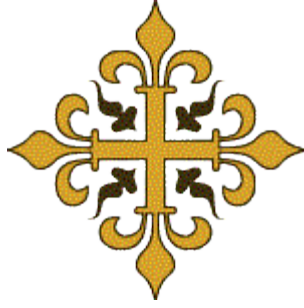


The Upper Triad Material

Topical Issue 5.71

Psychology and Sufism

The Articles of K.M.P. Mohamed Cassim



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Psychology and Sufism

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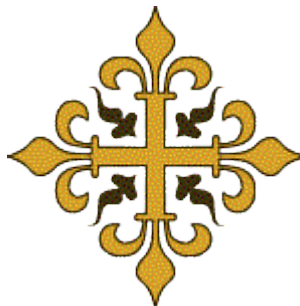
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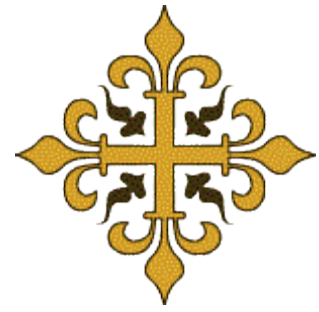
Psychology and Sufism



The Articles of K.M.P. Mohamed Cassim

- The articles of K.M.P. Mohamed Cassim effectively combine various principles of psychology and human nature, the spiritual path, and Sufism.
- The Upper Triad Association gratefully acknowledges permission to reprint these articles from the Perfect Peace Lodge, Shanthi, Pragathi Mawatha, Veyangoda, Sri Lanka.

Section 5.711



Psychology and Sufism 1

- The first series of articles by K.M.P. Mohamed Cassim.



The Sufi Way of Life 1

Sufism is interpreted in various ways according to the mental maturity of the person, but on a broad philosophical basis Sufism represents spiritual liberation, serenity, purity, and divine ecstasy.

Man cannot be considered as a bundle of psychological complexes or as a biological entity. The mystery of man is his inter-relation with the divine principle which is eternal and transcendental. Sufism emphasizes the importance of mental purification and the spiritual integration of man so as to function in the universe in tune with the infinite. Man's progress lies in the direction of attaining that state of blessedness which is divine in essence.

We all search for happiness, but can we achieve happiness in the physical world? Happiness is a state of mind in which we are free from emotional disturbances and psychological conflicts. Freedom from sensational attraction and repulsion is the deciding factor for the correct understanding of spiritual liberation which Sufism represents. Allah, the supreme reality, alone exists and all other creations are mere shadows of that divinity to which we must surrender and contact by the process of negating the mind.

Basic Concepts

According to the teaching of Sufism, one has to annihilate and empty the mind before one enters into the secret path of God-realization. This state is known as Fana. Constant meditation and deep contemplation with purification of the physical body and mind are strongly recommended for those who wish to progress towards the path of Tauhid (divine unification). To attune one's heart to that level of divine consciousness is the object of Sufi prayer. The highest achievement one can aim at is to awaken and absorb the divine consciousness by surrendering oneself completely to Allah and this realization is called Baqa.

The mystical quintessence of Sufism or Tasawwuf consists in realizing the highest stage (Maqam) known as Fana-Fit-Tauhid, which means the attainment of true wisdom, enlightenment, and passing away from all that is

other than reality. Worldly temptations cannot disturb a Sufi who is well established in the oneness of Allah, and to a Sufi the world is not a "thing" to be negated, but a spiritual training ground to be utilized for the development of various divine attributes and intuitive faculties. A Sufi enjoys the beauties of divine manifestation on the material plane, although he knows that Haq (reality) alone exists without the clash of duality. The world is not an illusion to be renounced, but the creation of Allah to be inwardly discovered in silent contemplation. The sweetness of unity in the midst of diversity is the main theme of Sufism. A Sufi functions in the world in a manner not to be entangled in it, because of inner detachment and divine understanding. A Sufi lives in a higher plane in which psychological confusions and mental complications cannot enter, as the bliss of super-consciousness gives him the nectar of Maith or the delight of divine intoxication.

A Diagnosis of Modern Man

Many people have mental troubles such as disquiet, distraction, and emotional disturbances, because they look upon pleasures and possessions as the primary objectives of life. Whoever is attached to pleasures must have the fear of losing them and the consequent cares and worries. The senses are insatiable and the means of their fulfillment are inadequate. Since the objects of desire are transitory, they cannot be acquired easily.

Modern man is a sick man because to him progress means radio, television, cinema, the invention of new ways of enjoyment, more and better cars and aeroplanes, and a ceaseless craving for outer stimulation to escape from meaningless trivial activities. Since there is no richness of inner life, he seeks compensation in outer wealth. He lacks inner strength and spiritual forces and hence his life urges him into a false excitement.

Further, the physical body and the organs, the instruments of sense enjoyment, give way before the mind is satisfied. As long as a person clamors for maximum pleasure, power, and material prosperity, he cannot escape the baneful effects of modern living -- constant tension, discontent, clash, and competition. The contributing factors for mental and functional disorders are due to fear, anxiety, frustration, internal conflict, and suppressed desire.

In the esoteric path of Sufism, self-realization is the only reality to which one's attention is directed, because our spiritual malady has one basis, and there is only one treatment for it. Its cause is the illusory self, and the treatment consists of realizing that the illusory self does not exist. However, mere intellectual recognition of the fact is not enough. After all, the "me" is our own creation. It is not imposed upon us from without. It is created by our reactions to everything that happens to us. We only exist in the eternal present and we do not exist as a continuity. We ourselves are not an illusory part of reality. Rather, we are reality itself.

A Prescription for Egocentricity

Sufism does not condemn the search for pleasure and possessions, but it strongly advises the seekers not to look upon them as ends in themselves. It also urges aspirants to divert their attention to the higher values and then they invariably become detached from the lower. Human desires and emotions are not wrong in themselves, but they have to be given higher and higher direction until they turn to Allah the highest. The task of Sufism is to develop man morally and spiritually so as to prevent his deterioration. Sufism is a divine art, the finest of all arts, and should be practiced in everyday life, in good cheer, just for the sheer joy of it, because it is a life of never-ending sweetness and ever present inspiration.

Sufism teaches us not to run away from duty or activity. We must act without the sense of ego. We must become instruments in the hands of the divine and cheerfully do actions without being affected by them. Sufism is particularly relevant to the present time as it points to the wholeness of individual consciousness and the unity of life. It does not separate man's spiritual life from his everyday life, but rather links his realization of truth, beauty, and goodness, with his action in thought and feeling. Sufism is not a way of escape from life and its problems, but enables an individual to face himself, his problems, and his relationships with the world around him.

According to Sufism, life is intended for attaining the supreme goal of self-realization. If we choose to remain in our lower nature, we will be a victim of life held in bondage and misery. At a time when the world is passing through a period of great travail and agony, it is up to us to make our lives either

harmonious or chaotic. If we attune our mind with meditation, then we will fill it with true beauty and peace. On the other hand, if our lives are ruled and controlled by egotism, then all the dark forces within us will create a state of discord and confusion. Therefore, it is very essential that we make every effort to reveal our divinity and make our lives blessed.

† Article No. 10

The Sufi Way of Life 2

Freedom Through Discipline

There is a good deal of discussion among modern people about freedom. Sufism points out that freedom comes to those who have a deep reverence for spiritual life, who are sincere in their quest for truth. As long as our thinking is conditioned by psychological time we cannot have real freedom, as absolute freedom is attained by transcending mental limitations. It is fear more than anything else that enslaves our thinking. Casting off fear and gaining real freedom for the mind is a matter of self-discipline and self-discovery. Without self-discipline the mind would not know what to do with its freedom. By freedom we do not mean the sense of freedom of a profligate who foolishly throws all established values to the winds and lives a whimsical and irresponsible life. The divine freedom within is not attained (merely) by learning or by extensive study. Spiritual liberation is revealed to those who have embraced truth in all sincerity.

Our experiences in life amply prove that we are not free, because we are conditioned by our emotions and desires which prevent us from realizing the supreme. Silent meditation is emphasized in Sufism because purity of heart and clarity of thought are essential prerequisites to self-realization. The dynamic energy of divine grace cannot be utilized by a weak and impure mind. The mysterious realm of divine power is so subtle that it cannot be grasped by intellectual ability. We have to open the intuitive faculty by practicing regular meditation.

Silence and Spontaneity

When we become completely absorbed in whatever we may be doing, then only the significance of the present moment becomes enormous. In all kinds of situations we must become aware of our thoughts, our feelings, and sensations. The functioning of our minds must be without identification or justification, without conclusion or preconceived ideas, without the screens of explanation or prejudice, without the expectation of reward, results, or satisfaction. Then only is spiritual experience possible. Truth has to be discovered from moment to moment by meditative silence.

Sufism indicates that freshness arises from living in the present, unspoiled by the conditioning and distortions of psychological memory. It requires the renunciation of everything to which we cling. It is only from the point of the present that both past and future can be observed. The touch of living truth can be experienced only in the present. The attitude of a seeker consists in examining every fact in its true perspective. Then only can he undertake the spiritual journey or search for truth without identification and resistance.

Sufism declares that there exists a kind of silence so intense, so immensely powerful. This silence is so profound that it makes any noise utterly insignificant. This silence is not non-talking or non-acting, because it does not lie in anything we do or do not do. It lies in what we are, and it is the complete absence of ego or I-ness. According to Sufism, this silence constitutes a mystical experience of a high order. The silence within is what is aimed at in meditation, and when we are able to stay in that state of meditation then only is there a possibility of negating the sense of "I" or the egocentric attitude. When we are able to keep our minds still, we develop a fresh understanding of the process of thinking, which means that thoughts may appear in our silent mind, but they do not disturb our inner serenity.

To a Sufi meditation implies that state of mystical experience in which the mind is not distracted by psychological impacts, because in the profound stillness one feels only the bliss of a witness-like state which cannot be attributed as void or emptiness. Meditation is not to get attached to the mind. Meditation is not to have any thought stirred up by outside conditions of life, good or bad. Meditation is an act of one instant and each moment is eternal,

free and sufficient unto itself. Meditation is a divine science one has to practice by examining closely the working of one's mind constantly in the mirror of daily relationship. This cannot be demonstrated, but has to be discovered in the depth of one's Qalb (heart). If one can wipe out all ideas from one's mind, give up all desires, and discard all mental impressions, then one will experience the state of meditation, and this state is spiritual illumination.

Self-Realization

The Sufi endowed with complete enlightenment sees through the eye of wisdom the entire universe as his own self, and regards everything as the self and nothing else. The Sufi does not look at anything external, and to him the tangible universe is verily God. Nothing whatsoever exists that is other than Allah. A Sufi is he who is liberated in life after crossing the ocean of delusion, passion, and aversion. He becomes a center of unity with perfect peace and dwells in the divine bliss derived from the discovery of truth. He is completely merged in Allah and yet he has normal consciousness. Therefore, he is free from all the illusions of duality and he is quite capable of looking after the affairs of the world. He is a source of great spiritual radiance.

The state of a Sufi has no longer the avidities of the "I" process as a motive, but emerges directly from an independent center which is free from all conditioning. We cannot judge the greatness of a self-realized Sufi who has transcended mental limitation because the Sufi plane of liberation is completely new and unique and cannot be compared with the relative plane in which we live.

The realization of the Sufi cannot be defined by words, as that state of reality is to be lived silently rather than trying to verbalize it. The highest perception of spiritual exaltation when analyzed in terms of ordinary language or explained logically will lead only to a paradox.

The Philosophy of Sufism

Many people accept as inevitable the changes which come in the course of material progress, but are reluctant to accept changes that affect them personally, which upset their established way of life, their manner of thinking and their conceptions of things. Few realize that the key to successful living lies in the ability to adapt to changing situations. The physical world is considered as real, but only the physical senses perceive it as such. The aim of Sufism is to bring about certain changes in man's consciousness wherein he transcends the limitation of physical existence. When our state of consciousness rises to the stage where our awareness of ourselves as oneness with the essence of reality (Dhat) is realized, then only will it enable us to claim the attainment of spiritual liberation. According to Sufism, we can never perceive the truth (Haqq) with a conditioned mind. We cannot attain liberation until our ego (Nafs) is dissolved. The way to go beyond the conditioned mind is only through self-knowledge, which means by extensive awareness and stillness of the mind, which will ultimately dissolve all delusions.

Human beings are in search of happiness in some form or another. Our quest for happiness continues unabated, though its entire attraction keeps on shifting. The craving is never satisfied because ego is the personification of our desire and a conglomeration of sense-experience which takes the form of pleasant or unpleasant psychological memory. Man's outlook must change with the acceptance of spiritual values as a guide to behavior. Sense-experiences affect our mental process in a subtle way causing feelings of attraction and repulsion.

Justification or condemnation creates a sort of whirlpool of duality in which our life is caught up. Sense-experiences get crystallized in psychological memory which projects the past into the present and tarnishes it with numerous preconceived notions and prejudices. False ego makes us view the present through the screen of the past and it also projects into the future in the form of hopes and fears, which of their very nature are illusory in character. This assertion of psychological memory with its ego complex is the conditioned mind.

The main point in Sufism is as to how one should live in detachment. Mind alone is the cause of the bondage and freedom of the soul (in the form of the personality). By the attachment of the mind to the world we become bound. We need to give up all ideas of me and mine for thus alone is the heart purified and so freed from lust, greed, and delusion. Detachment will help the unfoldment of devotion and devotion will help confirmation in detachment. When detachment and dispassion are practiced rightly one can rest assured that the discharge of duties in the world will only be helpful to spiritual progress. If one dons the garb of a monk, goes out in the forest, but carries in one's mind attachment for things, then one will see no better things in the forest than the world. Such a one will merely create a new worldly environment in the forest. But if one lives in the world, wears the habit of the common people of the world, and does the usual round of (proper) duties of life, then it is still possible to be detached from all things.

The great practical value of Sufism is that it gives meaning to life and purpose to physical existence. It replaces confusion with knowledge, and doubt and despair with confidence and hope. It bestows mental serenity upon those who actually practice it and makes possible the realization of reality. Sufism offers man not only a philosophy, but a code of conduct and a way of life which can be used as a foundation upon which to build spiritual freedom. When the basic cardinal principles are fully understood and assimilated, it changes the aspects of life so completely, enabling one to enjoy perfect peace and the capacity to distinguish between reality and illusion.

The great task is to discover reality on the basis of one's own inner experience. Further, it is in the process of one's life only that the discovery of divinity must be made as otherwise there can be no realization.

Sufism points out that every religion is a unique contribution to the spiritual life of humanity. It is very essential that a seeker must respect and admire the mystical approach of various religions by honestly accepting the different forms of expression so that one will be able to appreciate the underlying harmony of all religions. After all, religious harmony is not based on sameness, but on cooperation and mutual understanding.

If one is burdened with wrong theories and dogmas, one cannot perceive the truth and hence one must dissolve all prejudices which twist and cloud one's mental vision, so that one can approach many problems without any particular form of conditioning. It is to be realized that nothing impedes man's healthy inner growth like fear and suspicion. Without detachment we can never get rid of fear. We are always afraid of losing the things to which we are attached. The root of all these harmful weaknesses is attachment. Sufism says that through the practice of detachment alone can we regain the true awareness of Fana.

Sufism gives the technique so as to get the best out of life without being enslaved and degraded. Sufism teaches how to live in the world in a way which does not hurt the people and at the same time makes spiritual progress possible. It is absolutely true that all our sufferings and bondage of life have their source in our attachment. Our work for society cannot really do good to others unless it is unselfish, couched in detachment.

The outer world is nothing but a reflection of one's attitude. If the very structure of one's individual life is not free from confusion one cannot establish a harmonious relationship outwardly. Therefore, until and unless one develops a high degree of mental detachment by rigorous discipline and relentless effort one will not be able to progress in releasing self from the imprisonment of illusion.

A small mistake committed in a weak moment is enough to wreck what one has spiritually accomplished with diligence and perseverance. The most stupendous task is to observe everything in its purity, which means to see all without attachment, without identification and distortion. Self-realization or to know reality is to understand oneself, the spiritual depth of one's being. Man need only transcend his suffocating ego to discover his true being in the divine.

Those who have been successful in the discovery of this divine in the beyond are untouched by the vicissitudes of life and become absolutely free of all conditioning. They are at peace with themselves and with the world around them. They become a source of joy, inspiration, and peace.

As the human intellect develops, man's powers of comprehension increase, and in this connection, the study of Sufism assists each one to discover divinity. Man's first move towards attaining the state of supreme consciousness is to dispose of his material outlook and to seek the spiritual truth. The pursuit of truth is purely an inward pilgrimage, and one must finally come to realize that to attain inner tranquility one must be alert and sensitive, not to waste mental energy through any kind of conflicts and tensions. In other words, while one is observing various psychological reactions one must also be in a state of non-identification. A real seeker of Murid is not one who knows all, but he who has come to realize that the utility of knowledge is the ability to live peacefully and happily in the day-to-day affairs. Man seeks happiness in the external world, whereas divinity lies within. It has to be intuitively experienced, inwardly. We cannot think of reality and find it.

The philosophy of Sufism extols meditation (Muraqabah) as a way of self-realization. The blissful state of meditation can be experienced only when the entire thought-process is erased and transcended. Then only is it possible for one to contact that which gives spiritual perfection.

In Fana the mind is fully aware and completely neutral. It sees things as they are without accepting or rejecting, which means our mental functions of justification and condemnation cease to be in this state, and our mind becomes alert, extra active, and yet empty. In Fana our mind is stripped of everything including the false self, and then it is liberated and is in communion with the absolute reality. Actually, in Fana we go on eliminating image after image until we reach a point beyond which there is no going.

The Sufis have revealed the essence of life as the truth, and the truth remains constant. Only one's perception of it varies according to one's capacity to comprehend. It is to be realized that truth stands alone and when it is known one is spiritually free.

Yoga

In a world which is so much entangled and involved with sensate values, the right approach according to yoga is to discover divinity within us by self-observation rather than by pondering over external activities. Mere outward reformation without the inner spiritual transformation is useless and, therefore, what one requires is the tremendous power of concentration to keep one's mind in the profound state of silent meditation and quiet contemplation.

The purpose of yoga is to manifest the divine magnetism and attain spiritual liberation. If we want to progress in yoga we must discipline our minds. The nature of work should be harmonized in accordance with our temperaments. It is not the work that is important, but our attitude towards it, which to a certain extent reflects our inner relations in the shape of likes and dislikes. Bhakti yoga is a pure and spontaneous expression of love to something to which one is dedicated. Without devotion, one could not master efficiency which is the faculty of focusing one's attention wholeheartedly.

Karma yoga is a technique by which one develops the art of performing the allotted job without attachment or distraction. Karma yoga is in no way a hindrance to the practice of meditation, but it is a process of self-purification so as to cultivate the good qualities of humility and compassion.

The most important lesson one has to learn in the field of karma yoga is detachment and dispassion. It is always beneficial spiritually to dissociate ourselves from the clutches of worldly entanglements, although one cannot label the normal function of professional or business responsibility as mundane, because according to karma yoga the deciding factor is not the avoidance of activities, but the mental detachment and the ability to perform one's duty efficiently without worrying about the result of success or failure. Karma yoga does not clash with the path of wisdom or raja yoga, because in the actual practice of karma yoga one has to maintain mental equilibrium, so that one could discharge duty without caring for rewards.

The method of raja yoga is to control the activities of the mind. One should penetrate into the deeper layers of one's mind through self-observation. Then only there is the possibility of stopping the agitation of the mind. We are advised to watch the mind ceaselessly and thereby annihilate the desires in the mind completely. Mind is the major factor in bringing out worldly temptations through various image-making habits. Raja yoga puts an end to this vicious circle of the mind by close and continuous observation.

Jnana yoga predominantly stresses the importance of self-knowledge, which is not mere intellectual thinking or logical analysis, but entirely a different dimension of awareness in which one realizes everything as it is, without deception. Jnana yoga is the intuitive approach for the understanding of the supreme, as the twisted intellect and the deluded senses are not reliable instruments for the direct perception of reality. The darkness of avidya or ignorance comes into play when there is the projection of attraction and repulsion. In silence alone we feel full of blessedness and vision of reality. Wisdom flourishes silently and in deep meditation alone self-knowledge is revealed to us.

The family life is a training ground for one to develop the beneficent qualities such as fortitude, fearlessness, forgiveness, charity, modesty, steadfastness, and self-sacrifice. Family life should aim at transforming the animal propensities in man and enable him to unfold his divinity. In family life one should be in the world, but not of it, so that one can turn away from all the vanities of the world and devote one's energy to the realization of God, which is the fulfillment of life.

Whatever the condition may be, wherever we may go, we must have mental purity to such a degree to regard everyone as Brahman or the absolute reality. It is to be realized that the Atman or the infinite immortal self of man is in essence Brahman. The knowledge of the microcosm leads to the understanding of the macrocosm and in this way the knowledge of the self leads to the discovery of the Brahman. Basically, the Atman and the Brahman are identical and in actual realization they are one, though they appear different in expression. People wrongly postulate that Brahman is an extra cosmic being and think that the Atman and Brahman are two existences, but, in samadhi or the super-conscious state, we experience oneness with the Brahman.

The Significance of Meditation

The technique of meditation provides an integrated scheme of life which aims not only at spiritual emancipation, but also a happy, healthy, and useful life on earth. The significance and the greatness of meditative life is to dwell in the realm of divine consciousness without the conflict of duality. When our minds are purified by regular meditation, then our physical bodies also will become perfect instruments for the manifestation of divine energy. When we are in deep meditation, although we are keenly sensitive to outward vibrations, we are not at all disturbed because of the spiritual ecstasy which gives us the capacity to face all adverse situations easily.

Meditation is purely an action that operates beyond one's sensual plane in perfect harmony with the supreme. Meditation is that which gives us the light of wisdom and the capacity to observe everything in life as it is without deception or distortion. At the time of silent meditation, we feel the oneness of divinity and in which exalted state we experience the bliss of purity and serenity. Between two thoughts there is an interval of silence and to attain this beautiful state of silence one has to observe one's mind quietly with full alertness.

Meditation does not mean the negation of physical comfort, but true meditation is to keep the mind absolutely calm without being disturbed by outward distractions and attractions. If we observe our minds deeply we will find that the very nature of our minds is such that they create problems because our minds cannot exist without projecting imaginations. Generally, the mind is analyzed and called a bundle of thoughts, but when we are in meditation we feel only a witness-like state in which we mentally dissociate ourselves completely without being emotionally disturbed, which means the mind is sensitive-active and yet free from psychological distractions.

Meditation is really a pure and natural state in which the mind is silent. When the mind is calm and still there is the blessing of true happiness, the beauty of divine radiation. Meditation is not the creation of the mind. It is something

higher which elevates the mind to the spiritual plane. The beauty of meditation consists in comprehending the complexities of mind and this clarity or illumination is the proper channel for communicating with the spiritual center, and to live in this center of spiritual liberation one must be in meditation. Meditative awareness evokes the richness of divine grace which brings refreshment and renewal of life. To be in the supreme state of super-consciousness is the bliss of meditation.

Why is our mind so distracted? It is obviously, owing to the sensations that the physical world provides. It is excited by pleasure that it derives from its relationship with the physical world. It is attracted toward the resulting sensations because it seeks mechanically the habitual excitements they cause, even though these ultimately produce dissatisfaction. To contact reality, the mind must be still, and only by stilling it can real meditation be attained.

Misery and worries are products of mental reactions. Therefore, since it is the mind itself which produces confusion and misery, it cannot produce peace and happiness. Only when the mind is completely calm, meditation comes naturally, spontaneously, and sweetly, and that is our true state.

When we watch the mind we find that it is filled with discontent and insufficiency. Its guiding motive is to get some sort of pleasure by dwelling on its past sensations, but such indulgence only weakens its power of concentration. Instead of depending on such sensations, it should learn to observe its internal confusion calmly, as that will enable it to transcend the conditioning influence of past impressions.

But it makes every possible attempt to deviate from such self-observation, and thus evade perceiving reality. It does not face the fact of its confusion but tries to escape the suffering caused by it by projecting fictitious distractions.

The best way is for the mind to observe its reactions silently, as this enables it to erase the pollution caused by past impressions on it. It should be alert in watching its thought processes and the impressions made on it by people, ideas, and things. Left to itself, it reacts by attraction or repulsion in contacting objects owing to its memory of past associations. This automatic process

destroys its vigor and capacity for dispassionate observation. Self-observation is, therefore, the way to free it from subjection of past impressions.

What is needed is just to be aware of the state of confusion without identifying oneself with personal reactions or introducing one's emotional coloration. This sets us free from it and enables us to watch everything aloofly without acting on mere impulses. Thus in watching mental conflicts we find that the emotional attachment is dissolved. This capacity to observe calmly but with full attention the problem that occupies our mind is the only solution to psychological complexes. Only by constant observation of our mind can we understand the various layers of our mental makeup.

† Article No. 14

The Key to Self-Knowledge

We are all aspiring for happiness. The question is whether it can at all be attained by the mind. The mind is apt to mistake mere pleasurable sensations for happiness. And yet we find from experience that although gratified desire produces such sensations, they only intensify the desire for further similar sensations. The most important fact that we must understand is that we cannot have real freedom by indulging in emotional excitements.

If we observe our minds we will find that innumerable desires rush in, in confused manner. The best method to eliminate the contradictory emotions is to watch the activities of our minds with meditative awareness. We must also understand our mental reactions and psychological conflicts all the time, by the simple method of self-observation. Further, to watch slowly the inflowing breath brings not only harmonization of mind, but also vitality and strength to our nervous system which keep our physical bodies healthy, pure, and clean.

The process of divine healing is purely a spontaneous act which takes place quietly and sweetly when we are in deep silent meditation, in tune with that cosmic consciousness of divinity. The healing aspect of prayer can be conceived not by mere intellectual ability, but through the communion with that supreme power which operates full of spiritual magnetism. The physical light that we

see through our eyes can be defined, but the divine illumination which we intuitively perceive while we are in deep contemplation could not be described. By turning our minds toward the divine light we can actually transform and spiritualize the material aspects of life. To dwell in the abode of meditation is the only ladder that will lead to liberation and happiness.

The fundamental problem is that we cannot run away from our own mind which is the real culprit. The mind can be understood and unconscious desires can be exposed only when we are confronted with tempting circumstances. At this juncture, an aspirant must understand his reactions by watching the sensational activities of the mind silently. This quiet passive concentrated awareness is meditation, and this detached observation provides the spiritual life to go beyond the mind.

Worldly outward attraction cannot touch our minds if we constantly adopt the method of self-observation. The disturbing elements of distracted thoughts are completely negated by the process of self-knowledge, which means our mind is always magnetized through spiritual divine vibration. It is very important to ask ourselves why our mind is so much distracted. The distraction is due to the contact of sensations that the physical world provides.

The interaction of matter and mind is the main cause for the conflict, and the mind is much excited by the pleasure that it derives in its relationship with the material world. The mind is always attracted toward outward sensations because the mind is extremely mechanical in following the habitual excitements which produce in the end dissatisfaction. To contact reality, the mind must be still, and in this process of silencing the mind alone we can attain any real happiness.

It is very necessary that we should have the ability to discriminate between the real and the unreal. We must also have the spirit of renunciation which does not mean dissociation from people and things. Asceticism is really an attitude that holds that everything is permeated by the Godhead. When human energy goes out into different directions in the form of thirst for gratifications, it inevitably leads to frustration and sorrow.

When life is viewed merely from biological stance, it is only a story of birth, disease, old age, and death. The biological and conditioned man is the victim of bondage and ignorance when he is not enlightened.

Craving is the failure of the mental state to rest on the absolute reality, owing to the ignorance brought on by psychological impressions due to attachment. Attachment is always the auto-defensive reflex of an unconscious fear. Any attitude of dependence is an obstacle to the attainment of absolute.

Self-contemplation is essentially divergent, by turning inward away from the flux of phenomena, by putting aside all worldly desires. The necessity of observing our mind all the time is strongly stressed because of the fact that by this self-awareness alone can we unfold the entire layers of our mental makeup and thus pave the way for the attainment of a transcendental state which is the key to open the treasure of self-knowledge.

The secret of pure life consists in constantly discovering the inner workings of the mind and this state of self-observation is possible by keeping our minds clean without desires. The main defect in man is his inability to implement his decision of spiritual importance in his day-to-day affairs. The mind is the chief cause for all worries and tribulations as the tendency of the mind is to chase the sensual objects for its satisfaction and then after enjoyment, the very same mind will put contradictory questions and opposite suggestions. Man is leading a mundane life, not due to lack of understanding, but because he is unable to get away from worldly temptations. The possibility and the utter necessity to unfold the life in totality comes only when we are confronted with various problems and sufferings. During this period of spiritual testing, our task is to maintain the stability of mental equilibrium.

The main cause for the contamination of one's heart is not only the utter ignorance of spiritual living, but also the wrong attitude of clinging to carnal pleasures. One should not forget the important point that just as food is indispensable for keeping the body healthy and fit, in a similar manner meditation is also essential for the purity of the mind. The physical body by itself has no validity or utility without the cooperation and coordination of the soul energy. The nature of the physical body is such that it deteriorates in the course of time, but we must keep our minds absolutely clean and calm.

Through meditation alone we can purify our minds. When our physical bodies and minds are purified by constant meditation, then they become good and useful instruments to express the divine energy. The beauty of mental health consists in liberating our minds from the clutches of emotional complications. To live in the state of higher meditation is really a great service to humanity because this state emanates serenity and spiritual magnetism for the good of all.

By meeting people who are also interested in the pursuit of reality, we can develop and broaden our knowledge in the path of self-realization. The magnetic vibration one feels in the presence of an advanced soul is very inspiring and helpful to merge deeply into meditation. The secrets of inner spiritual mysteries are revealed to us in contemplation and that wisdom will guide us all. When one is in deep meditation, one is extremely sensitive to external influences, but the mind is not distracted by the attraction of sensual pressure because of the spiritual magnetism one draws while one is in meditation. Any movement from outside has not the power to disturb the person who is well attuned in meditation. Life is such that we are unable to predict anything definitely. But every major change in life is for good and one has nothing to worry or bother mentally. A sad state of affairs is that many people give top priority in the matter of providing all their bodily requirements, but neglect completely the needs of the soul and spiritual comforts.

In deep sleep we are aware of some inner urges, but we have no control over them because we have not properly penetrated into the working of our unconscious minds. It is very essential to observe the emotional modes of our minds if we want to master the devil of deception. It is a tedious task to observe our mental activities during sleep because that state of unconsciousness suggests its incomplete impressions as a dream.

The psychological hindrance is to realize the dream, but we normally identify ourselves as actors and thus we are affected by the consequences of the dream. The simple truth is that the stability of mental alertness is lost while we experience the dream and in which state the dreamer is unable to observe his thoughts correctly, without deception. Alertness of mind with sensitiveness opens the avenue to continue further in the discovery of unconsciousness.

Another problem which we are facing is attraction and repulsion. As we are unable to free ourselves from this dualistic complex which distracts us, we must choicelessly observe our minds in the mirror of relationships. Let us realize that the most useful lesson one can learn by undergoing bitter experiences repeatedly in life is that nothing in the world can produce real happiness except one's own mind, which is purified through meditation.

† Article No. 15

A Path to Perfect Peace

We live in a society which advocates that happiness is the outcome of wealth and material acquisition. But when we analyze the main reason for our failure to achieve happiness, we find that happiness does not dwell in outer or external things. While our minds are scattered and our hearts are cluttered up by various sorts of distractions, we are unable to establish harmony or happiness within us. Happiness comes when the mind and heart are kept in perfect unison. A person burdened with desires and ambition cannot enjoy the beauty of life because the freshness and newness of life can be experienced at every moment only through meditation, as otherwise life remains an essentially mundane existence.

Sufism says that without first creating order in our mind it is impossible to bring happiness in our life. We must realize the fact that our mind is the maker of all mischief and misery. When the mind is utterly quiet and silent, perfect tranquility prevails which is our real state. In other words, in the thought-free state of the mind alone we can attain real happiness. In that perfect stillness of mind, there is pure bliss, a rare sense of joy and sublime feeling.

We are all members of one huge family called humanity with one common purpose, and according to Sufism, that one common goal is to attain God-realization. Today the people in every land are faced with innumerable problems that were unknown to their ancestors because of the modern technological civilization. The modern man is so much involved in sensual activities that his mental energy is wasted enormously, hence it is very essential one must practice meditation systematically.

In other words, by keeping one's mind in a state of stillness, the quantum of energy that is dissipated through the cerebral-spinal system and the ceaseless cellular activities in the physical body are substantially minimized. In meditation, all the faculties with which the human mind is equipped are brought into full play and capacity. The state of meditation in no way brings about a lethargic condition of the mind or senses, but actually it creates an awareness full of dynamism and the optimum use of the mind and the senses.

Sufism stresses the importance of spiritual training and in this practice what is required is a discipline of the entire being of man of all the diverse faculties and not mere intellectual training, since spiritual illumination is not dependent on scholarship and logical thinking. At the end of a long and sustained spiritual practice, which involves serious control of the senses and the mind, then there is the possibility of purging of all its impurities. So long as there is desire in the mind the true state of Fana cannot be experienced because the craving of the mind for pleasure is always restless and unhappy.

Actually Fana is a pure sublime feeling untouched and uncorrupted by thoughts or desires. Fana means die before we die, as the heaviest burden of life is the ego, and this self of man creates all sorts of tension, misery, mischief, and conflict. Fana is complete only when one dies to every thought, desire, despair, hope, and ambition in life.

It is only by dying that one shall be able to find the joy of living. The Sufis interpret life as a long spiritual journey, someday coming to an end. And when it does come to an end, paradoxically it is there at the point from which it started. Therefore, death in this world is not the end of existence. It is worthy of note that if we want to be without problems we must be thoroughly dead (egoistically) while living, which means spiritual renewal is impossible without dropping mental mechanism. Mystically speaking, both birth and death are unified and transcended if one melts in the blaze of Infinite Truth (Haq).

Sufism is not a cold deliberate shunning of everybody and everything for the sake of one's own salvation, but the ultimate purpose of Sufism is the crucifixion of the egoistic personality and the rising up into a new consciousness of our eternal oneness with the Supreme Reality (Allah). The state of Baqa implies the death of human ego and the resurrection into the divine

consciousness. This spiritual awakening or divine revelation is achieved after passing through the experience of Fana, the silence of the great void.

Today, we find people spiritually hungry in every corner of the globe. It would seem that everyone of us wants happiness or peace of mind. If the world and society is in a chaotic condition, it is because there is no peace in the mind of man. Happiness comes only when our mind is perfectly clear and free from all confusions. We should enquire into the deeper aspects of the mind with ever increasing attention. It is also necessary to observe why the mind craves for sensual pleasures and how the same pleasurable enjoyments lead us to pain. Without such self-observation, it is impossible to have any kind of mastery over our mind. Whatever may be the pressures of problems confronting us, our mind should remain unaffected by circumstances.

When it is necessary, we must use our thinking faculty, but at other times we must be able to remain in our natural state of "perfect peace" without wasting our mental energy on unwanted thoughts and desires. The basic factor behind all human suffering is some sort of frustration, and the reason for such suffering is the interminable nature of desires which can be snapped only by abstention from desire altogether. Detachment in the true sense of the term is an experience which liberates one's mind in overcoming distraction.

The world we live in is a wonderful place because of its perpetually changing nature, a blessing to humanity. The world appears to men in different ways, according to their psychological constitution. To scientists it appears in one way while to ordinary men in another way. It is only to spiritually-realized people (Sufis) that the world appears in its true form. The realm of spiritual liberation has always been a matter of great interest to the seeker or Murid because man as a physically finite being in an imperfect world aspires for immortality. Every man (Insan) in his heart feels an urge for unalloyed joy, absolute freedom, uninterrupted peace, perpetual life, and cessation of misery.

Sufism makes a strong plea that the lasting solution for human problems can be found only when the mind reaches the state of Fana, because it constitutes not only the cessation of mental activities through choiceless awareness, but also the freedom from the known, which means that our mind has been merged in perfect silence. When we understand all about ourselves there is that

emptiness, and in that state there is wisdom, and that wisdom begins when sorrow ends. Sufism emphasizes the importance of leading a pure life and practicing spiritual discipline, so that the whole psycho-physical constitution of the Murid-seeker becomes changed and purified.

This self-discipline gives the seeker not only the necessary strength to bear the impact of mental agitation, but also saves him to stand the strains of the inner struggle. Meditation (Muraqabah) means a state of alertness where no thought interferes, and in that state we not only explore the various aspects of the mind, but also the secret of self, which brings about ever new dimensions of supra-mental state, a level beyond the senses. Normally, we act out of opinion, conclusion, or out of speculative intentions, but we must realize the fact that meditation is the action of silence. Meditation normalizes the nervous system, increases the orderly functioning of the brain, and promotes integrated thinking, regulated action, and appropriate behavior.

Concentration is the preliminary process by which the diversified rays of the mind are brought to a single point. But meditation which is the highest form of contemplation is the divine method by which our mind is ultimately rendered silent.

This state of meditative awareness not only helps us to commune with Allah but also releases the mind from its restlessness. All forms of spiritual discipline aim at tranquillization of the mind, helping to rectify functional impairment, mental disease, and structural alterations. Specialists in psychosomatic medicine and psychiatry have come to show a good deal of interest in meditation as it attempts to eliminate psychological tensions and counteract bad influences that cause disintegration of the personality. Both mental and physical relaxation is becoming more and more essential in the fast-moving, materialistic world in which we live.

Sufism holds the view that it is useless to look for peace or relaxation outside of ourselves. It must come from within by leading a meditative life. In the silent mind alone one can find full spiritual satisfaction. The best way to attain freedom is by egoless love, egoless work, egoless contemplation, and egoless knowledge, which means one has to surrender and sacrifice everything. In the present world and its crisis of character, it is our sacred duty to liberate the

human consciousness from the grip of petty conflict by emphasizing the importance of spiritual life. It is also to be realized that a meditative (spiritual) person alone can perform the right action in which there will be no regrets, confusion, or contradiction.

In meditation we live in this world without the images of pleasure or pain, and in that profound state of meditation (*Muraqabah*) we actually discover the origin of thinking. Then we enter into a new dimension where the division between the observer and observed does not exist, and there alone the blessing of divine unification (*Tawhid*) can take place spontaneously and effortlessly. Free and happy indeed is the Sufi who lives in a state of perfect peace and in which state of egolessness he is able to understand and appreciate the unending beauty of life.

† Article No. 16

The Aim of Sufism

It is essential to understand whether happiness can be achieved by the mind. If the mind undertakes to find happiness, then the mind may imagine mere sensation as happiness. Our experience shows that passionate desire produces a sense of momentary pleasure, but the impacts of such emotional excitements intensify the desire for further experience of lower sensations.

The best and the only practical method for the mind is to observe its reactions silently, and this self-observation alone will facilitate the mind to purify the residue of its past (coarse) impressions. The mind must be alert in watching its thought-process, and this awareness should be continued in our relationship with people, ideas, and things. Normally the mind reacts in the presence of an object and this object can be a living person or ideation or thing. The mind works in the form of attraction and repulsion in contacting the object, and this dualistic psychological like and dislike is due to the past association of memory. By following this automatic habitual process, the mind loses its vigor and strength for dispassionate observation. Self-observation is the right way to free the mind from past impressions.

When we watch the (unrefined) mind, we find that the mind is filled with discontent and insufficiency. The motive of the mind is to get some sort of pleasure by dwelling on its past sensations, and this indulgence weakens its power of concentration. Instead of depending on the lower form of sensation, the mind must watch its internal state calmly so that there is the possibility of transcending the conditioning deteriorating factors of past impressions. The mind naturally attempts to deviate from the path of self-observation and thus evade perceiving Reality. When the mind is confused, it does not face the fact of confusion, but, instead of experiencing acuteness of suffering that comes as a result of confusion, it runs away by projecting fictitious distractions.

We must just be aware of the state of confusion without identifying ourselves with personal reactions. If we experiment with this method of examining the problem of confusion, without introducing our emotional coloration to it, then we will be able to be free from the confusion. Then we will have the freedom to watch everything with concentration without acting on mere impulses. As soon as we observe any mental conflict we will feel that the emotional attachment to the problem is dissociated and dissolved. This dissociation gives us inner freedom to listen to any problem without being influenced by its reactions, and this capacity to watch with full attention is the only practical method of solving our own psychological problems.

Every incident in life is an opportunity for us to purify ourselves and thus maintain mental equilibrium, because everything in life takes place according to the Cosmic Will. If and when our like and dislike interfere in our relationship with people, then only the deteriorating factor sets in. If we wish to reach the supra-mental state of Divinity, we should not overlook the paramount importance of the disciplined life, due to too much preoccupation with worldly entanglement. It is to be learned that sensual enjoyment is not only useless as a means to spiritual liberation, but also potentially harmful, which gives restlessness to the physical body and the mind. Therefore we should put into place or maintain the practice and technique of meditation as a daily activity. The main obstacles in practicing meditation are the forces of habit which compel us to repeat the old familiar pattern of behavior, the psychological memory of the past, and the anticipation of the future.

According to Sufism, the root causes of all our mundane troubles are greed, hatred, delusion, ego, etc. We must realize the fact that only by detached observation alone can we eradicate these destructive habits.

In other words, permanent cure for psychological illness is through proper meditation. Everything accumulated in life is stored in our subconscious mind and naturally continues to exist unknowingly, since we are normally so occupied with other things that we are unaware of these unconscious conflicts and urges. But when we are quiet in meditation we can observe that these conflicting desires rise to the surface into the conscious mind. Without becoming aware of all the states of mind and its contents both conscious and unconscious, it is not really possible to develop meditative awareness or insight.

It is observable that the mind is subtle matter in a state of vibration, and through the mind alone sense-organs receive impressions of objects and react upon them. If we probe further into the mysteries of mind, we find that it has three substantive forces partaking of the Divine, human, and animal qualities. Therefore, a man is no better or worse than his state of mind at a given point of time.

Sufism teaches that clean living in action, speech, and thought is the basic principle for the purification of the mind. In all our activities there should be awareness and clarity of consciousness. If we meditate effectively, that is, live fully in the present from moment to moment, then there is no confusion, no ignorance, no illusion, and if anything comes up we know it and understand it. As we are spiritually awake, we have the potentiality to tackle whatever the problems are that come to us.

Living with meditative awareness is the aim of Sufism. Some people think of meditation only in terms of sitting in a particular place at a particular time, but in Sufism, meditative awareness is much more, and can be experienced at any moment. The purpose of Sufism is to help to first increase the awareness of what is going on inside the mind, and subsequently reduce the movement of the mental fluctuations, because the state of Fana cannot be attained by mere mental effort, and hence Sufism advises that the best way to overcome the assertive ego which is a barrier to self-knowledge is completely surrender to

God (Allah) and this total surrender of the ego at the Sanctuary of the Infinite is the secret of a truly spiritual life.

In Fana the psychological memory of the past and the anticipation of the future which tend to condition the function of the mind is negated. The term Fana has often been misunderstood. It does not mean absence or extinction, but it is unmovable, unshakable, like space, with nothing destructible. Fana means to unlearn the false identification of thought-waves with the ego-senses. This process of unlearning involves a complete transformation of character and the freedom from all lack of poise.

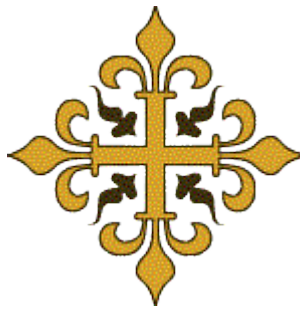
Sufism urges man to move from the world of concepts, theories, and imaginations into actual (spiritual) living. Man can never know his real Self as long as he is falsely identified with the ego-senses. Sufism directs the seeker to cherish the awareness of the existence of the Reality behind the changing world of name and form. Allah is beyond the comprehension of human speech and mind, and therefore, when a Sufi realizes God, he becomes silent and merges in the bliss of infinity. Meditation serves as a spiritual link to God.

At a certain stage of spiritual development, the seeker grows more complete in his contemplation and finds fulfillment in perfect oneness in the Divine Unity. Then the Sufi sees everything as Divine because his vision is such that he has reached the transcendental state of Baqa, in which exalted state the Supreme Consciousness prevails in him, and in that perfect liberation he leads the life of fullness and blessedness. The state of Baqa remains forever outside the power of thought-waves; it is essentially pure, enlightened, and free.

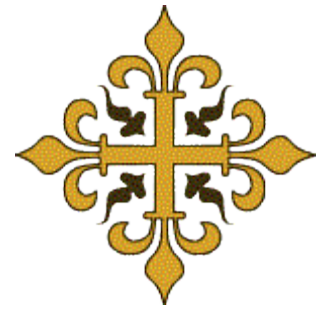
In Baqa we touch the perennial substratum of all manifestation in the universe of space, time, and causality. It is the essence of Reality, attribute-less Supreme Consciousness, the pre-creation state of silent non-dualism and indivisibility.

Psychologically speaking, this state of Baqa is seeing in wisdom the truth as the truth, falsehood as falsehood, free from delusion and ignorance. This supreme awareness is not an ordinary perception of something, but actually an experiencing of the Truth at that moment in which the ego is completely cut off (inert).

Sufism recommends that in preference to worldly pursuits we must work for the spiritual liberation of ourselves and for the good of the world. As we approach the supreme state of self-realization we are even better equipped to encourage others spiritually. Peace of mind is a universal longing of every human being. We may differ variously by race or religion, but we all agree with the value of having a peaceful mind. In our modern age of ever-increasing complexity, greater importance should be given to mental health, and to reach peace of mind, certain self-disciplines are to be practiced. Whenever we meditate (properly), we have mental clarity, spiritual alertness, and Divine awakening within us, and at that moment the mind is pure and silent.



Section 5.712



Psychology and Sufism 2

- A second series of articles by K.M.P. Mohamed Cassim.



The Spiritual Science of Sufism

It should be understood that there are two kinds of happiness, one kind derived from sensual pleasures which may arise from sense-perception. But the fact remains that everything experienced by the senses is misleading. The other kind of happiness is spiritual liberation that is realized through meditation. A purely intellectual comprehension of the divine life is not possible because it is not within the scope of mere logic. Spiritual life should never be thought of as an austerity, a kind of self-torture, grim and painful. On the contrary, spiritual life finds expression in joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, gentleness, and reverence for all.

The purpose of Sufism is to gain self-knowledge through direct perception. Sufism is a practical science of life, which opens direct experience to the field of reality as well as the different levels of spiritual consciousness. The Sufi way of meditation refines the nervous system in a gentle way, removing all mental strain and leads to higher consciousness. Spiritual freedom does not mean refraining from the responsibilities of life, but rather giving all aspects of practical life their due while spontaneously maintaining the meditative awareness as separate activity. Since our mind is unsteady, Sufism gives a definite method, the practice of which brings it under control and thus enables us to cultivate and enjoy evenness of mind in higher consciousness.

Many people advocate the material mode of life because they think that through material prosperity all happiness could be achieved, but actually it is not so. Although we get more and more comfort and pleasure, we are still not happy or free. On the contrary, our problems only increase. The simple fact is that when sense-desires are continually gratified naturally, the mind becomes poorer and more disturbed. Further, the mechanism of the mind is more thirsty, more craving and clinging towards sensual gratifications.

The other extreme considers that spiritual life means to give up their work and responsibilities, renouncing the world and refusing to face what arises in their lives. In fact, the world cannot be renounced since human relationships and life situations continuously reappear in different forms wherever we go, for problems

cannot be escaped by isolation. We have to accept life as it is; life has both good and bad, conflict and pleasure. In fact, we can learn more from pain than from pleasure because without conflict we may just continue to sleep in life without spiritual awakening; so any unpleasant experience can be used to teach and bring wisdom. So it is not by avoiding suffering but by going through it and working it through that we discover something very important in life about ourselves.

Sufism stresses the importance of mental purification and refinement because it is the confused mind that prevents the beauty of intuitive awareness. Mental disorders are closely connected with emotional distortions which obscure creative intelligence. Fear, anxiety, guilt, envy, grief, and pride of any kind are major mental and emotional barriers that have to be eliminated from the human system. To be aware of our spiritual nature, we must have the capacity to rise above the mundane without identifying ourselves with the mental or emotional processes and this constant conscious awareness of the super-consciousness is meditation.

The true goal of spiritual liberation consists in living on a higher divine plane, being not influenced by desires and not creating new desires as a result of thought or action. By not being influenced means that one is not inwardly touched by the working out of the residue of impressions. Enlightenment means not only mastery or total understanding of life, but also living with the awareness of pure consciousness, although with mental activity.

To progress towards spiritual life does not mean to be selfish or to be aloof from society. It means to abolish confusion and bring about clarity of mind. Until this is achieved within the individual it will not be possible to bring about a new order to society. Without first reforming oneself within, it is impossible to change society radically, because disorder and chaos in the world are nothing but the reflection of the chaos in each one of us. To establish oneself in silence is not a simple matter. The greatest patience and perseverance are called for.

Ordinarily we do not even observe the flux of thoughts crossing the mind. In meditation, particularly in the beginning stages, it is not that more thoughts rise, but we become more aware of them. Whatever is hidden comes to the surface and this is the proper time to deal with them and still the mind by

practicing choiceless awareness. When we can look towards the cause and origin of our thoughts, the chaos ceases and dissolves on its own.

Spiritual life signifies a simple, easy, and unstrained method of living with a proper sense of values without giving undue importance to worldly activities. The best and most harmonious relationships are based on non-attachment, in which we do not need others for our happiness and support. If we can be alone, then only are we free from ego wandering. In that state we do not carry anything with us and we do not look backward or forward; this is the stage of freedom from experience and non-experience. Further, in this state we can live every moment of our life in appreciating fully, and at the same time we can easily leave the state when the particular experience is finished.

Sufism is not a set of codes or tenets, but a way of life-being, from the beginning to the end a matter of spiritual experience. It is a practical way of living that avoids the extremes of self-indulgence and asceticism, and leads to an awareness of the divine center. The destiny of man is divine perfection and that spiritual liberation to be achieved is by going beyond the mind into the integral light of the immeasurable Godhead. The best form of prayer is to remain in perfect peace, avoiding even mental activity, because such profound inner calm will ultimately make our being merge with Allah, the Omnipresent.

Sufism teaches the technique of Fana which means not only erasing the already existing impressions on the subconscious mind, but also the method of performing action without attachment, so that no further impression is added to the subconscious mind. When once this method of doing actions without attachment is mastered, many of the causes for the emergence of psychosomatic ailments disappear. An analysis of the causes of diseases reveals that a suppressed emotion is quite dangerous and that emotional disturbances are due to conscious, subconscious conflict. Therefore, every action done with attachment produces an impression on the subconscious mind. This is the psychological weight that is to be removed by leading a life of purity.

Our life is a contradiction, one desire in opposition to another desire, one pleasure pulling us in one direction and another pleasure pulling us in another, making our life contradictory and confused. We cannot separate ourselves from the world because we are the world. To change the world we must change

ourselves and to bring about an orderly change we must understand the causes of the disorder that exists in us. We have nothing to do other than to have the capacity to observe the cause of disorder with inner freedom, since most of us are very heavily conditioned due to various circumstances.

The fundamental question is whether it is at all possible for the human mind to un-condition itself so that it can be free. Sufism says that it is possible for the human mind to be free of its conditioning through the technique of Fana, only when our thoughts have been stilled and the mind has been cleared of all its impressions. Fana implies a state of mind that does not depend on another psychologically and is not attached to any person, which does not mean, however, the non-existence of love.

We must realize that pure love is not attachment. It signifies a mind that is uncorrupted and without any sense of fear or conflict. Fana is to be simply aware of what is going on here and now and to find the capacity to live fully in the present.

The best way to attain the state of Fana is by following the path of meditation with self-knowledge. The beauty of Fana emerges when the dying of the ego has taken place. Fana is not a nothingness but a state, a reality that is when all our false values and desires are reduced to nothing. To keep our mind in a state of emptiness is quite indispensable so that we can contact and radiate spiritual magnetism. The wonderful capacity of divine consciousness comes into operation only when we abide permanently in the state of Fana and by living in the highest state of Fana, we spontaneously become a divine channel for the promotion of wisdom, unity, and universal brotherhood.

In Fana we not only transcend the mind, but also we touch the Cosmic Consciousness which gives us the bliss and divine guidance to shape our life in such a way as not to deviate from the spiritual path. The more we go into deeper meditation, the more we appreciate the beauty and usefulness of spiritual life. The divine contentment that we inwardly feel when we are in meditation is really a secret and sacred experience that sustains us and strengthens and stabilizes our divine life to which we are happily dedicated.

Our life is very complex and to understand the state of Fana we need to observe closely the structure of our mind. Since we are heavily conditioned, we are not free to understand the depth of mind. We have to find out how to die psychologically or inwardly because Fana means that every day we must die to all pleasures, to all psychological memories, to all the things we hold dear, so that our mind is always fresh and pure with meditative awareness.

† Article No. 18

An Esoteric Approach to Sufism

Medical research together with recent explorations of the mind have now confirmed that many of the ills that used to be considered as purely organic in nature are actually caused by our attitudes towards life and those around us. Even organic as well as nervous and psychological ills can be caused by hate, fear, jealousy, and anger. Therefore, we must make every effort to widen the vision of every human being by discovering divinity in each other, so that rank passion like hatred, anger, jealousy, and selfishness are set at naught.

When an aspirant begins to observe his mind he comes face to face with only a few desires and feelings which dance on the surface of his mind. But below the surface in the subconscious regions of his mind there are various kinds of thoughts and desires which exercise considerable influence upon the nature of the mind from behind the scenes. Further, when one makes serious attempts in controlling the grosser desires and feelings which create disturbances, one is surprised to find that many subtle thoughts and desires rise from the deeper layer of the mind and create troubles. The tendency of the mind is simply to drag us down towards the sensual attractions and if we indulge too much in any form of emotional excitement, then we are only damaging ourselves physically, mentally, and spiritually. We must realize the fact that we are attracted to sensuality because knowingly or unknowingly we derive certain pleasure by dwelling on those sensations.

Since the dangers of conflict of greed for wealth and power are so menacing, it is very essential that we lead a pure spiritual life so that we may cope with the innumerable problems maturely. To understand oneself correctly is a

tremendous job, because the self or mind is never the same from moment to moment. It is an obvious fact that life is a struggle not merely with circumstances and environments, but also because our minds are pulled in different directions. If we keenly observe we will find that there are so many contradictory desire compulsions and so many urges in our mind. Unless we grasp the totality of the mind we cannot be free. Right meditation alone can bring the realization of the true character of the self. A seeker must inwardly feel the call of Truth and he must discover the fact that when the true wisdom of Reality is attained, the veil of ignorance disappears, which means one establishes the right way of living in his own consciousness amidst chaos and confusion.

If we are upset even by trivial affairs, if we lose our character even by a small temptation, if our self-control is damaged by outward attraction, then these are an indication that we have not achieved the spiritual life. The deteriorating factor on the spiritual path is the distraction of the mind one feels while in meditation. Practice of meditation makes the mind calm and steady and eminently fit for reflecting the nature of Reality in its true light. Then the serene flow of divine energy is directed solely God-ward. Meditation sharpens the whole being, every pore of being becomes active in divine harmony. When the total mind becomes silence, that supreme silence permeates the whole world, which brings spiritual upliftment.

If every moment of our waking hours is filled with ego-centered activities, we do not know how to live in meditation. Meditation is the way to understand the movement of the mind and not to identify with it. If we understand the mechanistic nature of the brain and cerebral activity as a fact, then there is no more psychological identification with anything that the mind brings up. If we can calmly observe our thoughts then we will reach a state where thoughts are completely eliminated, and after that the observer remains immersed in blissful silence. This is something which we can really experiment with.

Thus meditation is the total silence of the mind in action. A spontaneous meditation releases a new and dynamic energy. It refreshes the nervous system and increases the sensitivity of the total being. The state of living in meditation is moving in spiritual freedom. The beauty of meditation gives us a new

dimension of divine living. Meditation is a science and it is not a speculative game.

The metaphysical science of Sufism explains that the notions of pleasure and pain result only from the contact of the senses with their objects. Since these contacts are connected with bodily existence, they have a beginning and an end and therefore they are not permanent. Further, it indicates that the unreal or impermanent is always in a state of flux. Change is its very nature. But behind the changing world is the unchanging Reality. In order to observe change, there must be something not changeable.

If the subject of the change is also changing, change could not be (properly) observed. Sufism insists that the true knowledge of Reality alone can be the sole means for the destruction of ignorance and for deliverance from the illusory bondage and sufferings from which man apparently suffers in this world. Sufism is not a creed or a set of dogmas, but a process enabling each man, whatever be his station in life, to grow and develop into a higher state of spiritual perfection.

Sufism insists that until and unless the practical life is fully imbued with love, devotion, and contemplation of the Absolute, one cannot enjoy the beauty of spiritual life. The true goodness of divine life consists in the all-around discipline and development of the physical body, the senses, the mind, the intellect, the emotions, and the heart, for the realization of Truth. Sufistic philosophy points out that everything except That is changing and only That is eternal and that eternal Reality is the Self of man. Everything else has an impermanent existence only in relation to the Self. The indwelling Self is ever changeless, indestructible, and illimitable.

Sufism declares that the liberating factor is meditative awareness, which means that if we remain simply aware of the pleasurable and painful feelings that arise within ourselves as a result of our contact with the external world, instead of reacting to them with craving or aversion as the case may be, then there is the possibility of putting an end to this mental distraction and disturbance. For this reason only the cultivation of self-awareness occupies a central place in Sufism, and in order to attain the true state of Fana, the mind must be perfectly pure and transparent, calm and tranquil, absolutely undisturbed. It is only

when the self is not that there is Fana, that state of being in which alone there can be purity. The state of Fana comes only when the self (ego) (mind) (personality) which is the process of accumulation (entanglement) ceases to be.

According to the esoteric aspects of Sufism, if a seeker maintains this state of Fana sufficiently, he will experience that his individual consciousness completely unifies with Reality. In this state the subject-object relation vanishes from the mind and no modification of the mind is felt; then only the real state of Baqa is attainable. In the highest state of Baqa, the Reality is not experienced as an object, but one becomes one with the Reality and therefore there is no plurality or process of dualistic knowledge.

The unconditioned state of Baqa is a supreme consciousness in which there is no difference between the knower and the knowable. A Sufi is an integrated, total man with a mind set free. A Sufi is he who has passed through various spiritual disciplines and attained the frame of mind which does not react to any condition or circumstance of life. A Sufi is not one who has retired from worldly life and lives away from the strife and turmoil of the world. A Sufi finds perfect inward peace and bliss in the midst of all the bewildering diversities of the world.

Sufism insists in understanding the fact that man suffers because of his false identification with an illusory separate self. His attachment to this fictitious entity, the 'me' is a result of distorted, dualistic, partial perceptions and conditioned responses due to past psychological memories and experiences. Although to keep the mind quiet is one of the most difficult things to achieve, it is very necessary that one should cultivate the habit of maintaining the mind in a state of perfect peace.

When the total mind becomes silence, then only one could develop the utter detachment which brings freedom from all the worries and sufferings connected with worldly events. Needless to say, the cessation of (spurious) mental activity does not result in withdrawing from the active world and does not result in benumbing any of one's capacities. The fulfillment of life at all levels is the aim of Sufism.

Sufism, An Exploration

Nowadays man faces pressures of increasing complexity which impose a severe strain on his mind. A person well established in the state of meditation (Muraqabah) can easily free himself from the tension and stress of modern life. Further, he can be free from undue anxieties, abnormal fears, and depressive frustrations which lead to feelings of insecurity, inferiority, and despondency. Therefore, Muraqabah is an important part of the spiritual discipline which is needed by the entire humanity because it will help a person not only in overcoming ignorance and delusion, but also in the attainment of perfect sanity, the realization of the highest wisdom, and the gaining of divine illumination. Muraqabah is a process of understanding our own mind calmly without any emotional involvement. And this can be stated as choiceless awareness where one is a witness to everything without being psychologically disturbed.

Modern man is so preoccupied with his ego-centered activities that he has lost the mental equipoise and necessary relaxation so as to face problems in the society in which he functions. Mere outer changes of life will neither bring real freedom nor solve any problems. We cannot reform society until radical changes first occur within the individuals who make up that society. Therefore, real education consists in the personal growth and harmonious integration of an individual, which means the discovery of inner spiritual values so that mere superficial external things and sensual pursuits lose their dominance. But alas, today major emphasis is placed on sensual enjoyments while little attention is paid to the spiritual fitness.

Life is an unbroken series of pleasurable and painful experiences, and so long as we function within the realm of ignorance we are under the tyranny of attachment and desires. Liberation is possible when the true wisdom of all our existence is realized through Muraqabah. Man has yet to learn how to meditate. An inquiry into the source of Muraqabah is the beginning of spiritual life. Personal discovery of the secret of Muraqabah implies the emptying of the content of one's mind. If we want to be free of mind, we must know what mind is. Until we watch and observe the movement of mind within us from moment to moment, we will never understand the beauty of Muraqabah. When there is

inner silence, then there is the possibility of contacting (Dhat) which is eternal and the essence of reality.

Consciously or unconsciously all are seeking happiness. Man is almost incessantly engaged in diverse activities and the motive behind all actions is the pursuit of happiness. But paradoxically, happiness seems to be always eluding our grasp. We must realize that the major obstacles to happiness are wrong emotional drives like greed, hatred, jealousy, and vanity. All these stem from one basic defect, namely egoism or selfishness. Lust and craving bring sorrow and not real happiness. Ambition may take us to the pinnacles of power and glory, but that is not real happiness. Pure joy of everlasting happiness can be experienced by leading a spiritual life, which means the silencing of sense agitations and the quieting of the mind.

One of the major problems in one's life is psychological conflict, and from this conflict all kinds of neurotic activities arise. The aim of Sufism is to eliminate all conflict inwardly and outwardly. Muraqabah is an action in which there are no regrets, no failure, and no sense of frustration. Spontaneous cessation of mental activity opens the doors to divine awakening. If we realize that Allah cannot be perceived by our mind then the mental activity comes to an end. We will never discover the immense timeless space of the infinite ultimate truth (Haq) until we realize the fact that in the midst of diversity of name and form there is the unity of essence of existence.

And when it is known that the same divine manifestation is in all creations, then there is no room for illusion or distress. It is on this practical aspect of non-dualism that the entire Sufistic philosophy of life has been built.

In Fana the mind never loses its balance and it preserves mental equilibrium intact under all circumstances. The state of Muraqabah can be experienced here and now, and it does not require renunciation of activity or physical isolation, but it needs only the abandonment of the ego sense and the capacity not to identify ourselves with anything in the world. Meditation is a liberation from the resistance of the mind. Actually, spiritual freedom implies the cessation of all mental conflicts and the capacity to use the mind when necessary and yet be free from it.

When the mind is agitated we think that our Ruh or eternal self also seems to be agitated, but our soul has no such agitation and it is always silent, and the agitations or eruptions we experience are only on the surface of the mind. The real meditation consists in experiencing the divinity within, without the intervention of the mind. The idea of "I am the enjoyer or the doer" arises in the mind only. We come to know of things only when the mind is available for perception. In meditation we withdraw ourselves from the sensual plane and we are elevated to our real state of pure consciousness. Meditation is a process of inner communication in which we experience the unity of existence, and it is a communion of self with divinity.

Although the modern civilization through the help of the rapid progress of science has reached a zenith, it is evident that men of great intellect have failed to find a permanent solution to the world problems. The great problems in the world are merely the extension of individual problems. Thus, perfect peace will come only to the world when there is serenity and harmony in the minds of men. Man is ever in search of peace and happiness. But real happiness and lasting peace can be found only in meditation and not in the sensate objects of pleasure. Meditation is not only an integral part of spiritual life, but also a direct means to divine enlightenment.

Meditation is not only to observe every movement of thought attentively, but it consists in seeing the fact in totality. When the mind is unconditioned, unburdened, and unfettered by past psychological memory, then it is in a state to receive the eternal. It is only through dispassionate observation that the mystery of the mind can be understood. The mind must act without any resistance, without any form of friction, because mental resistance creates distortion of vision. We need a clear, sharp, sensitive mind which comes from intelligent awareness and not by suppression. The right understanding of the deepest inner layers of the subconscious mind will bring tranquility and stillness.

Sufism does not give man a set of finished and final dogmas or creeds, but it asks man to discover truth through an exploration of inner space. The joy that comes through the practice of meditation surpasses all the pleasures which the transitory objects of life can give. Man is seeking freedom, but real liberation is possible only by throwing away all the mental impressions and desires, which

means to keep our soul (Ruh) aloof so that we can participate in the worldly activities and yet maintain a serene and blissful quietude of a peaceful witness-like state.

Our Ruh is a witness of the drama of life going on in our personality and in the world. The human body is an instrument for experience so as to attain oneness with the absolute reality. The object of Sufism is not only the naughting (negating) of the ego, but also the realization and the recognition that our true self is none other than the ultimate reality. Sufism is a science of life and it explains the art of living. It points out the goal of existence and provides methods by which sincere seekers can make their inner sacred pilgrimage towards Allah.

As long as the mind is a mechanical machine of psychological memory it is always restless, chattering and moving from one thing to another. Hence, it is essential for the mind to be unoccupied so that there is silence, calmness, and freedom. The quietness of the mind and the ultimate sublimation of all its thought currents is accomplished by the practice of Muraqabah. The process of emancipating the man from all his bondage and limitation and asserting his spiritual nature constitute the aim of Muraqabah.

The attainment of wisdom really means the discrimination of the real and the unreal and the detachment from the unreal so as to realize that one homogeneous being. There is a difference between theory and practice, because when crises come to us in life and put a strain upon us then at that time mere intellectual understanding or knowledge cannot give us specific remedies. The spiritual practice which means achieving self-mastery alone will help one to remain impervious to all difficulties in day-to-day affairs. To face all challenges and conflicts and to meet sufferings and sorrows with a pure and serene mind without being affected by them is the main goal of spiritual striving.

We must realize the fact that truth is not the product of mental reactions which take place mechanically. Mere emotional excitement in the name of devotion is not the goal of religious striving. When we are naturally calm and relaxed, when we enjoy the perfect peace within us, then only do we learn the divine art of meditative awareness which inspires us to have communion with the infinite.

In meditation we realize that behind all this seeming multiplicity of existence, the one unchanging substratum alone persists.

When we have rediscovered this supreme truth and have begun to realize the oneness of this infinite reality in our pure consciousness, then certainly we do not mistake the relative world in which we live as existing apart from that divinity. But when truth is not known, then the reality of that eternal principle is veiled from us, and then we interpret reality through our own misdirected imagination which forms the delusory projections. When the intellect is clouded with ignorance then the mind will dance in agitation. Therefore, liberation is possible only when the true wisdom of our inner self is revealed in silence.

† Article No. 20

The Eternity Here and Now 1

The main purpose of coming into this world is to realize our divinity which is eternal. But we are conditioned by three states of consciousness, namely, waking state, dream state, and dreamless sleep state. In the waking state we see many things and people in the physical world and by seeing these objects our mind is attached and identified with many forms and in this state we are functioning with our physical body and mind. When the physical body is tired we go to sleep. In the sleeping state the mind creates a mental world or image projected by desires. The impressions gathered while we are in the physical world are projected as a shadow form in the mental plane by our own mind with much exaggeration and dramatization.

In the dream state the world and the objects we see or experience are nothing but the product of our own mind. Both in waking and dream state our mind is functioning full of conflicts and agitations. Therefore, we are emotionally disturbed and our mind is also working at a tremendous speed in accordance with the intensity of the desire. In the dreamless sleep, the mind is not working in conflict but taking complete rest due to suspension of thought process, although it is covered by darkness.

We are all affected by three states of consciousness. In these states we are unable to discover our real self because of the projections and false images of our mind. The disturbing factors of mental projections obstruct us from realizing reality directly. The most fundamental defect in us is that we cling to the mind and the body as ourselves, whereas the body and the mind are mere instruments to be trained and purified for realization of divinity. Excitements and irritations are really blocking the path of self-realization which can be attained by transcending these three states. At this juncture it will be helpful to consider the method of meditation because only by understanding meditation correctly is there the possibility of going beyond the mind and thus liberating us from the clutches of sensual desires. The mind is continuously tempting us by identifying objects we see in the physical world. The question is how to stop the process of thinking so that we can realize our divinity.

The mind is changing from one desire to another and it is very excited with passions and hence through the mind we cannot discover reality. We are not so happy and peaceful because the mind is distracted by innumerable desires and as a result our energy is wasted in fulfilling the desires. The actual fact is that we cannot have real happiness and satisfaction when indulging in sensual pleasures because the desires are intensified and strengthened after enjoyment. The best and correct method is not to fulfill according to the dictations of our desires but to understand the mind by meditation. The art of meditation is to keep the mind under our control by understanding the activities of the mind. If we can observe each and every thought in a detached manner all the time, then we feel the most profound state of calmness.

In this state of tranquility we are in meditation. We must note the very important point that if our mind is well concentrated in the work which we are doing then the very work becomes meditation, and further our mental energy is not wasted nor our attention distracted.

It is our common experience, as soon as we are disturbed mentally the whole body and the mind are shattered with a crude form of vibration as a result of which the sweet state of meditation is lost and we are thrown from the height of divinity. If we can keep our mind in a state of meditation all the time then we will see that the physical world and our relationship with people are

harmonious. The emphasis on meditation is stressed because without meditation we cannot be free from the sensual cravings.

To attain our true state we must purify our physical body and mind by strictly following certain disciplines. If we fail in practicing our meditations regularly, then desires which are hiding in our unconscious mind will pull us down and impair our spiritual magnetism and therefore we must be careful even in moving with other people as there is a possibility of disturbing our mind by the influence of those persons who are leading a lower form of life. Meditation gives us spiritual vitality which shines through our face. The face indicates to a certain extent the inner state of mind. Those who are doing meditation reveal it in their faces. The face is the index of the soul.

The life of spirituality is full of cheerfulness and happiness. Indeed we who are leading a relatively spiritual life are fortunate because we understand the real purpose of coming into this physical world. In this world many are confused and they are leading miserable lives in that they are slaves to their own desires; they have destroyed the physical body and mind by enjoying the lowest pleasures. Although there are only a very few people who are sincerely dedicating their lives for the discovery of divinity, it is these few people who will guide humanity. Although we have to undergo difficulties in conquering our animal instincts we will ultimately succeed in winning our freedom. Real freedom is a state of mind in which we are undisturbed by environmental influences. We experience the sweetness of peace and the extraordinary beauty of spiritual grace and bliss when we are in deep meditation. Therefore, let us devote our time in the attainment of self-realization.

In life we are all confronted with many problems, but to solve any problem what we need is a clear mind to analyze the problem. The most important question is whether the mind is capable of approaching the problem without distraction. The mind is all the time thinking about past incidents and therefore, it is unable to face the problem without projecting its past impressions. The problem exists because of the mind of the thinker. To the thinker alone the various complications arise because the "thinker" is a false entity which derives sensations from the painful and pleasurable experiences thus establishing its permanency. Innumerable problems and difficulties are fabricated by wrong

thinking. In view of the above psychological reason it is necessary that we must transcend the mind to the spiritual plane.

A mind which is mechanical in its activities loses its capacity and pliability in receiving reality. A mechanical mind is lop-sided in its operation and is much disintegrated. To harmonize the mind we must have the ability to understand and observe the function of the mind dispassionately and this self-observation will lead us to self-discovery. To discover something which the mind cannot conceive is the right approach to meditation, a meditation in which even the meditator is absent in the absorption of divinity.

To maintain mental equilibrium it is very essential to study the function of the mind correctly. To penetrate into the unconscious level of the mind we must have meditative awareness to watch the hidden desires without being influenced by them. If we can undertake the journey of self-observation silently then we can gauge the agitation of unconscious urges unemotionally. The study of the unconscious mind is interesting if we can understand the significance of the symbols while we are exploring the explosive region of the unconscious mind. The unconscious mind is working ceaselessly making suggestions to the superficial mind as the upper mind is mostly controlled by impulses from the unconscious mind. As we are unable to check these impulses we must observe the unconscious mind while we are in meditation. Then we can proceed further in the discovery of reality which alone will give strength, stability, and liberation.

The most difficult task in the world is to understand our own mind, and the capacity for observation is complicated because of the fact that the observer who watches mental activities could be easily influenced by the reaction of various psychological tensions.

Hence, we must be alert not only in detecting the desires but also in watching them in a detached manner. To contact reality, the mind must be still without projecting its past impressions. In this process of silencing the mind alone we can enjoy the blessings of divine magnetism which brings freedom. The mind must be kept under complete control by means of meditation and this contemplative attitude in life will help us to contact reality which gives significance and vitality to all. Beauty is really a divine attribute because

beautiful objects elevate the mind to the height of purity. When the mind is excited by the impact of emotional confusions we cannot appreciate the beauty of divine creation. Anything that is creative is beautiful as it gives us inspiration to see things clearly. The true state of creativity is a state in which the mind is absolutely calm and silent. Devotion comes as a result of spontaneous dedication to that to which it is devoted and in this devotion we feel the beauty aspects of purifying experiences.

We are not the mere product of environmental influences or slaves to our instinctive passions and influences. We are creating environment through our thought and actions. If we have purity of heart and clarity of thought we will never be affected by environment. Our thoughts play an important part in shaping our spiritual life. Our thoughts do not only affect us, but also stimulate others as well. For an example, if we concentrate on pure thought, first of all it induces us to think intensely and deeply and at the same time we are also contributing right and pure thoughts abundantly, which will spontaneously tend to uplift others to think rightly and purely through the medium of thought vibrations. In view of this fact, we must exercise right thinking, right understanding, and right attitude in all of our mental activities.

† Article No. 21

The Eternity Here and Now 2

We cannot have real freedom until we transcend our minds by the process of meditation. We must understand our mental reactions and psychological conflicts by self-observation. Then there is the possibility of our minds moving into the realm of divinity. The fundamental principle of meditation consists in keeping our minds alert and calm, undisturbed by outward distractions. The radiation of divine current can be experienced directly when we are all tuned to that reality which operates when we meditate deeply. The meditative force and the vitality of magnetic power can be obtained inwardly when we commune with that divinity which speaks the eternal language of silence.

Whether we like it or not, there is an urge in us which seeks fulfillment only in perfect peace; to be "empty" ourselves is not a state of nothingness; it is the

cessation of desires which gives us the perennial joy of liberation. We cannot establish peace in the world until we understand our inner reality and thus live peacefully. We all have to live in this world, but we must live happily and freely without being affected by the waves of mental disturbances. We must climb to the heights of divine illumination by the help of meditation. We must concentrate all our energies in purifying our minds, before we undertake the sublime path of meditation. When we are happy with meditative awareness then our relationship with others will also be happy. Our life must be a long, continual practice of meditation, and then only can we have fresh minds to face all problems effectively.

The greatest obstacles for the attainment of super-consciousness are our own minds, which deceive us all the time in various ways. Man is conditioned by the environment, and hence it is very essential that one should completely overcome such circumstances as would stimulate lustful thoughts. It is absurd on our part to expect pure happiness through sensual activities and further to depend on excitement for the satisfaction of senses which only lead to psychological depression and exhaustion. It is very difficult to maintain our spiritual magnetism in the midst of sensational irritations. As soon as our minds are agitated, we are mentally confused by the false images of sensations. Clear perception takes place in a mind that is not distracted by external influences.

Although modern civilization has much advanced in scientific discoveries, the modern man is still groping in darkness as far as the true values of human life are concerned, because the vast development of material prosperity has blinded him to the necessity and importance of spiritual integration. Man thinks by amassing wealth and material goods he can attain happiness, on the contrary sensual enjoyments lead to utter frustration. One must learn to maintain the purity of one's mind and the clarity of one's thought all the time, even under unfavorable circumstances.

The innate divinity of man lies in his capacity to detach himself from the vicious circle which brings him miseries and mental complications together with physical contamination. Mere intellectual discussion without the flame of intuitive understanding is useless and wasteful. Ignorance exists only in the relative plane, in which duality plays a deceptive role. The elimination of

ignorance can be achieved not by psychological projection, but in the heights of self-contemplation which is meditation. The necessity of negating the mind in the process of meditation would be realized in the actual practice of meditation; without meditation one would be forced down through levels of dualism instead of being raised to union with the one supreme. The state of real freedom from the bondage of suffering is a deeply personal experience and, therefore, this state of spiritual liberation cannot be gauged by one's intellect, which is limited.

The energy that is wasted in the direction of emotional distractions should be conserved and converted into meditative force for the benefit of soul elevation and enlightenment. Nothing in this world gives that freedom and happiness for which one is searching; silent contemplation alone will create such a beautiful atmosphere and effect such spiritual integration as to enable one to enjoy life freely and fully.

When our mind is calm and peaceful and when there is no craving for any worldly desire, we experience proper meditation. We must have mental power and purity to live harmoniously with the rest of the world. Truth cannot be realized through mere intellectual capacity. If we are intensely aware of our thoughts, we will feel that our thoughts themselves are dissolved. We must have a fresh mind unclouded by past memories.

In direct experience desire is the effect of imagination. If an observer can observe an object without introducing past impressions, then there is the possibility of keeping the mind uncontaminated by desire because the observer is watching everything without condemnation or justification and thereby the strength of his mind is highly concentrated. The more we go deep into meditational awareness the more our minds become clear in reflecting reality or revealing truth. An aspirant must have the power of discrimination to perceive the reality hidden behind the appearance. To decide our spiritual destiny without the interference of emotional complication is an important matter, and for that we must get in touch with the supreme power through meditation and contemplation.

To receive the spiritual magnetism, we must attune our minds to the source from which the bliss of the soul radiates. To discover reality what is essential is the purification of the mind, which can release the hidden divine energy. This

divine magnetism is so delicate, and yet so powerful, that we must keep our body and mind clean and pure, so that we can reflect and radiate the beauty of its spiritual force. If we can delve deep into meditation, we will find that the mind is nothing but a bundle of desires and sensations, and these are preventing us from contacting the supreme power.

Generally one is afraid of death because one is incapable of facing the actuality of that unknown state, or in other words, one is unwilling to dissociate oneself from the continuous process of sensual experiences. If one can live from moment to moment in that meditative awareness which is a profound spiritual state, so that one is not gathering worldly impressions, then one is gifted with the faculty of perceiving the secret of death in the midst of diversity. If one reaches the highest realm of contemplation, then one's action is complete and there is no room for emotional fear or psychological accumulation of sensual qualities and tendencies.

There is no duality as death and living, and this sentimental demarcation line has been created by the mind. If one can die daily or empty the mind from the attachment of passionate desires, then one can experience the fact that in essence both life and death are joint phenomena and to meet the reality of death and the impacts of life simultaneously while one is in the physical plane is spiritual liberation, although this seems to be quite a paradox logically.

To a true seeker on the path the death is nothing and it does not change his freedom of search or function because the seeker who dedicates his life in the pursuit of reality does not die, but lives eternally with the infinite. Physical death is no way a barrier for a seeker to develop further towards the attainment of divine perfection. Needless to say, that one's spiritual progress and evolution does not end by the occurrence of death, but on the contrary, one can proceed peacefully and silently towards his goal of self-discovery. The purpose of creation and the manifestation of man on the material world is not to destroy and deteriorate, but to cultivate various divine faculties so as to reach the exalted state of enlightenment.

The nobility of man is that he is in possession of a soul which is deathless. For a man, the physical body is only a vehicle to gain spiritual liberation. The most important fact that one has to realize is that the purpose of having a body is to

establish a link with the infinite while living in this mundane world. If one does not make use of the body for the realization of reality, then one's life in this world is a waste and in vain.

People are deluded and deceived by the pleasures on the material plane, but at the time of death one will awaken from the slumber of ignorance and will see the real condition of the life lived in the world. While living in the physical world, one is not capable of analyzing and assessing one's mind as it is, because of the fact that one's mode of thinking is tremendously influenced by the five senses with the agitation of carnal pressures and cravings. It is to be noted that for an aspirant this sort of obstacle will not hinder him as he is gifted with purity of heart and clarity of thought which brings the light of wisdom and ability to march cheerfully towards the path.

If an aspirant realizes the fact that divinity can be discovered in the realm of death, then his life will be a source of inspiration and his action will be fresh and fearless. From the point of absolute reality, death is not the cessation of life, but the continuation of soul energy in a different place for inner development and spiritual integration. The heaviness of sensual impressions are so much loaded into man's mind, he is unable to walk properly towards the destination of death. With the emptiness of the mind alone one can enter into the kingdom of death. The materialistic attitude of the mind and poisonous sensual obsession should be obliterated or rather transcended by following the method of silent meditation and deep contemplation, then only is there the possibility of perceiving the mystery of life and death.

The Eternity Here and Now 3

Man's ability to perceive everything in the light of wisdom elevates his mind to the realm of divinity which is the spiritual plane. If we have the capacity to see the outward changes in utter dispassion and through the delight of meditation we can surely overcome all the difficulties and complications concerning the relative world which is always in tension.

The most practical method in retaining our spiritual magnetism consists in living always in the ecstasy of meditative awareness by dropping the dualistic mechanism of the mind in the absorption of the deep divine contemplation. The purpose of taking the physical body is not to waste in the blind play of sensual drama, but to live in the absolute reality which alone will give us liberation and happiness. Life is such that we have to undergo a tedious process of suffering so as to learn the lesson of spiritual liberation. The conflict that arises in our minds owing to entanglement of past experiences should be observed dispassionately.

The world we live in is in constant flux. There is nothing permanent in this relative world, because all the time it is in the process of change. It is nothing but delusion to cling to the physical world and we must liberate ourselves from the entanglements of worldly ambitions or attachments. We must dedicate our lives to the attainment of self-realization which alone will give us real freedom and enlightenment. A defect in us is that we are easily deceived by the impacts of lower sensations. The right way to live in this world is to detach oneself from sensual irritations.

The main reason why we do not have the capacity to concentrate on anything is due to our weakness in analyzing our thought process. Without understanding the working of our minds, it is impossible to proceed in the art of meditation. We mostly live with our own images which are the result of our mental reactions. By dwelling on past psychological memories we try to derive happiness, but we cannot attain bliss by clinging to sensations of sensuality. The living reality cannot be approached by the projections of our desires, as the

freshness of reality is polluted by impressions and hence, it is very necessary that we must keep our minds refreshed by meditation.

The determination to lead a pure spiritual life is an important qualification because the spiritual life consists in discovering the reality which is beyond the senses. By sheer ignorance, we have identified ourselves with desires and thereby we have lost the capacity to live in the profound state of divinity. The cause for all suffering is mainly due to attachment to sensual gratification and if we can attune our heart to eternal silence of divine light, then only we can develop the faculties of intuition and the serenity of meditation.

To enjoy life one must master the lower tendencies and emotional weaknesses as otherwise one's life will be filled with miseries and frustration. Happiness is really an inner experience one has to find when all evil desires cease. The cessation of desires is the real basis for pure happiness. In an agitated state of mind one cannot comprehend the fullness of happiness, which blooms only in the state of meditation. Meditation is not focusing one's mind on an object, but one requires tremendous power of self-observation and the ability to be aware of the thought process before one could proceed on the right path of self-discovery.

In the height of profound meditation we feel that sweet state of cosmic consciousness which transcends the limitation of mental obstructions. Spiritual life consists in the constant supply of divine energy. Meditation is not an escape from the responsibilities or an avenue of worldly isolation.

Meditation is really a state of mind in which we are capable of realizing the reality of life without deception. Even in the worldly activities, the meditative mind can observe various complications in a detached manner without involving psychological likes and dislikes.

A man of meditation in a subtle way directly operates in the relative plane by generating tremendous spiritual vibrations which bring the favorable atmosphere in transforming humanity towards divinity. All living organisms are inter-related and therefore, any development in any sphere will ultimately affect and improve the other. We must create the most suitable climate for the manifestation of divine consciousness, so that a radical change of spiritual integration can be introduced in the physical plane.

Truth cannot be conceived by the mind which is in a disturbed state. A pure heart is the right instrument for experiencing the truth. The dynamic aspects of truth can be experienced when we are in deep meditation with mystical silence. The beauty of truth can be appreciated when we transcend the relative plane of mental process. The magnetic radiation of truth can be contacted when the mind is absolutely calm and serene.

Love is purely a state of divinity which cannot be captured by the mind because in the actual realization of unity, one transcends the mental realm of duality. Mere emotional attraction of physical objects is not an aspect of love. The quality of love can be experienced in the actual detachment in which reality alone is realized in deep meditative awareness. The beauty of love consists in dissolving the egoistic "I" by the elevation of the supreme super-consciousness of the absolute. There is nothing to unite because in the oneness of reality the pure consciousness alone shines silently. The question of union with higher divine self does not exist in the realization of reality.

The most difficult task in life is the maintenance of mental equilibrium all the time. The disturbing elements of distractions should be eliminated. We must have the ability to raise our minds to that level of meditation in which alone we can be aware of every mental activity dispassionately. The art of living is to understand all situations in a state of serenity. Our own mind is the chief cause for creating complications in our relationships with people, ideas, and things. To watch everything quietly without involving ourselves in it is important in developing meditation. Deteriorating factors come into one's life when one is not capable of facing the challenge of life calmly. A healthy sign of the mind is to receive every impact and situation without emotional disturbance.

The beauty and the purity of the divine life can be understood only when one improves in the art of meditation. The ability to understand the mind is prevented if one becomes a slave to one's own desires. An important aspect in the path of reality is the discovery of the inner workings of our minds in the mirror of relationship. Needless to say, that the spiritual life is not separate from daily practical problems, but on the contrary the spiritual life must be tested in the day to day life. We aspire for inner freedom, but real liberation can

be had only in the spiritual palace and that spiritual plane or state is a direct experience that comes as a result of intensive meditation.

The sacredness of cultivating the wisdom consists in assessing the relative world as it is without the deception of attraction or repulsion. An intellect which is not properly governed by intuitive awareness is useless in the discovery of reality and therefore, it is necessary that one should train the intellectual faculty to be an instrument for the expression of divinity. Intuitive awareness can be achieved by the purification of the mind through self-contemplation.

The aim of human life is to aspire to something higher than mere sensual gratifications. All experiences in life amply prove the urgency of transcending the mental plane to the divine plane of intuition.

In meditation alone we are elevated to the height of bliss as material comforts will never bring happiness and contentment. The impacts of worldly enjoyments are transitory and they will not provide us with the peace of mind or the ability to live in the world without mental disturbance. Freedom is really a state of mind in which we observe all the activities in a manner not to be attached and contaminated by them psychologically.

The mysterious force of divine magnetism alone will purify the polluted atmosphere of mechanized materialism and our sacred task is to create the harmony of understanding by facing all the difficulties and obstacles calmly without deviating from our central aim of self-realization. The divine link and perfect peace can be fostered only in an atmosphere of purity and profound meditation. No one can change the mentality of others quickly and we elevate humanity to the extent we commune with the reality.

If we observe our minds we will find that we are never free from the corruption of desires. The cravings are given much importance by repeated gratifications and we cannot expect the blessing of divine manifestation if our minds are distracted by the impacts of material pleasure and mental confusion. In life we must have the ability to move in this world fearlessly with the meditative magnetism of spiritual serenity, so that the grace of divine power can be radiated for the betterment of humanity.

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Man is all the time deceived by his projections of the mind and it is apparent that the cause for suffering is due to the various attachments that he has in the material world. The nature of the mind is to cling to innumerable sensations and therefore it is very necessary that one must observe the activities of the mind in a detached manner dispassionately. We give importance to many things and if we watch closely, we will find that nothing in the world will ultimately give us happiness and liberation. Real freedom consists in keeping our minds undisturbed under all circumstances and needless to say, that in meditative awareness alone we can attain to that state of liberation from the conditioning factors of emotional complications.

The beauty and the sweetness of meditation can be experienced directly when we elevate our minds to the height of super-consciousness. Perfect peace is really a state of mind one has to realize through deep meditation and thus only we can establish true freedom and tranquility in the manifested world. Meditation consists in understanding our minds in the mirror of relationship as this kind of self-observation is very essential for the development of spiritual integration. The capacity to be aware of everything including the function of the mind is the correct method for the attainment of reality.

Do not react to anything violently, take what comes to you in an attitude of utter dispassion. Let nothing worry you as your business is to do your allotted job silently with a smiling face and leave the rest to universal law without bothering about the result. Be restful always in a relaxed mind. Mental excitements and sensational irritations should be avoided by adopting right concentration and clean conduct.

It is very important to impart the knowledge of spiritual hygiene which means the conservation of sex energy for utilization for intellectual work, emotional refinement, and spiritual service to humanity. In the past, the Eastern tradition emphasized through various methods of self-discipline that the householder's life was only a stepping stone for the moral advancement in the direction of spiritual emancipation. The householder's life was a centre for undertaking

various kinds of mental adaptability and emotional adjustment. But nowadays very few people realize the utter necessity of preserving the sex energy for spiritual development.

The defects that prevail in family life can be eradicated by showing the strength of spirituality through meditation. Married life must be based on divine understanding for the harmonious development of physical body, emotion, mind and soul. Silent communion and the delight of purity is the deciding factor in experiencing love. The reason for keeping the body and mind strong is purely for the sake of receiving the spiritual energy and in this connection, the conversion of sex energy into brain power will help the manifestation of divine dynamic force.

The nature of the mind is such that it takes all impressions into the subconscious mind. Through self-observation one can eradicate the impressions provided if one can delve deeply into that dark region without emotional entanglement. The ability to perceive the actuality in all is the virtue one must practice in the art of self-mastery. One cannot have freedom by obeying the blind forces of desires. It is very necessary that one must dwell in the higher consciousness so as to function freely without the limitation of mental agitation.

Realization of reality is here and now and not in the future. This dynamic aspect of living in the eternal now all the time is the most fundamental factor to elevate the man from the mess of mental distraction.

We can attain divinity only when we know the art of meditation and the correct approach to the realization of divinity is the self-observation of the mind and through meditation we can lead a life of detachment and dispassion. The beautiful aspect of divinity can be seen only when we experience an inner state of spiritual upliftment. Beauty is a quality of devotion which can be comprehended by the stillness of the mind. The bliss of silence is an attribute that can be enjoyed in the alertness of the mind. To commune with reality we have to eradicate psychological impressions through mental discipline. It is very necessary to lead a pure life so that we can be free from the complications of mental disturbances.

The metaphysical approach of solving the psychological problems does not mean the control of the physical body and mind, but the unfoldment of intuitive awareness and the harmonious development for the attainment of the absolute. There is nothing in the world either to reject or accept as in the higher realms of super-consciousness, we are able to observe everything calmly in a detached manner. It does not matter whether we live in the East or West, our souls are inwardly attuned to reality.

One is unable to present the inner mystical experience in terms of logic so as to be convinced and understood by ordinary people. The reality cannot be comprehended by the mind which is caught in the whirlpool of worldly agitations. The highest wisdom cannot be revealed through words. Hence, we have to keep silent and we also feel anything that comes to the verbal level is not the essence of That which can be contacted by meditation and contemplation.

The happiest period in life is when we are in meditation. Let us utilize our energy in developing our spiritual capacity. Concentration provides an opportunity to train one's mind properly and efficiently. One should not neglect the importance of spiritual training because the meditative atmosphere gives us an avenue to purify the emotional expressions in a dignified manner. Purity can be achieved by the practice of meditation. We are all influenced and conditioned by the sensual pleasures of the mind as the mind is all the time in movement chasing desires. Therefore, we must observe the subtle activities of the mind with alertness in a detached manner, so that there is the possibility of freeing the mind from the clutches of the cravings to which it is blindly attached. If we observe our minds deeply we will discover the very nature of the mind is such that it always creates problems, however subtle.

What is important is not the outward activities, but the vital interest in watching the reactions of our minds and this self-observation is very helpful to free ourselves from mental complexes and psychological complications. The basic approach to reality cannot be understood by the mind and hence, we have to find out whether there is the possibility of transcending the mind. If we observe the mind attentively, we will see or rather be aware that the mind functions by dividing into thinker and thought. The metaphysical puzzle is who comes first the "thinker" or the "thought." Our common knowledge suggests

that the thinker, as well as the process of thinking, are inter-related in their operation. But reality can be realized only when the mind is silent which means something unknown to the mind alone can bring liberation. And that unknown factor is not conditioned by time, space, and causation. In meditative awareness there is no physical-relative world and therefore, we can say boldly the world seems to exist because of the mind.

The attainment of absolute reality cannot be achieved by the mind because it is a bundle of impressions. The mind is limited by its very function, because the experiences of the mind are nothing but false images which have been gathered and stored in our subconscious mind. It seems that the very foundation of the mind is made by wrong notions which erect barriers in paying attention to an object. To observe our minds in the wakeful state seems to be easy, but to watch the activities of our minds while we are in sleep is very difficult.

The more we go into the deeper layers of our minds the more we feel the difficulties in watching the operation of our minds because of the sensitiveness we have developed in the course of self-observation. This sensitiveness seems to be a higher form of activity. However, the capacity to observe everything with full attention comes as a result of silent contemplation.

The physical world we see, as well as its diverse manifestations are mere projections of unreal appearance. When the mind is dissolved in proper meditation, the relative world is negated and then it can be proved or rather directly realized that supreme consciousness alone is real. We attain real happiness and satisfaction only when the mind is quiet without being disturbed by distractions. The physical world seems real only in relation to our mind. If the mind instead of seeing the world sees the seer or observer, then there is the possibility of transcending the mind and thus establishing a divine link with the higher consciousness. Meditative awareness and self-contemplation is the royal road to discovering divinity. Our physical eyes see only outward appearance, but to contact the unmanifest secret realm of cosmic consciousness, we have to train our minds efficiently by cultivating mental discipline and dispassion.

We can experience the beauty of perfect peace only when the mind is silent. It is very essential that a seeker should realize the importance of controlling the

mind as otherwise he will be easily deceived by temptations. The mind is a bundle of contradictory desires.

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It is always clinging to sensual pleasures because the mind itself is a collection of sensations. Therefore, the mind is not the proper instrument for the discovery of reality. Pure contemplation is a state of mind in which there are no distractions of thoughts and only in this level of meditation can we observe everything clearly. When we are in deep meditation, we are extremely sensitive to external influences, but the mind is not disturbed by outward attraction and repulsion because of spiritual ecstasy; any pressure from outside has not the power to irritate the seeker who is in meditation because of the fact when the mind is fully concentrated, it has the capacity to face all situations unemotionally. Meditation is the assurance of a new and free life. It is a wisdom born of a new revelation by which the world and life are seen and encountered in freedom and serenity.

In meditation, we do not feel the weight of the physical body and mental reactions; we do not feel the time factor or environmental pressure. We are transformed to a peaceful atmosphere where beauty and wisdom alone shine and if we can live in the inspiring meditative mood, then we can do our ordinary daily work most happily. To reach that level of meditation we have to watch our mind constantly. Any experience which brings painful sensation or irritating excitement is a disturbing element to be avoided immediately by the process of self-observation. To get to the root of the problem one must stop the disturbing factors of mental agitations by watching the function of mind in a detached manner through meditative awareness. Then there is the possibility of discovering divinity.

An aspirant who is well attuned to the infinite is a source of inspiration to all because in the height of contemplation he generates spiritual magnetism for the betterment of humanity. Prayer is a method of contemplation which provides facilities to commune with the omnipotent spiritual power and this magnetic grace transforms and uplifts to the height of perfection. Man is essentially

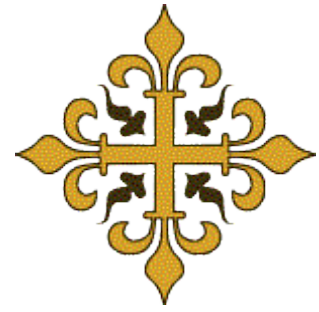
divine and immortal. Hence, man cannot be destroyed by the impacts of the phenomena of physical death. The main cause for taking the human body is to eliminate all the impurities and thus prepare physically and spiritually to receive the grace of divine energy.

Therefore, let us all attain the state of spiritual liberation. The necessity of taking the human body is stressed because of the fact that the highest state of spiritual elevation is possible only to the man. This physical world is only a temporary abode for us to prepare and equip ourselves with the spiritual powers and potentialities, so as to undertake the long sacred journey towards eternity. Therefore, let us make every effort to cultivate the divine attributes of silent contemplation, internal purity, and intuitive awareness.

Nowadays people are extremely alert only in scientific discovery, but in experiencing the inner freedom of reality they are not enthusiastic and this lack of interest is purely due to too much of mental activities. We need a peculiar state of mind to observe the process of thinking in a contemplative attitude and we must also have the ability to be aware of the emotional conflicts in a detached manner so that the bliss of the supreme can be attained. The determination to lead a pure spiritual life is an important qualification, because the spiritual life consists in discovering the reality which is beyond the senses. By sheer ignorance, we have identified ourselves with desires and thereby we have lost the capacity to live in the more profound state of divinity. The cause for much suffering is due to attachment to sensual gratification. When we attune our heart to eternal silence of divine light, we develop the faculties of intuition and the serenity of meditation.

Whatever job one may be pursuing, there must be the yearning towards the attainment of inner freedom. The world of phenomena is nothing but the expansion of the mind. Therefore, to identify ourselves with any emotional attachment is futile because the secret of self-reliance lies in discarding all desires and to rest in perfect peace. The most important problem that we are facing today is to free ourselves from the confusion of psychological complications. It is very essential that we must understand the activities of our minds all the time correctly and completely or otherwise there is the possibility of erecting false projections and complexes by the mind.

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- A third series of articles by K.M.P. Mohamed Cassim.



Meditation 1

The Pathway to Perfection

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

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

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

The mental process needs to be understood properly because spiritual transformation implies the definite ending of thought process and the beginning of another dimension where perfect silence prevails. Meditation is vital in leading a pure life because it is through meditation that the secrets of the mind

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Wisdom consists in understanding one's psychological reactions to objects, ideas, and persons correctly. An agitated, disorderly, or restless mind is incapable of facing the challenges of life. Mental disturbance is obviously due

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

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

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

Silence should be practiced for some time every day, for the purpose of mental relaxation. Those who observe silence for a few hours will have the ability to solve many psychological problems. Further, if we cultivate the habit of maintaining silence we will find that it gives a good deal of health-building elements, and as a result our mind is more calm and tranquil. Needless to say, too much of thinking or talking keeps the nervous system in a state of tension and excitement. The moment our thought stops we are full of energy because mental power has not been dissipated and there are no problems. In that state of deep silence there is neither the thinker nor the thought.

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

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

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

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

The secret of real freedom is to hold on to nothing, but to act with full attention without emotional involvement, because spiritual maturity lies in the readiness

to let go of everything. As a matter of fact, both bondage and the resulting suffering are purely conceptual and based on false identification with the fictitious entity (ego). When once we realize the false as false, it is not necessary any further to seek the truth, because that truth cannot be conceived as an object (truth can simply be realized). Once we realize that the thinking mind is merely a shadow of that reality, but not reality itself, then we cease to fret and worry, because in the absence of the ego we take the sacred pilgrimage towards the pathway to perfection.

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

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

Meditation 2

The Science of Synthesis

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

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

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

When one disciplines the mind, destroys the shackles of desire, and achieves inner peace, then only is one free from mental anguish, frustration, and

disappointment. Meditation is an effortless state that leads us beyond the psychological confusion into a state where the mind is at perfect peace.

Meditation is a delicate discipline to observe our thought processes as they are, without the burden of our past memory and preconceived ideas. It provides practical methods of holistic living that foster inner balance and outer harmony. Inner freedom is a state of being alone in meditation, which means being not dependent on others.

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

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

It is futile to embark upon the spiritual journey with a selfish mind and an impure heart. All the teachings of the great saints can be summarized to this, that our primary need is to attain a silent mind, and this emptiness of mind is indispensable for the realization of truth. Generally, our mind is like a mirror. It gathers dust while it reflects and the dust must be blown off again and again, and this constitutes the process of the dissociation from our ego, because it maintains a screen between oneself and reality. We must get rid of all our disturbances, both outer and inner, in order to perceive the reality, as the right perception is possible only with the help of a silent mind, and without right perception there cannot be right action.

It is very necessary to develop the divine qualities of mental alertness and purity of heart. There is no short-cut to enlightenment. What is required is a

transformation of our consciousness, a reshaping of every aspect of thinking (which results naturally into a reshaping of feelings and behavior). The content of human consciousness is the whole movement of thought and the desire for power, position, and the pursuit of pleasure, in which there is fear. Without understanding the subtle activities of our mind we cannot progress in spiritual life.

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

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

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

We live in a world full of stressful situations, and to run away from stress is to run away from life. By changing our mental responses we can easily learn to manage mental confusion, because virtually all psychological stress comes from

the rush and hurry (and attachments) of a frantic mind, which jumps recklessly to unwarranted conclusions and rushes to judgment. Such a mind subjects the body to continual stress because it is always moving, desiring, worrying, and/or fearing.

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

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

Philosophically speaking, there is only eternal present and there is neither past nor future. So long as the ego is there it creates fear or frustration (however subtle or obvious that might be). The element of fear (deception) is introduced by the ego when it thinks about the future or when the mind dwells in the past. The best way to overcome fear or insecurity is to observe the movement of the mind, through meditative awareness. Then the agitation of the mind stops, as the ending of the (independent) activity of the mind is the beginning of the sweet state of silence and serenity. Till we reach the state of internal silence we cannot be liberated from the influence of fear which always brings sorrow and misery.

Nowadays man has lost the charm and beauty of living totally every moment, as in life he passes through half-lived (unresolved) experiences. Therefore the challenges of life are half-met and half-resolved. Obviously, the challenges unmet and the tension unresolved go down to his subconscious mind and torture

him, as every experience which is not lived totally (fully resolved) brings various psychological complications. Fragmentation of attention is the main cause for misery and sorrow in life. Hence, the aim of meditation is the complete integration of the human being. When the psycho-physical energy of man is directed by enlightened intelligence, something wonderful happens and he experiences bliss and harmony in his relationship.

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

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

When one realizes that it is one's thoughts that cause unhappiness, then there is the right foundation, the correct starting point for investigation, which means that for the first time one becomes wholly (consciously) responsible for one's own sorrow and not (focused) on something external. At this stage what is immediately meaningful and relevant is that one should unceasingly enquire into various activities and psychological reactions of the mind, with ever increasing attention. This method of carefully watching the origin and the end of each thought will give the capacity to probe into both the conscious and unconscious aspects of mind and thereby not to get entangled in thoughts.

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

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

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

One of the most acute problems of our society is indeed the problem of strained human relationships, because man seems to have lost the art of living together peacefully. Man has been continuously engaged and primarily concerned with

the search for happiness. Yet the happiness that most of us are searching for cannot be had in sensual pleasures, because one's miseries and moods of depression simply stem from the persistent pursuit of wrong and unreal excitements.

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

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

To lead a spiritual life one must have the divine quality of fearlessness, so that one can face all the difficulties and problems boldly. To establish inner harmony through self-discipline is very important, as otherwise there is the possibility of deviating from the central aim of meditative awareness. Enlightenment is indeed a culminating point in the process of realizing the truth and for which one must have the capacity to observe and understand various layers of the mind through deep and silent meditation. It is very essential for an aspirant to dedicate his life not only in the service of humanity, but also in liberating himself from the limitation of his mind, so that he is quite capable of experiencing the sweetness of meditation. Real love is purely a divine attribute and can be enjoyed only when a seeker transcends his mental realm to the state of cosmic consciousness. To live in that state of infinity one must discard all

the petty desires and purify one's heart so that spiritual energy can be released for the spiritual elevation of humanity.

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

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

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

Spirituality is neither emotion nor reasoning nor action. It is something connected with divinity, in which the mind is free from superficial imposition, conditioning, and ego distortion. Real meditation consists of choiceless observation of one's thoughts and feelings from moment to moment. In this state of watching the thought process one makes no attempt whatsoever to

interfere with the psychological reaction towards people, events, situations, ideas, and so forth. It is an unprejudiced observation of the mind in the sense that there is no repression or condemnation (just detachment). Then there is the possibility of allowing the contents of the subconscious and unconscious desires to be exposed and transcended. When the noise of the petty mind has been silenced, when the death of the ego and the psychological past has taken place, when the clamor of the senses has ceased, then only there occurs the full flowering of divine love, compassion, and freedom.

† Article No. 48

Meditation 3

The Awakening of Wisdom

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

Both bondage and salvation are within each individual. Freedom cannot be obtained from sources external. As each person is unique, liberation can come only from one's own understanding, awareness, and meditation. The aim of spiritual life is not only to understand the subconscious and unconscious levels of our mind, but also to gain super-conscious experience through meditation. It is impossible to go beyond our conscious mind as long as we remain imprisoned by the impact of our unconscious urges. There are two major obstacles in our spiritual life and one is the presence of large areas of the unconscious in the

mind which we have not explored and the other is the hold of the past experiences of our conscious mind.

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

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

Our mind is very elusive and restless. It can make a heaven of hell and hell of heaven. Only a person who has freed himself from every trace of psychological conditioning and mental deception is fit to undertake the journey towards spiritual liberation. And such a person deserves to be called as a real seeker. Each seeker has to experience an initiatory death on the spiritual path, which means the annihilation of the lower self or ego. But this does not involve the death of the body, but the gateway to spiritual illumination. Man must be born again of the spirit and only he who gives up his (mundane) life shall find it. As man has forgotten to rediscover his eternal spirit we find various complications in our modern civilization. Until and unless we aspire to reach our original state of divinity we cannot enjoy the beauty and the fullness of love.

Truth will remain abstract, remote, and totally irrelevant to one's life until one has realized for oneself. Truth becomes a liberating factor only when one has personally rediscovered it through meditation. Meditation is a direct method of

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

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

The attitude of an aspirant should be spiritually uplifting to humanity, and for this he must dedicate his entire life in the pursuit of truth by leading a life of purity, humility, and serenity. One must lead the spiritual life not in isolation, but in the midst of society in order to encourage others towards divinity and thereby bring about transmutation and divine elevation. The application of mystical wisdom is the only solution for the modern man who is confronted with various psychological pressures and problems. The utility of mystical knowledge will pave the way to reaching perfection and blessedness.

The practice of meditation is the master key to opening the inner door of the kingdom of heaven which is within us. Spiritual life is not a matter of mere subjectivism denying all reality of objective conditions or circumstances, but on

the contrary, the world in which we live is an ideal place for a seeker to practice meditation and to develop divine faculties. One of the most baffling problems of spiritual life is the sustenance of one's interest and enthusiasm in the midst of endless difficulties and severest trials. Our civilization seems to be in a state of terrific hurry, although it does not know where it is hurrying to.

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

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

In (proper) scientific thinking, spirit and matter are no longer separate categories, but different aspects of the same universal process. In the recent development of transpersonal psychology, the transcendent and mystic stages of consciousness are studied more and more. There is an attempt to build bridges between psychology and spirituality. There are many levels of consciousness in the mind, of which mankind is not normally aware. The individual human mind is part of the absolute reality. Behind every human being there is an infinite spiritual dimension, because life is one non-fragmentable, indivisible wholeness. The ignorance of man regarding the essential nature of his divinity is a basic cause of the present world crisis. This

problem cannot be solved by any amount of rationalization, but only through intuitive wisdom.

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

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

The superficial conscious mind is occupied with various problems. We must have the capacity to watch what is going on without any distortion or resentment. In order to understand our hidden motives, responses, thoughts, and feelings, there must be mental detachment and tranquility so that the deep layers of the subconscious mind are projected at the conscious level and then transcended. So long as we are preoccupied with our attachments and prejudices (likes and dislikes) we cannot perceive the beauty of truth.

The spiritual life involves the incidental opening of all the hidden faculties and potentiality for sensitive awareness without fragmentation and divisions. A

sensitive response to life, refinement and subtlety in the faculties of consciousness are essential to the discovery of truth. Every emotion or frustration has a direct physiological consequence as well as a psychological one.

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

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

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

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

Physical death is not the cessation of the life energy, but on the contrary, the continuation of life. It gives an opportunity for the soul to express itself in a

different dimension of consciousness, in its onward march to the ultimate goal of perfection and liberation. Life is a constant movement, and that which lives from moment to moment carrying no burden of the psychological past is ever free. Therefore, it is ever unburdened. This state of living in the eternal now is possible by eliminating the selfish ego which is the source of misery. So long as the ego-sense endures, there will be no end to ignorance and bondage. We shall become free only by becoming egoless, and in this state we are aware of our soul, a transcendent principle of supreme consciousness.

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

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

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

To be truly successful is to attain peace of mind and inner freedom through meditation, because man is a spirit endowed with a mind and physical body. Man's relative superiority lies in understanding and transforming the mind. Actually, the only instrument man has to tackle any problem is his mind. We consider meditation as a discipline of the mind and the goal of meditation is enlightenment and liberation. Since we are essentially the infinite, not the

finite at all, nothing less than the attainment of the absolute can satisfy and liberate us. If we can look at everything without the image-making ego, then it is possible to live a life that is completely free from psychological conflict and confusion.

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

† Article No. 53

Meditation 4

The Art of Holistic Living

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

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

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

Truth cannot be preconceived; when we conceive it, we generally do so with a mind that has been conditioned by various psychological forces. We carry the memory of yesterday and it darkens our being. As long as the mind is a mechanical machine of memory, it knows no rest, no quietude, no silence, because the un-known divinity cannot be experienced by the mind which is the outcome of the known, of past psychological memory. When the mind is empty, we begin to appreciate not only the art of holistic living, but also we experience everlasting happiness of the boundless ocean of super-consciousness.

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

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

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

In this connection, the mystical instruction is to “die before death” which implies the ending of everything that one holds. Dying to attachment every minute, one will find the holistic state of timeless dimension. When each thought and feeling is fully experienced and not just partially, the image building process ends of its own accord. That is the art of dying psychologically from moment to moment. Images that have not been understood fully in the light of awareness tend to reappear in dreams. The mind that is not preoccupied with images is truly alert and supremely awake.

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

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

Psychologically, meditation is described as being a fourth state of consciousness, which means that it is neither waking, dreaming, nor sleeping. The common core of all meditative experience is a blissful state of awareness which leads to the extinction of the ego. The goal of meditation is not only enlightenment, but also its beneficial effects which are many and varied both

upon the physical body, the emotions, and the mind. Meditation brings a freedom from pressure in day-to-day living, an avoidance of the tired feeling, and a reduction of physical symptoms of stress.

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

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

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

Freedom is the birthright of every human being and no man likes his freedom to be curbed, curtailed, or suppressed. All human activity is an expression of this struggle to attain freedom. The urge to freedom in the human heart will not die until man realizes the highest of all freedoms, spiritual liberation. Real freedom consists not only in the discovery of the origin of our thinking, but also in

transcending our minds so that we can have the capacity to use our minds whenever possible and keep them unoccupied and restful, without any mental conflicts.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

All our psychological problems are rooted in ignorance. Hence, through meditation, we can enter into the divine state of supreme consciousness which will definitely help us to transcend the limitation of ignorance. Meditation gives us the capacity to refrain from all psychological reaction and thus

maintain calmness of emotional non-involvement in the midst of a variety of experiences whether pleasurable or painful. An academic understanding of abstract concepts is useless (by itself) as it does not help us to live and experience life in all its relationships. There is a difference between mere intellectual understanding and meditative awareness. While conceptual understanding can be partial, the meditative awareness is not only total and all-embracing, but also fully awake with all the faculties so integrated in the discovery of truth.

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

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

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

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

Therefore, one must have the capacity not only to understand the various activities of the superficial mind, but also to penetrate into the dark corners of the unconscious mind and thereby transcend it to the higher level of intuition in which alone all the contradictions, pull of various desires in different directions, are completely annihilated. In meditation all our mental powers are beautifully balanced and integrated and the many layers of our consciousness move in harmony. In meditation the wall between our desires and the opposing ideas is no more, and in that state we feel completely free, and yet we are quite capable of participating in any activity without being affected.

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

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

Self-Awareness 1

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

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

We always want to be a strong man or woman. What is the significance of real strength? Can a person who is strong physically face all problems? No, because the actual problems in life affect and attack directly our minds and not our physical bodies. Hence, only a person who is mentally strong alone can overcome all difficulties. How do we develop our minds so as to increase the mental force? We know from our daily experience that when our thoughts are scattered we are immediately disturbed. In other words mental weakness follows as soon as our minds get agitated. Real mental strength can be obtained by keeping our minds concentrated. Concentration consists in doing our work with full attention without being disturbed by outward circumstances, then only can we do our job efficiently. Without having learned to concentrate we cannot live in this world happily. The greatest achievement and advantage of having a strong and concentrated mind is that we are not mentally affected

by contact of people, things, or places. This mental force gives tremendous power to solve all problems which means we have the ability to participate in daily activities and at the same time we are not disturbed by reactions. A man of concentration acts freely by paying complete attention and he is not bothered about consequences of failures or success. The highest happiness is to keep the mind pure and peaceful under all circumstances.

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

Normally many people are afraid of death because they are strongly and blindly attached to worldly pleasures, persons, and things and hence they are not willing to separate themselves from the world to which they are so fervently attached. But at the time of death they are transported to the astral world by completely disconnecting their relationships of the physical world. In the astral or emotional world they feel the agonies of loneliness and further they are much disturbed because they are unable to fulfill their desires. So it is very necessary that we prepare to face death calmly and peacefully which means we must be ready to part with anything and everything in this world.

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

It is very essential for an aspirant to understand the importance of mental purification without which no one can improve in the sphere of spiritual life.

Anyone can practice meditation, but to study and be aware of the subtle processes of thought is really a tremendous task which needs careful attention and right living. In the world where there are so many distractions, owing to the pressure of modern civilization, it has become of paramount importance for the sincere aspirant to understand his psychological reactions correctly and completely.

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

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

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

It is a matter of vital importance for all intelligent people to make every effort to build a new world where people can live harmoniously, in their interpersonal relationships, without psychological fears and conflicts. The lack of purity in life is the main cause for nervous break-down and insanity, which are quite common nowadays. Lower impulses and emotions are nothing but reactions of thoughts. If one can control his thoughts by certain discipline only then is one

fit for the practice of meditation. One thinks (or feels and then thinks) first and then reacts, hence thinking is the cause and reaction is the effect. To stop reaction one has to understand the thinker who is thinking.

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

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

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

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

the height of spiritual magnetism is within us. The spiritual consciousness can be awakened by contact with highly evolved souls.

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

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

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

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

Self-Awareness 2

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

We must react or respond to every situation as otherwise we are not living. What is indicated here as reaction is not mere reactionary process through which we gather factual information but something of a psychological nature. Most of us are living either in the past or in the future because of this psychological memory. Since we are conditioned by our past memories, we are unable to enjoy the beauty of life in its purest form. We are not contacting the real. On the contrary, we experience only the past scars and impressions. We are actually disturbed by our past experiences and these accumulated impressions are the factors which prevent the realization of reality.

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

indulgence we cannot have satisfaction. On the contrary, we feel physically and mentally exhausted.

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

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

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

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

The worldly experiences which we accumulate are imaginative in character and as soon as we awaken from the slumber of ignorance we come to the real existence in which state there is no identification with illusion. The disintegration of the physical body is in no way going to alter the spiritual

journey in which we are presently engaged. Our endeavor is to break the chains of material limitations so as to reach the land of inner freedom.

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

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

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

To receive the divine magnetism we must purify the mind by self-observation. The radiation of spiritual power is the only remedy for the disease of the mind. To live sanely and harmoniously it is very essential to have a clear conception of the spiritual life, because the divine energy is so delicate that we must keep our physical bodies and minds absolutely pure and clean, so that we can utilize them to regenerate the spiritual force for the benefit of all.

The state of meditation is full of creativity as it generates living vitality and dynamic divinity with bliss. To contact the beauty of reality, the mind must be calm and alert. The ability to understand, to observe the function of the mind can be gained by studying the reactions of thoughts dispassionately or by watching the thought process in a detached way with intensive awareness. To

discover something which the mind cannot grasp is meditation -- a meditation in which the meditator is completely absorbed in reality.

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

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

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

The question is why we are unable to pay full attention to the job to which we are engaged. The reason for such inability for concentration is due to distraction of the mind which indicates lack of interest in the work to which we are attending. What are the factors which introduce distractions? The reactions of past experiences which are suppressed in the unconscious mind are the main cause for such mental agitations, and these distractions are pulling us in different directions which produce emotional upsets and conflicts.

The next question we have to consider is whether we can control the mind, and we must also determine whether the controller who controls the mind is really a spiritual entity or another aspect of the mind. The observer who examines desires is also conditioned by the desires and therefore, his decision is actually not acceptable in view of the emotional coloring. The dual process of analyzer as well as of the function of analyzing our desires proves the difficulties as the

analyzer is also a part of the mind and hence the observation of its psychological reactions cannot be relied on. We think or rather react to various excitements by means of words and these words stimulate sensations and accordingly the process of thinking is manipulated. Can we think without words? Sensations and the connected words are inter-related so closely that we do not know how to separate the words from the feelings. At first the words start and then thinking commences [?] and after that the chain of thinking follows. When the mind is calm and quiet, you will find there is no disturbance which indicates the absence of words. When we say we want to concentrate, we indirectly refer to the stoppage of sensational activities of the mind.

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

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

The point we have to understand before we undertake the journey of self realization is that we should not suppress the desires or act according to the desires, but we must understand them correctly. We have discovered that the mind is only a collection of desires and these desires exist because of certain reactions which have not been completely understood. When we meet an experience in life we approach it with the background of past impressions and as a result we are quite incapable of facing the situation without projecting these old impressions. Now when we act like that, it is obvious that our actions are mechanical in character or emotional in approach.

The mind consists of various instinctive impulses and these cravings bring disturbing elements. The cravings cannot be satisfied by indulgence because

dissatisfaction and incomplete experience is intensified. The make up of our minds is to a great degree influenced by the environment in which we are living as well as by the books we read and the people we move with. The mind is also molded by the education we receive. All the time we are conditioned by these outward impacts and the inward reactions which form the mental attitude through which we judge everything. In the unfoldment of our minds we must take into consideration all these psychological implications and impediments.

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

† Article No. 60

The Essence of Esoteric Philosophy

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

To discover the essence of reality, what is essential is the purification of the mind so that we can maintain meditative awareness through which we can get in touch with the divine energy. This energy is so delicate and swift that we must keep our physical bodies and minds absolutely clean and pure so that we can utilize the divine energy for beneficial purposes. By the attainment of

meditation we can be a center of dynamic spiritual force and purify the physical bodies by the radiation of divine force. The reality which the esoteric philosophy explains is a living and dynamic supreme power that has to be realized by transcending the mind through meditation and contemplation. We are all influenced and conditioned by the sensational pressure of mind.

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

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

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

The alternative, to be free from the desire, is to observe it calmly and face it without introducing personal reactions. This capacity to watch the desire will ultimately end in dissolution of the desire. The fact is that desire by itself is not the disturbing factor, but our individual likes and dislikes based on our past experience are the main cause for distraction. A desire is a kind of mental energy that is focused, and by giving coloration to it in the form of

identification, condemnation, and justification we intensify the particular desire, instead of paying full attention to it. Perhaps it might have come with a certain message from the unconscious layers of the mind. By listening to the message attentively, which the desire symbolizes, we give the opportunity to the desire to express the idea and thus we do not suppress it or indulge in it.

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

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

To have any conception of the supreme state of absolute reality by the mind is unreliable because the mind cannot gauge the subtle state of super-consciousness. The only alternative for the mind is to watch the operation of its own activities. In the relative plane where the mind is functioning we don't see objects as they actually are, but according to our likes and dislikes. In view of this psychological difficulty we must transcend the mind to the absolute plane by the process of self-observation. The relative plane exists because of the mind and in the ultimate analysis the mind itself dissolves and thereby the relative world is negated by realization of the absolute reality.

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

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

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

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

This is because the significance of spiritual life consists in discovering the reality which is beyond the mental function. By sheer ignorance we have identified ourselves with our desires and thus we have lost the capacity to live in the highest state of divinity. It is very important that we discriminate from

the illusion of the unreal and in deep meditation alone we can get the faculty of discrimination through which we can find the real.

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

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

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

The only practical method of solving this fundamental problem is by self-observation which means the mind must be so alert to understand its reactions in the mirror of relationship. If we train our mind to watch its activities and deceptions attentively all the time, then there is the possibility of exhausting the accumulated desires. As soon as past impressions are uprooted then the mind undergoes radical transformation.

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

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

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

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

Esoteric philosophy invites the modern man to live in a state which cannot be contaminated by the sensation of the mind. Man is affected by his own mind and he is unable to watch the disturbing elements of thought process because he has identified himself with the series of thought as "I", but "I" is nothing other than a bundle of thoughts-sensations. To observe the origin of thoughts calmly, quietly, and in a detached manner, is the only possible method of transcending

the reactions of the mind, so as to become established in the real self. The pressure of the mechanical mode of living makes the man want to escape from the illusion of sensual pleasure. Needless to say, that comforts and various facilities do not provide him with the satisfaction he seeks. Man cannot have liberation by indulging in sensational excitements.

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

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

The esoteric philosophy challenges the modern man to experiment by living rather than discussing it on the verbal level, as reality cannot be defined or argued about, but one has to live, and in the very living, every problem which man is confronted with will be solved. The problems exist only in the relative plane in which the mind is involved. In the absolute reality of super-consciousness there is no problem or mental complex, which is the psychological disease of modern man. The economic security or the material prosperity will never give the happiness which man searches for. The defect in modern man is

his utter inability in understanding the working of his own mind, and until and unless he discovers the functioning of his mind, he cannot solve any problem.

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

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

