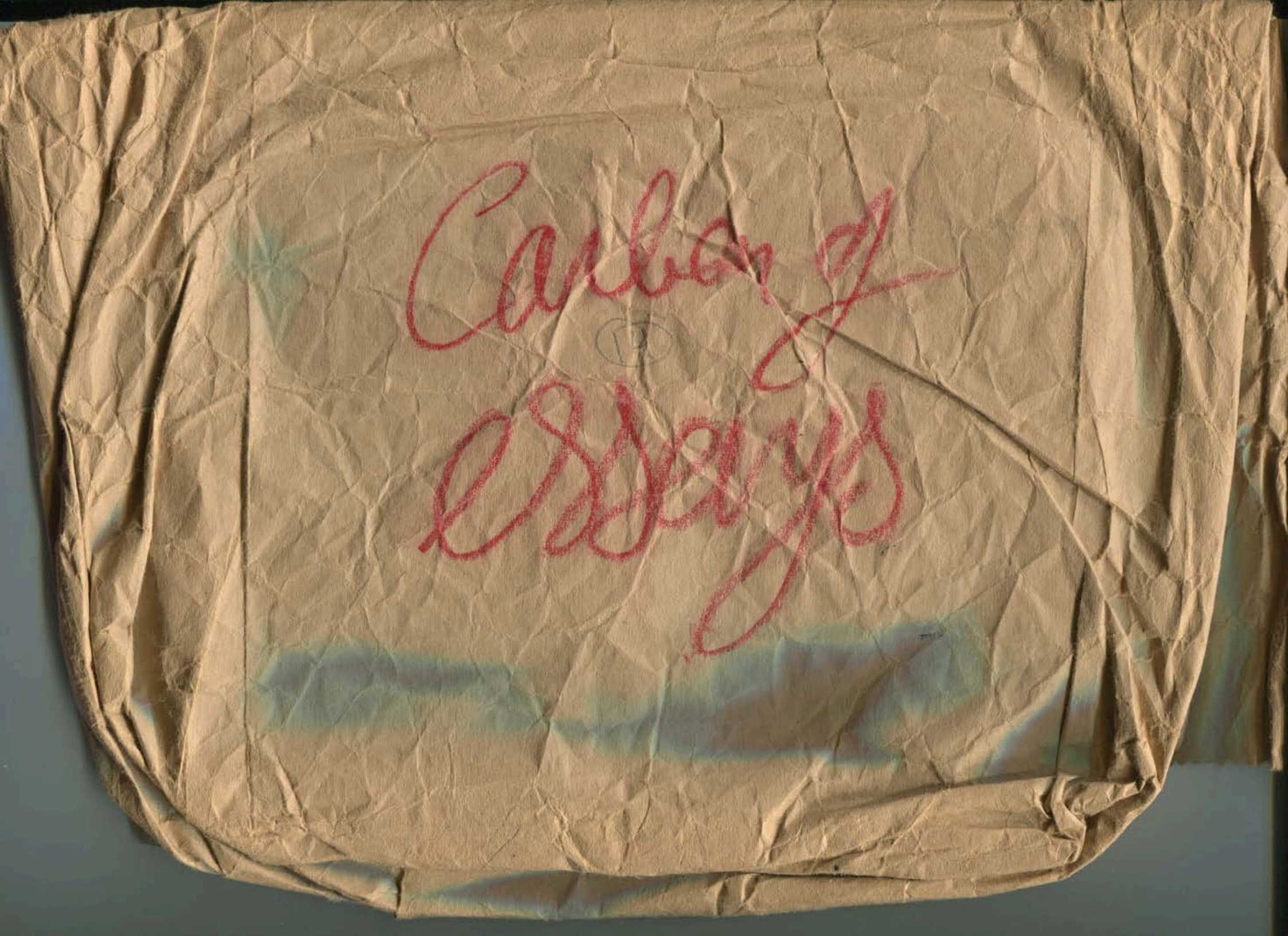
Carbon 7
Essays

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ESSAYS

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D

INSIGHT

If reality exists anywhere it must exist in an irreducible infinitude. But such a character places it beyond ordinary finite perceptions; a transcendental insight is therefore needful to bring man into relation with it. When the Supreme Reality is declared to be unknowable and unthinkable, we mean that it is unknowable only to physical sense-perception and unthinkable only by intellectual consciousness. Although the Absolute is beyond man's ordinary means of comprehension it is not beyond his extraordinary means. For he may unfold a transcendental insight. For there is in man a faculty higher than these two, the faculty of transcendental insight, which can enable him to know and to experience this Reality. The quest consummates itself in the philosophic experience, which is this unbroken enduring insight into the inner reality.

Man discovers himself as a body through the eyes but discovers himself as the Overself through insight. Thus, when experience has developed and perfected its own fullest self-comprehension it has developed the instrument of insight. When man is so mesmerized by his personality that he regards the Overself as non-existent and so mesmerized by the world-appearance that he regards Mind as a mere illusion, he is said to be dwelling in ignorance. When however he is aware of reality as intimately as he is aware of his own body, then only has he authentic insight. His struggle to attain an understanding of life will not be brought to a decisive issue before insight has fully flowered.

This faculty must not be confused with a merely intellectual one-sided so-called insight. For the whole of a man's being shares in its operations as the whole of his feeling-nature is penetrated by it. Whoever possesses this understanding possesses inextinguishable light. When reason can conquer its one-sidedness and admit the play of other elements, it will itself be absorbed in the higher and richer all-embracing faculty of immediate insight. In one sense insight is a synthetic faculty for it blends the abstract reason of the metaphysician, the feeling of the artist, the intuition of the mystic, the concrete reason of the scientist and the practical will of the active man. It fuses all these and yet it is also something higher which transcends them all. What the metaphysician only recognizes intellectually and what the mystic only feels emotionally are contained combined and yet transcended in the philosophical insight

Nor should it be confounded with intuition, of which it is the higher octave.

Nor is it to be confused with mere clairvoyant vision.

Insight is a three-in-one faculty; it sees, it knows and it is all at the same time. Because knowing involves a duality of knower and known, it disappears at this point and merges into being. Realization is not a personal experience for there is nothing personal in the real nor does it consist of an intellectual activity although the pressure of right intellectual activity is one of the factors which helps us to arrive at it. Its decress is alone authentic. He who has this sure insight is liberated from the dogmas of ecclesiastics and the speculations of theologians as from the aberrations of mystics and the imaginations of visionaries. Once he has attained to this higher consciousness, man's world-view will possess a certitude superior even to that of mathematicians. How can we be assured of the truth of insight? By the disappearance of ignorance, its opposite

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number. The two cannot co-exist. Its truth is not an argument but an achievement. The coming of insight means that blindness has gone. The man can see where before his eyes were firmly shut by illusion. Henceforth there is that in him which fixes its gaze steadfastly upon the Timeless, the Real and the impersonal. Insight alone has the power to pronounce on the universal truth and eternal reality of existence, because it alone has the power to penetrate the world appearance and contemplate what bliss behind it. To this unveiled faculty Reality will then be self-evident in the sense that man needs no outside testimony or rational proof of the sun's existence: it is perfectly self-evident in his own experience.

Illumination starts as an advancing process but ends as a suddent event. He grows slowly into Overself-discovery but the glorious bloom is abrupt. Insight arises of itself and without further striving when the needful preliminaries are finished. What then happens is that there is something like a veritable turning-around at the base of the whole consciousness. He realizes his own immediate oneness with the ultimate by a final flash of enlightenment which effectively removes all doubts and all ignorance forever. This very first glimpse will be such a tremendous and scintillating revelation to the man that it will leave an ineffaceable impression on his mind and he can never forget what he thus learns even if he were to try. His faith in the existence of the inner reality is thereafter absolutely unshakable and his resolve to carry on with the quest is thereafter completely ineradicable.

Anyone who has had such a flash of insight or experience of reality or gleam of enlightenment will naturally desire its constant presence or at least its continued return at will. But he will find that although insight deals with what is single, ultimate and final, there are separate graduated stages in its full unfoldment within man. The time it takes a rose to produce its buds is disproportionately longer than the time it takes these green cases themselves to open and burst into blossom. The unfoldment of insight is like that. The aspirant toils for long wearisome months or years amid emotional moods of darkness and failure, disheartenment and monotony. Suddenly the light breaks, his blindness vanishes and he begins to see again. The flashes of enlightenment swiftly pass but the adjustment of his character and mentality, his life and personality to it, spreads out over a disproportionately long period indeed. Years may often pass whilst he waits for the divine visitation to repeat itself. The full dawning of insight is a progressive graded event with time-lapses between each grade. This is better understood by pursuing an analogy by which insight is usually pictured in this teaching. No more time is needed for the first glimpse of reality than is needed by a flash of lightning to streak across the sky. Hence the first dawning of insight is called in this teaching "the lightning flash". Plato has similarly described this particular characteristic of the arisal of insight in his Seventh Epistle: "It is brought to birth in the soul on a sudden, as light that is kindled by a leaping spark." he writes. Indeed the glimpse is so swift and hence so elusive that its recipient must be

smart and alert to seize its dazzling significance before it is gone. It will not stay but vanishes in less than a second. Hence Augustine gives this advice: "In this first flash when thou art as if struck by lightning, when thou hearest inwardly the affirmation 'Truth' there remain if thou canst." The intellect must handle this mystical 'flash' as delicately as though it were a fragile orchid. Over-analysis may lead to its destruction; under-analysis to its incomprehension.

The student first sees reality as a man sitting in a dark room sees some of the objects therein when they are suddenly lit up by lightning, which is too swift to do more than outline the interior somewhat dimly. This degree of insight may be likened to seeing the figure of a human being from a distance but not being able to recognize whether it is a man or a woman. Hence if he misses, as he probably will, much of this significance on the first occasion this should warn him to be better prepared when it comes again. Every further flash makes the different things more and more distinguishable from one another. Just as during the first flash of lightning an observer may see only the inside walls of a room, during the second flash he may also see a table and some chairs, during the third flash he may also see some persons who are present too, until he finally gets to understand what the room is really like, so the student discovers that each momentary flash of the philosophic insight as and when it occurs tends to round out and complete the visible picture.

Nevertheless the fact remains that these glimpses of reality are but momentary ones however many times they be repeated, that when each lightning-flash has passed the student has to live on and by its unforgettable remembrance in the form of a powerful intuition but not a steady perception. Thus the need arises of progression into the second stage when it is as though the same man who formerly saw a room lit up by single and fitful lightning-flashes now sees the same room lit up by a small oil lantern. The light is now steady and continuous for a few hours until the oil gives out. The first brilliant lightning flash turns out to be but a foretaste of a stable state which will one day be kept as a permanent possession. Insight is brief at first but it becomes more and more stretched out with further experience.

The third stage is when he sees reality as the man in the dark room sees the objects by the light of the full moon. The fourth and the last stage is when he sees reality as the same man sees the objects by the full light of the sun at midday.

This insight must be got whilst we are still in this world in whose depths the imageless intangible Real forever abides, and not only whilst we are out of it in a trance. For what we see as the world is not its real nature but only a thought-constructive. The waking world is partly constructed by the individual, and the individual himself is partly a constructed entity. The same mind which co-constructs the one lays it before the other as an external but

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imagined thing. The world which is actually given in our experience is made up of millions of individual and independent items. The world which is rationally found by metaphysical examination is made of one stuff--Mind. The One appears as the Many! Thus the seeming variety of things melts down in the end to unity. All the myriad ideas not only exist for and to the mind but are in essence nothing else than mind. Every land, mountain and river, every wrought object, every living creature, even every human being, is but a thought-structure whose form appears and vanishes like the waves on an infinite ocean. The waves may go out but the ocean remains. And the ideas may go but Mind remains. It is nothing more and nothing less than the first origin and final source of all thoughts, beings and things.

The world's objectivity and materiality exist for the individual, but for the mind underlying both they are known as mere appearances. When however the individual comes to comprehend this and turns his attention to this hidden mind and finally knows it for what it is both when tranquilly abiding in itself or manifested in external activity he is said to have attained supreme insight. All other kinds of experience deal with something as if it were apart from Mind. This alone deals with something purely pertaining to Mind itself. All other experiences deal with forms but this deals with the unique formless. The moment the mind realizes that it is itself the permanent reality behind transient appearances, the constant perceiver of its own changing thought-forms, in that moment the truth flashes across it and illusion is dispelled. For man's insight is Mind contemplating itself.

Does the teaching of mentalism make the manifold world only a mirage? No! Like the superficial study of this teaching a superficial practice of yoga seems to rob the world of reality but an advanced practice restores it. The world finds its reality in World-Mind therefore it is a dependent reality. It brings recognition of the physical world as being real in its own way, although only dependently real. It is realization of unity of spirit-matter. "There is but one Nirvana, as there is but one Truth, not two or three," Gautama Buddha told one whose mind was uncertain. The mystic has yet to see that Mind upholds all its thoughts, to feel that it is present in and as all his external experience. People look upon this world either as being a reality or an illusion, according to whether their standpoint is materialistic or spiritualistic. The philosophic insight, however, knows that matter is spirit and spirit is matter because it knows that both are but Mind. Therefore this opposition becomes unintelligable and does not arise for it.

Overself when not under limitations of being aware or dreaming or unconscious is in the fourth state; it is then its own pure self, conscious in its own secondless way for itself, of itself and of nothing else! The discovery of Mind in its naked pure aloneness is

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made in a self-absorbed psychological free state, in the thought-free, sense Void. But it is not enough to touch the Void although most mystics consider it to be enough. The Void must next be brought into the Full, the Light must descent into the Dark, the Personality must not revel in the Void for its own exstatic enjoyment but must convert bliss into service. This consciousness of the Void must be carried not only into every wakeful instant but also into every dreaming one. The separation into Reality and Appearance, into Being and Becoming, must now be recognized for what it is—a tentative step and not a final one. The student who can rise so high must now transcend even this distinction. He must see all things as not-different from the original Mind Essence, must embrace them in a single realization with the essence itself. Man attains the final stage of insight only after hr has passed through this earlier experience of the Void. Only then may he return to the world of appearance and penetrate its profoundest secret. And this is—to perceive itsoneness with the Void, its not being different from the unseen and unseeable Infinite Space. After insight into the meaning of the Void, the Nought, flashes upon him, he travels onward to gain an understanding of the All, of the universal manifestation itself. When these two stages have been mastered, when insight attains its fullest bloom, the influx of separate thoughts will no longer break his transcendental consciousness and may therefore be accepted as a part of the Real. This, the highest grade of insight, is not something which happens now and then but something which indescribably [illegible] whether during sleep or during wakefulness.

Enlightenment is not a process which occurs as the result of a single factor. If insight has been gained by purely mystical means — which is the shorter way — it is always partial and fitful. If it has been gained by philosophic means — which includes the mystical and is therefore the longer way — it is full and permanent. The science of biology has shown that Nature takes more time to bring the superior organisms to their full growth than to bring the inferior ones to the same point. In the same way she requires a longer period to bring to maturity the higher powers of the human mind than the lower ones. And insight being the highest, subtlest and most recondite of all such powers, can therefore come into being only long after they themselves have come into being. That is to say, scientific thought and metaphysical reflection, mundane emotion and mystical feeling, intellect and intuition, must first proffer their contributions before insight can establish itself. Hence insight cannot be reached by intellect or emotion, intuition or will acting apart. None of these can of itself attain this goal. The whole man must advance towards it. When the faculty of reason is constantly exercised at its highest pitch, which means its most abstract and metaphysical pitch, if and when such exercise is conjoined in a certain way with the practice of mystical meditation, and when profound veneration and altruistic compassion is the atmosphere within which they move, they are one day suddenly and quite spontaneously replaced by the higher faculty of insight. The mystic finds his inner self. He discovers that personality is rooted in a deeper wider being—the Overself. But he does not discover the significance of philosophic self. He does not enter into comprehension of the All.

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illumination has been gained, it shines steadily and enduringly. It is never clouded even for a moment. In other words the philosopher walks in perpetual light and not in intermittent flashes of light as the mystic was. The philosophic knowledge is well established one whereas the mystic knowledge is an occasional one. Philosophic truth is a constant and unclouded power of the one whereas fleeting intuition or temporary ecstacy is at best attainment of the other. When a steady enlightenment beats down upon your path of life you have gained something which is unquestionably superior to the fitful feelings of ecstacy which visit the devotee or the mystic now and then. For these feelings will not of themselves be sufficient to keep you from going astray during the intervals when you do not have them, whereas the philosophic illumination shows you clearly every inch of the ground where you are walking. The mystic gets his fitful and partial glimpses of the Over-consciousness whereas with the philosopher like a lamp in a windless place it burns steadily. The inner perception will finally become continuous and the insight into what both he and the world really is will be inseparable from him. His inward eye forever gazes into infinity whilst his physical eyes do not fail to see the world at the same time.

What are the inner characteristics whereby a man will know that he has attained insight? The development of the different stages of insight — if achieved by the philosophic way — necessarily brings about certain changes of moral character as well as mental understanding. In the first stage there are: Morally, the permanent enfebblement of selfishness in the same way that a tree which has been struck by lightning is so enfeebled that it will not only stop growing but will also die sooner than it otherwise would have done. Mentally, the permanent disappearance of wrong views about self and God and of old illusions about matter, time and ~~sap~~ space. In the second stage the moral result is a permanent enfeeblement of lust, anger and hate. That is to say, although he may sometimes be disturbed by rebellious thoughts of ill-will and sensual desire the thoughts themselves will not attain any strength or intensity and will not be able to endure for more than a very short time. He will soon be ready to forgive critics, for example, or to be friendly with enemies. His partial apprehensions will be enlarged; his illusory beliefs will be eliminated: and his long habits of wrong thinking will be corrected.

In the third stage all passions are utterly subdued; lust, anger and hate are completely effaced and can never again affect his feelings for even a moment. In the fourth stage there is a perfect balance between the just needs of egoism and the wise demands of altruism. Disinterestedness marks all dealings with other persons; Vanity is utterly extinguished. There is a continuous unbroken feeling of exalted serenity which exits quite independently of the senses. All the finest tendencies of character, which circumstances may have hitherto kept latent or only half-unfolded, are now able to manifest themselves in their fulness without hindrance. Although the earlier stages of insight's development enable a student to intuit reality in ascending degrees of clearness, the experience is a fitful one and necessarily followed by a recoil back into ordinary consciousness. The attainment of the fourth stage alone yields a permanent and unbroken realisation throughout his lifetime. The mind is now always poised and calm and ever-concentrated on the Real. It possesses the power to enter at any moment into itself and remain rapt and thought-free. His consciousness of the Real will be an unwavering one. His perception of the transiency and insufficiency of form will be equally unwavering. His satisfaction with experience of the Divine will make him feel complete in himself.

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exalted serenity which exists quite independently of the senses. All the finest tendencies of character, which circumstances may have hitherto kept latent or only half-unfolded, are now able to manifest themselves in their fullness without hindrance. Although the earlier stages of Insight's development enable a student to intuit reality in ascending degrees of clearness, the experience is a fitful one and necessarily followed by a recoil back into ordinary consciousness. The attainment of the fourth stage alone yields a permanent and unbroken realization throughout his lifetime. The mind is now always poised and calm and ever-concentrated on the Real. It possesses the power to enter at any moment into itself and remain rapt and through-free. His consciousness of the Real will be an unwavering one. His perception of the transitory and insufficiency of form will be equally unwavering. His satisfaction with experience of the Divine will make him feel complete in himself.

Nevertheless as the Absolute still remains a great Mystery even ~~since~~ though and when we have won our way through to its presence and stand in its Light. No human being ever becomes Godhead. His highest possible achievement is this, to stand in the Light of the Godhead. Thereby the whole universe becomes revealed to him as itself a divine thought. This is Insight.

Insight is something which cannot be communicated but must be personally realized. It is entirely experiential. The guru who claims as so many Indian gurus have claimed, that his mere wish for another's attainment can enduringly realize itself in him, is deceiving the other. It is a sure sign of such misleading doctrine when a guru declares that the path to realization leads to and through him alone. Just as no amount of instruction will show a man how to dream, for it must come naturally or not at all, so no amount of instruction will show a man the ultimate state. The experience must come spontaneously of itself. To expect spiritual attainment without having deserved it by his own exertions is as unreasonable as to expect engineering attainment without having worked with an engine. The personal favor of no master and no priest can grant it, whatever popular superstition or self-interested 'guides' may say to the contrary. The man who thinks that by wholly handing his life over to such a guru realization will come of itself one day without any or even a little effort on his own part, is going to receive a severe awakening. One great human delusion is that which fosters the desire to get something for nothing. The rich social parasite who is satisfied to contribute nothing but takes much from the common store merely because some family ancestor had once given something is one example, the religious devotee who expects, without any effort on his own part, some other man to give him God, is another. There are too many seekers in mystical circles who are waiting for a Master to appear on the horizon who will conveniently present them with what can only come as a result of their own endeavors.

A genuine teacher seeks to help the pupil unfold what is already within him; he does not pretent to perform a miracle. If any man could permanently lift another man into the Overself, if he could transfer his own consciousness of it to a second person, the ~~mask~~ feat would have been accomplished by all the great sages of the past and the history of mankind would have been quite different, and the present state of mankind would have been far superior. It has never been done because it can never be a gift. Only through the processes of biological evolution does a sperm grow into an adult human being and only through the processes of spiritual evolution does a man grow into a sage. There are no swift and sudden transformations. The transforming touch of grace will come at the right psychological moment of his history when it should come. Butthat moment is determined by a man's Overself, not by any other man however belauded a teacher or saint he may be.

However useful and helpful they admittedly are in their own place, teachers cannot bring anybody to the one thing that matters most, to the established realization of the Overself. That can be done only by God's grace and in God's time--not ours or theirs. No embodied intermediary can do it for anyone else, can bestow the one initiation which, because it yields a permanent conscious and unbroken communion henceforth, counts above all others. In the end instruction must come pure and undefiled by human limitations. No finite being can initiate man enduringly into the Infinite, only the Infinite itself

can do that. Truth is best studied at its source. The aspirant should indeed no longer desecrate the universality of the Overself by transposing its greatness and grandeur to earthly mortals, nor sully its pure spiritual nature by their anthropomorphic worship. Guruless, he must stand alone before God. For God's deputy, the Overself, is a real being whose presence can be felt, whose understanding and consciousness do exist and who possesses the power to respond. Hence his call will be heard, his prayer for help will not be uttered in vain if it is sincerely uttered.

If, however, spirituality cannot be carried from one man to another as we carry a suitcase, those who are sensitive may feel i s presence and power. It is however ~~im~~ possible for an attained master to give a devoted disciple a temporary glimpse of reality by imparting to him a momentary glimpse of the first stage of insight. This he does by telepathically quietening the disciple's thought processes and by deepening his emotional movement.

The philosophic goal cannot be achieved by mass production methods although the religious goal, may. Every individual must find his own peculiar path to it. He may find it with the help of another, of a teacher, but still it will and must be his own.

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The European thinkers who worked out the mentalistic basis of life with intellectual thoroughness were German, too. Kant, Schopenhauer, Hartmann, Hegel, Schiller and Fichte saw and taught that Mind was the primal reality and that the world was an idea in Mind. The first people to take up the study of Sanskrit literature on a more extensive scale than any other in Europe, were the Germans. Among the small company of scholars who patiently thumbed the old Indian books -- vehicle of the world's noblest and loftiest thoughts as they are -- during the previous century, they were pre-eminent. Max Muller, the most famous of all Orientalists, was a German. Yet the first people to violate every ethical principle of that literature on a more extensive scale than any other in Europe, were the Germans.

Why did the German people put the Nazi iron mask on their faces and follow Hitler so fervently and so long? It is not that they lacked intelligence but that they let their intelligence be guided by their baser qualities. The situation must not be over-simplified, however. It is complicated by the fact that the German people have for long had a divided mentality. On the one hand they are idealistic, fanatically eager to give themselves up to and for a cause, that is an Idea. But on the other hand, they are crudely materialistic; ready to sink down into narrow selfishness and brutal violence. There is a still deeper and consequently a more metaphysical explanation, however, tremendous contrast, as developed during our own times and that is demoniac psychic obsession. This will shortly be explained.

The Germans are a great people gone astray. We must hope that, like the prodigal son, they will sooner or later come back to the right path. But the historic fact is that they have gone astray too often within recent times. They provide a striking case of failure to comprehend the truth of collective race Karma and consequently to evaluate suffering rightly. What utter destitution, what pitiful starvation, what widespread ruin prevailed among the German masses during the years after the first World War. These self-earned karmic sufferings sought to etch into every German heart the futility and failure of aggressive war. Nevertheless, as dominated as it was by stiff-backed Prussian Junkers, the Army High Command saw in the tremendous miseries which afflicted Germany during the decade that followed the 1914 War not a lesson to be learned repentantly but a condition to be violently revenged by future victories, not a melancholy harvest of that war itself but a jumping-off ground for preparing a second war. Hitler, later utilized and magnified the High Command's spirit and sought to undo whatever had been gained of this valuable lesson, and tried to inspire the lust for further war in his impressionable fellow countrymen.

If Hitler succeeded in gaining a response to his demoniacal suggestions, this was partly because of the moral cowardice of the German people and partly because the German character itself always latently harbored, as the poet Heine pointed out, a bullying tendency and homicidal mania akin to his own, albeit in lesser degree. Hitler became their beloved Fuehrer because too many of them wanted him to be their Fuehrer. Hitler was the final consummation of a process which was started intellectually by State-paid Hegel and practically by State-ruling Bismarck.

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HITLER'S SPIRITISM AND THE GERMAN PEOPLE

The European thinkers who worked out the manifold basis of life with intellectual thoroughness were German, too. Kant, Schopenhauer, Hartmann, Hegel, Schiller and Fichte saw and taught that Mind was the primal reality and that the world was an idea in Mind. The first people to take up the study of Sanskrit literature on a more extensive scale than any other in Europe, were the Germans. Among the small company of scholars who patiently thumbed the old Indian books — vehicle of the world's most lofty and loftiest thoughts as they are — during the previous century, they were pre-eminent. Max Müller, the most famous of all Orientalists, was a German. Yet the first people to violate every ethical principle of that literature on a more extensive scale than any other in Europe, were the Germans.

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So far as Nazism merely sought the unscrupulous aggrandizement of a war-minded nation at the expense of the rest of Europe, it merely developed to an extreme degree seeds of thought previously sown in the German mind by academic metaphysicians like Fichte and Hegel. Hegel was the spiritual progenitor of Goebbels, Fichte the intellectual kinsman of Alfred Rosenberg. The academic intonings of these and other Prussian metaphysicians heralded the crude bawlings of Nazism. Hegel was a brilliant but wordy metaphysician who set up the absolute State as a sacred idol. Karl Marx got his leading ideas from Hegel, whom he revered and on whose teachings he was brought up. Thus we may trace Marxism to its ultimate source--not Russia, not Jewry, but Germany! Hegel asserted that the national Government was the will of God made actual and was therefore under no moral obligation to other Governments. He went farther still onthe downward path and proclaimed that war was necessary for settling problems between States and even desirable because constant peace corrupted a people! He asserted that the human race had reached its maturity in the German people alone and that the supreme manifestation of the Spirit was in the German State! Therefore, this was to receive man's highest worship.

Bismarck laid his plans for a Germany of competent warriors grown great at the expense of other nations and he did so with an ethical unscrupulousness and a practical efficiency which became the keynote of the ruling Junker class henceforth. France, Austria and Denmark were his first victims and if he did not have more, it was only because he did not live long enough to secure them.

Then came Nietszche's distorted semi-mysticism to set up before his educated countrymen the ideal of a barbaric Superman, and Oswald Spengler's distorted intellectualism which led them to draw the false lesson from history that man is always a beast of prey. Spengler taught them that militarism was the correct tune to harmonize with the world's mystical rhythm.

Just as Hitler, the screaming Devil of Berlin, raised the bogeys of bolshevism and Judaism to hide his real evil aims, so the Kaiser Wilhelm raised the bogey of the Orient to hide his own over-reaching ambitions. He drew a picture in which he himself was represented as the German Archangel Michael calling upon all Europe to defend its homes against the invented Eastern peril, represented by a Buddha figure in the midst of a sinister halo! He frequently likened himself to a hand of God, to one destined to carry out Jehovah's will on the European continent. He finally proclaimed to his people that "Nothing must be settled in this world without the intervention of the German Emperor," and set out to back his words by drenching Europe in blood and tears.

So we arrive at our own generation, when self-grown economic frustration and selfish ambition, self-earned personal misery and moral failure prompted different groups within Germany to accept totalitarianism. Then Hitler and his blood-stained hierarchy succeeded in imposing his rule not only on them, but also on those who didn't want them.

There was once quite a glamour, for many people, around the figures of dictators, a glamour which fascinated and deceived not a few who ought

to have known better. Only a few months before the war broke out, a German Countess, an educated spiritually-minded and travelled woman, wrote to me in these terms: "The Fuehrer is the Messiah for whom not only we Germans but most Europeans have been waiting. He will save us all from the menace of irreligious materialism." I read this statement with deep wonder at what had become of her intelligence. And in earlier years I had listened, albeit sceptically, to verbal eulogies of Benita Mussolini made by prominent English men of affairs.

Setting aside the homage which was given to Adolf Hitler because of reasons which are easy to understand although hard to admire, there remains a residue which could have been born only because of the confusion and vagueness which hung around a certain side of his personality, and which, in pre-war years, bred many illusions in the minds of many people, German and non-German, European and Asiatic alike. This was his open confession of surrender to supernatural guidance and to superpersonal inspiration. Indeed, anyone listening to his speeches for the first time, with their exaggerated claims and confident declamation, might have been forgiven for deriving the impression that his opinions were shared by God!

Before the course of war revealed his fullcharacter and disillusioned them accordingly, a legend raised its foolish head amongst many Indians that he was a yogi who had taken to politics and so they admired him accordingly. Other Indians in their morbid reverence even proclaimed him to be an Avatar, and Incarnation of Deity! Not a little of their error was due to the superstitious regard in which they held Hitler's flaunted asceticism. But the truth is that his asceticism was not genuine. He was no celibate even though he did not marry. Pauline Kobler's book, "I Was Hitler's Maid", alone offers sufficient evidence of this. But he took care to keep his sexual adventures remote frompublic knowledge. He did not eat meat because he thought it poisoned the body, certainly not because he felt pity for slaughtered animals as he ate fish every day with great gusto. He did not drink alcohol because he believed it would interfere with the efficiency of his work, not because of any spiritual effort at self-conquest. He did not smoke, first because he regarded smoking as physically unhealthy, and second because he had a physiological reaction of strong nausea to it; in fact, only one man was ever allowed to smoke in his presence. That man was British Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain and the occasion was the famous negotiation at Munich. Thus, these three renunciations were merely preoccupations with bodily welfare and not with ethical ideals; indeed, they were actually tokens of his materialism and not of his holiness.

But if Hitler was not a mystic, what then was he? For we have to face the fact that he certainly had some kind of supernatural guidence, some abnormal element in his mentality. This element he sometimes referred to privately as his subconscious mind and at other times as a magical insight but more often and quite publicly as plain Providence.

"I shall go my way with the assurance of a sleep-walker," he announced after his accession to the Chancellorship. When he spoke as

a medium, he could easily bewitch and capture a gullible audience. And this indeed was one of his secrets, that he was nothing less and certainly something more than what is called in the West a spiritualistic medium between this world and the next.

When Hitler told the world that he was the instrument of a higher power, which he variously called Providence, the Almight, and so on, he was not wholly deceiving the world. We need not deny that Hitler firmly believed in his own hidden intuitive and mediumistic powers and in the past ascribed much of his success to his readiness to follow their guidance despite the opposition of logic and circumstance. His consciousness of being the medium for some mysterious entity was an authentic one. He felt that this was actually so. When its inspiration was upon him he could move whole audiences and mould important individuals to his will. Where he did deceive others was in his naming this inspiring power as divine and not devilish, as good and not evil, as higher and not lower. The voice which Hitler heard was not that of Providence, as he loudly claimed, but of lying evil spirits.

It is a fact, although not a commonly known one, that the Fuehrer for years secretly cultivated the habit of going quite frequently into a passive semi-trance condition. Occasionally he used an enormously large crystal to induce such a condition. In this state he believed himself to be in communion with occult forces, with spirit 'controls', from whom he got both guidance and inspiration. To take counsel of the perverted forces that possessed him and to promote his inner communion through such trances with them, he built a glass-walled private retreat six thousand feet high on the snowy precipitous summit of Mount Kehlstein where, unlike his famous mountain resting place at Berchtesgaden, visitors were hardly ever permitted to enter. Thus he could remain in the virtual solitude which this communion required. To find the time for these solitary meditations, he left the largest possible amount of state work and party direction to his collaborators. Even as late as the last years of the war, when the pressures of military necessity upon his time became more tremendous than ever before, Hitler insisted upon being alone for at least an hour each day. And it was known to a number of his close associates that this solitude was used to satisfy his occult interests and to carry on his magical practices.

He was indeed the focal point for a gigantic influx of evil spirits into our world. Those who have scientifically engaged in psychical research, know that a psychological belt wherein a host of evil earth-bound spirits are congregated, surrounds this planet. Hitler drew his deepest inspiration from this dark infernal region. Yet! He was satanically driven, darkly obsessed. This condition was normally evidenced by his vacant fixedly-staring look as well as by his raving, maniacal shouts. When taking tea or dinner with a friend, he often sat for hours after arrival silently gazing into space. His foaming mouth when he raged against somebody during his public speeches, no less than the diabolical hatred which impregnated his eyes when he delivered them, also testified to the ugly fact that he was demoniacally obsessed.

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Psychical researchers are aware too that such obsessing entities become most active at night, as anyone may discover by watching the conduct of a possessed person. Hence, we need not be surprised to learn that Hitler habitually did his most important work when others were asleep. He plotted his diabolical crimes, planned his military campaigns and dictated his political, personal and staff letters during the hours around and after midnight.

To comprehend the mysterious side of Hitler's personality correctly, we must comprehend its twofold nature. Not only was he a negative agent for disembodied external forces, he was also a positive agent for his own embodied internal ones. For, contrary to most mediums, he possessed an extraordinary mesmeric influence on others. He combined in himself the rare dualities of negative medium and positive hypnotists. Thus, we witness the paradox that whilst his own feelings and thoughts were being passively swayed by disincarnate beings, he himself positively swayed the feelings and thoughts of millions of his countryfolk.

His close associate, Himmler, made the following statement in a reported interview shortly before he committed suicide: "I know that I am personally doomed. That does not bother me much. It have no illusions whatsoever. But I am convinced Hitler has supernatural powers." And again: "Hitler is supernatural--of that I am convinced." Himmler had nothing to gain by making such statements at such a time. Hitler must be accorded these powers. Indeed Himmler himself kept in his pay a group of students of occultism who delved for him into Rosicrucian, Masonic, Ceremonial Magic, and other dark mysteris. But what Himmler did not say or did not know was that they were the powers of a black magician and a demoniacally possessed medium. Hitler's feverish inner world, exceptional though it was in some ways, was not much different from that of witchcraft and diabolism in others. It is a fact that the late Neville Chamberlain told his friends privately of finding horrible pictures of creatures of the underworld painted on the walls of Berchtesgaden, when he visited Hitler in 1938. And if we are to consider him against the larger background of planetary war and crisis, Hitler was something immensely more important and therefore more dangerous to mankind. He was the shadow thrown by the light of a great coming events.

Those who could not look deeply into his soul did not understand what powerful forces were at work through him. They didnnot understand why a daughter of Lord Redesdale, Miss Unity Mitford, his English follower and close friend, was so mesmerized that she would seem like a woman in a trance when she spoke of him. Hitler was indeed a hypnotist who used his powers for such utterly selfish ends as to warrant the title of black magician. Despite his own contempt for ordinary literature, he got together at his Berchtesgaden home one of the largest collections in Europe of books dealing with occultism, magic and the development of supernormal powers. His agents abroad co-operated by command in forming this extraordinary library. The daughter of a former American ambassador to Berlin described her reaction to meeting Hitler. She pointed out that his eyes were his

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only distinctive feature and she noticed how startling they were. Now every neophyte in hypnotism knows that the eyes constitute the principal physical channel for this strange mental influence. Understanding this we may know why he used always to persuade the heads of other States to come to him so that he could deal personally with them rather than through ordinary diplomatic channels, as he persuaded the late Mr. Chamberlain, President Hacha of the Czech Republic, the late King Boris of Bulgaria and several others.

He possessed also an instinctive belief in astrology. He looked constantly to the planets for advice about the right timing of his major moves. He kept hidden in the background of his personal life a group of advisers who acquired considerably influence over his decisions. They were men and women who devoted their lives to the practice of astrology, crystal-gazing or black-magic. The one to whom he owed most of all, the one who for ten years preceding his rise to power in 1933 led him step by step did not evenlive to see the war. From the hour when he met Erich Hanussen and heard the prediction: "You will rule Germany and conquer Europe", Hitler made his political moves not when circumstances or political associates suggested he should make them, but when the favourable positions of his stars suggested them. Hanussen's advice, based usually on interpretations of Hitler's horoscope but sometimes on crystal gazing, was implicitly accepted and fanatically followed for several years. How much Hanussen did to give Hitler great faith in himself and confidence in his unique destiny, cannot be correctly estimated but it was more than the world suspects because Hanussen was something more than a fortune-teller. He also dabbled deeply in black magic. He was immensely ambitious and morally unscrupulous. He acquired such an ascendency over Hitler that the other Nazi leaders became madly jealous and when, in 1933, the Nazis became Germany's rulers, a squad of storm Troopers under orders from Count Von Helldorf and General Goering brutally murdered him.

The gap left by Hanussen's exit was filled by two persons— Elsbeth Ebertin and Rudoph Hess. Frau Ebertin owned several shops which circulated psychic books and occult periodicals. One day she too disappeared but her body was never found. Nobody knows whether she is alive or dead. Rudolph Hess fervently studied the predictive arts and took an intense interest in occultism. Consequently, the tie between Hitler and Hess became more intimate and more close than between him and any of the other Nazi leaders. Because of this intimacy, Hess was not only appointed Leader of the Nazi Party but also nominated by the Fuhrer as his successor. It was Hess who announced the date of Jupiter's transit across the Sun in Hitler's horoscope as being auspicious for a highly successful move and his chief turned his attack on France in 1940 accordingly. Hess was undoubtedly psychic and was so used by Hitler. "My job was to estimate public opinion for the Fuehrer," he confessed to

only distinctive feature and she noticed how startling they were. Now every neophyte in hypnotism knows that the eyes constitute the principal physical element for this strange mental influence. Understanding this we may know why he used always to persuade the heads of other States to come to him so that he could deal personally with them rather than through ordinary diplomatic channels, as he persuaded the late Mr. Chamberlain, President Hacha of the Czech Republic, the late King Boris of Bulgaria and several others.

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The gap left by Hanussen's exit was filled by two persons—Elsbeth Ebertin and Rudolph Hess. Frau Ebertin owned several shops which circulated psychic books and occult periodicals. One day she too disappeared but her body was never found. Nobody knows whether she is alive or dead. Rudolph Hess fervently studied the predictive arts and took an intense interest in occultism. Consequently, the tie between Hitler and Hess became more intimate and more close than between him and any of the other Nazi leaders. Because of this intimacy, Hess was not only appointed Leader of the Nazi Party but also nominated by the Fuehrer as his successor. It was Hess who announced the date of Jupiter's transit across the Sun in Hitler's horoscope as being auspicious for a highly successful move and his chief turned his attack on France in 1940 accordingly. Hess was undoubtedly psychic and was so used by Hitler. "My job was to estimate public opinion for the Fuehrer," he confessed to

his British captors during interrogation after his flight from Germany.

Hitler's junior partner, Mussolini, was at an early age acquainted with the Asiatic occult and mystical doctrines, but he flatly said that he did not want them because they were enervating to his ego. Again, when Rosita Forbes, the well-known traveller, once asked Mussolini, "Do you believe in God"? He answered, "No I do not believe in any power other than my own. If I did I should be smashed." On the other hand, he was interested, for the avowed object of developing his personal force, in the study and practice of Tantrika yoga. This is a system of yoga which originated in Bengal but is now prevalent chiefly in Tibet. It easily becomes an instrument to serve overweening ambitions or unscrupulous lusts. In Mussolini's case it certainly did so and its treading only strengthened his capacity to hurt both himself and mankind.

Hitler was used not unwittingly but quite consciously as a channel for an influx of devilish entities from the unseen world. His claims to supernatural guidance from God were the expression for a gullible public of this secret communion with satanic beings. Through him the German race shared a terrible mental experience. It was awful, it was dramatic—this wholesale surrender of an entire nation's mind not only to a single evil monomaniacal passion, but also to a host of evil spirits submission to whom is technically known to psychical researchers as obsession.

He opened up the nether world to unheard-of dimensions as he opened the gates of our own world to an influx of the foulest spirit-entities. Through him mankind suffered the invasion of a host of invisible, demoniac creatures of the worst kind. Out of the degraded depths of the mental underworld wherein they had long lurked, these hideous monstrosities emerged to prey on an unwary planet. It was they who supported Hitler, who gave him strength, boldness and almost superhuman power. Such an irruption was not unexpected.

You had only to look into the frighteningly sinister face of a Himmler, the cunningly insincere face of Goebbels, the insanely earnest face of a Hess, and the incredibly stony or monstrously cruel faces of a hundred lesser Nazi leaders - all denuded of any decent human expression as they were - to see that the men themselves had been veritably caught and held by demons from foul regions of the netherworld. So eminent an Indian Yogi as Sri Aurobindo Ghose, the sage of Pondicherry, held the same view very strongly. These spirits, for whom Hitler was a super-medium, possessed neither conscience nor sense of truth. They were crafty, lying and deceitful. Hence, we need not be surprised that Hitler himself never heard the voice of conscience, never felt any sense of what is right or wrong. He himself once blatantly brazened forth the frank but ignoble admission that the only moral code which existed for him was that of success or failure. Anything that assisted him to get what he wanted was ethically good; anything that hindered him from doing so was ethically evil! It is for this reason that he became the most notorious liar in the contemporary public life of our planet. He would say anything—even the most elephantine exaggeration—that would be profitable to say but was just as ready to deny

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it the next moment if it was then still more profitable to do so. In his mouth the very function of language became a perverted one. All this should evidence evento the layman the evil character of the forces which possessed him and influenced them.

The Nazis made it their business not only to drag other people's bodies down to enslavement but also to drag their minds down to the gutter. For their cunning propaganda strove to create, stimulate or spread materialism, doubt, suspicions, treachery, dislike, greed, malice, hatred, bitterness and strife amongst mankind throughout the world. Whereas all the great prophets like Jesus and Krishna made a religion out of love, Hitler made a religion out of hatred. The Nazi movement was a demonist one, the Nazi way of like an inhuman one. The war was the struggle of unseen powers of Light against Darkness. Upon its physical outcome depended whether mankind was to sink into terrible materialism or rise to spiritual progress. The ideological differences between the democratic peoples and the Axis group were so sharp that there could be no compromise.

Hitler was Anti-Christ and Anti-Krishna. A worthy son of Satan, he won too many over to a new-old religion of untruth and hatred, which he falsely symbolised by the once-beloved but the now-dreaded double cross of Swastika. Through him Satan brooded over Berlin. Because woman can love more intensely than man, she can also swing backwards and hate more intensely. That is partly why, when the ground had to be broken, Hitler, the apostle of the Gospel of Hatred, found most converts among the German women of all ages, and the next largest number among the young men. "Keep your people in such a fanatically devoted and receptive mood," he once advised an associate, "that all your words will be mesmeric; then neither facts nor reason can prevail against them." It was easy even then to foresee that he would lead such followers through paths of dishonour and degradation to sheer suicide. Yet they were too blinded by their passions and selfishness to see where they were going. If the German masses followed Hitler as though they were a lot of dumb cattle and not thinking human beings, it was not because they, like their leader, had no conscience but because too many of them had perverted their conscience. Confronted by an inner evolutionary cross-roads, they tried to turn backwards along an outworn road which belonged to the primitive era of the cave-man. If thanks were at first to Hitler economically destitute, the price they paid was worse still, for he left them ethically destitute. No consideration of human kindness or human fellowship was allowed to interfere with the thoroughness of their leader's preparations for conquering an entire continent. No ethical scruple or kindling of conscience was permitted to weaken their mad worship of themselves or corrode their equally insane belief that might is the only right. In their Fascist frenzy they became the most dangerous people on earth because, to these disregards of ethical canons, they added the power of efficient military organization, the skill of advanced industrial technique, the strength of applied science, the cunning of developed intellect and the concentration of neurotic hatred.

But this said, let us not forget that however directly responsible Germany was for the war, the fact of world inter-dependence prevents us from claiming snow-white innocence for ourselves. It is a surface view which blames thewar only upon the deeds of certain individual men. The war was

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also the culmination of a world crisis, of a larger international tension which had developed during a number of years. The phenomenon of Fascism was thrown up by this tension. Hitler was but its concentrated expression, its supreme voice. The disappearance of leading Nazis does not necessarily mean the disappearance of the Nazi doctrines which they personified. These doctrines arose out of bad religious, intellectual, moral, economic and political conditions. The rectification and improvement of such conditions is an essential element inthe work of purifying modern society of its Nazi poison.

The wealthy German industrialists who financed Hitler thought they would thereby exercise the wraith of bolshevism which hung over Germany as well as make large profits out of new armaments policy. But they started something which, like a terrible Frankenstein, they could not control and Hitler in turn started a European war thinking he would become the European overlord. He in turn thus raised another and even worse Frankenstein and would fain have called for peace but his enemies were no longer willing to grant it. So his henchman Goebbels had to make this terrible admission at the end of 1942: "We could not stop now, even if we wanted to.

Behind it all lay the dramatic fact that the Germans were driven by a leader who was the most obsessed person in recorded history. Evil lying spirits used Hitler as their medium and through him influenced his people. This diabolic drama which was enacted on a patch of the earth's surface was really the reflection of a terrible struggle in the unseen world, a struggle referred to more lengthily in "The Wisdom of the Overself." And the only remedy for the obsessed condition of Hitler's followers was--bloodshed! Faust, the learned wizard in Goethe's drama, rightly observed, "Blood is a peculiar fluid." It was not for nothing that blood sacrifices were such a prominent feature of old-time magical rites or animal sacrifices such an important one of old-time religious rites. There is an intimate connection between blood and the emotions. A colossal blood sacrifice became necessary to violently to shatter the occult spell and quickly to purge the ferocious fanaticism of the Nazis. Their blood had indeed to be spilt on a vast scale. Therefore, from the time that Hitler was beguiled by his spirits to make his monumental mistake and invade Russia, the German armies suffered such colossal casualties that they steadily bled to death. In this way, Europe began to be partially drained of this sinister psychic foulness.

It is true that Hitler's invasion of Russia was not altogether the mistake it seemed to be. For it was also an act of desperation. Russia was rapibly building up her military forces at such a rate that Hitler perceived he had to strike soon or later would be too late. Nevertheless the fact remains that he did make one gigantic mistake. His lying obsessing entities promised him a seven weeks' lightning dash to Moscow and victory at the end of it. Instead they led him into a deadly trap. Out of the Russian adventure was born the beginning of the end of his regime. Both leader and led, being ignorant of karma, did not comprehend that with every aggressive step the Nazi armies took outside Germany, they were marching farther and farther away from true safety. This was true, not only in a military sense but also in a moral sense. Just as they got farther and

farther from their base and more and more exhausted as they spread themselves out across Europe and North Africa so they were preparing a worse and worse karmic retribution for themselves with every step taken into other lands. What divinely ~~ordained~~ worshippers did not know was that the world is brought upon their country sharply illustrates the danger in which a great nation puts itself when it credulously entrusts its guidance to a man so utterly devoid of goodness.

When a combination of militarists, lunatics, gangsters and demon-possessed persons are allowed in any country to predominate in the seats of power, as was the case with Nazi Germany, be assured that that country is headedfor disaster. The victory of Hitler would have meant the defeat of truth, goodness, human worth. Could those who followed him so fervently have glimpsed history beneath the surface, they would have recognized in him their own worst enemy. They failed to perceive that the Nazis were a passing phenomenon, that their misdeeds would find them out and that a dictator like Hitler, being only a glorified gangster, would ultimately meet a gangster's doom. Insofar as they adapted themselves to the Nazi credo of intellectual savagery, exaggerated nationalismand selfish aggression—so low had the countrymen of romantic Schiller and philosophis Schopenhauer fallen—they incurred a hard penalty. Hitler, luring them through a vain-glorious pride, first exploited bad economic conditions both to establish his own power and to create international tension, then used both their unworthy passion and their short-sighted prejudice to satisfy his own diseased psychosis of world domination. Such moral aberrations pass but they must be paid for. Humiliation and failure are but part of the price they had to pay for return to a more righteous path. The progress which he promised his people led them first into a vast prison and then into costly war.

Although Hitler unwittingly helped to break up the old order of things, in many ways he never destined to inaugurate the new one. Other hands than his and other methods than Nazism will construct the coming civilization. The bewitchment of a whole nation is drawing to a dramatic end. The self-styled Saviour of the Aryan race finally needed to save himself. He who conquered nearly all Europe was himself conquered by a power before which he was as helpless as a babe—the power of divine retribution. The harvest of aggressive war has been gathered in. The memory of slain relatives and the sight of crippled ones is there to teach them certain lessons. Only the fanatic and the ruthless will refuse to absorb these lessons and will see in those very sufferings a stimulant to revenge, an inducement to plot secretly or openly for a further war.

There are three main groups inside the Reich's frontiers. (1) Those who loved what Hitler stood for; (2) Those who hated it: (3) those who neither loved nor hated it. With the first group may be counted the thoroughly convinced, violent Nazis, the proud Prussian Junkers, the arrogant, chauvinistic officer caste and those pseudo-communists who discarded their principles overnight and joyfully joined in following Hitler along what promised to be a successful path of national aggrandizement. With the second group may be counted the sincere trade unionists with an international outlook and the intelligentsia with a liberal one, the communists who never ceased to regard Hitler as the enemy of the proletariat and the pious Christians who never ceased to regard Hitler as the enemy of Christ. With the third group may be counted those who stood between the two camps, a large middle and muddled host of mentally sick and emotionally gullible folk

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out of economic despair of or spiritual disheartenment thrust conscience aside, and turned towards Hitler. Thus the first were men of violence, the second, men of goodwill, the third, men of weak character.

Those Germans who fall into the second group include many who have spent years in concentration camps as well as many who did not follow Hitler inwardly, although they were compelled by his gangster distatorship to do so outwardly. They were among the millions who voted against him at the elections before he seized power. Many of them were quite helpless under the Gestapo and had to do what they were told. They should be singled out to replace the others in all official posts, public offices and organizational superintendence, so that they may become the shepherds to lead their nation back to the paths of rectitude, morality and restitution. They should receive all the practical and moral encouragement we can give them in their great task.

Those who fall into the third group - and they number at least half of all the people - present a problem which is more confused and less straightforward than the others. The particular lesson which they have to learn is that acquiescence in brutality and aggressiveness does not pay in the end any more than the perpetration of such crimes themselves. Nevertheless, although a people which acquiesces in the deeds of its rulers has to share the karma of those deeds, it need not necessarily share all the karma. They should make some reparation to those they have robbed, ruined or mutilated. But if we put them in a position where they will have nothing else to look forward to except a whole generation of starvation, then in their desperation they will just as certainly rise again and seek to destroy all Europe alongside of themselves. Therefore, remembering Versailles and its aftermath, we must temper natural desire to punish them adequately with a wise mercy, which need not be stretched too far but must not be stretched too little.

We must not forget that they are mostly the unfortunate, although not unwilling, dupes who allowed themselves to be carried away by a colossal hypnotic feat. Hence, they too are in a lesser sense Hitler's victims like other Europeans. The middle-aged and elderly among them had no enthusiasm for the war. They suffered to some extent from a guilty conscience and had also memories of a long series of victorious battles in World War I which led only to final defeat. If this second defeat has brought them to the discovery that they had been living for years under the leadership of liars, lunatics and criminals, and if suffering has been taken to heart and wrung a reluctant repentance from them, then we may deal more tolerantly with them, without however giving them the rewards and prerogatives which should be given to members of the second group. We should not be too cruel to them and we need not be too kind. In the final test, they may show by their own words and actions during the next decade whether they honestly with to enter the path of reconciliation. Their last yet first hope is to purify themselves by sacrifice and to make restitution - either physical or verbal - to those they have wronged. Every German who is not curable must be prevented from using any of the available means of influencing public opnion. We must try to purge their minds of Nazi tendencies and lead them to a better road. We must make it clear that not revenge nor even punishment alone but rather re-education for European citizenship is our inspiration.

What have they learnt from the tremendous vicissitudes of the

twelve-year Hitler regime, with its dizzy heights of early success and dismal humiliations of utter collapse. What have they read in the transciency of the success and in the finality of the collapse? After World War I, the more intelligent Germans of the middle classes, disillusioned by defeat, were swept by waves of pessimism which, in the case of some found expression in a search for mystical consolation, occult experience and prophetic messages and a search for violent sensualism in the case of many others. It is interesting to recall here that Dr. Neumann's "Reden des Gotamos", a translation of the many of the Buddha's sayings, lay in manuscript for over thirty years because it could not find a publisher. Then, in 1919, this lengthy volume was published in Berlin and immediately became a best seller. There was at the same time a wave of interest in Eastern wisdom and Oriental thought among the intelligentsia. But when economic conditions improved, in a few years most of the interest fell away. It was the drastic shock of defeat and its miserable aftermath that awakened them to this search for consolation. The external collapse led to an inner one. Buddhism, with its highly ascetic outlook, its over-emphasis on suffering, its denial of earthly hope, could offer this ruined people only an inward peace at most. Yet the intellectual elements among them clutched at it in their despair.

Again when Rabindranath Tagore visited Europe in 1921 bringing, as he himself said, the spiritual message of the East to the West, it was in Germany that he achieved a sensational success; it was in Germany that his lectures and writing gained an appreciation tremendously greater than they gained anywhere else. During that year nearly a million copies of his translated books were sold and there were always many more applicants than seats at his lectures. It is noteworthy, however, that this response developed chiefly in the German middle classes, the same classes who a dozen years later bestowed their devotion upon Hitler!

That some groups of middle-aged and elderly German men and women are taking to sincere forms of religion and, inlesser numbers, to mysticism, whether Eastern or Western, for consolation is again true. Through this they may be led to experience an inner change and become truly repentant about their country's war guilt. Hence, none should be happier than ourselves if they were to become morally awake. For then, indeed, we could rejoice with them. Jesus said: "Rejoise with me, for I have found my sheep which was lost. I say unto you, that even so there shall be joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine righteous persons, which need no repentance." Let us not forget these words. If it is possible for every embodied being to attain the knowledge of its own inherent divinity, as it certainly is, then it is possible for every German to do so. We must recognize the indisputable fact that in turning to Hitler as a saviour, millions of Germans were actuated by a vague belief in pseudo-mysticism. They had the right tendency turned in the wrong direction. If their suffering purify them sufficiently, they might now be readier for less ambiguous belief in a true mysticism. The Higher Self, speaking through its sympolic mouthpiece, Krishna, in the "Bhagavad Gita," says: "If one, even of demonistic conduct, were to be entirely devoted to me, he should be considered as a holy one treading the path of Yoga. Soon he comes to know truth and then attains to peace."

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this doctrine as being the best that mysticism has to offer. Quite correctly this metaphysic proclaimed that man attained his higher goal when he came to recognize his true being as rooted or identical with in the Absolute being. Quite incorrectly, however, through losing itself in queer and questionable logical abstractions it converted the individual Self into a pale fiction and the physical world into a grotesque hallucination.. The truth is that neither is the one a fiction nor the other a hallucination, but both are a manifestation. However insufficiently, the Real reveals itself in them It cannot be sundered from them.

The doctrine of world illusion is a stumbling block to most western students and this is understandable. Many Indians themselves expound this remarkable doctrine in a manner so airy and in a speech so glib that one feels intuitively it is only a bit of verbiage to them. A courageous and penetrating few have grasped the true thought of their masters; the rest repeat words and sentences like so many parrots. When we inquire as to what is the highest wisdom attained by Oriental sages, we are informed by many metaphysicians and several mystics that it consists in regarding a mysterious entity, Spirit, as the only reality and the universe itself as a mere illusion. When we ask them how this illusion originated they reply that because this entity alone exists there are no individuals in existence and consequently nobody to be caught in illusion! When, further we ask them what is the purpose of human existence, they answer that it is to discover reality; yet in the same breath they say that reality is totally unrelated to the universe and consequently to such existence! Nor is the current western religious belief that this world is principally a material one with a sort of incidental spiritual 'ghost' somewhere inside it any better. It is only one step less materialistic than the atheistic belief that there is no other world at all.

A doctrine which says that the Perfect alone exists, that the Absolute alone is real, that the universe is illusory and that our knowledge of it is false--such a doctrine unconsciously and unsatisfactorily commits itself to the conclusion that the Godhead is eternally engaged in the act of self-deception! This doctrine which makes the world non-existent, is a false conclusion reached by confused rational thinking or obscure mystical feeling, although drawn from the undeniable fact that the testimony of the senses is sometimes refuted by the testimony of reason. Nevertheless the idea-intoxicated metaphysician or self-deceived mystic who dismisses it as an ungrounded illusion does not dismiss himself thereby. He too is a part of this illusion. Yet he continues to treat himself as a reality. Such inconsistency would alone show the futility of his efforts and the illogicality of his thinking.

Those among the Greek, the Alexandrian and the Indian mystical metaphysicians who opposed the reality of spirit to the illusion of Matter were unable to explain how the two could be unified. Consequently, they placed the former on a pinnacle separated by an uncrossable chasm from the creative Universal Soul, from the material world and from the individual soul. All their ingenious explanations of existence either stopped at the edge of this chasm and there left the Absolute as an inexplicable mystery with whom the Relative had nothing to do or left the manifested world as a purposeless creation drifting like a mist in mid-air. Only one bridge can be built across this chasm and only mentalism can build it.

We have seen that 'matter' is non-existent and we know that thoughts are transient. What is it then that we are dealing with as the stuff of our personal world experience? Mentalism answers that it is the permanent essence of all thoughts, that it is Mind. This discovery is as far as we can get when searching inwards. Mind-essence

(1) It is not surprising that when mystics in East and West come to regard as their loftiest widdom a metaphysic which statically perched on an altitude of the most abstractly conceived ideas, which is void of human relations and human interest, and which disdains the entire world as being non-existent, they also come to be regarded by the critics of mysticism as impractical dreamers. The consequences of such a degeneration are serious. Men with brains put hem to no better use than wasting whole lifetimes in interminable discussions of a purely logical character, discussions which were devoid on one hand of human colouring and divorced on the other

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this doctrine as being the best that mysticism has to offer. Quite correctly this metaphysic proclaimed that man attained his higher goal when he came to recognize his true being as rooted or identical with the Absolute being. Quite incorrectly, however, through losing itself in queer and questionable logical abstractions it converted the individual self into a pale fiction and the physical world into a grotesque hallucination.. The truth is that neither is the one a fiction nor the other a hallucination, but both are a manifestation. However inevitably, the Real reveals itself in them it cannot be sundered from them.

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is the irreducible ultimate reality. It is itself empty of all forms, void of all individualization. But we have also to search outwards. And then, when we are able to see that it does not make any intrinsic difference to itself whether it be known as transient thoughts or as enduring Thought so long as it is always perceived as present, we see aright. The world is as appearance if it be viewed as a process but it is the uniquely Real if viewed as a single substance.

When first the truth dawns on us that this mysterious all-enclosing yet paradoxically all-excluding Void is the Real; when second its blessed presence is felt as something living within us in all states and times and places and not merely in meditation alone; when third we see the universe in its Cause and its Cause in the universe, Matter in Spirit and Spirit in Matter, the two at once, we are said to possess insight. We then perceive that the broad brown earth, covered with green stuff and rolling through hills and valleys, is not less real in substance than the Void, not less divine in essence than even though its form bent but a mental image which must pass away. We feel that it is a part of the mysterious Whole, a part which can in no wise be separated from that which sustains and cherishes it. Thus we learn now only that there is no reality independent of Mind and no ultimate being apart from our own innermost egoless self, but also that there exists no formed thing in our external experience which does not get its essential being from the same source whence we derive our own.

The impenetrable and enigmatic problem of how the Absolute became the Relative is a manufactured one. It exists only in a wordy realm of a logic divorced from fact, of a metaphysic which has set up an artificial opposition between Spirit and Matter because it did not know that these were merely Mind and its Idea. For if we intellectually throw everything into Mind, we discover at once the unifying principle which can neatly contain them without doing violence to its own integrity. Mind thus becomes the first principle of all existence and, paradoxically, the last too. The ego and the Ego's world are ideas of the Overself and the Overself in its turn is a ray of the Mind. Just as the sun appears to have split itself up into millions of rays but nevertheless remains the same single sun that it was before; so the ineffable Mind cannot be separated into parts, except in appearance and cannot be divided into individual entities except in human thinking about it. He who believes that Mind has ever lost anything by this self-giving, has ever become less than it ever was, does not comprehend it. It always keeps its pristine undivided and integral character. We humans are in essence divine souls radiated from that central sun—a simile which is useful to help our thinking minds grasp in the only way they can both the intimacy and immediacy of our inner reality. We are sharers in the reflection of its glorious light.

The One does not become the Many, for the orders of being and consciousness are different. It remains what it is and from it emanates the Many. The universe is much more an emanation than a

manifestation. Because it is an emanation rather than an illusion, the world-idea is not to be treated as an non-entity. It is not to be sharply divided from reality. For it is the Real manifesting something of itself in a particular way. All events are only its activity as all things are only its attributes. Relativity exists between the ideas themselves but the substratum out of which they spring is the eternal and infinite, the self-existent and Absolute Mind. Matter thus becomes but a mental entity. The Absolute is not cleft inseparably from the Relative for the relative is its own Idea. Mind itself is that which has always existed, which is the unique essence of all things and all beings, the first and last Principle of the world process. We may say of it what we may say of nothing else except Infinite Space: It IS. And this will still be true even if the whole universe, including the conscious beings in it, disappears. Mind could not have come into existence at any specific time as it could not have come into existence from nothing; therefore, it must always have existed and there was never a moment when it was not.

By contrast both our thoughts and the world which is inseparably associated with them, are transient and changeful. But the mind which makes their appearance possible, is not. It alone can stand the supreme test of ultimate reality, the test whether it is changeless and ever-enduring. Whatever is real can never perish. Whatever is only an emanation from the real will lose its form but nevertheless will not lose its essence. If it be true that the Godhead transcends all finite things nevertheless it is inseparably immanent in them and is indeed the very foundation of their existence. As if this cosmos could lie outside the force whence it arose, or the force outside the cosmos. They are not really two things but two aspects of one thing. it is not that the world is non-existent. it is a thought and has mental existence. Our natural desire to be assured of our own and the world's existence, no less than of life's utility is satisfied by the truth. Thus the world-problem that eluded these metaphysicians and mystics, is smoothly elucidated by mentalism. But to achieve this success we must first clearly understand that mentalism is not merely the same as idealism but is a fuller doctrine. For whereas the latter would convert everything into separate ideas and leave the world as such, the former would convert them into ideas only to unify them again into this single stuff--Mind.

The Real and its appearance are the same thing seen from different sides. After all, the innumerable subjects in the latter are formed by a process of thought, which is a power belonging to the former. We cannot do violence to the world's existence by dismissing it as unreal. It is only an incomplete mysticism or an unillumined merely intellectual metaphysics and not insight-based philosophy that attempts to do so. Philosophy, by dissolving the world's plurality into unity, reveals that it is ultimately made of the same stuff as its eternal ground. All the different space-time levels of the universe are interpenetrated by Mind. Therefore all worlds are one. Those who live in a particular space-time level will naturally have a different form of consciousness from those who live in another one. Consequently there can be--and are-- numerous forms of consciousness, each one representing a world to its inhabitants. But the ultimate 'stuff' of these worlds is one and the same -- Mind -- only the modes of apprehending it change from one space-time level to another. Each world is

real in experience of those in it, although vastly different from the others.

No world is an illusion for every world is spun out of God's own being, but our particular space-time mode of experiencing, knowing that world is illusory. The world appearance is real enough to those who have to live in it. Therefore the true position is not between it as illusion and something transcendental as reality but between appearance and its hidden ground. Thus when we expand our understanding of the physical world we discover that it too is divine. So long as the myth of multiplicity holds sway over our mind, so long will we be confounded and bewildered. We must turn to the truth: Unity. There is nothing but Mind.

When we can grasp this concept, that Mind is the only reality and that all else is but its appearance or manifestation, and when we grasp the corollary of this concept, that man himself is fundamentally rooted in Mind; we may then proceed to the further step that if human existence has any ultimate aim at all, it can only be to demonstrate the oneness of being and to enter consciously into its own hidden truth. Thus our final finding must be not that the world is an illusion nor that it is unreal but that its externality to mind is illusory and its independence of our own self is unreal. It does not exist in its own right. That stable reality which we believe is in things but believe wrongly to be in their sense-experienced existence, actually resides therefore in the universal mind which manifests itself in them. Consequently our total impression of the world's reality is not illusory but it is misplaced. If we would lay hold of this reality in the right way we must rise above the level of sensed perceptions and attain the level of the one all-unifying universal Mind behind them.

This mentalist appraisal of the nature of the wakeful world of so-called illusion and this realist appraisal of its worth are not Western alone. Thousands of years ago, some wise initiated commentators on "Mandukya Upanishad", including the most ancient of all, Gaudapada, followed the same line. The teaching of the old Eastern masters was that the world does not exist except through the Self; therefore they called the whole created universe 'maya', a world which we translate badly as illusion but whose true meaning can be got at only by pondering over mentalism. They pointed out that our first and natural instinct is to accept the external world as the final reality, but since that world requires a conscious self to witness it and to receive the reports of the sense organs concerning its existence, the ultimate reality was then this conscious witnessing self. This declaration did not destroy the first acceptance of external reality; it simply supplemented and deependd it. The Mentalist doctrine of maya explains that if we are not aware of the world, then the world has no real existence <u>for us</u>. Those last two words need treble underlining, for most people conveniently forget them or stupidly ignore them. Consciousness is thus shown to be the basic reality. Hence the 'Upanishad' verse: "In me arose the whole world:
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that all existence is mere illusion, represent the lamentable result of the impact of the full truth upon half-prepared minds.

If these views were ever to be carried into practical life, they would smite their holders with complete paralysis. The intellect would cease to move, the heart to feel and the body to act. But whatever may have been the case in ancient or medieval times, if we look into the practical life of their present-day advocates, we find that all this talk of a futile Absolute eternally divorced from a meaningless universe is mere syllogistic jugglery and logical bymnastics, for they usually take as much interest in securing 'illusory' earthly benefits for themselves as do the much-despised realists. Whilst they insist for the benefit of other persons on the nothingness of the common world, actually they show no less insistence than others in treating it in terms of the utmost reality. This is an evidence of the uselessness of a metaphysic divorced from mystical science and of the danger of exaggerating a single aspect of existence at the cost of all the others. In any case it is clear enough that the only reasonable goal of one who sincerely follows out the consequences of all such teaching is to renounce the active world and become a carefree lotus-eater or a body-hating monk or a self-centred dreamer.

Such a complete splitting of life from wisdom, of truth from experience, as is represented by the basic doctrine of this so-called 'highest' wisdom is not likely to be acceptable to the West as a contribution from the East. Fortunately this teaching is not worthy of the title. In the East's own hidden teaching lies a superior doctrine which satisfies alike both the demands of reason, the dictates of the heart, the promptings of intuition and the needs of practical activity. Whilst is rigorously refuses to accept the finality and errorsof sense-experience, it does not pessimistically alienate man from the ultimate values of such experience. There is no rest, no peace, no truth, no life even, certainly no happiness, while we cling to the phenomenal passing show for its own sake; but there is final peace and complete fulfillment when we can accept it as a fleeting manifestation of the deathless Real. Then you can convert all things and all creatures into thoughts, and the myriad of thoughts into their single element, mind, and mind into its unmanifest, un-individuated infinite essence or reality, Mind. You arise to a region where death is a fiction and suffering a phase that will pass. This is God, Nirvana, Overself--any name you wish to give it although no name can ever reach it. It is not to be thought of as a second thing apart from yourself, but as your very being. We are here on earth to find that.

This quest cannot be finished merely by an intellectualist abstraction of what is though to be real from our of what are thought to be the illusions of the terrestrial sphere, and certainly not by ascetic flight from them. It can come to a last terminus only when insight into the real is gained from and amid the fullest activity in the terrestrial sphere itself.

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think of it under two aspects: the ever-resting and the ever-working and under two forms: stillness and motion. Nor can we stop our understanding of this great truth at this point. For if we want to live more truly in accordance with the way in which the life of God itself is lived, if we aspire to imitate the divine existence so far and so humbly as we dare, then we too must bring our little lives into this same two-fold rhythm of quiescent stillness and busy activity, of inward contemplation and outward struggle, of self-regarding satisfaction and altruistic service.

This remembrance of and concentration on the silent void whilst engaged in the midst of bustling activity is admittedly not easy and requires nothing less than genius for its successful consummation. It is called in the Chinese hidden teaching "wu wei". An adulterated fragment of this teaching exists in Lao Tsu's little text entitled Tao Teh King and the phrase is usefully translated as meaning 'non-doing' or 'inaction'. Both western and Eastern Mystics have erroneously thought this means to refrain from action by living in monastic retret. The correct meaning is the inner realization of the basic voidness, the immateriality of existence, whilst outwardly taking that materiality as real for practical purposes. To practice inaction, in the sense in which it has been used in Oriental mystical works like the Bhagavad Gita and the Tao Teh King, does not mean physical inertia. This is a materialistic misapprehension. It means to effect an entrance into the Void and then to carry the sense of its emptiness into the very midst of activity, into the heart of physical existence. We have to comprehend that despite appearances the hidden teaching does not lead to utter nihilism or to blank negativism but rather to what is most real in life. Hence if most mystics envisage their ultimate physical goal as a state of inspired inactivity, all philosophers envisage their ultimate physical goal as a state of inspired action.

If it be true that we all live and move and have our being in the Infinite Mind, it must be equally true that the presence of that Mind is not confined to any Oriental ashrâm, mountain cave or cloistered retreat. It is here in London, here in Chicago and here in Chungking too. It is just as much here in the midst of Broadway's bustle and London's teeming life as it is in any far-off Tibetan monastery. If we could not find it whilst attending to our everyday practical interests, if it were utterly outside and forever beyond them, then it would not be the Real. If the start of outward activity annuls the inward peace, then the true transcendence has not been found. When we understand that this world is a manifestation of divine reality itself, then this earthly life is emphatically not a trap set by Satan, as some believe, nor a mirage made of cloud, as others say. It is not only something which does matter but on the contrary something which must matter even more to the truth-finder than it does to the materialist.

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finite world and the finite human life. Therefore, we do not need run away from the familiar world but we do need to see it by a diviner light, to experience not only its obvious transiency and multiplicity but also its hidden eternality and unity. For each man findswhat he is looking for and the world is a mirror of his own self. The frog is lured to grovel in the mud surrounding a lotus whereas the butterfly is lured by the fragrance to the flower itself. Let no one believe that the philosophic student effects this adjustment merely as a concession to a compulsive environment. He perceives quite clearly that the lotus-flower of reality which looks so lovely in the sunshine cannot be separated fromthe roots which look so ugly in the black muddy slime. Philosophy does not stand aside from human needs. It does not remain unrelated to human values.

THE GENESIS OF OUR JOURNAL

With the opening of its first issue, I explain why this journal came into being and proclaim what objectives it has made its own.

For several years I amused myself scribbling mystical books to bore materialistical people and playing with queer thoughts which were thrown up into the air and caught on the tip of my pen. The consequence was quite unforeseen. Letters came to me in a thin but ever-increasing and never-stopping stream from people who took more than a literary interest in these matters. They asked questions, raised problems, expressed criticism, offered praise or described experiences. I had to attend to a growing correspondence from both strangers and friends all over the world, which accumulated in quantity until it became formidable and forbidding. These letters were perforce frequently neglected in favour of more urgent matters or often left unanswered for long intervals.

To most authors letter-writing is an unwelcome task. "Ask a carpenter to plane planks just for fun," complained one of them. Alas! I have not yet attained -- although I still humbly try to attain -- the sublime patience of French Fenelon, the distinguished courtier, clever ecclesiastic and religious mystic, who was sent into disgrace through the misunderstanding and envy he had incurred, and who gave himself unwearyingly to the multitude of letters sent to him by pious persons. He unfailingly and promptly answered each one, saying "I had rather die, than fail a soul sent me by God." Not that I disliked receiving and reading letters. The very contrary was the case. I perused them attentively and found them full of human interest. It was only the labour of constructing written replies that weighed heavily on me. And having found a little light in the dark forest of life I knew I ought not to grudge a few rays for those who were almost lightless. I realised reluctantly that I must accept a permanent and unending correspondence as a part of life. I did what I could, therefore, making my answers so brief and often so belated that many correspondents wrote me down as impolite. Thus a certain number of letters managed to trickle out of the typewriter, especially when the latter trembled with shame or when an occasional assistant became sufficiently alarmed to draw attention, with a worried look on his face, to the state of extreme neglect into which correspondence had fallen!

Other correspondents requested an interview and where these were granted it became my destined lot to receive and respect numerous confidences from persons who ranged in character all the way from crook to saint. Hundreds asked me, at interviews or in letters, for counsel in their distresses, light in their perplexities and guidance in their quest. Whatever my little store of experience and knowledge contained, I freely gave out of it to those who came in sincerity what counsel I could and answered their questions, speaking as truth bade me, not as I preferred or my interlocutor desired. But the pressure of deeper, wider and more important activities eventually came to absorb so much time as to compel me to abandon this practice of granting interviews and, in the interests of greater service, to become inaccessible to the general public. This personal aloofness is a price which has since to be paid to pursue more effectively the grandly impersonal aims which fate placed in my hands.

From this crowd of correspondents and callers there emerged a small number of serious seekers, earnest and maturer souls who repeatedly begged me for more personal guidance. They made a little progress in the art of meditation or rose a little above the common view. Occasionally these pressing requests would strike a note of veritable anguish, as when an aspirant ran the whole gamut of pseudo-teachers, half-baked schools, commercialistic cults and

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But, as I pointed out in both letters and books, were I to hearken to these appeals I would assume an unwanted position into which I could fit only with some uneasiness. I expressly published to the world in the opening chapter of "The Wisdom of the Overself" that I "claim no higher status than that of a blundering student." Yet some emotional people still said that P.B. was an adept! I could only reply that it is true I was once an adept but then it was only in the art of practising foolishness! Bacon said that a little philosophy leads to atheism whereas more of it leads back to religion. Apparently nothing succeeds like failure for when more philosophy enabled me to discover my own unimportance, I actually walked into pre-funerary fame and people discussed me quite seriously! It was to some extent this consciousness that I was neither a holy adept nor a wise sage which prevented me from responding to requests for individual guidance, for this would be tantamount to an unspoken claim to exalted sanctity.

There was further and final reason why I always hesitated to respond as fully as others request or I myself wish. And this is that I observed with disgust and studied with cynicism the birth and course of so many Asiatic and Euro-American fanatical cults, dubious organizations, queer movements, freak societies and exploiting ashrams. I could not without losing my own self-respect place myself in a position likely to reflect some of the ridicule, notoriety or guilt which educated opinion rightly assigned to many of these movements. Nor could I ever bring myself to place philosophic knowledge or the transmission of mystic experience on sale for money as dealers placed cheese for sale on a shop-counter. I believed with Carlyle that "No man is ever paid for his real work or should ever expect to be paid." Nor could I find sufficient desire in my heart for the homage of others to inaugurate a new public organization of which I shall be the talked-about head, which may seem strange at a time when everyone who has an idea to propagate or an ambition to subserve flies to form another association. I did not want any followers; indeed I tried to evade them!

Indeed it was only out of a profound compassion for the seeking few that I consented again and again to emerge from the tranquil seclusion that my temperament needs. It was for their sake that I agreed to endure the attacks of dark powers, which attended such emergence, not seldom working through so-called 'spiritual' persons. When I consulted my heart it always answered by the irresistible wish to do something more for people than my books could possibly do. How could I meet their needs and yet retain my own freedom? How help others without tieing bonds between us both? This was the vexing problem I constantly faced.

Fate repeatedly forced it to an issue and now at last to a solution. For recently I was compelled to meditate afresh on the thorny situation in which I was placed vis-a-vis my readers, as well as those correspondents who complained of my laxness in answering letters without understanding that that was better than not answering at all! And the situation was made worse by handicaps placed upon my time, energy and movements. Letters had multiplied to the point where the work involved in individual replies proved too heavy for one person to carry out efficiently with a frail slender body, greatly limited time and little competent help.

Moreover, certain serious misconceptions about the teaching and about my own mental position arose as a consequence of deepening the revelation of it. Furthermore its profoundly metaphysical nature rendered it inevitable that numerous questions, problems and perplexities would trouble the minds of readers and press for clarification.

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Some persons were plunged in bewilderment at the new vista which was thus opened for them, others formed incorrect notions and most felt the need of a little personal guidance to cope with their mental problems. Indeed, an adequate conception of the hidden teaching is hard to get without undergoing a prolonged course that discusses and satisfies the questions which insistently raise their heads. These philosophical ideas, which had meant so much to me, needed to be better understood and appreciated by those who were ready for them. But the misunderstandings embedded in their minds could not be cleared nor the doubts removed without applying to the author himself. And thoroughly for him to unfold the details of the hidden doctrine so as to solve every reader's problems would inevitably necessitate adopting that very relation of teacher and disciple which I wished to avoid.

Failing such face-to-face instruction, the mailbag naturally suggested itself as a substitute for dealing with querents. But my correspondence would then swell to proportions which would be still more unmanageable as I had to cope with it single-handed, having no trained deputy to help me. It was then that I keenly felt the need of having some regular medium of communication with those who not only read my writings but try to study them closely and seriously. It became obvious that part of the ultimate solution of my problems lay in the creation of a little journal which would act as such a regular means of communication between us. Periodical publications are firmly established as excellent vehicles of intellectual traffic. They are no less important in the cultured world, ephemeral though they be, than books. Moreover, books are often apt to get a little out of date whereas periodicals possess that aura of topical freshness which gives them such an attractive appeal to most readers. It became my cherished dream that the archaic wisdom should become articulate in a modern way and that a brightly-written, beautifully printed periodical was as good a fulfillment of this as anything else. However, I hesitated when confronted by the actual creation of such a magazine, playing with the plan again and again yet never materializing it. Some strong intuition arose on every occasion and forbade the plunge, whilst reason itself counselled that I await the right conjuncture of circumstances. Moreover, it was necessary to have a fixed headquarters, an adequate staff and sufficient capital reserve properly to launch the projected journal. I had none of these things. All three were offered me by different publishers at different times but I had invariably refused such offers because both content and tone of the magazine would then have to be dictated by a commercialistic aim. Such an aim did not interest me and could not attract me. I regretfully answered that I could not contract away my independence of thought, writing and action. Thus, determined not to dissipate my forces in a premature beginning, I lay low whilst time passed over my head.

II

Now at last I glimpse with complete clarity that the right moment has arrived. The same intuition which always warned me against starting the journal, now approves it. The same reason which always pointed out all my handicaps, abruptly points out the way to their removal. Moreover, the re-establishment of safe, proper and regular postal communications between the different countries of Europe, America and Asia enable us to come into closer and freer touch with readers -- from many of whom we were entirely cut off-- than could have been possible before under the serious handicaps of war and censorship. Only now is it possible to consolidate, stabilise, revise and clarify all that my ten books may have achieved. And hence, only now when so much of the metaphysical, mystical and philosophical teaching is in the public's hands is it proper adequately to tackle their questions and clear their problems. I foresaw that from the months immediately following the close of the war there would be almost an avalanche of publications, of books,

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Quest, so long-awaited, has come out of its seclusion at last! The opening issue of this youngest magazine, devoted to the oldest wisdom has been purposely timed to synchronize with the early years of the post-war period.

Such are the factors primarily responsible for its birth and such the way in which it was born. The value of such a journal to me is as great as its value may be to readers themselves. For it will enable me to play the role of a silent preceptor but at the same time permit my relation with all students to be perfectly free, independent and unobligated. It will keep me in effective mental touch with all those who themselves want to keep in touch with me. It will provide a fitting personal organ of expression. Within its two covers it will uphold teachings which can best uphold men and women in this unstable age of mental confusion and ugly conflict. It will promote those teachings effectively but it will do so without starting a cult and hence without bringing to birth those unsavoury exploitations and unethical exaggerations which so often drag after every organized movement. It will supply continuity of mental plane contact amongst us all, wherever life throws us or fate holds us, so that students in the remotest places can feel that they have entered into inward relations with a common centre, which stands for the truth and reality of this lonely quest on which they are engaged.

Its pages will reach several others whom I find little or no time left to reach personally. From time to time I met in odd corners of the world a few persons with whom the relation of friendship somehow came to birth, a friendship slowly ripening with the years until it became so firm-based as to sur vive the resistance of abrasive karmic happenings. The personal and ideological loyalty of these friends triumphed grandly over the crude tests placed in their way by jealous malice or ignorant misunderstanding as it vanquished the subtler tests placed in their way by life itself.

They were not only profoundly loyal and devoted but they tried, according to opportunity and capacity, to follow out my teachings to a logical conclusion. Because their feet are still trudging the Secret Path, they look to me for the inner help they need. They have thus unwittingly imposed a loose uncovenanted kind of moral responsibility upon me. What I do for them is little anyway, although they usually think it to be much. It is true that I have never become a missionary for my own ideas and that many have deplored this exclusiveness, but nevertheless I always hoped that out of this small group there would emerge a few who felt the vocation and found the competence to play the role of teacher themselves.

We were not often or not long together, and indeed are not even now. The fates, behind their mask of inscrutability, keep the ways of our feet much apart. But let us be thankful anyway that we are on the same planet at the same time. Alas! that my time-pressed, work-laden life made me almost abandon the writing of letters. We need to find a further and better link to express our mutual affection, aspiration and collaboration. Quest will certainly be an excellent beginning of it.

III

What are the aims which inspire this journal? What is the task it has undertaken? What is the platform on which its feet are set?

"What's in a name?" asked Shakespeare.

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"What's in a name?" asked Shakespeare.

"Everything!" thought the learned men of ancient Egypt.

The title chosen for our magazine felicitously typifies this objective. Its scope embraces the FOUR chief phases of the Quest: Pure Religion, Mystical Meditation, Metaphysics of Truth and The Philosophic Life. It will be useful to consider them seriatim, to try to make them clearer to begin with by clearking the position in reference to the terms used, and thus remove likely misconceptions of the way in which it is intended to deal with them.

1. Pure Religion: What is meant by this is first best clarified by pointing out what is not meant. And under the latter heading the most important item is organized religion. Those who possess enough discernment in the study of history and enough discrimination in the study of doctrine find that most religious establishments have sought their own self-advancement at the expense of the spiritual advancement of their individual members and their worldly success in terms of wealth, power or prestige. Socrates, Jesus, Pythagoras, Joan of Arc, and Hypatia were put to death because they tried to enlighten their fellows. Organized religions did not save them but actively supported their persecutors. It was not the infidel enemies of Islam who excommunicated and exiled the young Kahlil Gibran but the priestly guardians of Islam. Yet these six men and women were more godly than the priests could ever be, more attuned in spirit to their Prophet's teaching than the ecclesiastics could even imagine, more spiritual than the clerics were even human.

   Ceremonial observances and social ordinances could be left out of religion without harming its true functions. When the enquiring mind discovers that religious forms are human creations rather than divine revelations, it begins to become wary of accepting them without critical reserve.

   Organized religion gives the illusion of saving humanity, not the reality. It is a surrender to human weakness, a device to enable all those who will not or cannot begin the search for God, to deceive themselves with the comfortable feeling that they have done so.

2. Mystical Meditations: To ensure a full and balanced growth, Quest will cover the entire field of the principal systems; but it will purify their exposition of the exaggerated claims and ridiculous one-sidedness which mar their native Oriental exposition. In addition to the elementary and intermediate yoga methods, it will also expound the ultra-mystic contemplation practices which belong to the most advanced stages and which are essential to the ultimate realization of the Overself.

   There is no intention of inculcating ancient methods of practice which are impracticable or inadvisable in modern twentieth century environments. The electric machine which impresses these very words for the reader's use is a product of the twentieth century A.D. but the basic ideas beneath them were known in the Far East long before the twentieth century B.D. Therefore, it is no meaningless paradox and no

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2. Mystical Meditations: To assure a full and balanced growth, Quest will cover the entire field of the principal systems; but it will purify their exposition of the exaggerated claims and ridiculous one-sidedness which mar their native Oriental exposition. In addition to the elementary and intermediate yoga methods, it will also expound the ultramystic contemplation practices which belong to the most advanced stages and which are essential to the ultimate realization of the Overself.

There is no intention of inculcating ancient methods of practice which are impracticable or inadvisable in modern twentieth century environments. The electric machine which impresses these very words for the reader's use is a product of the twentieth century A.D. but the basic ideas beneath them were known in the Far East long before the twentieth century B.C. Therefore, it is no meaningless paradox and no

violation of congruity if this magazine deliberately adorns its cover with the picture of a slender palm-tree spreading its leaves like a fan to shade a yogi squatting in front of a New York skyscraper. Its message has sprung from the soil of today, from the immediate needs of modern man, even though its roots descend into the far-off past. Hence, it will have no use for queer museum methods so often associated with yoga.

3. Metaphysics of Truth: Under this head there will be elucidated and published for the benefit of the laity as well as for those members of the cultural world who have not imprisoned themselves in idea-tight compartments, some of the loftiest truths accessible to human mind. There will be material here for sustaining study and valuable research.

It is fully realized that some portions of this section will impose severe intellectual strain upon the reader. This from the nature of the case is unavoidable. The metaphysics of truth usually demands a life-time's arduous study. Few in these busy times can find the requisite leisure for such a specialized task. Hence, this department will endeavour to help them by working out simple presentations in short articles, and by converting difficult knowledge bought in a dear and hard market into understandable journalistic contributions accessible to a moderate effort of most readers' minds. It will do its utmost to lighten this burden by presenting the most advanced subjects in the most readable manner possible and by expressing the most difficult thoughts in as easy straightforward and clear a way as possible.

Quest will seek to communicate the profoundest metaphysical ideas in the plainest words. It rejects obscurantism as it rejects mystery-mongering. For it wants to share its knowledge with the worthy and it realizes that this cannot be done where words are used so darkly in learned lucubrations as to hide and not reveal, or where they are used so speciously as to distort and not unravel truth. Readers new to the subject will be helped to teachings while every effort will be made to remove the vague and undefined fancies which rest in the minds of not a few amongst those already familiar with it. The editor has little use for merely academic writing bristling with technical terms. He will not encourage platitudinous professors who fill lecture-halls with words and bulky books with theories. Quest exists for those who have not had any formal initiation or special training in technical metaphysical lore as much and even more than it does for those who have plodded painstakingly through it, only to find bewilderment at its end because it was not the metaphysics of truth. It is desirous of reaching intelligent, unprejudiced layfolk who are not drawn to academic discussions but who want to understand life, and therefore it will use lay language to the utmost extent. It wants them to follow this study without becoming metaphysical pedants.

Nevertheless, if this journal will not tolerate a dry and dull treatment of metaphysics, this is not to say that it will therefore tolerate an incompetent amateurish treatment of it. Although its contents will primarily be unacademic and generally readable, a lofty standard of sound scholarship and documentary accuracy will not be deserted. We shall try to present the fruit of philosophy but to leave out its dullness.

4. The Philosophic Life: Men can be shown by their own experience how to know that inwardly they are truly immortal and truly spiritual. It is not enough to give merely a wordy adherence to the higher doctrines. They must apply this knowledge and its moral ideals to their daily business. Quest will place within the reach of readers the fruits of ripe reasoned thinking, sane views and sober judgment on world trends. It will establish itself amongst the discerning few as the advocate of a resurrected higher knowledge in contemporary life, as well as the exponent of a physical progress based fearlessly on lofty ethical principles. It will seek to instruct and guide opinion, dealing in an attitude of cold reason with questions of human welfare. Hence, although its chief interest is cultural it will ~~not hesitate to~~ deal with them from no narrow sectional viewpoint. Every such question will be judged soberly and scientifically by the light of our philosophy in the effort to give a correct lead to our readers. But it will chiefly stress principles and leave to others the question how exactly those principles can be best applied in detail. The scope of this journal will be broad and comprehensive, because philosophy itself is such.

IV

Through these pages I shall carry further the studies begun in my later books. Those students who are interested in following up these lines of thought will now be able to do so. There is no other way in which they can keep in such regular and frequent touch with me. Hence, I propose to devote substantial space in every issue to selections from the mailbag. Putting questions and demanding answers does help to bring out the truth - intellectually. It has been found that many of the questions asked -- no less than much of the advice given -- have a general interest and should be useful or welcome to a wider circle than the particular correspondents to whom they refer. It is my intention, therefore, to keep copies of all such replies and to publish here the more interesting excerpts from them. The program to be unfolded here will make a prominent feature.

It is one thing to sit in a comfortable editorial chair and give cheap advice via print, but quite another to feel profoundly the responsibility for words which may make or mar the lives of men and women. In this matter I dare not let my pen please itself. Hence, it would not be surprising to find that this feature becomes the most popular and perhaps the most valuable of all. A friend associated with an English university wrote us recently: "It would be of enormous help and encouragement to your readers and students in these bewildering days to have some word from you which stimulates them to continue thinking in principles and not get overwhelmed by the immediate details of living."

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If this journal is to fulfill its purpose, it should contain a symposium of individual expressions of its general viewpoint. Therefore, those friends who are somewhat familiar with it and who have a little literary talent and write with grammatical accuracy, should assist the editor. They could write for the paper as well as read it. At the same time, I shall also feel indebted to students who will co-operate by sending reports on empirical results obtained from their meditation practice as well as from the working out of our principles in everyday life. Such material will help to improve my own researches as well as to accumulate evidence which may interest and perhaps help to convince here and there the sceptical modern mind.

It will be the task of this office to put all manuscripts into reasonable shape: the contributors will have the duty of writing simply and naturally -- as in personal diary or to an intimate friend -- what they have experienced. These reports will be published, if at all, only anonymously. They will not, I hope, take the editor or his assistant to task for wielding the blue pencil liberally; that is their job and if its exercise hurts a writer's pride or vanity -- why so much the better for him!

It might be advisable to explain why America has been chosen as the headquarters of this journal. It would be more correct to say that I have but half-chosen it, the other half of this decision having been dictated by Karma.

There were repeated requests to establish myself, with the closure of Oriental researches, in England. Although it is my native land, I have been able to make fewer friends there than in America. Yet they are the most faithful of all. This is partly because they have known me longer than others and partly because beneath the cold surface of the Britisher is a warm core of strong loyalty which once aroused, makes him your follower or friend for life. Admittedly, it is difficu lt to arouse, but a single success compensates splendidly for several failures.

The need of health compelled me to live out of Europe. England's cold wet climate and my weak chest's reaction to it, helped to turn me into an expatriate. My love and need of the sun helped even more. The consequence is that I became something of a nomad, detached and quite international in my outlook, or rather, under the pressure of my philosophy, supernational.

The tropics nearly finished me. Although still somewhat frail in body, I feel as vigorous in mind as ever. But the delicate health of a body rescued in adolescence from tuberculosis and its later conditioning by tropical residence have combined to render advisable, if I would stay a little longer on this planet and thus perform a little more service, the avoidance of the misty skies and low temperatures of the British Isles and the selection of a warm dry climate for the major part of its remaining years. Such a climate exists in Arizona. So I have pitched my tent in its sparsely-populated desert region. The solitary reclusiveness of such a life is no objection. For I do not possess the kind of attractive personality which fits a man to be the public leader of a movement. But it is not immodest to say that I do possess the kind of studious mentality and mystical temperament which fit me to be the philosophical thinker and introspective seer of a movement like the present one. If I am determined not to appear in public to speak for it, I am quite willing however to remain in private to write for it.

Although the journal will inevitably tend to find its largest field of influence in the United States itself, nevertheless it will remain international in scope, appeal and operation. Quest is an internationally-run and internationally-read paper. It stands on an impartial platform. Its pen is free and its articles are written for those who are willing to think freely too. But this does not make it the mouthpiece of everyone who wants to use it. The distinctive principles which guide it and the special aims which it serves are followed by few and therefore its pages will be open to few likewise. There are no particular interests whose favour it courts or whose lips can dictate a single item of its policy or whose purse can purchase its resolve to publish anything less than truth. There are no axes of any kind to be ground here, whether personal or party. Its sponsors seek to serve men, not to profit by them. It is the partisan of no country, no organization, no society, no cult and no creed.

Such is the perspective with which there has been formulated a policy whose details will steadily be elaborated with each successive issue of the journal. These first issues hardly foreshadow future labours. Further numbers will carry a goodly cargo of philosophic lore, ethical inspiration and constructive messages to those who care for them. They will seek to incite suitable beginners to proceed with these teachings and to exhort earnest intermediates to practise them; to give bewildered neophytes the detailed information they are often demanding and all others an incentive to travel in the correct direction.

Proper spiritual guides are exceedingly rare nowadays. Hence, the work of this magazine will be most useful to those who are unable to obtain admission to a genuine school, which means to almost everyone, yet who would like to keep within the outer precinct of one school. It will also indisputably benefit all others who study it without prejudice. To work out the teaching I have to transfer it from my own mind through the channel of successive issues of this journal and thus gradually formulate its detailed development. Such explanation thus becomes a work of education. This education of the mind into grasping fundamentals is the immediate task.

I offer the journal to the consideration of those who care for these doctrines and to the judgment of Father Time in the hope that its words may communicate a burning desire never to rest until truth be found. Once understood, even by a handful of competent persons, this knowledge will make its own way in the world. Its dissemination is not to be secured by noise and shouting but by understanding and living it. Quest will modestly voice a subtle message and not play the part of a raucous loud-speaking propagandist. It will seek to exemplify in its pages that same calmness and dignity with which a philosopher should meet the ups and downs of contemporary events. It will not shout with the crowd nor permit its balance to be upset. It will always pursue its own inwardly-suggested policy. I shall write here only for those who are already convinced of the falsity of materialism -- not to argue with the others who have yet to find this out. For this is an educational and not a propagandist paper. It does not seek to compete with any other paper for the simple reason that it cannot. Its own distinctive characteristics restrict the circulation of this journal to the few whose interest in this special teaching is deep and devoted, whose minds are sufficiently ripened to be naturally sympathetic towards it. Thus it may now be better understood why there is no sense of disparagement in our statement that Quest will not be set apart from the motley crowd of other magazines by reason of its uniqueness.

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That is merely a matter of destiny. The others have their place but not one will be able to fill its own. Let it be boldly emphasized that it seeks to break new and exclusive ground in periodical literature. It has appeared because certain seekers of the West must now enter on a new phase in their evolution. Its objective will be to give such guidance on vital subjects as can be got nowhere else. I was forced to start this journal as much as any other reason because of the complaints by those who, listening to contemporary utterance for a consistent expression of philosophical mysticism identical with that taught in our latest books, ~~+~~ listen in vain. It is issued for those who belong to the twenty-first century but who have unfortunately been born in the twentieth. It is more than merely up-to-date; it is uniquely ahead of date.

V

The foundation of a new paper represents a new opportunity, ~~+~~ the opportunity to express the unspoken thoughts of a little groups of like-thinking people who hold ideas differing from those voiced in existing journals. Quest will bring together those who are members on an unique though scattered community of thought and ideals. Through it I can reserve the first publication of my most revelatory writing only for the few who, out of intellectual acceptance of my teaching and generous loyalty to my name, can receive what I have to give and can receive it sympathetically even if, on occasions, they might not be able to do so understandingly. They have shared my struggles in the past. Let them share my discoveries in the future.

It will find a few friends and some of them may even seek to serve it in their own way. It will really be my personal and authentic messenger to them. Within its semi-privately circulated pages I can open my heart and speak my mind more frankly and convey my news more freely than in a publicly-circulated print. There will be a sense of fellowship with its tiny audience which can never exist in a journal which, at any moment, might fall into the hands of unprepared persons and thus become the jest of fools and the jibe of knaves.

~~+~~ know well what some say and many think. Their criticism might easily discourage the starting of an enterprise which will afford further fuel for their petty malice or large misunderstanding. But I draw courage for the effort from the knowledge that an impersonal power bids me make it. Not to glorify self nor to gain reward but to fulfil my own heavenly duty do I move my pen or open my lips to instruct others in the sacred doctrines. Quest is not a commercial enterprise. If it begins its career with this initial disadvantage of dealing with a stratospheric subject; if such a magazine could never be a popular or a prosperous one, it will nevertheless be perfectly satisfied to find no more than the few whom it seeks to serve. If any others take it into their hands, it will merely hinder and not help their course. If both makers and readers of this journal are to avoid dissatisfaction and attain mutual cooperation, it is needful to restrict our circulation, to strive indeed for the lowest possible circulation -- which is the very opposite of what other journals strive for!

For all these reasons I have refused to make it indiscriminately available to the general public through commercial distributors and newsstands. This may cause a certain loss. The need of keeping the latter within bearable limits and thus assuring continuity of publication, compels me to limit the appearance of this magazine to once every two months. Anyway, the serious and subtle character of the subjects dealt with will cause the contents to demand not merely perusal but re-perusal and reflection. Hence, there will be plenty

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such an unusual journal needs a waiting period to collect together a staff of unusual contributors to provide sufficient reading matter. For the capacity to think philosophically or feel mystically is independent of the capacity to write skilfully, and good writing is a great help to creating understanding in the mind of the student.

Thus this little magazine has been born. Here it lies before your gaze. It was born out of necessity. It will live by service. Its success in moving men upwards to a higher life may deliberately be noiseless but may also be priceless. Its beginning is of the humblest and smallest kind -- it will come to your windows with the morning sparrows six times a year and try to show you a peerless way of thought and life.

Yet I do not really know how to classify this journal. I do not really know how to describe its character to prospective readers. Those who, with hopes raised by the cover picture, take it in expectation of getting a printed correspondence course on how to achieve success in Indian yoga, will be disappointed. Those who, with hopes equally raised by the same provocative picture, take it in expectation of getting a printed correspondence course on how to achieve success in worldly life, will likewise be disappointed. Nevertheless both groups may eventually get the equivalent in essential but scattered ideas of several such courses-- <u>may</u>, we say, because we ourselves do not know. What this journal will contain is something which even its own horoscope could not tell you!

It is indeed somewhat puzzling why Paul Brunton appointed such an irresponsible person like P.B. as its editor. For this erratic gentleman will print whatever happens to come into his head when he rises from his evening meditation on the ineffable Absolute, or when he reads the day's news in the gazette and the day's letters in his mailbag, or when he ascends the elevator of a New York skyscraper or --. In fact, the contents of the journal will depend chiefly on his momentary moods, supplemented by the labours of all his associate contributors. When it was intimated that this resulting Irish literary stew was hardly a satisfactory basis for starting a journal with such a specific cover, he replied that Paul Brunton had asked him to make the journal with such a specific cover, he replied that Paul Brunton had asked him to make the journal fit the special need of a particular planet at this precise moment in its evolution; that this need seemed to him to be not only making more yogis sit inside skyscrapers, but also to be making yoga itself spread around until it took in all human activity.

This doubtful declaration must be left to be puzzled over by our bewildered readers. But two things about this publication are quite clear. It does not propose to teach anyone anything but it may incidentally teach many people something. It proposes only to be itself -- just a queer little journal for those queer loyal persons who want to hear P.B. think aloud about various matters at random, from serious subjects like the Inner Realit y to (as some mystics believe) trifling ones like the Outer World. There will be those who may be offended at this facetious lifting of the editorial curtain to a supremely serious stage. We are sorry for them and unapologetic. Spain, which in the medieval period furnished Europe with her greatest mystics, furnished them also with a sense of humour. They were not less successful in their mystical endeavours and they were certainly more successful as human beings.

If this journal has a planetary mission, so had Hitler. His was absurd and insane, however, partly because he lost his sense of humour. His secretaries, for example, never dared bring him a cartoon from democratic newspapers which poked even the gentlest fun at his own person. This journal's mission is not so dreadfully solemn as that. It has no need to be deprived of life's saving grace of humour. Too many serious writings carry the solemn odour of midnight oil. Too many are products of musty learning gained at second-hand. I want this journal to be different, to be the distillate of the freshly-born experiences of the day and to be thoughtful without being dull. Although it

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pages breathe such youthful vigour as to carry their readers jauntily along with them, yet to make their content hold such ripe wisdom as to set longbeards frequently nodding in approval! And even if I cannot instruct anyone in the art of becoming a millionaire I can try to instruct them in the art of becoming a little wiser, a little better and perhaps a little happier.

I have already written far more on this subject than it was intended. Who would have thought that this old pen had so much ink in it? Or that it could fall into such flippant fluency at times? It forgets alas! that I am supposed to be if not an adept then at least a serious philosopher and simply pleases itself, taking fewer orders from my head than from its own cap. I am indeed much tempted to shoot at it just now but as it might be useful should I ever have to write another book again, I must refrain. And besides, I do not live, like a lawyer, under the tyranny of dusty precedents.

I have talked a lot about myself here and even to myself because that seemed the appropriate thing to do in an opening number. Fortunately for readers there can only be a single first issue of any journal! So they will not have to bear with my egotistical soliloquies again. But if I continue much longer I shall exhaust my ink and the reader his patience, so this article must be brought to a close!

# # #

pages breathe such youthful vigour as to carry their readers jauntily along with them, yet to make their contents hold such ripe wisdom as to set longbeards frequently nodding in approval! And even if I cannot instruct anyone in the art of becoming a millionaire I can try to instruct someone in the art of becoming a little wiser, a little better and perhaps a little happier.

I have already written far more on this subject than it was intended. Who would have thought that this old pen had so much ink in it? Or that it could roll into such flippant fluency at times? It forgets also! that I am supposed to be if not an adept then at least a serious philosopher and simply pleases itself, taking fewer orders from my head than from its own cuff. I am indeed much tempted to shoot at it just now but as it might be useful should I ever have to write another book again, I must refrain. And besides, I do not live, like a lawyer, under the tyranny of dusty precedents.

I have talked a lot about myself here and even to myself because that seemed the appropriate thing to do in an opening number. Fortunately for readers there can only be a single first issue of any journal! So they will not have to bear with my occasional egoistical soliloquies again. But if I continue much longer I shall exhaust my ink and the reader his patience, so this article must be brought to a close!

* * *

A KING--SAGE

In "The Hidden Teaching Beyond Yoga" mention was made of the profound impression made upon its author by His Highness the late Maharajah of Mysore, as well as of the profound impression his achievement in constructing a "a model state"---as it was often called--made upon the rest of India. The reason for exercising this pen with this panegyric upon a dead ruler is that he so splendidly illustrated the importance of the point made in the last chapter of that book and show so markedly what the ultimate path meant to him. In his personal life and public achievement, the practical vindication of this ultimate philosophy, as well as the highly instructive contrast to those ineffectual mystics or dubious occultists who are neither willing nor able to do something worthwhile for their fellow men. Some words about the secret mainsprings of his character and achievements may not come amiss, but may indeed be of value to others as his personal friendship was of exemplary value to the author.

Out of unfathomable space there emerges now and then the glittering light of a comet which streaks across the sky and is gone. Out of universal history there emerges occasionally the grand figure of a man whose character compels millions to place offerings of affection and reverence at his feet and then he too is gone. Such a man was the late Maharajah of Mysore, who died in 1940.

The Hindu newspaper of Madras said that "he was pious without being bigoted and gave princely sums to Christian churches, Muslim mosques and Hindu temples alike." The Bombay Times of India remarked that "Posterity will look on the late Maharajah as one who combined in his person the asceticism of the ancient Rishees with the dignity of a Ruler." A Karachi newspaper declared him to be "the most saintly Ruler that modern India has produced." The New York Times described him in its obituary notice as "in his personal life one of the holiest men in India."

Yet he was much more than that. The Maharajah was both a mystic and philosopher. But his mysticism was of the rarest kind and his philosophy equally rare. He measured the heights of religious aspiration and plumbed the depths of philosophic thinking. Yet he never lost himself in the sea of ambiguous sentiment or vague dreaming wherin so many drown. It was the fate of India's ancient Rishees (sages) and Mahatmas (perfect yogis) to be much misunderstood, so that its people came to revere the inert lethargic hermit or the runaway self-centered monk so long as either put on the white ash and yellow robe of sanctity. But the authentic teaching of the sages assigned--as it assigned a place to everything--a lower and temporary stage to such ascetic renunciations. The Bhagavad Gita, a Sanskrit classic before whose name millions of Hindus still bow, defined yoga as "skill in action" not as"skill in inertia". The Upanishads, a supposed to contain the profoundest wisdom of the Rishees, bade the wise man better the world and not desert it. Contrary to common opinion, actual research shows that the deepest solitudes do not always contain the divinest men. The late Maharajah of Mysore was one proof of this statement. He believed in and practised spirituality amid activity, not spirituality amid apathy.

His Highness was the gentlest of men. Yet his mere presence could inspire and impel others into wise activity of a beneficent kind.

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Those who visit Mysore for the first time usually exclaim admiringly at the beautiful architecture of its noble public buildings, the spacious and picturesque town planning, the leisurely garden-landscapes, the spouting fountains and fine roads. All this was but an outward revealing of the inward beauty which dwelt in the Maharajah's heart. Both in public and personal life, he mingled artistry with austerity and did not, like the narrow-minded, oppose them as incompatibles. His Highness was an artist to his finger tips. The loveliness of his creations proved it.

The principle that guided his deeper reflections was that philosophy must touch the whole of life and not merely a part. This led him naturally to set up an all-round balanced existence as an ideal both for himself and for his State. Until the shadows of illness darkened his later years and rendered such activities undesirable or impossible, he played enthusiastically at polo and tennis, visited the wild forests often and drove a fast little sports car. Yet the full circle of his program found place for the ritualistic duties of his religious faith, for the devoted study of ancient Sanskrit texts wherein the wisdom of the Rishees was inscribed, for the calm contemplation that lifts the mind into serene exaltation, and for the aesthetic enjoyment of music through his own talents or through appreciation of those of others. Withal he closely followed State affairs and brought a meticulous and sharpened attention to the complex structure of political, social, economic and admistrative responsibilities during a difficult and troubled time.

The ideal of a comprehensive existence led him to quicken the pace of industrialisation in a marked manner, for he saw that the economic improvement of his people largely depended upon it. He did not believe like so many mystics that machines came from the devil. He knew that they came from God just as much as souls. Consequently, an impressive array of great factories were brought into being. Works for the production of iron, steel, chemicals, fertilisers, textiles, silk, paper, pottery, electrical goods and soaps; refineries for sugar and oil; immense engineering projects to harness water-power, irrigate farms and create cheap electricity: these were but some of the attempts to accept the contributions of modern invention whilst keeping hold on the ultimate values of life. Such events might mean little in America or Europe but they meant much in India when the industrial epoch was still but an infant and where ninety-five percent of the people were still tillers of the soil. And needlesssto add, Mysore was a pioneer in village reconstruction and in the modern improvement of agricultural technique .

Such notable achievements could not have been carried out without an executive worthy of such a Ruler. Next to doing the right thing is getting the right men to do it for you. And the Maharajah had an unerring gift for choosing the right men. Once chosen, the mantle of his inspiration spread around them in a remarkable way.

He wielded the sceptre and wore the crown of supreme authority in a selfless spirit. He rules as a sacred trust the few million human beings and several million acres which destiny had put into his hands at an early age.

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What His Highness tried to do for his people is plain for all the world to see. It is his best monument as it is the best proof that the hidden teaching, when pursued to its glorious climax, is not something fit for dreamers only but is adequate to survive all the tests of experience. This does not mean that he created an ideal kingdom. He could not. For he was not free to do so. An Indian State was not, in these days, an independent one. Over it hovered the shadow of an alien power. Any attempt at radical reconstruction on his part would immediately have brought down the authoritative veto of this power. So he did no more than what could be done under such limiting circumstances.

He used the philosophic word "AUM" in Sanskrit characters as a single decoration in the hall of the Palace at the foot of Chamundi Hill. It was painted on the wall directly opposite his throne so that when he sat through the long ceremonial hours at public functions, it would be what he first saw and what he could concentrate o n during the waiting periods. Durbar (audience)

How lofty was his outlook may be gauged from the following sentences extracted at random from his Highness' own public utterances over many years:

1. "It has been a real sorrow to me to see lately in different parts of India great clashes over the externals of religion, showing, if they show nothing else, a tendency to pursue the shadow rather than the substance."

2. "I look upon all, whether Hindus, Muhammedans, or others, as equally dear to me."

3. "Any manifestation of a desire for the life of the spirit, however crude, is deserving of a sympathetic understanding."

4. "I am at one with you in all that tends to clear the jungle of dogma and tradition from the path of truth, as well as in what you have described as 'eagarness to work for the common good of all men.'"

5. "Indian philosophic traditions are supremely rich, but they need to be vivified by the breath of life to-day."

6. "I trust that you will also find time for the silent, absorbed and rapt contemplation of the spirit which we in India regard as more important than the feverish activity of the West."

7. "Science is re-making the world and the obligations that have been laid on birth and wealth, in their turn, now fall to be shared by [illegible] as well. One of these obligations seems to me to be to do what

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8. "I trust that you will also find time for the silent, absorbed and rapt contemplation of the spirit which we in India regard as more important than the feverish activity of the West."

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with the another. Such co-ordination seems to be sadly lacking at present. You give the world speed and there is a death roll like that of many battles. You mitigate disease and the incapables increase and multiply. You discover new explosives and place whole populations at the mercy of misguided individuals. It may be said that it is an impossible task to develop the minds, the senses and the moral faculties of men so as to enable them to cope at once with the conditions that accrue from new discoveries in the field of physical science. But co-ordination can at least do something. Treat the book of knowledge as a whole."

8. "It is my earnest desire that this spirit of brotherhood should be extended to the continuous improvement of the conditions of those who are less fortunate than ourselves. I pray that a similar spirit may extend itself to the dumb creation, and that we may see animals treated with ever-increasing consideration for the feelings which they cannot express."

9. "All human things are subject to decay. Fortune, however, is depicted as riding on a wheel; every descent leads to an ascent."

10. "The country needs something more virile than the accomplished gentleman. It needs men of enthusiasm, even more than refined intellectuals pursuing the easy path of worldly wisdom, worldly compromise and worldly success. It needs men of stout hearts and strong hands who will not allow their conscience to be drugged by sophistry of any kind, or their nerve to be paralysed by the fear of unpopularity, but will oppose wrong whenever found, and fight unflinchingly the battle of social justice and emancipation on behalf of the weak and down-trodden, men filled with intense passion for service."

11. Philosophy has come to be looked upon as an abstruse subject, far removed from the stress and strain of life. But a philosophy that is remote from life forfeits all our claim to homage. It should give us a co-ordinated world-view, which comprhends all the aspects of life including religion. Philosophy can justify its existence only by the creation of a broad based standpoint for the study of arts as well as of sciences, physical, biological and social. The world today suffers from excessive specialization and we are apt to miss the broad vistas of life because of our circumscribed outlook. It was not so long ago that politics and economics as well as the physical sciences were nourished by philosophy and grew up under its fostering care. They are now grown to manhood, and are apt to be somewhat contemptuous of thier philosophic ancestry. None the less, they need today theguiding counsel of philosophy. Our economic and our political difficulties point to the need for comprehensive thought, a need which philosophy alone can hope to meet. It evaluates all experience and thought and it is thus co-extensive with life."

12. "But deeper than all this is the need of the world today for that sovereign truth,--the truth which finds in Brahma and the Peace of Brahma, in other words, in the oneness of man and all creations in the cosmic real ty and in the realisation of that oneness, the sovereign cure for the malady of the world, a malady which an ill-directed pursuit of science and power has only aggravated, has indeed brought to a paroxysmal fury in our age. The emancipation will not only be a fitting conclusion to the age-long history of human freedom, but will also usher in a renaissance fruitful in works of peace and in saving power and knowledge."

Such a great and good man deserved to die peacefully. He did.

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THE ADVENTURE OF MEDITATION.

By Dr. Paul Brunton.

It has been customary for learned professors to teach that consciousness always implies a relation to an object because it is always directed towards something. This is true, but only true of the level of ordinary experience. It is no longer true on the level of the highest type of mystical experience. Here consciousness can exist without any relation at all for it can be directed towards its own self. This is the one experience which occurs in the mind and which possesses absolutely no correlation with, nor determination by, what is happening in, to or outside the body at the same time. Therefore it is, itself, a demonstration of the falsity of the materialistic view of man. The world of ordinary experience is not the last possible one. There is a deeper and diviner world, or in Wordsworth's good phrase, an 'unknown mode of being', open to man's adventuring. He has not yet attained true self-consciousness. He lives too completely on the lower level of his existence for that. It is indeed time he took full possession of himself.

But the external encounter with mystical statements is one thing, the personal experience of mystical states is quite another. Mystical theory has to justify itself in mystical experience. This it is quite able to do. Indeed, its practicality can best be proved by such experience. It will then be found that it cannot be easily disposed of as chimerical. For the experience of thousands of men throughout history, situated in every station of life, has confirmed the reality and attainability of the transcendental state. However, it is relatively only a few sensitive persons who have heard these mystical overtones of human existence. Yet we should not regard the mystic as a highly specialized type of human being. He is like ourself but he has had the vision and patience to follow up an act of faith with a long-drawn series of active experiments to test the truth of that faith. If one man has touched this higher consciousness, all men may touch it. The prerogative is not exclusive but inclusive, not personal but common.

There is something in us of which we are not normally conscious. It is only at rare moments that we become aware--and that dimly--of a second self, as it were, of a nobler serener self. We may have experienced such an uplift for only a few minutes but we will forever after be haunted by a sense of its tremendous importance. For we sense that we have then been in contact with something other than our ordinary self, sublimer than our ordinary self, yet despite that somehow related to it. Those of us who have passed through such an inspired mood, who have felt its serenity, tasted its power and obeyed its monitions, know well enough that only then have we been fully alive. Against the adamantine fact of our own overwhelming experience, the barbed arguments of others' scepticism avail nothing. There is no substitute for it. It is beyond all intellectual scholarship, above all religious rites.

This is indeed nothing else than the recognition of the 'soul'. The soul is most certainly there but if men do not turn inwards and attend to it, then it is not there for them. But, really, it is always there. The failure to recognize its existence is really the failure to turn attention away from the endless multitude of things which continuously extrovert it. This is why meditation, which is the art of introverting attention, is so needful. By means of our own mind, we can discover the soul. The introverted consciousness, turned away from five-sense activity to contemplate itself, first feels the presence and later becomes aware of the divine mind behind it. Therefore the practice of mental introversion, or meditation, is quite essential on this quest.

We cannot recapture those glorious moments of recognition, yet we cannot forget them. This tantalizing situation imposes a restlessness and disquiet upon our feelings. Nor will they ever be assuaged unless and until we take to the quest. If we would be inspired by the Spirit at all times and in all places, we must first let it inspire us at set times and in set places. This is one justification of meditation. For all inspiration rises out of the inward deeps of our nature. We cannot compel it, but we can invite it. We cannot command it for it commands us. The best way, therefore, to become inspired is to trace it out intuitively to its source, i.e., to the divine self within us. Meditation will help this unfoldment of latent intuition for it is, itself, an intuitive process.

Mysticism is a territory with which the average man is quite unfamiliar. He enters it, if he enters it at all, with a certain uneasiness and a certain hesitancy. Consequently, it is a common habit for ignorant critics to sneer at the mystic, who cultivates the power of introspection, as being morbid. But the fact is that, if he is a philosophic mystic, he will become a victorious master of introspection, not a morbid victim of it. Whoever, by steady practice, has succeeded with the processes of meditation becomes a living testimony to its indubitable worth. ~~He becomes a living testimony to its indubitable worth.~~ He gives in himself a demonstration that its promised results can be realized, that it is not a wild dream or fanciful abstraction. If we have never before practised the art of meditation, surely we cannot use our time to better purpose than to begin doing so now. Thus, we will introduce a new rhythm into our life which will eventually assist us in every imaginable way, which will make possible the improvement of our character and capacity, our ethics and consciousness, our understanding and peace, our intuition, and sometimes even our fortune. Faithfully practised and over a sufficient period of time, it will amply repay the effort given and will confer benefits which many are longing for but few are finding. There is also the testimony of history, though because of its confused character, our iconoclastic age may deem this of little account. The yoga system was being taught and practised beside the Ganges long before Rome had reached its heyday. The Quaker method of silent "waiting on the Lord" has been practised during the modern era in English

villages and American cities. A hundred different forms of mystical technique may be gathered from mysticism's archives by the student who has the time to do so. Out of this confused collection of ideas it is still possible to extricate some praxis, definitely common to all of them, for a methodical cultivation of the inner life.

A little more precise and little less poetic description of the art of meditation than is usually given would better assist the Western novice. Why should there not be a science of its technical side as there already are sciences of the technical sides of so many other arts? The following pages are one contribution towards the attempt to formulate such a scientific statement.

The need of solitude and time to cultivate the inner life, in both its metaphysical and mystical phases, is the first imperative. Solitude, because the presence of others definitely disturbs the emptying process. Time, because the mind is habitually filled with thoughts of the outer world; it is essential totally to empty it of them for a while regularly and habitually and deliberately. Without a determined use of willpower, it is however hard for most persons to get solitude or find time.

If the one requirement develops partly out of the aspirant's need of being able to concentrate thought without interruption, it also develops partly out of the restless mental auras which most people carry about with them. They themselves shrink from being alone and naturally introduce an antipathetic influence wherever solitary meditation is being practised. Perhaps their terror of solitude arises because it makes them conscious of the spiritual aimlessness and intellectual vacuity of their sojourn on earth. The fear of being alone simply means that a man has no inner life at all. The scale of values which lists solitude as a frightful evil to be avoided, or the desire for it as an eccentric or even anti-social trait, is a materialistic and stupid one. The mystic, who has learnt the art of creative solitude, can hear a mental voice in its inner silence. Thus, the loneliness which is maddening for some is enlightening for him.

For the other requirement there must be, for a certain period each day, a separation from all his usual physical labours and intellectual activities, a period wherein the aspirant can become and remain bodily still and mentally quiet. He must set apart a little time once or twice a day for meditation just as he sets apart some time for eating food. This is quite indispensable to achieving spiritual progress. It is quite practicable for most people to create a routine which, whilst satisfying the need of withdrawal for meditation, would still not interfere with worldly activities and responsibilities.

It is needful to put aside periodically the things of time so as to seek the timeless, to isolate oneself from the outward world so as to seek an inward one. The psychological purpose of such isolation is to create a new habit and a new attitude. The habit is meditation. The attitude

is introversion. He is called to the hard task of re-educating his powers of perception, understanding and attention. These powers have to be cultivated through a series of regular exercises. This means self-training in definite work and a long progressive apprenticeship. Meditation is an art and has to be learned by repeated practice like the art of playing a piano. It comes naturally to almost none. Its technique requires a skill which has to be learnt like the technique of any other art.

Here the habit-forming tendency of the mind can be an excellent help. He will gain more by exercises regularly practised over a period of say six months than by the same exercises done in fits and starts over the same period. Consequently, a fixed time of the day should be appointed for them. The ideal rhythm would be to meditate three times a day in co-ordination with the rhythm of the sun's movements--at dawn, noon and dusk. But he could not arrive at this at all at once. He could best start with a single period and continue with that for months or even years until he feels ready to advance and add a second period to it. He will have to work at these two periods, be they dawn and dusk or noon and dusk, for a considerable time before the inner prompting is likely to tell him to take the further step and add the third period. Even then it may not be possible for him always to adhere faithfully to the program thus laid down. Social necessities, for instance, may compel him to leave out some period or other almost every week. Hence, he must do his best within the limits of his personal circumstances.

Situated as the average Western man usually is, however, a single meditation is as much as he can conveniently practice each day. This will be enough and satisfactory progress can be made on such a basis. If sunrise or sunset hours are not available for mystical practice, then he may adjust its timing to suit his own convenience. Although the general rule is that meditation is much easier and more effective immediately before a meal, this rule need not always be rigidly followed. If, for example, it is more convenient to practice after partaking of the first meal of the day and if this breakfast be a light one, that will not be an hindrance; or if at any time of the day there is a genuine feeling of hunger, it would be better to satisfy this feeling first and then try to meditate rather than be disturbed by it during the practice period. The rule about selecting a time before meals for meditation does not apply to advanced students. In their case, if a contact with the higher element is made during practice, and the latter is then stopped to partake of food where domestic convenience, social necessity or other circumstances place the time outside their control, they may if they wish resume meditation after the meal and they will usually find that the contact is quickly and easily regained.

It will take some time for the mental agitation, created by getting immersed in worldly business or personal affairs, to subside. And until this happens, he cannot proceed with the positive work of meditation but must rather engage in the merely negative one of clearing out those distracting memories. This is one reason why in the Orient the morning period is recommended for such practice. At the beginning of

his day the thoughts and emotions are still undisturbed, hence withdrawal into their centre is then easier. Some, however, may find the morning, with its anticipation of activities to be yet started, unattractive for this purpose and may regard the very fatigue of a hard day's work as an inducement to relax in the evening and seek inner peace. The writer's own rhythm, which developed in accommodation to his circumstances as a busy hard-working man, is as follows: Every morning he remembers the higher purpose of his life in prayer, be it only for two or three minutes. Every evening he withdraws, if he can, in an hour-long meditation.

If the regular hour for meditation occasionally proves inconvenient, it may be postponed to a later one. If this is not possible, the practice may be abandoned for that day. It is better, if possible, to hold enduringly to the full period previously laid down as desirable and available for such exercise. This will help to create an advantageous habit. But, if on any particular day the fatigue becomes intolerable, then it will also be better to abandon practice for that day. Aside from these fixed times or perhaps in displacement of them, the intuitive call to abandon every physical labour and every intellectual activity will recur again and again. He should obey it. In the very midst of business affairs or daily work, he may have sudden lapses into inward abstraction. These will ordinarily be quite brief and should be definitely kept so. But they are worth cultivating wherever and whenever they happen to come. If this is done frequently and faithfully, the power to meditate increases.

Although no universally tenable duration may wisely be fixed, for it will always depend on individual circumstances and personal aptitudes, nevertheless it may be said that full and perfect concentration for two and a half minutes, or full and perfect meditation for forty-two minutes, are quite enough in most cases. The preliminaries of clearing all distracting thoughts out of the mind are not included in these figures. The advanced practitioner, who is able to enter the third degree, contemplation, is by the tradition of the hidden teaching, both in his own and in society's interests advised to limit this delightful experience to twenty-six minutes. But as already stated, a rule for all men at all times and in all places would be unwise. The apprentice meditator is easily fatigued. He will best proceed by setting himself easy tasks and short periods. These can be increased gradually as and when the inner prompting bids him do so. Whenever the aspirant has advanced to the point where he intuitively feels that a little more time devoted to these exercises would yield great results, he should follow the leading and seek out ways and means to add a quarter hour, twenty minutes, and so on. This usually happens only at a certain stage of his progress and should be linked to that stage.

"I often think how tenuous is the thread that holds our thoughts together. Hunger, thirst, heat, cold--a touch of any of them and all the aesthetics and philosophic thoughts on which we pride ourselves vanish as by a wand. For most people a mere flea inside the shirt can ruin Beethoven," so

writes Robert Gibbings in his little travel book, "Coming Down The Wye". It is precisely this dependence on externals which makes it necessary for the aspirant to shape them into a co-operative rather than let them remain in an obstructive form. He must not be hampered by the physical apparatus of meditation, but neither must he neglect it. Too much light, for instance, is disturbing to meditation. In the daytime, the window curtains should be drawn. In the evening, city dwellers will find that indirect or shaded electric lighting is best.

The first point to be attended to is the place where he proposes to practice. It should be one where he can remain undisturbed for the chosen period. Wherever this is possible, rather the place should also be rural, than urban, but freedom of choice is seldom possible here. We have only to contrast the soothing tranquillity of country life with the jarring bustle of city life to realize where the mystic can best attain his purpose. Life in the large city, with autos or trams constantly occuring inside it, is not conducive to meditation. Forests are particularly friendly to the aspirant seeking the right atmosphere for deep, peaceful meditations, gardens to the aspirant seeking happy mystical ecstacies.

The next point concerns the body. A straight upright spine with the head erect and in line with it often helps to keep the meditator's attention alert and gives more force to the concentration. He should try to cultivate the habit of sitting during the period as steady as a figure in a tableau. At first he will find it hard even to keep physically still for the period of practice, harder yet to keep mentally still, but the old habits of being fidgety or restless do yield eventually to such endeavours. But it is absurd to elevate this particular suggestion into a rigid universal dogma, as so many yogis do. The importance which they attach to a particular bodily posture during meditation is an exaggerated one. They insist on a perfectly erect spine as the prerequisite to success. Yet the Sufi Mystics in the Near East and Iran for a thousand years have meditated with head bent towards the chest or with spine so curved as to bring the face close to the knees or even with a swaying rhythmic forward and backward movement. They have not found this a bar to success and have produced attainments fully equal to those of the Yogis. Ralph Waldo Emerson, who was the equal of most Oriental mystics and yogis in mystical apprehension and moral reach, and unquestionably the superior of many in intellectual attainments and psychical balance, used a rocking chair at his writing table. Its rhythmic rise and fall helped his work. Now it could have done so, not during the physical act of writing--for that would have been interfered with--but only during the intervals of contemplation between such acts. Therefore he was helped and not hindered by its movement. Thirty years ago the writer personally could not obtain the mystical trance except by lying on his back in bed. Ten years later that was the one posture which effectually prevented him from obtaining it! Today it makes no difference whether he sits erect, lies recumbent or droops the head--the concentrated thought of the Beloved is enough to bring the mind unhindered into quick union with the Beloved.

What is the moral of this? The first is one he is constantly

insisting upon, that the thought is what matters most, and what happens inwardly in mind and heart is more important than mere outward activity. Why do the great Oriental religions like Islam, Zoroastrianism and Hinduism prescribe ablutions before prayer? The real intention is to ensure freedom from the mental disturbance resulting from an unclean and hence uneasy body. There is no mystical virtue in cleanliness. Some of the most reputed saints in the West and faqueers in the East have been physically dirty. Many Lamas in Tibet do not bathe for months at a time. The real value of cleanliness lies in removing a possible hindrance from mental concentration during prayer. Therefore, all rules concerning the body in relation to prayer or meditation, including all rules concerning its posture, should not be overrated, idolized or made coercive. The second moral is that each individual should choose the bodily posture which best suits him at the time, or which he receives an inner prompting to adopt, and not to torment himself trying to conform rigidly to some system when he finds that system uncomfortable or impossible. The more he can quieten his body and keep it from fidgeting, the better his concentration will become and the sooner its development will proceed. Comfortably seated, adequately relaxed, with nerves and muscles tension-free, his fleshy house must be kept as still as its mental tenant will, in the highest stage, one day likewise be. He has accomplished his side of the task when he can sit motionless for the prescribed period without moving a limb and without any other signs of bodily fidgeting or mental distraction.

It is now necessary to enquire into the nature and object of the concentration here required. Those who equate the word with what ordinarily passes under its name are both wrong and right. It is true that many people who have never even heard of Yoga, such as many business executives, for example, show a well-developed quality of concentration in their work. But this does not bring them any nearer to the knowledge of the inner self. On the contrary, they use their concentrative power to bind themselves closer to spiritual ignorance because they use it to sink more strongly into attachment to external things and, quite often, into the belief that matter is a reality. The kind of concentration inevitably practiced by a business executive is the same in some ways, but vitally different in other ways, from the kind deliberately practised by a mystic. The one is usually animated by a desire to retain or increase his earthly possessions; the other by a desire to be taken possession of by his higher self. The one clings throughout to the intellect's working; the other is glad to let it lapse entirely at a certain point into stillness. The one is concentrating on external things of which he can form concrete images in his mind; the other is concentrating on abstract concepts which eventually rise to the imageless plane. That is, the one often extroverts his mind and the other always introverts it--an entirely opposite process.

The mystic's effort should be to penetrate more and more into his own conscious being. During the earlier phase of this meditation there is a double endeavour, paradoxically one to forget and the other to remember. On the one hand, he has to strain continually to let go of his earthly self and forget it. On the other hand, he has to strain equally hard to take hold of his higher self and rediscover its existence, i.e., remember his origin.

All ordinary concentration concerns the form side of life, not its essence. The mystic may not indeed possess a greater concentration than the other is able to show at his best, but by giving it inward direction he uses it to detach himself from externals, to weaken his belief in matter's reality, and to become spiritually self-aware. The antennae of his mind must reach out towards that which as yet he cannot feel nor his eyes see. This first movement in the mystical exploration of the human consciousness is the sense in which philosophy uses the word concentration. When the mind stops working, the senses automatically follow into inactivity. When the mind's power is completely stilled, as in sleep, we cannot see, hear, feel, taste or smell. Hence, mentalism says that the mind is the real experiencing agent. Mysticism takes advantage of this scientific fact to evolve a technique whereby thoughts may be brought under full control or even suspended, the sense-reports dimmed or even banished, but yet the mind's power of self-consciousness may be kept alive. The outgoing tendencies of the self are called in through a deliberate effort of will, the attention is gathered up and its habitual direction reversed through introversion, so that the senses' reports become somewhat blurred. Hence, the first working principle of yoga is the diversion of attention and interest from outward things to an idea, a feeling, a series of thoughts, or a mental image which fills the void thus created. When thoughts are continually fastened to the senses, they keep up a restless rhythm of attraction and repulsion, of pleasure and pain, which imposes itself between us and stable peace. These minutes of mental quiet must be consecrated to suppressing the outgoing direction of thoughts, to turning them inwards and finally to interning them in their ineffable source.

In your inmost being you are already as divine as you are ever likely to be. Hence, no interior training can give you what you already possess, but a suitable training can help to give you the consciousness of what you possess. No practical system can develop a soul for you, for it is already there, but an adequate system can lead you into the awareness of it. And among the meditation exercises which must necessarily stand foremost in such a system, no single one is absolute and indispensable. There is no universal formula for the practice of meditation suited to all men at all times. It is not advantageous to the aspirant to repose in the bed of one formula during his whole lifetime. The philosophic ideals of a balanced development and an equilibrated personality would alone forbid it. On the contrary he will find it necessary to use different exercises at different periods of his mystical career.

The mystical course passes through a spiral-like ascending rhythm so that if, for instance, he began by meditating

on defects of character and dropped that later on for a more abstract topic, he will one day return to his former practice again, but this time it will be from a higher standpoint which will yield correspondingly more important gains. He may fix his attention on mental pictures or on abstract ideas, on specific themes or on vague feelings, on keen rational thinking or on the rejection of all thinking whatsoever. All these exercises have one and the same objective. All are approaches to one and the same psychological state. If the approaches differ, this is only because their points of departure are different. We must smile indulgently at those who insist that their particular kind of method is the only effective one, as we must smile tolerantly also at those who limit truth to their little conception of it. Philosophy does not say that the aspirant should not follow such a method but that he should not follow it to the exclusion of all other methods. A method or technique which may be good for one person may not be good for another. And the methods which well-suited the ancient mind may be ill-suited to the modern one, while the conditions laid down in former times may be inadequate to the modern time.

But whatever exercise he adopts, let him remember four indispensable points. First, his labour must seek to eliminate all thoughts except the thought of its own theme. Second, the more interested he becomes in what he is thinking of--yes, even the more excited he becomes about it, the more successful his concentration becomes. The converse of this is also true. Third, the concentration must pass from thinking about its chosen object in a logical way to entering into the object in a fixed settled way. Fourth, if the first step is to get a thorough grip on his thoughts and feelings, i.e., to achieve concentration, then the second step is to elevate them above all worldly activities and desires, i.e., to achieve meditation. That meditation begins well which begins by fervent prayer or ardent worship. Man must approach the divine withinness of his own self with all possible reverence, putting away the soiled shoes of worldly cynicism at its threshold.

Now real meditation is an intuitive process. But the tensions that prevail in the mind usually prevent this intuition being felt, and still more, being followed even if felt. If he is going to carry on with the same thoughts, the same cares and the same hopes which preoccupied his busy hours, he might as well continue with what he was doing before the meditation hour. The first advantage--as it is the first necessity--of meditation is that it shall concern itself with something entirely different. It must lift him out of the stream of personal life. It must, in short, start and end with one theme--the Overself. Hence, he must begin to meditate by taking his thoughts away from his own affairs and from the world's affairs, putting them instead on the object of his quest--the Overself. During these intervals he should cultivate the capacity to place his worldly business at a distance and to calm the outward rushing emotions. When he "goes into silence", when he sits down to meditate, he should first clear all the day's business or occupations out of his mind. When he enters the meditation chamber, he should not only let the door shut on the outside world altogether, but also on

that inside world where trivialities, routine, business affairs, angers, resentments, irritations and passions are native inhabitants. Equally so, he should let the past go and disdain the future. He is there to engage himself in an holier business than what the world usually engages in, to follow a diviner occupation than the personality's fated round, and to lift his thoughts to higher levels than the wonted one. The renunciation required of him during this period is both external and internal: it must indeed be a total one. The mother must put away her children as though they had never been born. The scholar must forget his books as though they had never rested on his shelves. The manufacturer must travel far from his factory as though it belonged to a dead past. The worker must join the ranks of the unemployed as though he had never been elsewhere. It often happens that failure in meditation is caused by this failure to detach thoughts from the personal affairs of everyday routine. The first remedy is to choose a theme which in itself holds sufficient interest to keep his thoughts tethered to it. The second remedy is rigidly to transfer attention back to this theme every time he becomes aware of having strayed.

In theory, the attention ought not to deviate a single second from the thought upon which it is being held. In practice, it will certainly do so for ancient habit has made it restless, intractable and dissipated. How weak man has become is shown by his widespread incapacity to pass even a half hour in uninterrupted withdrawal from the affairs of his personal individuality and in unremitting communion with his higher individuality. Concentration inexorably demands that the mind shall not think of twenty different things and people in as many minutes. Yet as soon as anyone sits down to meditate, a motley crowd of thoughts will batter at the gates of his consciousness. No one except the experienced person, who has practised for some years and practised with regularity, determination and understanding, is likely to be free of this nuisance. These distractions are so persistent and so troublesome that they drive many, if not most, beginners into hopeless despair or utter boredom and so drive them away from meditation exercises altogether in the end. How many people have had this time-wasting experience in meditation: They think for a moment or two about the spiritual theme they have assigned themselves but it is soon dropped or crowded out by a host of irrelevant thoughts, memories and anticipations--mostly of a worldly nature. They finally rise with relief from this irksome effort as soon as the allotted period ends. How often must they wait for the feeling of divine contact only to find at the end of the meditation period that it has again failed to manifest itself! How often have they begun with expectancy only to end with despondency as this tantalizing elusiveness repeats itself still again! If others have found the divine self by turning inwards, they themselves have been unluckier and found only irresponsive emptiness.

The aspirant must be willing to go through these boring preliminaries and endure the depressing unease of those early experiments. There is no escape from them at his present stage. Most of his time during the meditation is

frittered away in fighting his mental restlessness and emotional distractions. As thought after thought encroaches upon his attention, he must try to brush each one away as it appears and keep himself vigilant in this matter. It will require a kind of grip upon himself, an inner reserve which says: "Thus far but no farther". It is a strenuous exercise, this, to keep the mind in undistracted and undisturbed concentration upon the quest of the free self. He is habitually so active, so restless and so extroverted that the reversal of his ways inevitably meets with stiff and stubborn resistance. Even for the many persons of moderately successful advancement in the art, meditation is not outright smooth sailing. Alas! there are times for them, too, when the meditation period is filled with desert-like aridity, leaving thoughts restless and emotions bored. But even such periods are not really wasted. They teach them to be humble and patient. Although each practice period has no longer to surmount the natural inertia of the extroverted mentality, it still has to overcome anew not only the inner resistance of a turbulent mentality although it will be far less than with the unpractised person, but also the added resistance of alien thought-conditions and emotional strains temporarily 'picked up' during the day's contacts and meetings with others. This, indeed, is one of the further reasons why students of Yoga in the East take to solitude and avoid society. All these resistances evoke shadows of depression, even despair, but they can be overcome by using the sword of patience to pierce them. That is, unless they can bear the fatigue no longer, they should not impatiently abandon the practise on that occasion as being useless but should keep on keeping on, trying the effect of a prayer to the higher self to come to their help. After some minutes, perhaps, or a longer time, the resistance may melt away of its own accord.

Few of those, who sit down to unroll the coloured carpet of meditation, really succeed in entering the state of mental quiet. That is a positive and later result whereas the earlier one is negative. The struggle to keep the attention fixed, during the preliminary part of a meditation period, is an intense one. Many become disheartened by its difficulty. Yet the more and more they attempt it, the easier and easier it will certainly become in time. The disciple ought to recognise that, just as it often takes a certain length of time to get really started with some intellectual work, so it takes a certain time to get started with this spiritual work. Only the adept in meditation can obtain immediate results. All others need to work their way gradually toward the first results. He must accept the fact that these negative preliminaries, which yield no immediate fruit, must needs take up the greater part of his allotted time. He should not look for quick results. It cannot be helped. He must cheer himself with the thought that the reward of perseverance is expertness, but until then he must learn to wait and work for the agitated mentality to collect and calm itself and stop its whirl of themes and thoughts. He must remind himself that, if the practice of meditation is most difficult, it is also most essential, that without this unremitting practice made into a part of his everyday life, it is not possible to succeed either in detaching himself from earthly desires or in attaching himself to the Overself. Here, impatience is a

sign that the lower self naturally resists the inward drawing towards meditation for it sees in such a course the ultimate loss of its own sovereignty. If the commonplace qualities of patience and perseverance have any value anywhere, it is here. With their help and with devotion to the practice, he may after a protracted period of trial and error become possessed of a good technique. It was no less a master of the art than the renowned Indian sage, Shankara, who said that, if meditation is carried on with perseverance and fervour, it will attain its goal in not too long a time.

All the powerful and predominant tendencies, which make both the movement of thoughts and the externalization of attention the ingrained habits which they really are, assail the student and draw him backwards to the common enslaved condition in which he and all mankind have hitherto dwelt. His duty is to summon his inner strength to resist the return of these thoughts and to repel the intrusion of objects upon his attention. The effort to maintain the introverted state must be sustained, not in a violent nor self-conscious way but in an easy and gentle one. And it must be repeated day after day without remission until success is complete and permanent. Many beginners make the error of believing that the result, if any, of each individual meditation must necessarily show itself at the time of practice; and of assuming that because a meditation leaves them at the end as they were at the beginning, because it seems barren, dry and without result, that it therefore is a disappointing failure. This is not so. It may show itself a little later. The effort is not wasted. Only, the profit has not appeared above the threshold of consciousness. These exercises may make the going seem slow and laborious. They must look upon them as a kind of gymnastic discipline, a self-training whose results in self-development will surely show themselves, although at an unspecifiable date.

Just as we do not discard a mirror because we cannot see our face in it the first time but rub and polish it again and again until we do, so should we not discard the regular practice of meditation because we do not see our spiritual self in it the first year but should persevere until we do. To hush the outgoing energies of the body, to stand aside from the active functioning of the senses and to bid the waves of thought be still, is a task which naturally calls for a great concentration of all our forces. Therefore, it is not an easy one, but nevertheless it is not an impossible one. Hundreds of men and women have successfully accomplished it during the past centuries and in different lands. The secret of this achievement is not to give up the quest because results remain monotonously absent, not to stop efforts through impatience or irritation or despair. In the early stages, meditation feels arduous and profitless. In the intermediate stages, there are periods of conscious progress with intervals of staleness. For it is then that the mind works on the pneumatic drill principle. Persevering endeavour will bring proficiency, irregularly no doubt, but to an ever-increasing extent. If the thinking consciousness resents these daily attacks upon its restless wandering character and stubbornly clings to its old habits, one day its resistance will be worn out and it will quietly yield.

For months and perhaps years, the practitioner will have to draw attention forcibly back from these wanderings, but if he persists, the day will surely come when it will stop them of its own accord and willingly seek the rest which meditation offers. The hour will eventually come when he will no longer have to try to meditate; meditation will come to him of itself, facilely and smoothly. Expertness comes in the art of meditation, as in all other arts, through this untiring practice. The concentration becomes easy and pleasant. The proficient's internal tension disappears and his whole being becomes well-poised, harmoniously relaxed.

In this development there are three stages. First, the long monotonous tiring fight against the wandering tendencies of the intellect. Second, the shorter and easier struggle to maintain and prolong concentrative power once it is developed. Third, the effortless triumph of habitual practice finally making expertness a natural phenomenon. The firmness with which he holds the single idea of finding the divine self within and the immediacy with which he returns to its quest when he becomes aware of having deviated from it, will mark the end of the first stage with any exercise. If the first stage of concentrated attention inwardly directed upon the mind itself is successfully achieved, the second stage will then be to prolong it. The second stage has been satisfactorily achieved when the practice is resumed with pleasure and discontinued with reluctance, when the mind is able to concentrate and withdraw inwards within a minute or two of sitting down. He may arrive at such an expertness that he will be able to pass at once with ease and at will into the first and then the second stages of meditation.

As the effects of meditation grow more and more familiar, understanding of its mechanism and facility in its practice grow with them. With the increase of facility which time thus brings to him, the decrease of distraction will correspondingly delight him. Shorter and shorter will become the waiting preliminary period during which thoughts, memories, anticipations, emotions and agitations aroused by his external life manifest themselves and prevent perfect concentration or delay inward self-absorption. Anyone who is already well advanced on the quest always finds the meditation time a joyous tryst with the beloved whereas he who is taking his first steps often finds it an irksome meeting with boredom. The novice moves reluctantly and unwillingly to his self-commanded duty of daily meditation on his higher self. The proficient, who has conquered the technique, moves joyfully and eagerly to his God-blessed gift of daily communion with his higher self. It has passed from the stage of being a drudgery to that of being a privilege. In the fully developed meditative life, there is ease, naturalness and stability. It will demonstrate poise and show balance. The difference between a restless mind and a disciplined one is like the difference between mere chatter and good conversation.

The inner search for the spiritual self must go on steadily and uninterruptedly. If at first the seeker finds nothing and feels nothing, he is not to be discouraged. He is digging a well. Some have to dig far and long before water appears. He should push his search deeper down. The water of

life is there; he need not doubt that. Every ancient seer, every medieval saint, every contemporary mystic testifies to this fact. His mystical progress will be characterized by an increasing withdrawal into himself, by a drawing back from the physical senses, and by an interiorizing and immobilizing of attention. Deeper and deeper will his consciousness sink away from environment and into itself. During the mind's movement back upon itself, he will quite definitely experience the sensation of going inside. It will be like trying to penetrate through layer after layer of the mind. He has not only to shut out all sensations of external objects but all sensations of his own body's existence.

But it is one thing to introvert attention to this deep point and another to be able to sustain the introversion itself. He must not only achieve it fully and completely but also remain immersed in it for some time to develop its strength and effectiveness, to enable the daily renewals to become almost instantaneous. The troublesome temptation to get up and stop the effort, before the full time allotted for meditation is over, occasionally becomes overpowering. But to yield to it is to accept defeat. To resist it is to cut a further length of the road to victory. Or the temptation to get up and do this or that, to think about some other matter, even a spiritual matter, will also come insistently. He must remain firm and not yield to it. This is hard to do, but only because he has for so long, for a whole lifetime probably, allowed his attention to become absorbed by the outer world that it now tends naturally to fly back there the instant his vigilance stops. Through insistent practice and patient cultivation, he can definitely make this turning to the inner world, this silencing of body and mind, just as easy to do eventually as it is hard to do now.

He has now reached the most critical and most important part of his adventure in meditation. It is the border-line where his own effort must begin to cease and the soul's effort must begin to start. He has to keep perfectly still, in body and in thought, so as to let this other presence overshadow him in a beatific quiescence. It cannot do this whilst he is physically busy, mentally preoccupied, emotionally attracted or repelled by something or someone. He has to keep still in every way. Thus, he will introduce nothing to impede the holy presence's movement stealing over his body and taking hold of his mind. All this can be literally felt. But the slightest obstruction causes its instant withdrawal. From being positive he must now become passive. The profound mystery of Grace is involved here.

The psychological condition of this degree is quite involuntarily induced, whereas those of the earlier degrees cannot arise without willed endeavour. If the meditator does not brush aside its early beginnings or otherwise obstruct it, it often grows so rapidly into mesmeric strength as to become wholly irresistible. Although it is some power outside of his ordinary self, it is somehow also a power not separate from that self. The effect of this grace is a mighty one. With every influx of it, he feels a change coming over him, although this change may take a variety of forms. But whatever the form, the strain which accompanied his earlier essays

in concentration comes to an end. The struggles through which he then laboured will no more vex him. The aspirant has to feel his way into this higher mood much as the artist has to feel his own way into a creative mood. Attention must here move as vigilantly as a man walking along the narrow parapet of an embankment which overtops a river. When the central consciousness lies effortlessly fastened to this central point, its attention now wholly held, the period of novitiate, with its disheartening failures, is definitely at an end. His vague feelings will now begin to assume concrete form.

If the student faithfully follows out these instructions and diligently performs these exercises, he will sooner or later become conscious of this subtle presence within his own mental atmosphere. It will be something exalted, noble, serene and transcendental, but it will also be something which he cannot keep and quickly loses. Nevertheless, it will return again and again. As soon as he sits down to meditate, its spell will seem to be magically thrown over him like the fabled enchantment of fairy tales. He should unhesitatingly surrender to its mysterious but delightful influence. The process of bringing this new life to birth within himself, which was hitherto haturally a painful and prolonged one, will henceforth be a source of growing joy. Little by little he will forget his worldly affairs as he sits in meditation and more and more remember his spiritual affairs. He will come to love the calmness and contentment which these periods of fruitful contemplation bring him and which are unknown to those who despise such exercises. The sense of satisfying rest, which comes over him in this state, will always be noticeable. He will enter it each time feeling like a weary traveller who has reached the end of a long exile, like a fatigued wanderer who has returned home. During these brief periods, his consciousness will become invested with a ripeness of understanding that it does not possess outside them.

What he has most to learn at this stage is, in one sense, easy and simple. And yet in practice, it turns out to be hard and elusive. It is to 'let go', to cease from striving, to let his will relax, to stop thinking that the Overself is something he has to get hold of and to let himself be gotten hold of by it. Moreover, he is not to limit this attitude to the meditation period only but to bring it briefly several times a day into his ordinary life. He is indeed to be like the swimmer who now and again turns over on his back and floats quietly with a few gentle footstrokes where before he rushed noisily forward with vigorous armstrokes, or like the archer whose task is to concentrate on drawing the arrow as far backward as he can attain but the actual propulsive force is not supplied by him. So the Yogi's task is to concentrate his attention inwardly as much as he can but the actual entry into mystical consciousness is entirely beyond his own determining. This inner quest during meditation is something like the outer quest of a radio user who is twirling the station-finding knob at random in an effort to establish contact with a satisfying broadcast. For the meditator who has succeeded in turning his attention well inwards must then use it to explore his inner being in an effort to establish contact with its profoundest point, with the mystical centre where everyday consciousness emerges from the Overself. Until he has trained

himself in this mysterious art through long practice, his earlier explorings will naturally be slow, blind and groping ones. But just as naturally they will be transformed with time into well-directed movements which will quickly bring him to the sought-after point. Once he touches it and faithfully holds fast to it, he will have to cease being active and instead become quiescent and open to the diviner influence which will now play upon him, just as the radio listener when he has found the desired station must remain passive and open himself to the sounds which will now play upon his eardrums. (We do not offer these comparisons for their exactness but for their instructiveness. They are only analogies and ought not to be pushed beyond their usefulness or they will land us in difficulties.) One reason for this insistence on meditation as a part of the fourfold quest may now become clear. In all worldly affairs, he is ordinarily using his personal will whereas the philosophic ideal calls for its surrender to a higher will. The advanced phase of meditation enables him to practice this surrender in the deepest way. Hence, meditation is vastly important and imperatively necessary to the seeker for this reason alone. What he achieves temporarily in displacing the ego and stilling the mind during its short practice, will become a root whence the possibility of a more durable result can grow through the earth of his whole character.

A return to the attitude of prayer is helpful here to attract the onset of the state of quiescence. This is the way of utter humility for it merely sets up a quest and then waits for the divinity in him to rise up and end the quest by its own self-revelation. It is a way consonant with the words of Christ, satisfying the condition which He laid down when He said, "Except ye become as little children, ye cannot enter the kingdom of heaven." The keynote of this new stage is surrender, utter and complete. He must let the divine current flow unhindered and unregulated, not attempt arbitrarily to divert it into ego-chosen channels, or it will disappear. The moment when he feels the "Overself's spell" laid upon him is a crucial one. He must submit to it without resistance and without delay. Otherwise, it may be 'gone with the wind' for that day. All he has to do is to receive humbly rather than to strive egoistically. His work is to yield himself up, the Overself's to take possession of him.

If the first stage of this adventure involves an eager willed endeavour of the mind, the final involves a quiet passive surrender of it. If the one depends wholly on the aspirant's own exertions, the other depends wholly on the Overself's bestowal of grace. In both the first and second stages, i.e. in concentration and meditation, the will is eager and active so that the results are its own productions, but the very contrary is the case in contemplation, which is the third stage. He has absolutely nothing to do except be content and receive what the higher self graciously bestows upon him.

Such a state of absorption is not a passive one. How could it be when the mind must be made strong enough to endure the strain and steady enough to hold the stillness perfectly when the thoughts are dropped? It is definitely and energetically positive to the external world although necessarily

plastic and sensitive to the influx from the deeper mind. Indeed, he must beware of making his meditation merely negative and nothing more. He must disdain the glib easy assurance so often made by half-baked mystics or incompetent teachers that all he needs to do is sit down and wait passively for the "spirit" to enter into him. For this is a way which may not bring the 'spirit' at all but instead may lead either to waste of time or to psychic danger. He must not be vague, hazy or purposeless when he sits down, should not seek a mere blankness. On the contrary, he must be fully alert and wholly attentive, positive in attitude and definite in understanding of what it is that he is trying to do. There must be a definite subject for his thoughts to start with and only afterwards an object in repressing those thoughts. Only then may he become receptive and expectant but such relaxation should be like that of an eagle vigilantly poised in mid-air over a possible prey below. The dangers of faulty meditation, the lack of personal instructions and common experience to draw on which confronts the modern western man who attempts it, the excesses, extravaganees, absurdities and aberrations into which neurotic meditators may easily fall, all this constitutes a case for informed vigilance and common sense controls, not at all for dispensing with meditation altogether.

What will be the physical condition of the meditator when he reaches this degree?

It may be said in a real and definite sense that during the advanced stages of this endeavour, when he begins to sink in the heart and stop thinking on the way, he literally quite goes inside himself. As attention deepens, meditation passes into contemplation and the world of the five senses definitely recedes. He will sit like a rooted tree. For as this great stillness settles on the mind, a corresponding motionlessness settles on the body. The whole muscular system becomes unresistingly inert, every limb gently rigid. Some power, other than his own, captures his body and its limbs, his mind and its thoughts. He cannot stir the one or direct the other. He is its helpless victim. For a short time the body will be powerless to move, the mouth unable to speak, and the will unable to assert itself. He will naturally fear the unfamiliar. He will instinctively recoil from entering this stage, with its apparent meanace of losing consciousness or of becoming the helpless victim of unknown forces. But this condition will be a perfectly harmless one, the rigidity a purely fleeting one, the captivity an utterly delightful one. Ah! what a heavenly rapture permeates his feelings! No earthly counterpart could ever parallel it. He may even slide unwittingly into the deepest state of self-absorption when the skin on the face quite often becomes pale and tightly stretched, thus producing the ethereal appearance associated with the saints.

Whether or not his eyes will be shut depends partly on the nature of his preceding meditation exercise and partly on the special kind of grace that is being vouchsafed him for the time being. Generally speaking, the indrawing process is helped by their closure, the stabilizing process by their opening. This point will not be for him to settle, however,

but for the higher self. If they remain open, the eyes merely look unseeingly at their surroundings or into space. For the meditator's attention will be elsewhere, forgetting this world to remember a better one. During this semi-conscious and automatic fixation of the gaze, the lids may gently open a little wider than normal so that both pupil and iris are fully exposed or else they may narrow down into almond-shaped slits. The environmental thought-form may vanish altogether if his eyes are closed, or it may continue to exist in a vague blurred little-noticed image if they are slightly open. If the first condition arises, then there are no perceptions of the world as a field of experience and no willing of acts. In this full self-absorption, the senses cease all activity and are quite unable to take any impressions from outside the body.

But absolute withdrawal from all sense-impressions of the outward world is rarely attained nowadays by the average meditator. Nor is it really necessary. The meditator need not lose his awareness of the things around him and need not utterly forget his personal identity, i.e. he need not fall into a trance of utter insensibility. Such an expectation pertains only to the ancient Yoga-methods, not to the philosophic path which is here expounded. The disadvantages of those old ways is that they lead to the loss of all sense-perceptions, hence to unconsciousness of the external surroundings. Indeed, pushed to their farthest point as in the Yoga of body control, they lead to total unconsciousness. The advantage of the methods here advocated is that the consciousness of the world: sensations of sight, touch, hearing, etc., may be retained to some extent without disruption of the higher condition. The trance condition is not at all an indispensable one to this path. It is a physical repercussion which manifests itself in some individuals but not in all. If the consciousness is able to become perfectly concentrated and perfectly introverted, then the presence or absence of trance is unimportant. He, whose meditation attains utter self-absorption, may or may not experience an entire loss of external consciousness and of the capacity to observe what is happening around him. It is not an essential condition. Indeed, modern man in a Western milieu is unlikely to experience it. For him, the world does not become utterly absent and he keeps throughout a hazy notion of what is going on around him. But it does become faint and far-off. He enters an enormous absorption into himself.

It happens in some cases, but not in all, that on reaching what is called the 'neutral' point of his meditation, which is the point where his consciousness of outside things suddenly transforms itself into his consciousness of the fundamental self, he will slip insensibly into a total lapse of consciousness which will be exactly like a refreshing deep sleep. But it is not likely to last longer than a few moments or minutes.

Whatever physical end is the outcome of his successful adventure in meditation, the aspirant will invariably find that, for a brief while, he will seem to be without a body, a fleshless entity of pure thought, an invisible spirit of passive calm. It is after such an experience that he may come to feel that the body is an alien self.

If physical sensations and environmental images are more or less banished from the mind by this interiorizing of attention, abstract ideas, felt emotions or pictured forms which have been deliberately set up as an object of concentration become substituted for them. Now these, too, must be banished from the mind. Just as the attention has already emptied itself of sense-reports, so the intellect now slowly empties itself of thoughts and the imagination of pictures. This is the last important sign to occur when the second stage ends. The passage to the third degree is almost unwittingly and insensibly effected. The reasoning process is silenced, the memory fades, the image-making faculty ceases to operate as this mystical quietude descends on the soul. When the state of reverie can be induced without being a reverie on anything in particular, when the student is able to stop all movements of the mind, when he is able to hold his attention steady without holding it on any object or thought in particular except his own spiritual being, when he has learnt the art of being still, when he can cease running after his thoughts, and when he stops trying to keep step with time, he has learnt this part of the exercise. First, thinking must dismiss its objects; next, it must dismiss its own activity. For in this final stage, intellect impedes contemplation. The aspirant must initiate this process but he cannot consummate it. This will be brought about by a force outside his own volition. He may try to forcibly repress all thoughts, to arrest all intellectual operations and all emotional movements, but success will come only when and if the higher self takes an hand in the game. He may, however, greatly assist the process by understanding what is required of him in the various stages by the light of knowledge which has here been furnished him, and by offering no resistance through fear or ignorance to the unfamiliar and mysterious changes within his psyche which the higher self seeks to bring him.

The power which grips his mind will not let it form any thoughts, or, if it succeeds in doing so, will not let it hold them. That which clears all thoughts out of his consciousness is nothing less than grace. He reaches a point in his inward-bound journey when he is inhibited and the faculty of reasoning ceases to function. Although there is a complete silencing of his thoughts, there yet remains the thought of the concept or symbol which represents the higher power for him and which receives his devotion and aspiration. But it is a thought held, fixed, immovable, not leading off into a train of succeeding ones. His attention must be so finely concentrated on that 'other'--whether it be his higher self, his idea of God, a revered scriptural personage, or a living spiritual guide--that in the end he becomes absorbed in it, and passes away from the knowledge of his own personal existence. Now he must let even this last thought go altogether and then hold fast to the sacred emptiness, sacred because an indescribable sense of divine beatitude overwhelms him. When this final thought-activity gently, almost insensibly, comes to an end, with it the centering of his consciousness in the personal individuality also necessarily comes to an end. But this does not mean that all consciousness ceases. Instead, it shifts over to his higher individuality, his soul. Consciousness, in the ordinary form which it takes with present-day man, will go but it will not be lost.

This is the psychological condition of 'giving up self' to which every spiritual teacher has pointed as being of climacteric importance. There will be an overwhelming sense of release and then the ego will be taken up into and absorbed by the Overself. He feels that another self has emerged from the mysterious deeps of his own being and taken hold of him. What takes place is a veritable displacement of the lower consciousness by the higher one, just as the volume of the water in a vessel is displaced by an object which is placed inside it. He has effected a passage from the lower self to the higher one, from the lower will to the higher one. It is the sacred moment when a man actualizes his higher potentiality, i.e. when he becomes conscious of his divine part. "By not thinking nor desiring, she arrives at the mystical silence wherein God speaks with the soul, teaches it wisdom," explained Miguel de Molinos, Spanish adept, who was martyred for his services to mystical seekers throughout Europe. Only now can he understand why, although it is said that the Overself sits waiting in the heart, it would be a mistake to consider it as a merely passive entity and the way to it as a one-sided endeavour. On the contrary, it has guided his search and draws him inwards to itself and sheds its quickening grace at various times. Only now can he perceive that what he believed would be his own final discovery is, in reality, a veritable act of self-revelation on its part, just as the final act of union is a self-absorption by it. If in the first stage, the mind must leave outward distractions and, in the second, inward ones; in this third stage, it must leave its own egoism. His search for the inner reality of his own selfhood, the quintessence of his own consciousness, has come to an end.

Although he feels himself drawn into another world of being, he also feels such life-giving self-completion in this experience that he knows with absolute conviction it is what he has always most sought and most valued. Indeed, whilst he is in this state and wholly gathered in it, he experiences the extraordinary feeling that he is no stranger here, that he has always been in it, and that it is his natural condition. In this deep slumber of the body's senses and the person's thoughts, the primal mode of man's real being is found. He knows then that this is the infinite source of his finite existence. Here the tired wanderer rejoices at last in return to his true native land. The conviction that this indeed is the Real will be more intense than he has ever felt before with other kinds of experience. That here, in this mysterious region, the higher self has through long ages awaited him and that this meeting with it is the most momentous of his whole life, is an intuition that flashes poignantly through him.

It is the soul that takes control of his everyday self at such times. A definite feeling that he is mounting up to a higher level of his being, a joyous sense of liberation from the ordinary vibrations and customary agitations of the ego, naturally accompanies this psychological state. This makes him feel complete in himself and satisfied in himself, than which wonderful feeling he will never find a better. For the self he now realizes is as superior to the ordinary ever-frustrated ego as real flowers are to the artificial variety. In this moment when the contemplative mood fully matures, the

man feels that he has passed over from a lesser into a new and higher dimension of being, that it is a state whose reality and authority certify themselves, that it is mentally illuminative, that it throws his personal will into abeyance, and that nothing which he has previously desired can be so satisfying as this desireless consciousness. In the happy iridescence , the majestic silence and the dynamic awakening of this experience, that which has heretofore been a mere mental concept, an ineffectual bloodless notion, The Soul, now becomes filled with life and power. The personal ego's normal control vanishes, but its own consciousness is not suspended whilst the Overself's pervades him. The two exist side by side, like two concentric circles one inside the other, but with this difference: that all the evil in the ego is for the time of this overshadowing entirely neutralized, all worldly attitudes and earthly desires are utterly transcended. The whole moral nature of the man is sublimely elevated. The current which has entered into him acts as a solvent upon the last remnants of his lower nature. It seeks especially and destroys immediately the animal desires, the intellectual doubts, ill-will, pride, inertia and restlessness.

With the fading out of sensations, thoughts, desires, emotions and volitions in the deepest stage, the ego and its earthly interests fade out altogether. When all the faculties have gathered themselves into the mystical quiet, when will and thought lie passive in its still embrace, when no thoughts enter to disturb it, the mind is naturally even and serene to an extraordinary extent. The stream of ideas comes to an end. He sinks in a blessed quietude--wide, deep and complete--never before known. As he approaches nearer and nearer to the Overself, he becomes more and more conscious of the stillness which appears to surround it like an aura. The passage in meditation from ordinary consciousness to mystical awareness is a passage from corrosive turmoil to healing tranquility. He seems to enter a land of eternal rest and eternal silence, whose mysterious peace spins an incredible enchantment around his soul. A curious feeling of being laid under a benign spell comes over him. It is as though a little circle of impassive stillness has been drawn around his seated figure.

There is a dead silence which is merely the absence of words and there is a living silence which is really the presence of divinity. It is about this condition that St. Augustine in Europe counselled, "When thou inwardly hearest the affirmation 'Truth', there remain if thou canst." And it is about this same condition that Gaudapada in the Himalayas advised, "Touch it (the mind) not when it has found the condition of evenness."

But if the meditator must not let himself fall away too soon from this inner stillness, ~~nor~~ on the other hand, must not he let grow the habit of remaining overlong in it. It has already been mentioned that, for this practice of contemplative degree, twenty-six minutes will suffice. Such counsel is given only to students of philosophical mysticism, however, for it is only they who seek a balanced integral attainment. It will be rejected by all others so it is not tendered to them.

Sometimes the shedding of the grace, which draws the consciousness "inside", is so swift in its operation that it has forcibly to overcome the ego's resistance. When this happens, there is an abrupt but intense focussing of emotion upon the heart, a sudden but overwhelming yearning for the soul that dwells within it, and a tremendous agitation of the thoughts generally. The eyes may close involuntarily, the better to concentrate, with muscles around and behind them drawing tensely together around a common centre--the gap between the eyebrows. After a while the nervous excitement subsides and a beautiful calm replaces it. Then there will arise the loving joyous perception of the soul already described.

The meditator who reaches this state--and it is only a determined few who do so--enjoys its enthralling condition for a limited time only. There is a repeated experience of being possessed by the Overself for a brief while, coinciding with an occultation of the ego, and then the reappearance of the ego coinciding with an occultation of the Overself. This sense of being over-shadowed by another being, enclosed and held within its divine aura, presently stops. Unheedful of his desire, the visitation comes to an end. Neither by power of will nor by cunning of thought can he prevent this loss happening. Such a profound self-absorption is not attainable for more than a short time. To be granted this blessed period is one thing; to be able to sustain it is quite another. Nevertheless, if the beautiful experience passes, its beautiful memory remains. A hallowed light rests upon these shining hours.

If it be asked why these states are not sustained outside the peak hours of meditation, the answer lies concealed within the question itself. Meditation alone is not enough. The fulfilment of all the conditions regarding meditation exercise will advance him in his vocation as a mystic, but will not be sufficient by itself. What is still required of him is that he should become a philosophical mystic, should unfold the possibilities of his whole psyche and not only his intuitive ones. The effort to attain spiritual awareness is not only a matter of the acquirement of concentration. It is also a matter affecting every side of the life of man. If the quest were only a technical process and its problems only problems in meditational technique, it would be easy enough. But it is much more than that. For it also involves the emotions, the desires, the will and even an unknown factor, the Overself's grace. An integral and total quest must be followed. If, for instance, the aspirant meets with blockages in his attempts to go inside himself in inward-pressing concentration, it is certain that some of those blockages arise from earthly attachments and extroverting desires. Hence, an analytic purification of the heart, an emotional pruning of it, is indispensable side by side with his efforts to achieve the one-pointed stilled mind.

He can make a success of meditation only if he has veneration and sensitivity, only if he gives it the character of an act of tender devotion and makes it bear the quality of heartfelt reverence. The failure to get successful results is, in a number of cases, entirely due to neglect of this rule. It is an indispensable condition of progress in this

quest that love of the divine soul should become ardent and fervent. Only the complete fourfold path can lead to a durable realization. Therefore, his further efforts are to be directed towards this end. It is this joint effort of will and intuition, of thought and feeling, which constitutes the integral path. By steadfast practice of meditation and by assiduous efforts along these other lines, he becomes able in time to transfer himself at will to this deeper state and to sustain his consciousness therein. When, through the united and elevated efforts of thinking, feeling, willing, intuiting and aspiring, this meditation upon the Overself as being his own self becomes serenely uninterrupted and permanently stabilized, the man is said to have attained life's highest goal.

"NOT EASTWARDS BUT INWARDS"

The circumstance of a Western or Eastern birth ought to put us on our guard against introducing corresponding prejudices into our view of truth. Instead, we find the deplorable spectacle of so-called spiritual persons glorying in those narrow prejudices and glorifying their undesirable fruits. In the same family are those others whose misplaced patriotism blindly associates mystical culture with political nationalism.

History, learning, feeling and intelligence have thenceforth to pervert themselves in order to conform to the demands of this hybrid product. The temptation to exaggerate immensely the blessings of a legendary golden period about which history must perforce remain silent because unimpeachable facts simply do not exist, proves too strong for bias, vanity and credulity to resist.

It is an unfortunate fact that many Oriental religio-mystical writers of antique times, and not a few of later times, cultivated the art of letting their fancies run wild. The intent in some cases was, no doubt, simply, sincerely and well-meaningly to impress their readers and arouse their interest or, in other cases, to express symbolically what would be difficult for immature minds to comprehend literally. But their writings have an unfortunate effect, in places, upon the moderns--except those who are still medievally-minded and intellectually immature. For if we apply the various tests of credibility, such as critical analysis, rational plausibility, past experience or scientific knowledge, we are forced to recognize that although great truths are to be found in these writings, great nonsense is also to be found there, especially when they are supposed to describe, literally, historical events.

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do so with caution. For, where myth and legend permit it, even though history contradicts, this content is romantically associated in the prophet's or propagandist's imagination with alleged glories and perfect (because priest-guided) civilizations of their own long-vanished past, superstitiously coupled with old or new prophecies of a return to or resurrection of them in the near future. Each appeals to the vanity of his people by exclaiming, in effect, what Fichte exclaimed to the Germans: "Among all the nations, it is you in whom the germ of human perfection is most definitely contained, and to whom progress in the development thereof is entrusted." Led astray by their mistaken Messianic belief, they come at last firmly to expect that all other peoples and races on this earth will accept their moral leadership, acknowledge their spiritual authority and revere them as a divine race. Thus they egotistically turn truth--which should be regarded as the universal heritage of all humanity--into a local affair or a racial matter.

It is a common attitude among aged peoples to console themselves for present frustrations by contemplation of past glories, and for their contemporary spiritual bankruptcy by their ancient spiritual richness. On no better evidence than mere myth, they always assume that their old society was a perfect one. But had it really been so, it would have been an everlasting one. It is only the Imperfect and the Faulty that are doomed to change or perish. If there had ever been a faultless Oriental culture and society, they would have remained eternally so. The truth is there have never been such perfect conditions in the past anywhere at any time.

They assert that there has been a declension since the old days. Had this ancient world really been such a superior one or such a glamorous one, it would not have been partially displaced by the modern one, as it is being displaced today. Should we not rather say that humanity struck out in a different direction? And because that direction was necessary, it was not a worse one than before.

The very disorder and confusion which they criticize in our times and for which they blame our lapse from tradition are themselves results of the necessary development of mental individualization and personal freedom. The very individualism which they deplore is a sign of growth, of passing out from the stage of infantile leaning on authority to that of adolescent self-reliance.

Those who sigh for the old Orient are wild dreamers. Having deluded themselves with the absurd belief that society will be able to revert to the primitive condition of a civilization which suited it four thousand years ago, they next try to delude others into indulging in the same

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The very disorder and confusion which they criticize in our times and for which they blame our lapse from tradition are themselves results of the necessary development of mental individualization and personal freedom. The very individualism which they deplore is a sign of growth, of passing out from the stage of infantile leaning on authority to that of adolescent self-reliance.

Those who sigh for the old Orient are wild dreamers. Having deluded themselves with the absurd belief that society will be able to revert to the primitive condition of a civilization which suited it four thousand years ago, they next try to delude others into indulging in the same

foolish daydream. But it is unnatural for the adolescent to try to 'ungrow' himself and become a small child again.

The age when legend and fiction could be used to exploit the masses, is dying. The best symbol of this in our own time was the ignominious surrender of Japan's 'Son of Heaven' Emperor after his wartime defeat. His 3000 year-old dynasty was discredited, his teaching that Japs were the chosen race was exploded and his claim that he himself was a divine man was ridiculed--all by this single event.

Theoretically, such movements lead to confusion. Practically, they lead up a blind alley. For to think and behave as though we were Indians living in the fifth century and not as Euramericans living in the twentieth, only renders more difficult the solution of our own problems. Such blind imitation and uncritical obedience end in obstructing the spiritual development of the West from taking the course it should take and thus stultify a great opportunity. Those aspirants who flutter like moths around the light of India's past, should remember that the indisputable fact that this light has today given place to dimness is a grim warning to stop dreaming. Let them not be led astray by those who, morbidly sentimentalizing about the vanished glories of alleged Golden Ages, would have them discard modern knowledge, reject modern attitudes and ignore modern conditions. The infantile kind of spirituality which was to be found under the antique patriarchal regimes, is something they have to evolve out of, not retrogress into. They must respond to the discoveries of their time and bring their mystical tradition into faithful relation with the expanded human consciousness of today. The modern world must develop an autochthonous mysticism. It cannot be true to itself if it permits concepts and techniques which belong to the early beginnings of Indian life, to become predominant in its own maturer and more-developed existence. The natural reaction of an average educated Westerner to many of the ancient Asiatic palm-leaf texts is pardonable. He perceives little relevance in their matter and less in their manner to the way of life and thought which he is compelled to follow today. He finds 5,000 B.C. written all over their dusty surfaces. He becomes acutely aware that the lapse of time has greatly changed human conditions, surroundings, habits, beliefs and outlook. Even the speed of human life has accelerated to a degree undreamt of by the ancients. Modern man does not speak quite the same language as these tattered texts, however interesting and however valuable these may be to research scholars. The life to which they were related was not much like his own.

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The belief that the zenith of spiritual civilization has been attained in India is a dangerous illusion. It can be made true only by forgetting the present to remember the

past, only by shifting the centuries and denying actuality. Those persons who would escape to Indian ashrams or sit at the feet of Indian gurus, invariably end by becoming servile imitators at best or sleeping Rip Van Winkles at worst. Most white people who have spent much of their life in the tropics lose with the years much of their physical energy and intellectual idealism. The bodily languor and moral defeatism which replace these qualities do not favour the development of human personality or the cultivation of individual intelligence. The consequence is that the progress which Western aspirants seem to make in India is partly fictitious and unhealthily self-deceptive for it has not grown out of their own roots. Such aberrations as these cults of arbitrarily-fashioned racial superiority and passionately-advocated national messiahnism have appeared in every part of the world. There is hardly a country which does not possess one, or which is exempt from their special pretensions and cultural nonsense. All these movements of Messianic nationalism, whether Indian, Tibetan, Persian, Jewish, Polish or British, are inflated expressions of collective vanity and pious materialism. The first, because they regard their people as God's chosen favourite providentially destined to lead the rest of humanity; the second, because blood and flesh, not virtue and wisdom, are made the indicators of spiritual status.

True revelation can never circumscribe itself by such boundaries, never submit to being truncated by the accident of birth. True spirituality being always evidenced by an atmosphere of universality, these movements can lead only to its counterfeit or, more often, to a mixture of debased and genuine coinage. Generally, they necessarily exclude it in practice, whatever their tall talk about it is in theory. Only two or three such nationalistic cults have had the temerity to send forth their missionaries to other lands. The most active of these missionaries today are Indians and the most numerous are their Western disciples. Through these agents there is a growing movement to direct even us of the West back to the ancient and medieval Indian tradition.

The spiritual life is not and never has been the sole possession of a single race, country or continent. It can manifest anywhere and has indeed manifested everywhere. God has not given the monopoly of truth on this planet to the torrid regions of the palm alone. He has given truth in the past to the cold regions of the pine and is doing so again. We who tread Western soil shall not in this day and age find our spiritual home in the East, whatever its propagandists may say, but only in ourselves. We must labour independently at our own salvation. Let us not fear that we cannot achieve it. It may be said by some that we lack the spiritual strength to do so and that we must perforce look eastwards beyond our hemisphere for

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help. Very well, then let us go ahead and develop such strength. But the objection is not a sound one. We for one do not accept it. The wartime history of Europe and America has plainly refuted it. For millions of men, women and even youngsters have sacrificed life, undermined health, lost possessions or endured hardship in a resolute struggle against the embodied and embattled forces of evil during their attempt to intimidate the whole world. What sustained them during the terrible years of this heroic conflict if it was not, at bottom, anything less than spiritual strength?

If mysticism is to survive, it must surrender the static attitude, of which it is so fond, and become dynamic. It must absorb the modern spirit and not merely make a few concessions to it or even reject it outright. It must realize that God did not die with the past but lives today: that the voice of God can be heard from living lips, not less than from the dead ones which it honours; that no country and no period has or ever had a monopoly of divine revelation, inspiration and illumination. In short, it must be creative enough to wake up from the mesmeric spell which kept it looking either to India in the East or to medievalism in the West, a spell which powerfully instilled the unhealthy suggestion that authority and finality resided there alone.

A Personal Note:

The fatigue with which we left India was not only the physical result of four different tropical maladies which had struck us down at different times and nearly killed us. It was not only the emotional result of our failure to find in the twentieth century India what could hardly have been found in first century India. It was also and even more so the life-crushing realization that we had wasted the best years of a man's life, the years when his energies, enthusiasm, capacities and endurance were at their zenith, in the pursuit of a chimera by diverting our spiritual quest to the East when we ought to have continued it inwards.

It was not a white critic but an Asiatic philosopher himself, the one we met at Angkor and mentioned in "The Hidden Teaching Beyond Yoga" and in "The Wisdom of the Over-Self," who sadly told us that the then impending world war would precipitate a spiritual crisis which would lead to an unexpected reversal of an age-old position. Spirituality in its most dynamic and influential form would, he lamented, henceforth appear for a cycle in the West whilst spiritual teaching would flow to the East from the West and not the opposite way as in former times. Although he mentioned a Tibetan prediction on these lines, he made these prophetic observations on the basis of his own knowledge and experience, which were extremely wide and quite exceptional.

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The unpalatable conclusion has been wrung from us that, when a boy, what we sceptically read in Emerson is, in our own case anyway, quite correct after all. The Sage of Concord had written in his Journal after his return from a cultural visit to Europe: "A man contains all that is needful within himself." For we now know that had we remained loyal to the intuitive guidance which, unaided from without, led us into so many different phases of the Quest, and led us successfully, we would have missed the unpleasant disillusionments, the inner losses and inexcusable blunders which began to befall us as soon as we strayed away from it. Let us not be blamed, then, for the stress which we shall henceforth place on the modern need--whatever might have been the traditional ancient and medieval need--of practising self-reliance, nor for the scepticism with which we shall henceforth regard all attempts to persuade modern Europeans and Americans to become disciples of contemporary Indian teachers.

The fact that we have returned to the West for permanent settlement is not merely a physical one: it is also a symbolic one. For it means that we have abandoned a lifelong but uncritical respect for the phrase "Ex Oriente Lux" and have gained, instead, the firm conviction that those who were born in the West and possess its culture by inheritance, no less than those who were born in the East but possess our culture by education, must work out their own salvation.

We shall always remember India more for its good rice and bad rickshaws than for its spiritual men and elevating ashrams. Such is the sad confession to which time has forced us. The rosy hues with which we had tinged contemporary Indian mystics in our earlier outlook were, to a considerable extent, illusory. Time, wider experience and deeper thinking broke the illusion. Not that we have come back empty-handed. Something has definitely been gained. But wasted time and uselessly-spent energy cannot be regained. Much insight and great care are needed to pick up the wisdom of the East rather than the foolishness of the East. And that wisdom is less a contemporary one than an ancient one. Those who, like ourself, have drawn spiritual sustenance from Indian mystical and metaphysical culture have now to realize that it is no longer a living culture and that the books we once read with such deep satisfaction were written between one to five thousand years ago.

In breaking away from traditional teachings and still more in separating ourself from living gurus, we committed what is an unpardonable sin in India. For the confusion between mere precedents and fundamental principles, the incapacity to see anything beyond the past experience which pins them down, is perhaps more common in that country than elsewhere. Hence, ever since it became clear to most

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Indians and several mystically-bent Westerners interested in our earlier writings that we were not an orthodox believer in mysticism or an orthodox practitioner of yoga, we have been regarded by them with prejudice, doubt, dislike and suspicion. Yet it would be as well for them to recognize that the historic forces which are now at work will not spare those who are so solicitous of maintaining a rigid continuity with the past. Great changes have already come over the world scene during our own time and greater ones are still to come. Certainly, for ourself, there was no other way than the open-eyed observant attitude engendered by the science of today.

The Swami missionaries in the West already reverse their early praise and picture our literary expositions as perversions of ancient Indian doctrines by modern Western ideas, coupled with the assertion that we have not fully understood the Indian doctrines or else have deliberately misrepresented them. It must be said, in reply, that we always felt free to work out our own individual expression of any teaching, whatever its source, as well as to reinterpret it in a thoroughly modern manner. We did not owe fealty to any particular school of thought and the authority of esteemed names possessed only a limited value for us. The Vedantins, for instance, tried once to claim us as a votary, but if we were at any time a follower of Vedanta--which was not the case--it was only on our own terms, which we knew well would be unacceptable to them. We were less interested in what some ancient lips had uttered on any subject than in whether what they said was true. These words are written, as nearly all our words usually are, for Western readers. But if they should happen to leave any impression on Indian readers, rousing their conscience instead of their anger, we shall have rendered a better service to them and their country than those who imagine they serve her by sugary flattery. He is a true friend who not only praises our virtues but points out our defects at the same time. He is a wise man who not only accepts such pleasant-sounding praise but also such harsh-sounding censure and uses it to improve his character. India will best be helped by those thoughtful Indians who will face the truth through a clear window.

It is not altogether our fault if painful experiences forced us to revise earlier estimates and modify immature views. We firmly believe that such experiences were partly put in our way by the Overself so that out of our personal sufferings and disappointments, we should press the wine of a truer understanding, first for ourself and then for others, that we were called by destiny to be a pioneer. It is a platitude that pioneers must bear the brunt of a struggle.

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We went out for the first time with complete faith, based on familiarity with ancient Indian texts, that India held a monopoly of the highest spiritual thought and practice. When we left for the last time, that faith was broken. We had gone to India in a dreaming state. It is much to the good if the awakening showed that the dream, after all, was within ourself and that it was better henceforward to look in that direction than elsewhere, that we should always look for truth in ourself first and then only in others. We ought also to regard the whole long-drawn episode as a lesson in the necessity of arriving at a truly universal outlook. That which is everywhere present cannot be the monopoly of a particular race, people or sect. The Occidentals can find God as easily as the Orientals, if they want to. The Absolute reveals its presence to all alike. We ought to understand that nobility is inherent in individuals rather than in nations and that such individuals are born anywhere and everywhere. We came to the final conclusion that there is no spiritual East and no materialistic West. There are only individual Easterners and Westerners who happen to be spiritual. We should not let ourself be betrayed by personal feelings into a false revaluation of those immortal texts.

At this point it is advisable to interpolate a note upon the attitude which lies behind our critical statements. Let nobody make the mistake of believing that we write such things in a mood of bitter recrimination. That would be a great error, a complete misunderstanding of our attitude. The malicious tone and vicious temper of the partisan find no echo in our heart. We write them in the philosophical spirit which seeks through calm reflection to learn and profit by the widest experiences and the commonest errors. It is important that disillusionment should not create bitterness, that we should blame no one but ourself for our premature judgment. We shall be shamefully defeated in our quest of the Overself if the pain of our later Indian experiences makes us less generous intellectually when it ought to make us more so. Yes, our heart must not shrink; the more it has suffered, the more it should expand in forgiveness, in compassion and in freedom from prejudice.

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THE SPIRITUAL PATH OF SELF-RELIANCE.

One of the first things the philosophic student discovers as a consequence of his semantic studies is the tremendous influence which suggestion plays in human life. Each man is under some degree of tutelage to the mass. Every moment he is acted upon by suggestions from the crowd. He is more or less a slave--slave to a social form, slave to an established church, slave to conventional codes and slave to public opinion, even a wage-slave! Although this slavery was far worse in former times, even in our own time hardly anyone thinks, feels and acts quite fully and freely out of his individual will alone. He is more likely to think, feel and act out of what has been suggested to him by other people. Hence, he hardly ever lives his own independent life or obeys his own inner self but, with everybody, lives the crowd life. Even if some part of his attitude towards life is innate, the other part is not. It has been imposed upon him by the instruction and the teaching he has received, by the environments from which he has accepted influences and by the conventional standards to which he has conformed. When a world-outlook is so largely fashioned by external suggestion, the need of thinking for oneself becomes both a primary virtue and a factor in mental health.

This is true not only of the trivial affairs of everyday living but also of the loftier affairs of aspirational living. From several different sources a variety of suggestive influences play upon the student's mind and habits, influences which may be all very well for others but which may be harmful to his own individuality at his particular stage of spiritual progress. White truths and black falsehoods, cleverly-combined half-truths and half-falsehoods are continually being presented to his consciousness. Mental life must become a process of careful acceptance and vigilant rejection.

On this quest the seeker must be particularly careful to be on his guard against the skillfully suggested 'truths' of teachers who mistake their own candle-glimmer for the sun's glory and the prejudices born of their own narrow experience for the wisdom born of insight. This is especially necessary in the sphere of mystical experience. How many questionable visions have been suggested to a

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On this quest the seeker must be particularly careful to be on his guard against the skillfully suggested 'truths' of teachers who mistake their own candle-glimmer for the sun's glory and the prejudices born of their own narrow experience for the wisdom born of insight. This is especially necessary in the sphere of mystical experience. How many questionable visions have been suggested to a

meditator by his so-called spiritual guide! How many mystical experiences would never have occurred to him if this guide had not told him to expect them! How much near-mesmeric phenomena masquerades as mystical experience! Take those who are so fascinated by the ancient tenets and methods that they surrender themselves wholly to them and live in the past, wasting precious time relearning lessons which they had already learnt in those former epochs. They are victimized by the dead. They ignore the lessons of western civilization. Why were they reborn in the West if not to learn new lessons? Should they not be flexible enough to adapt themselves to the demands made by the present era? Uninspired, unenlightened teachers who do not perceive this continue to teach the old methods alone. They phonographically hand down what they have received by tradition. If they could realize the vivid inner spirit of their inheritance rather than its musty outer form, they would become free of the past. For then they would stand <u>alone</u> in the great Aloneness. And out of such a spirit they would instinctively give what is needed today, not what was needed by former centuries.

The disciple who places himself abjectly under the thumb of a supposed master or turns even a good man into the object of a superstitious idolatry, becomes a mere robot and as such is unfit to discover truth. Whoever has not the courage to think, speak and act independently of his teacher, will never have the chance to realize truth for himself. Whoever over-weights the value of a master's services to his disciple is ruled by emotion, not reason. For when a man is unable to think a thought unless he has received it from his teacher; when he does not make a single decision of his own but runs to his teacher to make it for him; when he studies no other system than the one promulgated by his master; when, in short, he has completely surrendered himself in every way to the master--then it is right to say that such a man will never know truth, never attain realization, never become a sage himself. If life becomes exclusively authoritarian, if he submits to having all his thinking, response and living done for him by others, he will eventually become too enervated or debilitated to think, respond and act by his own capacity. The system he studies has become a mere trap. The thoughts he utters or writes are borrowed clothes. The moves he makes deprive him of the lessons of experience. The slavish mentality which so-called teachers and pseudo-gurus create and perpetuate in their unfortunate disciples leads to their moral degeneration. For losing faith in their ability to attain truth by their own efforts, they do not try and consequently attain nothing.

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any dictatorial exploiting guide, the light of conscience goes out and the voice of common sense is stilled--they begin to walk in darkness; they cannot see whither they are being dragged. Those who follow such a teacher will in the end, if they are fortunate and sincere, be driven by disappointment to the necessity of retracing their steps. Those who surrender themselves wholly and blindly to him, surrender the very opportunity for which they have taken birth in a human body. He who hands them a ready-made teaching which they have nothing more to do than to believe, blocks their real path of progress and hinders their true development. Thus, instead of making his enslaved disciples conscious of their inner resources and awakening their inner power, he puts a wholly exaggerated valuation on his own service and tries to make them forget their self-reliance altogether. They become more weak-willed and more negative than they were before.

The priest played a dominant part in former epochs and assumed on his own shoulders the burden of truth seeking. But his work misdirected itself when it brought men to believe that without the mediation of other men, without the intercession of salaried sacerdotal hierarchies, it would be impossible for them to achieve a spiritual status. It is unfortunately an historic fact that in ancient and medieval times especially, almost every priesthood tended to arrogate to itself social, political and economic privileges upon the alleged sanction of its title to deputise for God on earth. Exploiting these privileges came in time to occupy the minds of many priests more than the advancement of humanity. It is not genuine religion but selfish priestcraft that, in the name of God, has so harmed and hindered man's progress. This is why we see that an important part of the mission of such great souls as Jesus, Buddha and Muhammad was to curb the unhealthy power and erase the superstition-fostering influence of the orthodox priests of their times.

It was always easy enough for the credulous, uneducated, under-privileged masses to fall victim to the promises and threats of priestcraft, but a parallel if more refined system of exploitation developed where it might be least expected. It appeared in a different stratum where it tried to hold its grip through the medium of exaggerated guru-worship on those who had evolved beyond the orthodox religious state into mysticism. The spiritual teacher originally represented one who gave guidance and assistance to the seeker, but misguided belief came in time to make him represent God incarnate to the seeker. In the Orient particularly, the ignorant deification of living men with the consequent slavish obedience and renunciation of intellect which this often entailed, once went and still goes to the most fantastic lengths. It has fostered

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widespread superstition, despoiled self-reliance and destroyed independent thinking. It has opened easy gates to many charlatans.

The custom of getting men to regard some other man as the incarnation of God may have been helpful in ancient times when the masses were simpler-minded than they are today, but has decidedly led to unfortunate results in modern times. At best, its value was on the practical and not philosophic side, to the untutored masses and not to the cultured classes. To ask a modern votary of mysticism to follow the same custom is to give an unhealthy direction to his inner life and a misleading one to his intellectual life. To call any guru by the Deity's name and to ascribe deific power to him is sheer blasphemy. When a fallible man is mystically turned into an omniscient divinity, when he is credulously draped in deific titles and reverentially enshrined by his disciples far beyond the profane reach of common reason, the philosophically-minded can do nothing else than gently smile and silently withdraw. To be worshipped by others is, in their view, not a privilege but a nuisance. The truth about this has been plainly and tersely set down by St. Paul: "I have planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth."

Every man has now to free himself from the tribal and racial suggestions imposed upon him, has to establish by effort his individual attitude towards life. This is especially true in spiritual matters. We should not worship any one. We may venerate his embodiment of the ideal, of the heart and mind in a perfect condition. It is the idea he represents that is to be worshipped, not his person. Philosophy ardently advocates the necessity and utility of veneration. But it does not advocate a blind and credulous veneration devoid of wisdom. We should venerate the master not because we want to turn a man into God, as the superstitious often do, but because we want to turn <u>ourself</u> into a master, as the philosophic try to do.

Philosophy is devoted to teaching principles, not to aggrandising, glorifying or exploiting personalities. It holds that the authority of the messengers is not of such primary importance as the truth of the message, that priority belongs to what is permanent and not to what is transient, and that men need a re-orientation of thought and renovation of practice much more than reverence for particular individuals. It worships divine ideals, not human idols. It substitutes the veneration of verities for the adoration of persons. It declares that whoever persists in worshipping dead persons, like Jesus, is throwing thoughts into the vanishing void, but that whoever worships the immortal principles taught by Jesus is laying up treasure in heaven. It seeks to inculcate great truths rather than to idolize great men. It is not concerned

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with what A or B has said or done so much as with whether A or B's words are true and his deeds right.

Let us entertain no illusions about this matter. Let us indulge in no wishful thinking and thus unwittingly deceive ourselves or unjustly deform truth.

Moreover, the world crisis as a sign that mankind are passing through a spiritual turning-point applies to truth-seekers also. It is time for them to stop living by other men's spiritual experience and to start living by their own. It is time to show, however vaguely, some of the attributes of dawning maturity. They must begin to cast aside passive acquiescence in patriarchal authority and become more responsible for their own beliefs. They must try to work out interpretations of scripture and life for themselves, not remain tied to obligatory ones imposed from without. They must begin to stand on their own individual resources or they will never rise to the level of direct spiritual communion at all. The tendency to look to one man or one organization as the sole repository of spiritual wisdom has become dangerous to their further progress.

In The Wisdom of the Overself we mentioned that the currents of evolution and the circumstances of modernity have created new cultural values which in turn have lessened the need of dependence on a teacher. One proof of this assertion lies in the fact that the same line of change may be seen also in the social, political and economic spheres. Two tremendous factors have more and more dominated the past hundred-year scene: science and democracy. Modern man's mental characteristics have inevitably been affected and altered by them. He both wants to understand things rationally and he wants to understand them for himself. In other words, democracy is here amongst us, is spreading more widely and more deeply and is here to stay. If life generally and politics particularly are quite rightly becoming more widely and more truly democratic, then it is not so surprising after all that religion, yoga and mystical instruction are also quite rightly becoming democratic. Democracy means the self-development of every human individual. Consequently, it leads him more and more to self-reliance. Against this is to be set the fact that in ancient times the spiritual--the religious and mystical but not the philosophic--teachers, as a class, imposed their rules or accepted obedience without encouraging questions or doubts on the devotee's part. Today the mentality of most people is more developed and seekers will not submit so blindly and so completely as in former times. This is in natural accord with the greater individual freedom of the present democratic era. There indeed has begun an evolutionary change in human consciousness.

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Evolution is both a tremendous fact and an ever-pressing force. It impels all life onwards and upwards. But this two-fold movement cannot actualise itself without over-passing and denying its earlier stages. Hence, he has to free himself from ancient enslavement to external authority. He must begin to look at the world with his own eyes. He must begin to seek in himself, in his own latent and wonderful resources, the help he needs. For all this is the first step to finding the divinity within himself, which after all is the ultimate and grand object of his earthly incarnation. We have often heard in recent times of this or that nation wishing to establish its political independence. We do not often hear of this or that man wishing to establish his mental independence. Yet such individualization of the human being, which is the present evolutionary goal, cannot be reached without it. That which was accomplished in former centuries by an appeal to blind faith must now be accomplished by an appeal to scientific rationality. No man and no group has a prescriptive right to own another man's or another group's mind for ever. No teacher is an ethical one who prevents his students discovering and developing their own latent and inexhaustible resources today, however permissible it was in primitive times.

The human multitude is emerging from adolescence and half-consciously preparing for its coming of age. New realms of experience are opening up for it. It must accept the responsibility of thinking for itself, which comes with the attainment of maturity. It stands today in an intellectual position which is very different from that in which all its forbears stood. It is no longer the simple infant holding on to the garments of authority and blindly following its leader. Today it must begin to see its way for itself and understand why it is going that particular way. History has entered an age when the masses must begin to find for themselves and in themselves the truth which in former ages was handed to them and accepted by them in blind trust from other men. Now man is passing out of this adolescent leaning upon others. Destiny will no longer permit him to depend unduly on the shelter of external authority alone--he has to learn also to depend on his own growing intelligence. A child which is always carried by its mother from infancy to maturity will never learn to walk, will indeed become too weak to stand on its own feet. It has to try and tumble and fall many a time before its limbs come into effective use. And if a student is always, metaphorically speaking, in the arms of a teacher, he too will never progress himself but will really be helpless and, what is worse, self-deceived in his supposed attainments. The belief that there must, however, be somebody to walk beside him all the time, to guide his thoughts and acts continually, a leader whom he must always be looking up to, is not a belief that philosophy can entertain.

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All the religions of the past sought to enfold men within groups. The tribal or racial outlook still clung to them. This was right under the external conditions which governed men's social existence in the past. Only a thousand years ago the inhabitants of America, for example, were completely cut off from the inhabitants of Europe. Consequently, the religion useful to the one people was not useful to the other. The habits and heredity of the one were different from those of the other. But today these conditions have been astonishingly changed. The planet's face has been transformed by human handicraft; Man has now the possibility and power to think universally, to choose for himself the ideas he wants to accept and the ideals he wants to follow. He is becoming mentally individualized. He can begin to re-assess the values of life and the ideas of existence, not as a mere unit in a tribal or national group but as a self-respecting individual. This indeed is simply democracy at work in religion. But in taking this step, he has taken the first step towards mysticism. For mysticism itself is the culmination of all sincere religion. What we mean is that modern man has to become more self-reliant, has to throw off the remnants of tribal consciousness which still rule him, has to learn to think for himself.

It is necessary, however, not to fall into error here. What is meant is that the ego's selfishness has now to be attenuated, but the ego's capacity for individual judgment, its faculty of independent development and thinking power have now to be increased. The individualization of man's thinking is one event, but the individualization of the ego itself is of an entirely different order. The first immediately confronts mankind and is extremely desirable, whereas the second is now about to leave the past and its prolongation becomes undesirable. The first will lead to wisdom and co-operation, whereas the second has led to cunning and selfishness. Some instructive details about the second evolutionary movement may be found in the ninth and tenth chapters of The Wisdom of the Overself.

II.

The Way of Organized Groups.

What has here been said of personal leaders and individual teachers applies equally to authoritarian, hierarchical institutions and public or secret dogma-bound organizations. Stereotyped religio-mystical institutionalism is forever suspicious of the member who would seek

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for truth with a free and independent mind. If he perseveres in the search, sooner or later he is sure to collide with it. When that happens, and he does not find it politic to compromise or wise to submit, he will be thrown out as a rebel, excommunicated as an heretic.

When he perceives how frequently they have become the traditional enemies, as in the cases of Buddha and Jesus, of man's inner progress, the prudent seeker will keep away from them, giving them his good wishes rather than his memberly presence. When he learns, from biography and history, how inevitably formal bodies tend to drive out what is most important and manage to keep what is least important, he will learn how dangerous to truth is gregariousness.

Most organizational forms are too illiberal, are committed by their very forms to the maintenance of past narrowness. They quickly become new cages for aspirants to walk into. The religionist is now so tight-bound a prisoner in the structure he has erected that he may not utter these truths even if he knows them, whereas the philosopher is now so impressed by the dangers which confront mankind that he must utter them.

If the student of philosophy is to join any group, it should not be an external one. It should be bound together by no visible ties but only by a common mental austerity of attitude, a common devotion to the quest of truth. He should not wear a label and could not bear an organization. For the one would separate him instantly from every other spiritual group and the other would force him to entertain thoughts of rivalry and struggle for worldly prestige or power at the expense of competing organizations. It is one of the beauties of philosophy that it is the only world-view which seeks no proselytes, makes no propaganda and possesses no vested interests. It is the only one that grants a true and total freedom--all others thrust their followers into cages.

Men admire a popular movement largely because it is so large. They worship brazen idols while dust collects on the golden ones. It is unlikely that a teaching which sets itself the most exacting standards is going to have a popular appeal. Philosophy is cheerfully prepared for that handicap. It clearly sees that it is intended for the discriminating few. Its sphere of operation inevitably provides it with well-defined limitations. It cannot hope to affect or awaken the multitude immediately and directly, hence does not seek to win their favour. Therefore, the fact that its followers may be no more than a mere handful will not disturb the complacency of its custodians. If they can become an instrument of esoteric enlightenment and individual regeneration for these men and women, if they,

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the only one that grants a true and total freedom--all
others thrust their followers into cages.

Men admire a popular movement largely because it is so
large. They worship brazen idols while dust collects on
the golden ones. It is unlikely that a teaching which
sets itself the most exacting standards is going to have
a popular appeal. Philosophy is cheerfully prepared for
that handicap. It clearly sees that it is intended for
the discriminating few. Its sphere of operation inevitably
provides it with well-defined limitations. It cannot hope
to affect or awaken the multitude immediately and directly,
hence does not seek to win their favour. Therefore, the
fact that its followers may be no more than a mere handful
will not disturb the complacency of its custodians. If
they can become an instrument of esoteric enlightenment and
individual regeneration for these men and women, if they,

in their turn, can thus be inspired to serve others in their own way--it shall surely be enough. They do not strive for the suffrages of the masses. The success they aim at does not consist in the large number, the big recognition, the wide approbation; it consists in reaching the waiting few who are ready to listen, to appreciate and to understand.

Philosophy is encircled by our little audience and will not be so unwise as to stray beyond it. It has deliberately sought to limit our field of influence. It wants the friendship of its followers but it does not want it on a false basis. If pleasing their prejudices, catering to their sentiments, confirming their wrong notions and supporting their illusions are to constitute this basis and not the quest of truth, then such friendship would not be authentic. It is less a concern whether people are prepared to listen or not as it is a duty to place before those who seek it and to make accessible to them the highest counsel and the wisest guidance we are able to give. Philosophy is an educational and not a propagandist movement. Therefore, it does not seek to compete with any other for the simple reason that it cannot. It is forced to restrict itself to the few whose interest in its special teaching is deep and devoted, whose minds are sufficiently ripened to be naturally sympathetic towards it.

It may now be better understood why there is no sense of disparagement in our statement that philosophy is set apart from the motley crowd of other teachings by reason of its uniqueness. That is merely a matter of character-making destiny. The others have their place but not one will be able to fill its own. It must be boldly emphasized that it breaks exclusive ground in reflection about, and penetration into, life. Once understood, even by a handful of competent persons, this knowledge makes its own way in the world. Its dissemination is not to be secured by noise and shouting but by understanding and living it. These are the reasons why it modestly voices its subtle message and does not play the part of a raucous loud-speaking propagandist, why it exemplifies in its calmness and dignity its own injunction on how to meet the ups and downs of contemporary events. It will not shout with the crowd but always pursues its own policy.

The advanced aspirant is a bad "joiner." Philosophy is sufficient for him. He will never again feel the need of adopting a new faith or following a new leader. He is not eager to follow his flightier sisters and brethren every year or two into the latest cult. He will always show a prudent reserve towards new prophets and coteries, teachers and doctrines, and refuse to commit himself headlong to them. He will not agree to shut his mind and quest in a closed system. He will not accept anything

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that restricts his views and narrows his perspective. Hence, he will not--for the sake of his own spiritual advancement--join any sect or organization, any institutional religion or mystical cult. The man who is captured by philosophic truth is captured forever, for it has set him free. Once a philosopher always a philosopher. We shall never hear of men dropping their allegiance to philosophy. If such an hitherto unheard-of event ever did happen, it would be only because the renegades had never really accepted true philosophy. For it alone deals with reality, not with fluctuating emotionalist feelings or intellectualist opinions about reality. Once anyone has dug his way to the rock-bottom foundations of the Higher Teachings' architectural structure, be sure that he will never desert it but will become more loyal to it with every year that passes. Yet it would be foolish to expect that more than a microscopic minority--those born with a burning desire to understand the innermost significance of life--will ever take the trouble to dig so deeply. Therefore, only a few of those who merely read about it will ever be completely loyal to it.

Throughout their long history mankind may be conveniently divided into these two groups: those who consciously dedicate themselves to the search after truth, and those who do not. The quest is only for the man who is willing and able to step out of the herd, for the sufferer who has had enough of blind living, and for the thinker who is more attracted by the lonely path of an austere individualism than by the over-trodden road of a self-deceptive orthodoxy.

How many promising souls have had their integrity violated and have been forced to abandon the path along which intuition was correctly leading them to lofty attainment only to be placed by their organization, group or personal guide upon a path that led in the end to disillusionment or disaster! He who attaches himself to a teacher shares not only ignorance and errors. Such a possibility might not have mattered much in ancient times when teachers who had realized truth could be found without excessive difficulty, but it matters greatly in modern times when one may comb an entire continent and fail to find one who has.

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the best and longest part of their lives in the expectation of meeting or the search for a spiritual guide of the rank of a Mahatma or Adept. They have done so because theosophy, especially neo-theosophy of the post-Blavatsky period, and Indian Vedantism have told them that the initiation, assistance and continuous guidance of such an exalted personage is absolutely indispensable to the spiritual quest and that without initiation the quest can only end in failure. But their search has usually been a vain one.

Now we fully admit and do not deny the assistance which may be got from a true teacher. But a trustworthy guide through the dark maze of mysticism is not easily found today. Where they believe that they have found such a master, quite often their search has been even worse than vain--for it has also been a self-deluded one. They actually endanger their inner life when they join it to a dubious inspiration and an undue subservience. We are here not passing judgment but merely stating facts. The difficulty of finding competent, pure, authentic and unselfish instruction is today so great, and only a little less so in the East than in the West, that it seems to us wiser to emphasize publicly the good possibilities of making progress by self-effort, of unfolding latent resources without over-anxiously seeking here and there to obtain a teacher. For so many aspirants are wasting precious time and energy in futile search and disappointing experiment, when they could be making progress and reaching maturity by availing themselves of their own inner guidance.

When we mention this rarity of qualified reliable teachers, the retort is often made that the mystical tradition contains a saying: "When the pupil is ready, the master appears." We would not contradict the truth of this saying but we would complement it with another truth--that the master here referred to is not necessarily an embodied one nor an external one. He may be out of the flesh or he may be inside the pupil's own heart. In both these cases the instruction will come and assistance be rendered from within through the intuitive faculty, or the master may be a printed book left for the guidance of posterity by one who had successfully finished the quest himself. There are many excellent books obtainable nowadays in which most aspirants can find sufficient reliable instruction to suit their immediate practical purpose. But, in the end, that which brings together the seeking man and the sought-for truth, whether the latter be found within himself, a book or another man, is the direct agency of his own Overself.

The heart's yearning for the Spirit is easily mistaken by beginners, owing to suggestions implanted from without, for a yearning for a master. Those who are mesmerised by past traditions--especially Oriental ones--or misled by

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present cults into accepting the suggestion that it is impossible to advance without a guide, merely transfer to the search for a human being what should be a search for their own soul. In their ignorance they superimpose his name upon it and honour him with the worship that should be given to the soul alone. Instead of setting out in quest of their own soul, they set out in quest of a man. The one being within themselves and the other without, the directions are totally opposite ones. Consequently, the two quests must lead to two different results.

When the Christ-self, speaking through Jesus, said: "I am the Door," It gave counsel which is still fresh today. It meant: "Do not look for other people's doors; do not turn to other men for that which your own higher self is waiting to give you." The solemn proclamation of this Christ-self in each man is: "I am The Way, The Truth and The Life." In himself he can find the guidance needed, the knowledge desired and the goal sought. But to do this, he must have full faith in the Christ-soul within him and not go wandering from one man to another. Either this soul exists within him or it does not. If it does, it is necessarily a living and active force behind the scenes of his visible life. It is surely as competent to guide him on the spiritual path as any embodied human being could guide him. If it is not true that his own soul can directly guide him, that it can by itself lead him into self-realization, then there is no truth in the claim that it exists nor in the records of its power. But the fact is that the voice which is calling him is the soul's, even though he ignorantly gives it some man's name. If this quest is nothing less than a search for his own deepest self, then the clinging to another human self, to external masters, can only prevent and not promote attainment.

Just as the seeker has to learn through disappointment and suffering to cast off sole dependence on any human being for happiness, so he has to learn through the same means to cast off sole reliance on any human being for guidance. The higher self alone can give him durable happiness and it is the higher self alone that can give him perfect guidance. In the end he is brought back by the tragic events of life to the essential solitariness of every human soul. And it is only when he is courageous enough to face those events and this solitariness in all its fulness, looking to no embodied man for assistance, that he has the unique chance of discovering its secret inhabitant--the divine soul. When he has come to realize through such disappointments and disillusionments that he must entrust himself to the guidance which comes from within, not only because it alone perceives the needs peculiar to himself but also because it emanates from that very second self which he is trying to discover, he has come to the true entrance of the mystical path. He has fulfilled one

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of the conditions requisite to authentic enlightenment--he has turned away from other things to the direction of the Soul itself. If he has to pass from the elementary into the higher grades, he can do so only by awakening to this advanced truth--that his own soul is the rightful God-given guide. When the novice has travelled sufficiently far to be able to understand this situation, he will start to form himself and not wait uselessly for some master to do it. He will begin to shape his ideas and direct his meditations for himself and not lie supine and helpless until he can receive them from outside. He will exercise his will and not let it lie flabby, inert or even paralyzed.

It is the pupil and the pupil alone who has to crush all evil passions, reject all evil thoughts, overcome all evil emotions. For they are his and unless he himself deals with them, the weaknesses of character which gave birth to them will still remain. It is not only absurd to count on a master doing this for him but also self-deceptive. No external agency can assure him externally what he must assure for himself internally. The knowledge which is born by his own thinking, the strength which is drawn from his own self, the compassion which comes out of his own heart are immensely superior to the second-hand products of exterior suggestion. He who acts on this truth will need no one else to teach him. His divine self is there, ever present, and will do it better. We assert plainly, that it is perfectly possible to attain this goal unhelped by any outside teacher. The baffled aspirant should waste no further time looking for truth in someone else and outside himself. Let him look within and be himself.

Even Sri Ramakrishna, the saint whom many of the swamis themselves follow, adoring him as an incarnation of God--even he has admitted: "He who can himself approach God with sincerity, earnest prayer and deep longing, needs no guru." It is true that the saint qualified his statement by adding: "But such deep yearning of the soul is rare; hence the necessity of a guru." But his admission still remains that anyone who really and honestly and strongly seeks the highest can find it without having to submit to dependence on another man, and that each possesses within himself the resources for such attainment and the means of such realization. If the yearning is strong enough and deep enough, it will find what it truly needs without much help from outside. But if it is not, then it will become the circle-wandering slave of a dozen narrow and unsuitable techniques, the enfeebled victim of a dozen exploiting teachers, before it becomes aware in the end that it has to find the path which conforms to its own individual characteristics, before it receives the liberating teaching which comes from the purity of its own Overself.

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In every individual there is an original, mysterious and incalculable element, because his past history and his prenatal ancestry in other lives on earth have inevitably been different at certain points from those of other individuals. His world-outlook may seem the same as theirs but there will always be subtle variations. There is no single path which can be presented to suit the multitudinous members of the human species. There is no one unalterable approach to this experience for all men. Each has to find his own way, to travel forward by the guidance of his own present understanding and past experience, and each in the end really does so despite all appearances to the contrary. For each man passes through a different set of life-experiences. His past history and present circumstances have constituted an individual being who is unique, who possesses something entirely his own. It is partly through the lessons, reflections, intuitions, traits, characteristics and capacities engendered by such experiences that he is able to find his way to truth. Therefore he is not only forced to work out his own salvation but also to work it out in his own unique way. Every description of a mystical path must consequently be understood in a general sense. If its expounder delimits it to constitute a precise path for all alike, he exaggerates.

Within the very broad limits of faithfulness to the path, the teacher should allow plenty of freedom to the student to choose his own steps upon it, to develop along his own personal lines, and should encourage him to think and feel as a free individual. Although there is so much in life which the aspirant shares with other beings, there is always a residue which imparts a stamp of individuality that is different from and unsharable with the individualities of all others. Consequently, the inner path which he must follow cannot be precisely the same as theirs. In the end, after profiting by all the help which he may gain from advanced guides and fellow-pilgrims, after all his attempts to imitate or follow them, he is forced to find or make a way for himself, a way which will be peculiarly his own. In the end he must work out his own unique means to salvation and depend on himself for further enlightenment and strength. Each man, taught by his own intelligence and instructed by his own intuition, must find his own unique path toward enlightenment. For each is an individual and therefore unique. To imitate always the thinking, speech and action of a particular teacher, to accept always the suggestive influence which he seeks to exert upon mesmerized followers, to practice only the method which suits such a teacher--this is not to travel the path to the wider Freedom.

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brusquely or foolishly reject whatever he can derive from other men, but it means that whilst accepting such aid he will not assign it a primary place, will not make the success or failure of his quest rest unduly on it. If he understands this situation correctly, this will not mean dependence merely upon the limited resources of his personality but upon the unlimited resources of that which dwells behind the personality. He will look, in short, with unshakable faith to the Overself to lead him finally into that realization of divinity which is his sublime goal.

The message of the twentieth century is that man should directly seek for his own higher self through personal effort, just as the message of an earlier time was that he should indirectly seek it only through a guide. It proclaims that it is in accordance with the spirit of such a message that the wise man of today will refuse to accept the title and position of a guide, although he will gladly accept those of a messenger. He will teach no disciples because he will teach that each seeker should become the disciple of the God within his own heart. He will seek, not credulous followers, but serious students. He will strive to attach disciples, not to his particular personality, but to truth. He can have no other aim than this--to bring men to themselves that they may henceforth be released from the tyranny of external dependence. He does not wish to enlist blind followers nor to develop a condition of mental lethargy in his pupils; he does not seek to make them supine and slave-like in their discipleship, unable to think independently for themselves.

The seeker must henceforth try to stand more alone, to trust more to his own power and intelligence. No teachers are really indispensable, although all are always helpful. Life and its experiences, Nature and her silences, Reflection and its conclusions, Meditation and its intuitions will supply him with what is needful. He ought to find in the struggles and difficulties of life a gymnasium in which to exercise his reason and capacity, not an excuse on which to flee to the second-hand comfort of a teacher upon whose shoulders all burdens are laid. He ought to comprehend that the pains and sufferings of life are intended to purge him of his attachments and to draw forth his latent knowledge that this world of becoming must forever be imperfect even as the world of being is forever perfect. For he is here ultimately to unfold his <u>own</u> faculties of intuition and intelligence; he is here ultimately to gain an understanding of existence for and by himself.

"I am forced to draw my philosophy from my own head," remarked Socrates, who learnt his teaching from no one. His own wisdom was dug out of the hidden depths of being. No teacher set his feet upon the path, no school

pursuedly or foolishly reject whatever he can derive from other men, but it means that whilst accepting such aid he will not assign it a primary place, will not make the success or failure of his quest rest unduly on it. If he understands this situation correctly, this will not mean dependence merely upon the limited resources of his personality but upon the unlimited resources of that which dwells behind the personality. He will look, in short, with unshakable faith to the Overself to lead him finally into that realization of divinity which is his supreme goal.

The message of the twentieth century is that man should directly seek for his own higher self through personal effort, just as the message of an earlier time was that he should indirectly seek it only through a guide. It proclaims that it is in accordance with the spirit of such a message that the wise man of today will refuse to accept the title and position of a guide, although he will gladly accept those of a messenger. He will teach no disciples because he will teach that each seeker should become the disciple of the God within his own heart. He will seek not credulous followers, but serious students. He will strive to attach disciples, not to his particular personality, but to truth. He can have no other aim than this--to bring men to themselves that they may henceforth be released from the tyranny of external dependence. He does not wish to enlist blind followers nor to develop a condition of mental lethargy in his pupils; he does not seek to make them supine and slave-like in their discipleship, unable to think independently for themselves.

The seeker must henceforth try to stand more alone, to trust more to his own power and intelligence. No teachers are really indispensable, although all are always helpful. Life and its experiences, Nature and her silences, Reflection and its conclusions, Meditation and its intuitions will supply him with what is needful. He ought to find in the struggles and difficulties of life a gymnasium in which to exercise his reason and capacity, not an excuse on which to flee to the second-hand comfort of a teacher upon whose shoulders all burdens are laid. He ought to comprehend that the pains and sufferings of life are intended to purge him of his attachments and to draw forth his latent knowledge that this world of becoming must forever be imperfect even as the world of being is forever perfect. For he is here ultimately to unfold his own faculties of intuition and intelligence; he is here ultimately to gain an understanding of existence for and by himself.

"I am forced to draw my philosophy from my own head," remarked Socrates, who learnt his teaching from no one. His own wisdom was dug out of the hidden depths of being. No teacher set his feet upon the path, no school

transmitted it to him--it was self-obtained. Therefore, it was natural that he himself should not care to unload a pack of ready-made doctrines upon a man's shoulders but rather endeavour to bring him to self-thought. A teacher's instruction at best leads to mediate knowledge, whereas the realization of truth must be immediate. The former is necessary as a preliminary step leading to the latter but it cannot of itself give realization. The student must therefore make his own efforts to realize what he has been taught. He cannot escape this duty if he wants reality and not merely words or thoughts about it. The seeker of today finds himself in the same position where self-effort is called for as in Socrates' day. It may be a fact that the old Sanskrit texts anticipated many of his eventual conclusions but he has to travel towards them by a different route. For he has now to walk alone with unaided thought and by pioneer experience. When he is compelled to stand on his own feet, he is compelled to study his own problems; what he thus gains is his unloseable own.

After all, it is of little use looking to others to provide that which, in the end, he has to provide for himself. He may flee to the imagined security of a master, a method, a creed, a church, an ashram, a group or an organization, but he flees in vain. In the end life demands that he discover his <u>own</u> resources. At best, as Socrates has shrewdly pointed out, the teacher can but work like a midwife--helping students to deliver themselves of their own truths. Each should understand that he mostly must work out his own salvation. All insidious suggestions intended to enhance their dependence, weakness and enslavement must be resolutely resisted by those who would be philosophic students. The first task of a true guide, therefore, is to create this necessary self-reliance within them, to help them get conscious of their own latent power, to encourage them to nurture their own understanding, by recommending reflection upon their own experiences. Intellectual integrity demands this of them--that they do not wholly subordinate liberty of action to another individual, that they do not become wholly subservient to his will and that they do not wholly forfeit their free will. If it is true that it is unethical to tyrannize over weaker men, it is equally unethical to yield to the tyranny of stronger men.

It is the student who must liberate himself from his own illusions, for no master can do it for him. He may momentarily and occasionally see the truth through the eyes of his master but he cannot enduringly and unbrokenly see it through any other eyes than his own. If he really wants to help the student, the healthy way is for the master to get him to use his own understanding independently, to give him enough confidence to develop his

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own powers of comprehension, and to promote his concentrative power and stimulate his thinking power. Thus, he learns to trust increasingly to his own inner resources and to convert aspiration into action.

In opposition to the orthodox views selfishly held by the heads or blindly followed by the advocates of other and older Indian schools which declared enlightenment to be quite impossible without a teacher, the Buddha plainly, if heretically, declared that there are two ways whereby one can arrive at right insight--either by learning it from others or by self-reflection. The same point has been differently explained in detail in "Yoga Vasishta," an old Sanskrit text, thus: "There are two kinds of paths leading to truth's freedom. Now hearken to them. If one should without the least failure follow the path laid down by a teacher, delusion will wear away from him little by little and emancipation will result, either in the very birth of his initiation by his guru or in some succeeding birth. The other path is where the mind, being slightly fortified with a stainless spontaneous knowledge, ceaselessly meditates upon it; and then there alights true enlightenment in it, like a fruit falling from above unexpectedly." This second path is the one which we have advocated. It is based on rationally thinking over and mystically meditating upon the remembrance of a glimpse, intuition or fleeting illumination which may have once been experienced, or alternatively upon the description of such an experience as given in books.

There is a plain inference to be drawn from these facts. It is that because everybody has been thrown back upon himself by the further statement in The Wisdom of the Overself that the Overself is the one true teacher to be sought above all others, nobody has really been hurt. In depriving them of doubtful, external guidance, we have given them back the surest internal guidance--the light and power of God within their own selves. We have endeavoured to awaken men, to bring them out of slavish dependence on others, to lift them up from being weak leaners to becoming self-reliant learners, to arouse them into the consciousness of their own powers of achievement and their own possibilities of knowledge. We have tried to bring them to look at life from their own spiritual centre and not that of someone else, to unfold forth into actuality out of themselves a wise comprehension of life, and to work by the light of their own creative ideas rather than by borrowed ones. We have sought to help individuals develop into the awareness of their own inherent divinity and thus fulfil the true purpose of their incarnation. The only redemption which philosophy proclaims is self-redemption. It believes that man must create out of his own consciousness and by his own effort the new understanding which shall transform him. For, in the end,

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realization of the Overself is nothing else than a shift of emphasis within his own being and therefore no outside force can effect it.

"Hold fast as a refuge to the truth. Look not for a refuge to anyone besides yourselves," exclaimed the dying Buddha to his attendant-disciple Ananda, when giving a parting message for all disciples. What he further said is also very instructive in condition with our subject. "Be ye lights unto yourselves" is one acceptable translation, but "Be ye islands to yourselves" is another. Whether we accept the one or the other, the meaning in both cases is ultimately the same. It is a message of self-reliance, of seeking within and not without for guidance and strength. It is, finally, a warning not to depend unduly on human teachers but mostly on the illuminative element within oneself. "Work out your own salvation with diligence," were the last words of this wonderful man, whose reposed form, smiling mouth and peaceful countenance evidenced his own sublime self-reliance.

IV.

The Choice Before the Seeker.

Nevertheless, only the unbalanced extremist can wish to dispense with wise instruction of the right kind, if it be available. For without it men must make trials and experiments in every direction, which means that they must make many mistakes and suffer much in consequence too. Yes, the need of a reliable master is great! But he must not only be a man of knowledge, he must also be a man of power and pity--power, because those who come to the quest are so weak themselves and pity, because there is no other inducement for him to help them. So if they are incapable of working out their hard problems by themselves, they should seek and accept the guidance of someone else. To get a little friendly guidance from someone who knows the farther stretches of the road is as sensible a procedure as to become the debilitated mental slave of someone who exudes pontifical infallibility and discourages scientific rationality is a senseless one. It is the primary function of a competent teacher to show a sure safe road to his pupils and thus shorten the effort needed, as it is his secondary function to impart a propulsive impulse towards the goal. Therefore, a fifteen-hundred years old Chinese text, the Chisto Tao Lun, says that a beginner on this quest should search and enquire

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for a man who possesses insight. If he is unable to find such a man, then he should search and enquire for one who is well-versed in meditation and well-advanced in knowledge. Having found a suitable teacher--even if younger than himself--he should, this text continues, respectfully express his desire for enlightenment and assistance.

The help which can be given by such a guide is to be admitted but, because there are few philosophers in the world and comparatively many more mystics and metaphysicians, the difficulty of finding it unentangled must also be admitted. For a man may have made some mystical or metaphysical progress and be willing to assist others to do so too, yet his attainment may not be sufficiently perfect to free him from adulterating this willingness with other motives. He may be swayed by the desire for financial gain, by an unconscious yielding to the sex impulse, by the wish to exercise power in the world, by the complex of being worshipped by many followers, or by unseen powers which are tempting him to his own destruction. The progressing mystic, betrayed by his own ambition or spurred by his own arrogance, may take to the teaching path before he is fit to do so. One result is that he becomes an exploiter, not a teacher. He domineers over the souls of his disciples, deliberately prevents them from finding out for themselves anything that is hostile to the teacher's interests or doctrines, issues arbitrary orders and expects unthinking obedience, hinders and does not help the true growth. When he wants them slavishly to echo all his teachings under pain of denunciation as heretics if they do not, when he ritually treats every manifestation of independent thought as sin--then he does not really teach them. He merely extends his egotism to include them, enlarges his 'I' to overflow into them.

It is not difficult to find such a guru possessed of mixed motives or of the desire to exploit others existing alongside of the desire to enlighten them. Where the instrument is itself impure, the inspiring power cannot but be equally impure, so that it will be an intermittent shuttling between the Overself at some times and the egoistic illusion at other times, with bewildering results for the unfortunate disciples for they cannot be expected to understand what is happening behind the scenes of their guru's mentality. We say 'unfortunate' for they may be led aright on some points but will surely be misled on others. It is most desirable therefore that if a seeker feels he must find a guide, he should find one who is personally in such a position that he need not be affected by these temptations. That is to say, he should be karmically fortunate as well as spiritually competent--he should either have independent financial means of his own or should have achieved financial success through the exercise of a profession or business; he should be happily

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married; he should possess through the accident of birth a respected position in the world or have attained it through his professional, business or social services. These, of course, constitute ideal surface qualifications but it is next to impossible to find them all combined in the person of a single man. Nevertheless, it is well to know them and hence to seek for someone with as many of them as can be found.

The ancient ideal of a completely ascetic teacher who had completely renounced the world cannot externally exist in modern western civilization today outside of sectarian monasteries, but it can exist internally in the heart of a man who has absolutely mastered his thoughts and emotions, even though he does wear the best clothes and even though he does sport a jewelled tie pin. Five hundred and fifty years have passed away since Shaikh Sharfuddin, a Sufi sage, wrote a letter in Persian which contained this clarification for a seeker: "A spiritual teacher is not the body, the head or the beard visible to man. He is, in reality, the inner being in the region of Truth." The wisdom of these words is needed today and will always be needed. The aspirant should not be influenced by the slave mentality of monkish teachers who will regard with shivering horror the picture of a modern guide such as we have here pointed out, but should use his God-given capacity to think for himself and comprehend that the form under which instruction is imparted must adapt itself to the needs and conditions of the times if it is to be genuinely useful. An honest teacher must be something more than a benevolent onlooker. Such sincere, genuine spiritual guidance as seeks to make the aspirant eventually able to dispense with the services of a guide altogether is healthy and helpful, but such selfish, bogus or incompetent guidance as depletes the aspirant's own powers and intelligence is unhealthy and harmful. The first places a key in his hands and bids him use it, whereas the second neither possesses a key nor, possessing, would be willing to give it away. Instead of increasing the student's feeling of weakness, the true teacher endeavours to instil in him the heightened confidence and deeper conviction which come with the personal exercise of his own powers. For his ever-present aim is to lead the aspirant towards attaining his own proper maturity. Whilst the right kind of teacher, like the right kind of book, will not save students from doing their own thinking, he will certainly help them to do it well. He cannot pursue the quest for them but he can help them pursue it in the right direction. The right kind of teacher must be able to convince his pupils of the truth of his teaching--not all at once, of course, but within a reasonable time. For muddled thinking and vague perception, insufficient experience and incomplete development inevitably disclose themselves in dark obscure expression and imperfect unconvincing exposition.

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We who write this piece sometimes think of the ancient wisdom as a giant statue, magnificent and beautiful to behold when it was made, but now, alas, fallen into the desert sand, half-buried, prostrate, slowly crumbling, waiting perhaps for some Napoleon of insight to arise one day and lift it. We sometimes even play with the thought that the disincarnate voice of a custodian of this half-lost wisdom may suddenly issue forth from the world's radio sets and speak those authentic words which many students would so gladly welcome. For is it not the sages' business to preserve the teachings of the philosophy of truth, to keep them from fading out of humanity's memory and to guide men into the ways of realizing the Overself in their own experience?

But alas, it is no use being befooled, whether by others or by oneself. The fact remains that sages in the old integral sense of the term, are now a vanished race. Let us not waste our time looking for such perfect men. We are unlikely to find them. Let us not expect to meet Gods walking upon this earth. Let us not ask where such sages exist and where they can be found. Who is there who knows? All that has been written on the subject is really a composite picture of different advanced types to be met with and of the ideal master to be dreamed of. So let us take good guidance wherever we get it and be glad that we do get it, whether from some person who has gone some little way ahead of ourselves--not necessarily all the way--or from some inspired text written by a sage himself, whether ancient, modern, oriental or occidental. Let it be understood therefore that whenever the sage is discussed in our later writings, it is not as an actualized being but as an idealized type, not as someone to be met anywhere in the flesh but as a composite image to focus struggling humanity's aspiration. Indeed, could such a creature really exist as an human being?

This situation being what it is, students must keep a clear sense of the realities which compose it. If historic change has largely brought about the disappearance of teaching sages and thus hindered the opportunities for the progress of present-day aspirants, it has also brought about the appearance of new opportunities which have helped it. In two points, at least, they are better off than their earlier brothers. They have available today the written or printed memorials of the thoughts and conclusions, the labours and victories, the methods and results of a host of seekers, yogis, mystics, sages and philosophers who lived in different centuries and in different lands throughout the whole world. The knowledge developed during some thousands of years can now be added to their own store. If a guide is most valuable for beginners to chalk out their path, to advise them in perplexity, to explain difficult doctrines and to protect them against

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pitfalls and snares, it is equally true that such guidance can also be got from available books. They have also available easier living conditions which free them from the physical hardships and difficulties, from the time-absorbing manual toil and drudgery that swallowed up so much of the effort and energy of those earlier men. In the end the seeker arrives and must arrive, if he is going to advance at all, at a stage where he must learn to walk by himself, must learn to extract from within all that is needful. The student who walks alone may make some mistakes but he will also gain useful experience and develop his own responsibility. He will become a learner instead of remaining a leaner. And in the end another man can only teach him what he needs to know and do but he cannot set him free from the ego, from the limitations of the consciousness evolved to its present point through so many ages of evolution. The belief that true teaching can come only from outside is an erroneous one. Indeed, sooner or later it becomes essential for the aspirant to learn the loftiest kind of self-reliance, that wherein he will look more and more to the Overself for guidance and nowhere else.

It is true that were he to adopt an wholly independent attitude prematurely, that is to say, before he was ready for it, he would commit a grave error, but when he reaches the study of philosophy the ripe and right moment to begin to adopt it has arrived. Thus, the paradox arises that just as the stage of long search for a guide is itself overpassed when a guide is found, so the stage of discipleship must in its own turn be overpassed if the Overself is to be found. The embodied master must be given up for the disembodied Overself. Just as the developing mind grows out of the belief in an external and personal God, replacing it by the belief in an inward and impersonal God, so little by little it grows out of dependence on an external and personal teacher and replaces it by dependence on the inward impersonal soul. The disciple can now see that all means from elementary ceremonial rites, the following of scriptural injunctions and the study of metaphysical or mystical books up to personal discipleship itself, have been merely temporary and successive pointers to the real means, which is to renounce everything and everyone else for an utter surrender to the Overself alone. They were needful and helpful to him in his spiritual childhood because they could be seen, touched and read, because they existed as sense-perceptible forms in space and time. But because the Overself exists in the invisible, intangible, nameless, timeless and spaceless void, he who seeks it must at last step out of such sensual limitations and seek it there alone in all its pure transcendence.

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Only after he ceases to search for any human teacher because the usefulness of such a search has been exhausted,

does he begin to receive the inner counsel which shows why all enfleshed teachers have to drop out of his life. The persevering seeker learns, in short, that he must surrender the false independence of his little isolated finite life, not to this man or that one but to the indwelling ever-present universal being within his heart, that there is no river in the world which can rise higher than its source, that if he wants ultimate truth it is no use going any longer to human beings--the last step is to go direct to the Ultimate Mind itself. The grace he needs and seeks must come from God. No institution can grant it. Any claim to the contrary is merely an act of human exploitation, not an affirmation of divine instrumentality.

This explains why no divine man ever appoints a direct successor. That usually occurs only in the institutions which arise around or after him, and whenever this has happened, the successor is invariably not up to the height of his predecessor. In fact, the degeneration of all spiritual institutions is due to the belief that historical succession is really possible as an inward and authentic fact rather than as a merely outward and apparent one. Spiritual genius is individual and unique. It can no more be delegated by such external methods as spoken or written appointment than artistic genius can be delegated. Shakespeare could not by such an easy method appoint a successor capable of writing plays as perfect as his own. Indeed, if this were really possible, divine men like Jesus and Buddha would have saved all mankind by the simple process of transforming all mankind overnight. They would have brought such vast numbers into this larger awareness that the ethical state of present-day humanity would have been immensely superior and gloriously different from what it now sadly is. But they did not do so because they could not do so. The work they did was always good but always unfinished. The condition of spiritual genius must be attained by diligent effort and protracted striving through many a lifetime. No guru can abruptly give away his higher consciousness as a permanent gift though he can and does give temporary glimpses of it. No guru can lastingly effect an enchantment wherein his disciple's whole past evolution and present characteristics can disappear entirely and abruptly. Whether it be the Tibetan belief that the Buddha's spirit animates in turn the bodies of their Dalai Lamas or the Hindu belief that the Infinite incarnates, this worship of a Man-God is infantile and primitive. In the superstitious adherence to the doctrines of pontifical, apostolic, episcopal, hierarchical and lamaic succession, often with an accompanying pretence of infallibility which arise out of this single error, we may discover the genesis and evolution of much religious imposture, degeneration, hypocrisy and materialism. All such doctrines are philosophically untenable and intellectually unhealthy. The only true line of

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valid succession, however, is that every avatar predicts, before he passes away, the coming of the next avatar. Thus his words give hope to those who, living later and in a period of degeneration, become concerned about the future of mankind just as they guarantee to others that the World-Mind will not forget its mortal progeny.

Now that we who write can look back, with a better balance and a surer judgment than ever before, upon a varied life of more than thirty years' spiritual seeking through service, aspiration, meditation, reflection, study, travel and personal contacts with holy men, if anyone were to ask from what source we derived the greatest help and made the quickest and farthest progress, we would be forced to answer--in contradiction to traditional Indian belief in this matter--that it was not from the holy men but our own manifold striving and humble prayer. Indeed, we would add the further conclusion that the importance attached to persons in both religion and mysticism is nearly always a most exaggerated one. It arises out of the human weakness which regards the formal symbol more attractive than the formless spirit, the tortuous allegory more convincing than the clean-cut concept and the sensuous image more real than the abstract idea. Yet it is the teaching that always outlives the prophet, the truth that is the essence of its messenger and the principle that is above the personality. This is why, in our published writings of the more recent years, we have been trying to lead seekers away from mere personalities--whether they be as lofty as Jesus or as lowly as P.B.--to sublime principles. We have been led during recent years, by a lengthening chain of events and by a growing guidance from within, to the sense of a duty laid on us to help disappointed seekers by pointing out where they have gone astray and by entreating them to put to the test their faith in the divine spirit. In this later teaching we have tried to direct them away from exaggerated teacher-seeking to rightful truth-seeking and to show that the one is not at all dependent on the other, as most of them strongly believe and as we ourself once believed. We have sincerely tried to turn their thoughts from occupying themselves with any perishable human leader's personality to occupying themselves with imperishable principles. Such a re-orientation may not only save them from wasting years but also protect them from unscrupulous pretension. It is partly for such reasons and partly because of the paucity of competent disinterested teachers today and the prevalence of bogus or faulty ones that, failing absolutely reliable guidance, we strongly advise candidates to rise against the slavish surrender of their individual intelligence to wrong leaders and walk alone.

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as such. We recognize that they have a proper purpose, which is to conserve spiritual gains and prevent spiritual teachings or literature from being lost. If they have the right men at the top; if they are worthily conducted; if they are vigilant against falling into the vices of exploitation, selfishness and materialism; if they sincerely keep always in view the inner purpose of their coming into being--then, indeed, they may play a useful, helping and honourable part. But if they are turned into machines for dominating minds, tyrannizing consciences, serving private interests and conserving superstitions--then we are opposed to them.

Those who have so far followed us with adequate understanding will also now understand that we have made no attack on the institution of discipleship itself. We have only tried to reveal its proper function and mark out its proper limits. Indeed, the reading of this essay will be incomplete without the complementary reading of its companion essay, "The Spiritual Path of Discipleship."

The physically blind man will not hesitate to ask for and obey the leading of a guide. The spiritually blind man, however, does not even do this much for he suffers from delusions and imagines he is seeing his way when he is doing nothing of the kind! Although the Buddha taught spiritual self-reliance, opposed priestcraft and exposed gurushiip, he did this only because he found himself in a land where these things had been so abused and pushed to such extremes that they did more evil than good. The Buddha did not intend his teachings on these points to be universally held and eternally valid. No sage ever adopts such an attitude exclusively. He is always a practical man and therefore always gives out what will best help his period and place. Only the student himself, by his own experience in trying this and testing that, can develop the capacity to solve his own problems, can ripen the power to discriminate between the real and the apparent, between the true and the false, the good and the evil, the right and the wrong. No teacher can do it for him. It is indispensable to his progress that he find out his weaknesses, errors and ignorance, and then seek to correct them. But this is not to say that he must always experiment blindly and move from one mistake to another. He can utilize the knowledge of those who, in the past, have gone before him on the road of life and of others who, in the present, have gone ahead of him on the same road. Anyone can reach the highest goal by his own power--that is perfectly true. But if he has a teacher to remove his doubts and correct his errors, to strengthen his capacity for meditation, inspire his efforts and explain his duties, he will reach it more quickly and more safely. There are times when everyone feels the need of something or someone to rest on, to whom he can appeal for help, encouragement,

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instruction, inspiration or direction, to assist him through the dark corridors of hopelessness and doubt. Certainly it is common sense to look for the man who can provide these things. Without being too cautious on the one hand or too rash on the other, he may seek a teacher. It is only by such an ideal balance that his efforts will achieve the best result possible under given conditions.

But it is hard to find such a person, hard to find anyone who unites in himself wisdom, compassion, experience, strength and the willingness to serve others without reward. The average seeker will have to look long and wearily before he can find a competent guide or even an honest one. What, then, is he to do? Shall he be so foolish as to entrust himself to an incompetent, a dishonest or an insane teacher? If he refuses to do so and is too discriminating to accept a sham substitute, is he to fall deeper into depression, sink more and more into despair? Or shall he trust the plain words of Jesus: "Seek and ye shall find. Knock and it shall be opened unto you." That is to say, shall he seek guidance from the ray of Godhead within his own breast and mind?

Why should I seek a teacher? Why should I want an intermediary to discover God? Is there not all truth within me? Is the desire for a teacher the last desire to be surrendered? Is the running hither and thither in quest of a guide the last step in the wrong direction? Do we not thereby confess that we are seeking Reality through the aid of some external and embodied personality when it is only to be discovered by seeking within, in our own internal and spiritual being? This is the suspicion that sooner or later will throw a shadow across the road and call us to "Halt!" If we fare further we do but seek outside that guidance, truth, help and inspiration which, in the ultimate, must come from the divine self alone. For is not the teacher's work but to lead one to the knowledge of one's own true self? Such are some of the inwardly prompted questions which naturally arise in an age when the human species is increasingly individualizing its mentality.

Amid this conflict of thoughts, each apparently true, the mind may well reel. But after war comes peace, and the troubled soul can find an honourable solution. It is this: Let him pray daily to the divinity within him, and pray as though it were for life itself when in great danger, choosing some words like these: "O, Thou Divinity within this body! Unto thee Love and Obedience! None else does this self know to whom to turn save Thee. Yet art Thou shrouded in impenetrable darkness. Thou art the object of this search, yet how art Thou to be found? If only through Thy Light in some other human form, some teacher, grant that this being may meet him soon, and

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know him as soon as met. But if Thou wish that this self know Thee directly, without another's aid, then must Thou open by Thy grace the gate which leads within, for I am helpless to do so."

A very earnest Western seeker once traveled to an Oriental country in quest of a guru. She selected the monastery of best repute and rented a cottage below it, the monastery being some distance up an hill. She sought for tuition from the abbott but her requests were ignored. After six months, as it seemed useless to stay longer, she began to arrange to depart and return home. Just then the comprehension struck her, as in a sudden flash, that no one outside herself could do the work resulting in self-realization for her. This seemed to clear up her mind and show her path of self-improvement. She was now ready to depart in peace. But that was the very moment when the abbott unexpectedly came at last to visit her and to tell her she was now ready for his help! So she remained and thus began her discipleship. It is significant that the country where this happened was not India.

Every real master ardently wishes his disciples to attain the state where they can dispense with his own services. He knows that he will help his disciples more by giving them the strength to escape from him than by leading them to depend on him! Every true master delights when his disciple begins to walk alone. If he does not have this wish and this delight, then he is no master but an exploiter. It is a fact, which vested interests and selfish exploitation have hidden from many for thousands of years, that divine guidance, inspiration and help can also come to the aspirant who deliberately walks alone. For his own Overself is the unfailing witness of all his efforts and aspirations and is ever-ready to befriend them. The inner light which is always there for such a man, is a safe and reliable light by which he can walk. When he begins to walk by the light of his own unveiled understanding and not by the borrowed lamp of another's, he begins to walk with sure steps. Such a sublime self-reliance is, in every way, better than the abject dependence on another human being, which passes so often for discipleship. The few who will gaze on these lines with confidence rather than with contempt, who in default of finding the right teacher and whilst refusing to accept the wrong one will make the experiment of working with their own natural intelligence enkindled by their own heartfelt yearning, prayer and warm devotion towards the Overself, shall find that the divine guidance can unquestionably become a living dynamic within their hearts, wise enough to give them all needful new instruction and strong enough to shape their whole lives. The inward teacher will lead them upward to the realization of their diviner possibilities as well as any outward

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teacher, or else it will lead them to such a man, if he be available.

After the student has taken the decisive step of depending on nobody but his own Overself he makes a strange discovery, and one of peculiar importance today when authentic sages are--so far as we know--perhaps a vanished race. The silence begins to speak to him with a new and profounder voice. We refer to the mystical phenomenon known as "the Interior Word." He learns that Truth is always in the world and that those who imagine it is often absent, to reappear only when the sages reappear, are mistaken. If men are blind, the books are not at fault because they cannot gather its printed thoughts. If they are deaf, the violin is not to be blamed because they cannot hear its sweet music. He learns that Truth has never departed from mankind. It is around every man; it is within him too. It is his hidden nature. But is he willing to receive it? Is he ready to recognize and to trust it? When he can answer these questions affirmatively, he shall perceive that he needs no other teacher than the Overself. Once he awakens to this light, he need henceforth search in no other place than that occupied by his own heart.

Ramakrishna's words, quoted on page 13 , are supported by a passage in the Arabic writings of Ibn Ul Farid, the 13th century mystical adept of Cairo: "I saw that he who brought me to behold and led me to my spiritual self was I....~~who brought me to behold and led me to my spiritual self was I~~....Even so my prayer was to myself....Here I reached a point from which the intellect recoils before gaining it, where from myself I was being joined and united to myself....And since I was seeking myself from myself, I directed myself to myself, and my soul showed me the way by means of me. Thinkst thou it was another, not thyself, that conversed with thee in the drowsiness of sleep touching various kinds of exalted wisdom?"

There is ready at hand an unfailing resource; there is always present a beneficent power. If we believe in the reality, the self-consciousness, the intelligence and the grace of the Overself, if we believe that these things really exist and are not mere intellectual concepts to play with in a game of speculation, then we must also believe that it can help us in our hour of need. To discover whether this is so we must proceed to make the experiment. We must place our fullest faith in it and make our deepest appeal to it. We must turn our face homewards. We must stop searching for gurus and masters, and remember that everything human may fail us in the end, whereas anything divine is forever a rock like authentic refuge. That which we seek is within our grasp because the Overself is within ourself. We must make the effort,

teacher, or else it will lead them to such a man, if he be available.

After the student has taken the decisive step of depending on nobody but his own Overself he makes a strange discovery, and one of peculiar importance today when authentic sages are--so far as we know--perhaps a vanished race. The silence begins to speak to him with a new and profounder voice. We refer to the mystical phenomenon known as "the Interior Word." He learns that Truth is always in the world and that those who imagine it is often absent, to reappear only when the sages reappear, are mistaken. If men are blind, the books are not at fault because they cannot gather its printed thoughts. If they are deaf, the violin is not to be blamed because they cannot hear its sweet music. He learns that Truth has never departed from mankind. It is around every man; it is within him too. It is his hidden nature. But is he willing to receive it? Is he ready to recognize and to trust it? When he can answer these questions affirmatively, he shall perceive that he needs no other teacher than the Overself. Once he awakens to this light, he need henceforth search in no other place than that occupied by his own heart.

Ramakrishna's words, quoted on page 13 , are supported by a passage in the Arabic writings of Ibn Ul Farid, the 13th century mystical adept of Cairo: "I saw that he who brought me to behold and led me to my spiritual self was I....who brought me to behold and led me to my spiritual self was I....Even so my prayer was to myself....Here I reached a point from which the intellect recoils before gaining it, where from myself I was being joined and united to myself....And since I was seeking myself from myself, I directed myself to myself, and my soul showed me the way by means of me. Thinket thou it was another, not thyself, that conversed with thee in the drowsiness of sleep touching various kinds of exalted wisdom?"

There is ready at hand an unfailing resource; there is always present a beneficent power. If we believe in the reality, the self-consciousness, the intelligence and the grace of the Overself, if we believe that these things really exist and are not mere intellectual concepts to play with in a game of speculation, then we must also believe that it can help us in our hour of need. To discover whether this is so we must proceed to make the experiment. We must place our fullest faith in it and make our deepest appeal to it. We must turn our face homewards. We must stop searching for gurus and masters, and remember that everything human may fail us in the end, whereas anything divine is forever a rock of authentic refuge. That which we seek is within our grasp because the Overself is within ourself. We must make the effort,

therefore, and rely upon our own inherent diviner qualities, our own sacred potentialities and our own mystical selfhood. It can hear our sincere prayer and it can grant its benign grace.

But all this will be done under the restrictions of wisdom, not in pandering to our sentimentality nor to reinforce our egotism. If the divine being is always there within him, the light it sheds and the warmth it emits are often largely or wholly obstructed by intervening walls from reaching his surface-consciousness. What are these walls? They are materialistic tendencies, excessive extroversion, habitual egotism, evil thoughts and animal passions. Therefore, to become conscious of this light, he must first refine his emotions, govern his instincts, keep up the practice of mystical introspection exercises, the study of the metaphysics of truth and the doing of acts which are both wise and altruistic. Purification of the heart must be the prerequisite for illumination of the mind.

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"THE MISSION OF SUFFERING"

The widespread area and enormous volume of pain and sorrow which have made themselves such front-rank features of human life in this generation, have also made more people think about this side of the problem of their existence than ever before. The pain of the body, the sorrow of the emotions--these two dark shadows on their life--have been the subject of terrible contemplations for millions of suffering men and women. It has been hard for many of them to sustain belief in the divine goodness, or at least in the divine mercy. The optimistic blindness to plain appearances which would say with Browning that "All's right with the world" and see only the truth, beauty and goodness everywhere, the mystical one-sidedness which would prefer to hide from unacceptable realities, must have received a severe jolt in many parts of the world during the war. Perhaps some horrible experiences have brought home to such dreamers the fact that their attitude was inadequate to explain and meet all circumstances. Thus, to suffer and suffer blindly until reason calls out in rebellion and emotion questions loudly in despair, is not without evolutionary meaning.

The feeling of personal helplessness in the face of these titanic events, the mood of utter hopelessness induced by a contemplation of the individual future and the thought of life's uselessness when everything must end in destruction or death--these themes have oppressed many minds during the war. It is not surprising that complexity of the human situation--surrounded by world-wide agonies as it has been for years--and the poignant failure to cope with it, chills the faith that life is worthwhile; nor need anyone be less surprised when it turns some people in the East to a monastic piety that forgets personal responsibility or others in the West to a despairing suicide that finishes it altogether. That is merely an attempt to evade the important lessons which must be distilled by calm, impersonal reflection upon these very troubles and misfortunes, an attempt which millions of others made by the different route of escape into pleasure, only to find when the war broke out that they had

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escaped into the greatest agony mankind has ever known. Intelligence, tortured by such terrible events as our war-wounded and crisis-stricken generation has seen, demands that they should at least be redressed by a higher purpose. It demands an answer to the question: "What is the function of suffering in human life?"

This problem is a twin-brother to the problem of evil. And just as we have elsewhere pointed out that there are two ways of approaching that one, so here we need to remember the double standpoint which philosophy adopts when treating all such questions--a standpoint fully elucidated in "The Hidden Teaching Beyond Yoga." On the one hand, there is the practical, personal, obvious and immediate approach. On the other, there is the metaphysical, impersonal, profound and ultimate approach. There is no painful event in a man's life or no sorrowful contact with another person which cannot be regarded from these two different points of view, and which will not then change its character and importance according to the particular point of view. Each result may be correct but, by itself, it cannot be complete.

All tall talk notwithstanding, the fact remains that very few people are really in a position to contemplate their own lives and fortunes with the genuine detachment demanded by the metaphysical approach. For our natural and human view of them is based upon our finite reactions, our limited senses, our short-range perceptions. In the midst of personal anguish, it is easy to lose perspective. We may take three instances. First, we rarely stop to weigh our own distresses against other men's. Second, when we are inclined to murmur against hard fate, we rarely balance our troubles against our advantages or our physical difficulties against our spiritual possessions. Third, when our personal situation works to our advantage we are often satisfied with things as they are, but when it does not, we are often discontented with the world as it is.

The insufficiency of our ordinary attitude towards this problem is that our perspectives are limited, our views short-ranged, and that we divorce them from their relationship to the larger problem of the universe itself. We shrink from adversity and fear trouble but this natural reaction should not be allowed to make us lose our sense of perspective. We have to see present distresses from a long-range standpoint, that is to say, from a metaphysical one. Unpopular though these views may be and unpalatable though their first taste be, unless personal wishes rather than observed fact are to rule our thinking, we have no other alternative than to accept the findings yielded by the higher standpoint, even though we accept them reluctantly and sadly. The truths uttered by philosophy, however sympathetically, may seem cold and drear--at the time--to one who keenly feels a personal anguish or is brokenhearted over a

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We must get a standard of knowledge which transcends mere individual opinion. That we can do only, however, if we look impersonally and not personally, if we drop the ego from our measuring and calculating. When we can gaze down impartially and indifferently upon our own person, the troubles and burdens which travel with it will assume a changed guise. We, with our limited viewpoints, want only what we call pleasurable situations to exist but the Infinite Intelligence, with its infinite viewpoint, is wiser. A continuous happiness is not always the best life even if it were obtainable, which it is not. Should we not say with Plato that it is better to suffer wrong than to do wrong? The problem of suffering does not exhaust itself with its practical aspect. We have also to consider its metaphysical one. If we have the intellectual and moral courage to do this without the egocentric attitude and the surface emotionality which normally govern our approach to it, it will be possible to see it in a clear light. Such is the self-discipline which philosophy asks from its students and such is the emancipated outlook it gives in return.

Thus, everything which happens to us may be considered in two different ways. It all depends on where we stand. If life is a burden to some, it is an inspiration to others. It is a curious fact that the same trouble which weakens one man adds strength to another; the same disappointment which renders one more selfish renders another more sympathetic; the same difficulty which dulls one mentality rouses the intelligence of another; the same environment which helps to degrade one person helps another to evolve. A reverse or disappointment which hardens and embitters one man against his fellows may soften and mellow another man.

We naturally resent the painful character of these experiences and question the wisdom which brings them to us, even though we admit in our calmer moments that they have really helped to shape our character or sharpen our intelligence. A just philosophic attitude demands, however, that we balance these feelings against the appreciation and joy with which we greet pleasant experiences. In the midst of torment we cannot see its use or justice, but in the calm long-range perspective of time we may see it as part of the divine leading towards our true goal. If a certain kind of unpleasant experience is necessary to the growth of our character, and if life eventually gives it to us, it is then not an <u>evil</u> but only an <u>ill</u>. If prosperity has created the pride in us which will ultimately lead to our downfall, poverty may create the humility which can save us. Loss of fortune, loss of health or loss of friends are unpleasant but they are also often sound tutors in disguise. When this

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is so, it would be an error to call them evils of life; more correctly, they are ills of life.

How often has seeming trouble masked approaching better fortune? How often have exterior frustration and disappointment led to interior consolation and development? How often has a crucial test of character been masked as good or evil fortune and an excellent opportunity been hidden in an apparently unpromising or trivial affair? How many have not found illness a time of rest when relaxation, reflection or prayer were enforced upon them, with results which beneficially influenced the remaining years of their lives? When sickness forces an extreme extrovert to take to his bed, do nothing and be still, it confers a real benefit on him and thus balances its injury to him. He has then the opportunity for neglected reflection about the basis of his life and for overdue reconsideration of the standards which govern it. If he refuses to accept it, if he is too stupid or too ego-centred to examine himself and his conduct, then of course the sickness does nothing but harm him.

There are tragic and terrible events which seem utterly evil at the time they happen but which seem disguised boons later. When suffering, like a surgeon's knife, is applied to a rotten part of our character, the operation may be as durably beneficial as it may be temporarily painful. The experience of outward loss may turn a man to inward gain. It is a painful experience but it is also a thought-provoking stimulus.

If the suffering that follows wrong action dramatically discourages our tendency thereto and picturesquely deters its repetition, we must cease to look upon pleasure as the only good and pain as the only evil. The cosmic force, which deludes undeveloped men into taking the sense-reports of things as their real nature, reflects itself in the cruder force which deludes advancing men into taking evil situations as good ones and good situations as evil ones. We are spiritually shortsighted. We do not always know what is good for us, do not always see a friendly hand in disappointments that turn us from a foolish, harmful or wrong course. No dictionary has yet taught us the true meaning of pain, pleasure, happiness and sorrow. There is no situation so evil that the philosopher cannot see some good in it, nor any situation so good that he cannot see some evil in it. Only, what he may mean by these terms will be based on a long-range view, too long indeed for the conventional mass of people to appreciate.

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The School of Sorrowful Experience.

How many men have been stirred by their compassion for suffering creatures to disbelief in, or even hatred of, the God who permits such sufferings to exist? But let them not deprive God too hastily of His much-praised goodness. Let them not believe also, in their limited, finite and dim understanding, that the Infinite Intelligence is capable of making mistakes. Do not the foregoing reflections suggest to us that some part at least of life's sorrow and pain is neither meaningless nor purposeless in the divine scheme? Does it ever occur to us that our normal attitude towards suffering, as towards death, is not the attitude which 'God' takes towards them? That when we ask in prayer for its relief as an evil, we anthropomorphize the Supreme Spirit? That whether a painful experience is really evil (or good) is largely relative to the character of the individual undergoing it?

It is neither strange nor accidental that the same sorrowful and painful combinations of circumstances seem to repeat themselves in so many different peoples' lives. Man is ordinarily neither amenable to reason's voice nor obedient to intuition's promptings. If he is to acquire salvation, he must first acquire experience. His long evolution operates by providing from without an increasing area of experience and from within an increasing refinement of consciousness. Out of the conflict of human emotions, he is working nearer to divine intuition; out of the struggle of human ideas, to divine intelligence. The experiences of life have meaning, purpose and instruction for him. The earth provides him with certain experiences and thus provides him with the means of self-development. If this purpose is achieved, then the suffering which intermittently accompanies those experiences can only be called evil from a narrow and limited view of things. He gets knowledge at the cost of evil, experience at the price of suffering. Out of these recurring lives on earth, man is accumulating diverse experiences. All of them, both good and evil alike, are in the end a means to develop character and nurture intelligence. Out of their fruits, he is accumulating the tendencies, knowledge, instincts and attitudes which make him what he is. More than that, his consciousness will eventually open up on a higher level. Nature directs her operations to this end. Life is not so monotonously futile as it seems. Each entity's suffering becomes a medium through which in the end it evolves a higher form of its own life.

It is true that life inexorably brings us anguish and disappointment. But it is also true that it brings us, if only we will accept them, the compensation of sounder judgment and the consolation of higher values. Such anguish is

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a tutor, albeit an expensive one. It is a way of learning nasty but needed lessons and improving low or inferior values. Suffering teaches us some particular aspect of truth and thus advances our progress. Humanity swims forward on a stream formed from its own tears. The real purpose of the shifts of experience, with its changes of fortune, its joyous or miserable happenings, is the ideas they suggest, the attitudes they elicit, the characteristics they draw out from us and the revaluations to which they direct us. We must learn to discipline the senses, re-educate character and develope intelligence. If reflection has not already led us to do so, then painful experience will inevitably lead us to consider its necessity. After all, if such an experience has made us perceive clearly and has forced us to note consciously that we are seriously deficient in certain essential qualities and has started us on the way to amendment, it has contributed to our progress. How, then, can it be evil? Is it not better to pass through it as through a discipline of character and conduct, as through a purge of our inefficiencies and our errors? It is necessary so long as certain lessons remain unlearned. It teaches where argument fails. If it brings home to us the consequences of having chosen wrongly, it justifies a place for itself in the universal scheme of things.

Unfortunately, many sufferers see no lesson to be learned from their loss or trouble; rather, they feel it to be senselessly damaging to their material and moral life. There is quite often apparent justification for their attitude but it is only a superficial one. The Infinite Wisdom would not have brought it to them had it really been unnecessary. Not that it is ever brought arbitrarily. It is brought under and by the precise operation of cosmic law. The destiny which foreordains so many of our sorrows is self-earned partly during the present and partly during anterior lives. We are not punished by a God who sits remote from our struggles and indifferent to our misery. We are punished by our own sins, deficiencies, misjudgments and disequilibriums. What we have wrought in the lives of others will ultimately be wrought in our own when the natural nemesis of karma comes into effect. We shall start removing our miseries as soon as we start removing our ignorance of the karmic laws which govern life--not before. Both men and nations are disciplined by these sad consequences of their own actions.

With all its blunders and all its sins, humanity may profit by its sufferings, its blood and its tears, and reach forth to grasp the great truth that divine justice does rule the world. The failure to understand karmic law and the neglect to obey it are responsible for more of the miseries of mankind than any other single cause. The terrible fact is, so many people fail to make this link in comprehension between their sins and their sorrows that the painful

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between their sins and their sorrows that the painful

experience is apparently wasted. This failure is the result of their letting themselves be deceived by the ego and misled by the lower emotions. It is a truth, although often obscured at times by a cloud of bitter emotion, that the failure of personal expectations and the frustration of worldly desires are often one way in which karma educates the ego and disciplines its character.

Most people think only of improving their fortunes, few of improving themselves. Not that philosophy would balance the one against the other, for it recognizes that their spheres are different, but that it would stress the foolishness of ignoring higher values. All men create certain values for themselves but Nature forces others upon them. So long as they are too obsessed with their own immediate aims to care for the ultimate ones of human life itself, so long will they suffer the inevitable consequences of their obsession. All other blunders follow inexorably from this, the primary one. If you want to wish another man well, the best you can wish him is not increase of fortune but increase of wisdom, not more fame but more awareness of his Overself. If religionists feel grateful to God for pleasant things and fortunate events, they should logically be grateful also for the unpleasant things and unfortunate events. But they aren't. It would be wiser, therefore, to stop ascribing both to God and start ascribing them to the true source in themselves. They usually get what they deserve under karma. Most people who ask for divine blessing, whether from God direct or from one of God's saints, ask for it in the form of material benefits and worldly advantages. Such people do not comprehend that the divine blessings are not seldom sent through material sorrows and worldly misfortunes. A little philosophical reflection upon the course of past events might enable them to discern good in apparent evil. Keats, with the intuition of a spiritual poet, felt this, too. "Do you not see," he wrote, "how necessary a world of pain and trouble is to school an intelligence and make it a soul?"

But if we are sceptics and do not believe that a moral law governs our existence or that a spiritual purpose has been set for our fulfilment, we shall then deceive ourselves utterly about our experiences. We shall rejoice over events which will bring us suffering or moan over events which will bring us to a halt in evil, and therefore dangerous, courses. It is sensible to bemoan past experiences if at the same time we try to learn the lessons they teach, but if we do not make this effort, then it is silly. In the first case, we convert stumbling blocks into steppingstones. In the second, we whip ourselves quite needlessly. We may use our agonies to burn out the ego's dross or we may permit them to increase it. The choice is our own.

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The unenlightened mind sees only misfortune where the enlightened mind sees karmic instruction and opportunity for self-improvement along with misfortune. When it is schooled both by experience and revelation to recognize and admit that its own mistaken behaviour has led to most of its misfortunes, to see the causal connection between personal wrong-doing and the penal troubles or sufferings which follow in its wake, it will act righteously through fear. But later, when it is schooled by subtler experience and loftier revelation to see the divine quest which life ordains it to follow, it will act righteously not from fear but through faith. When it comes to see or believe that most of its griefs are self-inflicted, it sees well.

The same experience which multiplies the mistakes of fools, corrects them for the wise. "A fool is he who soon forgets Depression's lesson when 'tis passed," wrote Ratnasekharasuri, a wise old Indian master of the Jain faith, five hundred years ago. The wisdom of these lines is still needed today. Quite often we do not see the benefits of our sufferings until they are long past. Sometimes, in a chastened mood, we can fill in the pattern which was woven between a past act and a present circumstance. But sometimes we cannot. In that event we may be able to do so many years later, when more of the pattern of our whole life has unfolded itself. Alas! the education which comes through our mistakes and failures sometimes comes too late to be of use in this lifetime. It is not till middle or old age that we comprehend its lessons at all.

them by

Are those who repeat old errors and blunder again and again into old sins, incurable of life's painful lessons? This is not really so. It is unfortunate that we do not usually know at the time that we are making these mistakes in judgment, displaying these faults of character or committing these sins in conduct. Indeed, it is often not until many years later that we make this startling discovery. It is equally unfortunate that we learn our lessons at a high cost and often learn the wrong lessons in the earlier and more limited stages of our experience. Again, the extent to which we learn from suffering may be very small. Hence, time and plenty of it is needful. That is, we need to come to earth again and again. This educative result cannot be achieved with a single experience. It is necessarily an accumulative result, achieved through innumerable experiences extending through many lives. The ego passes through numerous births from which it gradually but inevitably learns the art of living. These experiences are intended to release latent virtue, unfold latent wisdom, develope latent power. But they do not do this all at once. Hence, it is confused and bewildered by their apparent aimlessness, their seeming cruelty. They will certainly do so ultimately, however.

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Time has a mysterious value and will transmute our deepest woes into a benign wisdom. Eternal lessons lie hidden behind our ephemeral experiences. In the moment of illumination when we perceive the necessity of sorrow, frustration or adversity, in that moment we overcome its bitterness and mitigate its pain; we perceive, then, that the divine is here to befriend us, not affright us. Distresses provide us either with stimulus or with opposition to our strivings to become spiritually conscious. They are in every man's path, he who nears attainment no less than he who ignores the very thought of it. They must be regarded impersonally, studied and understood, if they are to be overcome through our wisdom rather than repeated through our ignorance.

Suffering seems useless when it forces concentration solely and entirely upon its own pain, when it arouses resentment and when it creates despair. How, then, could it help our spiritual progress? Nevertheless, this is only a surface view. Something of instructive or redemptive value is always being achieved through it. The divine laws are impelling onward and upward. We are moving little by little in spite of ourselves. But we are moving through the pain and suffering generated by blindness and selfishness. The hour is here for us to associate ourselves consciously with these laws. We may base our general policy of living on selfish interest, on upsurges of emotion, on calculating cunning or on idle drifting with the tide of circumstances. In consequence, we may find momentary benefits but we shall not find permanent ones. Or we may base it on philosophy. If we do so, we desert the old game of trial, error and suffering and begin to live by understanding. In that case, it is not the unexpected but the expected which will happen to us.

The mistakes in action which we make lead to results that in turn lead to doubts. Thus life tends to correct our world-view, for our deeds are unconsciously based upon this view.

When a man looks impersonally at his own present life and analytically at his own past history, comprehension will begin to be born and later, out of that, mastery. He to whom the pursuit of moral excellence and practical wisdom is something more than a phrase; will find both in the fortunes and misfortunes of existence, helps to achieve his aims. He will see all the mistakes he has made, what psychological causes led up to them and what external consequences they themselves led to, and seeing, he will suffer. If this suffering engraves a new and higher attitude upon his mind, it will not be regarded as something to be escaped but rather as something to be accepted. If, perceiving this, he cooperates consciously and deliberately in the gestation process, he triumphs over it. Out of the suffering, if

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properly regarded, he will draw a heightened power to control his lower self and a heightened capacity to understand it. Every fresh experience becomes like oil to the flame of his growing understanding. And this result is arrived at only because he has changed his attitude to that of an eager learner, has rejected the egotist interpretation of life for the impersonal one. To such a man suffering brings a cycle of new growth, but to the others it merely brings dulled consciousness.

Whatever severe anguish enters his life for the first time or the fortieth time, be it the unheralded turn of fortune for the worse or the unanticipated anxiety of surprising events, be it the wrong-doing of a human being or the tragic news of a written letter, be it a painful illness or a tremendous failure, he instinctively asks himself the question: "Why has this come to me?" and then reflects impartially, cooly and slowly, until he can discover its significance. For life would not have brought it into his experience if it were not his due, which means if he had not earned it or needed it. Such philosophical analysis may often show him the causes within himself of many external happenings. Every defect in character is seen to lead in the end to a deficit in happiness. But anyone may transmute it into an asset if he is awakened by such suffering to cultivate the opposite quality and thus improve character.

Not all sufferings are earned, however; not all descend on us in punishment or retribution. Some come only to help us develop better character, evolve new qualities and foster more intelligence. Where a sufferer cannot mend a bad environment or cannot undo a tangle of bad karma, then he should mend the way in which he views them. Where he cannot quickly adjust his outer circumstances, he can and must adjust his inner self. When he cannot extricate himself from a disharmonious environment by the integral use of intense endeavour and inspired imagination, he must learn to look on it with new eyes. It is the use that man makes of his sufferings that determines their values for him. With the recognition that his faults punish him and his weaknesses betray him, with a wise and impersonal attitude towards his troubles--whatever his personal feelings may be--he can turn them into assets. But if he lets those feelings sweep him away into bitterness, hatred or resentment, malice, fear or selfishness, they will remain as debits. If he can look upon every experience as an opportunity to learn wisdom and thus draw nearer to final enlightenment, nothing that happens to him will be unfruitful and everything can lead to a mental or moral enlargement. And what is not less valuable is that he will also draw nearer to the true happiness, whose quest is consciously or unconsciously the most magnetic of all his motivations.

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The Search for Happiness.

This is the tragic riddle with which life confronts us and which has to be solved, if we are ever to know peace. The inner nature of man bids him seek happiness. But his inner life shows sorrow and sin, his mind shows conflict and doubt. The outer environment of man at times pretends to give him happiness, but never does. It gives him, instead, occasional pleasures but shows misery and pain either at their heels or as their background. How can anyone be happy, it will be asked, when all existence is like this? What, then, is his highest happiness and where is he to seek it?

We have studied how, in their ignorant strivings for what they believed desirable, men have done wrongs and committed mistakes. Later, the results have been reflected back to them in sorrow and trouble. But it would be absurd to declare that all pain serves destiny's ends. After we have made all allowance for those calamities which are born out of our own errors and sins, it must nevertheless be admitted that there remains a proportion which are not of our own making at all. Whence do they come then? They are the natural consequence, for the most part, of human imperfections and, for a lesser part, of the interdependence of all mankind. These are most important points which we often fail to see. Although the suffering of human beings is often indicative that they have strayed from the right path, it is nevertheless incidental to human existence itself. The affliction to which they are exposed may not necessarily be the consequence of personal karma. It may be the consequence of being human. Whoever understands this statement, understands already a quarter of the Buddha's teaching. When he pointed out on how precarious a balance all human happiness rests, he pointed out a salutary fact. The truth of his teaching about the essentially sorrowful character of life is usually disguised by the pleasures and relaxations of peacetime. It becomes apparent to the generality of people only when it is thrust prominently into their consciousness by the horrors and tragedies of war. Our generation has had the tragic character of existence thrown by them into sharp relief. It has glimpsed dimly by its own painful experience what philosophy always knew clearly by its tranquil reflection. What else have the war and crisis been but bold and unforgettable demonstrations of the fact that suffering is inseparably allied to life in this world? It is in fact forever with us, albeit on an unimpressive and imposing scale. It is so familiar that we tend to remain untouched by its normal existence. Only the extremely thoughtful who seek truth or peace take note of its ever-presence and seek also for some solution of its meaning or escape from its burden.

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Where is the joy which is not sooner or later mingled with sorrow? A happiness which is not mixed at some point or at some time with misery, can nowhere be found on earth.

The limited character of the conditions under which most humans have to live and the adverse character of so many of the experiences they meet with, the millions of hearts filled with tormenting restlessness and frustrated longings and the millions of heads filled with uncertainties and strivings, the inescapable orbit of pleasures followed by pains and of attractions succeeded by repulsions, preclude the attainment or retainment of real happiness. The unsatisfactory final character of life's pleasures and the disappointments in the expectations it fosters are not so apparent, however, to the inexperienced young as to the well-experienced aged. Nevertheless, we have yet to meet the man, however young and enthusiastic he may be, who is satisfied with what he has got, or who is not dissatisfied because of what he has not got.

How often have the world's delights turned out to be mere cheats in the end! Life, with its recurrent agonies and repeated despairs, mocks the human struggle for happiness. It gives us ecstatic passions, yes! but also miserable partings, cheap joys but also costly despairs. Although we cannot transform it into a perfect paradise but can certainly improve it to yield less misery and more personal happiness than it would otherwise yield, the fact remains that when we have had our fill of the joys and pains, the struggles and crises of life, we may be more likely to pass a pessimistic verdict upon it. Even among those who reject this analysis and claim to be happy, we eventually see that when sorrow, anguish, loss, bereavement or illness has struck them down powerfully and perhaps unexpectedly, they feel that all incentive to action, all worldly ambition, has gone out of them. The truth is we cannot avoid meeting such tragic moments as we travel on life's journey. Not only Buddha in his sermons but also Sophocles in his dramas, Schopenhauer in his essays and Thomson in his poems, leave their audience with the dismal impression that life is hardly worth living. If we accept their standpoint, we find ourselves deprived of roseate earthly hopes.

It may be fitting, after this long lament, to close with some apt quotations selected from "The Diwan" by Nasir-I-Khusraw, 11th century poet, traveller, mystic and countryman of Omar Khayyam:

"This world's the ladder to that world, O Friend;
To mount, thou needs must climb it to the end....
And ever it cries in warning, 'I am hastening
fast away.
So clasp me close to your bosom, and cherish me
whilst you may.'

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I, who was once as the cypress, now upon Fortune's
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Let not her specious promise you to destruction
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Never was her covenant faithful; ne'er was her
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Be ever fearful of trouble when all seems fair and
clear,
For the essay is soon made grievous by the swift-
transforming sphere,
Forth will it drive, remorseless, when it deemeth
the time at hand,
The King from his court and castle, the lord from
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Never was exemption granted, since the planets be-
gan to run;
Seek for the mean in all things, nor strive to ex-
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For the Moon when the full it reacheth is already
about to wane."

The tides of fortune and wealth, pleasure and pain, ebb and flow for all men, for philosophers no less than others. Nobody can alter this natural law, as nobody dare ignore it. It is this tantalizing alternation that constitutes the general human experience. But whereas the philosophers keep their inner peace through all such changes, the others do not or cannot. This is because men whose happiness can only exist in company with external things, have not found happiness at all. For it will flee with the first flight of those things. If pleasure is eventually turned into pain, if joy becomes later a sourse of misery, then the happiness they get from such emotions is limited.

Is it possible to get a happiness which is unlimited by chance and which will never abate under any change of circumstances? Philosophy answers that, if we pursue its fourfold path to a successful terminus, we shall surely get such happiness. Some people feel vaguely and brokenly that there must be some kind of grander, nobler being than this sadly-limited earthly one, which is all that they have so far known. But only when suffering or privation has emphasized the tremendous contrast between the two, is their feeling likely to stir the question whether they propose to do anything about it and thus start the aspiration whose fullest expression is the path to realization of the soul, the quest of the Overself.

Death is the only thing in life that is absolutely certain. Shankara, the Indian sage, remarked that he is indeed a fool who wastes this precious chance of gaining

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salvation which birth as a human being gives him, and fails to profit by it. Yet during our passage from childhood to adolescence and thence to maturity and old age, engrossed as we are in the personal cares and physical pleasures of living, we rarely deem it necessary to undertake a search for the impersonal truth about our life and being. This is because spiritual ignorance binds us hand and foot and desire holds our eyelids down. But, in the end, we can no more escape from following the quest than we can escape from eating food. For it is an inexorable necessity of our inner being.

The most decisive argument, however, is that whether we like it or not, we are walking into the spiritually-ruled life anyway, but that if we fail to do so willingly we will walk into it backwards--with all the disadvantages of such a movement. There is the hard long way to truth and the easy short one. The first is the way of being tutored by the result of our thoughts and deeds. The second is the way of voluntarily going out in direct quest of the truth itself. The first slowly works out the meaning of its distressing experience. The second deliberately tries to get only a part. We may flee from sorrow into the escape of frivolity and amusement but, ghost-like, it will again return to haunt us. Or we may face it, study it and understand it through philosophical insight, when it will be conquered for ever.

Those who lose everything in a catastrophe, may for the first time find themselves. This is not only true for a few individuals here. It is true for all mankind everywhere. But it is especially true for those who are destined to engage in the quest during their present incarnation. When, by virtue of loftier pre-natal lives, a man is capable of following a purer, wiser and more spiritual course but won't do so, then the Overself will eventually show its hand and bring about his return by releasing a series of rapidly-changing karmically-derived events, which will show up vividly, abruptly and forcibly the foolishness of his present course. And it will do this by offering him attractive opportunity after attractive opportunity but always terminate each experience with disappointment, disillusionment or pain. Also, at the height of his greatest successes or in the depths of his greatest pleasures, it will make a man who has once been privileged to glimpse the Real--however briefly--suddenly perceive the limitations of success and the unsatisfactoriness of pleasure. This thought will come to him as a continually-recurring depressive intuition. It will indeed be a message sent by his higher self.

If the good and evil values of this earthly existence are in the end relative, partial and transient, there yet remains a supreme Good which is absolute, total and eternal.

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It belongs to the ultimate existence which we call God, whose ray in us is the Soul. All these varied experiences, these gratifications and disappointments, are intended to drive us to seek an answer to the question: "What is the purpose of life?" When a man discovers that life in the external world alternately harms and hurts his senses and that this alternation is an unavoidable constituent of such experience, he is then inwardly prepared to seek for the enduring happiness of reality. So many seek passionately for the shadows of life and miss its mystical substance, whilst so few ever go into reflection upon their human journey at all. Such reflection would show that we search for happiness only because we have not got it. This is as true of the most brutalized and most animalized man as it is of the most refined and most advanced one. The need is felt to be paramount. Why? Philosophy answers, "Because the real essence of our personality is the divine soul. Because this soul continually exists in a state of unbroken happiness. Because we unconsciously and indirectly know this and therefore always hope on and hold on despite all the sufferings and struggles that life brings us. Because even if we found all that we want physically and intellectually, we should still remain discontented, still go on with the search for happiness, for the simple reason that we had not yet found the soul itself."

How little men know at this immature stage of seeking amid externals that the treasures of bliss, satisfaction and possession are really all in themselves! The feeling of being incomplete, unfinished and imperfect harasses them; much of their unrest arises from it. But although they may experiment with various means of assuaging it, although they may seek satisfaction in different paths, they cannot overcome it except by taking to this quest. Thus, every desire of the inebriate for further drink is really a desire, at a low level of development, for the Overself's bliss. All men are engaged in this search for the second self but most men are engaged quite unconsciously. They are seeking its stable satisfaction in different ways--most through transient pleasures. How few can show themselves stronger than life's joys! Yet they are the ones who can also show themselves stronger than life's sorrows. How few comprehend that their need of the Divine is a permanent one! Most want to enjoy life in their way, which is entirely dependent on external things and other persons; not in the philosophic way which, whilst including them, is yet entirely independent of them. Although they think they are seeking happiness through the physical body, they are in fact seeking it through the spiritual mind. This is so and must be so because of the constitution of their own nature. In the first case, no sooner is one desire satisfied than another arises to replace it. In the second case, all desires fall away and unchanging inward rest is attained only when the spiritual is attained.

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From the moment that a man begins to look less to his changeful outer possessions and more to his controllable internal ones, he begins to gain the chance for real happiness. Let him keep his final reserves hidden in his heart. Then whatever happens, whatever course fortune takes, no one and nothing can take it from him. So long as he can carry the knowledge of truth in his head and the peace of God in his heart, he can carry the best of all his possessions with him wherever he may go. Not having lodged his possessions, whether material things or human affections, capitalized wealth or social honours, in his heart but kept them outside it where they belong, he can remain calm and unmoved when Fortune's caprice disturbs or even destroys them. He has learnt to keep within his heart only inalienable possessions like wisdom and virtue, only what renders him serenely independent of her revolutions.

He who depends on externals plays dice with his happiness. He who depends on his own Overself attains unfailing serenity.

There are six things whose quick attainment and uninterrupted continuance all of us unconsciously desire but which none of us ever find. We want: 1) happiness unmixed with sorrow, 2) life unbroken by death, 3) health unsaddened by sickness, 4) freedom unhindered by restraints, 5) knowledge untormented by questions, and 6) harmony with all other people. These things are never found on earth because they belong to heaven. But heaven is a state of mind. It is indeed mind in its own pure being. Therefore, we may yet attain them here and now so long as we search for them in the region of thought and feeling, and not in the region of flesh and blood. "The cause of happiness or misery is no other than one's self; it is an idea of the mind," teaches Krishna in "The Srimad Bhagavata."

Bitter thoughts and resentful feelings, negative ideas and unbalanced emotions will not only affect the quality of a man's character but also the quality of his fortunes. Troubles will come to him which would not otherwise have come to him. Enmities will be created or kept alive which would not have touched him or, touching, would have died down. If his experience of life has soured him, he may be sure that his thinking about life has something to do with the unhappy result. His actions are largely predetermined and his fortunes largely predestined by no other power or creature than himself. Both arise out of his own nature. A man may take a misfortune as a final defeat and sink by the wayside of despair. Or he may take it as a first challenge and rise to the summit of determination. This point we have earlier considered. In the end, it is his thought about it that matters. His attitude towards these happenings is not less important than the happenings themselves. The creative thought comes first; its visible results will

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come later. The finer the quality of the one, the better will be his satisfaction with the other.

The serene happiness of the soul can never be broken by the anguish and misery of the person. No grief or passion, no fear or pain can get into it. That part of his being which always remains in heaven, is the Overself. That part which descends to suffer and struggle on earth, is the personality. The two are indissolubly linked, although ignorance sees only the person. The separation in consciousness from the Overself is the fundamental, if hidden, cause of man's perennial search for happiness, now in one thing or through one person and then in or through another. But a happiness unhindered by some accompanying or subsequent sorrow, he never finds. How could he, if it does not exist in anything or anyone? His longing will never be satisfied until it is diverted to and satisfied by the transcendental Overself. All through its successive appearances in different bodies, the personality is seeking the wholeness, the happiness and the fulfilment of union with its higher nature. When it finally discovers that earthly things are transient and contradictory, that the pleasurable are tied to the painful, and makes this search a conscious one, he is said to have entered on the Quest. All forms of life in this world, being finite and limited, involve suffering. But life in the heavenly world, which is not a place but a state, is gloriously free and therefore without suffering.

The Cross of Sorrow and Salvation.

It is a paradox that we begin the quest when we discover the deep melancholy of transiency and unsatisfactoriness that underlies all life's beauty and pleasure, but we finish it when we discover the deep joy of the soul's everlasting loveliness that underlies the melancholy itself. We suffer today only that we shall be happy tomorrow. A true smile must be earned by fighting a way through the valley of fallen tears. Our deepest wisdom confers the only lasting serenity, yet is born amidst cruellest agony. These distresses make their valuable contribution to the development of consciousness and the expansion of intelligence, but by Nature's mercy are in the end utterly obliterated from the memory. When the estranged ego shatters its chains, renounces its isolation and returns to its holy parent, the Overself, it finds that it was hitherto taught by suffering only that it may henceforth be taught by bliss. The most evolved individual in any community is also the happiest one. Yet, if the secret chronicle of his bygone births could be read, its great length would inevitably single him out as having passed through a full experience of anguish.

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The sufferers of today are the seekers of tomorrow. When it will not open of its own accord, then the heart has to be broken to let God in. When a man's life has lost its bearings, the ego must be mortified. For only when its own rule flickers out, will a diviner one flame up. Religionists call God, "the Merciful," but it would be equally correct to use the opposite epithet, "the Merciless." For God's plan of human attraction and hence human development involves the use of suffering as a principal feature. If the hand of man is responsible for so much of his own or other's misery, the hand of God must be ultimately responsible for all of it. For the divine wisdom has ordained the laws which in turn ordain that man shall pass through it.

We may comprehend the meaning of suffering only when we get a whole picture of it, of the bright and the dark parts. Some, like Mrs. Eddy, rightly perceiving its irrelevance on the highest plane, wrongly deny it any proper place at all in the divine scheme. Others, like Charles Darwin, persist in looking at the shaded part of the picture only and remember the earth for its savage beasts and biological struggles and not for the food it gives them or the flowers it provides them. Both see in it a false perspective. Still others who persist in talking of Nature's cruelty to man, ought to ask themselves whether it has ever been equal to man's cruelty to man? If the governing laws of this universe were not beneficient, there would be no hope for mankind. But, on the contrary, there is every hope.

After all, the evils and pains of life have only a passing existence, and are relative to the good and joys of life. Their own existence is in the end controlled by the divine laws and utilized for the divinely-based universal outworking. Such complementaries and relativities followed by necessity as soon as this outworking itself began. It is useless to talk of any universe coming into existence without <u>both</u> good and evil, light and darkness, joy and sorrow, coming with it. Such duality is the inescapable tragic side of its manifestation. Only through its opposite, sickness, can health be known. The existence of the one is a necessary consequence of the existence of the other. Those who ask for a painless world do not comprehend that they are also asking for a joyless one. Such an ebb and flow between the opposites of joy and anguish, possession and loss, gives man a sense of values which he could not gain to such a vivid degree in any other way. Experience of one kind provides a needed balance for the experience of its contrary. This helps him to form a juster estimate of bodily life and earthly values, a truer perception of its transiency, and thus brings him closer to the consciousness of spiritual life.

To refuse a place for suffering in the divine plan

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because we judge it by our finite human limitation, is to detract from our evaluation of the divine wisdom. We see the part only and lament the evil and pain that rule it. There is no place for these dark shadows in the supreme reality; they belong only to the world of appearances. Here they tragically exist; there they could not even exist. This is the paradoxical situation. They cannot be denied, as some dreamers deny them, but the reality behind them, the original Power behind the universe itself, is good in the highest sense. Could we but see the whole, we would discover that the Beneficent and Beatific have never been dethroned. Unenlightened man hears the world's agony alone whereas philosophic man hears both the agony and the melody hidden behind it. Pain and sorrow do not represent the whole truth of life. The pain is an everlasting Bliss temporarily lost. The sorrow is an eternal Peace momentarily obscured. Love will one day soothe the human tumult; light will flood the world's darkness. There is an infinite wisdom inherent in the cosmic plan which the tumult and darkness may momentarily hide from our perceptions but can never obliterate.

Mind is the origin of Life. Ours is not a dead universe but a living one, because it is a mental one. All creative movement of this wonderful cosmos is a memorial to the hidden Mind whose presence called it forth. Hence, we see that the expression of intelligence is everywhere to be found. This Mind being a single one, not two or three, can manifest only a single kind of intelligence. It is not higher in some places and lower in others. Everywhere, in the state of every part of its cosmos and behind the life of every one of its creatures, the intelligence at work is the supreme, infinite and all-knowing one. And because there is this infinite intelligence behind the cosmos, so there is an infinitely intelligent plan for it. There is indeed overwhelming evidence that this is so. If reason requires an orderly principle behind the operations of Nature, insight finds it. A man cannot expand his knowledge of the inner working of Nature without expanding his reverence for the stupendous intelligence of Nature at the same time. There is a tremendous wisdom back of things which hushes the mind in amazement when it is first detected and discovered. And the world's evil and misery cannot possibly be exempt from its knowledge and sovereignty. When, even where he cannot understand its misery nor condone its frightfulness, a man can bring himself to accept the universe, he will know a great peace. Nor is it too hard to develop this capacity of acceptance when reason shows him unerring wisdom in so much that he can understand, while intuition tells him that love resides in the inmost heart of God's ray--the soul.

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Many people object that all this suffering misses its purpose because it does not carry its lesson with it on the

surface. A punishment which is not recognized and understood as such, loses its moral effect and defeats its beneficent purpose. Can this criticism be applied to deferred Karma? The first answer is that if suffering were the only method brought to bear upon the ego for its spiritual development, the divine plan could justly be accused of being brutal rather than educative. But evolution of the mentality and character of man develops in a twofold way. It works from the outside through his environment and from the inside through his heart. Hence, alongside the suffering there is also gracious instruction to explain its meaning. This is given externally by human teachers through religions and philosophies, and internally by the soul itself through intuitions and reasonings. After all, adversity and pain teach only a negative wisdom. The need for getting a creative understanding of life still remains. Therefore it is that some among those who have risen on the crest-wave of insight, are sent back into the world to point out the more positive way.

Suffering by itself does not instruct man nor lead to character reformation. Its work must be complemented and completed both by enlightenment from within and enlightenment from without. In the first case, the quality of the thought and the intuition he brings to the suffering, contributes towards its effects. In the second place, the quality of the spiritual teaching he receives and the spiritual reading he does, has the same result. It is his own reflection about it or upon other men's teaching about it that brings out its lessons. Divinely-inspired teachers, sages, saints, philosophers and mystics have appeared amongst us in every century precisely to make those lessons clear. Men do not heed them because they do not connect these impersonal statements with their own personal lives. But it is their duty and responsibility, not the teacher's, to make this connection. The fallacies in their unconscious interpretation of life's meaning have to be pointed out to them by painful events where there is no disposition to have them pointed out by human teachers.

This leads to the second answer, which is that this very obscurity of any causal link existing between sin and suffering, or between ignorance and suffering, or between incapacity and suffering, is intentional and deliberate. For it compels the sufferer to put to himself the question: "Why has this come to me?" In the search for a satisfying answer he slowly unfolds his intuition and develops his intelligence. The sufferings pass but these faculties remain. This whole situation becomes a device to bring them out of latency and fulfils an important part of his human evolution. Suffering remains his teacher only until he is willing to accept tuition at the hands of prophets, seers, sages, reflection and intuition. If he will not listen to these divine teachers, then he must listen to the

surface. A punishment which is not recognized and understood as such, loses its moral effect and defeats its beneficent purpose. Can this criticism be applied to deferred Karma? The first answer is that if suffering were the only method brought to bear upon the ego for its spiritual development, the divine plan could justly be accused of being brutal rather than educative. But evolution of the mentality and character of man develops in a twofold way. It works from the outside through his environment and from the inside through his heart. Hence, alongside the suffering there is also gracious instruction to explain its meaning. This is given externally by human teachers through religions and philosophies, and internally by the soul itself through intuitions and reasonings. After all, adversity and pain teach only a negative wisdom. The need for getting a creative understanding of life still remains. Therefore it is that some among those who have risen on the crest-wave of insight, are sent back into the world to point out the more positive way.

Suffering by itself does not instruct man nor lead to character reformation. Its work must be complemented and completed both by enlightenment from within and enlightenment from without. In the first case, the quality of the thought and the intuition he brings to the suffering, contributes towards its effects. In the second place, the quality of the spiritual teaching he receives and the spiritual reading he does, has the same result. It is his own reflection about it or upon other men's teaching about it that brings out its lessons. Divinely-inspired teachers, sages, saints, philosophers and mystics have appeared amongst us in every century precisely to make these lessons clear. Men do not heed them because they do not connect these impersonal statements with their own personal lives. But it is their duty and responsibility, not the teacher's, to make this connection. The failures in their unconscious interpretation of life's meaning have to be pointed out to them by painful events where there is no disposition to have them pointed out by human teachers.

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disagreeable consequence of his own sins. If he will not correct in himself the faults productive of intellectual mistakes and ethical misdeeds, if he refuses to learn from those gifted with insight, from history and religion, the lesson that wrong-doing does not pay, and if he is not capable of learning it in any other way, then life must teach it to him through personal anguish and ignominious humiliation.

It is deeply significant that the Cross, which is the emblem of sorrow and pain, should also be the emblem of salvation.

Every man is here on earth to become conscious of his super-earthly self. Until he does accomplish this task, he will be led through varied experiences in many births, experiences that will be punctuated at times with pain, grief and disappointment but tinged at intervals with joy, pleasure and satisfaction to make life bearable. He will certainly evolve despite all lapses and all setbacks because the eternal law, the living principle of his own being, will force him to do so. He will be made to embark on the spiritual quest in the end because it will be the only way to desirable happiness for him. Thus, every man is destined to come into enlightenment. The Divine Self does not pursue him in the sense that an ardent lover pursues the beloved one. But neither does it remain aloof and indifferent. It sits serenely in the heart waiting to welcome his return, knowing well that its power of magnetic attraction will draw him as his own evolving spiritual values will lead him to seek it and that instruction and suffering will make him aware of its presence. The divine love is limited only by his openness to it and his receptivity of it. And because it is love, it will not and does not compel him to turn away from his servitude to earthly attractions, which turning is the first form that such openness or receptivity must take. A salvation into which he were forced, in which his free will had no part to play and with which it did not cooperate, would not be true salvation. Its patience is immeasurable just because its love is immeasurable. If there are sorrow and pain in life, there are grace and mercy, pardon and love at the heart of life. Nothing so far written should lead anyone to the wrong conclusion that he could cease to cultivate sympathy for those who suffer, nor should it stop the hand that goes forth to relieve distress. Those messengers from the Infinite, like Jesus and Buddha, could not have brought pity and taught goodness if the Infinite itself were really cruel and evil. If they no longer suffered in themselves, they still suffered for others. The pain was a vicarious one. But their thought was not so much for people's bodies as for their minds.

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man is to turn about and face the Overself, to change the direction of his outlook. Once he has found this presence, felt this inspiration, surrendered to this power, it will carry him serenely through the troubles and crises, the buffetings and upheavals of life. In this liberation of the self from its own desires he will find the fulfilment of the self, the true satisfaction which those very desires are seeking. He will come, in time, to feel that this is the high purpose for which he came into this world and that all others have unfairly consumed more time and energy than they deserved.

The human quest of happiness is nearly always frustrated by some hideous physical circumstance, condition, lack or defect. Thus the human entity is driven in the end towards the non-physical, that is, towards religion, mysticism and philosophy. And thus we arrive in the end at the immeasurable value for man of religion, mysticism and philosophy (in ascending degree) and at the important consequences of his personal world-view. For, we gain from suffering, as from travel, partly what we bring to it. Our faulty conduct of life is the natural outcome of our faulty concept of life. Without the guidance of spiritual teaching, we muddle our few opportunities, waste our precious years and misdirect our limited energies. But when we begin to shape conduct by its principles, we begin to dissolve disharmonies. A spiritual understanding of life, which attains its best form in philosophy, assuages the pain and lightens the struggle of life. In hours of trouble or danger, in agony of emotions or flesh, we may derive a little or much relief by letting the mind take hold of its great truths and by musing on them. But at all times they may be dwelt upon with much benefit. Their study gives significant form to the flux of life's changes that would otherwise be meaningless and goal-less.

The Futility of Self-Martyrdom.

The indifference toward unalterable or unavoidable suffering preached by so many prophets, was not merely preached as an idealistic fancy, but, in most cases, as a realizable fact out of their experiences. Admittedly, its accomplishment is tremendously hard. For it depends in part on a complete concentration upon that which suffering cannot touch--the hidden soul. But this is not to be confused with a defeatist fatalism, a false resignation to God's will or a harsh asceticism. If anyone deduces from the foregoing pages that philosophy is in quest of self-suffering, self-deprivation and self-martyrdom, he makes a grave mistake.

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It does not joyfully hug the pains of life to its breast. It recognizes that although happiness is primarily an inner condition, it cannot be sundered altogether from outer conditions; that the materialism which makes light of human will and everything of human circumstance is as unbalanced as the idealism which does the exact opposite; and that if the kind of response we make to the external world is important, what the external world does to us is also important. It admits that the final step is to limit our desires, to stop following the common unthinking trend of endlessly multiplying them.

But this does not mean that we need necessarily impose discomfort upon ourselves or revert to a medieval mode of living. Such a negative attitude towards life does not satisfy the modern man. Yet his spiritual needs are no less great, indeed are greater, than medieval man's. Is it not better that he has something offered him that is within this reasonable reach, something that will uplift and exalt him whilst he yet remains usefully at work in the world, lives a normal life, marries and begets children, instead of being offered flight from all possessions to monasteries, jungles or the like?

For us, in this century, there is only one genuine way forward. It is to go forward with what we have, not to divest ourselves of it and go backward into ill-fitting medieval or antique modes. We may be as comfortable and as modern as we like, if only we will strike a balance between worldly needs and spiritual aims. Poverty is not the only gateway to purity.

The old way of decreasing possessions as a means of increasing spirituality is unsatisfactory today. It suited the old times, doubtless, but it is mere escapism in our times. The new way calls for a synthesis of physical with spiritual, a reconciliation of hitherto divergent trends. It recognizes that the real evil does not lie in the possessions themselves but in the mental possession of physical possessions. It understands the importance of thoughts, that "As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he." Even the leisures and luxuries of the rich are not necessarily anti-spiritual. They could be, but they need not be. We must beware of the dangers of wealth, yes! but we need not therefore fail to appreciate its values. The quest of physical comfort and the wish to accumulate possessions are natural needs and not bad in themselves, whatever asceticism may say. Only when they are permitted to dominate the heart of man to disproportionate excess do they become bad. In that event, after a certain time, a compulsory re-establishment of lost equilibrium will be brought about by karmic forces. The war, for instance, was not unconnected with such re-adjustment. For many men and women before it broke out, the quest of the Overself might as well have been

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non-existent. They could not believe in immortal Mind, which is perfectly credible, but they did believe in perishable Matter, which is metaphysically incredible. They did not understand that in holding to the reality of 'Matter' they were holding to the most illusory of man's conceptions. Consequently, they swung their censers of admiration before worthless idols. A self-deceptive outlook must always end in dangerous and painful disillusionment. There is always a grinning skeleton at such feasting, sarcastically shaking his bony hands in warning.

Nevertheless, it is advisable to repeat, there is nothing evil in physical things themselves--the evil begins only when we permit them to stupefy our minds, when we let them obstruct the inner spiritual purpose of our life on earth. Buddha taught that all the pleasant material things of life were really unpleasant and hence to be shunned. Philosophy respects this view but prefers its own fuller, better-balanced one. It conquers desires but refuses to make a fetish of discomfort.

It is much the same with the taste for healthy pleasure and the urge for amusing relaxation or light entertainment. They are natural and right. It is not wrong to attend to these human needs. Philosophy, unlike asceticism, does not scorn them and, unlike materialism, does not overrate them. What harm is in them so long as they are regarded as being mere accessories and not the principal end of life, minor essentials and not the major one? Man needs them because he needs to keep his sanity and balance. It is only when they are overdone or oversought, when they become narcotics to relieve him of the trouble of reflection about life, when they divert his attention from the tragedies and sorrows which should prompt such reflection, that they become dangerous and lead to the very insanity and unbalance against which they ought to have guarded him. When this happens, desire rages in his heart and disharmony spoils his outer existence. The only way of escape he knows is to add something more to the fast-burning heap of pleasures. They may then push him into sheer vice and dangerous folly. When too high a value is set upon pleasure, the inner retribution is inescapable. Happiness lasts only as long as pleasure lasts. They spend their affections upon vanishing things alone, hardly conscious of the inner desolation, the fatuous spiritual aimlessness of their lives. Leisure which might be devoted not only to getting necessary relaxation and amusement but also to fulfilling the purpose of incarnation, to gaining a little understanding, discipline and peace, is literally wasted away in a quest of idle or sensual enjoyment. The heaviest retribution comes when the supreme Reality is regarded as the supreme triviality. The war's agony was not remote from such a fact.

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But this said, it must also be said that philosophical mysticism does not desire to nullify our human joys with a lugubrious asceticism. There is an unfortunate tendency among ordinary mystics to become so enthused about the sombre forbidding way of asceticism as to regard it not as it should be, that is, only as a means to an end, but as a complete end in itself. The original purpose of ascetic discipline was the victory of mind over body as a preliminary to the victory of mind over itself. Asceticism was like a remedy taken to cure a sickness. But ascetics turned it into a permanent way of life. Medicine is most valuable as medicine but not as food. Because quinine has cured someone of fever, he does not incorporate it in his diet for the remainder of his lifetime. Yet this is just what most ascetics do. They have succumbed to manias, lost the balance of their psyche. Clearly, the way of sanity lies between the two extremes of self-indulgent worldliness and body-crushing mortification. Philosophy is not opposed to asceticism when sane, temperate and balanced. But it despises the unnecessary misery and useless struggles with which the ordinary ascetic obsesses himself. It sympathizes with the modern seeker when he is not as attracted by the rigours of asceticism as his medieval forbear was. It respects, indeed advocates, an occasional and limited asceticism but it rejects a permanent and excessive asceticism. It makes use of abstinence at a certain stage of the aspirant's career but then only in a limited way and for a limited time. It certainly bids its votary to practise some austerities, submit to some disciplines, but not to make a fetish of them, to use them only so far and so long as they are helpful to achieve self-mastery and thus treat them as means, not ends. Lastly, it affirms that self-restraint and sense-discipline are always necessary, even though harsh asceticism is not.

The uselessness of a merely physical asceticism is demonstrated by the fact that bodily habits are really mental habits. Desire, being but a strong thought, can only be effaced by an equally powerful thought, that is, by a mental process. No merely external discipline or physical renunciation can have the same effect, although it can and does help to bring about that effect. Asceticism pronounces the pleasure we take in the experience of the senses to be evil in itself. Philosophy replies that it is the being carried away from reason by the pleasures, being attached to them to the point of utter dependence upon them, that is evil. Asceticism declares the physical things we touch and taste to be evil, but philosophy says touch and taste are really mental experiences and that their mental discipline will be more effective than abstaining altogether from their physical exercise. Hence, it leaves us free to enjoy the good things of this world, so long as we do not get too attached to them nor inwardly enslaved by them. Living in inward detachment from the world

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is better than practising outward asceticism in the world.

Nor has philosophy much use for the attitude which insists on suffering miseries because it accepts them as the inescapable decree of God, or which waits helplessly for God to come and deliver it from its difficulties. Many an Eastern and even Western mystical leader has adopted and preached to others the cult of wholesale resignation to all happenings as being expressions of God's will, the virtue of letting God run the universe and not attempting to interfere with his operations, and the wisdom of believing that God knows better than we do how to conduct its affairs. As a direct consequence of his cult of complete social indifferentism, he has taught his devotees to submit to, or acquiesce in, all events of whatever character, to practise the non-resistance of evil and to abstain from interfering with the course of events under the delusion that some service to mankind is thereby effected.

But such unrestricted and unqualified counsel to submit to all circumstances, because they are God's will, is dangerous. The history of religion is alone eloquent on this point. How often has selfish priestcraft, serving the interests of a discredited group or a despotic monarch, adjured suffering men and tormented women not to mend their present tribulations but to endure them unresistingly because divinely-willed! Thus, energies which could have been directed towards improving conditions, were wasted in useless hopes of pleasing God. This weak attitude has long been selfishly exploited in India to claim caste as a divinely-ordained institution, just as it was taken advantage of in medieval Europe where each man was supposed to be born in the place and class proper to him. Even when a low-caste Hindu believes he could better do the work or carry out the duties of a higher caste, he is theoretically forbidden to change to it. If he defies his exploiters and makes the change, he is told that he has committed a sin and is contributing to the ruin of God's planned social order. If a cobbler finds himself possessed of literary genius, he must go on repairing shoes! If he refuses and takes to writing, he is told that he endangers his own salvation and society's harmony! Such is the absurd and cruel consequence of blind acceptance of an arrangement which was certainly convenient in a simple primitive world, but is no longer so in our modern complex one. And this, in its own turn, is the consequence of religious superstition inculcating a pseudo-resignation to events by misusing the name of God.

Philosophy freely admits that some circumstances, events and happenings are certainly divine leadings for us, whether pleasurable or painful, and it will be wiser in the end not to resist them. But it also says that others are devilish in origin and should certainly be resisted.

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But such unresisted and unqualified counsel to submit to all circumstances, because they are God's will, is dangerous. The history of religion is alone eloquent on this point. How often has selfish priestcraft, serving the interests of a discredited group or a despotic monarch, adjured suffering men and tormented women not to mend their present tribulations but to endure them unresistingly because divinely-willed! Thus, energies which could have been directed towards improving conditions, were wasted in useless hopes of pleasing God. This weak attitude has long been selfishly exploited in India to claim caste as a divinely-ordained institution, just as it was taken advantage of in medieval Europe where each man was supposed to be born in the place and class proper to him. Even when a low-caste Hindu believes he could better do the work or carry out the duties of a higher caste, he is theoretically forbidden to change to it. If he defies his exploiters and makes the change, he is told that he has committed a sin and is contributing to the ruin of God's planned social order. If a coppler finds himself possessed of literary genius, he must go on repairing shoes! If he refuses and takes to writing, he is told that he endangers his own salvation and society's harmony! Such is the absurd and cruel consequence of blind acceptance of an arrangement which was certainly convenient in a simple primitive world, but is no longer so in our modern complex one. And this, in its own turn, is the consequence of religious superstition inculcating a pseudo-resignation to events by misusing the name of God.

Philosophy has much use for the attitude which insists on suffering miseries because it accepts them as the inescapable decree of God, or which waits helplessly for God to come and deliver it from its difficulties. Many an Eastern and even Western mystical leader has adopted and preached to others the cult of wholesale resignation to all happenings as being expressions of God's will, the virtue of letting God run the universe and not attempting to interfere with his operations, and the wisdom of believing that God knows better than we do how to conduct its affairs. As a direct consequence of his cult of complete social indifferentism, he has taught his devotees to submit to, or acquiesce in, all events of whatever character, to practise the non-resistance of evil and to abstain from interfering with the course of events under the delusion that some service to mankind is thereby effected.

But the philosophy of resignation is not to be found in the Bible. Jesus, for instance, was not resigned to the fact that the Jews were under the heel of the Romans. He was not resigned to the fact that the Jewish religion had become a mockery. He was not resigned to the fact that the Jewish people were sinning against God. He was not resigned to the fact that the Jewish people were suffering from poverty, disease and oppression. He was not resigned to the fact that the Jewish people were ignorant of the truth. He was not resigned to the fact that the Jewish people were living in darkness. He was not resigned to the fact that the Jewish people were living in fear. He was not resigned to the fact that the Jewish people were living in sin. He was not resigned to the fact that the Jewish people were living in death. He was not resigned to the fact that the Jewish people were living in hell. He was not resigned to the fact that the Jewish people were living in the devil's kingdom. He was not resigned to the fact that the Jewish people were living in the devil's world. He was not resigned to the fact that the Jewish people were living in the devil's flesh. He was not resigned to the fact that the Jewish people were living in the devil's blood. He was not resigned to the fact that the Jewish people were living in the devil's bones. He was not resigned to the fact that the Jewish people were living in the devil's marrow. He was not resigned to the fact that the Jewish people were living in the devil's soul. He was not resigned to the fact that the Jewish people were living in the devil's spirit. He was not resigned to the fact that the Jewish people were living in the devil's mind. He was not resigned to the fact that the Jewish people were living in the devil's heart. He was not resigned to the fact that the Jewish people were living in the devil's eyes. He was not resigned to the fact that the Jewish people were living in the devil's ears. He was not resigned to the fact that the Jewish people were living in the devil's mouth. He was not resigned to the fact that the Jewish people were living in the devil's hands. He was not resigned to the fact that the Jewish people were living in the devil's feet. He was not resigned to the fact that the Jewish people were living in the devil's body. He was not resigned to the fact that the Jewish people were living in the devil's blood. He was not resigned to the fact that the Jewish people were living in the devil's bones. He was not resigned to the fact that the Jewish people were living in the devil's marrow. He was not resigned to the fact that the Jewish people were living in the devil's soul. He was not resigned to the fact that the Jewish people were living in the devil's spirit. He was not resigned to the fact that the Jewish people were living in the devil's mind. He was not resigned to the fact that the Jewish people were living in the devil's heart. He was not resigned to the fact that the Jewish people were living in the devil's eyes. He was not resigned to the fact that the Jewish people were living in the devil's ears. He was not resigned to the fact that the Jewish people were living in the devil's mouth. He was not resigned to the fact that the Jewish people were living in the devil's hands. He was not resigned to the fact that the Jewish people were living in the devil's feet. He was not resigned to the fact that the Jewish people were living in the devil's body.

Otherwise, they may lead us into error and disaster, as well as encourage their originators to commit further crime. Again, some events are the sweet fruit of good karma and therefore represent opportunity which ought to be seized. But others are the bitter fruit of bad karma and therefore represent traps, snares, pitfalls or troubles which ought to be warily guarded against.

It is true that nobody can hold his life entirely in his own hands. Everybody is himself held in the hands of the Overself. But the advice so often given to aspirants by religionists and mystics to yield to all events as being the actualizations of God's will, to resign unresistingly to whatever happens and whoever comes because it is ignorant egoism to do otherwise, is not accepted by philosophy as it stands. It is certainly true that in the end God turns all circumstances, all events, towards the furtherance of the divine intention for the universe. But this does not justify everyone in blindly accepting them always as being God's immediate will. They may not be. They may be man's will. The error of those who would have us submit unresistingly to what they call God's will, or of those who say that all sorrowful events represent this will, is to forget that if we submit unintelligently, uncritically and uncomprehendingly, if we do not study the lesson behind each experience, then God will send the same troubles again and again. For that which really sends us many experiences, is God's law of Karma.

Our tragedies and troubles do not happen to us by chance. A divine law brings most of them as the reaction to our own unworthy thoughts or as the correlation with our own improper desires and foolish deeds. This is the law of karma. Karma does not forge a cast-iron fatalistic chain around us. What it does is to make a situation which, be it remembered, was created by our own previous thinking and doing, develop in a particular way <u>if we ourself do nothing to make it develop in an alternate way</u>. Mere acceptance of the painful consequences of bad karma is not enough. Passive resignation to the inflexible decree of God's will is incomplete. We must add understanding to the acceptance, comprehension to the resignation. Otherwise, we suffer blindly and deprive ourselves of much of the profit which hides behind our pain. The inert acceptance by religious mystics of such evil conditions as always being God's will can only be characterized as a pathetic sign of their intellectual bankruptcy. The practical result is that these devotees regard sitting down and doing nothing, that is, idly waiting for things to drop into their laps, as the highest kind of human conduct. The dangers which beset such a passive attitude are serious. Not least is the danger of abandoning their life to mere chance and their will to mere circumstance.

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We are in rebellion against all these miserable advocates of the cause of misery who lean weakly on the worn-out excuse of God's will being behind everything and who therefore advise man to do nothing. We have raised the banner of rebellion against all those escapist mystics who defend "do-nothingism" as a rule of life when confronted by world-misery, merely because they themselves feel the bliss of inner peace; against all those Oriental religionists who defend it because they have made a dogma of the unalterability of karma; against all those unscientific metaphysicians who defend it because they regard every painful event as the expression of divine will and wisdom when it is so often the result of human will and stupidity; and against all those monastic hermits who find specious explanations for allowing others, who toil in the world, to wallow in ignorance or to agonize in suffering. The peace felt by the mystic is admirable but it is still a self-centred one; the karma propitiated by the religionist's prayers is ultimately self-earned and therefore must be self-alterable; the divinely-ordered events of the metaphysician could not have happened without man's own co-operation. Those who remain inert in the presence of widespread misery often do so because they have not experienced it deeply enough themselves. The innate foolishness and disguised indolence which bids us always bear karma unresistingly and unquestioningly as being God's will, although advocated by so many Indian mystical advocates of lethargy, is denied even by a great Indian seer like the author of the "Bhagavad Gita" and by a great Indian moralist like the author of "Hitopadesha." The first proclaims to a bewildered seer that: "Action is better than inaction." The second, in a discussion of fate and karma, affirms: "Fortune, of her own accord, takes her abode with the man who is endowed with energy, who is prompt and ready, who knows how to act."

All these advocates of non-resistance ignore the evolutionary need of cultivating both intelligence and will. The way in which we meet external situations and worldly events depends on these two factors as well as on our moral status. A total acceptance of, and passive resignation to, each situation or event because we believe that God's decree is expressed by it, deprives us of the chance to develop intelligence and exercise will. But such an activity is part of the divine evolutionary plan for humanity. Blind acceptance of every event, apathetic submission in the face of every situation, really means failure to co-operate with this plan, that is, the very opposite of what their advocates intend! Hence, when the celebrated Sufi mystic, Al Hallaj, was visited by Ibrahim Khawwas, he asked his visitor: "O Ibrahim, during these forty years of your connection with mysticism, what have you gained from it?" Ibrahim answered, "I have made the doctrine of passively trusting God to provide for all my material needs specially my own." Al Hallaj retorted, "You have wasted your life." A

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proper use of that intelligence which so many mystics scorn, may save us from falling into grievous blunders. For a merely mechanical resignation to the will of God may, on occasions, cause self-deception, abet laziness and excuse selfishness, whereas a wise resignation is always discriminating, reflective and profound. If we have the right kind of resignation, a resignation which does not preclude intelligent self-effort, then these difficult situations will be squarely met and honestly faced. Each new experience of the human situation becomes, if intelligently analyzed and rightly met, an asset to human character, a sharpener of human intelligence. Thus the resignation which philosophy teaches is perceptive and not blind. It does not regard God as a glorified despot and God's will as an arbitrary fiat. Accepting Plato's precept to Aristotle: "Be sure that all punishment which is inflicted upon men by God is not tyranny, but that it is correction and instruction," it uses its intelligence to discover what in its character needs such correction and what in its mentality needs such instruction. It refuses to drift fatalistically with events. It refuses the assertion that they are necessarily God's will and therefore both not to be changed and unchangeable.

Nobody should be asked to make himself unnecessarily miserable in the name of spiritual self-discipline nor to submit to intolerable degradations in the name of spiritual resignation. The philosophic ideal of a sane equilibrium would preclude it whilst its exhortation to self-improvement would oppose it. The dark sorrows with which life may present us can and should be met with a quiet confidence in the power of the soul to conquer them either psychologically or practically. But this power must be first felt for and then found, and next trusted and then obeyed. If we keep our thought wise and good and brave, it will shield us, always inwardly and mayhap outwardly, from life's sharpest arrows. And this is true whether they are shot at us by harsh fate or by human malice.

Both the Indian books quoted a couple of paragraphs above were written by mystics. Yet they reflected this same superior standpoint. Why? Because they were philosophical mystics. There is thus a vast and vital difference between the attitudes of unreflective ordinary mysticism and philosophic ultra-mysticism. Anyone whose mind is not too bemused by personality worship and authoritarian prestige to see this difference may now appreciate why philosophy has a contribution of the highest value to make in this sphere. Whilst on the one hand it repudiates this mystical indifferentism, on the other hand it repudiates the humanistic self-sufficiency exemplified in those who scorn the mystic's inward attainment. Whilst it points out the intellectual, ethical and practical errors of mysticism, it is much more emphatic in pointing

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The world war and world crisis have, however, dealt shattering blows to the once-complacent beliefs that the human intellect, unaided by any higher power or diviner light, is sufficiently wise to build a happy utopia on earth. Philosophy says that the benumbing mystical idea of leaving everything to be done by God and the arrogant materialist idea of doing everything by man, are both unacceptable extremes. It teaches that only in their union and consequent mutual modification does a right attitude lie. It advocates the exercise of human will to the utmost, the continuous application of human knowledge, scientific and otherwise, to the improvement of life in every direction. But, at the same time, it seeks to understand what is the divine will for us in every situation and advocates the surrender of the results of all these efforts to this higher will. It gives up all anxiety about results and thus keeps its inner peace, but it does not give up the efforts which can make or modify those results. It points out that the problem of bringing into working harmony the teaching which bids us resign all to God and the intelligence which bids us shape life by will, can be solved only by keeping a flexible mentality.

Nothing in the view presented in the foregoing pages should leave any room for indifference or callousness in its practical result, should prevent anyone from extending the hand of sympathy and help to sufferers.

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"INDIAN YOGA RECONSIDERED"

We often hear that religious and mystical paths lead to the same goal--God. This is doubtless true if we take a long-range evolutionary view of existence, if we think in terms of hundreds of lifetimes rather than in terms of a single one. But if we descend from ultimate considerations to immediate ones, we shall find that there are important differences between the attainments of the different paths. Mysticism is a strange country. It is no less important to find out the hidden goal or intrinsic purpose of a mystical technique ~~as~~ it is than to understand the man who has originated it. For in this elusive terrain, it is easy to jump to a superficial estimate but hard to descend to a scientific one. It is not enough to accept the asserted objective of any such path. Its examination is equally necessary. Does it really lead to such an objective? is the question which must start this examination, and not only by the declared theories behind it but much more by its ascertained results are we to find a correct answer. It is thus that our own new pilgrimage was born.

It all began with the framing of a single and simple question which experience, reflection and other men had suggested to us. We wanted to know why mystics play such an insignificant part in the collective life of mankind when, if their theories are true and their powers exist, they ought to be playing a leading part. For we believed then, and even more so now, that the ultimate worth of an outlook on life, which inculcates the hidden unity of the human family, is its power to find expression in the earthly life of mankind. We believe that those who possess such an outlook should endeavor to render it effectual, first in their own everyday existence and second in that of society, and not be content only with dreaming or talking about it. We believe that there is laid upon them the duty to <u>try</u> to mould, however slightly, the public mind; to <u>try</u> to guide the contemporary public welfare movements and inspire; to <u>try</u> to influence or counsel the leaders and intelligentsia. They ought not find an excuse for their failure to do so in the public distaste for mysticism, for they are not asked to obtrude the subject itself but only its fruits in unselfish service and wise guidance. Nor ought they to refuse the task as foredoomed to failure in the face of evil public karma. It is their duty to try, unconcernedly leaving all results to the

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Overself. In short, if their claims to esoteric knowledge and extraordinary powers are worth anything at all and can be demonstrated by results, they ought to try to leave their mark on history in a most unmistakable manner.

But when we gaze around at the contemporary world, we actually behold no such effective contribution, even though we are living in an epoch which has witnessed the most dramatic convulsions of human history. Whatever social benefit has been brought by the mystic to mankind has mostly been brought not because of their mystical outlook but in spite of it.

The mystical hermit who withdraws from his fellows physically may in time withdraw his fellow-feeling from them, too. When he settles down to enjoy the inward peace which world-shunning will admittedly yield him, there arises the danger of a complete introversion of the sympathies, a callous self-centredness in social relations and a cold indifference to the fate of mankind. We see it in the persons of ascetics and yogis especially, who, because of being so sublimely wrapped up in their own inner peace, are regarded as perfect sages by an ignorant populace and honoured accordingly. We must not fail to note the implication that the millions of suffering human creatures would then share in this supposed non-existence. Such a crankily ascetic and confusedly metaphysical indifference to the world leads inevitably to an indifference towards all mankind. Its welfare is not his concern. Thus, from a social standpoint he becomes impotent. To show, in the face of world agony, an emotional callousness and an intellectual apathy is a spiritual greatness which we have no desire to attain. On the contrary, we would regard it as spiritual littleness.

The question arises, How far is such stony callousness from or how near is it to the cruel cynicism displayed by the Japanese militarists when they officially referred to their invasion of China, despite the sea of human agony which it involved, as "the China incident"? These distasteful matters are mentioned not to attack the East, which we have known and loved too well ever to do, but merely because so many of us have not incorrectly regarded it as the natural home of mysticism and therefore as being able to show its best possibilities to the world. The Western mystics also possess their own brand of unattractive defects.

Thus, a studious observation in different parts of the world led to the arisal of queries and doubts. We became increasingly dismayed and then saddened at observing what turned out eventually to be the defects of the very virtues of mysticism when the emotions which it kindles remain unbalanced by reason and when the world-view which it engenders remains untested by experience. For we could not bring ourself to believe that true mysticism meant the neglect of personal duties

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and social responsibilities; the slovenly indifference toward those numerous details whose accumulation makes up the fabric of human living; the intellectual dullness which made a happy-hunting-ground wherein charlatans, quacks and lunatics could easily and successfully operate; the intellectual emasculation which destroyed self-reliance, initiative and will-power and depended on the miracle-mongering of supposed adepts for spiritual, medical and financial salvation; the lack of healthy driving ambition masquerading as a glorification of the discomforts and miseries of poverty; the indolence, incompetence, slovenly inefficiency and lack of concentration upon practical work wearing the disguise of worldly detachment and spiritual refinement; and the blind acceptance of every ancient or medieval superstition merely because it is ancient or medieval. We could not bring ourself to believe that all these defects were to be set up as praiseworthy virtues for the absurd reason that they were practised by many mystics as an outcome of their unbalanced temperament and confused thinking!

It was not surprising, therefore, that so many people even smiled in derision or sneered in contempt if anyone mentioned mystical ideas, and especially oriental ones, for these were in their minds invariably associated with queer fantastic cults or gross charlatanic exploitations. Nobody who had moved amidst a larger circle than the narrow one of the cults aforementioned could deny this, as nobody who had travelled the wide world could fail to have observed it within his own experience. Nor could he deny that there existed a rabid half-lunatic fringe around the following of these cults which was sufficiently large to draw them into their ridicule. We had indeed personally suffered from the generally disreputable status which many circles of society indiscriminately attached to these studies.

This contempt in which occult and yogic studies were held by so many educated people; the derision to which the teachers, organizations and prophets of a mystic character were subjected no less than the charlatanry and exploitation practised by not a few among them upon the gullible; the failure to influence, guide or direct public life for the better to any marked degree; were further facts which had an obvious lesson for the open-minded. They indicated that something was wrong somewhere, among the leaders as well as among their flocks. They revealed that we were not to accept every fantastic concept or exaggerated claim promulgated in the name of occultism, mysticism or yoga, and that everything was finally to be tested not only by its intellectual truth but also by its practical results.

Such reflections alone might have sufficed to persuade us to take up the pilgrim's staff again, but it is a further defect of the mystical temperament (a defect which, of course,

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we ourself shared although fortunately our mental make-up was too rational and too complex not to be somewhat aware of it) that it is prone to find plausible esoteric excuses for the inexcusable. The destiny, which had led us thus far, had to step in therefore and bring us to the critical crossroads of a compulsory and decisive recognition of the need of further search for a higher source of truth. And she began to do this, firstly, through the painful personal experience of monastic institutions which had quickly descended the way of most 'spiritual' institutions, and secondly, by stripping the facade of glamour which surrounded those whom we had taken at their reputed status of perfect sages when they were only perfect yogis at best. The consequence of this was a reorientation or rather return toward our early love of philosophy in an effort to correct and balance our mystical experience. And after this was done, destiny eventually finished her task both during the months which preceded the outbreak of World War II and during the years which followed it. For after all, a doctrine must be judged in the end not only by its inner truth but also by its outer fruit; a mystic must be judged not only by his pious inspirations and internal experiences but also by his actual deeds and external conduct. In such a test, what we personally experienced at this institution as briefly hinted at in the first chapter of "The Hidden Teaching Beyond Yoga", followed by what we personally observed of the dangerous yet widely approved influence on wartime history of certain mystically-guided public men in India, convinced us finally both of the insufficiency and imperfection of ordinary yoga taken by itself and of the uselessness of looking for wisdom in contemporary India at all, as apart from its ancient texts.

Before we can explain this second observation, we must first pen a brief preamble. There is a common belief that writers on higher thought should avoid politics but it is a belief common only amongst the mystically-inclined or monastically-minded, not amongst the philosophically-trained. We shall shortly explain that the only kind of mysticism we follow is the philosophical kind. Now it, among several other things, is part of the business of philosophy to examine political principles and ethical problems. It might, however, be advisable for mystics, religionists and ascetics to avoid political discussions, at least from the standpoint of practical policy, or they will run the risk of starting schisms and opening splits in their ranks and institutions because they distribute their political allegiance in various quarters. But such a risk does not detain the philosophically-inclined for a moment. The latter are necessarily independent and subserve the interests of no racial group, no particular organization and no special political affiliation. They believe truth to be as necessary in this practical world as in the less-visited worlds

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of metaphysical doctrine. Truth is their primary business, but it is ample enough to include matters erroneously supposed to be remote from it.

Nevertheless, those accustomed to move in the fixed orbit of ascetic mysticism, with its aloofness from politics as an expression of its aloofness from all earthly things, may be surprised or even shocked at the thought that a professed mystic should put forth such ideas as will be found in the next few pages. Many may consequently misjudge them and think that we are stooping into the dust of politics or airing nationalistic prejudices. Those friends, however, who really know us will not make this error. For we have come too often on this planetary scene and thus lived too long to care for the politics of a moment when eternity is our native atmosphere. We have travelled too widely and reflected too deeply to take root over-much in any one land rather than another and can honestly say with Thomas Paine, "The world is my country!" We have found loyal loving friends and bitter malicious enemies in every continent, among the Germans as well as among the English, among the Orientals as among the Occidentals, among capitalists no less than communists, and have come to regard all peoples with a more or less equal and cosmopolitan eye, knowing that it is always and ever the individual character that counts. If a man has genuinely awakened into the Overself consciousness, the experience will of itself annihilate his prejudices and unite him fundamentally with other men. If anyone speaks of God but dislikes another man merely because of racial or colour difference, be sure he is still living in darkness. The materialist, who thinks he is the body and nothing else, naturally betrays racial prejudice. The mentalist, who knows that he is mind more than flesh, naturally discards such prejudice as puerile. We have indeed suffered too greatly ourself from racial bias shown by others--more especially by so-called spiritual people, although we have never felt or shown the slightest bias against anyone--ever to have anything but loathing for it. Our views are, therefore, quite detached and impartial. If we venture now into what seems like politics for a few minutes, it is only because we do not and cannot divorce anything, not even politics, from life, and hence from truth and reality. We have no use for a goodness which wastes itself like a lonely flower in the desert air or for self-admiring monastic retreats, as we have no use for a faith or doctrine which is to be confined to the inactive shelves of libraries or to the fitful gossip of tea-tables.

If, therefore, the following paragraphs offend any reader, as is likely, because they are written more in criticism than in commendation and because of the inability of most Indian readers to consider them impersonally, unemotionally and impartially, let them nevertheless be regarded

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for what they are--an effort made solely in the detached spirit of philosophy. And if we have hitherto always maintained a studied silence on Indian political matters, it was because they were outside the sphere of our activity and not because they were outside the sphere of our study.

Moreover, we could not fail to admit some justice in a further question, one too which was often asked us by Western critics: Why has Shangri-la, which is the traditional home of yoga and the reputed paradise of mystics, shown proportionately such little external benefit from their presence and powers? Such a question may irritate many Shangrians emotionally, but it always impresses itself intellectually on most Westerners.

Tibet, even more than any other part of Asia, has fallen victim to the seductions of ascetic and monastic mysticism. The grand spiritual goal is there thought to demand complete isolation for its attainment. The most advanced spiritual type is believed to be the complete recluse. What has been the practical social result of all this lofty aspiration? Dirt, semi-starvation, disease and superstition are the common heritage of the masses, for those who had the superior intelligence to instruct and help them did not care to do so, did not care to take an interest in such mundane matters. To varnish the picture of the "Forbidden Land" with the romantic glamour of mystery is to deceive oneself.

Is it surprising that we personally passed from initial romantic glamour to final realistic disillusionment during the years which marked our own introduction to and experience of the eastern homes of mysticism? Is it surprising that a distinguished Indian yogi, Swami Vivekananda, wrote in a letter to his compatriots from the U.S.A: "You may be astonished to hear that, as practical Vedantists, the Americans are better than we are." We came for the first time as a world-indifferent mystic, seeking to penetrate into the mystery of Shangri-la. We left for the last time as a world-observant philosopher, having penetrated into the misery of Shangri-la. Why have the yogis and lamas been so ineffectual in modern Asia, as the mystics have been so powerless in modern Europe? The idealism which places defective observation on the pedestal of virtue, which is unable to see what is happening all around it and which ignores all the realities of a situation when they do not fit in with its wishful thinking, is not the kind that our search for truth could continually afford to indulge in.

Hence, we could not and indeed would not write "A Search in Secret India" again. Indeed, when our publishers approached me to write a second volume in continuation of it, we at once declined. And this happened less than a half dozen years after the original work was published. This avowal

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does not signify that we have abandoned the quest of the Overself or dropped the practice of meditation, but only that we now see how mistaken we were in, first, seeing the 'Spiritual Shangrila' of today under the falsifying glamour of its ancient mystical literature, and second, taking our first impressions of Shangrila's spiritual character as though they were the final and time-tested ones. For now we know that our salvation does not lie that way, that we of the West must produce our own gurus or perish.

We foresee that quite a group, bewildered by what the West has spiritually been in the past and dazzled by what the East has spiritually taught in the past, will fall prey to an increasing flow of swamis and monks, gurus and yogis, who will invade the West or else invite would-be followers to come out of it altogether and enter their ashrams. And even those who fail to fall for the Oriental varieties may fall for their corresponding Occidental analogues; freak forms of mysticism and occultism are emerging for their benefit out of fertile Eur-American imaginations. Already some Shangrian gurus have recently appointed advance agents in Western Lands, who are Westerners themselves, to collect followers, gather disciples, give 'initiations', or persuade aspirants to join their organizations. They are working without the benefit of publicity's limelight, partly in order to foster the give-inspiring illusion of representing a secret fraternity. And they are working with great success. It is enough for them to gain a single follower and then ask him to start the missionary snowball rolling. He at once informs his friends, who inform others and so on, ad inf. It is such a rare and thrilling opportunity, they tell themselves, "Just fancy! to become the disciple of a real master whilst staying at home in America or England, without having to travel on a long journey to Shangri-la and live there for years. It is all so easy, too." Hence they tumble over each other in their haste to join--and, needless to say, everyone is accepted.

It is because we thus foresee that quite a number in the postwar generation will become sick of the bleakness of materialism and tired of the emptiness of sensualism and in their genuine need will turn to mysticism that we feel the urgency of giving emphatic utterance to this grave warning. For in their emotional swing away from defective Western doctrines, they may move right over to defective Shangrian doctrines. It is needful to warn them that Indian mysticism of the primitive type, which is unfortunately the most prevalent type, would only increase the chaos and helplessness in the West, would only complicate our many problems and not solve them.

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There are those who have become tired of Western culture because of its extreme materialistic and rationalistic

tendency. There are others who have become weary of familiar religious scenes and dogmas. They have turned to Eastern thought in the belief that it represents a higher thought. They have turned to Oriental religion as something exotic and bizarre and hence stimulating. It is true that the Occident must one day make its salaam to Oriental wisdom and acknowledge that its elder brother has a heritage of spiritual lore which it must respect and revere. Yet it is equally true that during our travels in Eastern lands, we have often heard the more intelligent and the more widely experienced among Oriental students engaged on this quest declare mournfully that whatever world enlightenment would come in the future would necessarily have to come out of the West. This, they said, was partly because the Orient was itself yielding more and more to the bewitchment of material progress and would consequently sink more and more into materialism, partly because the spirit of independent impartial research for its own sake no longer prevailed in the East where the aspiring mind was half-strangled by narrow traditions and absurd superstitions, and partly because the West's own repressed longing to balance its high-practical development with an intuitive-mystical culture has been precipitated out of the unconscious by the war. For it is not enough to display great books written thousands of years ago; we must also display a great civilization today. Thus, the contradiction between India's sublime literature and backward condition is a tragic one.

Those contemporaries--and they are few indeed--who fled from the turmoil of life and have found satisfaction and peace in secluded Indian ashrams or their Western equivalents do not represent modern mankind but are rather atavistic throwbacks to more primitive times and more obsolete outlooks, persons quite understandably repelled by the complexity and strain of present-day life. Unfortunately, they overlook the fact that it is precisely to understand such complexity and to master such struggle that the God they profess to obey has thrown them into modern Western bodies. Do they seriously believe that they are reborn on earth only to pass through the same experience and the same environment each time? No! Life is perennially fresh and they return to learn new lessons from new experiences in new surroundings. To shrink from the difficult present and call a retreat to the easier past, to evade the problems of modernity by taking refuge in antiquity, to gain no inspiration from our own resources and to lapse back into those of medieval men, is to become defeatists. But it would be utterly wrong for us to hinder such persons making good their escape. Let them do so by all means, if they wish to. Nothing here written is intended for them. Those whose outlook is still based on self-seeking, still founded on indifference to others' welfare, will discover quite easily all the excuses they need to continue in the old way.

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The war was their chance to wake up, to quicken their process of thought. If it did not open the eyes of these mystical Rip Van Winkles, then its bestial horror and fiery terror was, for them, in vain. If the war did not break their unhealthy bewitchment, then, the post-war period certainly cannot do so. The mystic who remained a mere spectator of the world-conflict may have kept his inner peace undisturbed. But there is no need to practice yoga to obtain this kind of negative peace. Every inhabitant of a graveyard has it. We write only for the others--and they are the majority--who are sufficiently aroused not to fall into an escapism that merely evades the problems of living and does not solve them, who do not wish to revert to spiritual atavism in a progressive world, who have been stirred by mankind's wartime agonies to seek the rugged road to truth no less than the smoother path to peace, and who have come to understand that the only satisfactory question is the one which combines the pursuit of both truth and peace with the unselfish service of humanity.

Mysticism has been mostly associated in the popular mind with monasteries, retreats, ashrams, caves and similar places where novices and would-be yogis foregathered. Thus, it came to be looked upon as a way of escape from the domestic difficulties, the business troubles and emotional disappointments, which seem so inseparable from human existence. Those who could not cope with the ups and downs of daily life, with the shocks of unexpected misfortune or the death of beloved relatives, abruptly detached themselves from society and fled to the relative peace of monastic life. Those, who could not qualify themselves to earn their livelihood by burdensome physical or mental labour, renounced further effort and raised both their failure and their incompetence to the pedestal of virtue by proclaiming that they had renounced the world with all its wickedness! Nevertheless, deviously or directly, all these types came to the world for alms and food and clothing, for which the world continued to struggle, thus rendering itself able to provide them with their needs. Nor did they hesitate to proclaim a lordly spiritual superiority--quite disproportionate at times to their own personal defects--over the worldlings who financed or fed them.

If a man has undergone great emotional disappointment or much worldly suffering, he has every excuse for fleeing away to the peaceful refuge of monasticism, usually symbolized in the East by the donning of a yellow robe. What cannot be excused is, first, if he rests for the remainder of his earthly existence in such 'escapism'; and second, the large number of unholy 'holy' men who hypocritically imitate such a man and put on yellow robes, cover their heads with ashes or appoint themselves to manage ashrams in order to beg, covertly or openly, their way through life, or worse, so as

The war was their chance to wake up, to quicken their process of thought. If it did not open the eyes of these mystical Rip Van Winkles, then its bestial horror and fiery terror was, for them, in vain. If the war did not break their unreality bewitchment, then, the post-war period certainly cannot do so. The mystic who remained a mere spectator of the world-conflict may have kept his inner peace undisturbed. But there is no need to practice yoga to obtain this kind of negative peace. Every inhabitant of a graveyard has it. We write only for the others--and they are the majority--who are sufficiently aroused not to fall into an escapism that merely evades the problems of living and does not solve them, who do not wish to revert to spiritual atavism in a progressive world, who have been stirred by mankind's wartime agonies to seek the rugged road to truth no less than the smoother path to peace, and who have come to understand that the only satisfactory question is the one which combines the pursuit of both truth and peace with the unselfish service of humanity.

Mysticism has been mostly associated in the popular mind with monasteries, retreats, ashrams, caves and similar places where novices and world-be yogis foregathered. Thus it came to be looked upon as a way of escape from the domestic difficulties, the business troubles and emotional disappointments, which seem so inseparable from human existence. Those who could not cope with the ups and downs of daily life, with the shocks of unexpected misfortune or the death of beloved relatives, abruptly detached themselves from society and fled to the relative peace of monastic life. These, who could not qualify themselves to earn their livelihood by burdensome physical or mental labour, renounced further effort and raised both their failure and their incompetence to the pedestal of virtue by proclaiming that they had renounced the world with all its wickedness! Nevertheless, devotedly or directly, all these types came to the world for alms and food and clothing, for which the world continued to struggle, thus rendering itself able to provide them with their needs. Nor did they hesitate to proclaim a lordly spiritual superiority--quite disproportionate at times to their own personal defects--over the worldlings who financed or fed them.

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to exploit the pious or the aspirational. They contribute nothing to society and follow no inner quest for themselves, but batten on the superstitious hopes and panicky fears of the ignorant multitude by bestowing utterly worthless pseudo-blessings. Thus, they unconsciously exhibit the very materialism which they are supposed to avoid! And they have their parallel types in the mystic cults and occult circles of the West, too. When mysticism becomes merely a way of escape from difficulties that sharply demand to be faced, or when it breeds an atmosphere wherein pious charlatans can pretend to be hallowed mouthpieces for God, it is time to call a critical halt.

Mysticism, when psychologically comprehended and correctly practised, can certainly give man--weak-willed, passion-driven and earthward-bent, as he often is--definite disciplinary, emotional and ethical benefits. But so far as it shuts him up to lounge in his inner recesses and enjoy their peace alone, or so far as it persuades him to cast society permanently aside and withdraw like a tortoise into his own shell, it does not directly advantage others. The mystic wants to be left alone to meditate without external distractions. His peace is precious to him and he is unwilling to disturb it by sacrificing any part of his personal life for the benefit of others. The serious yogi-in-training usually spends most of a lifetime in segregation from his fellows, untrammeled by family burdens and unperturbed by social responsibility, because he is seeking something whose attainment the presence of others hinders and disturbs. He is naturally wrapped up by his discipline in a cloak of self-centredness. Every manual of yoga recommends the novice to turn hermit and forsake cities which, in moderation at the proper time in the proper place and for a limited duration, is a perfectly justifiable rule. He needs solitude and silence for the practice of his meditations. It is difficult to get these things in society so he quite properly avoids society. The very essence of all genuinely mystical exercises is the process of introversion. But carried to the point of excess, as it usually is when the practitioner is ignorant of the fact that mystic discipline is a means and not an end, it is likely to finish in callous self-centredness. When he does not realize that asceticism is but a temporary discipline, a jumping-off ground, whence to arrive at the higher and permanent condition of <u>internal</u> disentanglement, he is likely to fall into the trap of making such external disentanglement the goal of life and even become callously indifferent to the well-being of others, not deliberately of course, but as a consequence of his unbalanced introversion.

Mental quiet alone, however perfect, is of itself not enough. The man, who is content with it, is not a complete man. For life is here and now, and to live only in mystical delights in the belief that they are the ultimate goal, is

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to live only at the dream level. The consequence is that the external everyday life of action is kept outside them and left untouched or even regarded with positive hostility. If we understand with the philosophers that meditation is for life, it is well; but if we can only understand with the mystics that life is for meditation, then it is not well.

Nevertheless, although philosophy does not approve of quietistic idleness as an end in itself, it approves of occasional retreats into quietistic idleness as a temporary means to a wider end. Periodical retirement from the uncertainties of worldly affairs to the certitudes of spiritual ones, from the distractions of city life to the peace of Nature's solitudes, is an excellent rule. It is far wiser to do this and remain a layman than to spend all one's life in escapist institutions and become a monk. When a man is more concerned about retreat from the world rather than service in it, he may be obedient to a genuine inner need which at this particular stage will make for his true progress. We have nothing but commendation for such a man. But he may also be obedient, not to genuine need but to a timid fear of getting entangled in the affairs of troubled mankind. We have no commendation for such a man. He has merely transferred his selfishness from a positive to a negative state. His virtue, having had no strain upon it, becomes a cloistered enfeebled thing. It is not necessary to flee to monasteries for this self-training; we can practise it just as well in our own home. Indeed, we can then practise it better for the opposition overcome, the difficulties mastered, will give us a tested strength which no monastery can give. Lecturing to Anathpindika, a multi-millionaire of his time who wanted to renounce the world, the Buddha, arch-apostle of world-renunciation though he was, said: "I say unto thee, remain in thy station of life and apply thyself with diligence to thy enterprise--it is not life and wealth and power that enslave men, but the cleaving to life and wealth and power." There are those who believe philosophy to be a synonym for idleness. This quest is a virile affair. It is not a resignation to lethargy, nor a dissolution into inertia, nor an excuse for inaction. This is a quest which does not lead into ascetic negation of the world but into philosophic mastery of such negation, not into self-centred apathy but into altruistic, wise and useful activity. Whereas ascetic mysticism rejects the world, integral philosophy annexes it. Mysticism must become a part of life, not an evasion of it.

Every man has to act in some way. It is impossible for anyone to live without action. The ascetic, who thinks he has renounced it, has merely substituted one kind of action for another. This being the case, philosophy says it is better to align the motives for action with the highest philosophic ideal. All lesser motives are merely means to some

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end, whereas this alone is an end in itself. The ascetic, who as an end in itself cuts off contact with the world and shrinks from its affairs, will surely drift into sterile negation; whereas the one, who regards it only as an instrumental help to personal peace and mental self-discipline, will intermittently go back to the world he has deserted and embrace its affairs. Thus, he may test the true worth of his attainment by adjusting it to active life, assure himself whether the calmness which he has gained in a quiet corner can be kept in a noisy one, and help those who are unable to escape even temporarily from the world.

Now the sheltered life of an ashram may weaken a man for the struggle of existence, or it may strengthen him. Everything depends on the instruction or lack of it given in the ashram, the breadth of external experience, and the internal status achieved by its director. Many an ashram has rendered a man useless to society and helpless before life's struggles. Where it should show him how to interpret life aright and instil a teaching that will adequately stand up to the hard tests of actual experience, it often enfeebles his hands and diminishes his powers of correct thought. In any case, such methods of mass retreat are unsuited to us of the modern world and especially the Western world. It is better at least to remain human beings, since our feet are still encased in shoe leather and we have to walk this earth. Was it not a wise German who said: "He who has experienced nothing is made no wiser by solitude?"

When my esteemed friend, Dr. Evans Wentz, author of Tibetan Yoga and Secret Doctrines, proposed during talks in Oxford at one time and in the Himalayas at another that I join him in starting an ashram for yoga, I refused, because my own experience of ashrams in India had disillusioned me about their contemporary utility or their special holiness. Dwight Goddard, translator of A Buddhist Bible, after having qualified himself by study in China and Japan among the monks, ascetics, hermits and scholars, made several attempts to found an ashram, a Buddhist retreat, both in the mountains of Vermont at Thetford and the plains of California at Santa Barbara. Later, he wrote me that he had most unfortunate experiences in each case, so he decided in the end that America was not ready for such an experiment. This confirms my own view that it is not because the West is not ready for such things, but because it has outgrown them, that it refused to flee into asceticism and escapism. Each incarnation carries its special and necessary lessons for us, however disagreeable they may be. Therefore, the attempt to shirk those lessons by falling into an escapist attitude and environment is nothing praiseworthy.

We are not undervaluing the past, however. It has a definite value. But if men are to progress, they have only

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to learn from it and then put it aside--not to live in it stubbornly, blindly. They must look to present needs. Modern men can find no foothold in systems which are based on antique needs and which seem so utterly remote from contemporary life; in fact, if they are wide-awake, they not only dislike them but not frequently even distrust them. We must ourselves, however, beware of such atavism, such seeking to escape by a regression from the struggle of modern conditions to the shelter of primitive ones. The goal of our fitful human existence cannot be so narrow and so negative as to idolize the life of a lotus-eater, or to lull a man into continual trances or half-trances, or to let him meditate himself into a permanent condition of dreamy futility. Nor can it be to indulge all his years in the joyous hiatus of emotional titillations. Rare, however, are those determined mystics who succeed in emancipating themselves from the fanatical extreme of excessive meditation without, however, falling into the other error of abandoning it altogether. Great, indeed, is he who can escape from the pitfall of being carried away by his ecstatic feelings into an anaesthesis of social action. The ascetic who sits in negative virtue and safe isolation from the world's fray may feel happy, but the sage who spurns such egoistic satisfaction and serves others in its tumultuous midst provides a better ideal. Such a life is a creative one and not stippled with the pale hues of futility.

When a fine Spanish contemplative, St. Theresa, finally penetrated the enchanting glamour of her own mystical experience, she remarked: "This is the end of that spiritual union, that there may be born of its working, works." The time has indeed come for intelligent mystics, as contrasted with self-centred neurotic ones, to form precise and clear ideas as to the practical implications and social values of mysticism during a time of world upheaval such as ours. If ever it had an opportunity to play an historical role and to bring inner peace to the disrupted nerves of millions of people, mysticism has it now. The war has cleared the ground for a widespread revival of interest in and practice of mystical exercises. The question therefore arises: Are mystics to continue playing the old part of being passive spectators of the world-show or are they going to measure up to this unique opportunity of rendering timely service? Those who have been gifted with a glimpse of the far-off divine goal towards which all things are moving, should realize that they have a worthwhile place in the present scheme, a place which they alone can fill. They can contribute what none else can. They can not only help as every decent person is helping the forces of righteousness to secure outward victory over the forces of wickedness, but they can also help in the equally important inward struggle of the forces of knowledge against those of ignorance.

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The anchorite, who sits in a vacuum cut off from a world which he cannot cope with and which he lacks the imaginative sympathy to understand, has, if he is sufficiently intelligent and sufficiently developed, to face an inner crisis today. The world war and its aftermath involves us all, including him. Either he must be stirred by the tremendous happenings into a realization of his social responsibility and moral duty, or he must be written off humanity's account as a contemporary failure. He must wake up to the new world situation. How can the man of head and heart remain a foreigner to the tragic external forces around him today?

How can those, who feel with and for their suffering fellows, who recognize this unique war for the spiritual conflict which it really is and understand the tremendous moral consequences for mankind's future involved in its outcome, how can such persons shut themselves up in the ivory towers of yogic ashrams and monastic retreats? This callous disregard of other peoples' miseries, this encampment in a splendid oasis kept all to oneself, this ostrich-like immurement in a cold ivory tower, is not a sign of sagehood, whatever the populace believe. It was Vasishta, an ancient sage, not an ascetic, who said: "Unless the good of all becomes your good, you will add only fetters to your feet," when urging a young prince, who Buddha-like sought to renounce the world and escape his duties, to gain an egocentric peace. Whoever truly understands and deeply feels his inner relationship with and his shared responsibility for his fellow creatures can never subscribe to the cult of indifferentism. In a world crisis like the present one, for example, he could never bring himself to sit idly by, babbling with shrugged shoulders of people having to bear their karma and of everything being just as God wishes it to be, the while aggressive human instruments of unseen evil forces brutally strive to fix cruel spiked manacles upon the human race and mind. On the contrary, he will rise to the imperative call of the hour.

It is on this point of the necessity of altruistic service that the philosophic path diverges strikingly from the mystic path. Such a divergence, needful though it was at all times, became more needful than ever in our own times. The day of spiritual isolationism has passed. Such a self-centred doctrine can make little appeal to those who have been touched by the desperate and urgent needs of modern mankind. Mysticism seeks a static condition, whereas philosophy seeks a dynamic one. Mysticism is content with withdrawal from life, but philosophy would embrace all life. The mystic is happy when he gets his <u>own</u> inner peace, but the philosopher will be happy only when all men get such peace. The serene state, which mantles the philosopher, is not bought at the price of self-centred indifference to his fellows and does not isolate him from their struggles. He

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is subject to an inner necessity to serve mankind.

The great sages saw the desperate need of mankind and compassionately gave what help they could. They never stood aloof. They did not despise those who had to participate in worldly life and flee from them accordingly, but understood their situation and helped them. They did not spend their lives sitting aloof and apart in mountain caves and forest retreats, in ashrams and monastic hideouts, but went where the crowds were, where they were needed in fact. This is what Jesus did. This is what Buddha did. Jesus, indeed, worked so untiringly for the enlightenment of others that he often took no time to eat. These verses represent accurately the feeling which suffices the heart of such a man. This, indeed, is the outstanding characteristic which distinguishes them from mere yogis. They had pity. They had fellow feeling. In the Bhagavad Gita, Krishna makes it perfectly plain that the yogi who lives and serves the world is far superior to the yogi who flees from and renounces the world. Yet despite this explicit teaching by the one most-revered Indian sage, almost every Hindu ascetic will tell you that self-centred monasticism is superior! Whoever has attained true and permanent insight does not need to spend his time always in meditation. For meditation is a form of mental exercise to help its practiser get into the transcendent consciousness of pure Mind. He, who sees pure Mind all the time, does not need to practise any exercise for its possible perception. When, therefore, we are told that a sage lives in remote places and mountain caves in order to practise his meditations undisturbed, we may be sure that he is only an aspirant, only a would-be sage. The populace, impressed by his asceticism and awed by his trance, often regard such a yogi as a sage. He may himself accept such a valuation. But he will really only possess the status of a mystic, perhaps even a perfect one. If he reaches such perfection and is bewitched by his transient trances, he will feel that he is all-sufficient in himself and that he does not need anything from the world. The corollary of this is, unfortunately, that the woes of his fellow creatures have nothing to do with him also. If he becomes fascinated by the emotional satisfaction which envelopes his achievement, he developes an indifference toward suffering mankind and ends by becoming a complacent recluse and nothing more. This does not mean that a sage will never practise meditation. He will. But he will do so more for the benefit of others rather than for his own benefit. He will carry out all his other personal and social responsibilities, as his wisdom and karmic circumstances dictate; he will certainly not seek to run away from them nor believe that his enlightenment has relieved him of them.

An appreciation of all the admirable benefits of mystic practice ought not to blind us to its limitations and ought not to make us commit the error of setting it up as the only

is subject to an inner necessity to serve mankind.

The great sages saw the desperate need of mankind and compassionately gave what help they could. They never stood aloof. They did not despise those who had to participate in worldly life and flee from them accordingly, but understood their situation and helped them. They did not spend their lives sitting aloof and apart in mountain caves and forest retreats, in sanirams and monastic hideouts, but went where the crowds were, where they were needed in fact. This is what Jesus did. This is what Buddha did. Jesus, indeed, worked so untiringly for the enlightenment of others that he often took no time to eat. These verses represent accurately the feeling which suffices the heart of such a man. This, indeed, is the outstanding characteristic which distinguishes them from mere yogis. They had pity. They had fellow feeling. In the Bhagavad Gita, Krishna makes it perfectly plain that the yogi who lives and serves the world is far superior to the yogi who flees from and renounces the world. Yet despite this explicit teaching by the one most-revered Indian sage, almost every Hindu ascetic will tell you that self-centred monasticism is superior! Whoever has attained true and permanent insight does not need to spend his time always in meditation. For meditation is a form of mental exercise to help its practiser get into the transcendent consciousness of pure Mind. He, who sees pure Mind all the time, does not need to practise any exercise for its possible perception. When, therefore, we are told that a sage lives in remote places and mountain caves in order to practise his meditations undisturbed, we may be sure that he is only an aspirant, only a would-be sage. The populace, impressed by his asceticism and awed by his trance, often regard such a yogi as a sage. He may himself accept such a valuation. But he will really only possess the status of a mystic, perhaps even a perfect one. If he teaches such perfection and is bewitched by his transient trances, he will feel that he is all-sufficient in himself and that he does not need anything from the world. The corollary of this is, unfortunately, that the woes of his fellow creatures have nothing to do with him also. If he [redacted] reasoned by the emotional satisfaction which envelopes his achievement, he develops an indifference toward suffering mankind and ends by becoming a complacent recluse and nothing more. This does not mean that a sage will never practise meditation. He will. But he will do so more for the benefit of others rather than for his own benefit. He will carry out all his other personal and social responsibilities, as his wisdom and karmic circumstances dictate; he will certainly not seek to run away from them nor believe that his enlightenment has relieved him of them.

An appreciation of all the admirable benefits of mystic practise ought not to blind us to its limitations and ought not to make us commit the error of setting it up as the only

goal for all mankind. The reflective man will sooner or later come up against these limitations and the discontent thus generated will cause him to bestir himself once more upon this quest of the Overself. Thus, he may eventually enlarge his horizon and perceive that the ideal type is not the mystic but the sage.

What is a sage? He is the man who has finished all three stages of religion, yoga and philosophy, has realized the Overself, and has come in consequence to a wide compassion for his fellow creatures. Because he comprehends that the root of most human troubles and sufferings is ignorance, he likewise comprehends that the best form of service he can render is to enlighten others. Hence, so far as his own circumstances and capacities permit, and so far as the aspiration of others indicates, he devotes himself to their inner welfare. In such a beneficent occupation he will therefore incessantly engage himself. Through all history the mystic has been confused with the sage simply because the latter has rarely existed, being usually an aspirational ideal rather than a realized possibility. The highest type of the former achieves what may be called 'yogic immobilization', which is brought about by following a path of <u>abstraction</u> from entanglements, a path which is a necessary mental and physical discipline but still a negative one. It is not enough. Beyond it lies the ultimate path, which leads the man back into the world again but lets him keep a secret interior detachment. The aura of intense mental peace which is left in the presence of a perfect mystic is not necessarily a sign of perfection, as the ignorant think, but a sign of successful inward-turned concentration. He consciously exerts a mesmeric force on the disciples who sit passively around him. The sage, on the other hand, spends all this concentrative force in action intended to render real service to others whilst at the same time spontaneously and effortlessly giving those, who urge, that which is given by the mystic.

The mental differences between them are too subtle and complex for the uninitiated multitude to grasp, but it is easy to understand the <u>practical</u> difference between them. A simple analogy will help us here. There are two kinds of electricity: static and dynamic. The first yields at best a single useless spark, whereas the second yields a flow of continuous useful power. The electric current, which we tap for light, heat and power, belongs to the second category. The mystic, seeking to contract his activities to a minimum, is like the static electricity. The sage, seeking to render the utmost possible service during his lifetimes, is like dynamic electricity.

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in his compassionate consciousness of the darkness that overspreads it, deliberately turns his head toward the world. Psychologically, the mystic is at the stage where he needs to silence thinking and refrain from action in order to eliminate their disturbances, whereas the sage has long passed that point and can afford to let both thinking and action have full free play without harm. The squatting mystic has to neglect the earth because he seeks to soar in the heavenly sky; the working sage has to stand upon the earth because he finds its mirrors that sky! And whereas the first finds God within himself and Satan outside in the world, the second finds God everywhere. The mystic takes pride in his negligence of material affairs and in the half-heartedness with which he attends to material duties. The sage takes pride in the efficiency and concentration with which he attends to material responsibilities. The mystic may self-righteously believe that paying proper attention to material life is the same as practising materialism. The sage will sensibly believe that failing to do so is practising foolishness. Thus the aim of philosophy is not, like that of mysticism, to turn men away from the world. It is, indeed, the very contrary. It wishes them to embrace life fully, but to do so with self-mastery, complete understanding and disinterested helpfulness.

According to this teaching, it is the harmonious development of and the keeping of a wise balance between three factors which, in their ultimate synthesis, yield realization of the philosophic ideal and thus make the sage. These are: mystical feeling, metaphysical thinking and disinterested action. It is only in mediocre mentalities that these tendencies disagree with each other. In superior souls, they complement and help each other. Why is such stress laid on the last factor? Not only because the integral, i.e., physical, ethical and mental welfare of mankind, becomes inseparable from one's own; not only because the waking state, i.e., the world wherein activity attains its climax, possesses a peculiar importance of its own as will be ascertained in our study of sleep; but also because action is intimately connected with karma. Action is the force which bestows the final propulsion to karma. We take the last step to make or mar our ordinary life by our deeds, too. An old Sanskrit text pithily explains the point thus: "According to his desire is his habit of thinking, according to his habit of thinking he enacts a deed, according to the deed enacted is his karmic lot in life."

Thought however exalted, and feeling however purified, are not of themselves enough to perfect a man in the realization of the Overself. They are the seeds which must grow until they blossom into the flower of disinterested action. Therefore, the philosophy of truth knows no difference between theory and practice for to it both are really one. The

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student has every right to ask what practical purpose, what human benefit, what tangible result is to be looked for from these studies. No better test of a teaching can be devised than that simple one which Jesus bade his hearers apply: "By their fruits shall ye know them." It is as sound and effective, today, as it was in his own time. And it was the application of this test, which produced disappointing results, that caused us to desert the monastic ashrams in the East and the mystical associations in the West, to take to the lonelier path of philosophy.

These same points are thrown into high relief by the two world wars and their aftermath. How can a man remain indifferent or even indolent, isolated in his own peace, in the face of a world suffering as it never suffered before, if he really feels his mystical oneness with mankind? The answer, glibly given and gullibly accepted, is that the sages know best what they ought to do, that it suffices for them to work on mysterious 'spiritual' planes of being, and that it is sacrilege for us to criticize them. But our answer is that the dreams become actual when they leave the head and reach the hand and that in Buddha's words: "A beautiful thought or word, which is not followed by a corresponding action, is like a bright-hued flower that will bear no fruit." It is generally not within the average aspirant's competence to judge correctly who is or who is not a realized sage, but it is within his right to form a working and tentative judgment for the sake of his own personal and practical life.

Again, as the body does not become non-existent because it is a thought-form, so it has not become unimportant either. For it is only in this body that we can attain and realize the ultimate consciousness. If, as has been explained in "The Wisdom of the Overself", the physical wakeful state is the only one in which the task of true self-realization can be fully accomplished by the individual, then it is also the only one in which all mankind will ever accomplish it, too. And as the social arrangements and living conditions there may accelerate or retard the process of enlightenment, it becomes clear that the nature of those physical arrangements and conditions is important in the eyes of those who care for mankind's spiritual welfare. Consequently, true wisdom cannot be indifferent to them but, on the contrary, will always seek to improve the one and ameliorate the other. The mystical ascetic may stand indifferently aside, but the philosophic student cannot do so or use the quest as an apology for inertia when faced with social responsibilities. The ascetic striving to detach himself from sense activity, the mystic seeking to turn his interests wholly inward, the atavist sheltering in an Indian ashram from the complex strain of Western life--all these are entitled by their standpoint, by their cloistral outlook which is so unsympathetic toward a practical and human teaching such as ours, to turn aside: but

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not he who would use his higher intelligence and master true philosophy. The value of such teaching proves itself best under the stern pressure of terrific events; it reveals its practical worth most when he who has mastered it has to withstand the impact of a war like the present one.

Philosophy cannot fulfil itself in the individual alone. It must work through society, also. The interaction of both, in obedience to the higher laws of life, provides the field for its complete expression. This is a fundamental difference between the ancient and the modern teaching. The first usually separated the contemplative from the active life, whereas the second always unites them. The Christian, the Hindu, the Buddhist mystic usually had to withdraw himself from society's fold if he wished to pursue his inner life to its logical end, whereas the philosophic mystic of today throws himself ardently into the world arena to serve mankind. Everybody sees the historic struggle between the malefic and benefic forces in life, between what would arouse antipathy and stimulate selfishness amongst men and what would arouse sympathy and stimulate selflessness; but only the sage sees both this struggle and the concealed oneness beneath it. Whereas the mystic, when he gets a glimpse of this hidden unity of life, becomes emotionally mesmerized by it and physically immobilized by it and ascetically deserts the fight in consequence; the sage continues to take his part and contribute his help to the strengthening of the good forces. The disciples of philosophy should not hesitate to become a power in the world, utilizing that power not only for their personal benefit but equally and even more for humanity's benefit. Their social task is to adjust personal welfare to the common welfare and not to ignore either at the expense of the other. To do something worthwhile in life for themselves is the fruit of ambition, but to do something worthwhile for humanity also is the fruit of aspiration. It is the nature of manifestation to be ever-active. Hence, man cannot escape being involved in action of some kind. But what he can and should escape is being attached to his actions.

Let it be said in closing that if the present criticisms, which come from a friend and are consequently utterly without rancour, are mistaken to mean that there is nothing good in mystics and their mysticism, then our real aim will have escaped attention and we must refer readers for the contrast to our earliest writings where these subjects are treated with the utmost praise and sympathy. We are merely warning, as it were, the less experienced man from the country, who is travelling for the first time to a metropolitan city, of dangers which will confront him there and of the errors he is likely to make on the way. <u>We are not telling him not to visit the metropolis!</u> Would-be mystics, therefore, ought not to become disheartened at the critical note which has deliberately been introduced into this chapter as a protest

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against those monastically-minded teachers who would arrogate the kingdom of heaven to chronic recluses like themselves and their followers, leaving us--the unfortunate captives of social circumstances and human duty--outside! Let them enter this path and pursue it assiduously, for it will well repay their effort, but let them take our criticisms as useful advice on what to avoid, ever remembering that mind is more than habiliment. If we have administered a shock to them, it is also true that those who faithfully endure must one day come to bless the hand that gave it. For they are being asked not to mistake a half-truth for a whole one. And we have sought to shame them into higher ideals of usefulness to suffering humanity.

Nor should anyone misread this into being an indictment of mysticism. It is not. The basic fundamental efforts of the mystic, in so far as they attempt to reorientate attention inwards toward the divine source of thought, are not mistaken ones. Hence, the ascent to philosophy does not require the abandonment of what we have previously learnt, but it does require a shift in emphasis. Philosophy neither renounces the sublime fruits of mysticism nor liquidates its great essential values. The higher teaching does not come today to destroy but to fulfil, does not seek to supplant but to augment.

It is important to note that we have based our views not only on the theoretical consideration of mysticism, not only also on the measure taken of it by the traditional higher philosophical teaching, but also upon the scientific examination of its practical consequences. It was not only careful observation but also constant reflection, not only natural intuition but also mystical revelation, that showed us how true they were. And in this direction we have been fortunate enough to be able to have gathered data from the Asiatic, African, European and American continents, that is, from the Orient and the Occident, from every kind of individual and group, ashram and monastery, cult and sect, all on varying mental and moral levels. We have practiced the meditational and ascetic disciplines about which we have written. Hence, our knowledge of them is personal, not secondhand, and our writings deal with what we found, not with what imagination would like to find. If it is natural that so many whose narrow outlook or few contacts lead them to question our views, it is equally natural that the handful who have added to meditation practice a cultivated intelligence and wide experience should accept the rightness of these views and support their exponent. They can thus make the results of our reflections and experiences their own quite cheaply, in comparison with the heavy price which we had to pay for them.

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human being, which would harmonize and mutualize thinking, feelings and activity in the loftiest possible way. In a sense we had broken away from our own past, but in another sense we had merely continued its creative development. We realized, however, that we were not born to follow slavishly in any traditional rut and that we had to work out our own salvation.

That he has never changed an iota of his views from his eighteenth to his eightieth years, that consistency is a vital virtue for a thinker, can be a matter for praise only to those who deem truth so easy to get that one has only to pick it off a tree. People do not realize that a thoughtful and travelled writer's mind matures with ripening experience, like a child growing into a man, and that understanding rises gradually on the horizon of his mind. His books are but memorable milestones which mark the different stages of his inner progress and which reveal the inevitable expansion of his general outlook. This was, however, only partly true in our own case because frequent premonitions had always warned us of the course that our inner evolution would eventually take, although over-intense concentration on each phase as we passed through it as though it were an obsession and over-humble submission to authority unfortunately combined to prevent us taking an earlier profit from these premonitions. The reasons which caused us to feel misgivings about mysticism, which compelled us to search beyond its confines and which thus became the indirect cause of our discovery of ultra-mystic philosophy, are important; not because what happened to us mentally when we came to this climax in our life and thought is of particular historical importance, but because these were not personal but universal problems. They mark a crisis through which all who are genuinely progressive and not merely static seekers, must also and inevitably pass. And we know now, from our conversations with them in different parts of the world, that we have but given articulate form to aching interrogations and growing misgivings which have naturally suggested themselves to and troubled several other minds. Perhaps this article will help not a few to better understand certain rising feelings which have not yet emerged into clearly-conceived thoughts.

Until a few years ago we stood before the world as an exponent of mysticism and to a large extent of Indian mysticism. That we then abandoned such a position was an event to which most outside observers might not attach much significance, for neither our personality nor the subject involved interested them. But the truth is that we stood also in a symbolic relation to them, to the subject itself and to India. In one sense, we represented the mystically-seeking mind of the West. In another sense, we represented its practical and sceptical mind. In a third sense, we

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represented its probings into Asiatic spirituality. It is not that we did this deliberately or egoistically but only that, viewing the matter in retrospect, it is now obvious that we did it unconsciously and involuntarily. If anyone erroneously thinks that this is an attempt to establish a kind of claim to leadership and seeks to dispute it, he is more than welcome to do so. For not only do we not make such a claim, not only would such a position be most repugnant to us, but we ourselves would be the first to repudiate it.

With the publication of "The Wisdom of the Overself", we deliberately shifted the emphasis from the following of a master to following one's own inner prompting, reason and experience. This was done partly because the character of the coming age, with its emphasis on mental individualization, demanded it and partly because the average seeker in the West could only find teachers who, leaving aside those who were nothing more than selfish exploiters and camouflaged charlatans, had not themselves realized the goal or only those who taught "spiritual truths" which were often the result of merely intellectual speculations or uncontrolled psychic imaginations. It was unsafe to follow such guides who could not see where they were momentarily walking and could not even understand correctly the nature of the ultimate destination. If any spiritual teacher were to arise in the West who could truly claim to be its leader in a mystical and philosophic sense, he would have to be fully worthy of such devotion; he would have to be a man who had learnt to live in the Overself whether in trance or in the market place, as he would also have to be a man whose great mind fitted him to teach the blinded ignorant suffering West and whose great heart had dedicated him wholly to this task. But, alas, we have not seen such a man yet, strain our eyes on the horizon as we may.

Nor is it because we believe with Cicero that "To decide who is a wise man appears to us most especially the task of one who is himself wise" that we now prefer to keep our allegiance as free as the air. More mature experience at least has taught us that he must needs be a whole man, not a partial man, and we do not know where such an one is to be found. So our mind is quite unengaged and although it has not been able to put itself to rest by following some individual, it has at least been able to find some satisfaction by trying to follow Truth. Perhaps it will not be long before the West's new and true teacher arises. Who knows? Meanwhile, we are not content to subside into complete silence, to waste the years in idle self-centredness and lethargic complacency, hoarding our little heap of knowledge like a miser. It is not only necessary to impart a fundamental turn to the mystical thought of our time and thus make it correspond to modern Occidental needs, but also

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to develop it in consonance with the tremendous intellectual ferment which is taking place because of the world war. The immensity of the task which confronts us demands a continuous and exclusive dedication of every available minute of our time and energy for some years.

Now it is the business of a pioneer to travel where others do not travel simply because a proper road is not yet available; to see what others do not see simply because they are looking in a different direction; and to say what others do not understand chiefly because he has said it too soon. It is only when time develops a new road, turns their eyes and reveals further facts that they take up the ideas which were formerly ridiculed. Knowing all this, it is equally the business of a pioneer to remain undiscouraged during his lifetime and to expect some cessation of personal abuse only after his death. Such a situation should be satisfactory to all concerned for they will have the fun of laughing first under the delusion that they are laughing last, whilst he will have the fun of actually laughing last!

Whoever takes up the thankless task of setting down a mystical teaching in crisp, clear and definite statements rather than in veiled symbolical or vague ones; whoever is determined to free mystical ideas and meditational practices from the mockeries and lunacies which men and their institutions have fastened upon them; whoever refuses to shut his eyes to the shortcomings of individual mystical leaders and charlatanic pseudo-mystics, but realizes that the contemporary need of mysticism is much too urgent and its permanent worth much too great to be impugned by such failures; whoever declines to crush reason and live in self-deception at the bidding of ancient superstition; whoever cannot bring himself to condone the attrition of treasured ideals by blandly ignoring unpleasant episodes and unethical deeds; such a man will, it should now be obvious, fall between the double fire of all these mystics who are too credulous and all those materialists who are too sceptical. This cannot be helped.

Hence, it is our unfortunate fate to be a struggling pioneer swimming against strong currents of prejudice and ignorance. We have received what most pioneers in mystical and philosophic culture have received--kindly recognition and warm encouragement from the few who can comprehend what it is that we have endeavoured to achieve both for ourself and for humanity, but cold contempt and angry abuse from others.

What we are attempting to achieve will be less plain to this generation than to the one which will follow it. For it is nothing less than a pioneer task, a task which was shown us clairvoyantly but vividly more than a quarter

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century ago as something yet enwombed in the future. And like most pioneer truth-bearers, we have had to cut a new road with bleeding and blistering feet, a road that others will later smooth and surface without difficulty and still others travel sedately in ease and comfort. And again as with most pioneers, the stones of abuse and calumny have fallen plentifully on our head but a few flowers of appreciation and understanding have been mixed with them.

A world-wide observation of men and their methods, together with a lifetime of study and reflection, have convincingly revealed the futility of expecting that modern Asia, and particularly modern India, can become our guide in these matters. On the contrary, only disillusionment would be the consequence of taking such a course. This has been our own personal experience and this must also be the experience of the race. The modern world must formulate its own knowledge, work out its own salvation. This does not mean that it should or even could do this alone. It will have to look to the ancient world, and particularly to the ancient Asiatic world, for much of the foundational material which should enter into this structure. But twentieth-century man has got to find a new way of thought and practice that will fit his own developed mentality, altered conditions and complex circumstances, not only those of three thousand years ago. Otherwise, he will be like an engineer trying to construct a latest-type aeroplane without using modern materials, like aluminum, for its wings. And if this is true for the inhabitants of Asia, as every impartial observer must admit, it is a hundred times truer for the inhabitants of Europe and America.

It is true that the traditional doctrines make available to the novice the experience of many men during many centuries and are therefore of the greatest value to him. But this is not to say that the rapidly widening experience of modern history is therefore to be ignored as though it had not come into existence. If we are to be true to ourselves, we must indeed wed the old knowledge with the new, just as we must approach the ancient problems with the modern starting points. The culture of antiquity has not only to be adapted to the habitual ways of thinking now customary among us; it has not only to be expressed, expounded and explained by arguments which are the most currently intelligible to us; but also to be modified or even reconstructed in the light of the latest knowledge.

A friend, Umrao Singh Sher Gil of Simla, a distinguished Sikh aristocrat who spent 40 years in the study of Indian philosophy and the practice of Indian Yoga, finally confessed in his letters to me that:

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and egotistic yogis in my country. My warnings to you of eight years ago concerning so-called mystics and saints in India were not miscalculated. There are innumerable such ashrams where this commercialization or degeneration seems to have occurred. And much greater names are involved, with some of which you are familiar. I happen to have personal and authentic knowledge that some of these great idols had feet of clay which were not even baked. My criterion is Patanjali. I fear that some of these poor fellows have disturbed minds. Delusions are also a factor, against which Patanjali warned in his aphorism on the obstacles to yoga. I feel sick when I think of such things. That is why I am pursuing a lone path, as you are now doing. Alas, that it should have to be so! It cannot be helped. An honest attitude is a part of the preparation. The matter becomes too unsavoury for me to write more on this point.

(b) A reliable teacher I have still to find. What I have met hitherto are generally self-conceited windbags or modest ignoramuses.

(c) But some further disappointments await you not only in those who are the victims of yogic but also of Vedantic degenerations. The intellectual jugglery and empty presumptuous claims of the so-called Vedantins of these days do not impress me. The Direct Seer and man of positive knowledge has been invisible for many centuries in India, and philosophy has fallen into the hands of parrots with good memories and poor judgments who have no desire left for turning to facts.

(d) The mystic-metaphysic opiates have drugged India and the East. As long as the core of the doctrine is vitiated, as it is, there will be a reversion to passivity. The West should avoid such suicide. The virile new world order can be built only on more positive tendencies, although it cannot really do without the spiritual background. But this background must be a reconciliation of the Noumenal essence and phenomenal movement into an Unity.

(e) It is painful for me to write all this, but it must be done in the interest of Truth itself."

However, although there are regrettable shortcomings and undesirable tendencies in contemporary Indian spiritual culture which philosophy cannot avoid pointing out, a friendly criticism which it makes without rancour or heat and on the level of calm courteous discussion, it does not on that account oppose its introduction to the West but recognizes the need of expanding the Western outlook in these matters by accepting loans from the Eastern. If the resultant weakening of vested interests and traditional monopolies in religion will be accompanied by the setting up of new ones,

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this need not be regretted in a sphere where exploitation is inevitable and is worse where they are strongest. The West cannot go forward by going back to its own discarded irrational religious dogmas. Hence, philosophy welcomes all endeavours from whatever quarter to broaden the field of Western religio-mystic faith, but it refuses to associate itself with them. For although such a broadening will help Western civilization and not weaken it, as bigots assert, it will not save Western civilization. That will be possible only if it really wakes up, if it listens to the voices of its own living prophets, and if it follows a modern version of the age-old quest liveable amid and in touch with the realities of its own situation. The situation of modern man renders it essential to start a new living tradition rather than get entangled in an old decaying one, to develop an universal mysticism rather than narrow himself down to the Eastern kind.

The attitude of philosophy towards proselytizing Eur-American converts to yoga and propagandizing Ramakrishna-Mission swamis is naturally sympathetic, yet wisely discriminating. Philosophy refuses to associate itself with any particular religion, whether Eastern or Western. Hence, it is entirely uninterested in conversions from one religion to another, entirely unconcerned with the defense or attack, the spread or decay of any organized religion. Those who especially link it with Hinduism or Buddhism are wrong.

If it is so necessary for the West to universalize its spiritual culture, broaden its religious outlook, weaken its ecclesiastical monopolies, then my work must continue to help it do so. But there will be this difference between the early and later phase of my writing: that all its ideology will now be quite unlabelled with Indian names, sources or references, quite global in all such references. Thus it will not identify itself with any Indian movement, school, guru or teaching, but will remain nameless, detached. It will welcome the arrival of every missionary swami on Western shores and every Aldous Huxley's conversion to Hindu beliefs, but it will not go out of its way either to mention or support him. All these propagandists for Vedic revelations are alive to the past but dead to the present; all their disciples are defeated escapists, perhaps pardonably so, but still escapists. My teaching will be that not only the West but also the East has exhausted its own spiritual resources and must find new ones. But they will have to be found within itself again, although the help of the East is necessary for this task.

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THE WORLD'S SPIRITUAL CRISIS.

When we speak in our writings of the war's general effect, we refer not only to the period of actual fighting but also to the confused periods of so-called peace which precede and follow it. It is only for the sake of literary convenience that we lump the three periods together, either under the short term 'war' or under the more descriptive term 'world crisis'. This preamble will help to make clearer our point of view.

It is also needful to define here what we mean by the word 'spiritual', both in the present title and text as well as in our other writings. For in "The Hidden Teaching Beyond Yoga", we have pointed out how ambiguous it has become, how wide a range of connotations it now possesses. Briefly, we use it, generically, to cover any or all of the three aspects of human culture which oppose themselves to a materialistic interpretation of life, aspects which may conveniently be named the religious, the mystical, and the philosophic.

For some years, all of us heard the dread figure of Mars sharpening murderous weapons in preparation for the sacrifice he later demanded. Then swift and terrifying changes swept like a hurricane over the world. Violence became a feature of life, insecurity and uncertainty dominated it. Dangers and disasters overwhelmed it. Then science, which had brought civilization to the world, ringed us around with a circle of artillery that belched forth smoking destruction and made the planet stagnant with putrid corpses, replaced the smiling colours of the rainbow with the threatening outlines of bombing airplanes, and made men, women and children find the ancient glamour of the heavens gone as with frayed nerves they gazed upwards to the skies.

Too often the ancient history of a nation is a record of the barbarity of its rulers, the poverty of its people, and the ignorance of both. Voltaire, the French Bernard Shaw, grinned at the world and said sarcastically, "History is nothing more than a picture of crimes and misfortunes." But this is an exaggeration. It is possible to find, amid the blood-stained records of a people's life, not only that the jewels of culture, the ornaments of art and the treasures of useful invention have been renovated by war, but also that valuable moral and intellectual lessons have been conveyed.

This may shock some readers, but it will not shock those who have their ears to the ground and their eyes on the horizon. In any case, we write only for those who can no longer give moral support or intellectual acquiescence to the

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weaknesses of conventional guides and the faults of conventional teaching. History--by which we do not mean conventional historians--has much to tell us and still more to teach us concerning this point. Although the evil of war is that, if too severe and too prolonged, it destroys much of civilization itself and unleashes the worst animal passions in man, the good of war is that it quickens the speed of civilization's upward march and unleashes the best intelligence in man. If it sweeps the crowd along on a crestwave of anger, hate, horror and greed, it also stimulates the individual to think about realities and lifts him out of habitual mind-deadening grooves. The history of his inner progress is written in man's blood as well as in his books.

It was one consequence of the war that the dominant ideas of many people were largely upset. This could only have happened if those ideas were incorrect, unfactual or illusory. And this state of mind, in turn, could only have developed because these people had unconsciously looked at the world through spectacles of selfishness, prejudice or materialism, which distorted or even falsified the view. Hence, Emerson said, "War is part of our education." For war conditions do not allow men, as peace conditions so often do allow them, to run away from realities or to shirk facing unpleasant conditions or to remain unprogressively paralyzed by the past or to delude themselves with artificial values. Not all of Hitler's hysterical ramblings, for instance, could hide for long from the German people what a quagmire he had led them into, when the war had run its course sufficiently long.

The greatest of all wars first challenged and then exposed the true character of men and their institutions. It provided everybody with the chance to detect what was unsound in their life and to get rid of it. It burst many pretences, however ancient they were, showed up fissures and flaws on every side. It dug beneath the surface of things and revealed the contradictions lying under them. It stopped many from lazy acceptance of society and people, governments and institutions at their own conceited valuation, whilst it started them on the road to thinking for themselves. It blew the breezes of frankness across many stagnant pools of hypocrisy. Its hammer-blow shocks shook off not a few venerable prejudices from minds that would otherwise have continued to remain static. The jolts and pains, which came to a society that took the appearance of reality for reality itself, were truly its tutors. Even a little consideration of what the war has done to millions confirms these facts.

These tumultuous events of the world crisis have moved so rapidly that most minds have scarcely been able to keep in step with the pace of new history in the making. The desire to understand the deeper significance of these tremendous world happenings has necessarily spread amongst bewildered mankind. The war has awakened them abruptly and violently to some comprehension at least of the iconoclastic importance of the century in which they live. But when they attempt to read their future, their eyes begin to ache. What is to

weaknesses of conventional guides and the faults of conventional teaching. History--by which we do not mean conventional historians--has much to tell us and still more to teach us concerning this point. Although the evil of war is that, if too severe and too prolonged, it destroys much of civilization itself and unleashes the worst animal passions in man, the good of war is that it quickens the speed of civilization's upward march and unleashes the best intelligence in man. If it sweeps the crowd along on a crestwave of anger, hate, horror and greed, it also stimulates the individual to think about realities and lifts him out of habitual mind-deadening grooves. The history of his inner progress is written in man's blood as well as in his books.

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The greatest of all wars first challenged and then exposed the true character of men and their institutions. It provided everybody with the chance to detect what was unsound in their life and to get rid of it. It burst many pretences, however ancient they were, showed up flaws on every side. It dug beneath the surface of things and revealed the contradictions lying under them. It stopped many from lazy acceptance of society and people, governments and institutions at their own conceited valuation, whilst it started them on the road to thinking for themselves. It blew the breezes of frankness across many stagnant pools of hypocrisy. Its hammer-blow shook off not a few venerable prejudices from minds that would otherwise have continued to remain static. The jolts and pains, which came to a society that took the appearance of reality for reality itself, were truly its tutors. Even a little consideration of what the war has done to millions confirms these facts.

These tumultuous events of the world crisis have moved so rapidly that most minds have scarcely been able to keep in step with the pace of new history in the making. The desire to understand the deeper significance of these tremendous world happenings has necessarily spread amongst bewildered mankind. The war has awakened them abruptly and violently to some comprehension at least of the inescapable importance of the century in which they live. But when they attempt to read their future, their eyes begin to ache. What is to

become of the world, of the civilization built up with such effort, with such struggle? Reason is confounded and questions the past in vain. It is hard to trace a divine purpose within that confused torrent of happenings and people which we designate as contemporary history. The chronicle of history is usually full of wise instruction and he who would understand the present, has first to look to the past. But the times today cannot be read with such glib ease; yet if the rash hands of the senses cannot easily decipher the future, the fingers of the deepened and depersonalized mind may do so. Coming events cast their good or evil configuration beforehand upon calm, sensitive souls. That the unseen hand of destiny is unfolding the vivid scenes of an unique drama is evident to them. That the contemporary currents of world-throbbing happenings are but presages indicating that a radical shift-over in human existence is upon us is also clear to them. In geological history, earthquakes are a means adopted by Nature to restore a disturbed equilibrium. In human history, wartime world-upheaval is both karma's way to attaining equilibrium in an unbalanced society and evolution's way of making another spurt forward.

When we begin to seek in the myriad events of our time some intrinsic significance, some pervading purpose, this is in a deeper sense than in which the world situation is to be interpreted. History held many portents of it during the past decade, but today the sky is filled with them. The powerful evolutionary and karmic forces of Nature have found in certain men their partial means of expression and in certain events their abrupt outworking. For the historic fact is that, since the beginning of this century, we have lived between a vanishing epoch and an oncoming one. It is indeed true now to say that, with the close of the World War, the new age has arrived and that we are in the throes of its infantile struggles. If we see all around us the last signs of a dying age, we also see the first signs of a dawning one. For the World War was the signal of a coming age for which its own destructiveness prepared the way. If one task of the war was to expose the moral, economic and political decay of the dying age, then one task of the coming age is to express its own ethical, rational and creative virility. Hence, the war has produced a ferment of ideas, a current of awakening, which has followed across the five continents with increased and increasing momentum. Every period acquires its outlook by inheritance and retains it by habit, but war breaks up both. Because it broke up homes, families, cities, nations and institutions, as well as social, political and economic orders, to the most tremendous degree history has ever known, can we not discern therein that this war has been finishing in a dramatic manner the historic trend of a fast-closing world-cycle? The power, which maintained most of its institutions, was chiefly tradition. But the fact that there was so much discussion and so much debate about them was an ominous sign that even traditions, like clothes, wear themselves threadbare. For in earlier historical eras, their existence

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had been accepted unquestioningly like the existence of the sun.

Such a colossal breakup has two vital significances for us: the first, and simplest, is that we are faced with the inevitability of an evolutionary process, which marked the transition from an outworn epoch to the threshold of a coming one; the second, and subtlest, is that it marked for mankind a period of forced, if temporary, renunciation of earthly possessions to arouse and stimulate the quest of a spiritual one. The first significance was grasped by Hitler in his own crooked and dangerous way, but the second one was quite beyond his grasp. The great changes of thought and living, introduced by the two wars, will be completed by the second peace. New forms of human institutions will emerge therefrom. The problems that afflicted our race passed through an age of confusion and terror only that they might find satisfying solutions; the trampling of armies grew louder only that they might disappear altogether; the turmoil among the nations became worse only that a serene and steady peace might fall upon all; and the shouts of the wicked mingled with the cries of the oppressed only that happier sounds might succeed them.

It is essential to grasp this outstanding fact: that the course of the post-war history will no more depend upon the motives and desires of individuals than the course of the war itself depended on them. Tremendous karmic and evolutionary forces are at work and will themselves shape the world, using individuals merely as pawns in the game. The restoration of the old order of thought is not only undesirable, but also impossible. It can no longer sustain itself; hence, a new progressive one must replace it. No individual man or social group can avert this change. Indeed, nothing that any individual or any group of individuals can do will put a term to this dynamic process. They may try in their materialistic blindness or unhappy selfishness to substitute something apparently similar in its place, but their efforts will break down under the stress of implacable events. It may be affirmed that the end of such a course--and no prophetic sagacity is needed here--can only be disaster. Those who failed to keep pace with these swift-moving events and those who failed to react wisely to them, have found themselves in an unfortunate plight. This is why they have been compelled to stand, like mourning relatives, in vigil over the deathbed of long-vested interests and wide-flung proprietorships. The coming age will be fatal to all those individuals or institutions which have developed a vested interest in the past contrary to the true common welfare of the present, to forms which have outlived the term set for them by evolution, and to all those who are unteachable, stupefied, hence unfit to lead in such a crisis.

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The World War, which marked the climax of mankind's spiritual crisis, was not only a war between the Allies and the Axis. It was also a war between the opposing future and

the resistant past, between what was and what must be, between patriarchal leadership by a generation of backward-looking ghosts and democratic leadership by a generation of forward-looking men, between the weight of selfish short-sighted inertia and the power of altruistic farseeing imagination, between lower values and higher ones. It has forced old values out of the field and new ones into it, has greatly altered existing relations, and brought unexpected upheavals in man's mental life. It has put into relief this truth that human ideas and possessions, beliefs and things always rest on fluid waters and are not embedded in static soils. The mentality of man cannot progress unless it is free. Hence, once we have served our apprenticeship to the past, we must let it go so that we may perceive what it could not perceive and achieve what it did not achieve. Whoever understands the inner nature of the spiritual changes transpiring throughout the world can only smile at the stupid statements made by those who, paralyzed by their past, represent the dying epoch. For these changes are defying the desires of such men, whose pronouncements are both meaningless and valueless when matched against the background of the irresistible powers of karma and evolution. Nobody can succeed in reversing this evolutionary trend although somebody will doubtless try to do so. Those who still believe they can defy the evolutionary process which is at work, thereby reveal their incompetence to assess its potentialities and appraise its actualities correctly.

The faded old patterns of human living cannot be revivified. Those who want to carry on postwar existence with pre-war ideas, will be pathetically left behind. Society has turned its thoughts to the past long enough. It is not helpful to anyone to be blinded by the past, to see the world only as it was and not as it is, to neglect new possibilities because of old achievements. The ideas of an outmoded patriarchal civilization have little survival value because they are of little use in the kind of world mankind is being forced to shape for itself. We have more and more become involved in situations, which exhaust the strength of a patriarchal civilization to deal with and which exceed its knowledge to solve satisfactorily. Those who cannot understand that they are at the crumbling end of one epoch, will not understand that they are also at the dynamic beginning of another. Those who are caught up in groved routines so as to refuse to contemplate these ideas and resist these influences, are nevertheless everywhere being driven by the shock of historic changes to realize the insufficiency of the old materialistic ideas and the weakness of the old traditional influences. Thus, they are fighting a losing battle. So long as their thinking is set only by the dying past, so long will they deceive themselves and mislead others. Moreover, tragic situations will develop, unexpected incidents will occur and forbidding perspectives will open up, which will bewilder them to the

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extent that they will not know what to do. In short, pre-war prejudices must go. Pre-war mentalities must readjust themselves or take the consequences.

With the menace of these world conditions as they were, it behooved every thinking man to prepare himself that he might not be caught unawares and thrown into panic and terror. But how few did so! They ran through their days as swiftly as the glow runs through a cigarette, yet at the very end most of what they had gathered was but a heap of dead ash. Never before in history has there been so much widespread inward misery spiced with extravagant pleasure. The others deluded themselves with Number and Size and imagined they had built a worth-while civilization when they had merely multiplied their trivialities a thousand-fold. Blinded by acquisitive instinct and bemused by intellectual conceit, twentieth century man blundered about in a darkness which he mistook for light. With all its vaunted facade of brilliant technological achievement, how shabby was the spiritual poverty of our pre-war world! How many inspirations fell back blunted when they came in hard contact with our materialistic age! Never before in the chronicles of the world had so many speeches filled the air, so many words resounded through space, yet never before had the world been in such spiritual darkness. History reveals no counterpart to such conditions. Even the declining days of Rome were not so shadowed, for they were not so complicated by social and economic problems arising out of unbalanced mechanical progress and ethical and cultural problems brought on by the spread of scientific thought. Here was something planetary and not local, evolutionary and not episodic.

When human existence has become emptied of any inner meaning, when human beings are no longer able to detect the presence and action of divinity within their own selves, then human civilization has become a half-failure. The bombs, which fell on so many cities, not only exploded and blew up a period of uneasy peace, but they also exploded and blew up a whole era of increasing world-wide materialism. The old order of thought had to dissolve before our eyes. It was too false and hence too feeble to endure, when put to the searching test of a crisis like the present one. The inherited fallacies by which we lived, the distorted picture of the world which we held, became visible for what they really were. Only then, when the painful consequences of a materialistic world-view and the misguided actions which flow out of it came home at last to roost, did people begin to reflect upon the insufficiency of the one and the foolishness of the other. They had got so absorbed in earthly business that they forgot there existed a trans-earthly one. To live, as so many did, in the ego's ignorance, to exist without the faith or understanding that a divine soul dwells at our root, to continue smugly satisfied with the common heedlessness, to repose in

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such fancied security, is not to be alive but to lie already stretched out in the grave. Those, who could not understand this, who could not understand the deeper meaning of their own experience and their own self, formerly laughed with ridicule or looked with indifference at sincere attempts to reawaken the divine sense in mankind.

Such a deplorable attitude towards life could yield only discouraging results in life. That the society in which we lived for so many years was an unbalanced one is now clear to every calm observer, not himself stupefied by a sensual and selfish past. The values to which a materialistic outlook leads man could be assayed in such a time of social crisis and general turmoil. We saw them thus exposed everywhere, but especially in all their stark ugliness and extreme development among the Germans. During the past few years, history has given large-scale proof of the fundamental failure of the materialistic conception. Many individuals, who had not done so earlier, have come up against the practical limitations and intellectual contradictions of materialism. However well it worked during the smoother days of peace, it failed during the sterner days of war. For then it left them bereft of hope, plunged in darkness, filled with despair, filled with uncertainty.

Our pre-war sophisticated young men and women thought that social circumstances and bodily emotions were the supreme forces to which human life responds. They thought that man was entirely the product of his material environment and that they could successfully shape his modern environment into a thing of perfection. Intellect, working apart from intuition and divorcing itself from conscience, held down by desires, passions and egotisms, swollen by pride into self-deception about its own vaunted powers, picturing science as the new Messiah walking hand-in-hand with Marxism and psychoanalysis, led them naturally and inevitably into a cynical materialism and pleasure-seeking 'liberation'. Religion was despised, metaphysics was turned into a handmaiden of its own bleak, blank, immoral world-view, and mysticism was ignored altogether. A crushing retribution befell them. The utter failure of modern society to keep the peace, the pitiful inability of modern civilization to keep human beings from becoming ravening Nazi beasts, humiliated and depressed them. But it also instructed them. For the war showed up the insufficiency of all materialistic views, which ascribed the existence of evil solely to bad economic conditions or simply to psychological repressions, frustrations and perversions. These causes could account for some of the evil in humanity, but they could not account for the monstrosities of Nazi cruelty and Hitlerian criminality on the immense continental scale in which they appeared during our own time.

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had to withdraw in uncertainty and bewilderment. Here was a civilization, based upon materialistic sanctions, which ended in crushing disaster. Was it true, after all, that unguided by God and unstrengthened by divine forces, man could only make a bad mess of things? Could it be that the traditional religions of all peoples during all times were not fooling themselves and others, but really did contain something of truth?

Thus they began to turn contritely back toward ignored paths. Thus a new spiritual urge was awakened out of their sense of the colossal failure of unaided human wisdom. And thus the war expiated the sins, educated the minds, and sanctified the hearts of many. They saw, at last, that if the mysterious unseen realities of existence are left out of sight, we can never come to an adequate understanding of existence itself. This vindicated the philosophic dictum that 'materialism may capture man's thought and feeling but that it cannot hold them'. The experiences of life and the evolutions of Nature are such that he can be kept back from truth only for a time, never for all time. When he sees life whole and therefore sees it right, he will understand why Jesus said, "Seek ye first the kingdom of heaven and all these things shall be added unto you", and why, if he is to insist upon any single renovation in human life, it must be its own self-spiritualization, and that if he is to put emphasis anywhere, it must be upon the rediscovery of the divine purpose of his earthly life.

Yes, the war inexorably began the real education of mankind. Their minds could then open up and expand. Only when we change ourselves, shall we be able to change this unpleasant kind of education. And this is because the outstanding educative operation of war is that it deprives men of their external possessions and accustomed resources and throws them back on their own internal ones, that is, on their own character and capacities, ideas and ideals--in short, on their own consciousness. Then, if they over-value the worth of external possessions and under-value the worth of internal ones, they are certain to suffer, are certain to be shocked into discovering their own inner bankruptcy and their institutions' hollowness. Hence he, whose most cherished property was within himself, suffered least from the war. Whatever properties it may have deprived him of, it could not deprive him of his privilege to think constructively and live heroically, to go into the silent sanctuary within self and rediscover his essential divinity anew.

From a certain standpoint, the war was a punishment of mankind, not only on account of their wrong deeds but also on account of their wrong thoughts. The suppressed or half-concealed hatreds, for example, which never found outward expression, had to be paid for, however much less the price might have been. This was because the world's ultimate reality is nearer the nature of our mind than our body. Thus the perplexities, which beset the world today, are

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From a certain standpoint, the war was a punishment of mankind, not only on account of their wrong deeds but also on account of their wrong thoughts. The suppressed or half-concealed hatreds, for example, which never found outward expression, had to be paid for, however much less the price might have been. This was because the world's ultimate reality is nearer the nature of our mind than our body. Thus the perplexities, which beset the world today, are

merely magnifications of the perplexities which beset the individual. So long as individuals, either through selfishness, fear, distrust or hate, injure each other, so long will nations continue to do precisely the same. Therefore, philosophy iterates and re-iterates the importance of putting the individual mind and heart right, without which the state can never put itself right. The hand, which inflicted the terrible agony of this war upon man, was none other than his own. The God, who punished him for his selfishness, his materialism and his wrongdoing, was inside and not outside himself. For the karma, which thus brought him both the fruit of his mistaken planting and the consequences of his self-centered inertia, depended on Mind for its own operation. And Mind is the hidden essence of man. His sufferings are consequently neither meaningless nor purposeless. As soon as he starts to ask why they have come to him, they begin to serve him. If he pursues his questioning until he finds the correct answer, he will find also the reason why he is on earth at all. This will put his errant feet upon the quest of his divine inner self. It was because he deferred both question and quest that he had to endure this dread event. Out of the awful waste and loss, the horrible drama and tribulation of war, there is always the possibility that he will purify and renovate himself and thus come closer to his real estate. Even the worst evils serve a good end, in time. The calamities and affections, the hardships and misfortunes, the frustrations and losses of the crisis, serve at least this purpose: they make people turn, in their despair, toward spiritual remedies.

Thus the historical processes, which produced this dreadful situation, were themselves the echoes of deeper processes in human nature, of moral and mental ones. War has shown up materialism for the hideous and dangerous thing that it is. It has revealed that the painful distresses and galling errors of modern man are the outcome of the moral degeneration and spiritual ignorance of modern man. It has proved that every problem is, in the end, part of the larger human problems: What am I? What am I here for? The particular solutions we find for them pre-determine the particular kind of civilization we build up.

During the years of the first so-called peace, we hinted in a little book that a reconstruction of the ideological foundation of society was no less necessary than the reconstruction of its physical superstructures, of which one heard so much talk about. We hinted, too, that it was better to build on solid rock than on shifting quicksand. And we pointed out that the spiritual laws, which govern life, cannot be broken by nations any more than by individuals, without their transgressions echoing back as consequent suffering. It is necessary, therefore, to discover those laws. Enthusiasm, alone, is not enough and may even, as in the case of the Nazis, prove dangerous when unbalanced--calm, farsighted wisdom must guide it. After the 1914 War, we were

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merely decadent. After the 1939 War, we are really desperate. There is but one way to expel decadence and extirpate desperation. The years of military re-armament have to be succeeded by years of spiritual re-armament.

"Repent and be redeemed" is therefore the proper thought with which to touch the conscience of this time. The fact is that, without moral repentance, the world cannot save itself, cannot find a way out of its desperate situation. The darkness of a despairing future, bred by the degeneration of its humanity, is settling upon it. Without such repentance, the enormous danger of suicidal annihilation faces mankind--and the fact need not be blinked. If the war and peace cannot open men's eyes, if the words of spiritual seers cannot open them, nothing else than self-destruction will exist to end his inner blindness.

We must begin to see what the philosophers have long ago seen--that, psychologically, the maladjustments, the frustrations and the spiritual impoverishments of modern man are the root causes of his outer troubles, that, given the right atmosphere of co-operative goodwill and creative intelligence, all practical problems involving human relationships will soon solve themselves within it. That most strife-breeding political, economic and social questions would vanish altogether if we could create this new atmosphere, this new spiritual outlook, has become quite evident to them. ~~That~~ The widespread exclusion of higher principles and ethical considerations from the ruling policies of modern States is something that has brought its own Nemesis upon the modern world. ~~That~~ Only when the world will consent to become inspired by higher principles can it hope to find the real solution of the multitude of economic, political and social problems that face it. ~~That~~ All solutions, which lack these principles, are but paint and varnish which hide but do not change the real problems. ~~That~~ Only by raising the public conscience, through the efforts of inspired men and true religious teachers, will real change come about. ~~That~~ The higher executive posts in every country throughout the world should be filled by men who are as spiritually-minded as they must needs be practically-minded, if mankind is to make true progress--to put such men at the head of the social pyramid, as was formerly done in the pre-historic times under the system of king-sages, or to put spiritually-minded advisers at their side to ensure wisdom in action.

II.

Religion and the Crisis.

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economic and political crisis, which resulted from the war. They will also have to bestow some time and energy on overcoming the moral crisis, which produced the war. And this will be a task beyond their capacity, if they make the mistake of ignoring philosophical principles and neglect to seek divine aid. Therefore, we assert that it is because of the world tragedy that men and women need more spirituality, that is to say, more religion, more mysticism and more philosophy, not despite it. They need one, another, or all of this trio, because out of such sources flows the moral sense, the consciousness of a distinction between right and wrong, the realized duty of self-control and non-injury towards one's fellow creatures, and the compassionate feeling for others. They need them, also, to redeem faith in man and restore hope in his future.

Spiritual truth is, in the end, the only cure for the maladies of disillusionment and discouragement, of unhappiness, worry and sin, which have descended on the world. This fact has been overlooked because of competing issues or overlaid because of human exploitations. But the recognition of its factuality will provide the best ideological sanction for the principles upon which a recreated society should be based. It would be pleasant to offer an easier universal panacea, which would work overnight, but we know of no such. Whoever refuses to look for felicity in the only place where it can be found must necessarily suffer. It is perhaps more significant than ever in these harsh days. It has always been valuable to mankind, but it is particularly valuable in times when external possessions and internal dogmas have evaporated so largely before their eyes and when civilization itself walks along the verge of an abyss. It is true that people cannot give much of their thought to mental and moral betterment unless there has first been sufficient physical betterment to enable them to lift their eyes from the earth, but it is much more true however that mental and moral improvement is an inwardly-developing process which cannot be imposed from outside. The starvation of the bodily man must certainly be remedied, but the starvation of the spiritual man has even more dangerous results. A two-fold change--outer and inner, physical and spiritual, social and personal, practical and moral, environmental and intellectual--is needed. Both are essential, but from the standpoint of what karmic fate will overtake mankind, the second is very much the more important of the two.

If there were no divine soul within man, his ideals would be meaningless and useless. It is this that gives secret reality to his strivings for self-improvement and to his yearnings for social betterment. There is an undisclosed mystery in the heart of the worst gangster. For every individual embodies a ray of the universal Mind, however unprepossessing he may seem outwardly. If this were not so, no religion could ever have made an enduring appeal

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to man and no mystical teaching could have attracted his intuition at all. This is indeed the paradox of human life: that the Universal Mind, which pervades all men, also evades them. It is the presence of divinity within him, however covered over and however deeply hidden it may be, that gives man some sort of an ideal in his better moments and that makes him dissatisfied with what he now is. It is this ideal, which causes him to assign different values to different things and to different moods. And now, in a world civilization which is shaky and crumbling, the need of newer ideals and sounder values is an imperative one. Humanity has lived in a sterile, waterless desert long enough. How many long for inward peace, how few possess it! In every war-torn land, the number swells of those who are becoming thirsty for the fresh springs of truth, goodwill, peace and nobility. There exists today a vague groping for diviner knowledge, better understanding, and newer ways. The World-Mind has infused man with something of its own nature. Therefore, it is not enough to view our fellowmen by the light of their present defects only--we must also view them by the light of their divine possibilities.

Religion is the most widespread, the most popular, and the most elementary source of righteous conduct. It is best suited to the masses just as mysticism, its higher octave, is best suited to more sensitive people and just as philosophy, its highest octave, is best suited to more sensitive and more intelligent people. It is consequently the most valuable means of uplifting society. But the world has seen, in the tragic events of our time, how religion failed to accomplish its task and how unheard-of forces of evil raged for a time triumphantly across the planet. If we examine into the causes of this failure, we shall find a number of different causes of this failure, we shall find a number of different ones, but in the end we shall also find that they are merely superficial, external and incidental. The deepest, most inward and essential cause is simply this: <u>Religion has not been true to itself</u>. Here is an instance of what we mean: Muhammad democratically preached the brotherhood of all men. His followers unworthily preach the brotherhood of Muhammadans only. Thus his teaching has degenerated with time, and the history of every other religion--be it Christianity, Judaism, Hinduism or Buddhism--is deeply and darkly stained with unreligious thought and unfaithful practice.

But much worse than the degeneration of doctrine has been the degeneration of ethics. A man best proves what he is by his conduct, an institution or society by its deeds. For verbal preaching may be mocked by contradictory practices. The expounders and hierarchs of religion are rightly expected to set good standards for the supposedly weaker masses, but sacerdotal cupidity and ecclesiastical intolerance, the ignoble lust for power at any price and the ignorant hatred of other faiths, have far too often disappointed

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expectation. Most historical ecclesiastical organizations have betrayed their God, if only because their practical policy has been based on selfishly achieving their own success as institutions rather than sincerely offering their service as instruments.

The failure of moribund, organized religious institutions to prevent the war and to counteract the tide of materialism has brought inevitable karmic consequences to them. They are decaying through their own hollowness and hypocrisy. During wartime they have naturally experienced an increase of following, but after the strain of war has passed they will lose more than they have gained. The war has caused many an institution to totter, but the extent of the damage done to religious institutions will not be apparent until some time has passed. The sufferings, which the war forced on so many, forced them also to adjust themselves to new conditions of life. And this, in turn, required new thoughts about life, breaks from the mental ruts and crystallized attitudes of the past. The war has shown atheists and agnostics the practical unsatisfactoriness of their position and turned them favourably towards religion. But it has also shown blind believers the intellectual unsatisfactoriness of their own position. The high-explosive bombs, which exploded during the war, shattered many illusions about the power of prayer, or rather pseudo-prayer. The orthodox conceptions of God's benevolence suffered a severe set-back as a consequence of the war's horrors. The sufferings of good people did not make many of them look upon Deity as having kindly intentions towards His hapless progeny. Thus the same war, which has driven some men and women to renewed religious faith, has driven many more to new materialistic doubt. It has made the smaller group look more to a living God, and the larger one look less to the orthodox God.

These religious changes produced by the war have been too quick and too plentiful for most people to be able to comprehend their inner significance and to foresee whither they are leading us. The younger men and women everywhere--in Europe, Asia and America--have been losing faith in their old traditions, dropping their ancient religions, and turning for salvation towards political and economic development. Where traditional religion failed to meet present-day needs, blind totalitarian politico-economic movements arose out of the unfolding bud of time to replace them, masquerading as new faiths for the masses. The younger people want to investigate for themselves, to use their own judgment, and not blindly to accept as religious truth whatever they are told. The influence of ecclesiastical hierarchs has been waning and the power of pious authorities has been fading. Scriptural promises no longer attract the young and sacerdotal threats no longer intimidate them. They ridicule the past because it had no automobiles and no radios. Hence, beliefs and dogmas, institutions and offices, which depend on the past for their sanction, automatically come in for a share of this ridicule.

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But in turning aside with disillusionment from the slavish veneration of ecclesiastical authority, modern man is turning aside from veneration itself--which is a profound and dangerous error. It is well that he has tired of being irrational. It is not at all well that he should therefore become irreverential. He has unfortunately fallen out of the danger of being led astray by others into the danger of being led astray by himself for he is fast losing that quality upon which rests the very purpose of his earthly incarnation, the quality of feeling veneration for something beyond his own little being. He is losing the sense of a higher existence for himself and of a higher reality for the universe--only to gain a blank, bleak materialism. When moral principles are no longer binding on men, when the ethical appeal is thrust aside as an antiquated nuisance and its religious basis is denounced as an opiate for the people, a dangerous situation opens up. The effects of disbelief in the existence of a divine power show themselves in many different ways, but worst of all in the chaos and confusion which prevails. . The brutality, selfishness and falsehood of Nazism, for example, could only be acceptable to people bereft of all belief in retributive principles governing the world and this, in turn, arises out of disbelief in any other reality than Matter. Man is thus paying a heavy price for the development of his own thinking powers. No man is really healthy, who is physically robust but spiritually feeble, who is emotionally vigorous but ethically paralyzed, and who is alive in his animal nature but dead to his angelic one. When he declares, as Freud declared, that "God is an illusion, religion a disease, and the religious sense a pathological neurosis", then he himself must be treated as one suffering from delusions and neuroses.

At a certain stage of society's religious history, materialism liberates it from the superstitions, corruptions and degradations of degenerated religion and thus acts as a progressive factor. But as soon as it has fulfilled this need, its further continuance becomes a retrogressive factor. The same faculty of critical reason, which has led men out of gross superstition and thus given them mental sight, has also led them into scientific materialism and thus deprived them of this sight. It is an effective medicine when he gets spiritually diseased, but man cannot live by medicine alone. Hence, where the supposed representative of God has failed his people, his place is today being taken by others. The inspired poet is one of the active preachers of our times, as the illumined artist is one of its missionaries. The scientific metaphysician is being looked to for light more and more in our epoch. This is doubtless quite good in its way, but poetry, art and science are not religion. Each is capable of giving man some inner support for living, but none can give precisely that which religion gives. Scientific facts and scientific abstractions cannot

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of themselves nourish the soul of man satisfactorily. The modern intellectual, or his proletarian echo, is left half-starved by such a diet. He seeks the missing pabulum in art, pleasure, entertainment or sport. These certainly help him and indeed he often considers them sufficient to fulfill his want. But the transcendental needs of his soul, being what they are, can never really be replaced by any substitutes. And it is one value of world crisis and world war to make him dissatisfied with a merely materialistic existence. Again, his repressed aims, his secret purposes and his half-banished aspirations continue to torment the man caught in the steel-trap mechanism of modern civilization, who is not utterly bestialized or materialized only--they operate indirectly, they are the mainsprings behind emotions and activities, which respectively seem to be of a quite different character. Whether it be through drink or through sport, through the cinema or through sex, the unfortunate wage-slaves of a small-hearted economic order and the hard-driven human cogs of an unbalanced machine age must seek for an escape from the drab life of their tyrannic egos. But the escape, through religion, is immeasurably and immensely superior to the other channels in the quality and permanence of results. How many men and women are in the unhappy state of yearning for spiritual life, but unconsciously, through not understanding their own yearning. Modern civilization has tended to suppress these lofty yearnings, or at best to leave existence and importance therein a half-acknowledged state. These long-repressed spiritual yearnings have lain like soft arable earth beneath congealed volcanic lava. The war's upheaval has released them.

Religion itself is divine and enduring, but religious institutions, dogmas and hierarchies suffer from human frailty and evolutionary impermanence. It is not essential to man's salvation that he should believe that the world was made by God in six days, or that he will reincarnate on earth six hundred times. It is essential that he should believe in the existence of this power beyond himself, that he should seek to establish some kind of communion with it, and that he should practice virtue and abstain from injuring others. Therefore, every book that helps him to perceive these truths is a Scriptural book, no matter if it was written in the twentieth century and no matter what conventional or self-interested or unreflective people may say about it. The passing forms which religion takes may be infected with gross errors, polished superstition, selfish exploitation and ancient hypocrisy, but the pure and permanent essence which religion holds justifies its existence and imparts its best abiding influence. He may dispense with these forms, but he cannot really dispense with this essence. Behind the most empty rituals and most senseless dogmas of religion, behind the most mechanical intonings of priests and the most fossilized morality, behind the cruellest persecutions and the worst impostures, there hides that which transcends all

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rituals, dogmas, priests, morality, persecution and impostures. There is something higher than man in this cosmos. And religion is historically the most widespread way in which he marks his relation to this higher Power. We have earlier written that the failure of religion has arisen because it has not been true to itself. But such infidelity, in turn, has arisen because it has ceased to understand itself. This point must be clarified. Most of the world's wickedness arises out of the tragic ignorance of men and not out of the repulsive badness of men. This ignorance arises, in turn, out of their habitual identification of self with the body alone, utterly ignoring its larger and diviner side. The separation, which exists in consciousness between the ego and Overself, is a fatal one. It is the root of all man's sins, ignorance, woes and evils. To counteract this ignorance and gradually to remove it, religious, mystical and philosophic teachers are in very truth sent by God to enlighten the three different strata of the human race.

Left to themselves without the guidance of spiritual instructors and divine awakeners, men would lie in the torpor of ignorance and dip in the baseness of animalism. It is not enough for experience, alone, to form their characters and sharpen their intelligence. Their experience must be explained to them--something of its inner significance must be revealed to them. But because comprehension grows as the point of view rises, a religious teacher does this in an elementary way, a mystical teacher does it in a more advanced way, and a philosophic teacher does it in the fullest way. Within the conventional surface of religion and covered by its imposing rituals, there lies hidden a mystical content. And within this again, there lies a philosophical content. Hence, when elementary religious tenets are put forward as ultimate philosophic truths, the results are lamentable. They wax gradually from misunderstanding, superstition and absurdity to intolerance, hypocrisy, atheism and immorality. All this arises because the uninitiated uncritically confuse levels of intellectual reference, because they fail to make the necessary clear-cut division between what belongs to the sphere of religion and what belongs to the sphere of philosophy. The wise men, who devised systems of religion and techniques of mysticism, did so with the ultimate purpose of leading the human adventurer step by step from lower to loftier stages of spirituality. They wisely presented their teaching not only according to its own nature but according to the thought-forms of the people they were trying to instruct and to the historical background of the era in which they lived.

The sages started religion as a school for the spiritual uplift of man. The sacerdotal caste have turned it into a prison. It was instituted to advance him, gradually. Human organizations have used it to keep him forcibly down. The evolutionary experiences of life give him more and more inner responsibility, that is, mental individualization. Yet

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shortsighted ecclesiastics have tried to keep his intelligence and character in artificial clamps. Life seeks to transfer him from stage to stage of spiritual perception. Yet they have sought to defeat this holy aim. This is, indeed, one of the sins against the Holy Ghost: that many of those who came later utilized these systems and techniques to serve their own selfish purposes, to keep mankind's intelligence and character fossilized, imprisoned and subservient. Everywhere life is trying to individualize mankind mentally, yet these so-called leaders are trying to keep them clamped in outmoded remnants of tribal culture. Their patriarchal old ideas belong to times when men obediently herded together and blindly followed their priests, as their sheep and cattle obediently herded together and followed their own leaders. There were no opportunities for practising mental individualism then, whereas life in this democratic age provides them plentifully. When an organization exists to keep the ignorant masses embalmed in their dismal ignorance in an age when half of mankind is on the upward move towards greater understanding and wider knowledge, be sure that this organization will slowly be split from end to end by the powerful evolutionary and karmic forces of today. The old systems of stagnant public pieties are contending for the soul of humanity against the new movements of fresh personal religion. Selfish ecclesiasticism and pure spirituality are coming to grips. The first can no longer masquerade as the second. The second can no longer tolerate the first.

Let it not be thought that these criticisms come from a sneering enemy of religion. On the contrary, they come from a sincere friend. Even Jesus did not think it either wrong or a waste of force frequently to denounce the rabbinical hierarchy for their hypocritical ways, nor Buddha the Brahmanical hierarchy for their superstitious practices. But because love and not hate motivated their criticism, it was always constructive. Religion must be a flexible institution and should progress with the life and mind of man himself. In no other way can it save itself from its enemies and in no other way will it best serve humanity. The incapacity of the Russian Church, for example, to free itself from ancient dogmas and to adapt its teachings to the age of growing mental enlightenment and social freedom in which we find ourselves was one of the defects which led to the fierce attacks made on it after the Revolution and the great destruction it suffered in consequence. But religion is a necessity for the masses. Therefore, the cycle of atheism in Russia will eventually finish its course and disappear. It will then be replaced by a better form of religion. Institutions there must needs be for the masses. But when the churches and temples, synagogues and chapels fail to fulfill their primary function for which they were established, fail to bring man nearer to God, then someone has to think out new ones suited to a newly upthrown era, to develop

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a means of giving expression to contemporary changes of outlook and a means of giving satisfaction in a modern way to the sense of reverence.

This would not necessarily mean the creation of a new religion or the adoption of some exotic one. It could mean only a new and enlarged understanding of the old religions. The West would not need to turn toward Hinduism, for instance. It would not need to give up its Christianity. Jesus was a divine man and gave it what best suited it at the time. The West could save its perishing inner life by getting back to what Jesus really taught. Christianity, properly understood and correctly expounded, is very different from Churchianity. Unfortunately, past history and present signs show that those who should be the first to comprehend this, are usually the last. The lesson being disagreeable to them, they are disinclined to receive it. The official orthodox representatives of God on earth are the first to oppose and the last to accept manifestation of the living spirit of God amongst men. If people are forced to look elsewhere for religious sustenance, if the masses feel the need of something new, it is because they can find help nowhere else. Such being the actuality of present conditions, the opening of a new channel between finite man and his infinite source has become essential. This means that a new religion must be born. The war and its aftermath have created conditions suitable to the establishment of a new faith. Therefore, if it be true that a sudden and widespread revival of the old conventional dogmatic beliefs after the war is unlikely because orthodox religion in its present familiar forms has lost the inspiration and purity necessary to make it also effective, it is equally true that with the coming of peace there will be more people ready for a new religious revelation than there have been at any time during the past hundred years.

The intellectual and spiritual requirements of one epoch are historically different from those of others. Human society changes, evolves or degenerates: it cannot stand still for long. Hence, it finds for itself in every epoch either a modification, alteration and adaptation of traditional systems, or if it is sufficiently creative at the time, gives birth to entirely new systems altogether. The truth of this statement has been attested to by every age of mankind and on every continent from ill-fated Atlantis to thriving America. To hold, as the representatives of vested interests and orthodox institutions usually hold, that a particular system is suited to all the needs of all humanity for all time and therefore cannot be replaced or should not be replaced by another system, is to write a full stop to human evolution. It is a senseless view, as historically unjustified as it is philosophically untenable. No revelation is or can be the last one, nor the exhaustive one. Now that we live in a time when so many of the old systems have exhausted their best possibilities

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and fail to meet our newer needs, those who have turned aside from them yet are unwilling to remain spiritually unnourished should not be blamed if they are willing to enlist as followers of a more vital, more timely and more satisfying faith.

A divine man, born to fulfill a large and special religious mission, a man like the founders of the world-famed religions, not only has this educational task but he also reveals the Karmic will and expounds the evolutionary standards set for the coming age. Hence, the appearance of new prophets at periodical intervals is as wise as it is necessary. People, who attribute authority and holiness only to the dead past and never to the living present, thereby betray a spiritual pessimism which is unjustifiable and unjustified. But what few people understand is that the work of such a prophet is essentially accomplished within a limited period after his own appearance on earth and does not endure for all time. For his primary work is to plant something in the hearts of men, a gift of his grace, which shall be transmitted down through some centuries in ever-widening ripples. Nor does a sage cater entirely to the needs of the moment and condition his message only by the prepossessions of the age. He considers, also, the needs and prepossessions of generations yet unknown. Hence, the force thus spread reaches its zenith and then begins to weaken and ebb away. At its zenith the spirit is triumphant, but at its nadir the letter rules. In the first case we have true religion and men feel its inspiration, but in the second we have only its mockery and men feel its emptiness. For the divine guides, like Jesus and Buddha, possessed the power to bestow grace, whereas after the lapse of many centuries most of those who speak in their names utterly lack it. This is one reason why true religion has evaporated during the long lapse of many centuries so that what people mostly get today is merely its last residue. Such is the supreme intelligence, which holds the world within its grip, that these divine men are born again and again to help mankind at the time when they are most needed. Neither their appearance amongst us nor the successful spread of their influence is accidental. Both are divinely ordained through operations of human evolution and universal Karma.

All civilized societies and all cultural forms of the past have shown that they are inexorably subject to a rhythm of birth, growth and decay. They have their ardent springtime, their luxuriant summer, their cold autumn, their withered winter. Today, we witness the same storms of destructive events and the snows of miserable failure. Those, who are not too timid to face the unpalatable truth, know that this has only one meaning. We are at the end of an epoch. The old world is dying before our eyes. But death is only a transition--the joyous springtime of vital renewal always follows the freezing wintertime of outlived forms. A new epoch is indeed at hand with fresh ideas to lead us and fresh ideals to sustain us. Only the mentally blind now fail to anticipate it.

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It was a new comet which came to warn mankind that the old era was about to be liquidated, and it was another comet which came to notify them that the new era had begun. This was no more a coincidence to those who understand the hidden workings of Nature than was the fact that all the three leading Axis powers--Germany, Italy and Japan--started their nationalistic careers in the same year: 1871. The first harbinger appeared in the skies in the autumn of 1929. When the great economic blizzard hit America and thence spread to the whole world, it forced millions to realize that the old order was exhausted. Every country was affected by economic troubles with all their political, social and cultural consequences. None escaped. Each reacted in its own way. Japan's reaction was shortly to plunge desperately into international robbery by invading Manchuria. If with the facts now at our command we think back, we shall realize that the World War really started in 1931 with this invasion. For the line of continuous fighting against Japan in China down to the time of America's involvement after Pearl Harbour was paralleled for three years on the other side of the world by the civil war in Spain, where not only the Spaniards themselves but also Nazi Germans and Fascist Italians battled against Red Russians.

Thus, the earlier comet indeed prognosticated the coming World War, and the second comet which showed itself towards the end of 1942 heralded its closing. The military turning point of the World War was coincident with its appearance. For the great series of democratic nations' military victories began about this time. But the second comet's especial association was to act as the harbinger of a new age. These victories not only brought about the external liberation of millions of people from militaristic oppression, but were the prelude to the entire liberation of all mankind from every form of social and cultural oppression by the past. The new age could not fail, therefore, to be a new religious age also. Thus the new universal spiritual enlightenment was dated by the second comet. About this time, a divine man began his great mission upon our planet and inaugurated the new spiritual era. His work may be ushered in quietly at first--it may even escape the world's notice for a time, as the work of Jesus escaped every contemporary historian except Josephus. But in whatever way it begins, it will be adequately effective--as history will strikingly demonstrate before the end of this century. The original principles of the great religions have been so greatly altered, their moral effectiveness has been so markedly lessened, their anti-materialistic influence so sadly enfeebled, that the need of such a vast inward renewal is incontestable. When man's religion is no longer a flame-like conviction but a cold convenience, the need of a new spiritual dynamic is unquestionable.

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personality's will. They are the result of divine law, that is, of cosmic evolution and karmic operation. Whoever perceives this cannot but believe that when the need is so great, the yearning so widespread, the urgency so sharp, the divine wisdom which holds this earth within its grasp will not fail to inspire the most-evolved human being available with a universal Messianic mission of uplift, instruction, healing and awakening. And nobody less than such an august being could undertake the responsibility of so tremendous a task, which will specifically be directed towards the masses, towards millions of people. Nothing truly great can be done without great men. There must be a visible focus amongst us, even for the boldest of ideas. There must be a great leader. The spectacle confronting us today is the spectacle of a planet that is spiritually leaderless. We are told, "The hour produces the man." The hour is here, we believe, but we look around and see no Man. Spirituality is waiting to find its voice. Its reality is here, but its spokesman is not. Every half-baked cult and worn-out creed possesses its ambassador, but the ineffable divinity remains unvoiced. Nevertheless, we wait patiently for that one to come who shall utter anew the Christ-message to mankind. And his voice will not be as yours and mine, but will be a regenerative force which will startle the sleeping world. The world is in upheaval for a deeper reason than it suspects. For at a time of religious chaos and popular bewilderment, of world agony and human distress such as the present, it is in perfect consonance with the fact that supreme intelligence rules the cosmos, that truth shall be uncovered once more for the sake of those who need it. However, it is not through any one prophet alone that the new dawn will be ushered in but through a planetary outpouring, which flows through every useful channel it can find. In this complex epoch, its manifestations are as complex and varied as are the needs of mankind. There will be different prophets bearing different messages to differently-developed groups of people, but all will be inspired by one and the same timely power.

What is the new religious ideology which is to reign over the coming age?

The new religion must be: first, rational in form; second, effective in inspiring faith; third, powerful in uplifting character and influencing conduct; fourth, quick in meeting the requirements of modern times; and fifth, attentive to social needs.

On the first point, let it be said that the day when tribal theologies could satisfy the masses is fast-fading before our eyes. They cannot cope with the needs of a grown-up mentality. People are ready to receive and understand a faith, which makes less demands on blind credulity and more demands on rational intelligence. The human race has long been preparing for manhood. The end of war marks its crossing of the threshold. Now it must exercise manhood.

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Hence, religion must organize itself on a more intellectual basis to meet modern needs. It must present a fuller system, which will intelligibly explain the inner meaning of man, God, and the Universe. It must not contradict the verified knowledge of modern science. It ought no longer to attempt to outrage reason, but should go out of the way to convince it. It must be so timely and reasonable that it will give satisfying intelligent answers to his most disconcerting questions.

On the second point, it is a lesson of history that if religion is to be more rational it will have to be less ritualistic. The tendency of all external rites is to become empty and hollow. Nobody is worse off and everybody is better off when religious practices or rites, which have become merely mechanical and utterly hypocritical, are abandoned, whether in disbelief or in disgust. As a religion becomes less inspired, it becomes ritualistic. What it is no longer able to give men through inward power, it pretends to give them through outward forms. When the means of worship become an actual hindrance to communion with the Worshipped, when the worshipper is deceived by pretence of the act into belief that he has performed the act itself, it is time to call a halt. Nevertheless, ritual is useful if it helps the mind to think of diviner things and it therefore has a proper place in religion. If a religious ceremony acts as a springboard whence a man can enter more easily into a reverential mood, it has justified its value for him. This is usually the case with the peasant mentality among the lower classes and with the aesthetic temperament among the higher, although it is much less true of artisan town workers and city intellectuals who indeed may find it a hindrance to worship rather than a help. Religion will always be, by its nature, something of an allegory, but it need not always stick to the same set of symbols. Why should not this era find a new religious symbolism? In the end, religion will find its truer expression in the public acts and private thoughts of a man than in its own public rites. Those, who would propagate it, will best do so by their living example. It will then become less formal and more vital, less institutional and more free, less devoted to public parades in church, temple or synagogue and more devoted to personal righteousness in home, factory and field.

The practical question arises: What is to be done with orthodox religious institutions as they exist today? Much needs to be done with them. If mankind's religious leaders could broaden their vision, could recognize these truths, there would then be some hope for their institutions. If they cannot put themselves at the head of this movement, then they will have to become stragglers in its rear. The choice cannot be evaded. But, first, it may be said that unless the State dis-establishes it, it will continue to get, not religion in its purity but religion in its degeneration. To worship an institution, merely because it is an established one,

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is to worship an idol. The new religious teaching must be a vocation, not a profession. Hence, teachers may receive voluntary contributions towards their expenses, but they must not be paid a prescribed salary.

If rites and ceremonies will be less needed, then the services of priests to perform them will also be less needed. The coming faith will not only be a rational and riteless one, but may also be a priestless one. It will tolerate no paid professionals to exploit it in their own interests, but will substitute direct, silent, inward communion instead. It will not mock at itself with ostentatious, theatrical ceremonies nor at truth with hollow clamour, but will substitute the remembrances of moral law in everyday-conduct instead. The services of a professional priestly class were needed when the intellect of the race was still undeveloped and the masses still uneducated. But, today, when men are becoming mentally individualized and when illiteracy is being rapidly eliminated, people can read and reflect over sacred scriptures for themselves and with their own understanding. Not only will there be no religious ceremonials, no paid clergy, but there will be no public prayers. For these, sooner or later, tend to degenerate into hollow, meaningless formalities. Here, indeed, "Familiarity breeds contempt."

Its very newness would be an attractive feature to many because it would not have had time to develop the maladies of stiffened arteries and congealed blood, but would possess an aura of hope and helpfulness, of enthusiasm and energy. The religion of the new era must be alive. It must be so radiant with inspiration that it will have something to give man, instead of weakly begging for its own support and sustenance from him. It must be effective because so long as young people are given an uninspired religion and a mistaken education, so long will they be badly equipped for the hard business of living. We say 'uninspired' because not a few even of institutionalized religion's own ministers have raised their hands in helplessness as they watched the melancholy spectacle of a deserting flock and the inevitable results of an antiquated creed dwindling daily in its authority over the lives and hearts of men. In the early part of 1939, for example, it was noted that only five per-cent of the people of London thought it worthwhile to attend any place of worship. And we say 'mistaken' because, to take a particularly glaring example, the German people were one of the best-educated in the whole world and yet the Nazi doctrines were able to impose successfully on the German mind.

On the third point, the post-war situation of society will depend, eventually, less upon its political arrangements and more upon its ethical decisions. If it fails to maintain enough of the idealism born during the war, then like a rudderless, propellerless ship it will be helplessly tossed about upon a stormy sea. The old values have miserably

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collapsed where they deserved to do so. And unfortunately in their fall, they have dragged down some sound, ethical ones, which have not deserved to suffer in the same way but which selfish exploitation and stupid traditionalism have unfortunately associated with them. Consequently, many men have become morally perplexed and mentally hurt. Only so far as the religious faith into which he was born coincides with the reasoned faith which he has unconsciously worked out for himself, does anyone live practically by its ethics.

If religion, whether embodied in the old familiar creeds or the new unfamiliar cults, is to become morally powerful, it must absorb some Asiatic wisdom. The nineteenth century, which saw the expansion of capitalism and transport, the development of machinery and commerce, saw also the introduction of Asiatic thought into Europe and America and of European thought into Asia. Man's general situation is so tragic that it is time some Oriental ideas should cease to be regarded as strange, abnormal or exotic plants. His need of their fruits, in the re-orientation and reconstruction of himself and society, is urgent and profound. For only a shift in his thought and values can bring him the betterment that will be most worthwhile. From the East, he can learn ideas which show that ideals of self-discipline and self-improvement are indeed practical, sensible and necessary. This can be done by teaching men three important truths: first, that Karma will bring back to them whatever they give out; second, that the divine soul is ever-present in each of us; and third, that all peoples and all classes are interdependent and that none can be deliberately made miserable or even thoughtlessly left in misery, with impunity. If, accepting the second truth, we think of God as very far-off and remote, we are less likely to trouble ourselves much about His will in our worldly dealings. But, if we think of Him as being here and now within ourself and within others, then we are more likely to ennoble our dealings and do His will. And once convinced of the third truth, aggressive peoples will naturally abandon the false conceptions which lead them to believe that they can really profit by making war upon others. Because so much Nazi-Fascist poison was poured into the human mind for so many years, a counteracting serum is still needed. The new faith must uphold the dignity of human life, the divine potentialities which it contains, as it must inculcate the verity of the moral order.

On the fourth requirement of the new faith, let it be noted that we need a technique which will be workable under twentieth century conditions and understandable by the twentieth century mind. Otherwise, we shall end up by becoming living anachronisms, human relics of an obsolete past, and consequently ineffectual dreamers. The mould, into which the religious faith and mystical ideology of the post-war world will flow, will not be shaped by the desires of the spiritual guides who cling closely to the half-moribund institutions and obsolete dogmas of the pre-war world. If

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the representatives of dying and failing traditions have seen the writing on the wall, they will have seen that the future will not conform to their selfish hopes, much less obey their selfish dictates. New and different forces are inserting themselves into mens' hearts. New and different ideas are rising vitally in their minds. And new guides and new institutions will perforce come into existence to assist this process where the old ones might merely suffocate it. A mechanical conglomeration of the old existing religions, a world-federation of the traditional faiths, is impossible on any large and therefore useful scale. Moreover, it could never satisfy all tastes. What has the savage, with his taboo and magic, to find in fellowship with the Quaker, with his silent worship of the Invisible God? The universal religion, when it comes as it will at an appropriately advanced stage of human evolution, will not be a melange of outgrown faiths which have already fulfilled their mission, but a perfectly new and timely one. That stage, however, is far off.

The fifth requirement is that a divine teaching, today, must contain these two elements: the spiritual and the social. It must develop the individual and regenerate society. It must kindle solitary, personal experience and promote general, public welfare. The post-war period, with all the moral confusion, economic disorders and political complications legated to it, will open a period of great opportunity for starting a new faith, which has the wisdom to combine mystical meditation with social renovation. This is evidenced by what happened in Japan, to take a single example, after the last war. In 1921 the Japanese Government outlawed, in fear of its swift-rising influence, a new hybrid cult called OMOTO-KYO, which combined Socialism, millenarianism and mysticism and which gathered a million followers in a few years and published its own daily newspaper and magazines.

There is a profound reason why the new faith must possess such an integral character. In ancient civilizations, the spiritual formulation preceded the social one. But in the twentieth century civilization, the social must precede the spiritual. For men and circumstances have so changed that today we can give a new significance to human life only by first giving it new economic and political creations.

It has elsewhere been explained that the evolution of the human ego is about to undergo its most momentous historic change. Hitherto, it has wandered farther and farther in its own thought from its divine source on an outgoing orbit, but henceforth it must return nearer and nearer on an ingoing one. Hitherto, it has followed an increasingly separative movement leading to selfishness, but henceforth it will have to follow an increasingly unitive one leading to balanced altruism. Therefore, the keynote of the coming age will not be individualistic competition but co-operation, not the brutal struggle of creatures with each other for mere existence but

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the nobler union of all for each, each for all. If the old idea was that man must struggle against man, class against class, nation against nation, race against race, the new idea will be that they must co-operate together for their common welfare. Thus, the immense significance of such a spiritual change is that it will first have a pathway cleared for it by social-economic changes. The creation of new structural forms in the social sphere will thus itself be part of a higher movement whose later unfoldment will operate in the religious, mystical and philosophic spheres.

The evolution of each ego, of each entity conscious of a personal 'I', passes through three stages through immense periods of time. In the first and earliest stage, it unfolds its distinct physical selfhood, acquires more and more consciousness of the personal 'I' and hence divides and isolates itself from other egos. It seeks to differentiate itself from them. It feels the need to assert itself and its interests. This leads, inevitably, to antagonism towards them. Its movement is towards externality, a movement which must inevitably end in its taking the surface or appearance of things for reality, that is, in materialism. Here it is acquisitive. In its second and intermediate stage, it unfolds its mental selfhood and hence adds cunning to its separative and grasping tendencies, with intellect expanding to its extremest point. Here it is inquisitive. But midway in this stage, its descent comes to end with a turning point where it halts, turns around and begins to travel backward to its original source. In the third and last stage, the return towards its divine source continues. Its movement is now toward internality and through meditation, investigation and reflection, it ultimately achieves knowledge of its true being: its source, the Overself. And as all egos arise out of the Overself, the end of such a movement is one and the same for all--a common centre. Conflicts between them cease; mutual understanding, co-operation and compassion spreads. Hence, this stage is unitive.

The central point of the entire evolution is about where we now stand. Human attitudes and relations have reached their extreme degree of selfishness, separateness, struggle and division, have experienced the resulting exhaustion of an unheard-of world crisis, but are beginning to re-orientate themselves towards an acknowledgment of the fundamental unity of the whole race. Thus, war reaches its most violent and terrible phase in the second stage and then abruptly begins to vanish from human life altogether. The separatist outlook must cease. Most of our troubles have arisen because we have continued it beyond the point where it was either useful or needful.

The unequal state of evolution of all these egos, when thrown together into a conglomerate group on a single planet, is also responsible for the conflicts which have marked mankind's own history. They stand on different steps of the ladder all the way from savagery to maturity. The backward ego

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naturally attacks or preys on the advanced one. Thus, the purely self-regarding ego, which was once an essential pattern of the evolutionary scheme--a necessary goal in the movement of life--becomes with time a discordant ingredient of that scheme, an obstructive impediment to that movement. If humanity is to travel upward and fulfil its higher destiny, it can do so only by enlarging its area of interest and extending its field of consciousness. It must, in short, seek to realize the Overself on the one hand, to feel its oneness on the other.

We should preserve, intact, what is useful to us in the old systems, but at the same time we should create what is essential to our altered times. This is what present-day philosophy is trying to do. There are sincere religious prophets and teachers, ardent mystical swamis and monks eager to guide mankind in old dusty ways and well-trodden paths. But the special importance of the philosopher's work is that he is trying to hew out a new way, to cut a new path. For he perceives what these others fail to perceive--the vital necessity of readjustment to the unique evolutionary change which is now taking place. The philosophic seer knows how important to the race are the future purposes and distant goals hidden in the present confused tangle of events. He knows that the evolutionary twist, which is now appearing inside the human soul, is momentous in its ultimate significance. If the war did not change human nature generally, it did change a certain number of individual human beings. Everyone knows this. But everyone does not know that the war marked a moment of profound importance in human history--the change-over from a solely egoistic extroverted and materialistic basis to a deeper one.

At an earlier stage, the evolutionary path proceeded through an increased turning outward to the senses, a growing egotism and a developing intellect. But now, it is destined that human character and endeavour must strike out new paths for themselves--must reverse these trends. This evolutionary development represents what is virtually a new beginning in the history of the present race of mankind. Cosmic forces are communicating themselves to the human mind. The most tremendous change-over of its evolution is at hand. And the same forces, which are working at it from within by prompting, are also compelling it to submit itself from without by events. The great inner evolutionary change-over will be responsible for increasing tension and conflict within the individual human being, his lower self beckoning one way and his higher self beckoning another way.

All the world-shaking events of our times are compelling men and women to rise out of their habitual thoughtlessness about life. Whoever thinks that these people will be permitted to relapse into torpor again with the conclusion of the war, is mistaken. For the situation, today, is unique. New forces have entered the planet's atmosphere which will increasingly bring powerful inner and outer pressure to bear

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on its inhabitants because the ego is destined to evolve in a different direction. Hitherto it has, in most human beings, travelled farther and farther away from its hidden centre, the Overself, as it expanded its own circumference. Henceforth it will, whilst holding whatever is of worth in its previous gains, return closer and closer to that centre. And it will do this partly because planetary evolution has reached a point where it will enforce it and partly because it is itself so constituted that it cannot escape time by a return to the source of its own life. With the subsidence of present turmoils, the human ego will resist the realization of its spiritual possibilities less fiercely, if more subtly, than in the past. This will be a distinct and definite advance. It will show in many different phases and aspects. There is a real basis for hope in that we have seen the worst in man's conduct and that he will begin to reflect some better qualities and nobler attitudes. In this faith, we may work for a more spiritual future, sure that our efforts will not be in vain or futile. It may sustain us amid present crises when personal misfortunes bid us despair. It may enlighten us during contemporary darknesses when world events bid us fall into helpless inertia.

It would be easy to misunderstand this tenet. The assertion that such a tremendous modification in the spiritual make-up of mankind, as the disappearance of human egoism from human history, is certainly not made here. Such an assertion is wildly fantastic and would be and could be made with any hope of acceptance only if made to wild enthusiasts. The clinging to the 'I', or the aggressive assertion of it, is something which will yield only to the intermittent batterings of constant frustrations, repeated disappointments and frequent misfortunes, that is to say, to the experience of hundreds, if not thousands, of earthly incarnations. What is really asserted here is that:

(a) The universal crisis is a sign that we have reached a point in the process of the ego's development where the more violent and hence more extreme aspects of its inevitable struggles with other egos must be curbed in its own interest or self-destruction will ensue.

(b) The very intensity and extensity of this struggle during the war have brought about a widespread recognition of this fact.

(c) We are only at the very beginning of it now, although in a half-dozen centuries this result will have been achieved to such an extent all over the world as to be quite unmistakable. The forces, which are now beginning to release themselves in mankind's character, will by then increase in intensity quite rapidly. And although this has been happening on all

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the five continents, their quickest, strongest and fullest manifestation will occur on the North American continent. Such a development will be closely connected with the birth of a new ethnological race, which is maturing out of the American melting pot.

(d) This spiritual overturn in the ego's evolutionary life refers not to all the egos here but to the largest wave of human egos travelling our planetary path, not to all entities but only to the human ones, and not to the entire history of this earth but only to its present evolutionary cycle.

(e) At any given time, this planet will not be inhabited by more than a small number of spiritually-advanced persons. Nature maintains the balance between them and the unevolved masses by constant readjustment. This evolutionary overturn will not however directly involve the entire race, but only a part of it. Those who can accept such a higher world-view, are and will be heavily out-numbered by those who cannot. Small groups and scattered individuals in every part of the world will continue to respond immediately, directly and consciously to this urge, but the response of the masses will come mainly, vaguely and indirectly through their leaders and rulers.

(f) It does not matter, at first, that this great change in human outlook is taking place without a parallel consciousness of the inner evolutionary development, which is its real motivator. Such a deeper understanding is sure to come later. The ideology may be imperfect, but the impulsion is being felt just the same.

The new spiritual impulse, which inspires all these forward movements embodying this social principle, is God-sent. The old interests may struggle fiercely against it, but they cannot win against it. Forces are today entering this planet's atmosphere and pouring themselves into the humanity it bears which, owing to our having reached this unique turning point in evolution, are themselves of a unique and special character. Shadows signify the presence of light, Anti-christ the presence of Christ, and the evil forces of materialistic Nazism signify the presence of sacred powers of spiritual regeneration. If we deplore the great darkness which has fallen over this planet, we should know that it speaks of a coming dawn, as the unparalleled destructive violence of this war speaks of an unparalleled constructive peace. In other words, tremendous unreckoned spiritual energies are now in our midst and only await the ripened opportunity to manifest themselves.

Such is the coming faith, a faith suited to the requirements

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of men of intelligence and goodwill, capable of bringing together those whom the old religions keep divided and even hostile. No sincere well-wisher of mankind can object to the introduction of a new, genuinely-inspired faith. At the very worst it cannot harm mankind, whilst at the very best it may save mankind. Only the selfish guardians of uninspired, unserviceable vested interests can object to such results. But it cannot come of itself--it must come through some Man. In short, the times require a new Prophet.

There are being put forward, as religions divinely predained for and practically suited to our times, the Ramakrishna Mission form of Hinduism and the Iranian-born faith of Bahaism. Of the first, it need only be said that Sri Ramakrishna himself warned his disciples against forming an organized cult, and that none of the old religions, however polished up they may be, really suit us today. Of the second, it is needful only to examine a few of its leading tenets to show their insufficiency. The present-day version of Bahaism, which is markedly different from its original version, rejects mysticism. But we have already seen that the needed faith must have some mystical touch about it. This rejection is all the more curious and ironical because the founder of it was himself a mystic and a psychic. Next, divine claims are made on his behalf. The time, when reason could receive such claims, is vanishing. No one man can incarnate the ineffable, unbounded Absolute Spirit. Thirdly, the Bahai faith holds that there is a progressive revelation in time and that, because it is the latest one, it is consequently the best one. Against this claim, the informed observer may well smile and match the claim of Hinduism, which holds that the oldest and primal revelation is the best one and that time only brings deterioration. Incidentally, philosophy shares neither of these views and considers them both to be self-deceptions. Nor is the Bahai claim to be the latest religion tenable today. A hundred years have passed since the first Bahai prophet appeared. Several new religions and dozens of sects have been born during that time. That only a few achieved fame has nothing to do with the argument.

The totality of Bahai mystical self-deification claims are equally irrational in their literal form. And the Bahai religious-unification predictions have psychological roots which are unsound. Its expectation of an imminent attainment of religious unity is as groundless as its claims to possess the only divine manifestation for our age.

When they descend from piety to practice, the Bahais embrace impracticable schemes. If a certain mystically-advanced ashrama could not live as a harmonious, peaceable united family, how will it be possible for a merely religious Bahai world to do so? It is useless to ask humanity to outrun its present capacity, to live in a visionary's dreams or a fool's paradise. If nowhere on earth, not even amongst the most religious, most mystical and most spiritual assemblies, fraternities, societies or hermitages, men

of men of intelligence and goodwill, capable of bringing together those whom the old religions keep divided and even hostile. No sincere well-wisher of mankind can object to the introduction of a new, genuinely-inspired faith. At the very worst it cannot harm mankind, whilst at the very best it may save mankind. Only the selfish guardians of unimpaired, unservicesable vested interests can object to such results. But it cannot come of itself--it must come through some Man. In short, the times require a new Prophet.

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can live as a loving self-sacrificing family, how can they do so when still constrained by lower outlooks? The ideal of a single human family is not immediately realizable for it cannot be formed out of the present defective human material. To demand its instant enforcement is to label oneself an impracticable dreamer.

Considering these predictions on the level of philosophy leads to quite a different result. In both cases, we find that they arise out of emotional complexes and unphilosophic outlooks. Here emotion has mastered reason and the wish is father, mother, uncle and aunt to the thought! A philosophical view does not appraise the religious situation as being ripe for full planetary unification. The sentimental notion of world religious unity, which is the outstanding feature of Bahai social belief, must be given up. Wherever we look in the four kingdoms of Nature, we find that she is perpetually striving to achieve diversity. She rejects and abhors a monotonous uniformity. And if we restrict our gaze to the human kingdom, we find that the differences in thought and the divergencies in feeling are not only the expressions of the variations in evolutionary growth, but also of this innate striving of Nature herself. Why should anyone work for a manufactured unity of faiths? The spiritual requirements of different grades of humanity are so varied that it is better to provide a separate religion to suit each grade and await patiently their natural growth in mentality and character than force all grades within a single iron frame. These separatist tendencies need not be deplored and so long as they exist they must also be recognized. We live in a world where Nature has formed every entity as an individual one. Each is unique. If people have different ideas about the same thing, this is the inevitable result of the difference in their own capacities and perceptions. Why, then, should they not be themselves and therefore different?

It is useless to regret the unavoidable, to pine for the unattainable, and to strive for the undesirable. We should not waste time seeking for unity of thought or creating unity of outlook. These aims are unfeasible; these endeavours are impracticable. Even amongst the very proponents of unity, amongst the Bahais themselves, unity--whether of association or doctrine--has been non-existent. During the course of their short history, they have periodically separated themselves into factions under rival leaders. The ladder of incarnated life stretches all the way through progressively different levels of intelligence and character. It is to be expected, therefore, that there should be inequality, disagreement and disunity. Men can arrive at the same views when they arrive at the same standpoint, when they all attain an identical level. But this is prevented from happening by the ever-active operations of re-embodiment which, by the special influences brought to bear upon particular groups and by evolution which admits new entrants to the human kingdom and lets out old inhabitants, differentiate

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their various evolutionary stages, environments and conditions. A monotonous uniformity of thought and solidarity of aspiration--could they ever be obtained--would be signs of totalitarian compulsion, intellectual paralysis, or moral inactivity. They would not be a social advance, but a social calamity. What is the use of pursuing such an artificial ideal? In its present state, human nature would soon turn universal religion into an instrument of tyrannous repression of all ideas not held by it and into an agency for totalitarian persecution of all exponents of such ideas. The healthy, free competition of sects and creeds prevents this and compels tolerance.

Humanity is so variously constituted that the imposition of a single kind of religion would be more of a hindrance than a help. The temperament, which finds emotional satisfaction in the impressive sacramental forms of Roman Catholicism, for instance, will find emotional starvation in the bare, inward formlessness of Quakerism. Each man will understand in his own way, according to the grade of his intelligence and character. The more ways of approaching God there are to be found amongst us, the more opportunity for humanity to make this approach. A single way might suit one type, but will not suit many others. With the offerings of several ways, these too are served. Let us therefore welcome variety and not try to destroy it. Schisms into parties and divisions into sects will not only continue to occur, but can only occur among religionists and among mystics. This is because faith may wander with the one group as widely as imagination, and because intuition has to express itself with the other through the limitations of undeveloped personality. But never among philosophers. For here, faith is checked by reason and intuition upheld by investigation. Finally, philosophy observes that spiritual unity between men is essentially an inward, not an outward, fact. It must exist within or it does not exist at all. No organization, no institution, can make it so or is at all necessary to its own existence. Therefore, it can be only truly found in individuals.

Let us not become futile dreamers and demand from humanity a unity which its own variety could never give. Let us not expect it to subscribe to a single universal religion, for instance, which would displace the necessity for all other religions, nor ask it to live in a universal brotherhood which would be attainable only after the prior attainment of a superhuman, moral perfection. The belief that to bring such a new utopia into being it is only needful to do some quite simple act or make some overnight gesture or join some spiritual movement, is an intellectual error which besets the path of those who would improve mankind's lot. The attempt to force an artificial unity upon hostile sections of people, upon conflicting racial cultures or upon rival organized religions, is as unwise as it is likely to be unsuccessful.

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Such unity, to be real, must grow by itself out of an awakening to the fact that disunity is the cause of constant trouble and suffering as well as the effect of spiritual ignorance. Only then, when all men find the Overself in the heart and express it in action, shall we witness the realization of these twin ideals in the true sense. The growing desire for a more satisfying way of life and a more comforting view of man's near future will make more and more people listen to the voice of Bahai. This is to be welcomed. But there ought to be some critical discrimination in their listening. For the excessive idealism, which the Bahais regard as their strength, is really their weakness. Nevertheless, they are an admirable sect. Their adherents' personal character is generally lofty and their religious doctrines in some ways come quite near to our own. They well deserve our respect.

But although we are not here recommending the adoption of a uniform religion, we are suggesting a religion that is much needed by and will well suit a certain kind of modern type, a type which will emphasize inward holiness rather than outward observance, a type with the broadest outlook for it knows enough comparative religion to know that God has spoken to all races. Because those persons who exemplify this type are only a minority, and because they have already left the shelter of traditional, religious denominations, the new faith need not and does not compete with such denominations. If despite all this we call it a universal faith, this is to be understood correctly as meaning that the type indicated is to be found scattered in small numbers all over the world. We emphatically do not mean a single faith that ought to be embraced by all mankind. The tenets common to most religions should be brought forward and their universality proclaimed. But this need not mean that we should dispense with the varieties and differences of religion too.

III.

Mysticism and the Crisis.

The continued state of public alarm and private fear, which has prevailed before, during and now after the war, has undoubtedly affected the sanity of many Europeans. Weaker minds are being driven partly mad or becoming distorted, so we may expect that the whole of Europe has now become one huge pathological case. We have to face the fact that the number of those who suffer from serious neuroses does not run into hundreds but into millions, is not limited to a single class but spreads over all classes. To such people, the offer of mental quiet and emotional peace as is attainable through a practical technique will mean much. Such a technique exists already in the form of meditation practice and such practice lies at the very core

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The continued state of public alarm and private fear, which has prevailed before, during and now after the war, has undoubtedly affected the sanity of many Europeans. Weaker minds are being driven partly mad or becoming distorted, so we may expect that the whole of Europe has now become one huge pathological case. We have to face the fact that the number of those who suffer from serious neuroses does not run into hundreds but into millions, is not limited to a single class but spreads over all classes. To such people, the offer of mental quiet and emotional peace as is attainable through a practical technique will mean much. Such a technique exists already in the form of meditation practice and such practice lies at the very core

of all mysticism. If we expect the monasteries and convents which have been its traditional home but which lie too far outside the stream of normal human life to be useful to the masses, it may even be said that meditation has become something of a lost art in our generation. Hence, its revival may have something of the force of a rediscovery.

What the post-war period will witness is a justification of the general feeling that a new spiritual movement is to appear which will be inspired by great forces and which will present what may seem like new discoveries to many. Such a movement will certainly arise amongst those who will be attracted towards the quest of the Overself, whether as a solution of their outward miseries, inward distresses and spiritual difficulties, or whether as an alternative to the formal hypocrisies of which they have become tired. It will be religiously reverent in attitude, but personally mystical in practice. Its main practice will be that of inward, meditative communion. Its formulation will be rational and its presentation modern.

As man develops his mentality, he may come to discard religion, but that need of spiritual self-realization, which first inspired the religious sense within him, will never be discarded but only diverted. For it will also be the inspirer of his further phase, which is the mystical one. Religion is a first step in the right direction, but sooner or later man must continue his journey and go all the way along this road, which means that he must next pass through the phase of mysticism and later of philosophy.

The religious man's relation to God is primarily one of faith. He believes that a divine power exists and sustains everything. But faith may change, slacken or even vanish altogether under the hard pressure of unfavourable events or sceptic arguments. The mystic is not satisfied with such a situation. He sees the need for a more intimate relation to God. And through meditation he realizes it, finding a reflection of the divine power deep within his own self, its existence clearly proved by his own experience. Mysticism does not depend on the appeal to externals to convince him, but works entirely within the thought and feeling of a man for its truth. Religion derives its chief sanction from authority. Mysticism derives its chief sanction from experience. That the passage to it is an upward and progressive one is unquestionable. And this is the passage which large numbers of people are beginning to make in our time. For the macerating experiences, through which so many millions of people have passed during this decade, have inevitably produced a crop of unpleasant psychoses and tormenting neuroses, of unhappy mental disorientations and discouraging nervous exhaustions. Neurotic people are more plentiful today than at any previous time in human history. They are the inevitable by-product not only of this devastating war, but also of twentieth century machine-driven techniques of living. Consequently, on the one hand the crudest

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superstitions and the wildest beliefs, which are now disappearing amongst and being contemptuously cast off by the Orientals, have begun to reappear amongst and to be avidly cherished by the Occidentals, whilst on the other hand the healing tranquility offered by meditation practices renders them more attractive than they have ever been to the eyes of previous generations. Man, however, could not be expected to engage in mystical practices and study when he had to be militantly active in the defense of life and home, or when his mind was worried about the safety of his own people during the war. Now, however, it is impossible for him to do so.

Most men are aware of their obligations to themselves, their families and society. They try, however imperfectly, to fulfil them. But few men are aware of their obligation to their soul, to the Overself, which is the very source of their life-current and personal consciousness. Such an obligation must be fulfilled, partially by meditation practice and partially in other ways. In return, right meditation will give them inexpressible strength and indescribable trust. Any education which fails to teach the adolescent human being how to come into touch with its own divine soul, which fails to impart a knowledge of the art of meditation, is only a half-education.

Our crying need is for men who can and will make mysticism practical. Ancient techniques must be reshaped and modernized to suit our time, without however losing their essential basis. The spirit must be kept, the letter need not be. On the contrary, such change and adaptation are essential if Yoga is to be a helpful system and not a mummified one. To put mysticism on a scientific basis is not only to free it from superstitious belief but also from religious bias, thus making possible its universal appeal. Hence, mystics should not hesitate to invent new and better methods suited to our times and to combine them with the best of the old ones. We know more than well that in suggesting an innovation of this kind, we lay ourselves open to become a favourable target for the critical shots of the orthodox yogis. But the twentieth century is not called upon to subscribe slavishly to the methods, disciplines and systems of the tenth. Intelligent persons know that we cannot limit ourselves entirely to the life of the past. They have to be synthetic and to mould such elements only as they can profitably use into a fusion with present ones. So the old Indian Yogas, however admirably worked-out they be, are to be regarded with critical yet appreciative eyes and not simply with mute acceptance. Men of today must build up their own methods out of the needs of their own natures.

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IV.

Philosophy and the Crisis.

When a mystic matures his half-insight into the perfected faculty, he becomes a philosopher. Thenceforth, instead of denouncing reason he praises it, and instead of stopping at personal peace he travels on to social service. Hence, one of the outstanding nineteenth-century prophets, the Persian Baha'ullah, declared intelligence to be a gift from God which man ought to develop to the utmost, thus bringing science and religion into harmony. The mystical outlook is a tremendous advance on the religionist or materialist one, but compared with the philosophic outlook it is shallow, imperfect and incomplete. Thus, the third and final phase of man's upward quest is the philosophical one. Here he not only feels the divine presence, but also deepens, prolongs and understands what he feels. He adds clear knowledge to fitful emotion. This pompous term 'Philosophy' has, however, been so mis-used and mis-comprehended that a proper meaning must first be attached to it here before any advance can be made. It is a word, which etymologically carries a wide meaning--the love of wisdom--and therefore should not be limited merely to metaphysics or intellectual speculation. Yet, because it is all-comprehensive, it includes a metaphysics of truth. All other metaphysical systems bemuse the mind and torture the intellect with their intricate speculations. A metaphysical system provides us with the blueprint plan of existence, but such a plan is something isolated from existence. It must never be mistaken for existence itself. Thus, if religion engages his faith, metaphysics his intellect, mysticism his intuition, philosophy not only engages his whole nature but also engages it at its highest pitch. Religion presents truth pictorially, mysticism presents it intuitively, metaphysics presents it intellectually, but the philosopher becomes the truth in every part of his being and life. The religious code of conduct checks and disciplines the baser passions, aggressive instincts and selfish desires of man, but does not overcome them. Only the philosophic code can do that. The scientific method is to question Nature by observation and experiment. The religious method is to revere Nature as the handiwork of God. The mystical method is to introvert the senses and ignore her altogether so as to see God. The metaphysical method is to indulge in abstract reflection about her. The philosophic method contains and overtops them all because it adds the unfoldment of a transcendental insight and a divinized activity.

Philosophy does not call men by asking them to cast religion aside, nor scorn it by asking them to treat religion as useless. Religion is for everybody, including philosophers. But it does ask men to extend their religion beyond sectarianism, to purify their practice of it, and to deepen their understanding of it. Philosophy crowns what mysticism sets forth and consummates what religion promises, yet at the

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same time it corrects the errors and eliminates the limitations of both. Philosophy never opposes itself to religion--how could it, when genuine religion grows out of its own soil?--but only to the degeneration and corruptions of religion, just as it never disparages mysticism--whose meditational practices are part of its own life-blood--but only the extravagant and foolish forms which mysticism tends to assume. All earlier standpoints were useful as provisional ones, but imperfect as final ones. For finality and perfection belong only to the standpoint of the Whole, which is the philosophic one. Here is something on which a man can finally depend. Here is a way of thought, feeling and practice, whose truth has been tested in every conceivable manner since the hoariest antiquity, but has emerged triumphantly to face and pass the scrutiny of twentieth century scepticism itself. Once the sublime message of this philosophy has sunk deeply into his heart and once he has taken it receptively into his mind, he will find that hope, meaning and worth-whileness are gloriously restored to life. Like a great star blazing alone above the darkness, it will ever be there to lead him where others wander without directive purpose or stumble and fall in the unmapped night. Such is the incontrovertible character of higher philosophy that it will always survive, however many civilizations rise and vanish, for both prolonged experience and sustained reflection always confirm it in the end.

The wisdom of the sages is the wisdom of the ages. It can never perish. Why? Because all human thinking, all human feeling, all human experience, when led to the farthest end by the evolutionary movements, returns and must return to it. Nevertheless, that which held good for former times does not hold good for our own. The world has been changing and mankind along with it. Philosophy, which was once a closed preserve for a few who were privileged by personal status or mental receptivity, will in this coming age be brought more closely into the life of the common people. The impending universal enlightenment predicted in "The Wisdom of the Overself" must not be understood in any narrow sense as being solely religious and mystical. It is, even more so, intellectual and intuitional, that is, intelligential. For they are as much stages in the soul's onward march as mystical development. Philosophy, alone, does not divorce the various faculties of human nature, but rather unites and relates them.

Here it may be said, parenthetically, that the intelligence of man is a higher faculty than his logical intellect. For intelligence is the sum of intellect, emotion, intuition and experience.

The experiences of the past few decades, with their grand climax in the war itself, have awakened the mentality and sharpened the intelligence of millions who would otherwise have permitted life, men, institutions and ideas to have passed uncriticized and unappraised. For better or worse, the world has entered an age when both intellect and intelligence are getting into quicker stride and when the touchstone

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of scepticism is being applied to all things. This development respects nothing that is based on unverified dogmas and unverifiable beliefs. Philosophy is well suited to this spirit of the times, which will certainly spread and not diminish. It addresses itself to the world's growing understanding and not to its dying faith. The era of blind belief is a passing one. The era of intelligent understanding based on ascertained facts is taking its place. The mind of mankind is today bombarded with ideas on a scale undreamt of by earlier generations. Radio, press, literature, lectures and travel combine to force the pace of their intellectual growth in an unique manner, whilst the victories of science compel them to recast antiquated beliefs and to readjust themselves to a different spiritual landscape. Significant was what J. B. Priestley said in a radio talk from London during the spring of 1943: "The war has undoubtedly sharpened our minds and brought some intellectual zest to the English people. We are far more intelligent people than we were four years ago. The eager demand for good books and argumentative pamphlets, the many discussions and study circles most amply demonstrate this. Under the stress of war we are ridding ourselves of mental indolence."

Truth, being the knowledge of an everlasting reality, can neither change nor evolve. But its understanding, being the function of a changing and evolving human intellect, can both change and evolve with that intellect. The fact that the masses of this planetary cycle have been slowly maturing in understanding with lengthening experience of life through numerous incarnations explains why the philosophic teaching can now not only be presented more openly to the world but also more convincingly. For the widening data of science, the striking vicissitudes of history, economics and politics, the increasing pressure of unheard-of wartime sufferings--all these have combined to vindicate and explain this teaching to the ordinary mind in a way which was not possible during prior ages. However dimly they have begun to see its higher truths, still they have begun to see them. Greater lucidity will come with time. Revelation is usually partial and always progressive: a sudden, final and complete comprehension, occuring overnight, should be suspected. Formulated in tones friendlier to common human life and in phrases understandable by contemporary human thought, philosophy's message may seem more worth-while and its ethics more worth following.

Another way, whereby the metaphysical part of philosophy will be brought nearer to the common people, will be by bringing it down to earth and making it talk the language of common sense by uttering its thoughts in the speech of the street and by giving it primarily to the work-a-day, rather than the academic, world. The forms in which its metaphysics has been represented in the past and the terms in which it has been explained have usually been of such a difficult character as to require several years of unremitting study before they could be understood. Whatever else critics may say, to

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simplify those forms and clarify those terms, thus shortening the long period required for such a study, is to render a needed service to many who might otherwise turn away from the subject in despair. After wide experience, we do not hesitate to assert that, although outside popular taste, such knowledge is not outside popular grasp. Before metaphysics can come within its taste and grasp, two prerequisites are needed. First, there must be an awakening to the importance of this knowledge. Second, there must be a human and simpler presentation of it in contemporary language, a presentation which must arise out of the personal inner realization of the metaphysician himself.

The modern mind, and particularly the modern British mind, finds metaphysical knowledge somewhat remote and unreal, elusive and irksome. In the past, the Continental European could appreciate abstract metaphysical ideas whereas the British European could not. But the war has begun to change this. The Britisher has begun to search for the grand idea behind life, the inward significance of it. George Orwell, writing as lately as 1941 on the national characteristics of England, accurately observed: "They (the English) have a horror of abstract thought, they feel no need for any philosophy or systematic 'world-view'." Why is it, therefore, that such metaphysical works as my two recent books, "The Hidden Teaching Beyond Yoga" published in 1941, and "The Wisdom of the Overself" published in 1943, were successfully launched in England? The answer can only be that the English people, like nearly everyone and everything else affected by the world crisis, are changing involuntarily under its relentless impact.

But, as it has earlier been mentioned, metaphysics is only a part of the integral philosophy. A merely metaphysical development would not alone affect humanity deeply. Hence, it must again be emphasized that the philosophy of truth is not merely a dried-up intellectual speculation. It is an undivided way of living, feeling, intuiting and thinking. Its fruit is the practical integration of wise willing, noble emotion, mystical intuition and rational understanding. It would be a gross misunderstanding of this teaching and a great mistake for the student to believe that the passage from religion to mysticism and thence to philosophy implies the dropping of the first two altogether. On the contrary, he will find that devotion and meditation are as much present at the very end of this quest as at its very beginning. Only by this passage can he correct, develop, expand and complete the religious sense with which he originally began. But a teaching which can give so much, naturally demands much. It can attract and sustain only the best among twentieth century souls, for it is not only because the appreciation of philosophy calls for a ripened intelligence that its votaries are few compared with the votaries of religion. It is also because it calls for a perpetual self-discipline of the senses, passions, imagination, thoughts, emotions and even speech, and a

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devotion to the common welfare which most men will not voluntarily practise.

A sudden and widespread acceptance of this teaching is unlikely because, to the masses in their inferior stages of ethical, intuitional and intellectual development, its ideas and ideals have always seemed too remote. It has hitherto been a teaching for those who think, feel and act beyond their epoch. We need not be surprised, therefore, that candidates have always been few. Hence, the sages have, in the past, acted on the principle that to present such exalted and abstruse teachings to those who are not yet ready for their comprehension, is to bewilder them.

A world religion may spread, a world Messiah may appear, but both would exist primarily for the millions who need them. The few who have advanced mentally, morally and spiritually beyond the mass standard, need something more. To know truth and to know reality--this is the goal which blazes forth, star-like, before them. Hence, our task is a humbler and, numerically, a minor one. It is to serve their mystical and philosophic education--for they know that, only when the star of truth in its fulness blazes out, can the world be fully redeemed. That those who live by the light of these ideas, are and will long remain in a minority need not dishearten them. For they are working for tomorrow. And their number is sure to grow because life is a school and experience the best of all tutors. Like the Sphinx, that grand monument which crouches on a desert rock, they can afford to wait. The day of universal enlightenment may be remote, but it is inescapable. Because ultimate truth alone points to ultimate reality, men must inevitably and eventually find their way to it after they have exhausted everything else. Those who despond over the fewness of its followers, should remember that it is heartening to know that these exceptional men and women do exist and that this planet is not devoid of a desire to ascertain the truth about life. Humanity has need of these mystics and philosophers, yet they are all too scattered, unhonoured and too few unknown.

Why is it that so many are totally uninterested in these teachings? Why is it that so few accept them even after acquaintance? The answer to both these questions is that sufficient experience of life requisite to their proper evaluation and sympathetic reception has been absent on the one hand, whilst sufficient development of the intuitional, the moral and the intellectual faculties has been absent on the other hand. In the first case, no single lifetime could provide such a wealth of experience as is needed for this purpose, and therefore a cycle of reincarnations is necessary. Those who reject philosophic teaching, are accordingly egos still young in this cyclic progression. In the second case, it is simply the individual's own limitation of character and intelligence which prevent him perceiving their truth. We may expect philosophy to be acceptable to humanity in general only after it has exhausted the possibilities of religion and metaphysics,

devotion to the common welfare which most men will not volun-
tarily practise.

A sudden and widespread acceptance of this teaching is unlikely because, to the masses in their inferior stages of ethical, intuitional and intellectual development, its ideas and ideals have always seemed too remote. It has hitherto been a teaching for those who think, feel and act beyond their epoch. We need not be surprised, therefore, that candidates have always been few. Hence, the sages have, in the past, acted on the principle that to present such exalted and abstruse teachings to those, who are not yet ready for their comprehension, is to bewilder them.

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science and mysticism--not before. Then, its internal preparation being completed and its external conditions being ripe, its character, intelligence and experience will naturally demand philosophy. All people will then enjoy its benefits where only a few enjoy them today. Meanwhile, it is futile to offer such an advanced teaching to those who are not themselves sufficiently advanced to appreciate it. We must await their natural inner growth to the degree where such appreciation becomes spontaneous. The truth may be 'stepped down' to suit their present mentality where this can be safely done, but must be kept back and guarded where it cannot.

V.

Humanity at the Crossroads.

This survey of the spiritual significance of the world crisis must bring forward some more points before it finally closes. What we have just lived through is not one of those wars which, as history tells us, periodically occur. It was a struggle between powers of evil and powers of good for the very soul of man.

Extreme human types have been seen in the world during our generation. There are the Nazis, for example, who say, "Evil, be thou my good", on the one hand, and the idealists who want a world better in every way, on the other. Such a confusion of types leads naturally to a confusion of ideas and a chaos of ideals. The explanation is simple. We are emerging from a transitional period. The Nazis stand at the bottom of an evolutionary arc of descent, and the idealists at the beginning of an evolutionary arc of ascent. The two arcs cross one another during a transitional period. The story of evolution is not divided into rigid print-tight chapters. Its periods overlap each other. The one now closing is mingling its jagged ends with the beginnings of the one now opening. The struggle of conflicting ideals has therefore been tremendous and terrible.

During such a period, when society is in the throes of a crisis, several views of life inevitably struggle for triumph--a state of different ideas about inward and outward reconstruction fills the mental air and a ferment of contradictory ideals agitates the social heart. The separatist tendencies, which served evolutionary development so well in the past, will no longer serve it in the present. The hour is fateful. An abrupt change-over must be our choice. The time is here for a rapid move that shall raise us from the old standpoint to a better one. There is hope for modern civilization only if it reads at last the

science and mysticism--not before. Then, its internal preparation being completed and its external conditions being ripe, its character, intelligence and experience will naturally demand philosophy. All people will then enjoy its benefits where only a few enjoy them today. Meanwhile, it is futile to offer such an advanced teaching to those who are not themselves sufficiently advanced to appreciate it. We must await their natural inner growth to the degree where such appreciation becomes spontaneous. The truth may be 'stepped down' to suit their present mentality where this can be safely done, but must be kept back and guarded where it cannot.

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psychological signs of the times, appreciates the intellectual needs of the hour, accepts newer ideas, and yields to nobler ideals. A choice of roads is offered to us. Those whose conscience is awakened will take one road, and those whose conscience is dulled will take another. Life, today, is severely questioning them: What stuff are you really made of? What is it that you desire most? What are your basic intentions towards society? These are only a few of its questions.

Hence, although this epochal struggle against evil forces found in the war its most dramatic scene, it did not end with the war. The post-war period sees its continuation, albeit under altered and less violent forms. The differentiation of forces, which started in the decade before the war and which emerged sharply and quickly during the war itself, is a process which will continue into the peace. It is a process which is now too iconoclastic to come to an end before a thoroughly decisive issue has been reached. In other words, and whether we like it or not, we are called upon to take sides. For with the military war ended, we now enter a war of a different kind. There can be no immediate peace in the deep sense of this term. The Nazi-minded men within our ranks are re-aligning themselves against the progressive forces and will themselves have to be fought, albeit without bloodshed and without violence. For on the one hand the entrenched powers of evil have been in too wide and too deep a control of human society war, and on the other hand they have too successfully masqueraded as the powers of good to be easily detected for what they really are. When a modern spiritual attempt at universal brotherhood, like the Theosophical Society, has been split periodically with bitter dissension, treachery and strife; when a modern practical attempt at democratic comradeship, like the Soviet Republic, has been marked periodically with widespread 'purges' and tyrannic 'liquidations'; and when what is supposed to be one of the holiest ashrams in India, because of the presence of a genuinely great yogi, has an inner history of materialistic greed, petty jealousies, personal spitefulness and public deception--the thoughtful observer cannot but shake his head in despair at the adolescent hopes of enthusiastic novices that there will be an easy or quick passage into a spiritual epoch.

It is true that the influence of these ideas is growing. But it is also true that the growth is too slight and too slow to affect the external history of our generation in any decisive way. It does not justify the many mystical believers who cherish the self-deception of imminent spiritual revival on an overwhelming scale. Their own enthusiastic response is no accurate measure of the actual response of humanity's multitudes. The fact is that these teachings are not known beyond the circle of a negligible few. Indeed, we have been living at such a materialistic level of

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thought and experience that these ideas seem so utterly alien and absurdly fantastic to most people as to be undeserving of serious attention. If we look around observantly at contemporary humanity, there is little to show that it is aware of its high destiny. The complacent hopes of an imminent spiritual renaissance, which many emotional mystics hold, are mostly the projection of their own wishes upon the course of world events. Such hopes are not shared by philosophical mystics. On the contrary, we foresee more chaos and more conflict with collapse at the end, even if there will also be a few more flickering spiritual lights amid the darkness. To look at the future with an optimism which is unjustified, to look at the present with eyes which are self-deceptive--this is not the philosophic way. The feeble and haphazard tribute which we pay to the hidden reality, means little to our hearts and matters little in our lives. Until a new spiritual truth becomes as important for modern culture as a new internal combustion engine is important for modern transport, we shall continue to exhibit an unbalanced psyche, a strife-ridden civilization and an existence devoid of higher purpose. Because of the divine mysteries which he has unveiled, the mystical philosopher alone can bring down to suffering humanity heavenly comfort for earthly despairs, priceless guidance which he alone can offer, and redemptive grace which he alone can evoke. Is it not one of the most telling indictments of the materialistic character of our civilization that, despite its pretence of religious culture, it has no place for such a man, that it rejects him as unconventional and dismisses him as unworldly, and that it condemns him to remain a mere bystander during its greatest crisis?

Those who think we are on the verge of a general spiritual awakening, are over-optimistic. Those who expect a spiritual tidal wave to rush over the planet, are being disappointed. So far, it is still only a small circle of people who take any real interest in the inner life. There is little evidence of a new spirituality emerging from the war, much evidence of the old materialism being here still. The fact cannot be blinked. A few have quickly profited by their mistakes and grasped valuable principles that will help them thenceforth for the whole of their lives. Many, however, have learnt little or nothing from their experience and go on repeating the old mistakes and receiving the same painful consequences. Others have done worse even than that for they have learnt the wrong lessons. A so-called moral reawakening and inner seeking, on a planetary scale, are sadly-frustrated hopes. We are witnessing moral degeneracy and spiritual insensitiveness on a wide scale. And this is precisely what we should expect to witness, today. For humanity is moving through the very last lap of a descending arc in the series of its inner evolutionary life. But, because the first lap of the ascending arc intersects it, we are also witnessing the emergence of a few moral and spiritual pioneers.

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The new arc will rise to a higher level than the preceding one, but it will not rise in any way so rapidly as the last one will fall. Therefore, contemporary spiritual work will be appreciated by, and should be for the benefit of, these emergent few.

How long will the crisis last? When shall we come to the end of the purgatory through which we have been passing? Will the paradise of a better world be reached? This post-war period will produce a further crisis wherein humanity's karma will culminate for good or for bad. Civilization will then either rise up to a new and nobler level, or it will crash down into ruin and annihilation. If we do not realize that it will not only be our last chance to construct a worth-while world and for worth-while reasons to inhabit that world, but also that it will have to be constructed on entirely new principles and not merely on new details within the old principles, then the hope and possibility of such a world will be destroyed and an unworthy civilization will sink suicidally into the sanguinary abyss opening before our feet. If mankind does not have enough understanding to realize this, then there will be a final crisis which will finish the destruction of outworn social forms and the dissolution of outmoded ways of thought and life which war has already partially effected, a crisis comparable only to that of the destruction of Atlantis nearly twelve thousand years ago.

But in the end, the answers to these three questions depend heavily upon the spiritual orientation which we take. Those who look forward to a spiritual enlightenment and sudden redemption of the human race as much as those who look forward to a materialistic, economic and political millenial dawn, will neither be saved en masse nor transformed overnight. Men, who live in, by and for appearances, will always find truth unwelcome. The unmixed optimism which sees the immediate dawning of an epoch of an entirely spiritual outlook and a wholly universal brotherhood, is one which reason cannot easily share. That such an epoch will eventually come is certain, that its pioneers exist even today is equally certain, but its coming will hardly be in our own time, and its pioneers will continue to follow a lone path for a long while. For how are you going to get new conduct out of old instincts? Then how can you get a new age out of the old individuals? Only if they change under the pressure of this crisis. There is no better and ultimately no other guarantee of a better world.

But, will they change? There are pessimistic prophets who believe that civilization will sink deeper into sensualism, materialism, selfishness, brutality, strife and hatred. There are also optimistic enthusiasts who believe and expect a sudden spiritual revival and abrupt moral conversion will occur almost overnight, as it were. Neither view is wholly correct. The same world upheaval which has blinded some into greater passion and selfishness, has opened others' eyes. The facts are that the crisis is

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dividing mankind into two sections: those who, oppressed by the uncertainty of the future and the perils of death or mutilation, seek solace in a snatch-pleasures-whilst-you-can attitude; and those who, oppressed by the same thing, seek help instead from spiritual powers. That is to say, it is darkening the mentality of one group and awakening the mentality of another group. What sort of a balance will be struck between them is not yet to be safely predicted by human reason, but it is certainly the crossroad in human fate which we are now approaching.

Thus the war, or world crisis, will be beneficial to the spiritual evolution of some people and harmful to that of others, according to the way they react to its events, experiences and ideas. Where human reason is perplexed and cannot say with certainty whether or not an Atlantean catastrophe will overtake humanity, philosophic insight, however, moves with ease and can say with assurance that, although we shall skirt the edge of such a catastrophe, we shall fortunately escape being overwhelmed by it. Deeper than man's greed and hate, intellect and passion, lie spiritual forces which must be given an outlet. Hence, their evolutionary upheaval is overcoming his inner resistance at a heavy cost to himself. For one important inner significance of this world crisis is that it is a tremendous cleansing process, a drastic means of bringing some of the heaviest scum in humanity's character to the surface so as to remove it altogether. If the evil qualities displayed by Nazism rose to the surface, they could only have done so because they were already there to some extent beneath the surface or within the subconscious mind of the millions--and they were not all in Germany only--who either whole-heartedly accepted Nazism or else weakly approved it. This painful, drastic, but partial purification is necessary because humanity has to be rendered more receptive to the new forces of a divine character, which have begun to manifest themselves in its midst.

Thus, we may expect a kind of ideological interregnum, a period of chaos and suffering, ferment and struggle, which will last for a few years at least and several years at most, but which will be without the bloody violence of wartime. This interval will be succeeded by true peace, when the divine forces will really begin to make themselves felt as they arise out of the subconscious into the conscious mentality of mankind and as they begin to shape the external institutions of society through inspired leaders. Only then can we confidently affirm that the changes, which are yet to happen, will bring to our bewildered epoch a new hope. Only then may we look to the day when, out of the ashes of the world's turbulent past, there shall shortly arise a nobler epoch where common human welfare and individual human dignity will count for much, just as they counted for little in the old one. The ultimate future of man is full of gloriously exciting possibilities, although his immediate future is tinged with dreadfully saddening ones. But this interval will

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pass like night before dawn.

For, during the war years with their ever-present perils and ever-fresh tragedies, with the uncertainty of being alive tomorrow and the insecurity of personal possessions, it was inevitable that many a sleeping mind should awaken to question life for its meaning, as it was also inevitable that many another mind should awaken only to clutch missed pleasures before death might come. Men had to choose, in the end, between being led astray by their lower nature or becoming master of it. Hence, the acknowledgment of these higher needs exists today in many hearts, where it did not exist before the war. No people of the past ever faced what the people of today have faced. No struggle in history ever involved such momentous issues. Yet millions have risen to the noble inspiration, have suffered, struggled, lived and died for it. This fact is indeed a sign that the best does dwell within man and only awaits the proper evolutionary conditions to bring it slowly forth. If it be true that the spiritual sense of man was atrophied in pre-war years, it is also true that his soul could only be stunned, not slain. The very events, whose tremendous pressure revealed unsuspected weaknesses, also revealed their opposites, developed latent capacities and brought out untouched strength. They have shown how mankind can rise to the call of a noble cause and suffer and even die, self-sacrificingly, for it. The ordeal through which they passed was terrible, but it brought to the surface some magnificent qualities. It was not spiritually wasted. Some emphatic change in outlook, a deepening and a broadening one, has occurred. For the first time, large numbers felt the clear need of a spiritual support. A belated start is better than no start at all. This movement did not cease when the war ceased, for the problems of peace are just as grave and crushing to the individual, in their own way. Events, themselves, have forced this new awareness into the heads of millions who could not keep indefinitely inert under wartime pressures. A larger and larger number of awakened minds is turning away from unhelpful spiritual inertia and moving forward in quest of constructive new ideas, gravitating toward a better way of life. Hence, the war has done more for the furtherance of spiritual teachings than a dozen propaganda societies and a thousand books could have done. It has awakened the masses as they have never been awakened before. Therefore, it can also be said that the new epoch, when it comes after the period of confusion and uncertainty, will be a less materialistic, a nobler and more spiritual one.

The surge of a planetary karmic wave will carry all before it. The ultimate victory of new and better ideals is assured by the very character of the evolutionary process. The idealists will win in the end because that is Nature's design and because they represent the coming epoch. But they will not win easily, nor all at once. There is a thrill in knowing that you are allied with the coming forces, an intellectual delight in perceiving that you are moving with the

pass like night before dawn.

For, during the war years with their ever-present perils and ever-fresh tragedies, with the uncertainty of being alive tomorrow and the insecurity of personal possessions, it was inevitable that many a sleeping mind should awaken to question life for its meaning, as it was also inevitable that many another mind should awaken only to clutch missed pleasures before death might come. Men had to choose, in the end, between being led astray by their lower nature or becoming master of it. Hence, the acknowledgment of these higher needs exists today in many hearts, where it did not exist before the war. No people of the past ever faced what the people of today have faced. No struggle in history ever involved such momentous issues. Yet millions have risen to the noble inspiration, have suffered, struggled, lived and died for it. This fact is indeed a sign that the best does dwell within man and only awaits the proper evolutionary conditions to bring it slowly forth. If it be true that the spiritual sense of man was atrophied in pre-war years, it is also true that his soul could only be stunned, not slain. The very events, whose tremendous pressure revealed unsuspected weakness, also revealed their opposites, developed latent capacities and brought out unsuspected strength. They have shown how mankind can rise to the call of a noble cause and suffer and even die, self-sacrificingly, for it. The ordeal through which they passed was terrible, but it brought to the surface some magnificent qualities. It was not spiritually wasted. Some emphatic change in outlook, a deepening and a broadening one, has occurred. For the first time, large numbers felt the clear need of a spiritual support. A belated start is better than no start at all. This movement did not cease when the war ceased, for the problems of peace are just as grave and crushing to the individual, in their own way. Events, themselves, have forced this new awareness into the heads of millions who could not keep indefinitely inert under wartime pressures. A larger and larger number of awakened minds is turning away from unhelpful spiritual inertia and moving forward in quest of constructive new ideas, gravitating toward a better way of life. Hence, the war has done more for the furtherance of spiritual teachings than a dozen propaganda societies and a thousand books could have done. It has awakened the masses as they have never been awakened before. Therefore, it can also be said that the new epoch, when it comes after the period of confusion and uncertainty, will be a less materialistic, a nobler and more spiritual one.

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right trend. Yes, a new age is coming with new doctrines about man and matter, about property and society, about diet and nationality, about truth and time--a new age with new approaches to old problems. It will be more intuitive and cleverer, more intelligent and forward-looking, much more equalitarian and freedom loving, and much less patriarchally enslaved. It will be progressive in social reforms, inventive in practical techniques, more humanitarian in ethical attitude, more eclectic in intellectual activity, and readier to try out fresh ideas, fresh men and fresh machines. It will be a new era because so many will uphold new truths against old fallacies, new freedoms against old enslavements, new generosities against old selfishnesses, new opportunities against old privileges, and new outlooks against old prejudices. It will be a wiser and consequently a nobler period because it will have seen with its own eyes how materialism exhausted its own vitality and inescapably broke down owing to inner contradictions. A world order partly based on a higher conception of man, a world leadership which will reflect more philosophical truth in its attitude towards life, are not merely a theoretical possibility of the post-war period, but are an essential outcome of all the forces and events which have brought such a period into being.

The new era is here and cannot be killed, but it is here only in its infantile beginnings. It will have to struggle against bitter enemies and blind opposition. It will have to grow amidst strife, confusion and bewilderment. But it will grow. Thus, a little co-operation with evolutionary trends at the present juncture will yield great results. The solution of mankind's difficulties is the arisal of a new outlook. There is no other that will be really effective. Out of physical suffering and mental search, a new vision of life is being born.

It is the men, who occupy key positions, who need philosophy most, alike for their personal happiness as for the public's benefit. How weighty the responsibility which rests on those who rule, govern and guide and lead and instruct or influence, the common people! Hitherto, most of them have walked in the dark. If they are to walk in safety and not into an abyss, they must have light, must have some knowledge of the truth. Any attempt to turn society into a new course without such knowledge will hardly be more than walking in a circle. Hence, the timeliness of the philosophic teaching should compel its acceptance. If those, who pilot humanity, would make its ideas their own, this would be enough to save humanity. For their position gives them the chance--if they do not miss or misunderstand it--to become what Jesus said his true followers could be: the little leaven which spreads and turns a lump of indigestible dough into a loaf of eatable bread, or if that is not possible, the salt which prevents meat from becoming corrupt.

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We have written in "The Wisdom of the Overself" that humanity is walking along the edge of a precipice, that if a

right choice is not made when the decisive crossroads is faced after the war, the structure of civilization will be unable to maintain itself and will crash. But this precipice exists, after all, in our minds and hearts. A change of thought--an escape from old obsessions, an enlargement of outlook--can save us. How tremendous is the significance of the time we are living in! How terrible the prospect before mankind, if they fail to use this crucial opportunity aright and seek to resist the inevitable changes within and without themselves! How glorious if, humbled by their errors and purified by their sufferings, they comprehend and accept it! Such comprehension, as well as the inspiration that goes with it, can naturally be passed on to them only by those who have divested themselves of all partisan and personal interests, that is, only by practising philosophers, who can help them to find their better self and to express it in a better world-order.

We have said before, and we say again, that there is no need to despair. Man is on the upward move. All these tremendous events of his national history and all these tremendous repercussions of his personal history have etched and are still etching educative lessons into his consciousness. They have brought him closer and closer to the grand discovery of his soul-nature. The tempo was slow at first, but now it has quickened to an astonishing degree. From the moment this happens--and it will certainly happen eventually--he will recognize and accept the higher purpose of earthly incarnation and thenceforth rearrange his individual and social life accordingly. This is why we ought not to measure the world's future by its past. The pre-war materialism was so extreme that the post-war swing of the pendulum, when it does come, will be somewhat extreme, too. Today's opportunity is so extraordinary that it was never known by yesterday. Let us show that we recognize it by showing a courageous readiness to reconstruct today's human existence with vision and with initiative. What depth the pretence of spirituality has brought mankind to, is tragically plain for everyone to see. What its reality could bring them to, is the glorious height that now confronts them.

The Oriental belief, that former golden ages were necessarily happier, wiser and better ones than ours, is true only in a superficial sense. Whilst the people of those times were still primitive and had only partially developed their latent possibilities, the character of mankind was only partially developed for evil, too. But since then, they have had to evolve the powers of intellect applied to practical life and to individualize themselves out of tribal dependance. The consequence has been less communal spirit and greater personal selfishness, less response to spiritual intuitions and more reliance on materialistic sense promptings. Again, whilst the planet was still thinly peopled, the struggle of man against man was less, hence the call on his evil propensities was less, too. Actually, we have all lived through this

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or other planetary evolutions before and therefore have all possessed those manifold qualities and characteristics which belonged to the men of those earlier ages. If they were happier and better, then so were we. Those qualities and characteristics are still within us, but they have been overshadowed for a time by the other ones which evolution has since stressed. Lapsed for a time they may be, but lost forever they cannot be. Evolution does not discard its former gains but takes them up into itself, preserves and transmutes them whilst it moves onward.

Empires built upon pyramids of skulls and rivers of blood rise but to fall. Where is the Assyrian Kingdom today? The Greek might has cracked and dwindled. The broken clay bricks of vanished Babylon afford fit haunts for spiders and cockroaches. But the Assyrians, the Greeks and the Babylonians themselves have not vanished. They are with us today, albeit in different bodies and in other lands. The law of physical rebirth has brought them back to the school of life, either to learn fresh lessons or to re-learn the old ones which were insufficiently mastered. Hence, we have within us, today, the stored experiences, the unfolded capacities and the accumulated knowledge of all the previously-born races of mankind. Only, some of them are temporarily overlaid or temporarily neglected or even temporarily inaccessible. But they are there. We have to recover or express them alongside of what we have additionally gained since then. Over-concentration on the intellectual-physical phase of life may have made us materialists, but the shift of emphasis which the tide of evolution has now to bring about will make us something better. The time has indeed come to restore the balance, to realize that what we once were in the distant past we still are and much more besides, to open out all sides of our nature to fullest bloom in equal measures. In an age which has experienced awful disintegrations, we should begin to integrate ourselves. Such a rich integral life was not possible in primitive times. History has made us more ready for such a fuller quest than were earlier races. That is why we of this century must have the boldness to be ourselves and not pale imitations of the men of the distant past. Every historical period must find its own outlook, work out its own world-view afresh. How much more must this be the case in a period of such unique character as the one in which we live today!

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