What is the ego? It is everything we are personally aware of as being ourself - physically, intellectually, and emotionally. It acts through our senses, feelings and thoughts. Every living hyman creature knows itself in this personal way and cannot help doing so. There is nothing evil in it.

But still it is not the true man himself. If we are aware of that alone, we are aware of not more than a part of ourself. Why? Because behind the ego is the Universal Mind and Life from which we draw the very capacity of being individually conscious of thoughts feelings and the outside world. We are actually always in contact with this Mind, the point of contact being called the Overself. Nor could we be conscious of anything without this connection, whose effects show themselves rythmically.

All through Nature there is a process of two-fold rythm. In the body the blood is circulated by the heart. It goes out, comes back to its centre and is then pumped out again. The heartbeat is the sign of life. At night gur individual ego withdraws into, and is swallowed by, the Universal Mind. It is then unconscious in deep sleep, for when there is no consciousness there is no movement. When the ego awakes, its activity starts. Consider the whole universe and we see that it exists between the same two-way rythm of stillness and movement. The two together make up the completeness of all existence.

Everything from atom to universe comes originally out of the stillness and must return to it. Everything we are now conscious of we will no longer be conscious of when alone in the still centre of our being with God.

The ego is part of this two way existence. It is not aware of the other part, the Overself, which is like God because it never changes. By contrast the ego, with its body, emotions and intellect, is always changing. It is not eternal. It exists, but is not real in the metaphysical sense. But behind it is the Overself, which is real, without it there could be no ego and from which the ego came out. This is the Divine Centre in us.

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To understand the point better we may look at the cinema. Its pictures are constantly changing and the figures in them often moving, but the screen itself never changes. The Overself is as immobile as the screen. Just as the screen is needed to make the pictures possible, so the Overself makes the ego possible by letting it draw life and intelligence. And just as the screen is unpolluted by all the villainous crimes done in the photographs flickering upon it, unaffected by all the stormy emotions exhibited in the men and women who appear upon it. so the Overself is unpolluted by the ego's sins. unaffected by its thoughts and feelings. If we analyse the ego intellectually, we find that is first constituent is the body. All we know of the body is only our impression of it. We know it only in our onsciousness. The key to understanding this point is to suppose we are dreaming. In that state we could move and talk and work, yet we would be doing it all in a body which we knew only mentally. to our dreaming self it would seem to be experienced physically! In the same way the waking self experiences the world through the body as if it were outside ourself but it is really a state of consciousness.

The idea associated with the body is always
"I". We get this same idea with the thoughts and
feelings also. Ordinarlly it is the only "I" we
know because it is the only "I" our experience has
told us about. Where does this "I"-sense come from?
It comes from the part of us which is deeper than the
ordinary self, the part through which the ego does
not act, the part which speaks to us through
intuition. That is the Overself, which is impersonal.

The intellectual, the moral and the artistic lift man above the animal nature and make a human being. But they do not make the full human being. The Highest part is beyond them because it is the part from which even they draw their vitatity. We have to become whole and complete as a human being to fulfil the purpose of evolution. This requires us to become aware of this unknown part. It is the still centre which makes all activities possible, the Overself behind the ego.

To an infant the painting of Mona Lisa is only a blur of color but to a grown-up man, with mature refined feeling, it is a thing of moving appeal.

Why? Because when we hear inspired music or see a

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really experiencing a momentary reminder of this Presence of the Overself's beauty within ourselves.

How can we overcome the ego? We should watch ourselves during the day and detach ourselves from whatever we may be doing or saying or feeling. Through long practice this will develop an amazing inner calmass. We should try not to allow anything to disturb us. Even if others behave badly towards us we should understand their bad actions as something they cannot help. They themselves are the result of all their past. They will go on from a lower stage of evolution to a higher one in time. We should try to see that such sins or errors are inevitable just where they have reached. If we should practise non-injury toward them and refrain from returning evil for the evil they do us we shall not only avoid expressing the ego, but what is more actually gain a victory over it!

We can now appreciate why in India, at the confirmation ceremony a Brahmin boy is initiated at the age of thireen, the family guru obeys tradition and tells him that no matter what happens he must always try to practise calmness, that this is the greatest virtue he can posses mentally, just as purity is the greatest physically. Of course this is taught only to boys of the highest caste, the Brahmins, from whom the priests are drawn. If we too practise this virtue, we shall not only become serene and detached, but we shal also being to understand what the ego is. We shall learn that the ego is constantly changing. It is not a permanent beingl So where is the thing we call ego? WEXE Can we not say it is unreal?? It is only a series of emotional and mental changes which we think is "I" only because beneath them all is the feeling that we exist. This does not change for even if we can succeed in freeing ourself from them temporarily in meditation and hence from the ego, we still feel this "I" as a state where only the "Eternal Now" flows continuously from one moment to another.

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There is no ego in the final reality, only in the immediate practical existence of this illusory world. We should not be deceived by what it seems to be. We must practise the excercise of constantly reflecting upon its true nature, until we understand it is only a mental idea, something we take for granted by habit but which is only an appearance.

Another way to loosen the ego's grip upon us is to think of it as if it were a figure in a dream. Holding this thought repeatedly will help our efforts greatly. A third way is to regard what is happening to us as if it were happening to a stranger. For example, we will then try to become detached from praise given just as much as from abuse thrown at us. Thus, by such disciplines and reflections we dig down to the source where the ego comes from. All these practices are necessary; meditation alone is not enough. When you can stand aside from the ego and keep it in its proper place, it will then be working in a balanced rythm with the Overself, of which it will be the fully obedient servant.

As human beings go through their reincarnations they will be compelled, when their experience of life is long enough, to seek the real self in the end. Fitst their mental development is forced by need, for money, later by ambition for power or position, then for culture, and lastly they ruefully realize that even though they have all these things, they still lack Peace; they are still not inwardly satisfied. So they are forced to look within themselves and then they have to begin to transcend the ego.

The first beginning in this direction is through religion, which leads them by their faith to discipline their animal feelings and lower nature to some extent. To arouse, urge and stimulate men to do this, thus furthering their evolution, God sends prophets to them. The degree of evolution in character, intellect and environment at which they stand, limits what the prophets can teach them. Out of the mass of people some are more evolved and are led into the second and higher degree through mysticism. Here not only do they try to purify their bodies, emotions and thoughts but the ego itself is now recognized as an enemy to be fought. Here also the practice of meditation is taken up. It shows them the way into themselves, by drawing them away from the world outside, where

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most of their troubles come from, or from the body. Consequently they feel a satisfying peace as their intuitive feelings are developed and expand into mystical experiences.

The third stage is the philosophic one. All they previously learned was valued for the benefits it gave them but now they want to find Truth for its own sake and to its fullest extent. For they learn that when the ego is not mastered the moment they return from the Peace of meditation, it rushes in and subtly converts part of the results to its own purpose. They not only want peace but also the answers to many troubling questions about the world in which they live. Above all, they want to be always aware of the Overself whether they are active or at rest, because that is why they are here, and not just fitfully during meditation.

The deeper and fuller discipline of the ego is the last one to be undergone by the aspirant. By competent instruction, by his own constant watchful thought and special meditation, he ferrets it down to its hidden lair, gives it battle, and destroys its illusion thoroughly and finally. It can never again intrude into his feelings or ideas, much less master him. All through his philosophic career on the third stage he works also at the short path which sees nothing to alter, improve or change in him because it does not trouble with the ego at all but tries to find the Overself by insight, by seeing and being IT, by direct awareness of the Reality which always is at the foundation of his life.

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Pearls and Precious Stones

4026 WOKING WAY LOS ANGELES 27, CALIFORNIA

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Specializing in Star Sapphires Another way to locaen the ego's grip upon you is to think of it as a dream.

TELEPHONE.

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Jacques V. Masson

Pearls and Precious Stones

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4026 WOKING WAY LOS ANGELES 27, CALIFORNIA

Specializing in Star Sapphires

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JACQUES V. MASSON

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