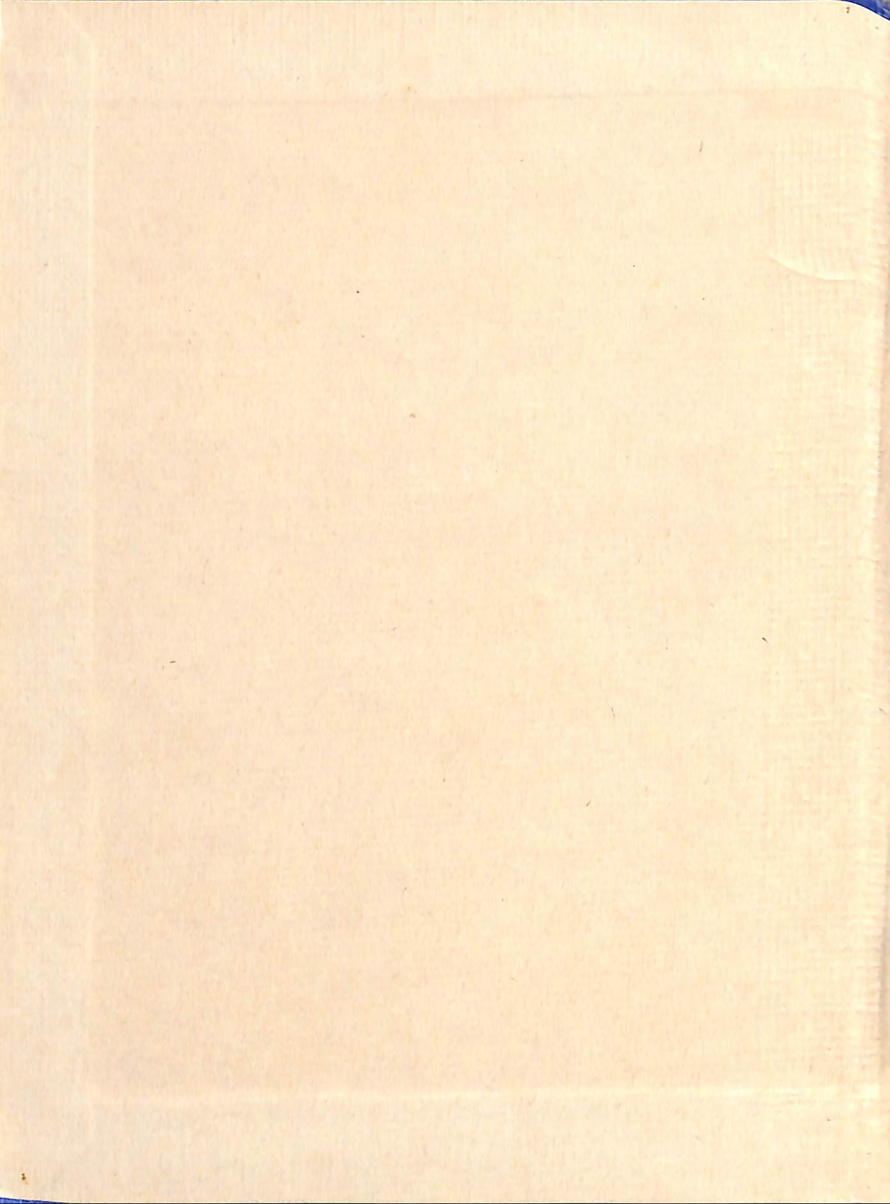
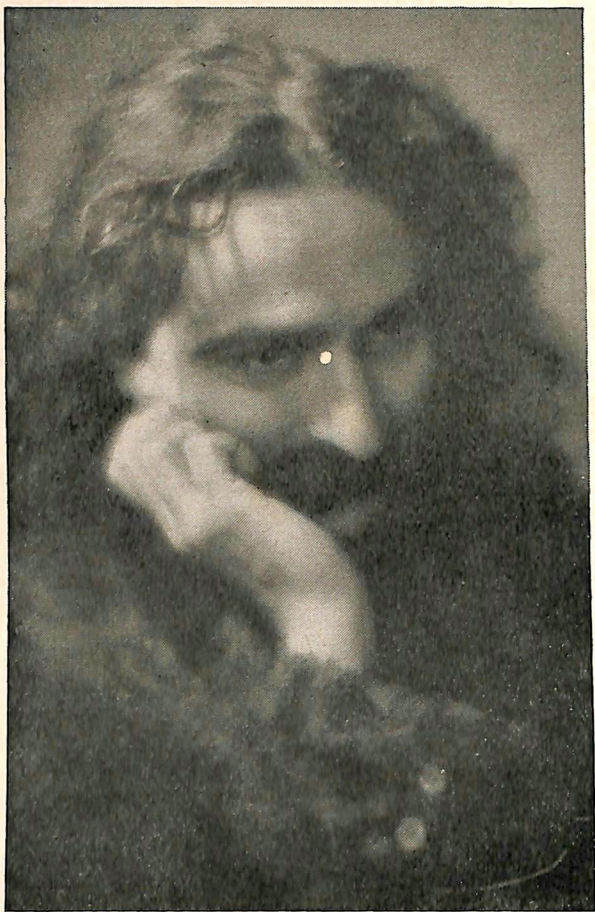


Silent Revelations
of
Meher Baba







"I bring to man Divine Love and the Life Eternal"

*Only when you drink
From the river of silence
Shall you indeed sing;
And when you have reached
The mountain-top
Then shall you begin to climb.*

—Kahlil Gibran.

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Silent Revelations of Meher Baba

Excerpts from the
SILENT DISCOURSES
of
MEHER BABA

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by
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FOREWORD

Humanity is at the crossroads of one of the most perplexing dilemmas in its long history. In the midst of death, a new life is in the making. Upon our choice of the kind of life it shall be, will depend the fate of untold generations to come.

Deep beneath the headline-surface of the clash of steel and fire, there are spiritual forces in ferment which lie dormant except in supreme moments of human destiny. Though few are aware of it, the global war is being fought not merely on the battlefronts of the world, but, in the more profound sense, in the soul-sanctuary of every man, woman and child on earth. The outcome of this Armegeddon will depend not so much on the decision of arms and the triumph of the intellect, as on the collective resolve of the heart of mankind.

It is gradually dawning upon man that, under whatever disguise, war is the crop of his own sowing; and in the midst of the all-absorbing horror of it, he is reaching out in anguish—as never before—for the magic formula that will exorcise this age-old curse of mankind. The conviction is growing within more and more of us, that this greatest of all world calamities is also the supreme opportunity for our redemption; that the very evil of today is our sublime chance for the boon of a nobler tomorrow. In that conviction the best minds and hearts in the world

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are groping for the answer how best to nurture this infant potentiality into a sturdy offspring for the good of humanity; how to prevent it from becoming another tragic might-have-been.

In the babel of clamor that beats a ceaseless reveille of impassioned advice on our eardrums, those who are wise enough to listen with their hearts, will discern a golden resonance, the serene emanations of certitude, that carry, on unruffled waves, the God-born answer to our man-made problem. It is the quiet call of the Silent One, which is addressed from the Heart of Eternity to ours; the earth-embracing celestial communion of the Perfect Spiritual Master—the soundless Voice of living Authority.

Those of us whose inner ears are attuned to this Silent Call, have made our decision: We want to help bring about a better tomorrow; be ready for it when it comes; respond to its heartbeat with richer blood, breathe the New Air with deeper lungs, climb the New Heights with sturdier limbs. We are reorienting our lives on the principle that the harvest of a nobler tomorrow will be possible only if we plant its seeds today; that the planting has to be done not only collectively by the nations of the world, but first of all individually, by each of us. Realizing that we are no qualified husbandmen of the unknown crop of the future, we seek the guidance of the Master Planter, who is teaching us the holy art of conditioning the soil of our today; of selecting the right seeds for

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our tomorrow, and of how most creatively to plant them.

The Master Plowman is Meher Baba, the Silent Father of Divine Compassion. His silence is the immortal voice of Authority. Few know Baba, many have the wrong idea about him, no one is uninfluenced by his life and work. Those who have the timeless privilege of devotional contact with him, know him to be the embodiment of Infinity upon this earth, God's Ambassador of Divine Love. They know that his living presence among us at this crucial moment is the divine answer to man's soul-cry for a celestial guide, who is here to teach man that the crime and ugliness, the suffering and agony which he fashions for himself out of ignorance, are merely passing phases in his upward evolution toward a higher destiny; that the eternal laws of cause and effect—of the immortality of the soul—are constructive, benevolent, inviolable; that man has the innate creative power to speed up the process of his spiritual evolution. They know that Baba's mission is to accelerate the fulfillment of God's plan for man; to expedite the coming era of Divine Love; of spiritual unfoldment and unbounded inspiration; of enduring peace and universal brotherhood. They have come to know that Baba is here to help man win the one victory of all victories—to win himself. Under his guidance, they are consciously at work creating a new life-pattern more in keeping with their

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divine heritage—a rhythm more in harmony with the timeless pulse beat of Infinity.

The age of the intellect has had its day. The greater age of the heart is at hand; and the Master of Silence is its Avatar. He brings to mankind, at the moment of its deepest despair, the divine certainty of redemption.

To partake of it, all we need do is to remove the sandals of materialistic taint from our unsteady feet, discard the garment of intellectual conceit, robe our feeble shoulders in the mantle of penitence, and enter the sanctuary of spiritual readiness in childlike humility and gratitude.

Alexander Markey.

June 17, 1944.

INTRODUCTION

Beneath the conflict of flesh and blood, the spirit of man is being profoundly stirred. The mortal conflagration through which he is passing, is burning into his consciousness the realization of the instability and futility of a life based upon purely material conceptions. The hour is near when he will instinctively seek the true source of that nobler life, in search of which man has lived and died from time immemorial. That hour will mark the beginning of man's spiritual emancipation.

In fulfillment of the Divine Will, man's first urge will be to extricate himself from the quagmire of spiritual apathy, and gain the path that leads to his higher Self. Simultaneously, the realization will dawn upon him that his spiritual limbs, so long neglected, have become atrophied; *he will begin to apprehend that by his own effort alone he is incapable of ascending into his greater Self.*

In his predicament he will try the routine, man-conceived formulæ; they will inevitably fail him. Baffled, he will once again cry out for divine intervention, as he did in other supreme crises in history. Finally, in desperation, he will grope for contact with some one who has the heart to understand his problem, and the authority to help him solve it.

At first man is likely to fumble in his search, pin his hopes in blind anguish on merchants of bogus promises; but he will soon learn that they

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leave him only deeper in the quicksand of hopelessness. *Inevitably, he will come to perceive that only complete submission to Divine Love can achieve his yearned-for spiritual emancipation; that only Divine Love can bring God into his heart; that nothing else can open for him the door to the Life Sublime for which his soul hungers, nor bestow upon him the enduring happiness for which he longs.*

This recurrent yearning of man for supernal intervention is inspired by his truest instinct; for only Divine Love can make men selfless and helpful to one another; it is the *only* medium that has the capacity to bring ultimate and abiding solution to the problems of the world.

In the depth of his despair man will fathom that there is but one true source of Divine Love; *God*; that on this earth no other than Divine Authority can be the fountainhead for this Love; *that only in the living person of a God-man can such Authority manifest.* In that supreme moment of realization man will be ready and eager to accept the loving guidance of such a Mediator; for, *at long last, it will have become clear to him that only Divine Wisdom incarnate in such Authority could light for him the way to his higher Self.*

Surrender to the prompting of Divine Authority will bring to man the revelation that his final redemption can come only through conscious recognition of his soul-identity with the Soul-Supreme of the universe. He will come to

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see the eternal truth, to which he has so long been blind, the most momentous, least comprehended fact in the cosmos: *that all souls are inseparably one*. Once this sovereign law is embraced by man, he will instinctively re-orientate his life; his attitude toward his fellowmen will spontaneously change from selfishness, greed and intolerance, to kindness, co-operation and love.

The new life, born of man's comprehension of the Oneness of all, will have its roots in spiritual understanding; it will in fact be the living affirmation of this divine Law. Nor does such a concept belong to utopia; it is practical, feasible, inevitable. *Nothing less will satisfy the great need and soul-hunger of mankind.*

Only through unqualified acceptance of this keynote fact of Oneness can true unity and good-will between human beings become a lasting reality; only through its universal application can be achieved ultimate concord between the peoples of the world. *Full-hearted yielding to Divine Love as the final arbiter is the only means through which the merging of the nations in a fraternity of selfless fellowship could ever be effected.* This Love—synonymous with the Cosmic Law, identical with God—is the only road to the long-predicted brotherhood on man's earth.

I. THE QUEST

Consciously or unconsciously, every living creature seeks one thing. In the lower forms of life and in less advanced human beings the quest is unconscious; in advanced human beings it is conscious. The object of the quest is called by many names — happiness, peace, freedom, truth, love, perfection, Self-realization, God-realization, union with God. Essentially it is a search for all of these; for all of these and all other noble concepts — no matter what their name — turn out in the end to be one. Everyone has moments of happiness, glimpses of truth, fleeting experiences of affinity with God; what every one longs for is to make them permanent.

It is a natural desire, based fundamentally on a memory, dim or clear as the individual's evolution may be low or high, of his essential unity with God; for all living creatures are partial manifestations of God, conditioned only by their lack of knowledge of their own true nature. The whole of evolution is in fact a progression from unconscious divinity to conscious divinity, in which God Himself, essentially eternal and unchangeable, assumes an infinite diversity of forms, passes through an endless variety of experiences and transcends a countless number of self-imposed limitations. Evolution from the standpoint of the Creator is a divine sport, in which the Unconditioned tests the infinitude of His absolute knowledge, power

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and bliss in the midst of all conditions. But evolution from the standpoint of the creature, with his limited knowledge, limited power, limited capacity for enjoying bliss, is an epic of alternating rest and struggle, joy and sorrow, love and hate, until in the perfected man God balances the pairs of opposites and transcends duality. Then creature and Creator recognize themselves as one; changelessness is established in the midst of change, eternity is experienced in the midst of time. God knows Himself as God, unchangeable in essence, infinite in manifestation, ever experiencing the supreme bliss of Self-realization in continually fresh awareness of Himself by Himself.

This realization must and does take place only in the midst of life, for it is only in the midst of life that limitation can be experienced and transcended, and that subsequent freedom from limitation can be enjoyed.

Such is the quest—the inner driving urge of the soul—that has saved man again and again from total moral disintegration, and will eventually lead him through ignorance, awakening, illumination, into ultimate spiritual redemption. My function is to indicate the direction of the path which man has to travel, point out the pitfalls on the way, lessen the hazards of the difficult passages, light and ease the final lap that ends in the culmination of his quest.

I bring to man Divine Love and the Life Eternal.

II. WAR AND BEYOND

War and the suffering which it inevitably brings, cannot be avoided by mere propaganda against war. If war is to disappear from human experience, it is essential to destroy its root-cause. The life of illusory values in which man is self-caught is the breeding-ground of the chaos that precipitates war; individual and collective egoism and selfishness, that hold most of mankind in their thrall, are its root-cause.

Man alone is responsible for war; through his greed, vanity, selfishness and cruelty does he bring the recurring evil of it upon himself. God, in His Grace, transmutes this man-wrought tragedy into a channel for the quickening of humanity to a concept of higher values. Appalling and devastating though it is, *man's war is thus saved by the Infinite from remaining an unmitigated evil.*

To purge himself, man has to become conscious of the redeeming God-Design in man-created war. To understand the real significance of violence and non-violence in this God-transmuted pattern of spiritual values, requires a true perception of the meaning and purpose of existence. Man's actions in war, therefore, should not be motivated by slogans, however high-sounding, that are based on erroneous concepts of violence or non-violence; his actions require the prompting of spiritual understanding, which is above man-made rules; of Divine Love, that is above man-conceived duality.

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God's Design infuses man's war with the capacity to generate and foster many qualities of divine importance, preventing it, therefore, from being wholly without spiritual significance. When man's mania for possessions and dominance forces a peaceful nation or people to take up arms for the sake of higher values, for unselfish considerations of general well-being, war becomes not merely inevitable, but spiritually defensible.

Under the stress of imminent danger, war inspires behavior that is free from the limited self; action that is kindled by the impersonal spirit which prompts willing sacrifice and suffering for the safety and welfare of others. It is better that such unselfish qualities be at least partially released under the stimulus of danger, than that they remain wholly dormant; it is preferable for the pressure of collective calamity to free man—if only temporarily—from his petty self, than for him to remain permanently enslaved by the ignoble pursuit of personal safety and the ruthless perpetuation of his selfish interests and existence.

In war, the peoples of the earth are roused to make unlimited sacrifices, and to endure untold agony for the sake of their countries or principles; in doing so, *they demonstrate their latent capacity for like, and even greater sacrifices and endurance for higher stakes: for the triumph of the Soul.*

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War reveals that even 'the man in the street' can rise to the greatest heights of sacrifice for the sake of a selfless cause. It also teaches that all worldly things—wealth, possessions, power, fame, family, the very tenor of life upon this earth—are transitory and devoid of lasting worth. The soul-searing incidents of war are enriched by the divine endowment to teach man lessons that will ultimately win him over to God; lessons that have the power to initiate him into the new life, a life inspired by God-Truth and founded on imperishable spiritual values. *If man fails to learn these divine lessons of war and to profit by them, he will have suffered and died in vain.*

To claim special dispensation, in war, for any particular race, religion or ideology is indefensible. All such assertions are based on the false doctrine of division and duality. Since the Lay of the Universe is synonymous with Oneness, and Oneness precludes soul-separation of one individual from another, of one part of mankind from another, there is no justification whatsoever for one side—*any side*—in war to claim that God favors it exclusively. *God does not scale His Grace to suit man's temporal quarrels and prejudices; His favor knows no discrimination; His Love is all-embracing.*

The time has come for man to acquire a new vision; to proclaim the ultimate truth that all life is one; that all life merges in God, who is the only Reality; that God alone is worth dying for,

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only God worth living for; that all else is vain and empty pursuit of illusory values.

The spiritual Oneness of all souls remains inviolate in spite of all wars; and *from the point of view of ultimate Reality, no soul is ever actually at war with any other soul.* War is a conflict between different ideologies and concepts, which extends to and involves not only the minds, but also the bodies of people; but the undivided and indivisible *soul* of mankind remains one in its unimpeachable and integral unity. *The divine catalyst that keeps the Soul-oneness of all Creation intact, even in the midst of the most devastating war, is Love.*

All collective efforts draw upon some aspect of love for their functioning. Wars are no exception. They too are often motivated and conducted by a form of love; but it is a love whose nature has not been understood. For even though wars demand the large-scale organizing and functioning of co-operative endeavor, the spiritual potential of such collective undertaking is artificially restricted by identification with segregated groups or limited ideals.

In order that love may come into its own, it must be freed from all impediments and released from all limitations. Love manifests in all phases of human life, but is restricted and often poisoned by personal ambition, racial pride, narrow loyalties, individual and national rivalries, chauvinism, attachment to caste, sect, religion or sex. *To usher in the resurrection of humanity,*

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the heart of man will have to be unlocked and a new love generated in it—the love which knows no limitations, no corruption; the ultimate Love that is wholly free from individual and collective greed.

Only through such universal interflow of selfless love will it be possible for humanity to eradicate greed, intolerance, exploitation—the three demons responsible for war—in all the gross and subtle forms which they assume in civilized life. In no other way can the mass-mind be purged of its age-old war-psychosis; through no other means can it perceive with redeeming clarity that war is not merely abominable, but in truth *not ever necessary* as a means of adjusting differences of *any* nature between nations. *The chief task of those deeply concerned with the regeneration of humanity is to wage a holy war against the pernicious state of mind that justifies aggression in any form. This can be accomplished only by dispelling the spiritual apathy and ignorance which hold the mass of mankind in bondage.*

If humanity is to redeem itself, it will have to emerge from the dreadful cataclysm of war with unimpaired spiritual integrity; with hearts free from the poison of malice and revenge; with minds disburdened of blows given and received; with souls unscathed by suffering, and filled with the spirit of unconditional surrender to the Divine Will that will inspire and ensoul the new humanity.

III. THE NEW HUMANITY

To diagnose the problem of mankind as merely the problem of bread, is to reduce humanity to the level of animalism. However, even in the limited field of purely material adjustment, man cannot succeed unless he approaches it with spiritual understanding.

Material adjustment is but part of the wider problem of spiritual adjustment. *Spiritual adjustment requires the elimination of the self, not only from the material aspects of life, but also from those spheres which affect the intellectual, emotional, cultural, social and political life of man.*

Thus, in the hour of trial, let not our thoughts be for our limited selves, but for others; not prompted by our egos, but responsive to the claims of our *divine* selves, which unite us with the rest of mankind. We cannot dodge our responsibility by evasion. To ignore human suffering as merely an illusory aspect of the illusory universe is indefensible. Not by ignoring suffering, but by ministering to it with creative love, do we gain the road to Life Eternal. Not through aloofness or indifference, but by eager, selfless service are we brought nearer the fountain-source of that transcendental Rhythm which is at the heart of God's Universe.

Service with reservations is mere window dressing. In identifying ourselves with a narrow group or faction, or with some limited ideal,

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we do not achieve a real fusion of our segregated selves, only the appearance of such fusion. *The true merging of the limited self with the Ocean of Universal Life involves complete surrender of isolated existence in all its aspects.*

Foggy conjectures, or a hodge-podge of stale ideas are no substitutes for a clear definition of man's true goal. If the world culture of tomorrow is to be an improvement on the savagery of today, it will have to emerge from an absolute understanding of the Universal Law, wholly independent of existing traditions and superstitions; it will not come into being through the sterile process of disembalming and rehashing obsolete values.

The glorious vista of God's Cosmic Plan is obscured by creeds, dogmas, sectarianism and superstitions. These limitations can be transcended by man not through blind or total denial of any worth in existing concepts, but by the discovery, unfolding, accentuation and development of whatever fragments of divine Truth may be hidden in them. This, however, must be accomplished, not within narrow, frigid limits, but in an atmosphere of pure, unhindered love. *Such love cannot function in an environment polluted by prejudice of any kind.*

Humanity—kindness and compassion toward all created beings—is the real test of civilization. The true barbarian is he who is devoid of humanity. Though a man be ever so learned, master of science, paragon of worldly attain-

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ment, if he lacks humanity he is still a barbarian.

In every part of the world, humanity is perpetually disintegrating into narrow groups, based upon the superficial and basically false differences of caste, creed, race, nationality, religion, ideology or culture. Since these groups have long been accustomed to distrust and fear those outside their self-imposed boundaries, they are animated by indifference, contempt or hostility toward each other. This attitude is born of ignorance, prejudice, envy, selfishness; it can be remedied only by the fostering of the spirit of mutuality which breaks through artificial isolationism and derives its imperishable strength from the sense of the inviolable unity of life as a whole. Love alone can achieve this. *Spontaneous love, that knows no man-created boundaries, is the great universal bond which unites all living creatures in immortal Oneness of soul-identity.*

Spontaneous love is not born of mere determination; through the exercise of will, one can at best be dutiful. By effort and persistence, one may succeed in bringing this sense of duty in conformity with one's pet concept of what is right; but such action is spiritually barren, because it lacks the inner beauty of voluntary love. *Love has to spring spontaneously from within*; it is in no way amenable to any form of outer compulsion. Love and coercion are incompatible; but though love cannot be forced upon one, it may be awakened through love itself.

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Love is essentially self-communicating; those who are blest with love, may fructify others who are void of it. *True love is unconquerable and irresistible; it goes on gathering power and spreading itself, until eventually it ennoble everyone and everything it touches.*

Once it is universally recognized that there are no claims greater than the claims of the Universal Divine Life, which includes all beings and all things without exception, this pure interflow of immaculate love will not only create lasting peace, harmony and happiness in individual, national and international spheres, but will shine forth in its own purity and beauty as God's most precious gift to man.

The New Humanity will come into being through the release of selfless love in measureless abundance. *Through the free, unhampered interplay of this true love from heart to heart, man will attain the new state of being, the highest level of life destined for him upon this earth.*

Divine Love is impervious to the onslaughts of duality, for it is an expression of Godhood—Infinite Unity—itself. Through Divine Love, the New Humanity will be put in tune with the Holy Plan. Divine Love will usher in not merely imperishable kindness among men, infinite bliss in personal life, but will also make possible the flowering of harmonious, co-operative life among the peoples of the world. *It will give birth to an era in which mankind will be emancipated from the tyranny of dead forms; an age that will give*

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full scope to the life creative, bring spiritual illumination to man's inspiration. It will be an era free from illusion, rooted in divine Reality; an age blest with lasting peace and abiding happiness; the millenium that will initiate man into the Life of Eternity.

The New Humanity calls for creative statesmanship that will recognize and emphasize this great potentiality of mankind; for a leadership that is dynamically aware of the essential unity of all human beings, not only through their predestined co-partnership in the Divine Plan for man upon earth, but also by virtue of the fact that they are all living expressions of the One Life.

No line of action—no covenant—will be helpful, nor fruitful, unless it is in absolute harmony with this profound Law of the Universe. *The regeneration of humanity depends upon leadership that has the wisdom to understand this transcendental fact, the inspiration to make creative use of it, the authority to put it into operation.*

The only antidote against the disease of hatred is love.

IV. MAYA—CREATOR OF ILLUSION

All human beings—whether they are conscious of it or not—want to realize the ultimate Truth; but Truth cannot be known and realized as *Truth*, unless ignorance is known and realized as *ignorance*; it is therefore of vital importance that man understand *Maya*—the principle of ignorance in Creation. *To understand Maya is to know half the Truth of the universe. It is imperatively necessary for man to know that which is false—for unless he knows it, he cannot get rid of it; and rid himself of it he must if he is to achieve spiritual redemption.*

The apparent existence of the duality of a God *Infinite* and a world *finite* is illusory; for *in Infinity there is in truth no room for anything else or anyone else.* How then does the false world of finite phenomena come into existence? It is created by *Maya*.

Maya eludes the comprehension of the finite mind; *its very existence depends on eluding it.* For if the finite mind of man could readily grasp the meaning of *Maya*, the whole intricate scheme of deception, which is *Maya's* stock-in-trade, and with which it has held all of mankind in its grip from time immemorial, would instantly disintegrate; it would in fact have been unable to hoodwink man in the first place. *So it is innate in the very nature of Maya to have placed itself beyond the pale of the human mind.* In whatever manner the limited intel-

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lect tries to understand or explain *Maya*, it falls short of the truth. *Maya is as unfathomable as God; Maya is God's Shadow.* While both God and *Maya* are beyond the comprehension of the limited intellect functioning in the world of duality, *they come to be thoroughly understood in the clear light of spiritual realization. Not until then is the enigma of Maya completely and finally solved for man.*

Maya itself is not illusion; it is the creator of illusion. Maya is not false; it is that which creates false impressions. Maya is not unreal; it is that which makes the real appear unreal, the unreal appear real. Maya is not duality; it is that which causes duality.

Maya becomes irresistible by taking possession of the very seat of knowledge—the human intellect. Maya is difficult to surmount, because under its sway the intellect—so dear to man—creates and upholds false beliefs and illusions with insidious logic that on the surface seems the last word in wisdom. The intellect which functions in *freedom*, prepares the way and assists the aspirant in the realization of the divine Truth; but the intellect that is slave to *Maya*, concentrates all its vast capacity and cunning on preventing true understanding.

Falsehood consists of taking the true as being false, or the false as being true; in other words considering anything to be other than what it intrinsically is. Mistakes in *valuation* can be committed in three ways: Taking as im-

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portant that which is unimportant; taking as unimportant that which is important; attributing to something an importance which is other than its true significance. *All these falsehoods are creations of Maya.*

The value of sense-objects is great or small according to the intensity or urgency of the lusts and longings of the individual. They have *potential* value when the lusts or longings are *latent*; they assume *actual* value when they become *active*. But every one of these values is false; for when ultimately all lusts and longings disappear, these pseudo-values are stripped of their borrowed importance; they stand naked in their true light: *empty, unreal deceptions.*

A characteristic example of attributing importance to that which is unimportant, is the prevalent attitude toward death. When a loved one dies, it usually rouses a feeling of sorrow and loneliness. This sense of grief for the deceased, whom one had been accustomed to seeing so often in the flesh, is, however, rooted in attachment to the *form*, not the *soul* of the departed. In his ignorance, man is not aware that *even though the form—the outer garment—has vanished, the soul is not dead, has in fact not even passed away; because the soul is imperishable, ever-present, everywhere.* The feeling of loneliness, the lingering memory of the beloved, the longing for his presence, the tears of bereavement and sighs of separation—are all due to false valuation; they are the product of *Maya*.

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Few are interested in God for His own sake. If the worldly-minded turn to God at all, it is mostly for their own selfish, mundane purposes. *They seek gratification of their cravings, hopes and even spites, through the intervention of a god of their own conceit—or of a deity who is the special fabrication and exclusive monopoly of the church or cult to which they happen to belong.* They do not seek God to satisfy an inner hunger for spiritual Truth. They long for all things except for the only Truth which *they ignore as wholly unimportant. They pursue happiness through everything except the Truth of God, the only unfailing Source of Abiding Joy.* This distortion of man's vision into considering as unimportant that which is important, is also the device of *Maya*.

An example of giving an importance to a thing other than its intrinsic significance, is when rituals, ceremonies and other routine religious practices are considered ends in themselves. They have their own value as means of expression, as vehicles of spiritual conditioning, but *as soon as they are permitted or encouraged to assume claims in their own right, they are vested with an importance which does not belong to them and to which they have no rightful claim. When thus clothed by Maya with an importance beyond their true measure, they bind and atrophy life, rather than quicken and help unfold it.*

False beliefs too are among the tricks *Maya*

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uses to hold the soul in ignorance and bondage. The false beliefs created by *Maya* are so deep-rooted and powerful that they assume in the average consciousness the status of self-evidence; they masquerade in the garb of veritable truths and are accepted by the mass of mankind without question.

For example, man believes that what he is, is represented by his physical body. It never occurs to him that he might be something other than what *seems* embodied in his tangible form. Identification with the body is accepted by him instinctively, without further proof. All his mundane senses and his ego-mind constantly attest what he has always regarded as an incontrovertible 'fact'; *and he holds the belief all the more strongly because so sure is he of his premise that he needs no further rational proof to support it.*

To give up the belief that he is the body, would involve the renunciation of all his desires pertaining to the physical body, and all the false values spawned by them. That is why the belief that he is his physical body becomes *natural* to man; it is easy to hold, difficult to uproot. On the other hand, belief that man is something other than his physical body seems *unnatural* and to call for convincing proof; it is difficult to hold, easy to resist. *Yet, when the mind is ultimately freed of all physical desires and attachments, the belief that man is his physical body proves to be utterly false, and the*

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revelation that he is something wholly other than his physical body emerges as the truth. This is equally true of man's subtle and mental bodies.

Man cherishes his false beliefs because he has come to *relish* them. *Maya* has succeeded in so thoroughly indoctrinating him, that through his long life as an individual soul, man has fondly clung to the false idea of his separate existence. All his thoughts, ideas, emotions, experiences and activities have ever assumed, confirmed and demonstrated to him the existence of the separate 'I'. *To give up this deep-rooted belief—which he does not even suspect to be false—to yield what he believes to be the core of his identity, would mean to surrender all that seems to constitute his very existence. This is a prospect utterly beyond the capacity of the unenlightened even to contemplate, let alone to accept.*

To shed this last vestige of falsehood—to yield one's cherished identity—is therefore the most difficult of all tasks. *Yet, in truth, this falsehood has no more substance than any of the earlier deceptions, which prior to awakening had seemed to the aspirant such unchallengeable certainties. Identification with the ego-mind too must eventually come to an end; it meets its doom when the soul renounces all craving for separate existence.*

Countless are the falsehoods which *Maya*-ridden man, in the stupor of his ignorance, is dup-

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ed into accepting; but from the very beginning all falsehoods carry within themselves the seeds of their own unmasking. Sooner or later in the evolutionary progress of the aspirant, their hollowness becomes evident and he recognizes them in their true colors for the innate falsehoods they are. Even in the very depths of ignorance, at the inception of man's evolution, there is a faint stirring of challenge to the first falsehood that fastens itself upon the soul. However feeble and inarticulate this slender beginning of a protest, it is the dawn of that quest for the final truth which will ultimately lead to the annihilation of all ignorance, all falsehood. The usurpation of every subsequent falsehood is accompanied by a spontaneous, though slow growth of inner restlessness—a slight tremor of suspicion, a vague quiver of fear—born of the divine ferment implanted in the depth of the soul for its ultimate salvation.

Identification with the body, for example, brings with it the *fear* of one's death, the fear of losing others. And in the very profundity of this fear—in man's heart of hearts—is seeded the first little sapling of suspicion that depending for abiding happiness merely upon the possession of perishable forms is building castles of hope on shadows of sand.

This is true of reliance on earthly possessions for security, and of all the other false premises with which *Maya* so enticingly paves the road of deception on which it is its diabolic business

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to lead man to his undoing. *By the grace of God, however, there is a hollow sound to every flagstone of falsehood over which man is lured to walk toward his doom. The false note in the very sound, the sense of walking on camouflaged pavement of thin ice, betrays the fancy trappings of Maya to the growing spiritual intuition of the victim and eventually leads him to full consciousness of the Truth.*

To achieve this, however, the aspirant must retrace his steps over the treacherous road he had travelled, and this is a task fraught with the most acute dangers. For not only is the surface flimsy and slippery, but Maya has cunningly changed the camouflage and shifted the landmarks, so that the victim now finds himself tragically lost in the labyrinth of a wilderness.

Frantically now he tries to escape, and in his anxiety is again and again fooled into following the innumerable false *Maya* lights that beckon him to bogus safety. *Maya's task now—and it is expert at it—is to conceal from the aspirant the one and only path that leads to his redemption. There is but one effective counterforce that can thwart the design of Maya and guide the aspirant to Divine safety: the Grace of the Perfect Master, who alone knows all the tricks of Maya and who alone on this earth is imperious to the wiles of Maya.*

Through the Grace of the Master the aspirant is enabled to distinguish the one true light from the myriad false ones, and to find his way

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out of the karmic wilderness into the Eternal Stronghold of God's Truth which is impregnable to the assaults of Maya.

Not until then does the soul become lucidly aware of the all-absorbing Truth that in the divine fact of Reality, Maya, and the whole universe of deception created by it, do not exist. Not until then does the soul know itself to be what it has always been: Eternally Self-realized; eternally infinite in all-knowledge, all-bliss, all-power and all-existence; eternally free from duality; eternally, inseparably all-one in God.

The highest divine knowledge is attained through Love, innate in which are the spiritual faculties of intuition and inspiration, as against the faculties of the intellect: theory and deduction. It is this Love that helps man to transcend the domain of the intellect, gain complete annihilation of the ego-self, and achieve the divine state that culminates in union with God.

V. RULE AND OVERTHROW OF THE EGO

The formation of the ego serves the purpose of giving a certain measure of stability to conscious processes; it also provides a working equilibrium which makes for a planned and organized life. It would, therefore, be a mistake to assume that the rise of the ego is without a creative purpose. Though it emerges only to vanish in the end, the ego does fulfill a temporary need which could not be ignored in the long journey of the soul.

The ego thus has a destined place, and performs a specific mission in the evolution of consciousness. However, since the ego is the master-agent of Maya, ingrained in its very nature is the ambition to transgress the boundaries of its ordained domain and to assume dictatorial powers over the soul. The most cunning weapon of the ego in achieving this is its fostering of the sense of separateness from the rest of creation; emphasis on difference from other forms of life and provocation of conflict with them is its favorite ammunition. Moreover, to conceal its identity and design, the ego masquerades under the false conceit of identification with the body, and as long as its sly disguise remains undetected, it is the source of all the illusion that vitiates experience.

Unsurpassed in subtlety and deception, ruthless in tactics, the ego proceeds to consolidate its position by fair means or foul. The chief aim

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of its strategy is to deep-root and perennialize the sense of individual separateness, for the ego can best thrive in the jungle-growth of spiritual ignorance thus fecundated in the mind of man. The ego is acutely aware that the sprouting of the first shoots of spiritual curiosity mark the beginning of its own doom. All its crafty maneuvering is consequently centered on one plot: to thwart, or at least to postpone indefinitely the germination of hyperphysical inquisitiveness. Inevitably then, *the ego becomes the chief hindrance to enlightenment of consciousness, the most formidable foe of spiritual emancipation.*

The dangers inherent in the growth of the ego are intensified by the fact that man is conscious only of a small surface fragment of the ego—unaware of the deeper might of its being, in which its real strength lurks. The ego is like an iceberg, that shows only about one-eighth of its menacing bulk, which is submerged, and out of sight. Likewise, but a fraction of the real ego becomes manifest in consciousness in the form of the individual 'I'; the true immensity of the ego remains concealed in the dark and treacherous catacombs of the subconscious mind.

The ego feeds and grows fat on desires; the very act of desiring—regardless of results—is its meat. Success in the attainment of a coveted object is the triumph of the ego; failure to satisfy a craving is the ego's frustration. Both gratification of desires, as well as inability to

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attain them contribute to the intensification of the ego. If it is subjected to curtailment in one direction, it seeks and forces compensating expansion in another. So determined is the ego to perpetuate its sway, that if it fails to prevent the birth of awakening and finds that it is being overwhelmed by a flood of spiritual resolutions and endeavors, it changes disguise with Machiavellian skill, and attempts to save itself by fastening upon the very force which had been brought into play for the overthrow of its reign. Still more, the ego has the adaptability to feed even upon the periodical lulls in the surge of cravings.

The only experience that contributes to the deflation of the ego is the manifestation of pure love; the only aspiration which tends to dissipate the false sense of separateness is the unalloyed longing to become one with the Beloved. Craving, hatred, anger, fear, jealousy, are all *exclusive* attitudes which create and widen the gulf between one's self and the rest of life; love alone is the *inclusive* approach that helps bridge this artificial, ego-created gap, and which tends to break through the barrier of separation erected by false imagination.

The divine lover, too, longs, but he is free of craving; he hungers for union with the Beloved, and in seeking it, his sense of the ego-centric 'I' becomes less and less assertive. In love, the 'I' does not think of self-preservation, just as the moth is not afraid of getting burn-

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ed in the flame. *The ego is the unflagging assertion of separateness; love the joyous affirmation of oneness. Only true love can overcome the ego; only union with the Beloved can completely dissolve it.*

In the ripeness of evolution comes to man, at last, the momentous discovery that life cannot be understood, nor lived fully, so long as it is made to revolve around the false pivot of the ego. It is then that the inescapable logic of man's own experience impels him to seek the real center of his being—the Spiritual Sun of Truth—and to re-orbit his life around it. This spiritual revolution necessitates the dethronement of the ego and its replacement by Truth-consciousness. Such an uprising against its dictatorship will inevitably be fought by the ego with all the formidable and sinister weapons at its disposal. In the course of it man will discover that his liberation from the over-lordship of the ego is in fact not possible short of the complete annihilation of the hydra-headed ego; for as long as there is even the feeblest breath of life left in the ego, it has the incredible toughness to re-suscitate itself, and the fabulous resources to re-establish its hegemony. Complete dissolution, therefore, of the false nucleus of accumulated and consolidated karmic impressions and tendencies—which is the mainspring of the power of the ego—is an inescapable prerequisite to realization of the divine truth. *The only road*

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to true integration and fulfillment of life is over the dead body of the ego.

The consummation of this goal is the one all-vital task of every human being—an undertaking which few have the wisdom and courage, the strength and capacity, the tenacity and endurance to successfully accomplish by themselves. It is the divine mission of the Perfect Spiritual Master to light the path for the aspirant, to help him over the critical spots, to guide him to his goal.

The ego is too deeply entrenched, its reserves are too shrewdly deployed, its decoys too ingeniously concealed for a successful frontal assault. The main strength of the ego must first be sapped; its shock-troops—the elite corps of cravings—confounded and disorganized; its whole strategy foiled by a war of attrition. The most effective means of accomplishing this is not by attack, but by the subtle generalship of strategic withdrawal—*withdrawal from desires*. In no other way can the mighty forces of the ego be split up into harassed fragments, its cunningly mined fields avoided, its adroitly laid traps by-passed. Thus only can the impregnable might of the ego be made vulnerable, its scattered battallions lured into pockets of undoing, its triumphant forces be reduced to impotence. Only by such a master stroke can the unbeatable armies of the ego be ultimately annihilated.

On the propaganda front, too, the utmost

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skill is necessary to counteract and neutralize the wily intrigue and subversive stealth of the ego. So clever is the disguise of its fifth columnists of pride, vanity, prejudice, intolerance, holier-than-thouness, conceit, piousness, ambition, cupidity, smugness, and of its many other well-groomed secret agents, that they are practically unrecognizable as enemies, in fact are held close to the average bosom as friends. The only thing which will smoke them out, is recognition of the fact that the task entrusted to them by the ego is *to implant in the mind and nurse into action the insidious doctrine of division and separateness from other creatures; the only countermeasure that will rout these satellite-termites of the ego, is the deliberate, consistent assertion of unity, the daily, living demonstration of oneness with all living beings.*

Simultaneously with parallel master strategy on the battle and propaganda fronts against the ego, the home front, too, requires the most skillful statesmanship, if the campaign against the hordes of the ego is to succeed. Here the deeper aspects of the conflict come into play.

One of the chief and most insidiously subversive fallacies on the home front is the ego-planted concept of 'good' and 'evil.' It is the ego's job to conjure up a false standard of 'right' and 'wrong' for man, and to mislead him into gauging his life and the life of others by it.

The ego has led man to believe that all he

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has to do for his salvation is to stop being 'bad' and to become 'good.' This is one of the ego's most pernicious snares; next to the complexes of superiority and inferiority it keeps more souls from liberation than any other device of the ego.

Apart from the fact that by design of the ego, standards of 'good' and 'bad' vary with the exigencies of time, clime and nationality, one of the chief reasons why this false concept is so destructive, is that it frequently results in an attitude of holier-than-thouness—the *perfect trap for the unwary*.

True, from the very beginning of human evolution, the problem of emancipation consists of cultivating and developing basically higher karmic tendencies and deeds, so that they might overlap and eventually annul the accumulated lower ones. Two cardinal facts, however, the ego deliberately keeps from its victims.

One of these all-vital truths is that *whether a person happens to be 'good' or 'bad' at any given time is dependent upon the inexorable operation of his karmic ties. In the light of this ultimate standard, saint and sinner are both what they are because of the immutable laws operative in the universe. Both have the same beginning, the same end.* From the divine point of view, and contrary to existing religions and creeds—so craftily instigated and popularized by the ego—*no sinner has the stigma of eternal degradation upon him, no saint the eternal dis-*

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tion of honor. No saint, however godlike, has attained the heights of moral excellence, except after many lives of moral failings; no sinner is so debased that he will not eventually rise from his ashes and ultimately achieve sainthood.

There is eternal, divine certainty of hope for everyone, without exception; none is utterly lost; none need ever despair. It remains true, however, that the way to divinity lies through renunciation of the base in favor of the noble.

The other unchangeable spiritual law which the ego takes such pains to hide from man, is, if anything, the target of a still more subtle strategy of distortion. The ego has no contrivance more effective in crippling the home front of man's crusade for self-liberation. *The truth it so craftily conceals is that "good" deeds and experiences are also products of desire, and are therefore karmically no less binding than "bad" ones. Spiritual emancipation is possible only when "good" and "bad" balance each other, merging so completely in absolute neutralization of fulfillment that they leave no room for any further choice of self-desire.*

The gradual unfoldment of 'good' brings in its train love, generosity and peace. The favorable karmic credits deposited by the manifestation of these qualities counterbalance and often overlap the debts of lust, greed and anger. *When the two sides are perfectly balanced, there is an instantaneous termination of both karmic debts and credits, and a simultaneous*

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transition of consciousness from a state of bondage to a state of freedom. But what the ego is so particularly shrewd in suppressing is that both the credit and debit sides of the book of karma have to sum up to absolute equality before the karmic account of the aspirant can be closed. For the ego is fully aware that if it permits the aspirant to draw the final line beneath his two equilibrated karmic columns, this line becomes at once a mortal dagger through its own heart.

Because of this certainty the ego does its best to keep the aspirant's karmic account in a constant state of unbalance. *And one of its cleverest frauds is to keep the account running by a surplus on the credit side of the ledger.* For it is sly enough to know that the deepest instinct of man is for the 'good,' and all that remains for the ego to do is to hitch the horse of this true instinct to the false wagon of self-righteousness, and it has the aspirant licked. In the majority of cases the aspirant stays licked, because he is unaware that *emancipation is not a matter of mere accumulation of virtue; it requires the most delicate troy-weight balancing of the evolutionary ledger. This is not a mathematical problem of matching what appear to be equal amounts on the two sides of the ledger; nor is it an automatic process that could be left to itself, but one that requires the most wise, most painstaking, most exacting effort on the part of the aspirant.*

Until man learns this—and it generally takes

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him many incarnations of triumph and frustration to learn it—he falls again and again for the honeyed words of his ego—the tempter—that ever builds new false mansions for him to dwell in, abodes to suit and perpetuate the particular *Maya*-distorted consciousness of the individual. Frequently this is a fool's paradise in the happy valley of self-deception, in which dwell the people who are tricked by the ego into believing that salvation is achieved by *denying* the existence of 'evil.'

In this valley of spiritual monomania dwell also the gullible who are roped into believing that the road to salvation lies by way of *affirmation*. The ego has convinced these poor deluded, whose number is growing into legion, that they can get anything they want, when they want it, including redemption, by riding roughshod over everything, even God, if necessary.

Between these extremes are people of many other, less assertive categories; honest, well-meaning, good and kindly people. All are led by the ego on puppet strings *away* from the divine goal, under the delusion that 'good' deeds, 'good' thoughts, 'good' behavior alone assure salvation.

For those whom it cannot lure into this phantom land of spiritual mesmerism, the ego builds palaces of sanctimoniousness or self-worship. These imposing castles of the mind, too, are founded on ignorance and falsehood. The intoxicant which the ego uses on the unfortunate

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dwellers in these fancy self-prisons is the conviction that they do not have to strive for salvation; they have already achieved it. They need not aspire for heaven, since they have turned earth into heaven for themselves, even if they had to do it at the expense of turning it into hell for others.

All these 'good' edifices are more difficult to dismantle than the 'bad' ones which they supplant, because self-identification with the 'good' becomes more easily deep-rooted than self-identification with the 'bad.' Inevitable pangs of conscience usually help man to recognition of what is 'bad' and assist him in ridding himself of it; but the 'good' is generally robed in the garment of self-esteem and becomes a bur of righteousness that bores its way ever deeper into man's consciousness, until it becomes well-nigh impossible to get rid of it.

The difficulty with the abode of 'evil' is not so much of perceiving it as a limitation, but in dismantling it; the problem of the palace of 'good' is not so much in dismantling it, but in perceiving it as a limitation. Both bind man alike. Their stranglehold is a problem of qualitative balancing. When this is accomplished, both 'good' and 'evil' disappear, leaving a clean slate of mind, on which nothing is written and which therefore reflects the undistorted Truth. In this pure reflection the mind at last perceives the untarnished soul. *This is Illumination.* After the mind has beheld the soul, it has to be

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merged in it, before the soul can become conscious of itself. *This is Realization.* In this state the mind itself, with all its impressions and accumulations of 'good' and 'evil,' and the ego-fostered perpetual strife between the two has disappeared. *For the soul has at last come to dwell in a Realm in which there is neither good nor evil, only God.*

Another aspect of the home front where the subversive activities of the ego create confusion most disruptive to the aspirant's war of liberation, is in the sphere of superiority and inferiority complexes that motivate man's behavior and actions. *These two destructive extremes have to be brought into delicately balanced polarity, if they are to neutralize each other.* And unless they are neutralized, the forces in field against the hosts of the ego will be handicapped, if not brought to grief.

To achieve perfect counterpoise between these two basic, ego-planted tangles of the mind, requires the creation of a psychic situation in which they are both induced, for a time, to come into full play simultaneously, without requiring the repression of the one, in order to secure the expression of the other. It is only when the aspirant enters into dynamic, creative affinity with the Master that these two complexes are severed from the puppet-strings of the ego and expend themselves in the impact of simultaneous demonstration of self-importance. The two complexes, which hold man in

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life-long thralldom, are thus brought into mutual tension by the attempt of the aspirant to enter into perfect kinship with the Master; like two light-rays of equal intensity, momentum and quality, they annihilate each other at the point of equilibrated contact. *The dissolution of these opposite complexes automatically brings down with it the superstructure of separative barriers which the ego has so laboriously built up in consciousness, and of which they were the main pillars. The breaking down of the walls of separation opens the way for the influx of divine love. With the emergence of divine love as the dominant factor in the life of the aspirant, the false sense of isolation of the 'I', as distinguished from the 'you', dissolves into the greater consciousness of indivisible unity—an absolute essential for the triumph of the crusade against the ego.*

In the course of his evolution, man has allowed himself to become too deeply entangled in the web woven about him by the assertive ego. Sapped of his divine creativeness by the age-old machinations of the ego, man has become incapable of successfully launching and victoriously consummating the Herculean campaign of annihilation against the all-powerful forces of the ego. *Only the Perfect Master who functions on the ultimate plane of Divine Absoluteness has the all-knowing wisdom, the unhampered capacity, the fatigueless energy, the exhaust-*

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less endurance to marshal such a campaign and to guide it to victory.

To understand the function of the Perfect Master is to realize that he is the affirmation incarnate of the unity of all life. Unalloyed allegiance to him, implicit faith in his guidance open the way to the influx of the Master's Love—the one solvent that not even the unparalleled toughness of the ego-nucleus can withstand. If, like a good soldier, the aspirant responds to the Master's command with unquestioned enthusiasm, and carries his orders into execution with unqualified fervor, he will open the floodgates of his heart to the unimpeded influx of the Master's Love. The irresistible potency of this divine solvent will finally disintegrate the ego and all the false concepts which are its offspring. In their place will flower the redeeming consciousness of divine Oneness, of which the Master is the living embodiment.

When this greater Awareness becomes the guiding incentive and vivifying principle in the life of the aspirant, it leads inevitably to his spiritual emancipation. For not only does it culminate in absolute union with the Master, and through the Master with all Creation, but in the supreme moment of merging with the Master in Divine Love, the aspirant attains the acme of his quest—the ultimate goal of all human beings: God-realization.

VI. DYNAMICS OF SPIRITUAL ADVANCEMENT

Worldly man lives mostly through and for the body. Even pursuits which seem to have little or no connection with the body, if traced to their source, will be found to have their roots in desires connected with the body. *Man's spiritual advancement begins when he ceases catering to his body exclusively and transfers his chief attention to the requirements of the soul.* This does not mean neglect of the body; on the contrary. From indulgence in abnormal appetites and gross physical habits, which tend to stimulate and excite the body, rather than keep it in a healthy condition, man now reclaims his body for the purpose for which it was originally intended: to serve as the temple of the soul. From the inception of spiritual awakening, man no longer is slave to his body. Like the driver of a car, who has a long distance to travel and keeps his motor well supplied with clean oil, good gasoline and pure water—not to indulge his car but to insure its perfect functioning—man now tends to the true needs of his body; he supplies it with wholesome, sensible food, guards it against contamination and abuse, only for the purpose of keeping it in perfect condition for the expression of the higher life. Instead of a hindrance, the body now becomes a help in the arduous task ahead.

Stirred by the incomprehensible and irresistible pull of his divine destiny, man proceeds to

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pursue his quest for spiritual emancipation. He soon discovers that the path is difficult, abounding with pitfalls and slippery precipices. Not infrequently he finds that after he had scaled great heights, the slightest mistake makes him lose his foothold and slide back, often plunging him to the bottom, where he has to start the precipitous climb all over again. *And the journey is never the same, the path always new, changing even during the ascent, with every karmic change in the climber's fortunes. That is why the aspirant is never safe unless he has the help and guidance of a Perfect Master—the divine guide—who knows every inch of the treacherous path, knows how to lead the climber to the top without mishap.*

The aspirant who has started on the spiritual path, carries with him all the vast accumulation of karmic impressions, tendencies, debts and obligations. In the intensity of his spiritual longing they remain partially suspended, and for a time inoperative, but time and again, when there is the slightest slackening of the spiritual effort, this temporarily suspended mass of karmic debris rearrays and reasserts itself into formidable, often impassable obstacles in the path of the aspirant. The problem may be likened to the flow of a river, whose powerful current carries along with it great quantities of eroded earth, trees, brush and other waste it has picked up at its source, from its banks and from its bed. As long as this mass is disbursed and sus-

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pended in the water, it does not hinder the flow of the river, though at times it might slacken it; but where the current slows down or becomes sluggish — particularly as it approaches the mouth — this vast residue has a tendency to settle on the bottom of the river, forming huge islands and deltas which not only obstruct the flow of the river, but often divert it and even split it into smaller currents, weakening, and at times completely dissipating the great force of the once mighty river. *The path of spiritual advancement is, in like manner, often blocked by obstacles of its own accumulation. These can be removed only with the help of the Perfect Master.*

The objective of spiritual advancement is not so much 'works', but the achievement of a quality of life that is free from the stranglehold of the ego. If the aspirant has great worldly achievements to his credit, *and claims them as his own*, his ego fastens itself upon his conceit—which it had cunningly engendered in him in the first place—and from this vantage point is able to seriously impede the spiritual progress of the aspirant. *That is why rituals and ceremonies, the thumbing of holy books, acts of charity and good works, methodical attendance at religious services, external renunciation and penances are absolutely futile, when they are rooted—as most often they are—in ego-consciousness.*

To avoid this fatal pitfall, the aspirant should free himself of the very consciousness of 'I do

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this' and 'This is mine.' It does not mean that he should refrain from all activity through fear of strengthening his ego. On the contrary, *he may have to adopt a life of increased activity in order to wear down the ego he has already developed. The aspirant is thus caught in a baffling dilemma: if he remains inactive, he does nothing toward breaking out of the prison of his ego-life; if he takes to a life of action, he risks being caught in the new traps planted by his ego with the help of these very acts.*

There is a very effective method to deal with this serious problem: for the aspirant to surrender his limited ego-life in favor of the unlimited ego-less life represented by the Master. Complete self-surrender is difficult to achieve; yet the most essential condition of spiritual advancement is the diminishing of the ego to its minimum. The aspirant, however, has been so accustomed to derive his zest in life from the stimulation of his limited ego, that an immediate transition from a life of egoistic action to one free from the ego would leave the aspirant completely bereft of inspiration; it would relegate him to a state of negative passivity, where there would be no room, no opportunity, for the joy of expression, or where he would be compelled to seek expression through automatic activity, like that of a lifeless machine; activity totally barren of any sense of fulfillment. Such a sudden transition therefore would be most fatal.

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*The solution is to create a provisional working ego entirely subservient to the Master. In centering his life, for a time, around this transitory alter-ego, the aspirant should adopt the following procedure: Before launching upon an activity—trivial or important—he should feel and believe that it is not *he* who is doing it, but the *Master*, who is having it done through him. When the activity is completed, the aspirant should not tarry to claim credit for the deed or to exult over it; *he should free himself of the last vestige of identification with the action by transferring its laurels to the Master.* This procedure, if persisted in, creates for the aspirant a new ego, which though provisional and seemingly outside himself, has the capacity to become a source of that confidence, inspiration, enthusiasm and ‘go’ that motivate all spontaneous human action. *But this new ego is spiritually harmless, since it derives its existence and functioning from the Master, who is the embodiment of ego-free Infinity, and therefore divinely immune to the sinister encroachment of the ego. When the time is ready, this provisional ego of the aspirant can be thrown away like a garment.**

The creation of a new ego which is entirely subservient to the Master is indispensable in the dynamics of spiritual advancement.

VII. EVOLUTION THROUGH THREE WORLDS

While developing full consciousness of the gross world in the human form, the soul simultaneously develops the subtle and mental bodies. As long as its sole awareness is confined to the gross world, however, the soul cannot use these bodies knowingly in wakefulness; it becomes cognizant of them and of the corresponding worlds only when its full consciousness is turned inward, toward itself. When the soul becomes aware of the subtle world, through the subtle body, it identifies itself with the subtle body; when it becomes conscious of the mental world, through the mental body, it assumes identity with the mental body, in the same manner as it identifies itself with the gross body when through it consciousness of the gross world comes to it. The homeward journey of the soul consists of freeing itself from the illusory identity with any of its bodies—gross, subtle or mental.

The soul is, always has been, and ever will be inseparably one with the Over-soul. In the primal beginning, however, it had no developed consciousness, and was therefore unaware of its identity with the Over-soul. Throughout the first stages of evolving consciousness, the soul is still unaware of its oneness with the Over-soul; its consciousness is confined to the various aspects of the phenomenal world, due to the karmic impressions, tendencies and obligations

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that limit its growth. Even after the aspirant has entered the spiritual path, the soul does not yet become conscious of its true identity; its awareness extends only to the gross, subtle and mental worlds, which are its own illusory shadows.

When the aspirant reaches the end of his quest, his soul has become free of all the karmic desires and limitations connected with the gross, subtle and mental worlds. Liberated from the falsehood of the past it now becomes possible for the soul to extricate itself from the illusion of finiteness, which owes its existence to the soul's identification with the gross, subtle and mental bodies. In this ultimate moment of redemption, the soul completely transcends the phenomenal world and becomes Self-conscious, Self-realized. *To attain this goal, the soul must retain full consciousness, and at the same time know itself to be wholly independent of the gross, subtle and mental bodies. It must be aware that the gross, subtle and mental worlds are products of illusion, become divinely conscious of its own transcendental supremacy over them.*

It is only in the super-conscious state that the mind is conscious of the *real* Self.

VIII. EVOLUTION THROUGH OPPOSITES

The mental and emotional tendencies accumulated by specific actions and experiences in the past, render the ego-mind susceptible to similar actions and experiences in the present and in the future. After a certain point of saturation is reached, however, this tendency is checked and counter-balanced by a natural reaction which manifests in a complete shift toward the opposite direction. Its aim is to clear the way for the operation of reverse tendencies.

This phenomenon occurs when the ego discovers the incompleteness of its share of an experience, and instinctively seeks to restore the lost balance by going over to its opposite. Thus, one who has had the experience of killing, will develop the psychic need for getting killed, and the susceptibility to it. The act of killing brings to the aggressor only one part of the complete experience: that of killing. The other half of the total act, the complimentary role of being killed, remains for him an unknown and unexplored aspect which, nevertheless, becomes in the act an inseparable, though unfulfilled part of his karma. From this moment, the slayer becomes subject to karmic determinism which compels completion of the cycle, and encourages it by attracting to the aggressor factors essential to the rounding out of the experience. The destiny of the killer is not fulfilled until he has actually gone through the personal ordeal of being at the receiving end of murder.

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Like the shuttle of the weaver's loom, the human mind is compelled to move between fateful opposites, developing the warp and woof of the cloth of life. The evolution of the psychic life is best represented not as a straight line but as a zig-zag course. The oscillation becomes less and less as one approaches the ultimate goal; subsides completely with its attainment.

To change one's inherited religion for a new one is like going from one cage into another. One should either cross the boundary of the religion of obsolete dogmas and enter the path that leads to spiritual emancipation, or remain within the creed-cage of one's birth.

IX. KARMIC IMPRESSIONS AND TENDENCIES*

The acquisition of evolutionary impressions, tendencies and emotions may be likened to the incessant winding of an endless string around an inert ball; the string representing the impressions, tendencies and emotions—the ball the mind of the individual soul. This winding process starts at the very beginning of creation and persists through all the evolutionary stages, including the human cycle. The string symbolizes all the mind impressions—natural as well as non-natural—and all the mental and emotional tendencies accumulated in the course of evolution.

Human beings fail of self-illumination because their consciousness is entwined in these impressions—veiled by the maze of accumulated imprints of past experiences. The will-to-be-conscious, which sprang into spontaneous being simultaneously with the birth of the first phenomenon in the cycle of evolution, comes to fruition in the form of human consciousness. It is, however, thwarted in its effort to arrive at the ultimate destination of its quest—awareness of the Oversoul—because the ego-mind is too deeply engrossed in accumulating and acting upon its karmic impressions, and counterbalancing the avalanche of tendencies created by them. Individual consciousness is expended in this all-absorbing process; it has not suffi-

* *Sanskaras*

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cient momentum left for the cardinal task of experiencing its own true nature as the Over-soul.

Only when consciousness is freed from its impediments and purged of its accumulated impressions and tendencies, does the initial will-to-be-conscious arrive at its final and true destination: conscious realization of the infinity and indivisible unity of the Absolute. *In search of the Ultimate Truth it is, therefore, of prime essence that man first obtain release from the karmic bondage of the past.* There are five different ways in which this may be accomplished:

1. *Cessation of New Impressions*

This consists of putting an end to the ceaseless activity of creating fresh impressions and tendencies. If the formation of mind impressions is compared to the winding of a string around a ball, this step is equivalent to putting a stop to the winding of any further string.

2. *Wearing Out of Old Impressions*

If accumulated impressions and tendencies are deliberately withheld from expressing themselves in action and experience, they gradually wear out. In our analogy, this process is comparable to the disintegration of the string through lack of use.

3. *Unwinding of Past Impressions*

This is achieved by the annulment of past impressions through mentally reversing the processes which originally led to their formation. Repentance, augmented by profound self-con-

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demnation, is the procedure, and it may be compared to the freeing of the ball by unwinding the string.

4. *Dispersion and Exhaustion of Impressions*
If the psychic energy which is imprisoned in the karmic impressions and tendencies is sublimated and diverted into other channels, they are exhausted in the effort, become dispersed and have a tendency to disappear. The ball, no longer inert, bursts its binding strings.

5. *Wiping Out of Impressions*
This consists of completely annihilating past impressions and their resultant tendencies; a process which is comparable to cutting the string into shreds, thereby liberating the ball.

The final wiping out of accumulated karmic impressions and tendencies can be effected only by the grace of a Perfect Master.

The average individual's karmic debris may be compared to an Augean stable, which is beyond his capacity to cleanse. But just as Hercules washed clean the stable of Augeas by turning the river Alpheus through it, so the Perfect Master can sweep away the karmic litter of the aspirant by training the current of his Divine Love upon it.

X. REINCARNATION AND KARMA

The overwhelming importance man attaches to death is the result of his attachment to outer forms. Age-old superstition, inculcated in his mind by orthodox creeds, makes it difficult, if not impossible for the average man to accept reincarnation as a fact. Two and two made four long before man's ancestors learned to multiply two by two. Reincarnation has been an immutable, divine fact from the first manifestation of creation; it is now and will continue to be, regardless of whether man, in his unawareness, refuses to accept it as a fact. *In the course of spiritual evolution all human beings reach a point of consciousness when the fact of reincarnation becomes vividly clear to them; and when it does, the phenomenon of death assumes an entirely new aspect; it reveals the innate beauty and sublimity of its creative place in the divine pattern of life.*

Even for the worldly man, death can lose much of its sting, when he acquires the wisdom to take a broader view of life. Regardless of the finite limitations of the intellect, he can accept it as a postulate that *in spite of the transitoriness of visible forms — in fact in and through these forms — there is an unbroken continuity of life*, which discards old forms and forges new ones for its habitation and manifestation. The recurring incident of death is balanced by the recurring incident of birth. In spite of the unceasing activity of the hand of

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Death, life continues to flourish; old generations are replaced by new ones; life reappears in fresh garments, incessantly renewing and refreshing itself. The stream of life throughout eternity, is forever advancing through constantly changing forms, which come and go like the waves of the ocean.

Hell and heaven are states of the mind; they should not be regarded as actual locales. Though from the subjective point of view, belief in these concepts exerts a powerful influence on the individual, they are both illusions within the greater illusion of the phenomenal world.

The experiences of earthly life, as well as the processes of reflection and integration through which the soul passes in life after death, are merely contributories to the main stream of intuitive wisdom, which is already latent in the soul from the very beginning of creation, and which reaches the full majesty of its flow at the moment of spiritual realization.

Except in rare instances, knowledge about past lives is not necessary for charting the onward course of spiritual evolution. Inner progression consists of guiding the life of the present in the light of the highest precepts perceived through the intuition, and not in subjecting it to the dominance of the past.

Though the opportunities afforded with each incarnation vary with time, place, sex, age and environment, each incarnation is predestined and affords special facilities for the unfolding

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of experiences along specific lines. The lessons which are readily learned in male incarnations, may not easily be absorbed through female incarnations; and the reverse too is true. Men, as a rule, excel in the qualities of head and will; they are capable of sound judgment and steadfast purpose. Women generally shine in the qualities of the heart; they are capable of intense love, which conditions them to welcome any sacrifice for the loved one.

The soul must go through both male and female incarnations, if it is to acquire the richness of experience which is prerequisite to the realization that the soul is beyond all forms of duality, including the over-emphasized duality of sex.

The problem of sex duality is part of the intrinsic problem of the whole of duality; it is automatically solved with the over-all solution of duality itself through Divine Love, in which there is neither 'I' nor 'You'; neither man nor woman.

In the world of physical phenomena, the law of conservation of energy, according to which no energy is ever lost, is an accepted fact. In the realm of spiritual values, too, it is an unalterable law that once karma—the principle of evolutionary cause and effect—comes into existence in the life of an individual, it does not mysteriously disappear, without fulfilling its natural function; it persists until it bears its own fruit or is undone by counter-

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karma. *Consequently, it is karmically inevitable for 'good' deeds to lead to good results; for 'bad' actions to bad consequences.*

If a person has done an evil turn to someone, he is fated to receive the penalty for it, and must welcome the evil thus brought upon himself in the knowledge that it is a debt paid. If he has done a good turn to a fellow human being, it is his destiny to receive a reward for it, and he must enjoy the good that comes to him, in the realization that that too is a debt discharged. What he does to another, he has also done to himself, although it may take time for him to realize how true this is. *The law of karma might be said to be the working of divine justice; a demonstration of the inseparable, timeless unity of all life, beneath the transitory surface of the world of duality.*

Most people are slaves of the mind; scarcely one in ten thousand is master of it—and thus master of life.

XI. LUST, GREED, LOVE

Infatuation, lust and greed may be regarded as lower, perverted forms of love. In infatuation, man becomes enamored of a desirable creature; in lust, he develops sensual appetite for it; in greed, he craves to possess it. Passive-blind surrender to the spell of carnal attraction is the bane of infatuation; active-aware appreciation of the intrinsic worth of the beloved is the blessing of love.

Lust is the lowest, most distorted form of love. In lust sole reliance is upon the quarry of the senses, with consequent spiritual subordination of the soul; the sensualist is virtually anchored to the prey of his lust. Love, however, puts the soul in direct and reciprocal touch with the Reality that is behind and beyond the form. Lust, therefore, may be called an experience heavy with the weight of its own corruption, while the exaltation of love seems to lend wings to the participants. In lust, there is a dwarfing of life; in love, an expansion of being. The sterility of lust depletes the spirit; it generates a sense of hopeless dependence upon a form which is regarded as belonging to another entity. *Love enhances the spirit; its sacred fire fuses the lives of lover and beloved into one, doubling the capacity of both.* Loving the whole world, is in the deepest sense equivalent to living in the whole world. Lust is a blundering into separateness and grief; love a

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progression into unity and joy. Lust is dissipation; love regeneration. Lust is the craving of the senses; love, the reaching out of the spirit. In lust there is excitement; in love, tranquillity. Lust *seeks* fulfillment; love *experiences* it.

Greed, too, has little in common with love. Greed is possessive in all its gross and subtle forms. It covets and appropriates coarse objects and people, as well as such ephemeral things as money, power, fame. Love seeks and attracts things and persons of beauty, values of lasting significance. The very idea of exclusive possession is unthinkable in love. There is, in love, a lavish, creative outpouring of the spirit that quickens and replenishes the psychic being of the beloved; it is wholly free from any expectations for itself. Greed, which drives the self to appropriate the target of its craving, ends in slavery to it; love, whose spontaneous joy it is to give away the self to the object of its longing, leads in fact to absorption of the beloved in the very being of the lover. In greed, the self tries to possess the object, but is itself spiritually possessed by it; *love lays the self at the feet of the beloved without any reservations, yet in that very act it finds the beloved becoming a spiritual part of its own being.*

In the fulfillment of love, reason plays a part. The interrelationship between the two is of three kinds. In the first, the sphere of love and the sphere of thought are kept as separate as possible; here the domain of love is practically

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closed to the expression of reason, while love is allowed little or no access to the realm of thought. Complete separation between these two expressions of the spirit is, of course, never possible; but where there is alternate functioning of love and reason—an oscillation of predominance—we have a love which is unilluminated by reason, a reason unsweetened by love.

In the second type, love and reason are operating simultaneously, but they do not work in harmony with each other. Though this conflict creates confusion, it is a necessary phase in the evolution toward the highest state, where there is true synthesis of love and reason.

This ideal blending of love and reason becomes an accomplished fact in the third kind of interrelation between the two. *In this highest manifestation of their respective functions, both love and reason are completely transformed; they emerge as one on a new level of awareness—beyond what is known as normal—into a state that may best be described as super-consciousness.*

It is due to love, that contact and communion between human beings assume significance; it is love which invests with meaning and value all that happens in the world of duality. But while love gives meaning to the world of duality, it is at the same time a standing challenge to it. *As love gathers strength, it generates creative restlessness and becomes the main driving force of that spiritual dynamic which ultimately suc-*

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ceeds in restoring to consciousness the original Unity of Being.

The pure, wholly selfless love which is awakened through the grace of the Master, is of greater spiritual value in the life of the aspirant than any other means that he may adopt in search of the Truth. Such love combines within itself not only the merits of all spiritual disciplines, but excels them all in the technique of leading the aspirant to his goal. When such a love comes to the aspirant, he has but one desire: to be united with the Divine Beloved. Such withdrawal of consciousness from all other desires leads to infinite virtue; nothing purifies one more completely than such a love for the Master. It inspires the aspirant to offer his all to the Divine Beloved; no sacrifice is too difficult for him; all his thoughts are withdrawn from the self and come to be centered exclusively in the Divine Beloved. *Through the ever-growing intensity of this love, the aspirant eventually breaks the shackles of the self and becomes united with the Beloved. This is the consummation of true love; for in the ultimate flowering of its God-essence in the Master, the love of the aspirant achieves divinity.*

Divine Love is in all aspects different from human love. Human love is for the many in the one; Divine Love for the One in the many. Human love creates innumerable complications and entanglements; Divine Love leads to integration and freedom. In human love, the duality of the

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lover and the beloved persists; in Divine Love the lover and the Beloved become one. At this stage, the aspirant has transcended the domain of duality and has become one with God; *for Divine Love is God*. In the supreme moment, when lover and Beloved become one, the end of the quest is merged with the beginning of bliss.

The whole universe sprang into being for the sake of Divine Love; out of it was it created, because of it does it endure, through it will it regain its Source. Man's supreme goal is to transmute the timeless love-urge within him into the God-essence of Divine Love. The merging of the two will dissolve all iniquity; it will give birth to what has so long been spoken of as the Kingdom of Heaven upon this earth.

A lustful man, no matter what good qualities he may possess, cannot move along the spiritual path; he is like a cart with one wheel.

XII. SEX, MARRIAGE, CELIBACY

Promiscuity in sex gratification is bound to land the aspirant in the most pitiful and dangerous chaos of ungovernable lust. In promiscuousness the suggestions of lust are inevitably the first to present themselves to the mind. *This dooms the sensualist to react every time within the gross pattern of the initial perversion; and with each indulgence, to seal tighter the door to nobler experiences.*

Among the chief characteristics of promiscuity is a growing sense of frustration and disappointment. When this becomes too acute, the mind resorts to forced, external repression of cravings. This inevitably results in further intensification of sex-hunger, often in sex-abnormalities. But when disappointment makes way for disillusionment or true awakening, the mind yields to the higher instinct of spontaneous inner renunciation. One phase of this is celibacy.

The value of celibacy lies in the habit of restraint and in the sense of detachment and independence which are its fruits. But as long as the mind is not completely free from craving, it knows no true freedom. The value of marriage, on the other hand, is to be found in the lessons of mutual adjustment and the sense of unity between man and woman that characterize the true wedlock. *Absolute union however—complete annihilation of duality—is possible only through Divine Love, which can never nest in*

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the heart so long as there is in the mind the slightest shadow of lust or craving. Only by treading the path of spontaneous inner renunciation of craving is it possible to attain true freedom and unity. This path of spiritual perfection is open to the aspirant whether in celibacy or marriage. Which of these he chooses will depend upon his karmic impressions, tendencies and ties.

Sex in true matrimony is entirely different from sex outside matrimony. In marriage, the tendencies of lust are much weaker, consequently more readily removed. When sex companionship in marriage is ennobled by love, illumined by spiritual idealism, and enhanced by a sense of responsibility, conditions for the sublimation of sex are much more favorable than in an atmosphere of promiscuousness.

In marriage, the range of mutual experiences is so wide that the suggestions of lust are not necessarily the first to present themselves; this gives the aspirant a real opportunity to recognize and counteract the limiting factors in his path. *By the gradual elimination of lust, and the substitution of increasingly richer marital experiences of selfless love and sacrifice, the aspirant can finally arrive at Infinity.*

The spiritual value of wedded life is in direct ratio to the nature of the dominant factors that characterize its daily routine. In the beginning the partners are generally drawn to each other by lust as well as love; but they can,

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through conscious and deliberate co-operative effort, gradually lessen the intrusion of lust, increase the element of love. Through this process of sublimation, lust ultimately disintegrates and gives way to pure love. *Through heart-felt sharing of joys and sorrows, through conscious ascendancy over gross instincts, the partners can progress from one spiritual triumph to another, from deep love to ever deeper love, until the possessive and jealous relationship of the initial period is entirely replaced by a love of selflessness and self-giving.* When matrimony is thus brought into direct line with the Divine Plan for the evolution of the individual, it becomes a pure blessing to the children who are the fruit of such a marriage, for they have the priceless advantage of imbibing the ennobling vibrations of a spiritual atmosphere from the very beginning of their earthly careers.

In true marriage there is no place for birth control as practiced by the misguided many; *from the spiritual point of view, birth control must essentially be effected by mental restriction and in no other way.* Mental power is necessarily undermined by reliance on physical means. The use of such means is detrimental to the development of self-control, most disastrous to spiritual advancement. Physical means of birth control are, therefore, under no condition advisable, however lofty the motives; they inevitably intensify the element of lust, lower the level of married life.

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If matrimony is based upon shallow considerations, it can easily deteriorate into a partnership of selfishness against the rest of the world. If, however, it is inspired by true devotion and consecrated by exalted idealism, it can rise to a fellowship which requires and calls forth increasingly greater mutual sacrifices, and results in ever-mounting experiences of spiritual growth. *Thus purified, marriage has the potentiality to become a medium through which the pure love and selfless service of the two united souls can achieve a momentum abundant enough to enrich the whole family of mankind.*

Real happiness lies in Oneness; wherever there is duality there is grief.

XIII. SELFLESS SERVICE

Selfless service is unaffected by results. It is like the rays of the sun that serve the world by shining alike on all creation; on the grass in the field, on the birds in the air, on the beasts in the forest, on all mankind; on saint and sinner, rich and poor, strong and weak—wholly impervious to their attitude or reaction.

It is of vital importance, however, that service, though utterly selfless, be guided by spiritual understanding; for even selfless service unintelligently handled often creates complications and chaos. *To be a pure blessing to humanity, the most selfless act of service must be born of absolute understanding of life, and governed by faultless wisdom.*

Selfless service consists of rendering service to others with no thought of gain, reward or result; it is free from the thought of placing others under obligation. In serving a fellow human being in the spirit of spontaneous, selfless love, one does not put him under obligation. On the contrary, the one helped confers upon the helper the blessing of an opportunity to serve his own true self.

There is complete disregard of one's own convenience or welfare in selfless service; *it is characterized by absolute subjugation of one's own happiness—by unalloyed joy in sacrificing everything for the well-being of others.* In selfless service the comfort of others is one's conveni-

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ence, their health one's healing, their happiness one's delight. Giving one's life for others, one gains glorious life for oneself. Sheltering others in one's heart, makes one inhabit theirs. An act of helpfulness, a word of comfort, the spontaneous warmth of one's selfless love, give to others what they greatly need; their thoughts of gratitude and good will, the heightened surge of their spirit, the increased flow of God-love released by the selfless act, bring to the giver infinitely more than he can ever give.

Service performed after realization of the divine Law of the Universe is a spontaneous expression of spiritual understanding; it is rooted in full comprehension of the true nature of the self. Though it is followed by important results in the objective world, it is in no way affected or complicated by craving for such results. The sun shines because it is its nature to do so, not out of any ambition to achieve something by it; the God-realized person lives a life of spontaneous self-offering, prompted by the heart of the Divine Reality with which he knows himself to be one, not out of longing to achieve anything for himself. *The God-conscious do not seek enrichment through attainments, for having realized the Infinite, they are already established in the divine sufficiency of the Universe.*

Selfless service reaches its acme in the God-realized Master.

The Perfect Master serves the whole universe

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out of the finality of his infinite consciousness; those who serve the Master or submit to his guidance, share in his universal work. Their service has the advantage of the Master's wisdom and insight. Willing participation in the work of the Master not only enhances the value of the disciple's service, but creates most favorable opportunities for spiritual enlightenment. *In importance, service originating in the instructions of the Master is second only to the service rendered by the Master himself.*

Selfless service is a road that leads to God.

Many of the so-called Christian missionaries are followers of Judas, not Jesus. The object of a true Christian missionary should be not merely to baptize so-called pagans, but to render unselfish service to others, regardless of race, color or creed.

XIV. UNIVERSAL SELFHOOD

Before duality can be completely transcended, selfishness must be transmuted into selflessness. This can be achieved by persistent and continuous performance of good deeds, which wears out selfishness. Channeled into good deeds, selfishness becomes the instrument of its own destruction. If persisted in, good deeds form a plank over which selfishness is made to walk to its doom.

Good deeds have a tendency to purify the doer. *From good, the soul passes on to God.* Selfishness becomes merged with Universal Selfhood, which is beyond good and bad, virtue and vice and all the other dual aspects of illusion. From the peak of selflessness is perceived the vista of oneness with all creation. On this level there is neither selfishness nor selflessness in the ordinary sense; both are merged in and absorbed by a feeling of *selfness* for all. This exalted state of liberation brings about undisturbed harmony without loss of discrimination, unshakable peace without indifference to surroundings.

To reach this Summit of Realization, man must liberate his heart by weeding out all desires, and by cultivating only one longing: the longing for union with God—the One Ultimate Reality—which he will find not in the changing panorama of external environment, but in the core of his own being.

XV. SEARCH FOR GOD

God either exists or does not exist. If He exists, the search for Him will be amply rewarded. Those who believe that He does not exist, may find it worth seeking Him. However, man's search for God is usually not a voluntary and joyous enterprise. As a rule, he has to be driven to it by disillusionment over worldly things that allure him and to which his mind is slave.

When a man puts his heart into an intelligent and purposeful exploration of his own life, an increasingly deeper comprehension of the true meaning of *all* life comes to him, until finally he discovers that while undergoing complete transformation of his own psychic being, he has at the same time also achieved a clearer perception of the true significance of life itself. With this unclouded, mature vision of the ultimate nature and worth of life, the simultaneous realization comes to man that God, whom he has so desperately sought, is no stranger, nor a hidden or foreign entity. *He becomes aware that God is Reality itself and not a mere hypothesis; the Reality that includes all and excludes nothing; the very Reality of which man himself is a part and in which he has his entire being—the God-Reality with which in fact man is identical.*

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Thus, though in his search for God man begins by seeking something apart from himself, something utterly new, what he actually attains is a new understanding of the Ancient Truth. The spiritual journey does not consist of arriving at a new destination, or of gaining possession of something which man before did not have; nor of becoming something which he had never been. It consists of the uprooting of his ignorance concerning himself and life. *Finding God is arriving at one's own self.*

You will not be saved by theological dogmas, or by taking for gospel a long-dead Prophet as the only God-incarnate, the only genuine Saviour, the last real messenger of God. To be saved, you must conquer your mind, renounce all low desires, lead a pure life, and follow a living One who has realized God and in whom you have indomitable faith.

XVI. THE ONE AND THE MANY

The One Supreme Being descends into the domain of illusion and seemingly assumes a multiplicity of forms and phenomena, which do not in fact exist. *In reality there is no separateness between individuals; it appears only in imagination.* All human beings are, in the deepest sense, Siamese multiplets, inseverably linked to all other human beings by divine tendons of spiritual oneness. The manifoldness apparent in the universe — the ostensible separateness between creature and creature, between one thing and another—is an entrancing phenomenon projected by the One Supreme Soul, as an experiment in celestial phantasy. The effect, to the limited eye, is much the same as the illusory multiplication of one person or object by the countless reflections in a many-mirrored room. Out of this imaginary division arises in the mind of man the illusory concept of 'I' and 'mine' as opposed to 'you' and 'yours.' Although the Soul of the Universe is in reality an absolute and undivided Unity, which includes and contains all there is, the myriad light-fragments of its own reflected imagination give the surface impression of division and manifoldness. This illusion—though seemingly as vividly real as a mirage—is no part of reality; consequently all its products are illusory.

This becomes virgin-clear and subject to no intellectual doubt when one reaches the Summit of Realization. From this vantage point one be-

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comes aware that *the Infinite is the One and Only Reality; there is no one else, no other thing outside the Infinite; He permeates and includes all creation so absolutely that there is no room for any rival existence.*

When man rises to recognition of this Oneness of All, he accomplishes the highest state of realization. In this sphere he retains full evolutionary consciousness, but is no longer bound by the limitations of illusion and desire. His limited individuality—product of ignorance—is here transmuted into the Divine Individuality which knows no limitations and has none. *In this state, the illimitable consciousness of the Universal Soul becomes individuated without yielding its Oneness; incarnate without giving rise to any form of illusion.*

To beseech God for material prosperity is blasphemy, not prayer.

XVII. THE SEVEN REALITIES

The only real Existence is that of the one and only God, who is the Self in every one.

The only real Love is the Love for God.

The only real Sacrifice is that which knows no reservations.

The only real Renunciation is the giving up of all selfish thoughts and desires even in the midst of worldly duties.

The only real Knowledge is the recognition that God is the inner dweller in all—in good and bad—without exception.

The only real Self-Control is complete mastery over gross desires.

The only real Surrender is absolute yielding to the will of God.

XVIII. ACTION AND INACTION

Inaction is in many ways preferable to unintelligent action, for it has at least the merit of not creating further karmic complications. Even good and righteous action sows the seeds of new complexities which thicken the jungle that past actions and experiences have grown in the mind. All life is an effort to attain freedom from self-created entanglements; a desperate, ceaseless, though usually unconscious struggle to undo what had unwittingly been committed in the past; to discard the accumulated burden of our yesterdays; to get clear of the debris piled up by our temporal achievements and failures. *The ultimate goal of life is to achieve unhampered freedom; to mature into that intrinsic richness of being which knows no limitations.*

The progression from unwise action to enlightened action—from entangling experiences to redeeming experiences—is often through inaction. This transitory stage is characteristic of that moment in life when unintelligent action has stopped because of critical doubt, and intelligent action has not yet begun for want of adequate momentum. This passiveness may be called *creative inaction*, which plays a useful part in man's spiritual progress. It should not be confused with the ordinary type of inaction, that is born of inertia or parented by fear of life.

XIX. MIND AND HEART

In the life of most people, the mind and the heart are constantly at loggerheads, and the conflict between the two creates perpetual confusion. In its self-seeking manipulation of the material world, the mind becomes saturated with experiences of separateness and multiplicity. This feeds the *egocentric* tendencies which *divide* man from man and make him selfish, possessive. The heart, on the other hand, is quickened by the glow of love, which comes to it through its inner experiences, and by the glimpses of spiritual unity with which it is rewarded; it, therefore, seeks expression through *self-giving* tendencies, which *unite* man with man and make him selfless, generous.

When the mind encroaches upon the province of the heart, it requires assurance of conviction before it will sanction the release of love. But *love is nothing if not spontaneous. It is born not of reasoning. Nor is it the fruit of bargaining. If man's mind insists on first being convinced or assured about the object of his longing, before giving it his love, he is indulging in nothing more than a form of calculated selfishness.*

The mind is the thesaurus of learning, the heart the treasure-house of love and spiritual wisdom. Mind arrogates to itself the right to tell man what things are worth having, but it has not the authority for it, nor the capacity. All it can do is to indicate *how* to achieve ends inspired by promptings deeper than its own

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shallowness; it cannot originate them. In most people, the mind is slave to wants and cravings by which they allow themselves to be driven. This results in the denial of the life of the spirit. *The mind can enhance the life of the spirit only when its ideals and values are inspired by the deepest persuasions of the heart.*

Spiritual understanding is born of harmony between mind and heart. Such harmony does not require interchange of effort; nor does it imply cross-function; it calls for co-operative functioning. The spheres of the mind and the heart are neither identical, nor co-ordinate. True, the mind and the heart must be balanced, but this cannot be achieved by pitting the mind against the heart, or the heart against the mind. It can be attained not by physical tension, only through intelligent adjustment. The mind and the heart are truly balanced when they serve their appointed purposes and perform their divinely allotted tasks in perfect rhythm with each other; only when thus poised can there be true harmony between them. *Such intimate rapport between mind and heart is the most vital prerequisite of an integrated, balanced life of spiritual understanding.*

Intellectual convictions regarding God and Creation are not to be mistaken for God-realization; the head should not be confused with the hair, nor the thing itself with its shadow.

XX. THE PATH AND THE PLANES

Treading the spiritual path consists of neutralizing the results of the mental-emotional impressions and tendencies accumulated by karmic experiences; it entails the removing of the impenetrable veils which have created in the aspirant a sense of insurmountable separateness and unredeemable isolation.

Each definite stage of advancement represents a state of consciousness; and the advancement from one state of consciousness to another proceeds side by side with the progression from one inner plane to another. There are six intermediate planes and states of consciousness that have to be experienced before the attainment of the seventh plane—the end of the journey—which is simultaneous with the realization of the God-state. The inner planes are comparable to railway stations in which trains halt for a while; the states of consciousness may be likened to the movements of passengers as they alight at the stations.

When the aspirant enters a new inner plane, he becomes merged with it, and along with the lessening of illusive mental activity, he experiences a substantial diminution of the ego-life. This curtailment of the ego-life is of a character different from the final annihilation of the ego, which takes place on the seventh plane. *In attaining this ego-less state of ultimate consciousness, the pilgrim becomes permanently merged in God—is in fact none other than God himself.*

XXI. OCCULTISM AND SPIRITUALITY

While the aspirant is experiencing psychic unfoldment, occasional manifestations of the subtle world will come to him in the form of significant visions, lights, colors, sounds, odors, bodiless journeys, and contacts. At first, these experiences are erratic and the aspirant is likely to treat them as hallucinations; yet however superficial his reaction, their intrinsic potency is so great that he will find it impossible to resist their influence. This, because they play an important part in the process of his spiritual illumination. These phenomena often bear unmistakable credentials of their claim to validity; but even where such proof is not self-evident, they compel attention and respect because of the unique significance and influence, the peace and bliss with which they are often endowed. These attributes, characteristic of genuine occult experiences, are good criteria by which to distinguish them from hallucinations and illusions.

Occult phenomena, experienced by the aspirant involuntarily, are of much less importance than those in which he participates in full consciousness and as a result of deliberate volition. The aspirant is, therefore, advised not to treat these experiences lightly, or to dismiss them as of no significance. On the contrary, it will be of great assistance to him if he will give them his full-hearted interest and co-operation. Being merely the passive recipient of occult ex-

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periences results in slower progress for the aspirant, than if he confines himself to putting into practice the noblest intuitions of his heart.

Occult experiences are vouchsafed the aspirant only when absolutely necessary for his spiritual development, and not to satisfy his curiosity or in answer to his demand.

When occult experiences are the gift of the Master or of spiritually advanced souls, they serve the purpose of unveiling much of the hitherto obscured intuitions of the aspirant; they help to remove some of the difficulties in his path, and are intended to impart to him an increasing sense of that confidence and enthusiasm so indispensable in coping with the new requirements of each stage of progress.

There are a number of outward actions characteristic of the relationship between Master and disciple, which to the uninitiated may seem of little or merely archaic significance, but which have, in fact, profound occult meaning. Among these is the touching of the feet of a Perfect Master with one's hands and forehead, then touching one's forehead with the same fingers. With this deeply symbolic gesture the disciple or pilgrim actually lays his karmic burden upon the Master, while the touching of the forehead signifies both that the devotee performs this action in full consciousness of its significance, and that in the act he surrenders his ego-mind which stands in the way of his emancipation. *The Master collects the karmic burden of the*

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world, just as an ordinary person gathers upon his feet the dust of the road. And the Master, being above and beyond karma, can dispose of the burden—however vast—with the same ease with which the ordinary wanderer washes the dust of the road—however thick—off his feet.

Another procedure which belongs in this sphere has to do with the removing of the veil from the inner eye of the aspirant. *When with the help of the Master the inner eye is opened, the disciple actually sees God—the age-old object of his search and longing.* This is part of the helpful occult experiences the Master brings to the disciple to speed his regeneration. As the gaze of the soul is turned inward and fixed upon the heavenly beauty of the Supreme Reality, the longing and determination for union with it become infinitely more intense than in groping for an invisible God through mere speculation or imagination. *When the time for the disciple is ripe, the Perfect Master can give sight to this inner eye in less than an instant.*

The ultimate goal of the aspirant is to realize that God is the only Reality; that he himself is in profound fact one with God—and therefore one with divine Reality. To reach the pinnacle of this understanding, the disciple must first be freed from the hypnotic effect of the multiform world. He must come to know that the whole structure of the universe is in fact within his own self; that it springs into illusory existence from a minute point in the core

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of his being; that it shapes into apparent form out of his own infinitesimal God-atom, which is immune to size, unencumbered by space, free from the limitations of time.

The unveiling of the inner eye brings this impalpable point-sublime of the cosmos within perfect visibility of the disciple. With rare exceptions, certain occult incidents, evoked by the Master, are indispensable before the aspirant can achieve sufficient clarity of inner vision to gain this ultimate spiritual penetration.

There is a very clear and definite distinction between occultism and mysticism, spiritualism and spirituality. Failure to grasp the full import of this difference can lead only to dire confusion.

While occult phenomena often play an important role in the regeneration of the aspirant, it is essential for him to be aware that, no matter how real they seem, they are no less the product of false imagination than the ordinary phenomena of the gross world. As stepping stones toward the spiritual goal they are indispensable—as is the rest of the illusory world—but as far as the aspirant is concerned, the instant he perceives God as the ultimate and only Reality, occult phenomena, together with the whole universe of illusion, return to the nothingness in which they had their inception.

Thus, while in profound truth, the whole universe and all it represents has no more substance or reality than a zero, the God-realized

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Master makes legitimate use of his occult powers when he finds it necessary to bring into play the illusory phenomena of an illusory world to help disentangle the mind of an aspirant who had become enmeshed in its delusion. For until he is liberated from the web of this falsehood, the aspirant is incapable of fulfilling his true spiritual mission upon this earth, *which is to realize the Divine Life and to help others do likewise. This can be achieved only by manifesting Divine Life in every thought and deed, every moment of every day.*

To penetrate into the essence of all being; to plumb the significance of Creation; to attain integral oneness with the divine symphony of the Universe; to release the fragrance of this sublime attainment for the guidance and benefit of others, by expressing, in the workaday world of forms, the truth, love, purity and beauty of God's Eternal Rhythm, is the sole pursuit which has any intrinsic and absolute worth. All other quests, exertions and attainments, if divorced from this goal, are of perishable, short lived importance.

To see God means ceasing to see anything but God.

XXII. MEDITATION

Meditation may be described as the path which the aspirant cuts for himself, while trying to penetrate beyond the limitations of the mind. Intellect plays an important part in the process of meditation, but purely mechanical application of the mind to this task becomes not only irksome but must ultimately lead to failure. To prevent this, the aspirant is well advised to follow the guidance of the Master who knows the pitfalls and how to avoid them. A few basic suggestions will greatly simplify the work of the disciple and guard him against disappointments.

There are three kinds of meditation. In the first, it is the intellect that is brought predominantly into play; this might be called 'discriminative meditation'. In the second, the heart has pride of place; this may be referred to as the 'meditation of the heart'. The third type of meditation is pivoted around the active nature of man and this might rightly be called 'the meditation of action.'

Discriminative meditation is exemplified by the mental assertion of an intellectual formula; such, for example, as, "I am not my gross, mental or subtle body; I am without limitation; I am Infinite." Meditation of the heart is expressed by the constant and unhampered flow of love from aspirant to Master—the Divine Beloved. Meditation of action is represented by the unreserved dedication of the aspirant's life

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to the self-less service of the Master and of humanity.

In the pre-spiritual stage, meditations are wholly without spiritual motivation. When they are not day-dreams, they are in the nature of mental acrobatics; both are almost exclusively concerned with mundane objects and pursuits, disregarding totally the effect they may have upon the spiritual growth of the individual.

The sense of spontaneity experienced in meditations of the pre-spiritual period, is due to the ego-interest created by individual karmic impressions and tendencies; they are, in fact, the crest of the momentum which has its origin in the accumulated impressions and tendencies of the past. They are not only far from being expressions of freedom of action, or efforts at liberation, but are actually symptoms of spiritual bondage, and tend further to ensnare the individual.

At the pre-spiritual level, man is engulfed in unrelieved ignorance concerning the goal of infinite freedom; and, though he is far from being happy and contented, he is so deeply identified with karmic interests, so completely slave to their appeal, that he experiences gratification in their furtherance. But the pleasure of his chase is conditional and transitory, the spontaneity which he experiences is illusory, because through all his pursuits his mind is the puppet of his own limitations, the unwitting stooge of his ego, which is using his artificially

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stimulated eagerness for its own destructive ends.

There may seem to be a resemblance between the true meditation of the spiritually liberated soul and the pre-spiritual mental exertions of worldly man; but this resemblance is merely superficial; under its thin surface is the vast abyss between impulsiveness of the ego and true spontaneity of the spirit; between bondage and freedom; between fleeting pleasure of the senses and abiding happiness of the soul. In pre-spiritual meditation the operation of the mind is slave to unconscious compulsion; in the spiritually emancipated, mental activity is the free-choice expression of conscious and unfettered initiative. The two functions are worlds apart.

In the world of the aspirant, meditation plays a purposeful, dynamic part. In all its forms, its sole aim is to attain—directly or indirectly—the complete merging of the mind in divine Infinity.

In the early stages it is necessary for the aspirant to make use of the ordinary forms of meditation. Even those in the advanced spiritual state have to resort to most of the specialized forms. *Those, however, who are in intimate contact with a God-realized Master can often dispense with many routine and even special forms of meditation. Such is the potency of genuine devotion to the Perfect Master, so infallible his guidance, so mighty the virtue of the disciple's love for the Master and the Mas-*

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ter's response, that the irresistible spiritual power generated by them transcends the limitations of time and impediments; it helps achieve directly and in less time, what endless forms of meditation, repeated over extended periods of time, strive to accomplish indirectly.

The Master guides the aspirant in the selection of the few types of meditation which will most help speed his particular progress. He instructs the disciple in the most effective performance of the chosen meditations.

When the mind is thus perfectly tuned to the object of meditation, it merges with the Absolute and experiences a state of spontaneous enjoyment of uninterrupted self-knowledge, in which the aspirant loses his limited individuality, and discovers that he is identical with God.

When the soul emerges from the ego-shell and soars into the infinite life of God, its artificial, limited individuality is replaced by the divine Reality of unlimited consciousness. The soul becomes aware of its God-oneness, and in that conscious knowledge preserves its divine individuality. Thus individuality is not entirely extinguished; the pure essence of it is retained in spiritualized form.

This state of God-consciousness is infinite in every respect; it is characterized by unlimited understanding, purity, love and happiness. To be initiated into this state is to arrive at the endlessness of the life in Eternity.

XXIII. THE LIFE OF THE SPIRIT

The ways of the impressionable many are as a rule emblematic of the attitude and behavior of the influential few. In our age, these key figures in public life are, with rare exceptions, glamorous exponents of crass materialism. They are habitually played up by news-hungry front-page exploitation; the inevitable psychological effect is world-consciousness of gross materialism.

Worldly man, in his limited vision, fancies something to be right; he then proceeds to *make* it right for other people of similar tendencies, and to declare it sacrosanct for those whose concept of right differs from his. Such a life of arbitrary negation and uncritical imitation is not the life of the spirit; blind surrender to convention does not necessarily result in wise action; much less does it lead to perfection. The life of the spirit has its basis in a true understanding of values, and is governed by it.

In the life of perfect action there must be harmonious adjustment between the material and spiritual aspects of life. This cannot be effected by granting equal importance to them. *The spirit must and ever will have an inviolable priority over matter.* This sovereignty is expressed not by avoiding or rejecting matter, but by making full use of it as an appropriate vehicle for the expression of the spirit.

There is no basic conflict between the current of mundane life and the life of the spirit. The spiritually evolved do not disdain objects of

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beauty or works of art; they do not disparage the noble achievements of science, nor scorn the constructive attainments of politics. Things of beauty become degraded when perverted into objects of craving, jealousy or exclusive possessiveness. Creations of art degenerate into mediums for the inflation of the ego and the breeding of human frailties; triumphs of science are desecrated by man into instruments for mutual destruction; domestic and international chaos are aggravated and perpetuated by the prostitution of politics for selfish ends. *Rightly employed, however, and invested with spiritual understanding, things of beauty can become the source of purity, inspiration and joy; works of art have the power to ennoble and raise the consciousness of man; attainments of science reveal their capacity to redeem mankind from unnecessary handicaps and suffering; political action—transmuted by the alchemy of the spirit into statesmanship—can be instrumental in promoting true brotherhood of humanity.*

The life of the spirit is not expressed through ignoring worldly spheres of existence. *It comes to full flowering when applied to the task of transmuting the material world into a channel for the Divine purpose, which is to bring love, peace, happiness, beauty and spiritual perfection within the reach of all.*

The life of the spirit finds its truest expression in all-inclusiveness, free from attachment, in appreciation untrammelled by entanglement.

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This cosmic poise comes to ultimate fruition in spiritually perfect souls. They have the divine capacity to manifest supreme excellence in any phase of life which they deem necessary for the spiritual quickening of other souls. If there is lack of happiness, or beauty, or goodness in the life of those who come within the orbit of the Master, these very deficiencies are transmuted by him into opportunities to shower upon them his divine love, and to redeem them from temporal or spiritual poverty. *Thus the every-day responses of the Perfect Master to his worldly environment are the highest expressions of the life of the spirit on the earth plane. They are manifestations of dynamic, creative Divinity that spreads and multiplies itself, spiritualizing everything with which it comes in contact.*

From the materialistic standpoint it may seem cowardly to forsake the mundane life, but from the divine point of view, it requires supreme courage to live the life of the spirit.

XXIV. PERFECTION

There are two kinds of perfection: the comparative perfection of the world of duality, and the absolute perfection of the spirit, which is beyond duality. Like all other aspects of mundane existence, worldly perfection, too, admits of degrees. Good and bad, strength and weakness, virtue and vice are all opposites of duality, though in truth they are merely different degrees of the one Reality. Evil is the minimum of good, weakness the lowest degree of strength, vice the ebb tide of virtue. Perfection and imperfection in the world of duality are both products of comparison, contrast and relative interpretation. Perfection assumes meaning in its own right only when it is compared with man's concept of imperfection, and vice versa.

In the non-spiritual concept, perfection is subject not merely to gradation, but also to classification. A man may be perfect in science, imperfect in everything else. At the other end of the scale, murder without a clue is referred to as the perfect crime. The differences and degrees of mundane perfection are applicable to every phase of man's existence; they are subject to excellence of quality or extent of capacity, and are all in the domain of the intellect.

Spiritual perfection is of an entirely different kind. It has no parallel in man's world of duality, and is entirely beyond the scope of the intellect. *The spiritually perfect are conscious of the divine fact that nothing exists but*

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God — the only Reality — and that everything which seems so solidly to exist in the world of duality is only illusion.

Perfection in one field of endeavor is no perfection; it is merely a one-sided exaggeration of a faculty or capacity—an abnormality which actually results in incapacity to adjust oneself to the everchanging vicissitudes of life. In the rare instances when the one-sided perfectionist has a chance to function in an environment which gives full scope to his particular capacity, he may enjoy a fleeting sense of harmony with the world—achieve even a temporary state of false happiness. But the moment he is taken out of his environment, into an atmosphere which makes demands on his lesser faculties, his poise is shattered, and he generally becomes the victim of an acute sense of failure and frustration. Perfection in merely one aspect of life becomes then an impediment, rather than an advantage.

True perfection implies the ultimate in every respect—a perfection in which all the aspects of man's total capacity are fully developed. It does not merely transcend the opposites, it also includes them. The truly perfect man is not bound by any arbitrary rule or limited ideal; he responds with absolute spontaneity and in perfect rhythm to all the possible situations in life. He can adapt himself instantly to the most unexpected changes in fortune, or to the most startling variations in environment, without for

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a moment surrendering the spiritual poise which is the balance-wheel of his being. He maintains an unshakable sense of harmony, an imperturbable spirit of peace—baffling to the uninitiated. The perfect man is all-perfect, but no matter in what field of endeavor he is called upon to exercise his perfection, he functions with utter detachment. Like the person with gloves, who handles dirt without being soiled by it, the spiritually perfect man can be engaged in worldly activities without being affected or bound by them. *Such perfection is beyond the limitations of worldly concepts; it can be achieved only through spiritual emancipation, which is tantamount to God-realization.*

Perfection—in the truest sense—does not belong to God as God, nor does it belong to man as man; perfection manifests when man becomes God, or when God becomes man. It comes into being when the finite transcends its limitations and realizes its infinity, or when the Infinite discards His apparent aloofness and becomes man. In either case, the finite and the Infinite do not function outside each other. *Perfection is achieved when there is a happy and conscious blending of the finite and the Infinite. In such a blissful integration the Infinite reveals Himself through the finite, without thereby being limited; the finite transcends its sense of limitation in the full knowledge of it being the revelation of the Infinite.*

XXV. MASTER AND DISCIPLE

Those who are unconscious of their divinity can have no concept of the God-state; they are aware only of the body-state. To achieve the God-state, they have to love, with their whole being, a Perfect Master who dwells constantly in the God-state; they have to dedicate themselves to him, be guided by him. The Master is supremely impersonal; his only concern at all times, is to remove the veils between the limited consciousness of the disciple and his Higher-Self. *There can be no conflict between the devotion of the disciple to his Master and his allegiance to his own Higher-Self. On the contrary, at the end of his search the disciple discovers that the Master is none other than his own Higher-Self in another form.*

The Master in his utter impersonality and unimpeded divinity is so perfectly complete that he has no desires for himself. All that the Master requires of the disciple is that he reconstitute himself in the light of the higher Truth. To become the disciple of a God-realized Master is to begin to tread the path that leads to the ultimate spiritual goal. This is the meaning and purpose of true discipleship.

The aspirant has to climb his own path; the Master's province is to confirm, bring into focus, consolidate the previously developed intuitions and perceptions of the aspirant, and to precipitate his consciousness into the next stage which, though indispensable, cannot, by its very

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nature, be anticipated by the disciple, nor comprehended by him until he has reached it.

Since the Master is for the aspirant a symbol of the Supreme Self-In-All, he finds the problem of true adjustment with the Master identical with the problem of realizing his own inner divinity and of arriving at a true adjustment with all other forms of the Supreme Self. Through his allegiance to the Master the aspirant gives effect to his growing appreciation of the fundamental unity of all these problems. From the point of view of psychological strategy, the aspirant is through his discipleship in a position to tackle these problems not as separate phenomena but as aspects of one problem. Thus he can arrive at true integration, which is totally different from temporary compromise between conflicting claims. In order to help the disciple achieve this difficult task, the Master becomes the nucleus of all the spiritual idealism of the aspirant; thus the Master helps bring about the intensive concentration of psychic energy which the disciple must develop to break through the many barriers which lie between him and his goal.

Obedience to the Master, implied in full self-surrender, is of two kinds: intellectual and absolute. Of these, intellectual obedience comes first and is preliminary to absolute obedience, which, however, is more fruitful. Next to all-love for the Master, unquestioned obedience to him is the most potent step in the right direction

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which the disciple could possibly make; it is obedience without reservations, not even bound by the requirement that the real significance of the Master's orders be within the intellectual comprehension of the devotee. *Through such implicit and unquestioning obedience, all the tangled knots of the disciple's desires, tendencies and complex life impressions are unraveled, released and dissolved. The deep link which is created between Master and aspirant through such unqualified obedience, makes possible an unhindered, never-ending flow of spiritual wisdom and power from Master to pupil.*

Do not be afraid of God. How can you love Him if you fear Him? Fear and love are incompatible. *The truly religious are God-loving, not God-fearing.*

XXVI. GOD-REALIZATION

To arrive at true self-knowledge is to arrive at the realization of God. God-realization is a unique experience. It is different from all other states of consciousness, because they are realized through the medium of the mind, while God-consciousness in no way depends upon the mind, nor on any other human channel. To know anything other than one's own self is possible only through some limited intermediary; to know one's own self no finite medium is necessary.

In God-realization the soul has discarded its delusion of separateness; it has transcended duality in the crowning realization of its identity with Infinite Reality. In the achievement of God-realization, the shackles of limited individuality have forever been broken; man's world of shadows has vanished; the veils of illusion have permanently been lifted; the feverishness and agonizing distress so inseparable from the pursuits of limited consciousness, have been supplanted by the tranquillity and bliss of Truth-consciousness; and the restlessness and fury of temporal existence have become completely resolved in the ineffable peace and unfathomed stillness of eternity.

XXVII. GOD-MAN

In the ordinary man of the world the limited individuality, which is identified with a finite name and form, predominates; its mundane activities create a veil of ignorance that completely obscures the God within. Before this veil can be lifted, the limited individual has to surrender his limited existence. When the 'I' disappears, without leaving *a trace of its limited ego-life, what remains is God*. Surrender of the limited life is the relinquishing of the firmly rooted delusion of separate existence. It is not the giving up of anything real; it is the discarding of the false, the inheriting of the True.

The soul in bondage is tied to the world of forms by the chain of karmic experiences, tendencies and obligations, which create and sustain the identification of the soul with the illusory bodies of man. The conflict and disharmony within consciousness, and the perversions in the expression of man's will, arise out of this false identification, rather than merely out of physical, mental and subtle body consciousness.

Not until the moment of God-realization on the seventh and final plane of spiritual ascension, does this mortal conflict come to an end. Then does the soul come into full possession of its own divine joy, which is utterly beyond the comprehension of the non-realized. It is an eternal bliss unparalled in mundane experience, yet it does not unbalance the soul, for it is now permanently balanced in the poise of non-du-

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ality. No longer is the soul subject to the ebb and flow of newly found love and joy—and the inevitable disillusionment and sorrow that follow in their wake. The ecstasy of the moments of God-proximity and the heart-break of long intervals of retrogression are over too, for the soul is now one with the Divine Beloved, completely merged in Him; it is one with God, *itself* now the infinite ocean of unbounded happiness.

The happiness of the God-realized is without limitations and is self-sustaining; it is eternally at its highest peak, not subject to fluctuation; with God-realization comes unqualified finality, unassailable equanimity. The happiness of the saints is born of increasing proximity and closer intimacy with the Divine Beloved, from whom they are, however, still separated. *The God-realized are one with the Divine Beloved; their happiness is an inalienable aspect of the God-state itself, with which they are identical, and in which there is no duality.* The happiness of the saints is derivative; the happiness of the God-realized, self-emanating. *The happiness of the saints owes its inception and growth to the increasing influx of Divine Grace; the happiness of the God-realized has no beginning, no end; it is.*

One who has realized his identity with the Infinite is the God-man. The God-man is free from all karmic ties; he is liberated from consciousness of the various body states; he uses these il-

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lusory outer forms merely as instruments for the expression of the Divine Will in its undefiled purity—like the master violinist who expresses on his Stradivarius every nuance of the composer's inspiration, without identifying himself with it.

The God-man has realized the ultimate Truth. He knows the true nature of God, is aware of the true nature of Creation. His purified consciousness has revealed to him that Creation, in fact, does not exist; that it is merely the changing shadow of God, Who is the Only Eternal, Real existence, Who is at the heart of all Creation, Who is All-Creation Himself.

The state of perfection in which the God-man dwells is beyond all forms of duality and opposites; it is a state of untarnished divinity and boundless freedom, immortal sweetness and undying joy, perfect completeness and unhampered creativeness.

The God-man is inseparably and forever united with God; he dwells in a state of non-duality in the very midst of duality; he not only knows himself to be one with all, but also knows himself to be the Only One. The God-man, no longer separate from the One, but All-One himself, sees all souls as his own; he sees himself in everything; his universal mind includes all the minds in its scope. Although he knows himself to be identical with God and is thus eternally free, he also knows himself to be one with all souls in bondage and is thus vicariously bound.

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Though he constantly experiences the eternal Bliss of God-realization, he also experiences suffering by proxy, because of the agony of unrealized souls with whom he knows himself to be one. *This is the true meaning of the Crucifixion of Christ. The God-man, in heart-truth, is forever being crucified; and is continuously taking birth.*

The God-man is the Lord and Servant of the Universe at one and the same time. As one who showers his spiritual bounty on all in measureless abundance, he is the Lord of the Universe; as one who continuously bears the burden of all and helps them through endless spiritual difficulties, he is the Servant of the Universe. Just as he is Lord and Servant in one, he is also the supreme Lover and the matchless Beloved in one. The love he gives and receives is the divine galvanizer that frees the soul from the inertia of ignorance. In giving Love, the God-man gives it to himself in other forms; in receiving it, he re-absorbs what has been awakened through his own Grace: the blessing which he continuously showers on all without distinction. The Grace of the God-man is like the rain, which falls equally on all the land, whether barren or fertile, fructifying only those acres which arduous and patient toil had rendered fertile.

The banyan tree grows huge and mighty, giving free shade and shelter to travellers, protecting them from sun, rain and storm. In

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the fullness of its growth, its descending branches strike their roots deep into the yielding earth to seed other banyan trees which, in due course, not only become as huge and mighty as their parents, spreading their benevolence of shade and shelter to the travellers, but also inherit the power to recreate themselves in similar full-grown banyan trees.

The God-man is the divine Banyan Tree—shelter and protection to wandering souls, creator of other God-men—whose work is done without thought of recompense or expectation of reward.

In the God-man, the divine purpose of Creation has been completely realized. He no longer has anything to obtain for himself by remaining in the world; yet he retains his outer forms. In divine compassion he continues to use them for the emancipation of other souls, and to help them attain God-consciousness. The voluntary presence of the God-man on the earthplane is the highest demonstration of Divine Love in action.

God, the Real Beloved, is ever ready to enter your house—the mind—but he cannot, because it is filled with unreal beloveds—your desires—which leave no room for Him.

XXVIII. AVATAR

The divine freedom from earthly limitations, which comes to man with God-realization, assumes three forms. Most God-realized souls leave the body at once and forever, and remain eternally merged in the unmanifest aspect of God. They are conscious only of the immortal bliss of union with the Infinite. Creation no longer exists for them. Their constant round of births and deaths is ended. They have achieved final liberation from the body.

Some God-realized souls retain the body for a time and remain on earth, but their consciousness is merged completely in the unmanifest aspect of God. They are therefore not conscious either of their bodies or of Creation. They experience constantly the infinite bliss, power and knowledge of God, but they cannot consciously use them in Creation, or help others to attain liberation. Nevertheless they are focal points on earth for the concentration and radiation of the infinite power, knowledge and bliss of God.

A few God-realized souls retain their bodies, yet are conscious of themselves as God in both His unmanifest and manifest aspects. They know themselves as God-in-all, and are therefore able to render spiritual help to all souls, under all conditions, and to assist those who are ready, to attain God-realization. These are the Perfect Masters.

There are fifty-six Perfect Masters in the

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world at all times. They are always one in consciousness, always different in function. As a rule they live and work incognito, apart from the general public; but five, who act in a sense as a directing body, always work in public and in an atmosphere of commanding prominence. In *Avataric* periods, the *Avatar*, as the Perfect Master Supreme, takes his place at the head of this body and of the spiritual hierarchy as a whole.

Avataric periods are like the spring-tide of Creation. They bring a new release of power, a new awakening of consciousness, a new experience of life—not merely for a few, but for all. Qualities of energy and awareness, which had been used and enjoyed between Avataric periods by only a few advanced souls, are made available for all humanity. Life as a whole is stepped up to a new rate of vibration. The transition from sensation to reason was one such step; the transition from reason to intuition will be another.

This new influx of the creative impulse takes place through the medium of a divine personality; a supreme incarnation of God—an *Avatar*. The *Avatar* was the first individual soul to emerge from the evolutionary process as the Perfect Master Supreme; he is the only *Avatar* who has ever manifested or ever will manifest. Through him, God first completed the journey from unconscious Divinity to conscious Divinity—first unconsciously became man in order

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consciously to become God. Through the *Avatar*, God, at His own ordained intervals of time, consciously becomes man for the liberation of mankind.

The *Avatar* appears in different forms, under different names, at different times, in different parts of the world. As his appearance always coincides with the spiritual renaissance of mankind, so the time immediately preceding his manifestation is always one in which humanity suffers from the pangs of the approaching birth. At such periods man seems more than ever enslaved by desire, more than ever driven by greed, held by fear, swept by anger, engulfed in carnage. The strong dominate the weak; the rich oppress the poor, large masses of people are exploited for the benefit of the few who are in power. The individual, who finds no peace or rest, seeks to forget himself in excitement. Immorality increases, crime flourishes, God is ridiculed. Corruption spreads throughout the social order. Racial, class and national hatreds are aroused and fostered. Wars break out. Humanity grows desperate. There seems to be no possibility of stemming the tide of destruction.

At this moment the *Avatar* appears. Supreme manifestation of God in human form, he is the divine gauge by which man may measure his own true size, and glimpse the height of his ultimate growth. By the perfection of his divinely human life upon this earth, the *Avatar* in-

SILENT REVELATIONS

spires a complete revaluation of man's worldly standards of existence.

In those who contact him he awakens a love that consumes all selfish desires in the flame of the one desire to serve him. Those who consecrate their lives to him, gradually become identified with him in consciousness. Little by little their humanity is absorbed into his divinity, and they become free.

Those who are closest to him are known as his Circle. Every Perfect Master has an intimate Circle of twelve disciples, who, in point of realization, are made equal to the Master himself, though they differ from him in function and authority. In *Avataric* periods the *Avatar* has a Circle of one hundred and twenty disciples, all of whom experience Realization and work for the liberation of others.

The *Avatar* awakens contemporary humanity to a realization of its true spiritual nature, gives liberation to those who are ready, and quickens the life of the spirit in his time. For posterity is left the stimulating power of his divinely human example, the nobility of a life supremely lived, of a love unmingled with desire, of a power unused except for others, of a peace untroubled by ambition, of a knowledge undimmed by illusion. He has demonstrated the possibility of a divine life for all humanity; a heavenly life upon earth. *Those who have the necessary courage, integrity and readiness can follow when they will.*

XXIX. BLENDING WITH THE MASTER

He Who Would Realize Me Must Have:

Intense Longing for Union with Me

Unfailing Humility

Insatiable Spiritual Hunger

Unquestionable Faith

Imperturbable Self-Control

Unwavering Fidelity

Impregnable Peace of Mind.

He Must Dedicate His Life to:

Unconditional Renunciation

Spontaneous Obedience

Whole-Hearted Surrender

Unselfish Service

Self-Giving Love.

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