself dissolves and thereby the relative world is negated by realization of the absolute reality.

Meditation is really a technique through which we purify the mind. Purity of mind is an essential factor in proceeding correctly on the path of self-discovery. The metaphysical aspect of meditation is that we are able to perceive the divine principle in life through which we understand the significance of life. We aspire to freedom, but the liberation we cherish can be had in the spiritual plane, and that spiritual state is a direct experience that comes as a result of intensive meditation.

As we live with our own thoughts and images we are not able to contact the reality. By dwelling on past incidents we poison the vitality of our mental force. We cannot approach a living thing by the projection of our desires on it as the life loses its significance and vitality because of the pollution of the past psychological impressions which destroy the divine elements in us. We are never alone with purity without the corruption of desires and we always give strength to the desires by deriving certain lower forms of gratification.

Why are we unable to live without desire? Why are these contradictory desires waging war on us? The main reason is that we do not have sufficient power to integrate all the forces of desires in one direction. The integration of personality comes by paying complete attention to each and every desire because this sort of undistracted attention gives us the capacity to observe without identifying it. The desires are rooted in our mind as a result of certain incomplete experiences and these impressions are major factors in the distraction of the mind. By observing the desires we are not only focusing our mental energy but also we are releasing the incomplete experiences.

In life we must move freely without the hindrance of desires so that we can enjoy the beauty of spiritual life with clarity of thought and purity of heart. We must develop the quality of watching everything without projecting our desires so that we can dissociate ourselves completely from the deception of desires. The firm determination to lead a spiritual life is an important qualification.

This is because the significance of spiritual life consists in discovering the reality which is beyond the mental function. By sheer ignorance we have identified ourselves with our desires and thus we have lost the capacity to live in the highest state of divinity. It is very important that we discriminate from the illusion of the unreal and in deep meditation alone we can get the faculty of discrimination through which we can find the real.

The world is governed by certain laws and these laws are working so mysteriously that we are unable to see with our physical eyes, but they can be understood by the faculty of intuition. To develop the intuition one must train the intellect systematically by following regular concentration so that we can increase the power of intuitional awareness. Intuition is a direct form of communication with reality in which the intellect is extremely sensitive and alert but inactive. By the process of self observation and meditation we eradicate the emotional complexes and disturbing desires which are impediments in the discovery of reality. The intellect can function freely when the psychological interest is dissolved by the force of concentration. The field in which the intellect can function should be where the emotional reactions are absent so that intellectual power can be utilized for development of intuition.

The clash between the intellect and emotion is the main cause for the intensification of an inner struggle which generates mental conflicts and tensions. The intellect is situated in a peculiar position according to which it can be attacked by the elements of emotion or it can be elevated by spiritual inspiration to higher consciousness to express the divine attributes.

Now the interesting question is what should a man do to have freedom from the limitation of the relative plane in which the human mind occupies an important place. The problem is not outside or in the manifested world. But the individual like or dislike is the main factor for mental disturbance which we try to escape. Any escape that comes from an external agency has no validity in solving the individual problems as that sort of escape which gives temporary relief from inner conflict should not be taken as permanent help in eradicating the innumerable desires to which the mind is attached and identified.

The only practical method of solving this fundamental problem is by self-observation which means the mind must be so alert to understand its reactions

in the mirror of relationship. If we train our mind to watch its activities and deceptions attentively all the time, then there is the possibility of exhausting the accumulated desires. As soon as past impressions are uprooted then the mind undergoes radical transformation.

As a result of this spiritual renewal the mind is purified and the mind becomes a proper medium to express the divine magnetism. Life has significance only when we discover that reality which comes spontaneously when the mind is calm, and the purpose of esoteric philosophy is to elevate the mind to the height of the absolute plane in which the law of causation is negated and transcended.

Esoteric philosophy is a science which explains the secret of the invisible world. What we see outwardly is not the real; behind the appearance there is a supreme power which manifests and sustains the entire world. The determination to lead a pure life is the important aspect in developing the capacity to perceive the invisible law. Our mind is distracted towards the lower sensual plane because of the impacts of impressions that it has gathered in the past; these impressions are strongly registered in the unconscious mind and these incomplete desires are responsible for the restless activities of the mind.

We cannot proceed in the path of self-realization until and unless we eradicate these scars of impressions. If we delve deeply in meditation, we will discover that the mind is nothing but a bundle of desires which prevent us from purifying the mind. The purificatory process can be attained only when we reach the highest level of absolute silence in which the mind is not dead but dynamically passive with full concentration.

It is this power of alertness through which we can observe everything in a witness-like state without reaction. The inner secret in solving human problems lies in understanding the activities of the mind by a choice-less awareness without imposing any religious belief or materialistic interpretations. Modern man is in a state of perpetual stress, physically and mentally, as a result of the present technological civilization, which is mainly based on the gratifications of senses.

Esoteric philosophy invites the modern man to live in a state which cannot be contaminated by the sensation of the mind. Man is affected by his own mind

and he is unable to watch the disturbing elements of thought process because he has identified himself with the series of thought as "I", but "I" is nothing other than a bundle of thoughts-sensations. To observe the origin of thoughts calmly, quietly, and in a detached manner, is the only possible method of transcending the reactions of the mind, so as to become established in the real self. The pressure of the mechanical mode of living makes the man want to escape from the illusion of sensual pleasure. Needless to say, that comforts and various facilities do not provide him with the satisfaction he seeks. Man cannot have liberation by indulging in sensational excitements.

We are living in an era which gives importance to scientific discovery. One cannot depend on the findings of science, as its conclusions are often contradicted by the scientists themselves in conformity with the latest research. Science by itself, cannot produce anything to satisfy modern man, as the nature of man is not only to master the physical world, but also to evolve in the direction of divine perfection. In this connection, the esoteric philosophy directs the modern man to divert his attention to the very source of his thinking process by meditational awareness. The world exists only in relation to the mind; when the mind is still held by deep contemplation, then in that profound silence, the mind is negated and in its place Self shines with full illumination. In the absence of mind, what is known is the consciousness of the Self.

Man is aspiring for happiness and liberation. But the modern man is afraid to live in that state of bliss in which the mind is brought to nothingness. Emotional excitements or logical analysis will not lead him to the real freedom which comes through meditation. One may ask the question that if the mind is brought to the state of voidness, then who is going to enjoy the blessings of the freedom? This question does not arise in the actual realization of reality, because in the transcendental state the super-consciousness, the duality of thinker and thought or experience and experiencer is non-existent. The Self alone shines in its purity.

The esoteric philosophy challenges the modern man to experiment by living rather than discussing it on the verbal level, as reality cannot be defined or argued about, but one has to live, and in the very living, every problem which man is confronted with will be solved. The problems exist only in the relative plane in which the mind is involved. In the absolute reality of super-

consciousness there is no problem or mental complex, which is the psychological disease of modern man. The economic security or the material prosperity will never give the happiness which man searches for. The defect in modern man is his utter inability in understanding the working of his own mind, and until and unless he discovers the functioning of his mind, he cannot solve any problem.

In the message of the esoteric philosophy what is stressed, is to understand the subtle functions of the mind and if the modern man cannot discover his mind, he has no basis for any judgment. His own mind deceives him in a thousand and one ways and he avoids facing this fact by forgetting himself in amusement and other activities. He is tired of every sort of worldly enjoyment which can be seen by his urge for philosophical literature, and especially spiritual aspirants are earnestly searching for knowledge of the eternal Self.

The esoteric philosophy holds that Truth alone exists and one must realize the reality, and the very discovery will liberate oneself. To commune with that reality one has to stop the process of thinking by silent meditation, and as soon as the mind reaches the state of serenity, then reality alone exists without the duality of mental complications.

† Article No. 55

Problems

One of the major preoccupations of life on the physical plane involves dealing with problems. From the personality perspective anything that presents an obstacle to the achievement of what the personality desires is a problem. Some problems are merely minor inconveniences, while others are of a magnitude that impacts the entire lifetime or one's opportunity to even remain incarnate. From the higher perspective, all problems are essentially the disguised mechanism of opportunity for the evolution of consciousness. They are the karmic instruments of learning (whether that learning occurs consciously or unconsciously).

Most people desire to be problem-free, happy, healthy, materially comfortable, etc. They therefore seek to avoid problems, resent problems, and feel

themselves to be somehow victimized by other people or God or “bad luck” when they view their lives as “burdened with problems.” The pursuit of happiness is their objective. The spiritual student, however realizes that the objective of physical plane experience is not the achievement of happiness, which is but a transient emotional condition, but learning and growth in consciousness. The spiritual student therefore holds a very different attitude toward problems.

Most of humanity earnestly desire to have their problems removed so that they may be happy and comfortable. That end point (happiness) is viewed (by most) as being all-important. The spiritual student, however, realizes that the learning, which is the purpose of physical existence, occurs as a result of the process of working through problems. If it were possible to have one’s problems instantly removed through divine or human intervention of some sort, what would be achieved? From the standpoint of evolution, nothing. From the standpoint of the personality, there would be a brief emotional contentment, but the lesson would remain unlearned, and according to karmic necessity, it would have to be dealt with either later in this lifetime or subsequently, in a future lifetime. Problems can be resolved, but only as the lessons they present are learned. In this sense, it is the process of resolution (learning) that is far more significant than the attainment of a problem-less state.

Therefore, the spiritual student has great respect, not resentment or disdain, for the problems that come before him or her. As he or she works through the process of dealing with problems, openness to the valuable lessons of each problem is maintained. He or she endeavors to approach each as a challenge calling forth the creative problem-solving ability (resolution through understanding) of the higher self.

It is also important for the spiritual student to view all problems from the perspective of a detached onlooker, refusing to become emotionally entangled. Emotional entanglement is the “normal” reaction to problems, and it often becomes a more significant problem to deal with than the original problem. An emotionally entangled personality is unresponsive to the guidance or energy from the higher self. This can be clearly observed in the case of physical health problems where an individual’s emotional response to the situation can play a tremendous role in either facilitating or inhibiting healing processes. The

emotional elemental naturally thrives on the stimulation of problems, reveling in worry, anger, fear, etc. But keeping the emotions stimulated prevents the effective learning that leads to the ultimate resolution of the problem. The extreme case of emotional entanglement can lead to suicide. Suicide essentially results when the emotional nature of the personality is completely unresponsive to the will of the soul, and acts independently in denying the soul the intended opportunity of that incarnation.

Problems all have an evolutionary purpose for those afflicted. The purpose (lesson) of some problems is obvious and karmically easily traced to improper action or thought in the current incarnation. The purpose of other problems is often not as obvious to the conscious mind. Karma can be of an individual or group nature, such that some problems are not specifically generated in response to the individual karma, but rather by the karma of the group (racial, national, historical, etc.) of which he or she is a part. Causes may also lie several lifetimes in the past with the effects manifesting in the current lifetime as a problem. Thus, when the spiritual student makes conscious attempts to understand the source (cause) of a problem, he or she is often limited by the inability of the concrete mind to know the individual and group history and evolutionary need.

Wherever possible, the spiritual student should endeavor to develop a conscious understanding of the cause of his or her problems (being very careful not to simply become self-deceived or arrogant in thinking that there is complete understanding where only a partial understanding may exist). In cases where one cannot honestly discern a cause, one should proceed in what appears to be the most appropriate manner, maintaining a positive, detached attitude, and trusting that learning on subconscious levels is taking place.

Sometimes karma appears to be cruel and great pain or suffering accompany it. If the spiritual student can maintain a perspective of calm detachment and surety that effects (pain, suffering, etc.) are purposeful opportunities when seen from the higher perspective and integrated over the course of evolution, he or she will have learned much about the maya, glamour, and illusion which cloud the physical, emotional, and mental existence. Confidence must also be maintained in the "justice" inherent in the fabric of the universe that works through karma, treating all equally (from the greater perspective) and according

to evolutionary need. Although it may be difficult to appreciate, suffering is a powerful mechanism for the growth of humanity.

Being impersonal and detached in dealing with one's own problems and those of others does not imply cold indifference. Humanity in the group and individual sense suffers greatly. The spiritual student may be acutely aware of that suffering and be deeply compassionate, but he does not become emotionally entangled and does not therefore compound the suffering by adding to the negative emotionally energized thought-forms that retard humanity's progress. The spiritual student may choose to work in an objective manner to aid the afflicted, but his help is often more valuable when rendered subjectively via the evocation and distribution of light energy through service-oriented meditation. Through such meditation light and healing energy are evoked for all within humanity who are responsive to that encouragement, not for specific individuals with specific problems.

Until the spiritual student has developed the intuition to the extent to which he or she can reliably discern the karma of others, it is advisable to be very careful in attempting to offer individual assistance with problems. Many sincerely motivated "spiritual healers," for example, have various abilities to work with the etheric body (and thereby produce effects in the physical body), but very few have any understanding of the karmic relationships involved. To produce a "healing" without karmic understanding would, from a higher perspective, simply serve to delay the eventual resolution of the karma (which would return later in the form of another problem). Those very few spiritual students who can discern karmic relationships can work true "miracles," but the "miracle" is really only the culmination of the learning process (in which case the "healer" is merely a facilitator). If the lesson has been learned, there is no longer a need for the problem to exist, and it can be resolved rapidly. "Miracles" only occur naturally, and when they are consistent with the individual's karma.

Seeking divine intervention, miracles, healing, or other forms of aid from friends, groups, or counselors is essentially looking to external sources for solutions to problems. These external sources can be helpful by sometimes offering encouragement or giving indications (hints) as to appropriate responses to the problem's challenge, but the actual "work" of understanding and resolving the karma associated with the problem must be accomplished by the afflicted

individual. No one can (although many try) lead another's life or solve another's problems for them.

Seeking external aid is reasonable in many cases, but the spiritual student should increasingly come to rely upon the soul, the Christ-within for guidance. He or she should not pray or will that problems go away, but rather that an increasing light of understanding illumine the way and reveal the lesson that is the hidden gift of each problem.

† Article No. 56

Change

The old saying, "Nothing ever stays the same," is more significant than is generally realized. Externally, everything in the manifested universe is in motion, from atoms to galaxies, with the constant movement bringing continuous outer change. Ultimately all that is manifested in the world of form will at some point naturally disappear, as the manifested becomes the unmanifested, only to later reappear in a changed form. On the higher, more subtle, inner planes of consciousness, there is change also, as consciousness is slowly evolving and developing higher quality through new awareness evoked from experience in the world of form.

Change is essential to evolution, although much change occurs so slowly and gradually that it is not readily noticed (appearance being deceiving). For all life, there are cycles within cycles of progressive growth and evolution (of form and consciousness) spread over vast timeframes that are difficult for humanity to perceive and even to conceive. Yet these cycles exist nonetheless, with associated forces moving the various lifewaves and composite lives along in the evolutionary flow. Only the Absolute God, the One, is unchangeable and immutable.

Overall, there are two types of external change, that which is relatively superficial and insignificant, and that which is relatively meaningful as it concerns the group or individual and its evolutionary progress. For humanity, the more significant outer changes can serve as awakeners from the sleep-like

absorption of the mundane world and personality life to instead becoming aware of higher, more spiritual concepts and purposes. To those who are responsive, outer changes can provide an opportunity to achieve a measure of freedom from the usual patterns and habits of mundane life, to attain new awareness and growth. Thus outer physical changes can be a catalyst for inner changes of consciousness.

Inner changes which relate to one's quality of consciousness are the true significant changes. The purpose of experience and expression on the lower planes of consciousness is to advance the evolution of consciousness. This is achieved by learning from experience and assimilating the lessons, understanding, and wisdom gained from activity on the lower planes. Assimilation of experience for most people is gradual and processed much later than the experience itself, between incarnations. Individuals with more awareness seek to consciously learn from experience in a more timely manner, while still in incarnation. This results in more substantial growth in consciousness.

External circumstances and experiences are the primary focus of most people, with their concept of change relating most directly to outer conditions: family, job, health, residence, social life, physical appearance, possessions, etc. However, external conditions are relatively unimportant in comparison with consciousness. Outer conditions merely afford the physical stage for learning, unfolding new scenes for the actors to experience and test their skills at enlightened living, thereby eventually increasing awareness and consciousness.

Any progressive outer change that occurs in the world of form and is lasting comes only as a result of an inner change of consciousness. There must be inner growth and realization to sustain outer progress, not merely superficial and temporary manipulation of form.

An outer change, however, can be the stimulus for a reflective inner evaluation of one's life. It can be initiated by the soul to spur the personality to take a fresh look at its pattern of living, and prompt new insights that result in modification of perspectives and habits. A change can involve giving up the old, the known, the comfortable and seemingly tried and true. In its place is the unknown, the

new, the untested and unproven, and often uncomfortable (to the personality). Change can offer opportunities, challenges, and tests.

Part of the difficulty of change is the reaction of the personality which either desires change and seeks it according to the personality's own terms, or fears change and seeks to avoid it. The typical personality (ego, mind) has many attachments which it does not want to relinquish, and it has its own agenda, independent of the soul: plans, dreams, schemes, hopes, and desires. Of detachment and desirelessness, the average person knows little.

There are some people who seek change and variety constantly for the sheer excitement (glamour) of it (to the personality), and out of boredom. But wherever they go, whatever the change, the people take themselves with them, with the same old limiting thoughts, feelings, and desires. The changes may be variations on a theme, as the outer circumstances change, but in reality it is the same old situation or issue just clothed or packaged a little differently. All of which means the individual still has the same basic lesson to learn that keeps recreating itself until it is mastered.

At the other extreme are people who are threatened and resistant to any change, preferring to hold onto only what is familiar, comfortable, and enjoyed, desiring to keep things exactly the way they are. They feel it takes less effort to cling to the known than to experience something new, and because of that attitude, they may be missing or postponing needed new learning opportunities (until they are compelled to do so). Besides, it is useless to try to prevent things from changing, to keep the world, or people, or places, or relationships exactly the same. It is against the forces of evolution, for from the long perspective, nothing in the world of form is static or permanent; it is all subject to modification and growth. Even truth itself evolves as higher more complete truths are revealed, as the student evolves and is better able to comprehend.

For the spiritual student, neither approach to change is appropriate. The serious student endeavors to be detached, desireless, and impersonal, committed to service in whatever form, place, manner, or timeframe his or her soul may guide. The spiritual student neither aggressively seeks change nor avoids change, for through desirelessness, humility, and meditative insight, it becomes apparent what path is appropriate, (relatively) uncolored by the student's own thoughts,

feelings, and desires. Thus the student is freer to intelligently respond to the higher energy flow and work with it, rather than endeavoring to arrogantly manipulate it or block it.

The energy flow is qualified by karma, taking into consideration all the many inputs and associated factors. It enfolds all lives from the lesser (less evolved) to the greater, qualifying all manifested life in accordance with evolutionary purpose. All of the outer conditions of life are produced by the energy flow and contained within it.

With humility, the spiritual student opens to the energy flow, endeavoring to accurately perceive it and intelligently and cooperatively work with it, finding the proper balance between blind passivity and active resistance to its direction. If what is intuitively perceived is also what the personality desires, then the spiritual student may be quite vulnerable to misinterpretation, especially if the student has a strong mind. For the mind can masquerade as the soul directing what the mind (ego) desires, and as long as there is personal energy involved, it is difficult to discern what is real. Therefore detachment, impersonality, and humility are beneficial to proper discernment.

While the energy flow may cause changes, the energy flow itself may be changed and appropriately modified depending on the response (reaction, resistance, arrogant manipulation, insightful understanding and cooperation) of those involved, as the responses become part of the causes of future effects. The timeframe and manner in which the energy flow occurs cannot be forcibly manipulated by the personality, for events unfold as they are intended, taking into consideration all karmic and evolutionary factors. A student's strong expectations (demands) may become blocks to the unfoldment of events until the student achieves the humble, detached state, and releases them.

As the spiritual student, intent on service, looks out into the external world, he or she may perceive a sorry scene, and the student's heart may be filled with compassion for those who suffer. It is natural to want to change conditions, but the student should approach the problem from the plane of causes and not just effects. Suffering exists because of the state of consciousness where selfishness, separateness, and ignorance hold sway. Hunger, homelessness,

disease, war, persecution, poverty, and prejudice are some of the results. To treat the form (effect) without also addressing the cause is futile.

Outer conditions, however harsh they seem, are a result of the law of cause and effect (karma). To seek to change external conditions, some consideration of the karmic factors is called for. Insights also are needed into what humanity can learn from the situation it helped create, what adjustments in consciousness need to be achieved, as well as what outer changes are required to be implemented. With this understanding, true inner changes in human consciousness can appropriately be encouraged and will gradually occur (usually taking longer than the student hopefully imagines, as genuine evolution of consciousness for humanity is a long process), with a resultant reflection externally that will be appropriate to the situation. Any outer changes that result may not necessarily be (and frequently are not) what an individual first desired, given the limitations of one's perspective, but rather the changes will be the appropriate effect of the causative factors modified by the new growth in inner consciousness.

As a student perceives the restorative energies within the overall energy flow, the student can align his or her efforts with the natural progressive flow. Working physically in humanitarian efforts to bring about progressive change is beneficial, but for the spiritual student, working subjectively and meditatively (aligned in a higher group effort if possible) is much more effective. And it is more helpful to focus on a general overall qualification of uplifting spiritual energy for humanity rather than on changing the specifics of form and external conditions.

For most people in incarnation, life is full of possible outer changes, birth, beginning school, graduation, new job, marriage, having children, empty nests, divorce, job promotions, no jobs, raises, pay cuts, relocations, new town, new country, new friends, no friends, new homes, no homes, good health, bad health, accidents, healings, successes, failures, war, peace, happiness, sadness, ignorance, knowledge, growing old, and ultimately death, to contrast just a few. Through it all, the spiritual student should maintain poise and detachment, facing with equanimity whatever comes his or her way, seeking to learn from it and intelligently responding to the circumstances.

With heart and mind focused on spiritual service and enlightenment, little can detour the student from higher goals. It is not that important whether a spiritual student has much or little outer change in life, whether there is great variety of experience or simplicity of outer life. Whatever is required from the energy flow will naturally come forward. What is important is that the student is learning from outer experiences in the world of form, and endeavoring to meditatively know the inner world of reality, which will result in inner changes (growth in consciousness), the only kind of change that really counts.

† Article No. 57

Speech

Speech, composed of articulate sounds and words to symbolize and communicate meaning, is potentially a great creative force. The creative power of speech enables the effective speaker, working through the throat center or chakra, to help bring into manifestation that which is spoken (assuming it is in accord with the bounds of karma). This creative potential has growing significance for spiritual students involved in spiritual development, refinement, and service.

The masses of humanity, however, have little awareness or understanding of the higher significance of speech, which is demonstrated by the manner in which they express themselves through the medium of speech. In many segments of society, the degenerative quality of speech degrades the speaker and listener alike. In some environments, coarse, vile, and degrading names, words, and remarks are repeatedly spoken, perhaps initially for shock value which after a while no longer shock, but become routine. This demeaning speech is reflected to an extent in the public at large; e.g., in the media, inappropriate words (with corresponding thoughts and feelings) are routinely expressed in movie dialogues and in song lyrics, as well as in casual conversation. Sometimes violent, cruel, and despicable thoughts and acts are repeatedly encouraged in degenerative utterances. All such speech brings with it a low quality of negative energy and an overall qualification that degrades and pollutes the local environment,

undermines spiritual awareness, and contributes to the debasing of the planetary mental and emotional aura.

Much coarse speech is spoken in the name of sophistication, or of rebellion, without awareness or consideration of the effects and consequences. The effects of such speech are especially strong on young people and those who are easily influenced. When coupled with strong visual pictures, the impact is magnified.

Speech can be a powerful tool of public influence, as any leader realizes who has used it to mobilize the (unthinking) masses to rally to his or her purposes through a rousing public address. The magnetic quality expressing through the speech and throat center of a public speaker can be used for selfish purposes or higher purpose, depending on the spiritual quality, consciousness, and motive of the speaker. A more selfish or personality-oriented speaker expresses through a more hypnotic magnetic quality that appeals to the emotions of the audience and less along the line of encouraging intelligent consideration of ideas. An effective spiritually oriented speaker expresses a higher type of magnetism that appeals more to the higher minds of the audience.

In the mundane world, there exists a constant commotion of chatter and idle talk. The mindless babbling undermines an individual's self-restraint and proper consideration and evaluation of what he (she) is about to say before he (she) says it. The person talks without really thinking. Even when an individual does have something meaningful and appropriate to say, one's constant talking diminishes the potency and dilutes the impact of what one says. Because society encourages constant chatter, when a person is quiet, the individual is likely to be asked what is wrong, or there is an assumption of shyness.

Gossip consumes much of the talk of an increasingly intrusive public, ranging from gossip about an individual's own immediate circle of acquaintances, to the many celebrities in the public eye. In this type of conversation, the focus is ever on the personality and outer material life. Discussions of ideas and concepts are much less appealing to the emotionally polarized public.

Even with all the many words sounded daily, speech can convey a meaning beyond the words used. In higher speech, by attuning to the energy behind the words, sometimes more subtle meaning may be revealed to those who really listen. Esoterically, words may have layers of meaning and through intuitive awareness, a properly qualified spiritual student may perceive the higher meaning.

Even in an exoteric sense, more is communicated through speech than just the words themselves; e.g., the tone of voice expressed can indicate sincerity and gentleness, or harshness and sarcasm. Sarcasm can undermine and turn words into swords. It is wielded considerably in the name of humor, but depending on motive, sarcasm can communicate mocking, or ridicule and contempt, rather than conveying some form of encouraging energy. The energy behind the words is often negative and destructive to some degree rather than positive and uplifting.

Criticism conveyed in speech is usually destructive rather than helpful. Criticism is often stated purportedly to assist an individual, but it is rare that the motive is pure and harmless. At times honest evaluations must be given, and with higher intent, this can be done in a beneficial manner, as one looks for the good as well as what is lacking. The tone of voice and loudness of a speaker may also convey negative qualities such as impatience, irritation, anger, excitement, or depression, all of which can indicate loss of emotional and mental control on the part of the speaker. Conversely, there is much truth to the saying, "A soft voice turns away wrath." A calm, gentle voice can help heal, inspire, and encourage.

Speaking the truth is worthwhile for all persons. However, many people regularly lie and see nothing wrong in it. For the general public, that inevitably (eventually) brings its own consequences. For spiritual students, it is more serious; the consequences are greater, and it also undermines efforts to recognize the truth. If one does not respect the truth and endeavor to be truthful, one develops little facility for realization of truth.

Therefore one should be truthful in all things, small or large. A person should say what one means and mean what one says. One should be accurate in speech, and not be careless with facts and details. An individual should be

sincere and avoid being two-faced. It is far better to say nothing than to knowingly mislead or misstate what is true.

For speech can at times trigger powerful effects. In fact, what a person says (thinks, believes) can become a self-fulfilling prophecy (depending upon the potency involved). Even something said in kidding can (will) be taken literally by the speaker's own subconscious mind as it endeavors to some degree to bring what is said into outer manifestation. The speaker may not mean it, but the subconscious mind thinks that he or she does.

Indeed there is much thoughtless speech in the public at large. But for the serious spiritual student, the continual goal is "right speech." "Right speech," as one of the qualities of the Noble Eightfold Path, means self-control in speech so that it is true, gentle, kind, necessary, useful, and constructive. A spiritual student must refrain from idle talk and gossip and thus help avoid absorption in the mundane world. "Right speech" assists in the proper discipline and refinement of the emotional and mental bodies of the spiritual student.

"Right speech" is also closely related to "right belief," "right thought," and "right action," all significant aspects of right spiritual living.

As the spiritual student grows, he (she) develops the throat chakra, the etheric force center that is related to speech. The throat center transforms thought energies into speech energies and is involved in their projection. The student begins to learn how to consciously control and utilize the throat chakra and direct its creative power.

One of the aspects of speech is its effectiveness (as an aspect of one's quality of consciousness) as reflected through the coherence and magnitude of the throat center. The magnitude relates to the intensity and potency of the throat center while the coherence relates to the quality and purity of the center. The magnetism and focus of the throat center encourage the degree of response to the speaker. A magnetic rapport is needed with an audience, and the throat center must be properly focused to insure that the energies will not be scattered. With a well-developed throat center, there will be a natural flowing of thought energies and their transformation into projected speech which will have a creative impact on its environment.

It is important to know how to speak effectively, but it is just as important to know when to speak, and when not to speak. With discretion comes wisdom. In silence, there can be enlightenment. In quietude, one silences the outer voice that the inner voice of the soul may speak, the Voice of the Silence. This is quite difficult for the average spiritual aspirant to do, so great is the programming of outer mundane life for constant speech. Thus many of the mystery schools of ages past had a rule that all beginners were not allowed to speak for two years after entering the school. Following the two years, they hopefully had learned sufficient reticence of speech.

While it may be unrealistic to think that spiritual students of today living in the outer world should refrain from speaking for two years, students nonetheless should endeavor to develop reticence and to speak less and think more. Although speech is currently a primary means of communication on the physical plane, telepathy and intuitive perception are other more direct, less cumbersome means of communication and will eventually play an increasing role.

Speech is a creative magical force which can cause thoughts to become materialized. The white magicians of the spiritual hierarchy have knowledge and understanding of the force of speech and of silence. There is a segment of magical work which employs mantras, formulas, and words of power which call into action the creative forces of nature and achieve magical effects. The work is closely protected to help insure as much as possible that only those who are spiritually evolved and properly qualified have access to such knowledge. The white magician works for the benefit of the whole and the greater good in accordance with higher purpose. The black magician works for selfish purposes of his own lower nature.

On macrocosmic levels, the process of creation is carried on through speech, sound, and by use of the Word. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was God." And so it was that according to the Old Testament (and other scriptures and sacred books), the worlds were created by the Word (sound, speech) of God.

Thus spiritual students should have an increasing respect for the great power of speech and guard well its use. As man the microcosm grows and evolves,

moving from unevolved, unthinking man to intelligent man, and eventually to an aspirant and disciple on the spiritual path, so his relative potency grows. The quality and appropriateness of his words and manner of speech become increasingly more significant as he increases his ability to impact the environment through speech. Though initially untrained and unaware of the specific thought-forms he creates and vitalizes through speech, the student should be aware in a general sense that this process is on-going, and that he has the potential for doing more harm (as well as good) than average man.

Therefore he should carefully discipline his thoughts and his speech. He should refrain from ordinary patterns of talking, regulate his speech, and develop reticence. When he does speak, it should be "right speech" which is honest, constructive, and helpful. Through these and other disciplines, the serious spiritual student will begin to qualify himself eventually for training and knowledge about aspects of the higher creative magic of speech, which someday will be employed by the student in spiritual service.

The typical coarse speech, continual chatter, and degrading utterances within mundane life are far removed from the higher, spiritualized use of speech. How great is humanity's lack of awareness and understanding as it slowly moves toward evolutionary progress. And yet the higher creative power of speech cannot be lost or undermined. Encouragingly, the outer sounds of ignorance, no matter how coarse or loud the volume, cannot drown out the inner sound of the Voice of the Silence, and cannot still its resulting enlightenment.

† Article No. 58

Separativeness 1

Separativeness is the tendency to separate, to set or keep apart, to divide, differentiate, or discriminate between, to disunite. Separateness is the opposite of oneness and unity, and as such, in a higher sense, it is an illusion, but in the objective world, it is a very potent and challenging illusion, and one with which all spiritual students must deal. The source of the illusion is the underlying miasma of matter and form, with duality created in the differentiation of spirit

and matter. Yet, there is only one God within which all lives and forms are differentiated. God is immanent and transcendent, and there are no lives, or places, or forms in which God is not, for all is One.

In the process of manifestation, however, at the beginning of each manvantara (or great cycle of manifestation), the One Life differentiates itself into the many lives for evolutionary purposes. After eons of development and evolution, the many lives, greatly enhanced in spiritual consciousness, return to the One, and manifestation ceases (and that which is manifested is withdrawn) for a corresponding cycle of pralaya, to await another great cycle of manifestation. Initially in manifestation, the illusion of separateness serves a purpose to advance the cause of evolution, but at the later stages, it is counterproductive, and must be overcome.

In the first major phase of manifestation, involution or the path of descent, there is an immersion of spirit into matter and ultimately a “forgetting” of the oneness with God. The consciousness that exists, although primitive, is group consciousness, not individual consciousness. A lifewave, on the path of descent, moves through the elemental, mineral, plant, and animal kingdoms. When a lifewave reaches the animal kingdom, a shared group soul for each species exists, and through instinct (intelligence and intuition have yet to develop), there is still a sense of (unconscious) interconnectedness. This quality can be observed in the instinctive (unconsciously collaborative) behavior of many animal species.

The second major phase of manifestation is evolution, the path of ascent, which commences after the lifewave advances into the human kingdom through the process of individualization. The units of the lifewave are then at their lowest point of immersion into matter and appear the most separate, functioning at this stage with (seemingly) individual souls and a growing awareness of self-consciousness. The illusion of separateness is required because the human being must develop the intellect and begin to think for himself (herself), learning to choose to do what is right himself (herself) rather than having it imposed or simply blindly following in mass consciousness. Instinct must eventually be replaced by intelligence, and later when the influence of the soul is established, by intuition.

In the human kingdom, the personality (lower self) (ego) is the instrument of separative, independent existence. The personality succumbs to the illusion of separateness, while the soul (the higher self) knows no such separation. The soul recognizes its oneness with all other souls and with the one soul or oversoul of which it is a part, as well as its unity with all life. For the soul, there can be no "otherness" or separation of life.

The unevolved individual lives through great numbers of incarnations and thereby gains much experience. As the individual learns from experience, the physical body, the emotional nature, and the mind develop more and become stronger, and each takes on an independent, separative direction of its own. The personality, a reflection of the overshadowing (indwelling) soul, is a composite consciousness of physical, emotional, and mental elemental lives on the involutory path, and each body of lives expresses a particular (usually different) ray energy.

The physical elemental lives which compose the physical body are inertial, and resist movement and activity, but need movement and activity in order to progress. This is provided by the astral or emotional elemental lives, which instinctively stimulate the physical body as a means of further stimulating the emotional or astral body. Astral or emotional elementals instinctively produce the highs and lows of emotional expression. Mental elementals instinctively encourage the evocation of thinking, and that tendency must be overcome if the mind is to be calmed.

Depending upon the degree of relative independence of the three aspects, the personality is accordingly scattered and non-cohesive, being unable to function effectively. A major challenge for the individual is to integrate these three aspects into one coherent unit, the personality, with the personality ray dominating the over-all expression. The mind is employed in controlling the physical body and the emotions. As the personality becomes more refined and responsive to the soul, a small semblance of inclusiveness and brotherhood gradually begins to emerge. The illusion of separation from God and from other human beings begins to weaken. But it is a long process before the higher light of reality finally breaks through.

As the rapport between personality and soul grows, the individual is drawn onto the path of accelerated human development known as the formal spiritual path. Being an aspirant to the path, the spiritual student comes to believe in the concept of unity and the oneness of all life. However, as a disciple and later as an adept, he is required to actually live that principle. On the formal spiritual path, the great sin is the sin of separateness. It is not the sin of individuality, for the true individuality is the soul, not its lower reflection, the personality, and the soul inclusively knows all units of consciousness to be an expression of the One Life. When the personality achieves spiritual alignment with the soul, it too attains that realization.

The long-range evolutionary goal of (life in) the human kingdom is to advance to the next highest kingdom, the superhuman kingdom of souls. By developing self-mastery over his lower nature and realization of his true higher nature (the soul) (the monad), the individual strengthens his unity with all life and increases his desire and ability to serve. He identifies with the greater whole, offers encouragement to all, and knows that when others succeed, so does he, for all are one. He becomes group conscious on soul levels, which because the individual has advanced through individualization, self-consciousness, and the spiritual realizations of the human kingdom, this group consciousness is on a much higher turn of the spiral than the group consciousness of the less-evolved animal kingdom.

Those in the superhuman kingdom of souls such as the masters, chohans, mahachochan, manu, bodhisattva, etc. (those in the spiritual hierarchy) embody the oneness with all life, and through true selflessness, regularly sacrifice their own growth to help others. More and more, this impulse of (sense of) oneness and self-sacrifice increases as one evolves. Shining examples are seen in the buddhas of compassion whose love and compassion is so all-encompassing that they willingly forego their higher place to serve and subjectively encourage their younger, less evolved brothers. On the other hand, the pratyeka buddhas who have also achieved the spiritual accomplishment of buddhahood, become absorbed on a higher level of unity.

And so does the glorious path of spiritual evolution stand before humanity. Thus it is so important to overcome separateness and selfishness at the appropriate (required) stage of the developmental process. As an individual

becomes more potent, the unresolved coarseness and lack of refinement become more serious, and the personality (the physical body, the emotions, and the mind) become more difficult to tame and control.

The selfish, separative, independent ego is not responsive to the soul. Karma, the teacher, will endeavor to compel refinement and responsiveness through harsh circumstances and experiences, if necessary. The little life eventually must be in harmony with the greater life.

Most or all of the world's and an individual's problems are caused by separateness and selfishness. Poverty, hunger, war, pollution, crime, cruelty, fear, and despair have their seeds in the illusion of separateness from God, from other people, and other life. Selfishness cannot exist where there is true realization of the oneness of all life. The narcissistic, hedonistic, and materialistic tendencies and values of humanity must be transformed through higher consciousness and awareness. Self-interest must give way to group interest, and selfish pursuits to spiritual service. What is for the highest good of all concerned must be the decisive factor of any endeavor.

Spiritual students, through their own inner realizations of unity, can lead the way for humanity. And yet there are many impediments to these realizations. By examining the common obstacles shared by humanity and all spiritual students, as well as considering, with humility, one's own particular tendencies, the light of the soul may be poured in and greater understanding achieved.

† Article No. 59

Separativeness 2

Separativeness is a consequence of manifestation in which the one life (God) differentiates into many lives for evolutionary purposes. The result in the objective world is the illusion of duality of spirit and matter. The sense of separateness grows within a lifewave as it moves along the involutory path of descent into matter. It culminates with individualization and self-consciousness as a lifewave advances into the human kingdom. Thereafter, the

evolving lives enter the path of return to God, and as they develop greater consciousness and awareness, they become greatly enhanced in quality. The increased spiritual awareness enables each life to overcome the illusion of separateness, as it realizes its oneness with God and other lives.

In this particular cycle or stage of human evolution, the goal is to advance the polarization of consciousness from the emotional plane of consciousness to polarization on the mental plane. This involves overcoming lower emotional expression while achieving additional development of the mind. Over-emotionalism and the coarse or negative feelings and passions of the personality, as well as selfish, personal, sentimental love must be overcome and transmuted into higher heart-centered (soul) expression.

Pure, refined emotions of more noble human expression need to be developed such as all-inclusive, impersonal (selfless) love, compassion, goodwill, aspiration, and joy. Mental growth must be accomplished involving both the concrete and abstract mind. The well-developed mind, tempered by the soul, is the instrument employed to properly transcend the lower emotional nature.

However, when the mastering of coarser emotions and the achievement of mental polarization is the spiritual student's objective, sometimes mistakenly the student develops an aversion to expressing any emotion, not only the lower, more personal (selfish) emotions which must be transmuted, but the higher, more refined emotions as well. And therein lies a potential problem related to separateness and separativeness.

The mind becomes increasingly strong. The student realizes he has acquired considerably more knowledge and has developed much greater mental power than previously held. He also realizes his mental ability is much greater than the average person. These realizations, when untempered by heart quality and the soul, unfortunately can breed pride and resulting further separateness (and separativeness) through a tendency to (naively) look down upon those who are not as far along in the developmental process. The somewhat advanced individual may (falsely) consider himself (herself) superior or elite (even though there are always those who have achieved higher development, the more advanced individual eventually overcomes all sense of superiority).

Developing the concrete mind stimulates the critical and separative nature, which is first rooted in the defensive instincts and compounded by glamour and self-centeredness. The unrefined emotions and the unrefined concrete mind may express separativeness through glamour, exclusiveness, personalization, pride, arrogance, disdain, selfishness, and self-absorption. The sight of the greater unity is lost in any emphasis upon the differences and (perceived or imagined) failings of others. While tendencies toward separativeness, pride, and criticalness may be particularly stimulated by unbalanced mental development, they may be additionally strengthened by the lower expression of any one or more of the seven ray energies in the personality.

The lower expressions (weaknesses) of any of the seven ray qualities must eventually be transmuted into the higher expressions (strengths), and a proper balance of head and heart energies must be achieved. For example, having a preponderance of heart-centered, mystical, even-numbered rays (rays 2, 4, and 6) provides special challenges in regard to achieving proper emotional control and refinement, and the development of the mind and mental polarization. A well-developed mind is much more challenging to achieve where there is a preponderance of mystical ray energies, but such a mind is needed to control, refine, and uplift the lower emotional nature into higher spiritual expression.

Intellectual Separativeness

For the individual with mostly occult (head-centered) rays, the challenge to develop heart quality and to dispel the illusion of separateness is potentially considerable. If a person has a preponderant First Ray energy (of will and power) or Fifth Ray energy (of concrete knowledge) and is lacking refinement [as well as to a lesser degree, a preponderant Third Ray energy (of active intelligence) or Seventh Ray energy (of organization and ceremonial magic)], he or she must deal with additional implied separative tendencies as the mind develops. Wherever there are opinions, there is separateness and there is separativeness.

Some of the weaknesses of the head-centered First Ray which must be transcended are willfulness, separativeness, isolativeness, aloofness, pride, arrogance, egotism, impatience, obstinacy, hardness, cruelty, domination,

feelings of superiority, lack of respect for others, unrelenting ambition, and independence.

Some of the weaknesses of the head-centered Fifth Ray are criticalness, concrete mindedness, over-analysis, separateness, tendency to divide or precipitate cleavages, narrowness of thinking, excessive mentalism, absorption in the glamour of mental development, enchantment with mental power, lack of emotional responsiveness, and lack of feeling for others.

Each of these qualities is a barrier to development of heart quality and oneness. Instead of love for mankind, a disdain for mankind may unfold. For example, when tragedies occur to humanity or to individuals, little compassion may be felt, for the student enchanted with and hardened by the mind will duly note that the incident is caused by karma, which is true (as everything is governed by karma, the seemingly fortunate and unfortunate). Yet wherever there is a lack of heart energy, there will be little or no attempt by the student to (impersonally) share encouraging energies such as light and love.

The hard-hearted person tends to insulate himself (herself) from any feelings for or identification with anyone so foolish or coarse as to suffer such consequences. And yet the seeming misfortune provides learning opportunities for those who experience it, as well as providing an opportunity for the on-looking spiritual student to demonstrate the heart qualities of compassion and a sense of oneness (not separateness) by offering uplifting energies.

The serious spiritual student must develop the virtues of inclusive love, humility, compassion, goodwill, and oneness. The mind alone cannot achieve this. The mind can help enable the student to recognize the merit and need of such qualities. But it is heart quality that provides the means of achievement (for the head-centered student). And for a person with a very potent mind, developing an equally large and balancing measure of heart may be a very challenging task to accomplish, as it means the mind must give up some of its power.

But it must be done for greater purposes as well as for the student's own well-being, for the stronger the mind becomes, the greater is the challenge to master

it, and the more devious and subtle the mind becomes in protecting its power and domain.

The student may think he (she) has achieved a great deal of humility or compassion or heart quality because that is what the mind wants him (her) to believe. But it may be an illusion. Eventually circumstances will force him (her) to face the truth and deal honestly with the issue. The student will be forced to realize that he (she) is not a separate "island," but rather is "a piece of the continent, a part of the main." Whatever happens to his neighbor affects him also. He cannot separate and isolate himself.

In commencing the effort to expand the heart nature, love, compassion, and goodwill need to be truly felt, experienced, and realized. The aversion of a spiritual student to expressing any type of emotion (not just the lower, coarser emotions) must be overcome as one gradually learns to awaken and increase the flow of heart energies from the soul. The student needs to look for the good (the God) in all, not for the bad, for what one looks for, one will find.

Recognizing the good and God in all helps break down the artificial and illusionary barriers of separateness, and reinforces the realization of oneness and the rapport with all life. The higher emotions need to be expressed with loving detachment, heart-centered impersonality, and mature sympathy and empathy. This enables one to help another while maintaining poise, higher understanding, and alignment with one's higher self (the soul), while avoiding becoming emotionally upset, and inappropriately entangled and distracted. Only a person who is stable, strong, and well-balanced can effectively aid another.

In any serious effort to heal or assist another person (or group), there first must be compassion (and mature, unselfish love) to be of real service. Love provides the rapport and interconnectedness, because God, the Solar Logos of this solar system and the essence of oneness, is Love and Wisdom (an expression of Second Ray energy). Expressing love helps the spiritual student reflect the God within, while establishing the link with another person (or group) through which healing and encouraging energies can flow. As the student moves forward upon the spiritual path, service to humanity (and the lower kingdoms) becomes an increasingly significant responsibility (dharma), and the nature of a student's heart quality continues to be an expanding aspect of the service requirement.

Emotional Separativeness

Emotional separativeness is in some ways more potent than its intellectual counterpart, because the idea is intensified and propagated through emotionalization. Religiously inspired strife and warfare (imposition of dogma, holy wars, inquisitions) for example, are a matter of separativeness along so-called mystical lines.

It is the materialism of each of the lower bodies and the inherent nature of the ego (self-centeredness) that produces or sustains the illusion (separateness). Wherever that selfishness or self-centeredness is emotionalized, the problem is compounded by the inherent intensification and glamorization (unconscious self-justification) conveyed by the emotions. All three of the even-numbered rays in the human context involve some degree of emotional excess to be overcome through refinement (and mental balance). Wherever there are strong feelings, however noble those feelings may be, there is separateness and separativeness, by virtue of the differences engendered. The whole emotional realm is a matter of attraction and repulsion, of harmony through conflict, of independence in every selfish emotion.

Balance

Yet, none of the seven rays, in and of itself, is any more or less separative than any other. Separativeness occurs throughout the rays wherever there is coarseness and a lack of refinement on some level. Each has a considerable separative tendency in its materialistic and personal side, yet each also has a considerable (albeit masked) tendency toward unification and realization (synthesis). To succeed in overcoming separativeness, one must “understand” as well as “feel” a sense of unity in diversity.

Ultimately for the serious spiritual student, there must be the development and proper balance of both the heart and the head, for the contributions, qualities, and development of both centers are needed to appropriately tread the spiritual path. Where one or the other quality is lacking or in considerable lesser proportion than the other, the imbalance can become a basic limitation to advancement upon the path. The spiritual student, as he endeavors to become

(be) the higher self (the soul), must develop considerable head quality to overcome ignorance leading to enlightenment, but it is heart quality in its higher sense which ultimately overcomes separateness, leading to unity with God. In the unfolded lotus heart of the soul, there can be no divisions, no separateness, no selfishness, only love, compassion, and the quiet and refined joy of oneness with all life.

† Article No. 61

At the Feet of the Master 1

Discrimination

The first of these qualifications is discrimination; and this is usually taken as the discrimination between the real and the unreal which leads men to enter the Path. It is this, but it is also much more; and it is to be practiced, not only at the beginning of the Path, but at every step of it every day until the end. You enter the Path because you have learned that on it alone can be found those things which are worth gaining. Men who do not know, work to gain wealth and power, but these are at most for one life only, and therefore unreal. There are greater things than these, things which are real and lasting; when you have once seen these, you desire those others no more.

In all the world there are only two kinds of people -- those who know, and those who do not know; and this knowledge is the thing which matters. What religion a man holds, to what race he belongs -- these things are not important; the really important thing is this knowledge -- the knowledge of God's plan for men. For God has a plan, and that plan is evolution. When once a man has seen that and really knows it, he cannot help working for it and making himself one with it, because it is so glorious, so beautiful. So, because he knows, he is on God's side, standing for good and resisting evil, working for evolution and not for selfishness.

If he is on God's side he is one of us, and it does not matter in the least whether he calls himself a Hindu or a Buddhist, a Christian or a Muslim, whether he is an Indian or an Englishman, a Chinaman or a Russian. Those who are on His

side know why they are here and what they should do, and they are trying to do it; all the others do not yet know what they should do, and so they often act foolishly, and try to invent ways for themselves which they think will be pleasant for themselves, not understanding that all are one, and that therefore only what the One wills can ever be really pleasant for any one. They are following the unreal instead of the real. Until they learn to distinguish between these two, they have not ranged themselves on God's side, and so this discrimination is the first step.

But even when the choice is made, you must still remember that of the real and the unreal there are many varieties; and discrimination must still be made between the right and the wrong, the important and the unimportant, the useful and the useless, the true and the false, the selfish and the unselfish.

Between the right and wrong it should not be difficult to choose, for those who wish to follow the Master [soul] have already decided to take the right at all costs. But the body and the man are two, and the man's will is not always what the body wishes. When your body wishes something, stop and think whether you really wish for it. For you are God, and you will only what God wills; but you must dig deep down into yourself to find the God within you, and listen to His voice, which is your voice. Do not mistake your bodies for yourself -- neither the physical body, nor the astral, nor the mental. Each one of them will pretend to be the Self, in order to gain what it wants. But you must know them all, and know yourself as their master.

When there is work that must be done, the physical body wants to rest, to go out walking, to eat and drink; and the man who does not know says to himself: "I want to do these things, and I must do them." But the man who knows says: "This that wants is not I, and it must wait awhile."

Often when there is an opportunity to help some one, the body feels: "How much trouble it will be for men; let some one else do it." But the man replies to his body: "You shall not hinder me in doing good work."

The body is your animal -- the horse upon which you ride. Therefore you must treat it well, and take good care of it; you must not overwork it, you must feed it properly on pure food and drink only, and keep it strictly clean always, even

from the minutest speck of dirt. For without a perfectly clean and healthy body you cannot do the arduous work of preparation, you cannot bear its ceaseless strain. But it must always be you who controls that body, not it that controls you.

The astral body has its desires -- dozens of them; it wants you to be angry, to say sharp words, to feel jealous, to be greedy for money, to envy other people their possessions, to yield yourself to depression. All these things it wants, and many more, not because it wishes to harm you, but because it likes violent vibrations, and likes to change them constantly. But you want none of these things, and therefore you must discriminate between your wants and your body's.

Your mental body wishes to think itself proudly separate, to think much of itself and little of others. Even when you have turned it away from worldly things, it still tries to calculate for self, to make you think of your own progress, instead of thinking of the Master's [soul's] work and of helping others. When you meditate, it will try to make you think of the many different things which it wants instead of the one thing which you want. You are not this mind, but it is yours to use; so here again discrimination is necessary. You must watch unceasingly, or you will fail.

Between right and wrong, occultism knows no compromise. At whatever apparent cost, that which is right you must do, that which is wrong you must not do, no matter what the ignorant may think or say. You must study deeply the hidden laws of nature, and when you know them arrange your life according to them, using always reason and common-sense.

You must discriminate between the important and the unimportant. Firm as a rock where right and wrong are concerned, yield always to others in things which do not matter. For you must be always gentle and kindly, reasonable and accommodating, leaving to others the same full liberty which you need for yourself.

Try to see what is worth doing; and remember that you must not judge by the size of a thing. A small thing which is directly useful in the Master's [soul's] work is far better worth doing than a large thing which the world would call

good. You must distinguish not only the useful from the useless, but the more useful from the less useful. To feed the poor is a good and noble and useful work; yet to feed their souls is nobler and more useful than to feed their bodies. Any rich man can feed the body, but only those who know can feed the soul. If you know, it is your duty to help others to know.

However wise you may be already, on this Path you have much to learn; so much that here also there must be discrimination, and you must think carefully what is worth learning. All knowledge is useful, and one day you will have all knowledge; but while you have only part, take care that it is the most useful part. God is wisdom as well as love; and the more wisdom you have the more you can manifest of Him. Study then, but study first that which will most help you to help others. Work patiently at your studies, not that men may think you wise, not even that you may have the happiness of being wise, but because only the wise man can be wisely helpful. However much you wish to help, if you are ignorant you may do more harm than good.

You must distinguish between truth and falsehood; you must learn to be true all through, in thought and word and deed.

In thought first; and that is not easy, for there are in the world many untrue thoughts, many foolish superstitions, and no one who is enslaved by them can make progress. Therefore you must not hold a thought just because many other people hold it, nor because it has been believed for centuries, nor because it is written in some book which men think sacred; you must think of the matter for yourself, and judge for yourself whether it is reasonable. Remember that though a thousand men agree upon a subject, if they know nothing about that subject their opinion is of no value. He who would walk upon the Path must learn to think for himself, for superstition is one of the greatest evils in the world, one of the fetters from which you must utterly free yourself.

Your thought about others must be true; you must not think of them what you do not know. Do not suppose that they are always thinking of you. If a man does something which you think will harm you, or says something which you think applies to you, do not think at once: "He meant to injure me." Most probably he never thought of you at all, for each person has his own troubles and his thought turn chiefly around himself. If a man speak angrily to you, do not

think: "He hates me, he wishes to wound me." Probably some one or something else has made him angry, and because he happens to meet you he turns his anger upon you. He is acting foolishly, for all anger is foolish, but you must not therefore think untruly of him.

When you become a pupil of the Master [soul], you may always try the truth of your thought by laying it besides his. For the pupil is one with the Master [soul], and he needs only to put back his thought into the Master's [soul's] thought to see at once whether it agrees. If it does not, it is wrong, and he changes it instantly, for the Master's [soul's] thought is perfect, because he knows all.

Those who are not yet accepted by him cannot do quite this; but they may greatly help themselves by stopping often to think: "What would the Master think about this? What would the Master say or do under these circumstances?" For you must never do or say or think what you cannot imagine the Master as doing or saying or thinking.

You must be true in speech too -- accurate and without exaggeration. Never attribute motives to another; only his Master [soul] knows his thoughts, and he may be acting from reasons which have never entered your mind. If you hear a story against any one, do not repeat it; it may not be true, and even if it is, it is kinder to say nothing. Think well before speaking, lest you should fall into inaccuracy.

Be true in action; never pretend to be other than you are, for all pretence is a hindrance to the pure light of truth, which should shine through you as sunlight shines through clear glass.

You must discriminate between the selfish and the unselfish. For selfishness has many forms, and when you think you have finally killed it in one of them, it arises in another as strongly as ever. But by degrees you will become so full of thought for the helping of others that there will be no room, no time, for any thought about yourself.

You must discriminate in yet another way. Learn to distinguish the God in everyone and everything, no matter how evil he or it may appear on the surface.

You can help your brother through that which you have in common with him, and that is the divine life; learn how to arouse that in him, learn how to appeal to that in him; so shall you save your brother from wrong.

† Article No. 62

At the Feet of the Master 2

Desirelessness

There are many for whom the qualification of desirelessness is a difficult one, for they feel that they are their desires -- that if their distinctive desires, their likings and dislikings, are taken away from them, there will be no self left. But these are only they who have not seen the Master [soul]; in the light of His holy presence all desire dies, but the desire to be like Him. Yet before you have the happiness of meeting Him face to face, you may attain desirelessness if you will. Discrimination has already shown you that the things which most men desire, such as wealth and power, are not worth having; when this is really felt, not merely said, all desire for them ceases.

Thus far all is simple; it needs only that you should understand. But there are some who forsake the pursuit of earthly aims only in order to gain heaven, or to attain personal liberation from rebirth; into this error you must not fall. If you have forgotten self altogether, you cannot be thinking when that self should be set free, or what kind of heaven it shall have. Remember that all selfish desire binds, however high may be its object, and until you have got rid of it you are not wholly free to devote yourself to the work of the Master [soul].

When all desires for self are gone, there may still be a desire to see the result of your work. If you help anybody, you want to see how much you have helped him; perhaps even you want him to see it too, and to be grateful. But this is still desire, and also want of trust. When you pour out your strength to help, there must be a result, whether you can see it or not; if you know the law you know this must be so. So you must do right for the sake of the right, not in the hope of reward; you must work for the sake of the work, not in the hope of seeing the

result; you must give yourself to the service of the world because you love it, and cannot help giving yourself to it.

Have no desire for psychic powers; they will come when the Master [soul] knows that it is best for you to have them. To force them too soon often brings in its train much trouble; often their possessor is misled by deceitful nature-spirits, or becomes conceited and thinks he cannot make a mistake; and in any case the time and strength that it takes to gain them might be spent in work for others. They will come in the course of development -- they must come; and if the Master [soul] sees that it would be useful for you to have them sooner, He will tell you how to unfold them safely. Until then, you are better without them.

You must guard, too, against certain small desires which are common in daily life. Never wish to shine, or to appear clever; have no desire to speak. It is well to speak little; better still to say nothing, unless you are quite sure that what you wish to say is true, kind, and helpful. Before speaking think carefully whether what you are going to say has those three qualities; if it has not, do not say it.

It is well to get used even now to thinking carefully before speaking; for when you reach initiation you must watch every word, lest you should tell what must not be told. Much common talk is unnecessary and foolish; when it is gossip, it is wicked. So be accustomed to listen rather than to talk; do not offer opinions unless directly asked for them.

One statement of the qualifications gives them thus; to know, to dare, to will, and to be silent; and the last of the four is the hardest of them all.

Another common desire which you must sternly repress is the wish to meddle in other men's business. What another man does or says or believes is no affair of yours, and you must learn to let him absolutely alone. He has full right to free thought and speech and action, so long as he does not interfere with any one else. You yourself claim the freedom to do what you think proper; you must allow the same freedom to him, and when he exercises it you have no right to talk about him.

If you think he is doing wrong, and you can contrive an opportunity of privately and very politely telling him why you think so, it is possible that you may convince him; but there are many cases in which even that would be an improper interference. On no account must you go and gossip to some third person about the matter, for that is an extremely wicked action.

If you see a case of cruelty to a child or an animal, it is your duty to interfere. If you see any one breaking the law of the country, you should inform the authorities. If you are placed in charge of another person in order to teach him, it may become your duty gently to tell him of his faults. Except in such cases, mind your own business, and learn the virtue of silence.

† Article No. 63

At the Feet of the Master 3

Good Conduct

The six points of conduct which are specially required are given by the Master as (1) self-control as to the mind, (2) self-control in action, (3) tolerance, (4) cheerfulness, (5) one-pointedness, and (6) confidence.

1. Self-Control as to the Mind

The qualification of desirelessness shows that the astral body must be controlled; this shows the same thing as to the mental body. It means control of temper, so that you may feel no anger or impatience; of the mind itself, so that the thought may always be calm and unruffled; and (through the mind) of the nerves, so that they may be as little irritable as possible. This last is difficult, because when you try to prepare yourself for the Path, you cannot help making your body more sensitive, so that its nerves are easily disturbed by a sound or a shock, and feel any pressure acutely; but you must do your best.

The calm mind means also courage, so that you may face without fear the trials and difficulties of the Path; it means also steadiness, so that you may make

light of the troubles which come into every one's life, and avoid the incessant worry over little things in which many people spend most of their time. The Master [soul] teaches that it does not matter in the least what happens to a man from the outside; sorrows, troubles, sicknesses, losses -- all these must be as nothing to him, and must not be allowed to affect the calmness of his mind. They are the result of past actions, and when they come you must bear them cheerfully, remembering that all evil is transitory, and that your duty is to remain always joyous and serene. They belong to your previous lives, not to this; you cannot alter them, so it is useless to trouble about them. Think rather of what you are doing now, which will make the events of your next life, for that you can alter.

Never allow yourself to feel sad or depressed. Depression is wrong, because it infects others and makes their lives harder, which you have no right to do. Therefore if ever it comes to you, throw it off at once.

In yet another way you must control your thought; you must not let it wander. Whatever you are doing, fix your thought upon it, that it may be perfectly done; do not let your mind be idle, but keep good thoughts always in the background of it, ready to come forward the moment it is free.

Use your thought-power every day for good purposes; be a force in the direction of evolution. Think each day of some one whom you know to be in sorrow, or suffering, or in need of help, and pour out loving thought upon him.

Hold back your mind from pride, for pride comes only from ignorance. The man who does not know thinks that he is great, that he has done this or that great thing; the wise man knows that only God is great, that all good work is done by God alone.

2. Self-Control in Action

If your thought is what it should be, you will have little trouble with your action. Yet remember that, to be useful to mankind, thought must result in action. There must be no laziness, but constant activity in good work. But it must be your own duty that you do -- not another man's, unless with his permission and by way of helping him.

Leave every man to do his own work in his own way; be always ready to offer help where it is needed, but never interfere. For many people the most difficult thing in the world to learn is to mind their own business; but that is exactly what you must do.

Because you try to take up higher work, you must not forget your ordinary duties, for until they are done you are not free for other service. You should undertake no new worldly duties; but those which you have already taken upon you, you must perfectly fulfill -- all clear and reasonable duties which you yourself recognize, that is, not imaginary duties which others try to impose upon you. If you are to be His [God's] [the soul's] you must do ordinary work better than others, not worse; because you must do that also for His sake.

3. Tolerance

You must feel perfect tolerance for all, and a hearty interest in the beliefs of those of another religion, just as much as in your own. For their religion is a path to the highest, just as yours is. And to help all, you must understand all. But in order to gain this perfect tolerance, you must yourself first be free from bigotry and superstition. You must learn that no ceremonies are necessary; else you will think yourself somehow better than those who do not perform them. Yet you must not condemn others who still cling to ceremonies. Let them do as they will; only they must not interfere with you who know the truth -- they must not try to force upon you that which you have outgrown. Make allowance for everything; be kindly towards everything.

Now that your eyes are opened, some of your old beliefs, your old ceremonies, may seem to you absurd; perhaps, indeed, they really are so. Yet though you can no longer take part in them, respect them for the sake of those good souls to whom they are still important. They have their place, they have their use; they are like those double lines which guided you as a child to write straight and evenly, until you learned to write far better and more freely without them. There was a time when you needed them; but now that time is past.

A great teacher once wrote: "When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child; but when I became a man I put away childish things." Yet he who has forgotten his childhood and lost sympathy

with the children is not the man who can teach them or help them. So look kindly, gently, tolerantly upon all; but upon all alike, Buddhist or Hindu, Jain or Jew, Christian or Muslim.

4. Cheerfulness

You must bear your karma cheerfully, whatever it may be, taking it as an honor that suffering comes to you, because it shows that the Lords of Karma think you worth helping. However hard it is, be thankful that it is no worse. Remember that you are of but little use to the Master [soul] until your evil karma is worked out, and you are free. By offering yourself to Him [God], you have asked that your karma may be hurried, and so now in one or two lives you work through what otherwise might have been spread over a hundred. But in order to make the best out of it, you must bear it cheerfully, gladly.

Yet another point. You must give up all feeling of possession. Karma may take from you the things which you like best -- even the people whom you love most. Even then you must be cheerful -- ready to part with anything and everything. Often the Master [God] [the soul] needs to pour out His strength upon others through His servant; He cannot do that if the servant yields to depression. So cheerfulness must be the rule.

5. One-Pointedness

The one thing that you must set before you is to do the Master's work. Whatever else may come in your way to do, that at least you must never forget. Yet nothing else can come in your way, for all helpful, unselfish work is the Master's work, and you must do it for His sake.

And you must give all your attention to each piece as you do it, so that it may be your very best. The same teacher also wrote: "Whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men." Think how you would do a piece of work if you knew that the Master was coming at once to look at it; just in that way you must do all your work. Those who know most will most know all that that verse means. And there is another like it, much older: "Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might."

One-pointedness means, too, that nothing shall ever turn you, even for a moment, from the Path upon which you have entered. No temptations, no worldly pleasures, no worldly affections even, must ever draw you aside. For you yourself must become one with the Path; it must be so much part of your nature that you follow it without needing to think of it, and cannot turn aside. You, the Monad, have decided it; to break away from it would be to break away from yourself.

6. Confidence

You must trust your Master [God] [soul]; you must trust yourself. If you have seen the Master, you will trust Him to the uttermost, through many lives and deaths. If you have not yet seen Him, you must still try to realize Him and trust Him, because if you do not, even He cannot help you. Unless there is perfect trust, there cannot be the perfect flow of love and power.

You must trust yourself. You say you know yourself too well? If you feel so, you do not know yourself; you know only the weak outer husk, which has fallen often into the mire. But you -- the real you -- you are a spark of God's own fire, and God, who is almighty, is in you, and because of that there is nothing that you cannot do if you will. Say to yourself: "What man has done, man can do. I am a man, yet also God in man; I can do this thing, and I will." For your will must be like tempered steel, if you would tread the Path.

† Article No. 64

At the Feet of the Master 4

Love

Of all the qualifications, love is the most important, for if it is strong enough in a man, it forces him to acquire all the rest, and all the rest without it would never be sufficient. Often it is translated as an intense desire for liberation from the round of births and deaths, and for union with God. But to put it in that way sounds selfish, and gives only part of the meaning. It is not so much desire

as will, resolve, determination. To produce its result, this resolve must fill your whole nature, so as to leave no room for any other feeling. It is indeed the will to be one with God, not in order that you may escape from weariness and suffering, but in order that because of your deep love for Him you may act with Him and as He does. Because He is love, you, if you would become one with Him, must be filled with perfect unselfishness and love also.

In daily life this means two things; first, that you shall be careful to do no hurt to any living thing; second, that you shall always be watching for an opportunity to help.

First, to do no hurt. Three sins there are which work more harm than all else in the world -- gossip, cruelty, and superstition -- because they are sins against love. Against these three the man who would fill his heart with the love of God must watch ceaselessly.

See what gossip does. It begins with evil thought, and that in itself is a crime. For in everyone and in everything there is good; in everyone and in everything there is evil. Either of these we can strengthen by thinking of it, and in this way we can help or hinder evolution; we can do the will of the Logos or we can resist Him. If you think of the evil in another, you are doing at the same time three wicked things:

1. You are filling your neighborhood with evil thought instead of with good thought, and so you are adding to the sorrow of the world.
2. If there is in that man the evil which you think, you are strengthening it and feeding it; and so you are making your brother worse instead of better. But generally the evil is not there, and you have only fancied it; and then your wicked thought tempts your brother to do wrong, for if he is not yet perfect you may make him that which you have thought him.
3. You fill your own mind with evil thoughts instead of good; and so you hinder your own growth, and make yourself, for those who can see, an ugly and painful object instead of a beautiful and lovable one.

Not content with having done all this harm to himself and to his victim, the gossip tries with all his might to make other men partners in his crime. Eagerly he tells his wicked tale to them, hoping that they will believe it; and then they join with him in pouring evil thought upon the poor sufferer. And this goes on day after day, and is done not by one man but by thousands. Do you begin to see how base, how terrible a sin this is? You must avoid it altogether. Never speak ill of any one; refuse to listen when any one else speaks ill of another, but gently say: "Perhaps this is not true, and even if it is, it is kinder not to speak of it."

Then as to cruelty. This is of two kinds, intentional and unintentional. Intentional cruelty is purposely to give pain to another living being; and that is the greatest of all sins -- the work of a devil rather than a man.

You would say that no man could do such a thing; but men have done it often, and are daily doing it now. The inquisitors did it; many religious people did it in the name of their religion. Vivisectionists do it; many schoolmasters do it habitually. All these people try to excuse their brutality by saying that it is the custom; but a crime does not cease to be a crime because many commit it. Karma takes no account of custom; and the karma of cruelty is the most terrible of all. In India at least there can be no excuse for such customs, for the duty of harmlessness is well-known to all. The fate of the cruel must fall also upon all who go out intentionally to kill God's creatures, and call it "sport."

Such things as these you would not do, I know; and for the sake of the love of God, when opportunity offers, you will speak clearly against them. But there is a cruelty in speech as well as in act; and a man who says a word with the intention to wound another is guilty of this crime. That, too, you would not do; but sometimes a careless word does as much harm as a malicious one. So you must be on your guard against unintentional cruelty.

It comes usually from thoughtlessness. A man is so filled with greed and avarice that he never even thinks of the suffering which he causes to others by paying too little, or by half-starving his wife and children. Another thinks only of his own lust, and cares little how many ... he ruins in satisfying it. Just to save himself a few minutes' trouble, a man does not pay his workmen on the proper day, thinking nothing of the difficulties he brings upon them. So much

suffering is caused just by carelessness -- by forgetting to think how an action will affect others. But karma never forgets, and it takes no account of the fact that men forget. If you wish to enter the Path, you must think of the consequences of what you do, lest you should be guilty of thoughtless cruelty.

Superstition is another mighty evil, and has caused much terrible cruelty. The man who is a slave to it despises others who are wiser, tries to force them to do as he does. Think of the awful slaughter produced by the superstition that animals should be sacrificed, and by the still more cruel superstition that man needs flesh for food. Think of the treatment which superstition has meted out to the depressed classes in our beloved India, and see in that how this evil quality can breed heartless cruelty even among those who know the duty of brotherhood. Many crimes have men committed in the name of the God of love, moved by this nightmare of superstition; be very careful therefore that no slightest trace of it remains in you.

These three great crimes you must avoid, for they are fatal to all progress, because they sin against love. But not only must you thus refrain from evil; you must be active in doing good. You must be so filled with the intense desire of service that you are ever on the watch to render it all around you -- not to man alone, but even to animals and plants. You must render it in small things every day, that the habit may be formed, so that you may not miss the rare opportunity when the great thing offers itself to be done. For if you yearn to be one with God, it is not for your own sake; it is that you may be a channel through which His love may flow to reach your fellow men.

He who is on the Path exists not for himself, but for others; he has forgotten himself, in order that he may serve them. He is as a pen in the hand of God, through which His thought may flow, and find for itself an expression down here, which without a pen it could not have. Yet at the same time he is also a living plume of fire, raying out upon the world the divine love which fills his heart.

The wisdom which enables you to help, the will which directs the wisdom, the love which inspires the will -- these are your qualifications. Will, wisdom, and love are the three aspects of the Logos; and you, who wish to enroll yourselves to serve Him, must show forth these aspects in the world.

Light on the Path 1

These rules are written for all disciples: Attend you to them.

Before the eyes can see they must be incapable of tears. Before the ear can hear it must have lost its sensitiveness. Before the voice can speak in the presence of the Masters it must have lost the power to wound. Before the soul can stand in the presence of the Masters its feet must be washed in the blood of the heart.

1. Kill out ambition.

Note (I): Ambition is the first curse: the great tempter of the man who is rising above his fellows. It is the simplest form of looking for reward. Men of intelligence and power are led away from their higher possibilities by it continually. Yet it is a necessary teacher. Its results turn to dust and ashes in the mouth; like death and estrangement it shows the man at last that to work for self is to work for disappointment. But though this first rule seems so simple and easy, do not quickly pass it by. For these vices of the ordinary man pass through a subtle transformation and reappear with changed aspect in the heart of the disciple. It is easy to say, "I will not be ambitious." It is not so easy to say, "When the Master reads my heart he will find it clean utterly." The pure artist who works for the love of his work is sometimes more firmly planted on the right road than the occultist, who fancies he has removed his interest from self, but who has in reality only enlarged the limits of experience and desire, and transferred his interest to the things which concern his larger span of life. The same principle applies to the other two seemingly simple rules. Linger over them and do not let yourself be easily deceived by your own heart. For now, at the threshold, a mistake can be corrected. But carry it on with you and it will grow and come to fruition, or else you must suffer bitterly in its destruction.

2. Kill out desire of life.

3. Kill out desire of comfort.

4. Work as those work who are ambitious.

Respect life as those who desire it. Be happy as those are who live for happiness.

Seek in the heart the source of evil and expunge it. It lives fruitfully in the heart of the devoted disciple as well as in the heart of the man of desire. Only the strong can kill it out. The weak must wait for its growth, its fruition, its death. And it is a plant that lives and increases throughout the ages. It flowers when the man has accumulated unto himself innumerable existences. He who will enter upon the path of power must tear this thing out of his heart. And then the heart will bleed, and the whole life of the man seem to be utterly dissolved. This ordeal must be endured: it may come at the first step of the perilous ladder which leads to the path of life: it may not come until the last. But, remember that it has to be endured, and fasten the energies of your soul upon the task. Live neither in the present nor the future, but in the eternal. This giant weed cannot flower there: this blot upon existence is wiped out by the very atmosphere of eternal thought.

5. Kill out all sense of separateness.

Note (2): Do not fancy you can stand aside from the bad man or the foolish man. They are yourself, though in a lesser degree than your friend or your master. But if you allow the idea of separateness from any evil thing or person to grow up within you, by so doing you create karma, which will bind you to that thing or person till your soul recognizes that it cannot be isolated. Remember that the sin and shame of the world are your sin and shame; for you are part of it; your karma is inextricably interwoven with the great karma. And before you can attain knowledge you must have passed through all places, foul and clean alike. Therefore, remember that the soiled garment you shrink from touching may have been yours yesterday, may be yours tomorrow. And if you turn with horror from it, when it is flung upon your shoulders, it will cling the more closely to you. The self-righteous man makes for himself a bed of mire. Abstain because it is right to abstain -- not that yourself shall be kept clean.

6. Kill out desire for sensation.

7. Kill out the hunger for growth.

8. Yet stand alone and isolated, because nothing that is embodied, nothing that is conscious of separation, nothing that is out of the eternal, can aid you. Learn from sensation and observe it, because only so can you commence the science of self-knowledge, and plant your foot on the first step on the ladder. Grow as the flower grows, unconsciously, but eagerly anxious to open its soul to the air. So must you press forward to open your soul to the eternal. But it must be the eternal that draws forth your strength and beauty, not desire of growth. For in the one case you develop in the luxuriance of purity, in the other you harden by the forcible passion for personal stature.

9. Desire only that which is within you.

10. Desire only that which is beyond you.

11. Desire only that which is unattainable.

12. For within you is the light of the world -- the only light that can be shed upon the Path. If you are unable to perceive it within you, it is useless to look for it elsewhere. It is beyond you; because when you reach it you have lost yourself. It is unattainable, because it forever recedes. You will enter the light, but you will never touch the flame.

13. Desire power ardently.

14. Desire peace fervently.

15. Desire possessions above all.

16. But those possessions must belong to the pure soul only, and be possessed therefore by all pure souls equally, and thus be the especial property of the whole only when united. Hunger for such possessions as can be held by the pure soul, that you may accumulate wealth for that united spirit of life which is your only true self. The peace you shall desire is that sacred peace which nothing can disturb, and in which the soul grows as does the holy flower upon the still lagoons. And that power which the disciple shall covet is that which shall make him appear as nothing in the eyes of men.

17. Seek out the way.

Note (3): These four words seem, perhaps, too slight to stand alone. The disciple may say, "Should I study these thoughts at all did I not seek out the way?" Yet do not pass on hastily. Pause and consider awhile. Is it the way you desire, or is it that there is a dim perspective in your visions of great heights to be scaled by yourself, of a great future for you to compass? Be warned. The way is to be sought for its own sake, not with regard to your feet that shall tread it.

There is a correspondence between this rule and the 17th of the 2nd series. When after ages of struggle and many victories the final battle is won, the final secret demanded, then you are prepared for a further path. When the final secret of this great lesson is told, in it is opened the mystery of the new way -- a path which leads out of all human experience, and which is utterly beyond human perception or imagination. At each of these points it is needful to pause long and consider well. At each of these points it is necessary to be sure that the way is chosen for its own sake. The way and the truth come first, then follows the life.

18. Seek the way by retreating within.

19. Seek the way by advancing boldly without.

20. Seek it not by any one road.

To each temperament there is one road which seems the most desirable. But the way is not found by devotion alone, by religious contemplation alone, by ardent progress, by self-sacrificing labor, by studious observation of life. None alone can take the disciple more than one step onwards. All steps are necessary to make up the ladder. The vices of men become steps in the ladder, one by one, as they are surmounted. The virtues of man are steps indeed, necessary -- not by any means to be dispensed with. Yet, though they create a fair atmosphere and a happy future, they are useless if they stand alone. The whole nature of man must be used wisely by the one who desires to enter the way. Each man is to himself absolutely the way, the truth, and the life. But he is only so when he

grasps his whole individuality firmly, and by the force of his awakened spiritual will recognizes this individuality as not himself, but that thing which he has with pain created for his own use, and by means of which he purposes, as his growth slowly develops his intelligence, to reach to the life beyond individuality. When he knows that for this his wonderful complex separated life exists, then, indeed, and then only, he is upon the way. Seek it by plunging into the mysterious and glorious depths of your own inmost being. Seek it by testing all experience, by utilizing the senses in order to understand the growth and meaning of individuality, and the beauty and obscurity of those other divine fragments which are struggling side by side with you, and form the race to which you belong.

Seek it by study of the laws of being, the laws of nature, the laws of the supernatural; and seek it by making the profound obeisance of the soul to the dim star that burns within. Steadily, as you watch and worship, its light will grow stronger. Then you may know you have found the beginning of the way. And when you have found the end it slight will suddenly become the infinite light.

Note (4): Seek it by testing all experience, and remember that when we say this we do not say "Yield to the seductions of sense in order to know it." Before you have become an occultist you may do this; but not afterwards. When you have chosen and entered the path you cannot yield to these seductions without shame. Yet you can experience them without horror: can weigh, observe, and test them, and wait with the patience of confidence for the hour when they shall affect you no longer. But do not condemn the man that yields; stretch out your hand to him as a brother pilgrim whose feet have become heavy with mire. Remember that great though the gulf may be between the good man and the sinner, it is greater between the good man and the man who has attained knowledge; it is immeasurable between the good man and the one on the threshold of divinity. Therefore be wary lest too soon you fancy yourself a thing apart from the mass.

When you have found the beginning of the way the star of your soul will show its light; and by that light you will perceive how great is the darkness in which it burns. Mind, heart, brain, all are obscure and dark until the first great battle has been won. Be not appalled and terrified by this sight; keep your eyes fixed

on the small light and it will grow. But let the darkness within help you to understand the helplessness of those who have seen no light, whose souls are in profound gloom. Blame them not, shrink not from them, but try to lift a little of the heavy karma of the world; give your aid to the few strong hands that hold back the powers of darkness from obtaining complete victory. Then do you enter into a partnership of joy, which brings indeed terrible toil and profound sadness, but also a great and ever-increasing delight.

21. Look for the flower to bloom in the silence that follows the storm: not till then.

It shall grow, it will shoot up, it will make branches and leaves and form buds, while the storm continues, while the battle lasts. But not till the whole personality of the man is dissolved and melted -- not until it is held by the divine fragment which has created it, as a mere subject for grave experiment and experience -- not until the whole nature has yielded and become subject unto its higher self, can the bloom open. Then will come a calm such as comes in a tropical country after the heavy rain, when nature works so swiftly that one may see her action. Such a calm will come to the harassed spirit. And in the deep silence the mysterious event will occur which will prove that the way has been found. Call it by what name you will, it is a voice that speaks where there is none to speak -- it is a messenger that comes, a messenger without form or substance; or it is the flower of the soul that has opened. It cannot be described by any metaphor. But it can be felt after, looked for, and desired, even amid the raging of the storm. The silence may last a moment of time or it may last a thousand years. But it will end. Yet you will carry its strength with you. Again and again the battle must be fought and won. It is only for an interval that nature can be still.

Note (5): The opening of the bloom is the glorious moment when perception awakes: with it comes confidence, knowledge, certainty. The pause of the soul is the moment of wonder, and the next moment of satisfaction, that is the silence. Know that those who have passed through the silence, and felt its peace and retained its strength, they long that you shall pass through it also. Therefore, in the Hall of Learning, when he is capable of entering there, the disciple will always find his master.

Those that ask shall have. But though the ordinary man asks perpetually, his voice is not heard. For he asks with his mind only; and the voice of the mind is only heard on that plane on which the mind acts. Therefore, not until the first twenty-one rules are past do we say those that ask shall have.

To read, in the occult sense, is to read with the eyes of the spirit. To ask is to feel the hunger within -- the yearning of spiritual aspiration. To be able to read means having obtained the power in a small degree of gratifying that hunger. When the disciple is ready to learn, then he is accepted, acknowledged, recognized. It must be so, for he has lit his lamp, and it cannot be hidden. But to learn is impossible until the first great battle has been won. The mind may recognize truth, but the spirit cannot receive it. Once having passed through the storm and attained the peace, it is then always possible to learn, even though the disciple waver, hesitate, and turn aside. The voice of the silence remains within him, and though he leave the path utterly, yet one day it will resound and rend him asunder and separate his passions from his divine possibilities. Then with pain and desperate cries from the deserted lower self he will return.

These written above are the first of the rules which are written on the walls of the Hall of Learning. Those that ask shall have. Those that desire to read shall read. Those who desire to learn shall learn.

† Article No. 66

Light on the Path 2

Out of the silence that is peace a resonant voice shall arise. And this voice will say, "It is not well; thou hast reaped, now thou must sow." And knowing this voice to be the silence itself thou wilt obey.

Thou who art now a disciple, able to stand, able to hear, able to see, able to speak, who hast conquered desire and attained to self-knowledge, who hast seen thy soul in its bloom and recognized it, and heard the voice of the silence, go thou to the Hall of Learning and read what is written there for thee.

Note (6): To be able to stand is to have confidence; to be able to hear is to have opened the doors of the soul; to be able to see is to have attained perception; to be able to speak is to have attained the power of helping others; to have conquered desire is to have learned how to use and control the self; to have attained to self-knowledge is to have retreated to the inner fortress from whence the personal man can be viewed with impartiality; to have seen thy soul in its bloom is to have obtained a momentary glimpse in thyself of the transfiguration which shall eventually make thee more than man; to recognize is to achieve the great task of gazing upon the blazing light without dropping the eyes and not falling back in terror, as though before some ghastly phantom. This happens to some, and so when the victory is all but won it is lost; to hear the voice of the silence is to understand that from within comes the only true guidance; to go to the Hall of Learning is to enter the state in which learning becomes possible. Then will many words be written there for thee, and written in fiery letters for thee easily to read. For when the disciple is ready, the master is ready also.

1. **Stand aside in the coming battle**, and though thou fightest be not thou the warrior.

2. **Look for the warrior and let him fight in thee.**

3. **Take his orders for battle and obey them.**

4. **Obey him not as though he were a general**, but as though he were thyself, and his spoken words were the utterance of thy secret desires; for he is thyself, yet infinitely wiser and stronger than thyself. Look for him, else in the fever and hurry of the fight thou mayest pass him; and he will not know thee unless thou knowest him. If thy cry meet his listening ear then will he fight in thee and fill the dull void within. And if this is so, then canst thou go through the fight cool and unwearied, standing aside and letting him battle for thee. Then it will be impossible for thee to strike one blow amiss. But if thou look not for him, if thou pass him by, then there is no safeguard for thee. Thy brain will reel, thy heart grow uncertain, and in the dust of the battle-field thy sight and senses will fail, and thou wilt not know thy friends from thy enemies. He is thyself, yet thou art but finite and liable to error. He is eternal and is sure. He is eternal truth. When once he has entered thee and become thy

warrior, he will never utterly desert thee, and at the day of the great peace he will become one with thee.

5. Listen to the song of life.

Note (7): Look for it and listen to it first in your own heart. At first you may say, "It is not there; when I search I find only discord." Look deeper. If again you are disappointed, pause and look deeper again. There is a natural melody, an obscure fount in every human heart. It may be hidden over and utterly concealed and silenced -- but it is there. At the very base of your nature you will find faith, hope, and love. He that chooses evil refuses to look within himself, shuts his ears to the melody of his heart, as he blinds his eyes to the light of his soul. He does this because he finds it easier to live in desires. But underneath all life is the strong current that cannot be checked; the great waters are there in reality. Find them, and you will perceive that none, not the most wretched of creatures, but is a part of it, however he blinds himself to the fact and builds up for himself a phantasmal outer form of horror. In that sense it is that we say to you -- All those beings among whom you struggle on are fragments of the divine. And so deceptive is the illusion in which you live, that it is hard to guess where you will first detect the sweet voice in the hearts of others. But know that it is certainly within yourself. Look for it there, and once having heard it, you will more readily recognize it around you.

6. Store in your memory the melody you hear.

7. Learn from it the lesson of harmony.

8. **You can stand upright now**, firm as a rock amid the turmoil, obeying the warrior who is thyself and thy king. Unconcerned in the battle save to do his bidding, having no longer any care as to the result of the battle, for one thing only is important, that the warrior shall win, and you know he is incapable of defeat -- standing thus, cool and awakened, use the hearing you have acquired by pain and by the destruction of pain. Only fragments of the great song come to your ears while yet you are but man. But if you listen to it, remember it faithfully, so that none which has reached you is lost, and endeavor to learn from it the meaning of the mystery which surrounds you. In time you will need no teacher. For as the individual has voice, so has that in which the individual

exists. Life itself has speech and is never silent. And its utterance is not, as you that are deaf may suppose, a cry: it is a song. Learn from it that you are part of the harmony; learn from it to obey the laws of the harmony.

9. Regard earnestly all the life that surrounds you.

10. Learn to look intelligently into the hearts of men.

Note (8): From an absolutely impersonal point of view, otherwise your sight is colored. Therefore impersonality must first be understood.

Intelligence is impartial: no man is your enemy: no man is your friend. All alike are your teachers. Your enemy becomes a mystery that must be solved, even though it takes ages: for man must be understood. Your friend becomes a part of yourself, an extension of yourself, a riddle hard to read. Only one thing is more difficult to know -- your own heart. Not until the bonds of personality are loosed, can that profound mystery of self begin to be seen. Not till you stand aside from it will it in any way reveal itself to your understanding. Then, and not till then, can you grasp and guide it. Then, and not till then, can you use all its powers, and devote them to a worthy service.

11. Regard most earnestly your own heart.

12. For through your own heart comes the one light which can illuminate life and make it clear to your eyes.

Study the hearts of men, that you may know what is that world in which you live and of which you will to be a part. Regard the constantly changing and moving life which surrounds you, for it is formed by the hearts of men; and as you learn to understand their constitution and meaning, you will by degrees be able to read the larger word of life.

13. Speech comes only with knowledge. Attain to knowledge and you will attain to speech.

Note (9): It is impossible to help others till you have obtained some certainty of your own. When you have learned the first 21 rules and have entered the Hall of

Learning with your powers developed and sense unchained, then you will find there is a fount within you from which speech will arise.

14. Having obtained the use of the inner senses, having conquered the desires of the outer senses, having conquered the desires of the individual soul, and having obtained knowledge, prepare now to enter upon the way in reality. The path is found: make yourself ready to tread it.

15. Inquire of the earth, the air, and the water, of the secrets they hold for you. The development of your inner senses will enable you to do this.

16. Inquire of the holy ones of the earth of the secrets they hold for you. The conquering of the desires of the outer senses will give you the right to do this.

17. Inquire of the inmost, the one, of its final secret, which it holds for you through the ages.

The great and difficult victory, the conquering of the desires of the individual soul, is a work of ages; therefore expect not to obtain its reward until ages of experience have been accumulated. When the time of learning this seventeenth rule is reached, man is on the threshold of becoming more than man.

18. The knowledge which is now yours is only yours because your soul has become one with all pure souls and with the inmost. It is a trust vested in you by the One. Betray it, misuse your knowledge, or neglect it, and it is possible even now for you to fall from the high estate you have attained.

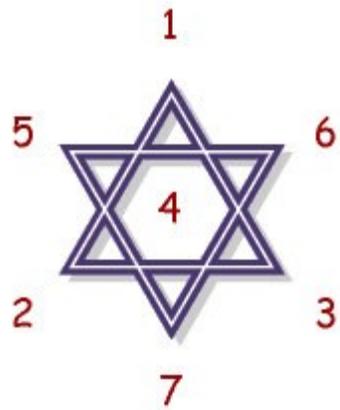
Great ones fall back, even from the threshold, unable to sustain the weight of their responsibility, unable to pass on. Therefore look forward always with awe and trembling to this moment, and be prepared for the battle.

19. It is written that for him who is on the threshold of divinity no law can be framed, no guide can exist. Yet to enlighten the disciple, the final struggle may thus be expressed:

Hold fast to that which has neither substance nor existence.

20. Listen only to the voice which is soundless.

21. Look only on that which is invisible alike to the inner and the outer sense.



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