

Carbons 20 (Lit paras typed 1965)

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Editor's Note: This file has all 28 of PB's original "Old" Categories, and there are very few problems with the text for once. In addition to the categorized material, there is a short essay by PB titled "The Discipline of Speech" at the end of the file. The majority of his writing about speech is to be found under "Voice" in Titled Items 1 and 2. The original of this essay can be

found in *Unrevised Essays*. "Lit Paras" was a term PB used for compilations of paras from his 28 categories that he was considering putting into a new book. There are two annotations by PB himself on pages 3 and 106, but otherwise this file is relatively clean.

For more information about the people and texts PB quotes or references here, please see the file titled "Wiki Standard Info for Comments." For more information about the editorial standards, spelling changes, and formatting that we have implemented – including page and para numbering – please see the file titled "Introductory Readers' Guide." We have introduced minimal changes to the text; our changes deal with inconsistencies of spelling, educated guesses at illegible words, and the rare modification of grammar for clarity's sake. Whenever there is any question as to whether what is typed is what PB wrote, please consult the associated scan of the original pages, currently to be found in a PDF of the same name. – Timothy Smith (TJS), 2020

1¹

2²

3

(3-1)³ This is a Carbon Copy of Lit paras typed 1965

4⁴

5

(5-1)⁵ P.B.

For your attention, please.

<u>III</u>	Note No. 11. ⁶	A word is missing.
<u>IV</u>	Note No. 83. ⁷	There appears to be a word missing.
<u>VI</u>	Note No. 63. ⁸	Note unfinished.
<u>XVII</u>	Note No. 17. ⁹	A word is missing at the end.
<u>XXIII</u>	Note No. 35. ¹⁰	Instruction at the head of this note to "Copy also in Objet's

¹ Void page. A handwritten sticky note on this page reads: "OK (doesn't need to be copied) PA."

² Blank page

³ The paras on this page are unnumbered. It is entirely handwritten by PB himself.

⁴ Void page. This is an advertisement in German.

⁵ The para on this page is unnumbered.

⁶ This refers to what is now para 16-1. – TJS '15

⁷ The para this note refers to was not found in this file. – TJS '15

⁸ This refers to what is now para 31-5. – TJS '15

⁹ This refers to what is now para 64-5. – TJS '15

¹⁰ This refers to what is now para 93-3, although no such note is on that page. Apparently it was on the paper from which this was typed. – TJS '15

XXIII Note No 37.¹¹

d'art re Ring." Does this perhaps refer to some other notes?
I have left spaces for the insertion of words missing from
this note.

Notes attached to this sheet are not numbered.

Please see originals.¹²

6¹³

Old i: Art and Inspiration ... NEW XIV: The Arts in Culture & XXII: Inspiration and the Overself

7
I

(7-1)¹⁴ They put all their mixed-up mental and emotional turmoil into their art work. Instead of seeking and expressing beauty, which is the true mission of art, they have nothing better to give the world than the ugly, the chaotic and the boring.

(7-2) A work of art may exalt its participants if its theme is spiritual, mystic, philosophic or Nature-beautiful, or degrade them, or leave them unaffected.

(7-3) An art production whose form derives from spiritual tradition or symbolism, whose content derives from spiritual experience or understanding, is at least as worthy of veneration as a religious relic.

(7-4) A work of art which awakens in its beholder or hearer or reader a deep feeling of reverential worship or inner strength or mental tranquillity, thereby gives him a blessing. It enables him to share the artist's inspiration.

(7-5) Tolstoy, in the earlier period of his life, created some artistic pieces which gave him Europe-wide fame. But in the later period of his life when a gloomy saturnine asceticism held his mind, he preached moralising sermons instead and puritanically denounced art.

(7-6) The artist who exults in the beauty he has found may not be far from the contemplative who exults in the peace he has felt.

¹¹ This refers to what is now para 93-5. – TJS '15

¹² This page is a note from the typist (probably Lorraine Stevens) to PB. – TJS '15

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¹⁴ The paras on this page are numbered 1 through 19.

(7-7) The seeker quests until his thought rests.

(7-8) Intuition is truth drawn from one's own self, that is, from within, be it a practical or a spiritual truth, whereas intellect squeezes its conclusion out of presented evidence, that is, from without.

(7-9) I cannot separate, as the old Greeks could not separate, the love of beauty in Nature and art, from the love of Truth in thought and experience.

(7-10) We become aware of a dynamic inspiration behind certain pieces of music, or writing, or sculpting, or painting.

(7-11) In a piece of writing or a product of art, we touch hands with its composer.

(7-12) This is the true task of art – to kindle inspiration first in the artist and then in his public.

(7-13) But intuitions are not easily, and certainly not always, identifiable.

(7-14) A sunless, art-ignoring, beauty-fearing asceticism is far from the philosophical quest.

(7-15) Art and Nature may so be used as to enlarge us, to give us less egoistic ideas and greater hearts.

(7-16) The practice of observing sunsets can become valuable aesthetically, profitable spiritually, if it leads to meditation.

(7-17) Art fulfils its highest purpose, acquires more valuable significance, when it becomes a vehicle for spiritual beauty.

(7-18) His best moves are mostly the unplanned ones.

(7-19) Beauty has its own holiness.

8
I

(8-1)¹⁵ The writer who has something worthwhile to communicate, the artist who has an offering of beauty to contribute, blesses his world, but the other kind pollutes it.

¹⁵ The paras on this page are numbered 20 through 31, making them consecutive with the previous page.

(8-2) The younger generation has lost this sensitivity, this refinement of taste and perception. Its admirations are crude, its enthusiasms are vulgar and its condemnations are unjust.

(8-3) We must call in the services of art to give religion its finest dress. Music must show its triumphs in the individual soul, architecture must create the proper atmosphere for communion, painting and sculpture give the visual assistance to the mind's upward ascension.

(8-4) The spectator of a painted picture or a natural landscape, the hearer of a musical theme, may find in it the chance to rise above his everyday thoughts and ordinary feelings.

(8-5) Abstract painters lack direction yet glory in the lack. Where this is just a means of hiding their lack of skill it is understandable but unpardonable. Where they have the skill, which is uncommon, it is to be deplored as surrender to unbalanced or unworthy influences.

(8-6) When they fulfil their highest mission, painting and sculpture try to make visible, music tries to make audible, prose literature tries to make thinkable, poetic literature tries to make imaginable the invisible, inaudible, unthinkable and unimaginable mystery of pure Spirit. Although it is true that they can never give shape to what is by its very nature the Shapeless, it is also true that they can hint, suggest, symbolise and – point to It.

(8-7) Such intuitions come to the mind's surface occasionally but remain inactive during most of a man's lifetime.

(8-8) If the artist could only learn to be as inspired in his life as he is at times in his work, that is, as elevated and idealistic, how quickly would he realise the quest's highest state!

(8-9) Literature can be as much a spiritual force in these modern times as liturgy has been in medieval times.

(8-10) Changes in the arts have been matched by changes in architecture, building, design, decoration, factories, furniture, shapes, colours and styles of household things.

(8-11) I have lived to see art go crazy, spewing forth sinister productions that give the world no inspiration, no beauty, no truth and no uplift, that are themselves conceived in morbidity and ugliness, lunacy and chaos, degeneracy and intellectual dissolution.

(8-12) David Bloom (30-year-old 1964 U.S.A. Conductor, who is rapidly rising to great success) of his inner preparation just prior to performing: "I try to spend a few minutes then to relax the mind and to empty it of self, memories, family etc." he told a friend. "When I actually play, the result appears in my being completely oblivious to the audience, in being aware of the music alone, identified with it, completely concentrated in, and on, it."

9
I

(9-1)¹⁶ Art works may merely decorate and entertain our leisure, or they may provide new means for worship, new power to uplift us.

(9-2) Too many modern buildings have the soullessness, the materialistic inner and outer nature, of mechanical constructions. They are not growths. This is why they lack beauty, grace, charm. Competent function only is their purpose. They achieve it. But they are monotonous barracks.

(9-3) The attitude of the younger generation, in these matters, disquiets me. I have come out of touch, and become out of sympathy, with it.

(9-4) Compare the raucous strident noise that is too often offered today as music with the measured refined glory of a classic like Handel's "Messiah!"

(9-5) Method and technique are necessary in themselves but incomplete; inspiration and intuition should shine behind them. The genius has both, although the amounts vary from man to man.

(9-6) Only truly inspired geniuses of art and intellect, and those members of the public who appreciate their productions, understand that religion has to a large extent appeared in different vesture to this generation.

(9-7) The stage epitomises and dramatises human experience. This offers us the chance to draw some of its lessons. Serious literature interprets human life and offers some of its meaning. Music's incantation can draw us up to exalted levels, and the other arts can show us a beauty which refines feeling and uplifts emotion. But all these possibilities can be realised only if the creators of these productions are themselves open to true inspiration.

(9-8) Why did the crowds press into the lecture-halls wherever Emerson came? Why

¹⁶ The paras on this page are numbered 32 through 43, making them consecutive with the previous page.

did they listen in awe and silence to this man in whose mind glowed a divine lamp? Emerson gave them inspiration.

(9-9) The best service a writer can render is to seek and find divine inspiration and true thinking, and then to offer the result to his fellow-men.

(9-10) We see so much lawlessness in life today, especially among the rebellious young, that it is not surprising to find so much lawlessness in art.

(9-11) The miracle of musical beauty is to be experienced gratefully, not for the sensuous and emotional satisfactions alone, but also for the reminder to make all life beautiful.

(9-12) He is not inspired all the time.

10¹⁷

I

Old ii: Relax and Retreat ... NEW III: Relax and Retreat

11

II

(11-1)¹⁸ Life in the world, with its small hypocrisies and large selfishnesses, must inevitably produce frictions and troubles as its fruit. Need we wonder why some men and women get disgusted and turn away from it?

(11-2) The disgust with the world, which Shankara regards as one of the four essential qualities for the Quest, or dispassion as it is sometimes translated, must also include disgust with humanity. Therefore if it leads a man to seek a solitary existence in order to find what the world's influences obstruct, he ought not to be blamed.

(11-3) Let us give all honour to the man who puts everything - position and property - aside to dedicate his life unto spiritual seeking, who renounces the world and its attractive offerings for a barer, ascetic existence. But let us not make, or accept, the false assertion that this is the only way toward spiritual heights.

(11-4) They need to get away from time to time from the world's turmoils and contaminations, from personal history and its distresses, personal anticipations or

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¹⁸ The paras on this page are numbered 1 through 14.

desires and their disappointment.

(11-5) The more possessions the more time we have to give to them, and therefore the more energy. There is then proportionately less of both available for higher studies, meditation practice and metaphysical reflection.

(11-6) It is true here as in other fields that study of the history and theory of mysticism will never be a satisfying substitute for practice of the exercises of mysticism.

(11-7) The shaven headed cowled monk of Christian lands or the long-haired bare shouldered sadhu of Indian soil are set up as the ultimate in spirituality. But this is a belief foisted on mankind by the monastic circles themselves.

(11-8) He has given up the management of his own life. How much more should he give up attempting to manage other people's lives for them?

(11-9) They wish to deny themselves some of the pleasures of life and to discard some of its comforts, so that they may be less hindered in their endeavour to gain a modicum of self-mastery.

(11-10) Tension of some kind cannot be avoided, for all activity, physical or mental, calls it forth. It becomes harmful when it is not rightly balanced by relaxation, when it alone rules the man.

(11-11) The ideal place for meditation recommended to Buddhist beginners is a cemetery.

(11-12) He will seek to make some interval during each day when he can take up the practice again.

(11-13) The aura which permeates such a place is something one can feel and something friendly to the soul's growth through meditation.

(11-14) A joyless asceticism is not to the modern taste.

12
II

(12-1)¹⁹ Should he renounce the appreciation of art, its forms and styles; should he desist from cultivating aesthetic taste?

¹⁹ The paras on this page are numbered 15 through 25, making them consecutive with the previous page.

(12-2) For the person who is not a complete beginner, who has attained a modest proficiency in the inner life, there is no real contradiction between the inner and the outer life. The one kind of existence will be inspired by the other. Neither despising the world nor becoming lost in it, he moves in poised safety through it.

(12-3) Perhaps one of the best arguments for solitude was put by an ancient Sutra of the Buddhists: "Let the meditator be alone. It is enough that he has himself to fight."

(12-4) Philosophy asks no one to turn away from the world, for in its view the divine spirit is not absent from the world. But it counsels all aspirants to get away from the world from time to time, and especially at certain phases of their inner life.

(12-5) The Fathers of the Eastern Orthodox Church regarded hermitic solitude as better suited to the more advanced monks than monastic community. This was because the hermit had better conditions for the practise of concentration and the dwelling in higher states of consciousness. Large monasteries are places of inner struggle and preparation, small anachoretic houses are places of inner quiet, according to this view. This, presumably, is why both forms of habitation are to be found on Mount Athos.

(12-6) The Hindu-Buddhist monastic sects which consider life in this world to be an evil, and the world itself to be an inexplicable mistake to be endured until we can escape from it by a transcendental attainment, are not supported by all their own sages. Some, and they are of the best, reject such statements.

(12-7) Prince Rama wanted to withdraw from his position, title, duties and family in pursuit of God. But the wise Vashistha, the great teacher of Mentalism, asked him: "Is He apart from the world that you wish to renounce it?"

(12-8) Is it possible to take part in the world's pursuits and still make solid spiritual progress? The answer depends upon the particular phase of inner life through which a man is passing. The young tender plant could not endure what the older and more solidly established one could.

(12-9) He may believe that he has shut out the world by shutting himself inside an ashram, a monastery, an ascetic community, but this is only his delusion. For he will find strains present in those institutions which, while not of the magnitude or violence of those found in the world, are still anything but holy.

(12-10) If a man returns daily to the Centre of his being, keeps the access to it open by meditation, he withdraws more and more from the body's domination and the intellect's one-sidedness. That is to say, he becomes more and more himself, less and less limited by his instruments.

(12-11) Can we really practice such indifference to the external circumstances of life?

13
II

(13-1)²⁰ If he is to cease mixing with the world as the price of following a spiritual path, without having either income or monastery to support him, it may become an economic impossibility. For this is not India, where such a course is usually provided for by society.

(13-2) As Father Gregory, a monk of the Monastery of Xeropotamou, on Mount Athos, declared, the reason for their existence on that peninsula was some inner experience, some enlightening glimpse, which gave them the urge to forsake the world and its possessions, the family and its endearments, to devote the rest of their lives to a monk's bare life.

(13-3) The ascetic belief that comfort is a spiritual hindrance and luxury a spiritual sin, and art a spiritual tempter is not entirely groundless. Much depends on the definitions made, the standards set, but more especially on the circumstances fixed by destiny.

(13-4) The night vigil services at Mount Athos Monasteries may go on continuously for several hours, and there may be no fewer than one every week. The young novices find attendance at them very tiring and physically uncomfortable and also complain that the ordinary daily liturgical services are too long. In the Orthodox services the congregation has to stand on its feet throughout the period. The resultant exhaustion, and other ascetic living conditions, cause a high proportion of novices to find monastic life on Athos too severe, so they abandon it after a trial.

(13-5) Milinda Panha²¹ (a Pali-language text on the questions put by King Menander to the Buddhist sage Nagasena): "Now even as laymen living at home and in the enjoyment of the pleasures of the senses, do they realise in themselves the condition of peace, the supreme good, nirvana."

(13-6) Father Theocletos, secretary of the Monastery of Dionysiou, on Mount Athos, shrewdly observed that the communal monasteries are suited to spiritual children, where the preliminary work of instruction and purification enabled novices to get rid of bad thoughts and passions to an extent sufficient to enable them to pass on to the higher stage of recluses living alone or in pairs in cottages or huts and enjoying mystical

²⁰ The paras on this page are numbered 26 through 37, making them consecutive with the previous page.

²¹ "Milindapanha" in the original.

experiences.

(13-7) A narrow interpretation of the spiritual life would confine it to the cave or the monastery.

(13-8) This daily immersion in the sacred depths of his own being must one day bring its memorable result.

(13-9) To withdraw into the woods, or into some place in the country away from it all is helpful at times to city dwellers.

(13-10) With more understanding of life, there comes more interest in life.

(13-11) Possessions can become encumbrances.

(13-12) Is he to disengage himself from the world's life?

14
II

(14-1)²² From this higher standpoint, so many possessions are recognised as superfluous and dispensable and only the few are recognised as essential and necessities.

(14-2) The disadvantages of being a celebrity, the futility of worldly honours, are more likely to be recognised by the old than by the young.

Old iii: Meditation ... NEW IV: Elementary Meditation & XXIII: Advanced Contemplation

15
III

(15-1)²³ Some measure of moral culture is indispensable both as a preliminary course and parallel endeavour to meditation. The Path is beset with moral risks and mental dangers for those who have not previously prepared their characters and personalities to engage in its practices: for those who are still largely gripped by selfish instincts and undisciplined passions, for those who are emotionally unstable and intellectually unbalanced. Hence preliminary and accompanying courses of ascetic self-denial, self-control and self-improvement are usually prescribed. Sensual lusts and low desires

²² The paras on this page are numbered 38 through 39, making them consecutive with the previous page.

²³ The paras on this page are numbered 1 through 10.

have not only to be curbed, but also ignoble thoughts and unworthy attitudes, if meditation exercises are to be done with safety and finished with success.

(15-2) The aspirant should vigilantly detect and immediately appreciate those rare mystical moments which come of their own accord. They should be ardently cherished and used as they come by putting all other activity aside for a few minutes and concentrating fully on them. Otherwise they display an ephemeral nature and disappear on fleet wings. They can later be used as themes for meditational exercises by striving to recapture them through imaginative remembrance and concentration.

(15-3) The body's position is not without its influence upon the beginnings of meditation. All muscles should be relaxed, all limbs at ease, all fingers at rest and the jaw unclenched. Any physical tenseness hinders the onset of contemplation.

(15-4) The danger of sitting passively in meditation whilst in the presence of someone else who is not, and even in a number of cases of someone who is, is the danger of receiving and absorbing from that person his emotional and mental emanations of a negative character. This is one important reason why solitary practice is usually enjoined.

(15-5) If facility can come only after many years of constant practice, even that is not too high a price to pay for it.

(15-6) The number of times he is to practise each day will depend on the strength of his aspiration and the circumstances in which he lives. It may be once; it may be twice or thrice. The length of time he is to give to each single practise-period will depend on the degree of skill he has reached.

(15-7) He needs for his purpose a place where his practice will not be interrupted and where his attention will not be distracted.

(15-8) The delicious calm which makes itself felt when meditation settles down after the initial struggling period.

(15-9) That is a suitable posture wherein one can sit perfectly still and wherein the body can send no messages to the mind, be they of pleasure or of irritation.

(15-10) "Yoga" can be a treacherous term. It may easily be made to mean at one and the same time a practice which leads to truth and a practice which leads to fantasy.

(16-1)²⁴ It is not enough to lull the mind: the heart's feeling must be stimulated and directed in aspiration and devotion, warm and strong toward the Overself. _____²⁵ arouses a certain force, the Spirit-Energy, which acts for a short time to prepare him for deeper, more concentrated contemplation.

(16-2) If he will devotedly pursue the exercises, despite repeated failure, such perseverance will sooner or later find a reward.

(16-3) If it is to profit him, the student must not allow his meditation to become nebulous and vague.

(16-4) If it is necessary to rise earlier each morning to find the time for this exercise, the sacrifice will turn, by perseverance, into a satisfaction.

(16-5) It is not possible to master the art of meditation without acquiring the virtue of patience. One has to learn first how to sit statue-still without fidgeting and without changes; second, how to endure the waiting period when the body's stillness is mocked by the mind's restlessness.

(16-6) What is called for at this stage is not so much a renunciation of the world as a renunciation of thoughts – of all thoughts, be they of the gross world or of the spiritual quest!

(16-7) Charles Morgan in his novel "Sparkenbroke:" "Sit for a long time still: still for so long and in such a way that your imagination annihilates yourself. You cease to exist. Then, slowly, let consciousness return; hearing, feeling, sight slowly returning; and you who were dead are alive again..."

(16-8) The time will come if he perseveres when he will bring himself out of the meditation with as great a feeling of reluctance as he had of irksomeness when he entered it. Its present ease will match its past difficulty. It will then not be a duty but an enjoyment.

(16-9) When this peace falls on the man's mind, it is like the hush falling on a room full of people making a loud noise.

(16-10) When inner contact with the Presence is established, when it has taken firm hold over him, he no longer moves, speaks or acts out of his own will.

²⁴ The paras on this page are numbered 11 through 25, making them consecutive with the previous page.

²⁵ A blank space was left in the original because the original typist couldn't read PB's handwriting, or because PB himself left a blank in the para.

(16-11) There is a twilit, vague and nebulous frontier between the two states, most often experienced just after waking. It is here that the psychic and occult are most easily felt and, on a higher level, the intuitive and spiritual most easily known.

(16-12) In the ordinary person, consciousness remains only at his periphery, but in the adept it can be drawn at any moment and at will to this centre.

(16-13) This centre of his own being never moves. It is forever in stillness.

(16-14) Certain helps to facilitate the realisation of these aims have been suggested.

(16-15) If the thoughts wander, as they will do, it is necessary to recall them.

17
III

(17-1)²⁶ "Meditate upon the sun when it is rising and pouring its golden rays upon the villages and valleys. Let these heavenly pictures remain inscribed upon your heart." – Kahlil Gibran in a letter to a friend.

(17-2) Once he is able to push the door open, he finds himself in a place where the light is heavenly, the peace indescribable, the feeling of divine support immeasurable.

(17-3) He experiences a pleasant sensation of becoming light as air, of attention being withdrawn from the flesh, of achieving a new glorious freedom unhampered by the heaviness of bone, blood and tissue.

(17-4) How far is all this utter emotional stillness and grave mental silence from all the noise of religious disputations, from all the tension of sectarian criticism, from all the puerilities of textual hair-splitting!

(17-5) He learns a valuable art; – how to sit, squat or recline without the unnecessary and disturbing nuisance of fidgets, and without moving any muscles at all.

(17-6) The glassy look which comes over the eyes of a hypnotised person, the rigid unblinking stare, and the unnatural dilation of the pupil, are signs of the mind's deep abstraction.

(17-7) When the meditation deepens sufficiently, he may feel that higher forces seize

²⁶ The paras on this page are numbered 26 through 37, making them consecutive with the previous page.

hold of him, of his will and mind, body and self, even of his breathing. But to predict with certainty when this may happen is usually beyond his capacity. A long-established experience and a high degree of concentration would be the first prerequisites for this, and there are others too.

(17-8) If the session is to be really profitable, in the highest sense, it should be approached with the utmost patience. He should be prepared to wait, and to go on doing so, for the inner light to manifest itself, without giving way to restlessness disappointment or frustration. This is the Hall of Waiting in occult terminology.

(17-9) To search around inside oneself may be a morbid or a dangerous affair, if it has no high objective.

(17-10) "Meditate on the mind as Brahman (the Supreme Being)" counsels an ancient Indian text.

(17-11) Some of the exercises will be of no benefit if practised too soon by unready minds, and may even do some harm.

(17-12) There is a feeling of the Overself's closeness when the deepest point in meditation is reached.

18²⁷
III

Old iv: The Path ... NEW I: Overview of the Quest

19
IV

(19-1)²⁸ The bigger an organisation becomes, the more likely are dissensions and quarrels to arise within it, despite all its professions of special sanctity or proclamations of brotherly love. The essential things get gradually lost, the accidental are made more of and treasured up. The Spirit is squeezed out, the superfluities brought in.

(19-2) The bands, small or large, which gather around a guru, or attach themselves to the latest movements, or join the organised groups, need to exercise much care if they are to escape from the zealotry and bigotry, the little-mindedness and carping criticism into which most of the members too often fall.

²⁷ Blank page

²⁸ The paras on this page are numbered 1 through 11.

(19-3) To expect a Spiritual Master to repeat himself in the institution, organisation or order which gathers around him, is to expect what history tells us never happens. Shelley, Michelangelo and Pheidias did not found organisations to produce further Shelleys, Michelangelos and Pheidiases. New persons must arise to express their own inspirations. Why then found strangling institutions at all, why gather followers together into exclusive sects, why create still more monasteries and lamaseries, why make leader-worship a substitute for Spirit-and-truth worship?

(19-4) Gautama saw much evidence among the Hindus of their traditions of guru-worship and their cults of personal adulation. To prevent this arising among those who accepted his teaching, he commanded that his own person was to remain unpictured in art, ungraven in image. But this was too much to ask of sentimental, devotional and emotional humanity.

(19-5) The all-knowing attitude which they adopt requires an all-believing attitude on the part of their disciples.

(19-6) There is a kind of guru active in East and West alike, who hungers for followers, is eager to acquire disciples, plays the dictator to his little circle and not infrequently tries to get money from them. His teaching may be quite plausible, his promises quite attractive. But he is self-appointed, not God-appointed.

(19-7) Somewhere, somehow, he may find the clue he needs, be it through a book read, a phrase heard, a landscape seen or an experience undergone.

(19-8) A man who stays outside all the crusading sects and organising societies, the formal religions and personal cults, is condemned to live in exile.

(19-9) He is saved from spiritual snobbishness by the practice of humility, and from spiritual priggishness by the sense of humour.

(19-10) He would not be happy confined in a group, an organisation or a sect.

(19-11) The fact is that most people are quite uninterested in such a quest.

20
IV

(20-1)²⁹ It is not a matter of running after the showy, the exotic, the sensational, although there are many who, attracted to this sort of thing, fall into self-deception and

²⁹ The paras on this page are numbered 12 through 27, making them consecutive with the previous page.

miss the true way.

(20-2) If they are tempted at times to abandon the dreams of higher attainment which accompanied their entry on the quest, who can blame them?

(20-3) He may succeed in his aim only if he succeeds in not getting entangled by irrelevant activities and intruding persons.

(20-4) He finds himself in that suspended and desolate state, the Dark Night of the Soul.

(20-5) In the grim rayless blackness of the soul's dark night, a dreadful loneliness is felt. No one can help him here, no friend, no teacher, no guide, no book or Bible. Hope and faith seem unwarranted, the heavens shut out. He lives in despair, forsaken, bored and depressed.

(20-6) It has been said that too many of the younger questers, in their early enthusiasm, undertake too much too fast, and later end in disappointment and discouragement, so that they abandon the Quest or else suffer deeply. There is some truth in this criticism.

(20-7) Too often sects breed tyranny, uncharitableness and fanaticism. They shut out the freedom which permits spiritual adventure and hence true spiritual seeking.

(20-8) The sombre loneliness experienced during the Dark Night of the Soul is unique. No other kind of loneliness duplicates it either in nature or acuteness, although some may approach it. It creates the feeling of absolute rejection, of being an outcast.

(20-9) Too many parrot phrases circulate among the followers of gurus and the members of movements.

(20-10) The man whose faith in the presence and power of his own higher self allows him to pursue his quest alone, without seeking to be supported on the way, or propped up at every turn, by a master is not necessarily worse off.

(20-11) The perseverance demanded, the patience called for, is colossal. I know a man who struggled through the Arabian desert to reach a Master living in a certain isolated village but eventually his endurance came to an end. He abandoned his search and lay down exhausted, preparatory to turning back. (Complete Romano's³⁰ story)

(20-12) The profound meaning of life is not put before our eyes. We have to dig for it with much patience and much perseverance.

³⁰ Romano was a student of PB's in the '40s through the '60s, so far as I know – TJS '15

(20-13) It is this continuing and determined pursuit of truth which brings a rewarding result.

(20-14) It becomes, in the end, what is after all the very opposite of what it began with, a search for impersonality.

(20-15) He assuredly has at least the correct approach, is following the right direction.

(20-16) It is to the Overself that he must give his ultimate allegiance.

21
IV

(21-1)³¹ No seeker is so ardent but he has times when effort relaxes and feeling stagnates.

(21-2) Truth is not confined to any sect but fragments of it may be found scattered here and there.

(21-3) The danger of this personal deification is that the person is expected to exhibit his perfections and when he exhibits his imperfections there is an emotional fall.

(21-4) It is very significant that a recent Chinese translator of Tao-Teh King claimed that it was a collection of sayings for old men.

(21-5) The course of each quester is not necessarily invariable nor his experiences always inevitable.

(21-6) Organised forms are necessary to worldly enterprises but not to the philosophical quest. It is too highly individual an affair.

(21-7) Lest the complacent consciousness of progress should give rise to spiritual pride, let him remember that a change of circumstances may shatter it.

(21-8) Sectarianism, zealotry and bigotry develop by stages in the minds of followers.

(21-9) Far from the din and disparagements of jarring sects, he lives unlabelled and free.

(21-10) It is a quest to make a life of better quality, both inside and outside the self, in the thoughts moving in the brain, in the body holding that brain and in the

³¹ The paras on this page are numbered 28 through 44, making them consecutive with the previous page.

environment where that body moves.

(21-11) Worse is the belief that this futility must go on forever, that his quest is defeated at the start.

(21-12) How can he who loves the Spirit, who feels Its goodwill which excludes nothing, associate himself with an enclosed group or community which excludes everyone who is not an adherent of its particular faith?

(21-13) Whether it be mere dalliance with occultism or serious quest for reality, it is still a turn for the better.

(21-14) Perhaps if he had foreseen the tremendous height and craggy face of the peak which he proposed to climb, he would never have begun! The hope would seem too daring.

(21-15) No matter what the personal circumstances of a man may be, no matter whether he be rich or poor, well or ill, old or young, educated or illiterate, there is no point in his life where some part at least of the quest may not be introduced.

(21-16) Those who are ideal disciples are those who take their master's teaching as the last word in finality, who follow him in all his counsels, judgments and views, and who diverge from him in nothing. That is, those who are willing to make themselves complete copies of him. Is this desirable?

(21-17) It is only the beginner who needs to think of the quest as separate from the common life, something special, aloof, apart. The more proficient knows that it must become the very channel for that life.

22
IV

(22-1)³² There is no cut and dried system or method which can be guaranteed to work successfully in every case. But there are suggestions, hints, ideas, which have been culled from the personal experiences of a widely varied, world-spread number of masters and aspirants.

(22-2) Religious followers begin to organise themselves either quite spontaneously when unled, or quite obediently when a leader appears, for several good understandable reasons. The coming together in a compact group affords some

³² The paras on this page are numbered 45 through 56, making them consecutive with the previous page.

protection, offers them a mode of expression, and the teaching a mode of preservation.

(22-3) The title 'leader' implies its corollary 'follower.' But a spiritual leader of the kind here described does not want a mass of followers trailing behind him in a partisan spirit. It is enough for him to give others a few inspirations, ideas, insights, and yet leave them free to work on the material as they wish, unobligated to join any movement.

(22-4) Cicero tried to console the aged by writing a very lengthy essay counselling them to ignore their difficulties and pointing to the compensations they possess. But I suspect that most of the readers it is intended for will be more irritated than helped, more annoyed than comforted, by its somewhat unconvincing pages.

(22-5) The reasons which men give for coming to this quest are widely different. If suffering brings many, joy brings others. If a kind of ambition brings not a few, satiety with ambition brings a few.

(22-6) Let him expose himself to the best influences in art and spirituality. If they are not available in persons, they may be in books and periodicals, in pictures and statues, in records and concerts.

(22-7) He can begin this inner work with whatever capacities he has now, from wherever he is now on life's road. There is no time that is not the right time, no place that is not the right place, no circumstances which cannot be put to use in some way. For there are lessons to be learnt everywhere, meanings to be gleaned in all experiences, spiritual tests and opportunities of the most varied kinds can be found in the most unlikely situations, the most unspiritual environments.

(22-8) The individual need to escape from rigid formalism into intellectual freedom comes only to a minority. But it is from this minority that the real truth seekers emerge.

(22-9) Their own personal experience of the disloyalty to original ideals and the degradation from original purity, of the tyranny and intolerance of organisation and hierarchy, has led many who have broken away to fear and distrust such authoritarian forms altogether.

(22-10) It is essential to reject negative thoughts, to accept and hold only the affirmative ones.

(22-11) How few are those who feel the call to such a quest.

(22-12) All mankind must pass this way.³³

23
IV

(23-1)³⁴ It is misleading to pick out any one way to the Overself and label it the best, or worse still, the only way. It is unfair to compare the merits of different ways. For the truth is that firstly each has a contribution to make, and finally each individual aspirant has his own special way.

(23-2) How can the naive inexperienced beginner fail to commit errors and neglect precautions; how can he not be deceived by his own imaginations nor puzzled by the contradictions and paradoxes which beset this path?

(23-3) The decision to follow the Quest and the determination to carry out the necessary work.

(23-4) We must find the Overself through our own perceptions, that is, through our own eyes – or never. It will not suffice to believe that we can go on seeing it through the eyes of another man – be he a holy guru, or not.

(23-5) The direction in which we are to move and the purpose which is to engage our striving are more valuable, more important, than programme and plan. They are more flexible, leave one freer.

(23-6) Is this a futile quest for a state of beatitude beyond human grasp? Is it merely an eccentric folly?

(23-7) This freedom to search for and find truth as well as to select one's own path of approach toward it, is a precious prerogative.

(23-8) He pulls back when any group or organisation wants to hold him or put its classifying label on him.

(23-9) I would revise an oft-quoted sentence so that it reads: "When the master is ready, the pupil appears!"

(23-10) The individualist cannot fit into the life of human anthills.

³³ This section is continued in the paras on page 24.

³⁴ The paras on this page are numbered 70 through 82; they are not consecutive with the previous page – but follow the paras on page 24.

(23-11) He makes his own world-view rather than inherits it with his body, i.e. he thinks for himself, without inherited bias and prejudice.

(23-12) An experience so lovely, yielding a memory so precious, is worth the effort of seeking.

(23-13) He becomes mentally ambitious, searching for truths that will enlarge his horizons and open up his consciousness.

24
IV

(24-1)³⁵ Since most persons are disinclined to engage in the toil of self-improvement and in the discipline of critical self-examination, most persons are not found upon the quest. Yet these requirements are only its preliminaries!

(24-2) We would all like to learn quick ways of achieving Nirvana; we would all like to realise the Overself overnight. Spiritual teachers are often asked for some magical formula whose use would turn man into Overman.

(24-3) He is not likely to be a member of any organised movement because his mind is too large to be exclusive. He is outside all organised groups because, in spirit, he is inside all of them.

(24-4) If a man refuses to conform to ideas which are stupid or cramping, to customs which are useless or unfeeling, he is entitled to do so. But he must be prepared to pay the price of his independence.

(24-5) The quest, with its thrilling comprehensions and encouraging consolations, would still be worthwhile if it were merely a help to living and nothing more.

(24-6) He may quite likely meet with inertia inside himself and hostility outside himself, for the quest is too demanding.

(24-7) Too many beginners become discouraged because progress is slow, or even non-existent. But, really, much depends on the point of view. Without succumbing to the sugary over-optimism of an Emerson, which could make him write that "the soul's highest duty is to be of good cheer" – in such contrast to Buddha's oft-repeated insistence that its highest duty is to see life as suffering – they can at least admit that they have made a start on this conscious quest of truth, that they have discovered there

³⁵ The paras on this page are numbered 57 through 69; they are not consecutive with the previous page – but follow the paras on page 22.

is such a quest, and that there is a magnificent climax to the human adventure. They can be thankful for all this. I have known some men who took this view, who enjoyed being questers, who were even enthusiastic although they had had no inner experiences and made no dramatic progress. They were positive, not negative, thinkers.

(24-8) The quester who has reached a sufficiently advanced stage becomes keenly aware of the paradoxes and contrarities of his life. His inner experiences should be _____³⁶ of the great sages and philosophic seers.

(24-9) When the forces of religion become incorporated in a collective body, it becomes an instrument to impede those forces!

(24-10) It is not by making a person – be he disciple or learner – subservient and dependent that we serve him best, but by helping him to help himself, to develop himself.

(24-11) To set up these good and great men as being even better and greater than they are, and especially to deprive them of their humanity and replace it by some supernatural status, is to render a disservice to them as well as to truth.

(24-12) The wisest master lets the disciple develop in his own way, according to his own individuality.

(24-13) When men act together in a religious or political organisation, they often act worse than they would do as individuals.³⁷

Old v: What is Philosophy ... NEW XX: What is Philosophy?

25
V

(25-1)³⁸ It is hopeless to explain some of these truths to the backward types of people, hopeless to expect them to accept what can only bewilder their minds.

(25-2) Whoever reaches this point and fails to establish a good equilibrium between heaven and earth, will have to hang suspended between them, no longer on earth but

³⁶ A blank space was left in the original because the original typist couldn't read PB's handwriting, or because PB himself left a blank in the para.

³⁷ This section is continued in the paras on page 23.

³⁸ The paras on this page are numbered 1 through 14; they are not consecutive with the previous page.

not at all near heaven.

(25-3) If someone were to compile a list of the famous ones who found in philosophy the truth they could find nowhere else, the names would stretch from the Far East to the Far West, from pre-Greek antiquity to post war modernity.

(25-4) "Nothing in excess," says the inscription carved in stone at the ruin of Delphi. "Do not overplay an act," is the advice given to young players by theatrical veterans. "Do not overstate your case" is the equally good counsel given to advocates of a cause, a movement, a reform.

(25-5) Just as in practical life we harmonise and balance two opposing facts to arrive at adequate decisions, as for instance, between the need of prudence and the need of enterprise, so too in spiritual life it is essential to reconcile apparent incompatibles.

(25-6) Any good quality may be pushed to fanatical extremes, whereupon it may become a bad quality.

(25-7) The Delphi Temple inscription carved on wall was not only "Know Thyself" but continued "Nothing in excess."

(25-8) Balance is the corrective needed to prevent any good turning into a bad.

(25-9) It is not just this element alone which makes for enlightenment for it is only one among others.

(25-10) One of the signs of fanaticism is its conceited assurance; another its lunatic extremist attitude which denounces a moderate position as heretical.

(25-11) Why put oneself in any of these extreme positions? Why not adopt the Chinese 'Golden Mean?'

(25-12) The truth is so fully-faceted that neither intellect nor activity is excluded from its orbit.

(25-13) When he becomes expertly balanced the between the different forces playing in him, the suggestions playing on him from others, he can better hold the truth and not lose it again.

(25-14) Philosophy, understood and used, will bring him to a completer balance than he has yet possessed.

Old vi: Emotions and Ethics ... NEW VI: Emotions and Ethics27
VI

(27-1)⁴⁰ The fear of hurting his feelings is, in such a case, a foolish consideration. For it condones present error instead of correcting it. Yielding to this fear keeps the man imprisoned in a wrong view, where rejecting the fear might be the first step towards his liberation from it.

(27-2) Someone complained to me that a certain literary presentation of Vedanta repelled him. Its austere coldness, intellectual dryness and logical abstractness made it seem unreal, dead, remote from life. I happened to know the author and to know also that he was a genuine seer. Was the complaint, then, unwarranted? Nothing is really true for us if it is not felt. It is a great mistake to believe that the impersonal egoless Real is known without any accompaniment of feeling as if it were a kind of corpse. Such a conception is quite artificial.

(27-3) He must develop emotional maturity, strong character and a courageous attitude toward life. This positive strength is needed to face and master the many different trying situations of existence. The will has to be hardened so that it keeps him from being drowned in the wash of emotional reactions. Only after he has done this can he penetrate through to the deeper layer of being where his inner Self dwells. If this is not done in the early stages of growth he will eventually be forced to retract his steps and learn, consciously and deliberately, the neglected lessons.

(27-4) What historian has complete and true information on any past event or obscure personage when he does not even have it on any present event or celebrated personage? Unless business or duty brings the responsibility into our hands, it is fairer to refrain from sitting in judgment.

(27-5) Those who must speak of their emotional distresses or irritating problems, their misfortunes or disagreeable illnesses, should learn something from the Japanese attitude and at least do so with a smile.

³⁹ Blank page

⁴⁰ The paras on this page are numbered 15 through 27, they are not consecutive with the previous page - but follow the paras on page 28.

(27-6) his faults and laxities

(27-7) Etiquette. He persists in showing a proper courtesy to those who themselves behave badly.

(27-8) He may argue if others wish to do so but he will never argue acrimoniously.

(27-9) Refinement is as valuable a quality, and as spiritual, as truth-seeking.

(27-10) Although generally he will be infinitely considerate of other persons, there will be certain situations wherein he will be infinitely hard upon them and utterly indifferent to their emotional feelings.

(27-11) Emotion must move along with reason, not separate itself entirely from it.

(27-12) A portentous gravity is not at all a hall-mark of the sage.

(27-13) Men seek their mental, emotional or physical satisfactions.⁴¹

28

VI

(28-1)⁴² Confucius saw the moral worth of proper manners, the ennobling value of dignified living, the formative power of right custom.

(28-2) If society did to Confucius' canons of propriety and conduct what it did to all religions; if it made the externals and forms more important than the realities and spirit, that was not Confucius' fault.

(28-3) Although philosophy wags no finger in smug portentous moralising, it respects the validity of karmic consequences, the getting-back of what is given out, and also the need to begin curbing the ego, its desires and passions, as a preliminary to crushing it. There is solid factual ground for the excellent ethical counsel given to all humanity by Confucius and Buddha, Jesus and Socrates.

(28-4) When superior patrician ancestry, or higher education, or greater wealth, or influential social position, lead in speech or behaviour to arrogant hauteur and scornful contempt for the less fortunate, it leads to the snob. In him, outward and formal good manners do not come from the heart; in him, the spirit contradicts the letter. Consequently they are not really good manners at all.

⁴¹ This section is continued in the paras on page 30.

⁴² The paras on this page are numbered 1 through 14.

(28-5) This species called Man has shown its finer possibilities in the kindness of Christ, the compassion of Buddha, the love of St Francis and the skill of Michelangelo.

(28-6) It is not the emotions which are to be kept out but the disturbances to which they may give rise.

(28-7) Gita teaches that thought creates attachment, and this in turn leads to desire.

(28-8) He learns like a second habit to compose himself into detachment before snubs, to respond with gay half-whispered laughter to attacks.

(28-9) Those who decry the social graces, who condemn good manners as hypocritical and empty are wrong. Confucius had solid spiritual reasons for praising such courteous conduct.

(28-10) However hedonist a man may be by temperament, the practice of some philosophic virtue may become a necessity.

(28-11) There are two different ways of being detached: the ascetic's which dissociates itself from the world and tries to live outside the world's activities; and the philosopher's which accepts those activities but not the dependence which usually comes with them.

(28-12) Do not respond to negative or base emotion with the like. The greater the animosity shown you, for instance, the greater is the inward calm with which it should be met.

(28-13) By 'heart' I mean the central abode of human feeling, the symbolic reminder that the 'head' or cold dry intellect is not enough to touch the reality of Spirit.

(28-14) He may not indulge in spiteful criticism, which helps neither himself nor those criticised nor those who have to listen to it.⁴³

29

VI

(29-1)⁴⁴ These formal patterns of behaviour set forth as examples to learn and imitate are, after all, mainly for undeveloped or immature beginners. They are commandments

⁴³ This section is continued in the paras on page 27.

⁴⁴ The paras on this page are numbered 44 through 58; they are not consecutive with the previous page - but follow the paras on page 30.

to be obeyed. But evolved maturer types may not really need them, because they instinctively act in such a way.

(29-2) Where minds are great and hearts are large, two persons can remain cordial friends even though their outlooks differ.

(29-3) Character may be bettered by bettering conduct, which is visible, just as it may by bettering feeling, which is not. K'ung Fu-tzu⁴⁵ perceived this and built his system upon it.

(29-4) He will find that there is no other way, and will do better to come to it in the beginning than in the end. He must learn to co-operate with the World-Idea, the planetary will, or suffer from its whips. The choice is between animal-human and spiritual-human.

(29-5) He must be equally steadfast in adhering to this attitude whether other people utter complaints against him or make compliments to him.

(29-6) The outward display and inward practice of a genuine composure is always better than emotional fluctuations and physical agitations.

(29-7) Discipline of Speech. When a man has this feeling of inner harmony it leads to a harmonious attitude toward all others. He suffers no nervous tension with them. He can sit, unspeaking, unplagued by tacit suggestions from society to break into his mind's stillness with trivial talk, useless chatter or malicious gossip.

(29-8) Any good overdone or misdirected or exaggerated, too easily becomes bad. This is what happens when appreciation of human quality, or social worth, is turned to snobbishness.

(29-9) This coolness where other men might seethe with passion or emotion, this detachment from events and persons, things and places, is exacerbating to those who misunderstand it.

(29-10) Israel Zangwill's "character cynically observed" in a novel: "I know just enough about men to know that they are better left unknown. It is better to keep one's illusions."

(29-11) Most neurotics cannot take any criticism – no matter how helpful, constructive or well-meant it be – but only exaggerated praise.

⁴⁵ "Kung fu-tse" in the original.

(29-12) So long as he lacks humour, he may tend to make the quest a heavy burden of disciplines, exercises, duties and tests only, that is, he may confine it to the Long Path only, and miss its joyous releases, its happy discoveries.

(29-13) The broad-minded man will not let his personal regard for anyone be dimmed because their views happen to be diverse.

(29-14) The first stage is to expunge the evil in his heart and to raise the good in it to the highest possible octave.

(29-15) The emotions felt inside the heart, the thoughts evoked inside the head, affect the environment and atmosphere outside us.⁴⁶

30
VI

(30-1)⁴⁷ The Chinese of an earlier generation, as also most Orientals, were taught to respect the aged.

(30-2) Even an excitable man who sets out to nurture this serene philosophic calm may surprise himself with what can be attained by diligent perseverance.

(30-3) Between the two extremes of hyperbolic praise and critical denunciation there is a middle point of sane balanced understanding.

(30-4) It is natural for a philosopher to promote harmony among others and reduce discord. He fully believes in and always practises "peace on earth, goodwill among men."

(30-5) This is the ideal, but to translate it into the actual, to assert it in the midst and against the opposition of a grossly materialistic environment, calls for firmness and determination.

(30-6) Yang Chu who was a Taoist but such a strongly individual one that he did not hesitate to modify the teachings where necessary, thought that neither being poor nor being wealthy was desirable, that a better condition was the middle one between the two. The sage argued that they brought their own special kind of anxieties with them and so were not conducive to peace of mind.

⁴⁶ This section is continued in the paras on page 31.

⁴⁷ The paras on this page are numbered 28 through 43; they are not consecutive with the previous page - but follow the paras on page 27.

(30-7) The attempt to escape from such problems by first refusing to look at them, and second, by refraining from the efforts needed to deal with them, leads only to their prolongation and enlargement later on.

(30-8) The world being what it is, if he encounters discourtesies and indignities he must not let the hurts penetrate this closed sphere of inner inviolate calm. Here he can remain cool and invulnerable, unaffected and unruffled.

(30-9) Life brings its own pressure to bear upon ideals and instincts, consciences and temperaments.

(30-10) The Taoist masters did not make, as the Buddhist and Hindu masters made, complete freedom from desire an essential prerequisite. They were satisfied to ask for "fewness of desires" only.

(30-11) These young street-hooligans who 'cosh' harmless old people or rob small shopkeepers with violence are savages dressed up in the garb of civilised beings. But they have not even the advantages of tribal laws and taboos and standards that savages have, for they have no upbringing, no manners at all.

(30-12) Always to condemn other methods and ways than one's own is a sign of spiritual narrowness. Just a tolerance of them is a sign of spiritual greatness.

(30-13) Is there any man who is all saint or all sinner?

(30-14) Impatience is the source of rash actions.

(30-15) Character is tested by affliction more than by prosperity.

(30-16) How many misguided persons have condoned bringing harm to a fellow human or animal creature by quoting a text or a doctrine!⁴⁸

31
VI

(31-1)⁴⁹ Those who are not completely honest with themselves, who prefer attractive delusion to repulsive truth, merely defer the moment of humiliating confession.

(31-2) Human preferences do exist; it is possible to pretend that they may not be there

⁴⁸ This section is continued in the paras on page 29.

⁴⁹ The paras on this page are numbered 59 through 63; they are not consecutive with the previous page - but follow the paras on page 29.

when they actually are: but this has to be paid for by self-deception.

(31-3) This is really to condone a sin and become an accomplice in it.

(31-4) Mencius makes even the movements of the body one of the features which exhibit outwardly the Superior Man's virtue.

(31-5) Whatever else he may be, he is no aspirant to sainthood. That admirable goal is quite proper for those whose innate vocation lies that way. But it is not the⁵⁰

32⁵¹
VI

Old vii: The Intellect ... NEW VII: The Intellect

33
VII

(33-1)⁵² Ideas are imposed upon the mind from various sources, accepted consciously or subconsciously, swallowed, and later regurgitated as if they were one's own! Such is the power of suggestion!

(33-2) This is the direction in which science is moving, however unwittingly and unwillingly.

(33-3) If no man can get all the facts about any situation where he has to choose a course, how can any man arrive at a completely correct decision about it?

(33-4) He cultivates the capacity to look on both sides of a problem, and to give both their just weight.

(33-5) When science leads man to deny his sacred source and to decry all personal testimonies to experience of its existence, science is no longer serving man but seriously crippling him.

(33-6) Man imagines that he has all but triumphed over Nature, believes that he has nearly overcome its forces. But all this is illusory.

⁵⁰ Incomplete para - the end of this para was not found in this file.

⁵¹ Blank page

⁵² The paras on this page are numbered 18 through 29; they are not consecutive with the previous page - but follow the paras on page 34.

(33-7) Words can only limit the truth, hence give distorted or partial or misleading expression to it.

(33-8) What clergymen preached to them, scientists taught them to doubt.

(33-9) The worst books are mere repetitions and the best are mere exercises in intellection.

(33-10) Science is here to serve mankind, but it has been allowed to govern mankind. This is why it has produced materialists, men whose minds are so narrow, so limited to technology and logic, that they are quite unaware of the finer side of human nature – the spiritual and intuitive.

(33-11) They may try to escape from their doubts, perhaps by stifling them, perhaps by ignoring their very existence, perhaps by going to the guru and getting his reassurance again. This course may succeed for a time, even for a lifetime. But it is not conducive to their true welfare.

(33-12) To believe that true philosophy is wholly confined to metaphysical speculation is an error.

34
VII

(34-1)⁵³ The books in certain libraries I once worked in, notably those of the British Museum in London and the House of Congress in Washington, are numbered by the million and the shelves on which they stand are measured by the mile!

(34-2) The pontifical self-important formality of such statements is intended to create an impression. It does. But we must penetrate their surface. Then we find there is some hollowness beneath them.

(34-3) The intensity with which a view is held tells us something about its holder, nothing about the truth of that view.

(34-4) Man's body is formed of chemical compounds yet man himself – with his flights of sacred aspiration and intellectual speculation, his adventures in artistic creation and appreciation has little resemblance to a chemical compound.

(34-5) Socrates taught that character was somehow dependent on intelligence: the better quality of the one was a consequence of the better quality of the other. Therefore

⁵³ The paras on this page are numbered 1 through 17.

cultivate clear intelligence, he said. Long after Spinoza repeated this advice.

(34-6) The notion that intellectual activity must be abolished if salvation is to be procured, is a mixing up of the false with the true.

(34-7) It may properly be called a scientific method only if its results can be checked by observers anywhere in the world.

(34-8) They can neither understand nor appreciate mystical truth.

(34-9) Is there any single idea which can be established among all men so that they will accept it without cavil?

(34-10) Those who reject critical enquiry may easily become victims of superstition or imposture.

(34-11) The unripe intelligence does not comprehend, and therefore does not appreciate, the higher flights of philosophy.

(34-12) Science has its bigotries no less than religion.

(34-13) To develop intellect and then to know when to drop it, is to become its master. It then fulfils its proper purpose and serves man instead of dominating – and therefore unbalancing – him.

(34-14) “The academic people think they know everything already” Jung once said sarcastically. To which I would add that is because they have never recovered from the effects of education. The higher the education the harder it is to recover.

(34-15) They proclaim the relativity of all intellectual standpoints, all spiritual doctrines, but fail to see that their own standpoint and doctrine are also stamped with such relativity.

(34-16) The silent mind receives spiritual guidance and allows grace to approach; the thinking mind deals with the world and attends to its activities.

(34-17) The intense intellectual joy of discovering a new truth – new, that is, to oneself, but as old perhaps as thoughtful humanity itself – equates with the intense aesthetic joy of creating or appreciating an art work.⁵⁴

⁵⁴ This section is continued in the paras on page 33.

Old viii: The Body ... NEW V: The Body

35
VIII

(35-1)⁵⁵ One message of the Sphinx is to balance the human mind with the brutish animal in us. This is not the same as the ascetic's message, which is to exterminate the animal altogether.

(35-2) Where fate forces the practice of complete abstinence it should be accepted philosophically and its compensatory benefits recognised.

(35-3) The ascetic who takes one aspect of life and concentrates on that to excess, becomes a freak or even a monstrosity.

(35-4) Sutra of the 42 Sections (Chinese Mahayana)

Buddha said "Of all longings and desires none is stronger than sex. Sex as a desire has no equal. Rely on the (universal) Oneness. No one is able to become a follower of the Way if he accepts dualism." Comment by translator "Chu Ch'an" (probably John Blofeld) "The Buddhist argues that distinctions between this and that are really void and that fundamentally everything is one. Sex is an extreme example of the negation of this theory, since it depends entirely upon the attraction between opposites."

Buddha said "To put a stop to these evil actions (unceasing indulgence of sexual passion) will not be so good as to put a stop to (the root) in your mind. If the mind desists, its followers will stop also."

(35-5) The refusal to study Hatha Yoga is short-sighted, narrow-minded and unjustified for this, as the Yoga of Body Control, lays some foundation for the mental and higher Yogas. Hatha Yoga is not concerned only with gaining abnormal physical power as the opponents seem to believe, but with gaining physical health, freedom from sickness, abundant vitality and especially a purified nervous system and disciplined instincts. The Indian Government subsidises an ashram for the scientific study of Hatha Yoga, not far from Bombay, because of the resultant physical benefits.

(35-6) Do what he will, the body, like society, will not let him forget its claims upon him.

(35-7) Scandinavia has highest percentages of world's insanity and suicide. Can the rarity of fresh raw fruit and vegetables, the long dark winters and the necessity of preserving most food be blamed? In the South Sea islands where there is almost no

⁵⁵ The paras on this page are numbered 12 through 22; they are not consecutive with the previous page - but follow the paras on page 36.

insanity and no suicide, plenty of raw food is eaten and plenty of sunshine obtained.

(35-8) The notion that rigours and penances and severities could shorten the way and hasten the attainment, that ascetic abnegations of sex, comfort, art, culture and refinement could extricate the human being from his predicament, is a very old and widespread notion.

(35-9) The picture of an ascetic life is always uninviting and often gloomy.

(35-10) If his flesh yields to every temptation, discipline is called for.

(35-11) Some practise asceticism, others merely pretend to do so.⁵⁶

36
VIII

(36-1)⁵⁷ It has been asked why the Pythagorean teaching interdicted the use of beans in a vegetable diet. Having sojourned and studied in India he was well acquainted with the Bhagavad Gita's rule that the yogi's food should be light and easily digestible. He gave exactly the same rule to his followers and dried beans fell under the ban because they were then, as now, because of their tough skins, notoriously indigestible. A further reason was his belief, also picked up in India, that all large and medium size beans contain an ingredient which is harmful to the body. The very small bean called "gram" in India and "Mung bean" in China does not fall under the ban, is harmless and nourishing and palatable.

(36-2) FASTING To break a fast use warm water with a little mildly acid fruit or fruit juice - lemon or tomato. Reserve the sweet fruits - oranges, grapes and coconut water - for the second breaking of fast. If possible use only distilled water for these drinks.

(36-3) The Hindu religion put celibates on high ranking pinnacles and admired those who practised asceticism. The Hebrew religion condemned celibacy and produced no ascetics. Yet both religions claimed divine inspiration.

(36-4) In India the Buddha spoke of the human body, its associations, activities and attractions with disgust. In Belgium, Jansen took the same attitude. But the Greeks rejected such an extreme view. Instead of shunning the body in their outlook, they gave it an important place in education, art and philosophy.

(36-5) He alone is entitled to ask for help or mercy - which is a form of help - who

⁵⁶ This section is continued in the paras on page 37.

⁵⁷ The paras on this page are numbered 1 through 12.

himself shows pity, spares life, eschews cruelty and grants mercy to the helpless and oppressed; who does not, in Plutarch's phrase, "allow his lips to touch the flesh of a murdered being."

(36-6) The power of sex to make or mar happiness or equanimity is formidable. Left to run amok in savage lust it harms and degrades a man but, redeemed and transmuted, it serves his best interests.

(36-7) Most people seek more comfortable ways of disciplining the body than the extremely ascetical one.

(36-8) to behold without hostile criticism and without cruel comment, the faults in other persons.

(36-9) I have often quoted in talks Anatole France's terse brilliant phrase: "All is opinion." The Brahmins consider a twice-daily shower bath to be an essential part of their religion. The moderns say that cleanliness is next to godliness. Yet many a medieval monk remained unwashed for long periods, rejecting baths as luxuries for the effete and indulgences for the body.

(36-10) St Francis of Assisi was unhealthy. His eyes, spleen, stomach and liver were diseased.

(36-11) Draw the Force into every pore of your skin until it pervades your whole body.⁵⁸

37
VIII

(37-1)⁵⁹ All hurried rushing movements in walking, as all abrupt movements in working, show forth the tensions in a man. He is not yet at peace with himself, nor with the world.

(37-2) The use of blood in animal sacrifices is a legacy from Atlantean sorcery. It is evil, and found only among peoples who have not attained the refinement of consciousness and development of conscience which accompany a higher conception of God.

(37-3) The queer belief that a venture into matrimony would damage the aspirant's capacity to realise his spiritual ideal, is widely held in India.

⁵⁸ This section is continued in the paras on page 35.

⁵⁹ The paras on this page are numbered 23 through 32; they are not consecutive with the previous page - but follow the paras on page 35.

(37-4) In Zangwill's facetious phrase: "How poorly humanity compared with cows and horses." But the novelist was comparing appearance, not diet.

(37-5) The Eastern Orthodox Church allows the lower ranks of priest to marry, but not the higher ones. This is because the Fathers considered celibacy a pre-requisite to enlightenment. "Acquire chastity," enjoined St Ephrem,⁶⁰ the Syrian, "that the Holy Spirit may come to dwell in thee." (The latter's writings are much read in the Mount Athos monasteries, which helps to explain why women are forbidden to visit them.)

(37-6) One proof that marriage is no bar to enlightenment was reported to me at the time of writing this paragraph. A young married woman in the condition of early pregnancy with her second child, had been practising meditation for short sessions at irregular intervals as her circumstances did not offer opportunity for it. There was a feeling of frustration and nothing came out of the practice. One night she had retired to bed but not yet fallen asleep. Suddenly, without any preparation or warning a mystical experience rapidly developed and lasted for about one and a half hours. "It was the most beautiful condition I have ever known - utter fulfilment, peace, contentment and love for all" she described it.

(37-7) The puritanical view of life has been mixed up too often with the religious view. The philosopher is not concerned with that. But it has equally been mixed up with the mystical view. Here he is concerned, enough to declare that they do not necessarily go together.

(37-8) The phallic appetite is large in some men, small in others.

(37-9) The ascetic who is ashamed to possess a body, is as foolish as the one who hates it for the weaknesses he thinks it produces in his feelings.

(37-10) He may have to adopt a penitential way of living for a time, purificatory and reformatory. It may even be required for several years. But fanatical extremes and foolish self-torments are not required.

38⁶¹
VIII

Old ix: The Negatives ... NEW XI: The Negatives

39
IX

⁶⁰ "St. Ephraim" in the original.

⁶¹ Blank page

(39-1)⁶² A civilisation which has magnificence without significance cannot endure. Its very lack of soul is as much a threat to its existence as the tail of a burning comet could be to our own.

(39-2) KRISHNAMURTI The criticism of society, its ambitions and ideals, its politics and religion, its education and wars, which was made by Lao-Tzu,⁶³ was made again in modern times by Krishnamurti.

(39-3) The Vedantic prophets, non-dualist Hindu abstractionists, wrote no texts to fit the monstrous evil of that time: their students turned away bewildered from pages that told of the ultimate benignity of things but nothing immediately applicable.

(39-4) Have these men of inner light no contribution to proffer humanity in this epoch of dire need? Must they all stand aloof, or helpless, or indifferent, or preaching and moralising?

(39-5) A colossal revision of attitudes is called for, an abandonment of outmoded ideas which belong to the story of the nineteenth century and which create self-deception when carried into the mid-twentieth century.

(39-6) The future, with its over-populated countries of the East, darkens imagination like a nightmare.

(39-7) Ideals must still be given to the world even if they seem quite impractical, and even if the giver is crucified as Jesus was, or shot as Kennedy was. They are needed to offset the egoism and materialism which come so much more easily to most people.

(39-8) What Jesus taught nearly two thousand years ago and what the Buddha taught nearly five hundred years before him, is still true; even more true, if that could be, for it has the proofs afforded by all history during that time; hatred cannot end by being returned, nothing will dissolve it save a generous and patient goodwill.

(39-9) I know there is some belief that not only has human capacity been extended by modern scientific knowledge but also that human character has been improved by modern civilisation and culture. I doubt that this is so.

(39-10) There are individual men, as there are whole peoples, with fangs and claws, ruthless and aggressive, soulless and materialistic.

⁶² The paras on this page are numbered 12 through 24; they are not consecutive with the previous page - but follow the paras on page 40.

⁶³ "Lao-tse" in the original.

(39-11) Society begins with the individual, goes on through him, and its higher purpose is fulfilled in him alone. Political thinkers, guides and leaders who reject this truth will never escape from the immensely difficult problem into which their half-true, half-false concepts must lead them incessantly.

(39-12) The world's life is such that he may find himself in crises where it exerts pressure to break with his ideals.

(39-13) If pacifism is to mean the acceptance of evil then it cannot be enough.⁶⁴

40

IX

(40-1)⁶⁵ If men will not break away from what is bad in their past, as for instance, the fear, suspicion and distrust which develop between two races or two nations through their historic relationship, then Nature (i.e. God, Life, call it as you like) will do it for them forcibly and violently through natural disasters (such as earthquakes, floods, climatic extremes, drought, etc.) or through merely presenting them with the fruits of their own thinking crystallised on the physical level, i.e. with their karma in the form of war, revolution etc.

(40-2) It was the custom and convention among so-called educated people to regard everything which savoured of the mystical as being the very zenith of foolishness. Custom was such an excellent guide that it brought the world to the brink of disaster, and education was so greatly misunderstood that instead of properly preparing young people for life, it left them standing tragically helpless or emotionally mixed-up before the stony Sphinx of existence.

(40-3) Somewhere between a roseate optimism and a gloomy pessimism truth hovers. It does not stand still. For each person touches it at some point pre-determined by his own personal experience of life.

(40-4) Virgil, the Roman, dreamt of universal peace. Many today entertain the same dream but at the same time they are contradicted by piled-up evidences of the violence in human nature, the strife engendered by blind self-interest, the killing instinct that is a heritage from the animal.

(40-5) The shallow enthusiasm which greets every new scientific advance, the short-sighted acquiescence in political use of scientific power – these are quite pathetic when

⁶⁴ This section is continued in the paras on page 42.

⁶⁵ The paras on this page are numbered 1 through 11.

it is only a matter of time before both logically terminate in killing most of us.

(40-6) None of us in this generation will live to see spiders spinning their webs across atomic bombs or interballistic missiles but no prophecy is more certain to be fulfilled in the lifetime of a later generation. For suffering will force its lesson home on the unwilling minds of reluctant pupils; new egos will incarnate with more receptive hearts; and the World-Idea will impose its rule under an iron law.

(40-7) Despite repeated lessons afforded by life and plain to read, their diseased attitude remains incurable.

(40-8) First the killing instinct will have to go, then the fighting instinct will have to follow.

(40-9) Life in our generation has been exciting, interesting and even stimulating. But it has also been dangerous, insecure and changeable.

(40-10) Leaders who do not know where they are going in the end, but only the immediate destination.

(40-11) The childhood of the human race is passing away but its education has yet to be completed.⁶⁶

41

IX

(41-1)⁶⁷ The present awakening of the coloured races is full of significance. We hear much of the barbaric cruelty and savage violence accompanying it; but not enough of the saintliness which occasionally flashes across the black man's sky. Martin Luther King, for instance, now as I write a Nobel peace-prizeman, comes closer to the character of Jesus than the vast majority of white men. The spiritual future of this planet may hold surprises and one of the greatest could well be the appearance of the next great prophet in the despised body of a dark-skinned man. No divine law has prescribed seership as a white-fleshed thing only, nor established the bringing of spiritual balm as a white monopoly for all time. This is mere human opinion frozen to the past by its own historic past. But the past becomes musty, faded, and has to give way to the new forces now pressing for entrance.

(41-2) When this century opened there was much stirring in the brains of journalists and

⁶⁶ This section is continued in the paras on page 39.

⁶⁷ The paras on this page are numbered 39 through 49; they are not consecutive with the previous page - but follow the paras on page 42.

writers. They speculated on the impending changes and the coming innovations which the next hundred years would bring. But although there was much expectation of more scientific wonders, it cannot be affirmed that there was any expectation of a discovery by mid-century of how to poison, infect fatally or incinerate the entire race.

(41-3) Where this inner attitude of goodwill is lacking, there no real success can be achieved in the estrangement of war.

(41-4) Most people are the victims of suggestion and are easily impressed by (and deceived by) appearances. They confound bigness of size with greatness of soul; they call that nation 'great' which has a big empire, often won by ethically dubious methods. A big pack of wolves is not something to admire or respect.

(41-5) Without knowing the real and hidden causes of the malady of war, we cannot find the real and lasting cure of war.

(41-6) Destiny uses certain men to work out its large public aims yet lets them work at their little personal ones all at the same time.

(41-7) Nature, through her spasms and eruptions, floods and convulsions, may continue a cold war of her own.

(41-8) In the end the nations will find what the individual person always finds, that no other course will be effective than this one.

(41-9) Those utopians who look for a quick abatement of human selfishness – and a consequent quick abatement of all the ghastly evils, sins and crimes which come out of it – look in vain. But what cannot come quickly on a mass scale can, and will, come from scattered individuals.

(41-10) Too many men are patriots for mixed reasons. The legitimate one – service to the society by which they live – is clearly one of them but the illegitimate one is rarely recognised. And this one is egotistic. The fanatical phrase 'my country' alone reveals this fact. For this country is an extension of his own ego. He belongs to it.

(41-11) He comes in time to question the wisdom of so-called statesmen, the righteousness of so-called leaders.⁶⁸

⁶⁸ This section is continued in the paras on page 43.

(42-1)⁶⁹ Only when a social class such as an hereditary aristocracy, or a priestly class, an ecclesiastic hierarchy, is really and inwardly superior, alive and significant does it deserve respect. If it lacks this inner element, it is merely a withered copy of what it once was. That is, it is dying and inferior.

(42-2) The inhuman and destructive attitudes, unsympathetic and unpitying, is a sign of the evil presence at work in our midst.

(42-3) Controversies in politics, literature and art, and disputes in business or personal matters are too often conducted on the principle that one side is completely right and the other completely wrong, that the good intentions of the one always prevail but in the case of the other are always to be doubted.

(42-4) They live for no worthy purpose, certainly for no high one, and so they live largely in vain.

(42-5) At the heart of every atom of every universe there is Spirit, divine and deathless. It is for this reason that any human society based upon its denial has no future and cannot survive. As long as man exists he will need to satisfy inner hunger, to find spiritual comfort, to receive holy communion and to hear words of eternal truth.

(42-6) War is the normal state of wild beasts. If human beings engage in it too, that is because they have not got rid of the tiger and wolf within themselves.

(42-7) I feel out of tune, out of sympathy with the generation recently arrived. There is an intolerance in their attitude, a rudeness in their manners, a hardness in their tones, a spitefulness in their criticism – which is plentiful, widespread and severe – and an arrogance in their judgments which repel me, even send shivers up my spine sometimes. The abyss between me and these people is too deep and too wide.

(42-8) The Archimandrite Paul, of Monastery of Karakallou, on Mount Athos, thinks that the present decline into irreligion and materialism has brought the world to an extremity, from which it will have no other reaction than to recoil and go back to spiritual views.

(42-9) These doubts need not push us into the false romanticism which so many modern writers impart to earlier centuries because they see so much to censure in their own.

(42-10) Only that nation will act wisely in this critical phase of human history which acts on the recognition that this is not the medieval world, not the antique world, but

⁶⁹ The paras on this page are numbered 25 through 38; they are not consecutive with the previous page – but the follow the paras on page 39.

the nuclear world. This is a new era which demands a transvaluation of values, method, and even men!

(42-11) The totalitarian materialists mistake a busy human ant-heap for a truly human civilisation.

(42-12) There is too much human rubbish on this planet.

(42-13) How purposeless are their lives, how trivial their aims!

(42-14) It is the difference between being savage and being civilised.⁷⁰

43

IX

(43-1)⁷¹ The hard, almost callous, insensitivity of so many moderns, their sceptical, contemptuous, sarcastic and conceited attitude when confronted with the finer and subtler things of life, show how deeply atheism, or materialism, has eaten into their souls, how ignorant they are of the higher laws governing life.

(43-2) Poor Figaro hastened to laugh to avoid the urge to weep. We may have to do the same when we look at the tragi-comedy that is human history. Does it have, can it have, any meaning at all?

(43-3) There is no perpetual peace anywhere on this planet, only perpetual strife. But it is open to man to take the violence, the murder and the war, out of this strife. He may purge it of its savage beast qualities.

(43-4) When science serves politics only, and both are unguided by knowledge of the higher laws governing mankind then both, in this age of nuclear weapons, put mankind in danger of nuclear annihilation.

(43-5) The times favour a sharing of the truth with all the people and not merely with a particular minority.

(43-6) It is the age-old, tireless conflict between spiritual barbarism and true civilisation.

(43-7) obsolete old concepts.

⁷⁰ This section is continued in the paras on page 41.

⁷¹ The paras on this page are numbered 50 through 56; they are not consecutive with the previous page – but follow the paras on page 41.

Old x: Mentalism ... NEW XXI: Mentalism

(45-1)⁷³ Outside of the mystical experience wherein the whole universe rolls up and vanishes away, leaving the man “conscious only of consciousness” the next overwhelming realisation of mentalism comes to dying persons.

(45-2) The tenth man in the Hindu story who failed to count himself when checking if all the party who waded across a river were safe, the Hebrew rabbi who said on his deathbed, “If there proves to be no future life, how I shall laugh!” and the scientist who denied the existence of mind because brain-flesh produces consciousness – all three show how easy it is to forget the subject when looking at the object.

(45-3) The old scientific materialism which confounded brain (a lump of flesh and nerve-stuff) with mind (a state of consciousness) which pathetically believed and actually taught that this lump of flesh could describe itself on the lecture-platform to medical students, or compose books explaining itself to them, and which did all this with cocksureness and finality, committed its error because it omitted to look at That which noted the brain’s existence.

(45-4) To say that all is opinion is equivalent to saying that all is idea.

(45-5) Mind is the power which enables us, on the one hand, to think and, on the other, to be aware of thoughts and things.

(45-6) All experience is my experience, is known only in the version which exists within my mind.

(45-7) If scientists had stuck to the ordinary man’s common sense view of things they could never have come so far in nuclear physics as they have done. For there is a point where truth falsifies common sense.

(45-8) That the majority of men have been unable in the past to perceive mentalism’s truth is fully understandable, even pardonable, if we admit how stubbornly unshakeable is the human sense of material reality. The only successful attack on it

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⁷³ The paras on this page are numbered 1 through 11.

hitherto has been that made by actual personal mystical experience – but mystics formed only a minority among men. This is why the mid-twentieth century discoveries in nuclear physics are so important, for they must lead ultimately to the full vindication of mentalism, as they have already begun to do partially.

(45-9) The process of becoming aware of the world makes a second thing of the world, objectifies it, and thus materialises it. Whoever proclaims himself a materialist cannot be blamed. But he is blameworthy for failing to go farther and recognise what has happened. What he experiences is the mentalness of the world. What he falsely understands by his experience is the materiality of the world.

(45-10) Truth, in its higher reaches, is subversive of common sense, shattering to common mentality and inconceivable to ego-cramped persons.

(45-11) If materialism reduces man to mere physical substance, mentalism magnifies him to the grander stature of Mind.

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X

Old xi: The Ego ... NEW VIII: The Ego

47

XI

(47-1)⁷⁵ Ordinarily men do not escape from their own point of view. This is one aspect of Anatole France's meaning in his phrase: "All is opinion." For all rests on the ego itself, since the latter participates in all events, both in the making of them and in the thinking about them.

(47-2) It was a wise teacher who said to me: Do not demand from human beings a selflessness they are not capable of giving; demand only that they understand this is the direction toward which the divine World-Idea is pushing them. Through one way or another, they will come in the end to suffer attrition of the ego until it is finally reduced to complete subservience to Overself.

(47-3) "Lose yourself if you would find yourself," said Jesus. Lose the false conception that the self is something by itself, able to stand separate and alone, capable of being regarded as an object knowable by you, the subject. Let this untruth go, and you will

⁷⁴ Blank page

⁷⁵ The paras on this page are numbered 19 through 29; they are not consecutive with the previous page – but follow the paras on page 48.

find the truth. Cease this identification with the personality, and you will find the Overself.

(47-4) Can he be blamed for wanting personal guidance in his perplexities, personal comfort in his troubles, and some sort of individual awareness when the nirvanic end of the quest is at last attained?

(47-5) To most western ears the advice, given as a universal panacea to suffering humanity by monastic hermits, not to trouble about anything except to 'know the self' may sound fatuous and irritating. Yet there is deep wisdom in it.

(47-6) The body, the emotional feelings and the intellect, are all placed on the circle-line. That which is at the centre of being is consciousness-in-itself.

(47-7) If a man wants to come to the awareness of his Overself, he must let go the awareness of his littler self, must shut himself off from its own narrow world. But this can only be effectively done if it is done inwardly.

(47-8) It may correctly be denied that in most cases such impartiality and impersonality is possible.

(47-9) Swami Premananda: "Don't run around in the circle. Move toward the Centre. You are thinking of your own ego-self. Move out of it."

(47-10) Every man's head is full of himself, his own little affairs.

(47-11) Man moves from Overself to ego and hence moves into suffering.

48
XI

(48-1)⁷⁶ The ego seems to have a colossal capacity for trickery and deception concerning its own motives.

(48-2) Some come to this through the joy enkindled by great music, inspired writing or majestic landscape, through response to beauty but others – and they are more – come through being wrecked or crushed, threatened with destruction, hopeless, forlorn and helpless. They reach the end of their strength, or discover the falseness and futility of their wisdom.

(48-3) The metaphysicians or mystics, particularly the Indian ones, who speak

⁷⁶ The paras on this page are numbered 1 through 18.

slightingly of the body and deny that it is the self, would conform more to the realities of experience if they said that it is a part of the self.

(48-4) The 'I' thinks: this is the subject. But the 'I' it thinks of is 'me,' which is an object. Ordinarily, consciousness must have an object of consciousness. This coupling is an essential of our mental life.

(48-5) Wherever human consciousness exists, wherever there is a thinker, there are also his thoughts. Subject and object join to make conscious existence of an ego, an I, possible, both in waking and dream states.

(48-6) How few know that they are here as representatives of their divine source!

(48-7) The egoist has as much chance of finding real peace of mind as the historian of finding truth in politics.

(48-8) Each human being has a specific work to do, to express the uniqueness that is himself. It can be delegated to no one else. In doing it, if he uses the opportunity aright, he may be led to the great Uniqueness which is super-personal, beyond his ego and behind all egos.

(48-9) The ego's capacity for its own deception is immense.

(48-10) With one part of himself he honestly seeks truth but with another part he tries to evade it.

(48-11) He must look for the real and not simply the ostensible motives behind his own decisions and actions.

(48-12) Whether it is possible for anyone to achieve a total impersonality may be questioned, but if the ideal of it is set up, at least right direction will be gained and some progress will be made.

(48-13) All life is experienced from the ego's point of view, all events seen from it, all persons known from it.

(48-14) The ego may carefully suppress its more obvious manifestations, both from other people and from himself.

(48-15) They are so accustomed to thinking in terms of the ego that it seems impossible (to them) to think in any other way.

(48-16) To keep you attached to itself, albeit more subtly, the ego will make use of these

very spiritual practices by which you hoped to escape it.

(48-17) Is man's existence merely a chemical one?

(48-18) The egoist has eyes only for himself.⁷⁷

Old xii: The Overself ... NEW XXII: Inspiration and the Overself

49
XII

(49-1)⁷⁸ At some time, to some degree and in some way, everything else in human experience can be directly examined and analysed. But this is the one thing that can never be treated in this way. For it can never acknowledge itself without objectifying itself, thus making something other than itself, some simulacrum that is not its real self.

(49-2) Seeing a man or an object is one thing, recognising him or it is another. The glimpse is the beginning, recognising it for what it is, is a further and extended operation.

(49-3) The after-effects of the glimpse are sometimes widely opposite. One person swells with pride, exults in the fact that he has been granted it, where another will be made humbler by it.

(49-4) The divine rapture which may be a rich and vital experience to one man may be merely empty unrealistic words when he talks or writes about it to others.

(49-5) The sudden Olympian elation which the glimpse gives, the unfamiliar feeling that it is like looking through a window on an entirely different and wholly glorious world of being; the inner knowing that this is reality – these things make it a benediction.

(49-6) The idea, ideal person, inspired prophet or human redeemer whose image is best established in a person's mind by custom and familiarity, is in most cases the channel used by the Overself when bestowing the glimpse.

(49-7) The light of truth removes the falsities in his world-view, and diminishes the feebleness in his character. It brings him a new strength.

⁷⁷ This section is continued in the paras on page 47.

⁷⁸ The paras on this page are numbered 7 through 18; they are not consecutive with the previous page – but follow the paras on page 50.

(49-8) Where other men see nothing, sense nothing, revere nothing, he does all these things. For him the Empty is the Full.

(49-9) It is important to remember that such experiences may be expected only rarely in most cases, perhaps once or twice in a lifetime, if the person is not consciously on the quest. It is natural to hope that it will be repeated. But the first glimpse is given to show the way, to throw light on the path ahead, to give direction and goal to the person. But if the glimpse is only temporary and rare, the metaphysical understanding to be derived from it is the permanent benefit. So seek to get and clarify this understanding.

(49-10) Lao-Tzu⁷⁹ was a librarian by profession, Janaka a king and Brother Lawrence a kitchen menial. Yet all had this same wonderful experience of peaceful communion with Overself, proving that one's antecedents, or work, or position are neither helps nor handicaps.

(49-11) The glimpse will help him to live through the dark periods that may come, when otherwise he might succumb to despair.

(49-12) Even the mere feeling of being alive brings content, satisfaction and reconciliation. How far this is from later stages of the Long Path, with their exaggerated idea of his worthlessness.⁸⁰

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XII

(50-1)⁸¹ The declaration of Jesus that whosoever will save his life shall lose it, is uncompromising. It is an eternal truth as well as a universal one. It is needed by the naive as well as by the sophisticated. Only those who, under the strain and struggle of quotidian existence in these difficult times, ardently yearn for the peace of self-forgetting can begin to understand the first faint echo of that satisfaction which losing one's life brings. It means in plainer language that those who seek salvation in some deep, hidden and fundamental part of themselves have to make this firm resolution that the physical, the emotional and the intellectual activities of the personal self shall count less. They will not be able to do that unless they desire salvation more than anything else in their lives. Jesus' statement means that they should seek to liberate the life within them from the very limited idea which the personal ego forms around it and within which it remains confined to the physical, emotional and intellectual planes alone, and bring it to function also in the intuitive-spiritual. It means that the

⁷⁹ "Lao-tse" in the original

⁸⁰ This section is continued in the paras on page 51.

⁸¹ The paras on this page are numbered 1 through 6.

inexorable condition which the Overself imposes before it will reveal itself in all its beauty, its grandeur, its peace and its power is that they should abnegate this unbalanced interest in the lower activities of this world in which they are so totally immersed. If this abnegation leads to the extreme point of withdrawal from the world then they must even be willing to obey and to take the consequences. But since it is fundamentally an inner thing it does not necessarily lead a man to take this extreme step, so long as he keeps his inner life and being inviolable even whilst trafficking with the world.

Such an achievement may seem very far off from human possibility and indeed we find in history that not many have either cared, or been able, to realise it, for it is far too painful to the ego. But the metaphysical truths of successive rebirth on earth and of the unreality of time, should give some comfort here. The first teaches a great patience while men labour daily at the task of remaking themselves. The second teaches that the Overself is even now ever present with all, that in the eternal Now there is no futurity and that theoretically the possibility of its realisation does not necessarily belong to some distant rebirth.

(50-2) Too many lives have a hard grey colour about them. The glimpse changes this, for an hour or a day, and puts a delicate pastel beauty in its place.

(50-3) For these few seconds or minutes, hours or days, he belongs to a class apart, enlarged in consciousness.

(50-4) Although life is really like a dream, some phases of the dream are more worthwhile than others – those which bring the Glimpse, for instance.

(50-5) It is the highest possible form of self-recognition. It is the discovery of who and what we really are.

(50-6) He leaves time and ego behind him.⁸²

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XII

(51-1)⁸³ An experience which is so convincing, so real, that no intellectual argument to the contrary can stand against it, is final. Let others say what they will, he remains unswayed.

(51-2) Instinctively he knows it to be one of the most beautiful, most important of

⁸² This section is continued in the paras on page 49.

⁸³ The paras on this page are numbered 19 through 36; they are not consecutive with the previous page – but follow the paras on page 49.

experiences he has ever had.

(51-3) It is a common mistake among those who have this glimpse for the first time, and even for the second time, to expect it to last forever. But when they find that it has no more immortality than the other experiences of the human mind, they suffer needlessly, not understanding, bewildered.

(51-4) There is no possibility here of feeling stagnant, mediocre, ordinary. It is their very contraries that he feels.

(51-5) The glimpse will sustain him long after its actual occurrence.

(51-6) When this glorious feeling comes over him, whether at a gentle pace or with a lively rush, he should accept the gift straightway.

(51-7) A few minutes of the glimpse compensates fully for the lengthened years of dull mediocrity and triviality, reconciles him to the past's sufferings.

(51-8) The attempt to intellectualise the glimpse may end it. Far better to wait in patience for it to go, as it came, without his personal interference.

(51-9) The hope of living over again those wonderful moments is never lost.

(51-10) The glimpse vibrates in memory for many years afterward.

(51-11) Sudden, almost miraculous opening.

(51-12) You may be an insignificant creature in the vastness of the cosmos but the divine life, of which that cosmos is but a channel, is in you too. Have enough faith in your divine heritage, take it into your common everyday life and thought, and in some way, to some people, you will become very significant and important.

(51-13) The glimpse may be of long duration, extending into weeks, or more commonly of short duration, lasting just a minute or two.

(51-14) This is the spiritual climax of a man's life, this dramatic moment when consciousness comes to recognise and understand itself.

(51-15) If the experience is not fully understood, or if it comes to one quite unprepared for it, or if it comes too prematurely, it may be half-misunderstood and its teaching half misconceived. In that case the will to act may become paralysed, the mind over-conscious of futility and evanescence.

(51-16) He perceives that this is a new kind of experience, a new way of knowing, a new level of happiness, a new quality of life.

(51-17) Glimpses cannot be summoned at will.

(51-18) It comes suddenly and, he believes, effortlessly.

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(52-1)⁸⁴ The closer he comes to the Overself the more reticent he becomes about it.

(52-2) All his life has to converge upon this divine focus, all his experience has to draw its supreme significance from it.

(52-3) He must first identify its real character when he feels its presence, and then be passive to facilitate its onset.

(52-4) There is a particle of divinity deep in the heart of every man.

(52-5) The intensity of this experience, the deep tranquillity which separates it from all other experiences.

(52-6) The same Overself is behind us all, contains us all.

Old xiii: The World-Mind ... NEW XXVII: The World-Mind

53
XIII

(53-1)⁸⁵ Between these two currents of opposite direction, between the positive and negative, the beneficent and sinister, the evolutionary and involutionary, the universe finds itself.

(53-2) The tension developed between these opposites is a perpetual one. It is dominant factor of life everywhere.

(53-3) Even if he cannot fit all the pieces of the world-puzzle into place, he can fit many

⁸⁴ The paras on this page are numbered 37 through 42, making them consecutive with the previous page.

⁸⁵ The paras on this page are numbered 1 through 14.

of them into some kind of orderliness.

(53-4) The World-Mind is expressing through an infinite number of minds its own infinitude multiplied by infinity an infinite number of times.

(53-5) The body's physical cells disintegrate into the earth and become part of the soil until they take new forms in plant and animal life. Just as a class in school one day breaks up and all the students go their separate ways, and in its place another class is formed, so the units are fully individualised only when they enter the human stage. Until then they very very slowly approach this release, just as an embryo in the womb approaches the form of a new-born baby.

(53-6) The human body is composed of millions of tiny different intelligences, each having its own specialised life, all having developed from a single generalised cell. Some cells die within hours, others within days or even longer after the body's own death.

The fertilised egg contains all the organs of the human being in miniature. They merely grow and become big to produce the adult.

(53-7) The universe comes into being, maintains its varied operations, or passes into dissolution, by inherent necessity.

(53-8) The Chinese character for YANG is a single whole line, for YIN, a line broken in the middle.

(53-9) We may safely trust the universal movement even though we cannot see sufficient good emerging from it.

(53-10) The meteor which moves across the earth's orbit is as much beyond man's control as his larger part in the World-Idea.

(53-11) The mass of people are like blind worms wriggling through the earth. They toil but do not know that the real value of their labours is not in the passages they make for air and moisture, nor in the fertile mould they carry to the soil's surface. No! – it is in the evolutionary consequences within themselves.

(53-12) Nowhere in Nature does a situation, a circumstance, a creature or a person recur exactly as before. It is true that Nature repeats herself but during the interval the spiral has wound its way onward.

(53-13) The universe is not only constructed by divine intelligence on a two-way oscillating rhythm, but also on a balancing force between both movements.

(53-14) Is life only a stream of random events following one another haphazardly? Or is there an order, a meaning, a purpose behind it all?

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XIII

(54-1)⁸⁶ The infinite permutations of Nature are so vast and so varied only because they are an attempt to express the infinite being, in terms of time, space, form and motion. But such an attempt can never come to any finality; it is endless: a forever-turning spiral.

(54-2) All around us Nature offers her seasonal and annual messages. They are simple yet relevant to our human experience, elementary yet unnoticed because of our other preoccupations.

(54-3) Neither thinking nor any other kind of human activity can grasp the full truth about the World-Mind. Not even at the height reached by sage or adept is this possible.

(54-4) We have to pass from prattling about man's long-past Fall to his newly-possible Rise. It is time to take a better view of him, and certainly of his prospects.

(54-5) Just as the polarity of the universe makes two opposite movements exist at the same time, so does it make two opposite tendencies in man exist at the same time.

(54-6) Nothing exists without its contrary: if there is suffering as well as sweetness in this life, that is no accident, nor brought into the scheme of things by human evil alone.

(54-7) The World-Idea will be realised anyhow, whatever human beings do or fail to do.

(54-8) This movement between two poles is a perpetual one.

(54-9) There is a central calm behind the universe's agitation.

(54-10) The mere movement in time does not automatically bring progress.

(54-11) World-Mind is omnipresent.

(54-12) Each individual centre of life and intelligence is a replica in miniscule of the World-Mind itself.

⁸⁶ The paras on this page are numbered 15 through 26, making them consecutive with the previous page.

Old xiv: From Birth to Rebirth ... NEW IX: From Birth to Rebirth

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XIV

(55-1)⁸⁷ There are even those among Orientals who consider any kind of self-help to be an endeavour to force the divine will and therefore a blasphemy!

(55-2) It is at times difficult to foretell the future consequences of certain actions.

(55-3) Forces come into operation beyond our prevision, expectation and control, or contrary to our judgment.

(55-4) When adversities and calamities come suddenly or diseases and malfunctionings of the body come unexpectedly, the resultant sufferings may begin to teach him new values.

(55-5) The possession of moral values and metaphysical capacities and spiritually intuitive qualities which distinguish more evolved from less evolved men takes time to acquire. So much time that reincarnation must be a continuous process.

(55-6) Many individuals may be caught in the wave of a common destiny, may have to share a group karma.

(55-7) We find life in this world thrust upon us. Thus the very beginning mocks at arrogant men who claim that human will is free.

(55-8) Life itself will work out his future course without consulting him.

(55-9) The spiritualists want this miserable earth all over again, with its petty egotisms and trivialities, to be preserved in a fourth dimension after their exit from the body.

(55-10) The same destiny which brings two persons together, also parts them.

(55-11) Beyond all this suffering there is undreamed-of happiness.

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⁸⁷ The paras on this page are numbered 15 through 25; they are not consecutive with the previous page – but follow the paras on page 56.

(56-1)⁸⁸ We automatically try to repeat the old patterns of behaviour created in former lives whether they are beneficial or injurious to us. This happens because we can hardly help doing so.

(56-2) When this truth is at last seen, that heaven is not a place in space but a condition of being, and that therefore it can to a certain extent be realised even before death, a feeling of joy and a sense of adventure are felt. The joy arises because we are no longer restricted by time, and the adventuresomeness arises because a vista of the quest's possibilities opens up.

(56-3) The feeling of familiarity with someone met for the first time, of vague indistinct recognition which we sometimes get, may have varying significances. But one of them is an echo of remembrance of previous contact in a past birth.

(56-4) If the future were completely inevitable, then it would also be completely unalterable.

(56-5) Most of our decisions are what they are by necessity; only in a minority of them are they free choices in any real sense.

(56-6) What happens to us today is a necessary consequence of what happened in the past – not only to us but also to the others who are now concerned along with us. The amount of active free choice and free will that we can slip into this situation today is, however, not non-existent but of limited existence.

(56-7) Lodovico, the Italian medieval prince, fell into one trouble after another despite his faithful following of advice given by a personal astrologer. For there are several different ways of interpreting a starry relationship – be it square or trine, conjunction or opposition. Astrology can point more easily and more certainly to its nature, as whether it be good or bad. But it cannot point to the precise meaning of a configuration in such detail that all astrologers would agree among themselves. Hence astrology is not a science so much as an art. The perfect astrologer would have to be omniscient and dwell far above the common human scene.

(56-8) If certain evils are written in our destiny and may not be avoided by effort, it is still sometimes possible to minimise them by prudence.

(56-9) Some measure of fate, prudence, destiny, must exist in the world of human affairs if they are to be part of a divine order, and not of a mere fortuitous chaos.

(56-10) With every course of action, with every important decision, he buys its

⁸⁸ The paras on this page are numbered 1 through 14.

consequences.

(56-11) One of the most impressive biographical facts about most of these men is the mixture of fate and free will in their lives.

(56-12) Must the deeper thinker fall into the frightening fatalism of the Orient, and is there no escape from it?

(56-13) A single lifetime is all-too-short to accomplish such high desires.

(56-14) Can events be anticipated before they come to pass?⁸⁹

Old xv: The Reign of Relativity ... NEW XIX: The Reign of Relativity

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(57-1)⁹⁰ Time seems to ebb down; he rests in the eternal Now, all haste gone, all urgent pressures stilled. He feels there is enough time to do all that has to be done, however slowly he moves to, and through, it.

(57-2) Israel Zangwill, in one of his novels, wrote: "We grow and become different. Life is full of chances and human beings are full of changes and nothing remains fixed."

(57-3) The very idea of a First Cause of the universe is a false one. For a 'first' involves the denial of any historic past, a 'cause' involves the existence of a 'before' and an 'after' i.e. of time. But time is infinite and 'first' denies it. So a 'First Cause' is a contradictory idea.

(57-4) How can you be sure that your daily life is not a dream? You may reply that it is impossible for you to think otherwise.

(57-5) Consider neither past nor future: boldly entrust your life to the superior power.

(57-6) Although you will probably feel, like nearly everyone else, outside the experience of time and apart from it, you will in reality be inside it. For it will be deep in your consciousness and involved in the making of its shape.

(57-7) The meaning of eternity reveals itself when the stillness suspends time.

⁸⁹ This section is continued in the paras on page 55.

⁹⁰ The paras on this page are numbered 1 through 13.

(57-8) So long as we think of eternity as being a long-drawn waiting period stretching through millions of years, so long will we fail to understand the true meaning of Spirit, and hence the true meaning of spirituality.

(57-9) That there is an insight where all times lie side by side – the past, the present, the future – the twentieth century B.C. and the twentieth century A.D., may seem impossible to the ordinary mind.

(57-10) People who do not know how to get rid of time except by getting involved in time-using activities, cannot know the value of contemplation.

(57-11) While he is inside the dream he is outside its real nature, unable to measure its true dimension.

(57-12) In the very midst of his dream he knows what in it is true and what is only imaginary.

(57-13) Tomorrow is already here!

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Old xvi: The Absolute Mind ... NEW XXVIII: The Alone

59

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(59-1)⁹² Just as the eye cannot see itself as a second thing apart, so the Overself (which you are) cannot objectify itself, cannot become an object to be looked at or thought about. For in that case you would be dealing with a pretender, while all your thinking could in the end only deliver another thought, not the reality itself.

(59-2) The mind's chief distinguishing power is to know – whether the object known is the world around or the ideas within. When this is turned in still deeper upon itself, subject and object are one, the thought-making activity comes to rest, and the 'I'-mystery solved. Man discovers his real self, or being, his soul.

⁹¹ Blank page

⁹² The paras on this page are numbered 14 through 25; they are not consecutive with the previous page – but follow the paras on page 60.

(59-3) This experience of self-annihilation (fana, the Sufis call it) teaches several valuable truths, but the one which needs mention here is that whether you feel the Reality in an overwhelming mystic experience or not, what matters is that you should carry the unfaltering faith that it is always there, always present with you and within you.

(59-4) This is the climax of his quest towards which he has moved through all its phases and stages. He comes face to face with his own central mystery. Who am I? He then discovers his divine dignity by realising the philosophic truth taught and retaught since the most ancient times.

(59-5) It is not really a goal to be reached, nor a state to be attained, nor something new to be added to what he now has or is. But if he insists on thinking that it is any of these things, there is no other course open than to take the appropriate action, make the necessary effort, for such achievement. His labours are really self-imposed, a consequence of incorrect thought about himself.

(59-6) All attempts to explain the inexplicable, to describe the inscrutable, to communicate the ineffable must end in failure if they begin and end in words. For then it is merely intellect talking to intellect. But let the attempts be made in the stillness, let 'heart speak to heart' and the Real may reveal itself.

(59-7) First, remember that It is appearing as ego; then remember to think that you are It; finally cease to think of It so you may be free of thoughts to be It!

(59-8) As the perception of this truth passes across consciousness a feeling of being liberated follows it.

(59-9) Truth can be received, and studied, at different levels – lower, middle and higher. But it remains one and the same.

(59-10) This analysis separates all human existence into the seen or known and that which sees or knows.

(59-11) Whether we search the records of the Christian West or of Buddhist Asia, of Hindu India or Muhammadan⁹³ Near East, we shall find no loftier truth than this.

(59-12) It is a waste of time to keep looking for your past again. Live now.⁹⁴

⁹³ "Muhammedan" in the original.

⁹⁴ This section is continued in the paras on page 61.

(60-1)⁹⁵ On diverse occasions he will train himself to move from the position of participant to that of onlooker.

(60-2) Is he to continue his existence henceforth as an emotionless and passionless spectator of the human drama? Will he never again have his moments of human weakness?

(60-3) Just as Islam allows no portrait, no graven image to represent the man Muhammad;⁹⁶ just as Buddha forbade any figure of himself to be made or used (a prohibition disobeyed after a century or two); just as the Jews were willing to be executed rather than allow Caesarian deificatory effigies newly brought to Jerusalem to be displayed; so philosophy holds that no words can ever describe, no concept ever express, no human leader ever incarnate the ineffable truth, and that all assertions to the contrary merely defile truth. IT cannot be confined.

(60-4) Nirvana is never achieved, never attained, never realised. For if that were possible then the achiever, the attainer, the realiser, that is, the ego, would be on the same unchanging level, would itself be Ultimate!

(60-5) No situation in human life lasts totally unchanged forever, just as no condition on the very planet which harbours that life lasts forever. It is folly to demand changelessness. And yet we do. Why? Because beneath this conscious desire for fresh experiences, there is the unconscious longing for That which is the permanent core of selfhood. The stilled, one-pointed and reverent mind may know it, the self may dissolve in it.

(60-6) If the Overself is timeless, unaffected by the clock's ticking, how could acts performed in time, exercises of the mind done by the clock, bring a man into the Overself's eternal consciousness?

(60-7) The consciousness of Consciousness never deserts him. It remains somewhere on the outer periphery of the mind all the time and expands to its fullness at special times – that is, when withdrawn from all activities for a few minutes.

(60-8) The only real existence is the mind's. But we ordinarily know only its projections and retractions, its phases and states, its consciousness and lapses.

(60-9) This is the only, the self-existent, Reality. All else passes away, but not this.

⁹⁵ The paras on this page are numbered 1 through 13.

⁹⁶ "Mohammed" in the original.

(60-10) This disclosure that the whole universe exists in the mind comes with Reality's revelation.

(60-11) It is not a testable truth; it must be left the mystery that it is.

(60-12) A point is reached where the seeker must stop making a thought of the Overself, or he will defeat himself and ensure inability to go beyond the intellect into the Overself. At this point he is required to enter the Stillness.

(60-13) When all thoughts are gone, when all vibration, movement or activity of the thinking faculty has ceased, then is the self-revealing possible of Mind-in-itself, of Consciousness without its states.⁹⁷

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(61-1)⁹⁸ We know as much, and as little, about the Primal Mind as we know why there was a beginning of the universe – that is, precisely nothing.

(61-2) If he really distrusts the power of words to express Reality other than symbolically, he will logically fall into complete silence. As Lao-Tzu⁹⁹ wrote: "Those who know, do not speak!"

(61-3) If the Overself could be expressed in words there would be no need for Its silence.

(61-4) He is exquisitely balanced between time and eternity.

(61-5) Despite all the absurd claims to the contrary, no one has ever interpreted to us the great Mystery of mysteries, the Godhead behind the God active in the universe.

(61-6) Quhyasamaja Tantra: "The steady way of attaining enlightenment is to avoid any conception about the highest knowledge or its realisation."

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⁹⁷ This section is continued in the paras on page 59.

⁹⁸ The paras on this page are numbered 26 through 31; they are not consecutive with the previous page – but follow the paras on page 59.

⁹⁹ "Lao-tse" in the original.

¹⁰⁰ Blank page

Old xvii: Way to Overself ... NEW II: Overview of Practices Involved & XXIII: Advanced Contemplation

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(63-1)¹⁰¹ The man who is determined to devote his life to self-improvement inevitably experiences moods when he feels that his attempts at it are so unavailing and that he comes so wretchedly short of the ideal that he might as well abandon his quest.

(63-2) These long pathers, these self-conscious strivers after near-perfection, are still striving within the ego and, in the end, however nobly, for the ego. For they are trying to improve it, not lose it. If the latter were their real goal they would be interested neither in its improvement nor worsening since both activities are only aspects. Why should they deal with it at all? Why not try the opposite course, the Short Path which silences the ego, not by striving to do so but by ignoring it through fastening attention upon the Overself.

(63-3) Although the movement towards enlightenment goes forward by stages, the actual moment of enlightenment comes abruptly with a sudden transcendence of the darkness in which men ordinarily live.

(63-4) The new thinking that is needed when one enters the Short Path, is not merely different from the old but totally opposite to it.

(63-5) Too much preoccupation with the Long Path for too long a period, brings an inevitable reaction against it and reversal from its direction. He gets tired of its demands, of all its tangle of restraints, controls, exercises and austere repressions. He needs a change.

(63-6) When the likelihood of entering the superior consciousness seems no longer possible, when this hope which started and stayed them on the Long Path is finally thrown aside, then there is a natural reaction into feelings of resignation, frustration, cynicism or despair, according to the personal disposition.

(63-7) Wisdom does not come overnight. It needs time to ripen. But Revelation can come in that way. But its recipient will still need time to adjust to it, and to integrate with it.

(63-8) However lofty his aspirations may be, they are all-too-often thwarted by the weakness of his will or the direction of his tendencies.

¹⁰¹ The paras on this page are numbered 1 through 12.

(63-9) A true spirituality is not aware of itself and therefore is not portentous and heavy. It is “natural.”

(63-10) He may well ask himself at this point, as Yen Hui, the Chinese disciple of Confucius asked, whether the Goal is not really an inaccessible peak, attracting climbers yet always defeating them in the end.

(63-11) We solve one problem only to encounter another, dispose of one difficulty only to find it replaced by a fresh one, get rid of one shortcoming only to become aware that new circumstances generate another.

(63-12) The preliminary work on oneself is a purificatory one, a getting rid of all the grosser elements that block one’s way physically and emotionally. It is the Long Path and its practice helps one to avoid the kind of meditation which may have misleading results.

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(64-1)¹⁰² The long-pather who broods morbidly over his own vileness, who strains himself unnecessarily to achieve what the Overself does not ask him to achieve, needs to be instructed on the place and meaning of the Short Path.

(64-2) The great patience needed on the Long Path proves in time to be beyond the capacity of many aspirants. The offer of the Short Path to bring quick, or at least quicker, results proves more attractive in the end.

(64-3) Out of his disappointment or bewilderment he may draw, in the end, not merely some kind of compensatory lesson but an entirely new and fruitful result.

(64-4) The Short Path advocate may pertinently ask his Long Path friend “Why not make the end into the beginning. Why not directly still the mind, empty it of thoughts, instead of attaching it to some idea and concentrating upon that in the earlier stages only to drop it in the later ones. Why let it go on what the Australians call ‘a walkabout’?”

(64-5) When preoccupation with the disciplines and regimes, the restrictions and curbs prescribed on the Long Path become so excessive as to be morbid or become so neglectful of the freedom, the satisfaction and the happiness-bringing attitudes, it is

¹⁰² The paras on this page are numbered 13 through 23, making them consecutive with the previous page.

time to bring them to an end. They need to be replaced by the opposing practices of the Short Path – fears by faiths, morbidity by joy, intolerances by

(64-6) The mentality of self-dependence, self-improvement and self-effort engendered on the Long Path is good in its time and place. But if persisted in for too long it can become an obstruction, if not an obsession.

(64-7) Although we must cease to blame others for our troubles, or conditions for our misfortunes, and assume responsibility for the self which we have created and the actions it has done, we need not push our sense of guilt to the point of morbidity. Although we have attracted so many of our misfortunes by our own thoughts and feelings and actions, we need not feed pessimism until it becomes despair. Too many persons on the Long Path fall into these errors through expecting more from themselves than they actually realised.

(64-8) The Short Path frees us from the anxieties and guilts which make living more of a burden than it need be.

(64-9) Only when it becomes natural and therefore easy, continuous and therefore well-established, does meditation become completely fruitful. But this is possible only on the Short Path.

(64-10) The Long Path is suited to those monks who live in community, in ashrams or monasteries. But the Short Path is suited to the individualist and to the layman-householder living in the world.

(64-11) Those long path followers who wear themselves out trying to attain the unattainable.

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(65-1)¹⁰³ After many years of search and experiment, study and practice, he may arrive at and travel through a dead-end street.

(65-2) Meher Baba uses the term “Short Path through the Grace of a Master” and “Long Path of self-endeavour.”

(65-3) Only the Short Path can turn aspiration into attainment, for only it proffers grace.

¹⁰³ The paras on this page are numbered 24 through 42, making them consecutive with the previous page.

(65-4) How helpless he really is – at the mercy of his body and its condition, of his mind and its moods!

(65-5) Confucius' injunctions to acquire specific virtues is Long Path, whereas Lao-Tzu's¹⁰⁴ counsel to let the mind become empty so that Tao may enter it, is Short Path.

(65-6) The hope of suddenly or swiftly getting established in the Overself by way of the Short Path naturally attracts the young and enthusiastic much more than the middle-aged and blasé. For the latter have seen every development in their consciousness come on a little at a time, and often brokenly.

(65-7) The quest of truth by a mind deformed by hate, anger, bias, bitterness or greed, or deficient in concentration, calmness or aspiration must end in a failure which will be partial or total to the extent that these negatives are partial or total. This is why Long Path is needed.

(65-8) The Long Path puts too much emphasis on guilts and faults, neuroses and sins.

(65-9) When concern with the ego-correcting requirements of the Long Path overrides concern with ego-transcending requirements of the Short Path, it is time to take a fresh look at one's position.

(65-10) The Long Path of self-improvement has as its goal self-perfection.

(65-11) All these attempts at self-justification are quite unnecessary.

(65-12) He must be willing to discard the familiar attitudes developed on the Long Path. There will be an inner struggle.

(65-13) He fusses too much about the condition of his soul.

(65-14) Most aspirants need this long preparatory work of the Long Path.

(65-15) The methods, traditions and teachings of the Long Path are useful to the beginner and assist him through the earlier stages of this quest.

(65-16) Shen-hui¹⁰⁵ (Chinese Zen Master) "Without practising (yoga), by attaining to correct understanding alone, and by deeply impregnating yourself with it, all the chief entanglements and deceptive ideas will gradually fall away."

¹⁰⁴ "Lao-tse's" in the original

¹⁰⁵ "Shen Hui" in the original.

(65-17) They approach Zen excited by its promise of sudden enlightenment, exhilarated by its freedom from disciplines and exercises.

(65-18) When he recognises how abortive his aspirations now seem, how baffled his hopes, he reaches the critical point.

(65-19) The Long Path man may get too preoccupied with his own progress.

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XVII

(66-1)¹⁰⁶ If the end of the Long Path is spiritual stagnation, this is not to be taken to mean that the Long Path is not worth entering, nor that its efforts are valueless and so much time wasted. That would be an error. This so-called stagnation is really the “dark night of the soul” in Spanish St John of the Cross’ phrase. It makes the man ready to receive grace.

(66-2) Padmasambhava¹⁰⁷ (Tibetan Master): “If the seeker, when sought, cannot be found, thereupon is attained the goal of the seeking, the end of the quest itself. Then there is no need to search for anything and there is nothing to be practised.”

(66-3) Then he comes to realise the magnitude of what he undertook in the first rush of enthusiasm, and the littleness of his qualification for it. Then only does the Long Path lead to an inaccessible peak, he sees. He is overwhelmed and fails to see the great preparatory service it rendered him.

(66-4) Without expecting miracles from human nature it is not unreasonable to assert that the realisation of its larger possibilities is more likely to happen on the Short Path and has a better chance to be achieved.

(66-5) Chuang-Tzu’s¹⁰⁸ assertion that the self must be shaped quite undeliberately “like Tao itself” is the Short Path’s “naturalness” advocated here.

(66-6) Spirituality needs time to develop; the spark needs fanning: but this need not be turned into an excuse for surrendering completely to the Long Path’s limitations.

(66-7) If he begins with the Short Path he may feel that whatever is accomplished is self-accomplished and thus, subtly, insidiously, his ego will triumphantly reassert, or keep,

¹⁰⁶ The paras on this page are numbered 43 through 55, making them consecutive with the previous page.

¹⁰⁷ “Padma Sambhava” in the original.

¹⁰⁸ “Chuang Tzu’s” in the original.

its supremacy. But if he begins with the Long Path and, after all his efforts, reaches an inconclusive result, the consequent despair may crush his ego and point up his dependence on, and need of, Grace.

(66-8) Swami Ramdas, like Bismarck, read detective stories in his after-lunch rest period. Did he find it a necessity, and not merely a relaxation, thus to get away from all the tense talk of spiritual egocentrism that went on all day around him, and with him?

(66-9) Those who take to the Short Path have to encounter the risk of self-deception, of falling victims to the belief in their own imaginary spiritual attainments.

(66-10) He reaches the conclusion that nothing more is to be gained by continuing the Long Path exercises, that further efforts will be useless, without avail. He enters a period of apparent stagnation, the 'dark night of the soul' so well described by St John of the Cross.

(66-11) Since the recognition of the divine element in oneself is one day inevitable, why not come to it at once?

(66-12) The tension between what we are and what we desire to be is sometimes unbearable.

(66-13) It has been observed that most religious hymns are about ourselves, few only are about God.¹⁰⁹

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XVII

(67-1)¹¹⁰ Yang Chu described the Long Path travellers as searchers for a missing sheep who themselves got lost in the multitude of efforts involving a plenitude of details.

(67-2) The world is carried in the mind and, ultimately, is the mind. But in trying to extend this knowledge of what the world is, to what the mind is, we make it into a second thing, an object apart, and fail to find it, for this it is not. So if looking for it cannot lead to awareness of it, ceasing to look for it is the first step. This is the same as taking to the Short Path.

(67-3) All the exact instructions and precise techniques to be found in different parts of the world will be of no avail in the end to reach enlightenment, although they may well

¹⁰⁹ This section is continued in the paras on page 68.

¹¹⁰ The paras on this page are numbered 66 through 79; they are not consecutive with the previous page - but follow the paras on page 68.

be useful to make him ready to receive enlightenment.

(67-4) We need the spiritual assurance which looks for enlightenment, not in some long-drawn-out future but to-day.

(67-5) The Long Path is likely to come first in a man's spiritual career, with the bizarre result that he is required to become much more aware of what is going on within himself, his thoughts, feelings and character, and then, with entry on the Short Path, to become much less aware of it, even to the point of ignoring it.

(67-6) So long as the Overself is sought elsewhere than where It is, as apart from the seeker himself, so long will the quest for it end in failure.

(67-7) The wish to attain realisation of the Overself becomes father to the belief that realisation is actually happening!

(67-8) The disciplines and searches of the Long Path come to an end when he comes to realise that the whole task is beyond his strength.

(67-9) It is not enough to turn away from this constant preoccupation with the ego if the movement is only partly completed. It must be wholly and fully directed toward the Overself.

(67-10) There is really nothing to be achieved here; only something to be accepted – the fact of your own divinity.

(67-11) If the Long Path begins and ends with ego, the Short Path begins with a 180 degrees turn-around, opens up a vista of the infinite Overself.

(67-12) There is no way out of this captivity to the ego except through giving up this identification with the ego. That is to say, take to the Short Path!

(67-13) Because it is impossible for the questing ego to become the Overself, the quester must recognise that he is the Overself and stop thinking in egoistic terms of progress along a path, or attainment of a goal.

(67-14) The Long Path has no property in itself which can turn darkness into light, the ordinary mentality into the illumined one.

(68-1)¹¹¹ What has never been lost can never be found. If a quester fails to find the Overself, it is not because of faults or weaknesses in the ego but because he is himself that which he seeks. There is nothing else to be found than understanding of this fact. Instead of seeking Overself as something above, beyond or apart from himself, he should stop seeking altogether and recognise i am as I AM!

(68-2) The philosopher has as little use for artificial professional sanctity as for morbid body-hating asceticism. Enlightenment must become 'natural' – a living fact of the whole being – and its possessor inconspicuous. Neither the one nor the other is to be advertised publicly in any way.

(68-3) The narrow limited presentation of the path to enlightenment needs rebuttal. And this can be found in the cases of men who entered and remained in the light not by the persevering practice of yoga, or by personal guru-initiation, but by fastening interest, thought, feeling, devotion, faith on the light itself solely and exclusively.

(68-4) If the advances in understanding, the glimpse of higher states and the improvements in mental attitude are regarded egoistically, that is, with the smug complacency that it is "I" who has brought them about, then their value is only preparatory. For they still leave him self-enclosed and he still remains outside the Overself. The Long Path merely takes him to another part of the ego, even though it is the higher part.

(68-5) The moment the questing attitude is taken, with the Overself as its sought-for goal, in that moment the ego and the Overself are put apart as two separate things and cannot be brought together again. But by letting such thoughts go, and all thoughts subside, mind may enter the Stillness and know itself again as Mind. Yet even this is useless if understanding that the seeker is really the sought, is lacking.

(68-6) Swami Premananda: "I say to people 'Don't give up anything: they will give you up. Do you have to give up darkness? No, you have only to bring in the light. So long as you are trying to resist something, you are having it constantly with you.'"

(68-7) What hope is there of attaining the Long Path's goal? Even if it remains unattained, he can get nothing but benefit by the mere approach to it. All his efforts will be compensated in some way.

(68-8) The Long Path is concerned with techniques, how to practise and apply them. But techniques can only improve the human instrument, make it better able to receive enlightenment; they cannot of themselves give enlightenment.

¹¹¹ The paras on this page are numbered 56 through 65; they are not consecutive with the previous page – but follow the paras on page 66.

(68-9) The Short Path of recognising the divine existence here and now whether or not the ego feels it, is the best path at a certain stage.

(68-10) Yes, the Quest is a lengthy affair, and its slowness sometimes dries up the sap of enthusiasm.¹¹²

Old xviii: The God Within ... NEW XXV: World-Mind in Individual Mind

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(69-1)¹¹³ The view that such an existence is selfish and unproductive, is a shallow one. It takes no account of the value of higher forces. For whoever, by this quest and practice, realises the divine presence, does so not only for himself but for all others in that little part of the world confided to his care.

(69-2) He is happier to move through this world incognito, if fate will let him, than celebrated.

(69-3) The guru is regarded, in the phantasy of his worshippers, as a prodigy of genius and a paragon of virtue.

(69-4) The question is asked periodically by ardent seekers after truth, Why is this attainment so rare?

(69-5) What a guide may be able to do in certain cases is to facilitate the awakening of higher consciousness and to make easier the entry of higher truths.

(69-6) Instead of communicating itself to others, his stillness often unnerves them. It seems inhuman.

(69-7) Such men possess the faculty of insight and are marked by the quality of compassion.

(69-8) When Truth is identified with the name of a single man only, it is time to protest.

(69-9) Because of the many seeming contradictions in his nature he may be much

¹¹² This section is continued in the paras on page 67.

¹¹³ The paras on this page are numbered 14 through 30; they are not consecutive with the previous page – but follow the paras on page 70.

misunderstood by others.

(69-10) When his ego's pride has been shattered, only when he has become depressed by future prospects and humiliated by present failure, a man is more likely to listen to the truth about himself.

(69-11) The rarity of such men among us shows what anyone can quickly see – that their attainment is hard to realise. But it also shows that most of them do not return to this earth again. They pass on. But the tradition is that they do not pass without initiating one other person at least.

(69-12) Although outwardly I ceased to be a literary and articulate link with the Maharshi,¹¹⁴ inwardly I myself never ceased to be linked with him.

(69-13) If the master has a real affinity, the disciple may see him, and especially his face, in places where he is not even there physically, and may feel his presence closely.

(69-14) Krishnamurti's ideal is excellent but in the end, and in actuality, as demonstrated by observation in a wide area of space and time, it creates disorder. If he really believes in this ideal, surely, silence is the proper way, and the only way, to express it.

(69-15) No one but Allah knows all. The sage is not a human encyclopaedia. Those who expect an answer to every question, do not show up the sage's ignorance but their own.

(69-16) Such enlightened men belong to an invisible aristocracy, the only true one, of which the visible aristocracy is too often a false echo.

(69-17) The guru gives his service both in monition and admonition, both in strengthening conviction and fostering aspiration.¹¹⁵

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(70-1)¹¹⁶ The practice is all-too-common in the Orient of presenting a guru to the literary public in a most fulsome and adulatory manner. Those followers who write as if their spiritual guide is a faultless person, never blundering in any way and ever angelic in all ways, do their guide a disservice. They deprive him of his humanity and others of the

¹¹⁴ "Maharishee" in the original

¹¹⁵ This section is continued in the paras on pages 72.

¹¹⁶ The paras on this page are numbered 1 through 13.

hope of attaining his condition. His reliability and competence, his trustworthiness and holiness, as a guide, are not diminished if his limitations and faults as a human being are acknowledged.

(70-2) It is not for him to work for humanity by helping particular persons and by alleviating isolated distresses. His form of service must stretch over wider areas, must affect a multitude of persons. But this is possible only if he works in deeper ground and through secret unobtrusive ways.

(70-3) It is no small thing to bring a spiritual light to those who are lost and drifting on the sea of modern materialism.

(70-4) We often hear that the enlightened man must speak to his time in its own idiom, must belong to his age if he would communicate effectually with others. But there are some statements which are so starkly true that they belong to all time. This is one of them.

(70-5) Out of the desire to communicate this truth to others, to share this loving feeling for it with them, he may put time and talent at their service.

(70-6) The expectations of disciples, their high estimate of his character and notion of his outlook, may help to make him what he is.

(70-7) A circular barrier of inaccessibility appears to surround these truths. But a few have broken it, ended the isolation, and brought back manna for hungry aspirants.

(70-8) But when they see him too often and too close not to find out his very human limitations, a reversal of attitude may set in.

(70-9) The opening pages of The Hidden Teaching Beyond Yoga enumerated seven world changes which made necessary a widening of the policy of secrecy previously pursued.

(70-10) The catalyst which by its presence enables chemical elements to change their forms does not itself change. In the same way the illumine may be used by higher forces to affect, influence or even change others without any active personal move on his part to bring about this result. He may not even feel, see or know what is happening, yet he has started it!

(70-11) Contrast Lao-Tzu's¹¹⁷ teaching with Edmund Burke's "All that is necessary for the triumph of evil is that good men do nothing."

¹¹⁷ "Lao-tse's" in the original.

(70-12) It is an error to believe that they are necessarily attained. Most are still striving.

(70-13) A peace pervades him, gathered from deep thought and, much more, from the stillness which transcends all thought.¹¹⁸

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(71-1)¹¹⁹ It is in the region of consciousness below the normal state that the most powerful forces move the human being – and can be applied to move him. Here only can the ‘radical transformation’ which Krishnamurti so often calls for, be made.

(71-2) The teaching is not usually or at first comprehensible to the multitude. But given time and some systematic and purposeful training, it could be made comprehensible to them. They have in the past been underrated, their potentialities neglected. The duty of guiding and elevating these supposed morons has been selfishly unperceived. Responsibility ought to accompany privilege.

(71-3) Are they unfeeling creatures, whose passions have lived and died out utterly, whose problems have been dealt with and removed by the mere efflux of time, whose worldly attachments have lost all strength and dropped away – in short, is their serenity largely a matter of emotional lethargy and retarded physical metabolism?

(71-4) Nietzsche put Emerson’s idea in another way. He wrote that a whole nation is a detour to create a dozen great men.

(71-5) He literally tries to embody, in Jesus’ words ‘goodwill toward all men,’ not only to a mere section, such as his own race or nation. His goodwill is universal. Nobody is shut out from it because of his skin’s colour, his people’s history, his social class.

(71-6) Aldous Huxley’s close friendship in California with Krishnamurti did not save him from making the Mescaline error, nor from taking the inferior Subud initiation.

(71-7) If some enlightened souls are given a mission to stir the world to higher ideals, others feel no such duty and remain quiescent or even saturninely secluded.

(71-8) He may do nothing more than put his mite of cheering truth and softening goodness into the grim world around him, but this will be enough. He cannot

¹¹⁸ This section is continued in the paras on page 69.

¹¹⁹ The paras on this page are numbered 43 through 55; they are not consecutive with the previous page – but follow the paras on page 72.

contribute more than he has. The ultimate result of this contribution may be little, but he has tried to do God's will on earth.

(71-9) If these truths prove arrestive to some minds, even dazzling in their effect, they stir no interest at all in other minds, for there are varying degrees of inner ripeness.

(71-10) His outlook extends far beyond particular movements, groups and causes, even when he can see and approve their limited usefulness.

(71-11) Nobody could look less like a mystic than Walter Russell, yet his long poem The Divine Iliad is the kind of work we associate with hirsute, eccentric dreamers.

(71-12) "The Texts of Taoism:" "The ancient worthy was free from all exercise of thought and purpose, entirely passive in the hands of Tao."

(71-13) His help to others is quite often given without his knowing it – such is the power and presence emanating from him.¹²⁰

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(72-1)¹²¹ In a region of India where one travels as much by boat on inland canals and lagoons as on roads; where coconut groves flourish luxuriantly on every side; where broad white sandy beaches hide the mineral thorium, so much sought in the years immediately after the war by atomic energy producing nations, where – on one of these beaches – the Apostle St Thomas is said to have landed and preached Christ, I met Atmananda the Sage.

(72-2) In this strange world with which I have been dealing, Krishnamurti, the South Indian Brahmin who was more at home, and for more years, in Ojai, California than in Madras, India, occupies a unique position which nobody else can duplicate. There is much in the lives and teachings of Indian gurus which repeats the same pattern but K's life and teaching are apart, different and outstanding, yet the colour and mystery with which the gurus are invested by themselves or by disciples, he rejects sternly.

(72-3) It is not by overmuch fussy activity that we necessarily serve others best. We may, if we have opened ourselves to divine influences, become radiations of such influences. Merely by being faithful to them, we become the best missionaries for them.

¹²⁰ This section is continued in the paras on page 73.

¹²¹ The paras on this page are numbered 31 through 42; they are not consecutive with the previous page – but follow the paras on page 69.

(72-4) It was in 1929 that Krishnamurti exploded for the first time in public addresses which reversed his earlier teaching, dissolved the societies of which he was the titular head, renounced theosophy, and asserted that “religious organisations are barriers to understanding of the truth.”

(72-5) The masses of people are entitled to learn some of these basic facts. They have the latent potentiality to do so but not the outer opportunity.

(72-6) Only a miniscule portion of the population is likely to comprehend clearly and fully such metaphysical truths. The others would merely be befogged by them.

(72-7) By a principle of symbiosis what he is, being now at the source of human power, spreads out and ripples its influence on the human group, which at the least would otherwise become worse than it is, and at the most lights up inspiration in certain individual minds and makes them benefactors of the race.

(72-8) He can awaken some persons to this divine presence within themselves, but not all. He may do this mysteriously by some unknown process; or he may do it deliberately and with the display of his technique.

(72-9) If he serves a race, a nation, a class or a group, his service will not be for them as such – his outlook is too wide for that – but as human beings.

(72-10) By his mere proximity alone he bestows a benediction upon others. If they fail to respond, at least they had the opportunity to respond.

(72-11) Sometime, somewhere, someone arises to uphold the sacred torch, to shed light again in the dark places.

(72-12) What can he add to the world’s store of wisdom, is a serious question with him.¹²²

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(73-1)¹²³ If we consider the imperfections of all other human relationships, by what right should we demand perfection in this single relationship?

(73-2) His function is to interpret man – and more especially spiritual man – to himself.

¹²² This section is continued in the paras on page 71.

¹²³ The paras on this page are numbered 56 through 62; they are not consecutive with the previous page – but follow the paras on page 71.

(73-3) Serving humanity in his secret way, drawing benediction for all from this divine source, it would seem to be an unrequited activity but he himself is included as recipient and beneficiary.

(73-4) Its message must not only be made clear for the unfamiliar but also vivid for the insensitive.

(73-5) Is such aloofness really as brutal as it seems?

(73-6) The world will assess his motives at the lowest level, interpret his actions in the basest way. If he were to let it rot in its own ignorance, he would be well justified.

(73-7) Results are achieved partly by a process of osmosis, of contagion, and partly by determined personal endeavour.

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Old xix: Religion ... NEW XVII: The Religious Urge

75
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(75-1)¹²⁵ A religious organisation acts also as guardian of the verbal spiritual message, preserving its existence and its verbal precision.

(75-2) Ecclesiasts and theologians, clergymen and priests naturally put forward the biased belief that only established, organised, institutional and historic religion is authoritative and reliable.

(75-3) Only those who have studied widely or travelled extensively and who, moreover, have done so with an open unprejudiced mind to learn the best said, written and experienced, know how much is astonishingly revealed by comparative religion and comparative mysticism.

(75-4) The established churches, Eastern or Western, become too held down by their own past. Their forms and teachings are not elastic enough. They suffer from stagnation.

¹²⁴ Blank page

¹²⁵ The paras on this page are numbered 14 through 25; they are not consecutive with the previous page - but follow the paras on page 76.

(75-5) But most people, certainly the common folk, want a human God, one who shows emotion and responds to theirs.

(75-6) The free man will not take kindly to rigidly binding dogmas, may even come to feel spiritually suffocated by them.

(75-7) The movement from cherished myth to unfamiliar truth may be an unwelcome one for most people but it cannot be deferred forever.

(75-8) A wide experience of men shows up the strange fact that they may be well talented, brilliantly executive or acute reasoners, yet their religious beliefs will often be kept in closed compartments, unaffected by their mental powers, undisturbed by their excellent judgment and hence quite primitive and quite irrational.

(75-9) Those flat plaques made of wood, painted and varnished, called icons, feature prominently in the Byzantine and Russian Orthodox Churches. Each shows a portrait of some saint, apostle or holy man. The heads are often surrounded by a golden halo. The plaque is often brought out during critical times or severe illness. A small oil lamp or wick-holder burns continuously in front of it.

(75-10) All students in educational and religious institutions of higher learning – colleges, universities, seminaries and theological schools – should have the opportunity of learning the history and teaching of non-Christian religions, and of Christian denominations other than those prevailing in the particular institution. Thus Catholics should at least appreciate the point of view of Protestants, and the latter should do the same as regards Catholics.

(75-11) All too often we see that men who are competent, informed and expert in a business, professional or artistic sphere will nevertheless be incompetent, ignorant and inexpert in their thinking about topics belonging to the religious or mystic sphere.

(75-12) When a tradition has lost its inner vitality, when it is only a worm-eaten or worn-out thing, its rescue and revitalisation may still be desirable.¹²⁶

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(76-1)¹²⁷ Institutional forms render their service by helping a body of teaching to survive, by giving permanence to a tradition, by enshrining and preserving valued

¹²⁶ This section is continued in the paras on page 78.

¹²⁷ The paras on this page are numbered 1 through 13.

memories.

(76-2) Every sacred building has to fulfil this function, be it Greek temple or Muhammadan¹²⁸ mosque, Gothic church or Hindu shrine.

(76-3) The Jews, whose original prophet-seers must have comprehended the meaning of pure Spirit, who were forbidden to make any graven images for themselves, have made several in the form of the spirit-suffocating letter of their Torah, their Talmud, their Old Testament, their traditions and customs. All this, intended to uplift and purify, not only failed to do so but prevented them from recognising Jesus for what he was.

(76-4) Some statistically-minded writer once estimated the number of religious edifices – churches, temples, synagogues and mosques – in the world to be about seven million.

(76-5) As time goes on his mind evolves to a higher definition of that which is named God. He finds the earlier ones too inadequate and the religion they are connected with too constricting.

(76-6) Religion as popularly organised, with priesthoods and hierarchs, vestments and incense, ceremonials and rites, liturgies and Scriptures, churches and temples, is an excellent first step for most people but not for all people.

(76-7) There is hope for these teachings so long as they do not become embedded in an organised church, so long as the movement of public appreciation remains individualistic, so long as no orthodoxy gets established with its accompanying pronouncements of anathema upon heresy.

(76-8) Why is it that nobody seems to give the proper weight to the words of St Peter in the Acts of the Apostles: “And we are witnesses of all things which He, whom they slew and hanged on a tree, did both in the land of the Jews and in Jerusalem.” Is this not a flat contradiction of the common belief that Jesus was nailed and crucified?

(76-9) I had heard from different sources – Hindu, Buddhist, Nestorian and Indian Christian – of this legend which is current in the Western Himalaya region and in Chinese Turkestan, that Jesus came as a young man to India and spent several years there before returning to Palestine.

(76-10) The gorgeous ceremonials and censored picturesque rituals of a religion appeal to those of aesthetic feeling, impress those of simple unsceptical minds.

(76-11) The clash of new concepts with old traditions is nothing new. All the history of

¹²⁸ “Muhammedan” in the original.

religion is a history of rival sects and cliques, or large heresies and little schisms.

(76-12) Religion is the earliest, the easiest, the least-demanding response of the masses to inner call.

(76-13) The man who subscribes to no orthodox religious belief is not necessarily an atheist.¹²⁹

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(77-1)¹³⁰ It must be remembered as a mark against exaggerated valuation of, and trust in, religious institutions and religious authority, that the Holy Inquisition not only burnt or tortured infidels and {Jews}¹³¹ but even the Franciscan Brothers, good Christian Catholics who happened to become victims of the prejudice of one particular medieval Pope.

(77-2) From whatever source it may be available, he will not be so narrow as to let bias against that source or affinity with a different one prevent him from receiving any spiritual light from it.

(77-3) The popular religion is usually an adjustment to the popular mentality. It is not for searchers after absolute truth. The planet is not peopled by the few searchers but by the multitude.

(77-4) Some men, all too many men, are as stupid in their religious belief and practice as they are clever in their business ideas and activity. If they were to manage their businesses in the same credulous unreasoning and superstitious way in which they follow their religion, they would go bankrupt.

(77-5) It is strange how men who apply reason rigorously to their professional or business life, fail to apply it to their religious life, which remains unaffected however highly developed their intellectual powers may be. It is a case of closed compartments.

(77-6) If some forms of religion are sensuous, if others are austere, all forms are expressions of some aspect only and hence incomplete.

¹²⁹ This section is continued in the paras on page 75.

¹³⁰ The paras on this page are numbered 37 through 53; they are not consecutive with the previous page – but follow the paras on page 78. This page is a duplicate of page 769 in Grey Long 14-19.

¹³¹ “Jesus” in the original.

(77-7) The need for religion is a need that most men have for holding on to something higher than themselves.

(77-8) All such denigration of other spiritual paths or of other spiritual tribes is as unnecessary as it is inexcusable.

(77-9) There are those who attach sanctity to such beliefs but the philosopher is not one of them.

(77-10) Fanaticism holds their thin lips tightly together and is written across their narrow foreheads.

(77-11) If we are to keep religions inspired, we must keep its ministers and priests inspired, i.e. we must keep their hearts open to the sacred presence, their minds alive to the sacred Truth

(77-12) The mere title or position of priest, minister, clergyman does not sanctify a man if he lacks the inner sanctity.

(77-13) The mythology of a religion may have some truth and fact behind it, but they would need sifting out and separating – not an easy task – or allegory will be taken too literally.

(77-14) Where is there an infallible arbiter in these theological metaphysical and mystical arguments?

(77-15) Philosophy competes with no teaching, religion, system. It stands by itself, unique.

(77-16) He may or may not care to affiliate with religious groups or mystical societies.

(77-17) He cannot be classed with any religious denomination.¹³²

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(78-1)¹³³ The coming faiths will be wider than the old ones, for they cannot be deeper. They will explain more to more. They will not reject intellect, nor its modern product, science, but will put both in their own place, just where they belong. Their conception

¹³² This section is continued in the paras on page 79.

¹³³ The paras on this page are numbered 26 through 36; they are not consecutive with the previous page – but follow the paras on page 75.

of God will be infinitely more godlike than so many familiar, limited and anthropomorphic conceptions that have been babbled in the past.

(78-2) How many a prophet has been crucified afresh by his alleged followers who persecuted and oppressed in his name! How often has his teaching been caricatured by giving it a false application to serve personal interests, or support emotional hatreds!

(78-3) The simple ideas, forms and observances of a popular religion make available to the many some of the truth, however despoiled it be by human organisation, human fanaticism and human superstition.

(78-4) The Biblical sages have told to all human races, not only to the Hebrew race, truths which, being eternal, are as needed in the twentieth century A.D. as they were in the twentieth century B.C. There is no statement in the Book of Proverbs for instance, which requires revising and bringing up to date, or which can be dismissed as discarded religious superstition.

(78-5) Israel Zangwill: "The twaddle which is talked at Quaker meetings when an old bore is played upon by the Spirit, turns one's thoughts longingly to a stately liturgy, independent of the passing generation. Humanity is between the devil and the deep sea. Institutions strangle the spirit and their absence dissipates it..."

(b) "The doctrine of the Dalai-Lamas of Tibet has for many centuries paralysed a priest-ridden Asiatic population." (1910)

(78-6) To abbreviate Charles Lamb's sentence: "Why keep up a form when the life of it is fled?" Why not go back to its real source?

(78-7) If the Gita's statement means anything at all, it means that we ought to be tolerant to other people's worship, to the form in which they symbolise God. Pliny understood this very well when he wrote: "You are going to Athens. Respect their gods."

(78-8) What is true in the old religions that have vanished and in the existing ones that have survived can never become out-dated, outworn. Even when the religion itself passes on, the truth in it stays among us, reincarnated into a new form, perhaps.

(78-9) One hears men whose lives have known disaster and tragedy blaspheme existence, scorn religion and deny divine beneficence.

(78-10) It will be objected that if God is in our hearts then he must also be in constant communion with our beastliness and imbecility!

(78-11) If religions lose their original inspiration, if their texts get corrupted and their priests get worldly, it is relevant to enquire whether such deteriorations can be avoided.

The imperfections of human nature warn us that total avoidance is impossible.¹³⁴

79
XIX

(79-1)¹³⁵ If a teaching can make a man more hopeful when accepted, more peaceful when studied and more intuitive when applied, then it deserves respect, not scorn.

(79-2) He has no use for dogmas which keep minds pressed into rigid sectarian moulds.

(79-3) They are the first glimmers of receptivity to spiritual consciousness.

(79-4) When outward conformity has to be applied to inward rebellion, the result may be a prudent adaptation or a sickly hypocrisy.

80¹³⁶
XIX

Old xx: The Sensitives ... NEW XVI: The Sensitives

81
XX

(81-1)¹³⁷ Paralysis of the mind is not peace of the mind.

(81-2) One common fault is to greet the latest master with adoring emotion, then to follow him with strongly personal clinging attitude, and to talk of him only in superlatives. In such an atmosphere the ego thrives unsuspected where it is supposed to be most absent!

(81-3) In this field of spiritual seeking, the babel of different voices uttering contradictory messages, often creates bewilderment in the end and throws all into confusion.

(81-4) Joel Goldsmith gave great truths to mankind but also made some errors. He lived in an unreal fantasy-world. Gigantic miracles became obtainable in this world at a low

¹³⁴ This section is continued in the paras on page 77.

¹³⁵ The paras on this page are numbered 54 through 57; they are not consecutive with the previous page - but follow the paras on page 77.

¹³⁶ Blank page

¹³⁷ The paras on this page are numbered 19 through 31; they are not consecutive with the previous page - but follow the paras on page 82.

price. It is the old witch-doctor magic presented in a twentieth-century guise. It is the kind of world in which only dreamers can live, and from which only dreams can issue.

(81-5) Rasputin is reputed to have belonged to a religious society which believed that sin was the path to repentance and this in turn to salvation: and so to sin greatly was to be saved more quickly.

(81-6) These cults fall into the mistake of making worldly success and triumphant ambition synonymous with divine response to their prayer or divine reward for their meditation.

(81-7) Psychic phenomena, whether of a sensory or mental kind, which insidiously flatter the ego should be ignored, or discounted as illusory. The most absurd effect is the Messiah complex.

(81-8) It is not surprising that so extraordinary and mysterious a field should be taken advantage of and exploited by half-charlatans and semi-qualified persons.

(81-9) Although his attitude toward such movements and groups is necessarily a detached one, it is at the same time quite sympathetic where sympathy is merited.

(81-10) It can lead only to temporary titillations of the emotions, whether ecstatic or otherwise, but never to that sublime Knowledge which releases man from all quests and all hankerings. This alone confers the realisation of what we are here for; this alone bestows immortal benefit to himself and all creatures.

(81-11) Their published writings fail to show any logical basis; but they do succeed in showing a semi-pathological condition in the writers.

(81-12) One of the great mistakes to be found in mystical circles is that which fails to recognise that most glimpses fade away. They come for a time only, not for all time. Out of this mistake there are born cults and sects, teachings and doctrines, practices and methods which merely reflect human opinion, guesses, theories, prejudices and preferences, and not at all divine enlightenment.

(81-13) It is fashionable among the younger people today to sneer at things which I reverence, to disparage artistic and intellectual productions which I admire, and to denigrate persons whom I respect.¹³⁸

¹³⁸ This section is continued in the paras on page 83.

(82-1)¹³⁹ All he cares about is its impingement on his own self, so that he gets the two mixed up and fails to know the Overself as it really is.

(82-2) Occult phenomena and much mystical self-hypnotic phenomena only interrupt his quest, they do not fulfil it.

(82-3) Every psychic vision is really seen outside his being.

(82-4) These little groups and large sects spend much of their time and waste much of their mental or vocal energy between obloquy of other groups and panegyric of their own, between personal denigration of teachers outside their boundary and personal adulation of those inside it.

(82-5) Out of his own ideas and prejudices, tastes and temperament he unconsciously creates the form of revelations, messages and dogmas.

(82-6) Such cults have ever attracted the indolent and the irresponsible, those who hope to get something for nothing.

(82-7) The preachings and teachings, the assertions and predictions, the personal claims and egotistic posturings of insane persons are accepted as divine.

(82-8) They are peaceful but only in the same way that a vegetable is peaceful. There is no positive value, no real achievement here.

(82-9) The leaders of these cults, whether deluded or demented, may attract a following of naive, inexperienced youth or unbalanced, confused age.

(82-10) The alleged allegorical nature of these writings leads to much loss of time and more fantasy when accepted; it leads nowhere.

(82-11) The total sanity of some of these leaders and, to a lesser extent, of their followers must be questioned.

(82-12) He can know only what the condition, nature and quality of his knowing instrument permits.

(82-13) The frenetic evangelist, worked up to a state of unbalanced excitement, may incite his audience either to melodramatic holiness or to religious hysteria. They are so overwhelmed by their emotions – which in turn are prompted by hypnotic suggestion –

¹³⁹ The paras on this page are numbered 1 through 18.

that when the wave subsides later, they may repudiate what is now accepted.

(82-14) Much so-called inner guidance is nothing of the sort. It is made up out of the man's own ideas or the traditions of his background or out of other men's ideas transferred by suggestion to him.

(82-15) He lives in a private world of his own, a captive of his dominant ideas.

(82-16) They are very earnest but this does not prevent them from being very naive.

(82-17) the futility of their intellectuality.

(82-18) It is a world of oddities and lunacies in doctrine, some quite amusing but others quite imbecile.¹⁴⁰

83
XX

(83-1)¹⁴¹ The experience may be gratifying but it may also be of little value; it is cosy but not cosmic!

(83-2) Various forms of dementia may be recognised among these misguided seekers, but the cases differ widely from the extremely mild to the severely dangerous.

(83-3) Subud's is a mediumistic method; the risks involved make it difficult to trust any such method.

(83-4) Psychic phenomena are often an accompaniment of certain stages of meditation. When they are sensory in form, it is only necessary to note if they hold any useful meaning, if they are authentic and not illusory, and pass on.

(83-5) These are mentally disturbed persons who have aggravated their condition by taking to the quest in the wrong way, by extreme forms of asceticism, by blind naive spiritistic mediumship or by improper, ego-worshipping meditation.

(83-6) Thought-impressions and mental deposits are left behind, to exist for a while until they gradually fade away.

(83-7) The mystic's experiences - whatever kind they be - may be based on solid truth

¹⁴⁰ This section is continued in the paras on page 81.

¹⁴¹ The paras on this page are numbered 32 through 50; they are not consecutive with the previous page - but follow the paras on page 81.

or founded on mere illusion.

(83-8) They float around following every teacher in turn, enthusiastically eulogising the one currently in the ascendant, only to criticise him later – the lesson of keeping detached, unjoined, accepting truth without tying new bonds to half-truth or nonsense, remaining unreceived.

(83-9) He should take care against the pitfalls which beset the naive, the unwary, the fanatical and the occult-wonder-seekers.

(83-10) The poor spiritual aspirant may well be bewildered when those who so glibly give him such copious advice, contradict one another.

(83-11) When all the substitutes for truth have been tried and found wanting, then only will men turn to the truth itself.

(83-12) Theatricality is associated with some forms of mysticism and some gurus.

(83-13) The tendency to believe in wishful thinking, in mirages and utopias that always exist in the future is too often associated with mystics who have not attained their mystical maturity.

(83-14) No teaching, and certainly no set of beliefs, can hope to escape some kind of criticism, fair or unfair, nor obtain complete and general acceptance.

(83-15) When the wave of enthusiasm recedes, he is left with doubts, even criticisms.

(83-16) Only when he is away from the cult's hypnosis and adjusts himself to the fact as it is, not as it has been suggested to him, can he hope to find truth!

(83-17) There are some experiences which shrink the ego, others which enlarge it.

(83-18) He may find a little light after much searching.

(83-19) The unwary follower is deceived by this over-simplification and becomes falsely confident.

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XX

(84-1)¹⁴² Most of the revelations and communications from “on high” already existed in

¹⁴² The para on this page is numbered 51, making it consecutive with the previous page

his mental store of ideas and beliefs.

Old xxi: The World-Idea ... NEW XXVI: The World-Idea

85
XXI

(85-1)¹⁴³ I am by nature a wanderer, a gypsy. But there is no utopian meaning behind my travels. I am not searching for any colony or monastery, group or co-operative, where all live harmoniously together in a paradisiacal relationship. Only young dreamers and naive inexperienced enthusiasts look for such places in this world.

(85-2) Zangwill's belief that biographies were never true, and his consequent refusal to permit one to be written about himself, is a belief which I share. Zangwill entered into the public life and affairs of his time, which I hardly ever have done, so his experience and observation, his knowledge on this point, are far wider than mine.

(85-3) It is very different to criticise, not as an opponent or detractor, but as one who is himself a believer, who accepts the ideal, the practice and the teaching, but wants only to push them higher, farther and wider, to make it more complete. It is unfortunate and cannot be helped, if this makes me no believer in the orthodox sense.

(85-4) The ancient Roman belief that books are born under some kind of horoscopolical destiny, just like human beings, seems, in my experience, to have a basis of truth.

(85-5) When a man loses his literary ambitions and deliberately drops out of public notice, it may be because he has heard another, perhaps higher, call.

(85-6) The best of being a writer is the opportunity given to show man his true worth, to lift up his own idea of himself, to persuade him that trivial aims are not enough.

(85-7) Father Maximos, the librarian of the Monastery of Koutloumusiou on Mount Athos, refuses to correspond because he does not want to be reminded of the world. "I never reply when they write me" he declared.

(85-8) I do not agree with Thoreau's ascetic assertion that "Water is the only drink for a wise man." It is a good drink for all, yes, wise and stupid alike, but it brings no such cheer to the heart as tea.

¹⁴³ The paras on this page are numbered 12 through 23; they are not consecutive with the previous page - but follow the paras on page 86.

(85-9) The evening comes on apace but still I am loath to light the room lamp. For this is my favoured hour to escape the world, its dusk my daily invitation to return to the heart's silent mysterious depth. More especially is this so in the long summer evenings.

(85-10) I had a large acquaintance among the holy men, the seekers after truth, and the would-be occultists.

(85-11) I visited monasteries and ashrams, gurus and abbots, either as a friendly observer or as a student of comparative religion and mysticism.

(85-12) I agree with Israel Zangwill, when he remarked at a public speech, that "it is always a mistake for a literary man to show himself in the flesh; the flesh is generally a little disappointing; an author should be a disembodied spirit!"¹⁴⁴

86
XXI

(86-1)¹⁴⁵ When the editors of the popular Penguin series of paperback asked me to write a manual on Yoga I declined but recommended my good friend Professor Wood. He was given the assignment. The reason for my refusal was that I had been too much identified with the exposition of yoga in the past and wanted to get a different, a wider identity. Yoga was an essential preparation, but all too often it led to a self-conscious spirituality, a professional truth-seeking, that shut out other important facets of life as trivial. I felt, with Japanese¹⁴⁶ Zen and Chinese Cha'an, that the ordinary everyday life, the world, the body, the arts, could not be ignored without loss, that a fuller vision included them all.

(86-2) The shadows were falling all around me but still I was reluctant to switch on the lamp and dispel the half-gloom. For the stilled mind kept me in a stilled body, fastened to the chair by invisible cords.

(86-3) When I take up one of these earlier works, I am appalled at its varied imperfections of statement and content. It is now too late to attempt to improve them, for so many alterations would be needed that the work would be tantamount to writing new books.

(86-4) Alas! The Secret Path was somewhat too encouraging to its readers. The Path asks more from its treaders than those pages seem to indicate.

¹⁴⁴ This section is continued in the paras on page 87.

¹⁴⁵ The paras on this page are numbered 1 through 11.

¹⁴⁶ "Jap" in the original.

(86-5) Destiny made me a kind of gypsy, living everywhere and therefore nowhere.

(86-6) We who write have a responsibility for the thought-forms we create and let loose in the world.

(86-7) I worked at this book so intermittently and so slowly that some thought it would never be finished at all. But remembering how I wrote The Secret Path in four weeks, The Quest of the Overself in four months and The Wisdom of the Overself in fourteen, I smiled. For what lay behind this seeming procrastination was not to be told and had to be left a mystery.

(86-8) I deliberately sought obscurity without and oblivion within.

(86-9) I early learnt that to be tall is to be impressive and that to be short, as I am, is to be an insignificant figure.

(86-10) For too long I have been accustomed to the fluid inconstant life of a gypsy, for too many years I have wandered from city to city, village to village, continent to continent, gaining my experience of human existence in a variety of places, some quite jungle-like and primitive, others completely metropolitan and sophisticated. Glamour lies no longer in the unknown unvisited district but in settlement for the ageing body, in taking root and gaining refuge from the burden of ever packing and unpacking.

(86-11) Putting words together on paper to tell how this glimpse lifts one out of the ordinariness of the common existence, is a work anyone must enjoy doing.¹⁴⁷

87
XXI

(87-1)¹⁴⁸ I looked around for my pen and was about to take it up when I realised that it was better to contribute my silence than my thoughts.

(87-2) I am not the first writer who found his opinions changing nor shall I be the last. Why must we be bound to an iron consistency when to be human is to be subject to change – outward and inward, experiential and mental, circumstantial and emotional. But what actually happened is rather that I shifted my standpoint a little higher. The resulting changes were merely the resulting larger horizon and better perspective. If I had written these same books later, I would have written them differently. But the difference in content would not have been so much one of inconsistency as of

¹⁴⁷ This section is continued in the paras on page 85.

¹⁴⁸ The paras on this page are numbered 24 through 35; they are not consecutive with the previous page – but follow the paras on page 85.

enlargement. The difference in style would perhaps have been greater. There would have been a loss of vehemence and impressionability in the descriptive travel works, but a gain in discrimination and knowledge. There would have been a loss of iconoclasm and superficiality in the philosophic expository works but a gain of balance and depth and carefulness.

(87-3) If the years bring him a larger outlook, as I feel they have brought me (and I am nearer seventy than sixty); old truths come alive with new meaning.

(87-4) I became a keen resurrectionist, with the ancient wisdom as the object of my activities. But all this was done as a freelance, independent of any school, group or organisation, and therefore without the bias or restraints, the prejudices or constrictions which follow them.

(87-5) To make the most obscure truths easily intelligible, to translate the world-symbol into plain communication, is a noble work.

(87-6) I find myself among a dwindling band of those who met these remarkable men, who knew them personally.

(87-7) In the words of Homer, I "shift from place to place."

(87-8) I have known the man who was, in his time, the world's greatest screen comedian - Chaplin.

(87-9) I refuse to be put into any of the usual categories under which writers or teachers are put.

(87-10) Later I hope to throw these assorted sentences together into some sort of loose unity.

(87-11) There are marked worldly advantages for a man in having physical height and good looks.

(87-12) I am not very anxious to prove my consistency: it is not important to me.

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XXI

Old xxii: The Reverential Life ... NEW XVIII: The

Reverential Life

89

XXII

(89-1)¹⁵⁰ Meditation in a solitary place remote from the world may help others who are still in the world, but only under certain conditions. It must, for example, be deliberately directed towards named individuals. If it floats away into the general atmosphere without any thought of others, it is only a self-absorption, barren to others if profitable to oneself. It can be turned toward the spiritual assistance of anyone the practiser loves or wishes to befriend. But it should not be so turned prematurely. Before he can render real service, he must first acquire the power to do so. Before he can fruitfully pray for persons he must first be able to draw strength from that which is above all persons. The capacity to serve must first be got before the attempt to serve is made. Therefore he should resist the temptation to plunge straightway into prayer or meditation on behalf of others. Instead he should wait until his worship or communion attains its highest level of being. Then – and then only – should he begin to draw from it the power and help and light to be directed altruistically towards others. Once he has developed the capacity to enter easily into the deeply absorbed state, he may then use it to help others also. Let him take the names and images of these people with him after he has passed into the state and let him hold them there for a while in the divine atmosphere.

(89-2) Those who are called by the Overself's Grace to the Overself's presence are few. If we enquire why this should be so, we shall receive varying answers from the authorities in religious mysticism.

(89-3) Another channel for grace's manifestation is through circumstances. These may provide the right surroundings, the right persons and the right happenings for it.

(89-4) The case for Grace is that only the Overself can tell us what the Overself is, can teach us about itself. The ego-intellect cannot do so; the senses certainly cannot and ordinary experience seems far from it.

(89-5) He feels infinity with others and that is enough reason to include them in the circle embraced by his meditation. He needs no other reason.

(89-6) The devotee who is mainly trying to draw God's attention to himself, is still ego-centred.

(89-7) My personal memories of these have revived out of the shadows with a freshness which shows not my own special capacity but their remarkable quality. Once again

¹⁵⁰ The paras on this page are numbered 1 through 9.

they become living personalities to me.

(89-8) If you cannot see the proper way to deal with your problem; if making a right decision or coping with a difficult situation seems too much for you; if all the usual guides to action prove insufficient or unhelpful, then it is time to hand the trouble over to the Superior Power.

(89-9) As he becomes more sensitive to the Overself's presence, he knows that he has only to turn to it to receive divine strength and nourishment.

90
XXII

(90-1)¹⁵¹ A proneness to veneration is necessary in an aspirant: it helps him in different ways. But the sceptical and denigrating attitude which is so common in certain intellectual and social circles tends to make any manifestation of this quality quite impossible.

(90-2) Out of the grand mystery of the Overself, the first communication we receive telling us of, and making us feel, its existence, is Grace.

(90-3) "By him is He realised to whom He is full of grace," says Katha Upanishad.

Old xxiii: Orient and Occident ... NEW XV: The Orient

91
XXIII

(91-1)¹⁵² They brought from India's shores its pearls and its peppers, its silks and its spices, little knowing that this would later be followed by its religions and cults.

(91-2) the narrowed mentalities of those who live under rules of negation, prohibition and limitation.

(91-3) The newcomer landing for the first time in a country like India imagines many more gurus and disciples in those unfamiliar faces than he will actually find, much more spirituality in those ancient cities and villages than there really is.

¹⁵¹ The paras on this page are numbered 10 through 12, making them consecutive with the previous page.

¹⁵² The paras on this page are numbered 15 through 32; they are not consecutive with the previous page - but follow the paras on page 92.

(91-4) The East is being slowly recognised as one authentic source of spiritual knowledge.

(91-5) Indian religious law forbids the mixing of colours and organises society on a skin colour basis (Varna).

(91-6) Reverence for holiness comes easily and naturally to the Indian even more than to most Orientals.

(91-7) The old Orient with its piety and beggary, its sleepiness and fanaticism, has been dissolving before our eyes.

(91-8) The courtesy expressed in polite living and the virtue expressed in good living – this is the acquirement which makes “the Better Man” in Confucius’ phrase, and this is what he bade us cultivate.

(91-9) The basic principle and practical method of Taoism is Wu Wei – “Do Nothing.” This puzzles the ordinary Western mind until it is explained as equivalent to the Psalmist’s “Be still.” Stop the ego’s constant physical and mental activity to let the Overself in!

(91-10) What a man does in his private domestic or family life was to Confucius no less important than what he did in public, although the sage dealt more with the latter.

(91-11) The Andavar wore a large, loosely-wound turban. His body was clad in bright-coloured satin shirt and purplish-black muslin trousers. His face was always cheerful.

(91-12) My personal memories of the Maharshi¹⁵³ are numerous and varied, it would be a pity to let them vanish wholly. So I try here to rescue a few.

(91-13) The name of Confucius is too often associated with imprisonment in a stiff formalism.

(91-14) Yoga is on the way in the West to becoming respectable. What began with human curiosity is moving toward human acclamation.

(91-15) Greek Stoicism, Chinese Taoism and Hindu Yoga had certain common features and common conceptions even though differences were also there.

(91-16) In a region of India where the fruit of cashew trees and the fronds of coconut

¹⁵³ “Maharishee” in the original

palms show themselves everywhere, I met a mentalist. His name was Atmananda.

(91-17) We have witnessed in our own time an inrush of Oriental mysticisms, concepts and practices.

(91-18) The Chinese and the Indian civilisations are at least a thousand years older than the European.¹⁵⁴

92

XXIII

(92-1)¹⁵⁵ After I read Ibn Tufail's "The Awakening of the Soul" my mind gravitated quite naturally to Eastern wisdom.

(92-2) the flat roofs of an Indian town.

(92-3) the graceful cupolas and tall aspiring minarets of a mosque.

(92-4) The gradual coming into fashion of interest in Oriental mystical ideas and practices, the belated recognition that the Occidental outlook may improve by including these additions, the gradual cessation of abuse of heathens, their ignorance and their superstition, the appearance of more books on Eastern themes each year and the giving of more lectures - these things are significant.

(92-5) When a non-Hindu - i.e. a Christian or Muhammadan¹⁵⁶ - fell into a huddle on the tiled floor before him, touching it with his forehead, the Maharshi¹⁵⁷ was obviously embarrassed. But only out of his kindly considerateness for the other man. For he knew that prostration before another man was alien to the custom and attitude of the Christian or Muhammadan.¹⁵⁸

(92-6) The popularity of Zen Buddhism in certain circles, the far wider practice of Hatha Yoga in other ones, brings danger to the authenticity, purity and understanding of the original. Some part of these three may be lost, another part distorted.

(92-7) Restricted as he voluntarily was to the couch, the Maharshi¹⁵⁹ varied his position on it at different times of the day. Sometimes his was a recumbent figure, sometimes a

¹⁵⁴ This section is continued in the paras on page 93.

¹⁵⁵ The paras on this page are numbered 1 through 14.

¹⁵⁶ "Mohammedan" in the original.

¹⁵⁷ "Maharishee" in the original

¹⁵⁸ "Mohammedan" in the original.

¹⁵⁹ "Maharishee" in the original

seated one. He sat, reclined, squatted, leant forwards or backwards. Sometimes he assumed the pose of chin cupped in his hands which always reminded me faintly of Rodin's sculpture "The Thinker."

(92-8) Truth today is not in the ownership of the Orient alone and if certain traditions which have been recounted to me are correct, then it never was, although it unquestionably mostly was.

(92-9) The Indians, out of sentimental patriotism, make much of the limited number of historical evidences of the spread of their ideas to the West in early times. But they make little of the reverse trend brought about by the advance of Alexander's army resulting in the spread of Grecian culture in the East.

(92-10) Oriental fancy can become very exuberant; the stories which gather round the guru's figure can become very prolific: and much of it all may be untrustworthy.

(92-11) They seem utterly out of the contemporary background, as out of date as if they belonged to the medieval period.

(92-12) The Maharshi¹⁶⁰ demonstrated the truth of Lao-Tzu's¹⁶¹ counsel concerning the advantages of lying low if one rests one's life on the Overself. Never once did he push his own name and fame, but his worth came to world recognition. Never once did he ask for a roof over his head but others provided it for him.

(92-13) Great stone figures of the bull, found in many Indian temples, represent Shiva, the Creator.

(92-14) There is inner security behind that smile of Gautama.¹⁶²

93

XXIII

(93-1)¹⁶³ The pleasant smile, the quiet restful air, the detached aloofness of these Buddha figures, may present a new experience to the western beholder who sees them for the first time.

(93-2) Confucius often inculcated the reverential spirit and musical responsiveness. It is

¹⁶⁰ "Maharishee" in the original

¹⁶¹ "Lat-tse's" in the original.

¹⁶² This section is continued in the paras on page 91.

¹⁶³ The paras on this page are numbered 33 through 42; they are not consecutive with the previous page - but follow the paras on page 91.

a mistake to believe he taught only a dry wooden ceremonialism.

(93-3) Confucius is reported to have met and talked with Lao-Tzu,¹⁶⁴ whom he thereafter called "the dragon."

(93-4) I sat in the silent half-deserted Acropolis, looking beyond it in the direction of the blue Aegean waters, and thought of those great minds who once starred the Hellenic heaven. I thought of Pythagoras who travelled to learn, and then settled to teach, the spiritual secrets of Persia, Egypt, India. I thought of Kallikrates, the architect of pillared Parthenon. I thought of Socrates the truth-seeking questioner; of Plato, the sage, who built a Republic based on wisdom in his mind; of Hippocrates, observant, shrewd teacher of physicians; of Pheidias, sculptor of the golden statue of Zeus at Olympia; of Solon, who gave Greece some of its finest law-reforms and economic improvements; of Herodotus, most honest and interesting of historians. I thought of others too, who came later with the coming of Christianity, of mystics, saints and theologians, brilliant in their time.

(93-5) There are ultra-patriotic Indians who claim that aeroplanes and other Western inventions were previously invented by their own progenitors. The only evidence for such claims is a few sentences in the Purana and Veda - early sacred texts from the chapters on mythological history. This kind of fairy-tale evidence is on a par with that offered at the turn of this century by one who described himself as the 'Hebrew National Poet,' who dedicated his book, "To the Learned Men of all Nations" and who asserted that the Talmud was the pository whence Virgil got his best ideas, Pasteur his germ _____,¹⁶⁵ the engineer Eiffel his plan for the famous tower, and even the inventors of the electric telegraph and the bicycle their {original}¹⁶⁶ impulsion!

(93-6) They look at life as if from a distance, unaffected by it intellectually, unmoved by it emotionally, unconcerned with it personally. They seem bloodless creatures, these figures held out to us as ideal by Hindu religio-philosophic texts.

(93-7) This geographical conception of spiritual truth, which places the centre of light in Asia and the centre of darkness in the rest of the world, had some value in the past centuries but it is of dubious value in our own.

(93-8) There are practices in this Eastern tradition which are almost unworkable in a

¹⁶⁴ "Lao-tse" in the original.

¹⁶⁵ A blank space was left in the original because the original typist couldn't read PB's handwriting, or because PB himself left a blank in the para.

¹⁶⁶ A blank space was left in the original because the original typist couldn't read PB's handwriting, or because PB himself left a blank in the para. Only "-al" was visible in the original. We have inserted "original" into the text for clarity.

modern Western background; there are ideals which are almost unattainable when applied in this same scene. Why then borrow and resuscitate them?

(93-9) The dhyana of Sanskrit become the ch'an or ch'anting of Chinese and the zazen of Japanese. All mean contemplation.

(93-10) In the tropic dawn, darkness runs away quickly.

94
XXIII

(94-1)¹⁶⁷ Atmananda¹⁶⁸ moved forward in rhythmic steps, then fell back, a somewhat lesser distance. In this way he made a very slow progress in the ceremonial dance. The strange gripping emotion of the classical music, the Master's solemn exquisitely rhythmic movements now forwards now backwards, the intense blackness of the night, the encircling tall palm trees which themselves encircled us, the hushed air of expectancy and gravity which pervaded the little group of disciples – all created an eerie impression at first but a higher one succeeded it. I knew what the participants in the ancient Greek mysteries must have felt.

(94-2) Islam has its worshipped saints, its walis, despite the Quran's prohibition of such intermediaries between Allah and man.

(94-3) In the Musee¹⁶⁹ Guimet in Paris, we may see a couple of ancient statuettes that perfectly portray Buddha's wonderful half-smile of happy deliverance from this world of ignorance, illusion, error, sin and suffering.

(94-4) The word 'yoga' has been associated in some people's minds with queer ideas and repulsive practices.

(94-5) The taste for beautiful things, homes, architecture and literature came to us with our Greek heritage.

(94-6) (Maharshi)¹⁷⁰ Sometimes one felt in the presence of a visitor from another planet, at other times with a being of another species.

(94-7) A faintly-glowing oil-fed cotton wick showed his shadowy outline as I entered

¹⁶⁷ The paras on this page are numbered 43 through 56, making them consecutive with the previous page.

¹⁶⁸ "Atamanda" in the original.

¹⁶⁹ "Musée" in the original.

¹⁷⁰ "Maharshee" in the original

the small room.

(94-8) Eastern Orthodox Church monasteries do not encourage intellectual work and scholarship. Instead they encourage only attendance at religious services, night vigils, and above all the practice of meditation.

(94-9) These ikons are highly revered, are believed to be permeated with magical power, or else with psychic forces which can cure a man's bodily sickness or even take possession of his mind.

(94-10) These Indian religions which preach futility and enjoin renunciation are as much the product of their tropical enervating climate as the malarias and fevers and choleras which beset Indian bodies.

(94-11) The disconcerting abruptness of his speech, the provoking iconoclasm of his views, made the Krishnamurti¹⁷¹ of those days a fierce critic of the Establishment.

(94-12) The Greeks of today quarrel fiercely over politics. How far are they from Plato's pictured ideal types, as the Indians of today are far from Shankaracharya's¹⁷² pictured sages!

(94-13) Asia has been caught up, and swept along, in the currents of modern ideas and development.

(94-14) If we compare Hebrew with Egyptian texts the coincidence of whole sentences is startling.

Old xxiv: General ... NEW XII: Reflections

95

XXIV

(95-1)¹⁷³ "You gently sip the nectareous Dew" wrote a versifier in a mid-18th century "London Chronicle" about the partaking of tea.

(95-2) There is need and room for both these things. Why then should one or the other be cast out as irreconcilable?

(95-3) Subconsciously fearing to look at the facts as they are, he becomes an innocent at

¹⁷¹ Referring to Jiddu Krishnamurti (not U.G. Krishnamurti). – TJS '15

¹⁷² "Shanka Acharya's" in the original.

¹⁷³ The paras on this page are numbered 1 through 23.

large.

(95-4) Such a man is more to be commiserated for his spiritual blindness than congratulated for his worldly shrewdness.

(95-5) All this is an attempt to explain the situation, not to excuse it.

(95-6) I have often dispensed with formalities and disregarded conventional proprieties.

(95-7) I doubt if this will ever be solved. It is beyond the power of men.

(95-8) If you want to attain a good objective, you must use a good means as no other will bring the same result.

(95-9) An ideal solution would apply only to ideal people.

(95-10) Its meaning is so clear that it needs no interpretation.

(95-11) It is a long distance from being quite naive and being quite knowledgeable.

(95-12) Expect the unexpected!

(95-13) At one extreme are those who are held captive by convention; at the other, those who delight in flouting public opinion.

(95-14) Those who are able to think deeply upon such matters and are also quite well-informed, will find that much of their thinking has been done for them already by sages who preceded us.

(95-15) Why sacrifice one essential merely to gain the other? We could, and should, have both at the same time.

(95-16) My question is asked most respectfully, certainly not in the least derogatively.

(95-17) It is an idea which men receive either with indifference or with incredulity.

(95-18) This is a truth that can never become obsolete, for permanency is stamped upon it.

(95-19) Those gentlemen who sit in one part of Westminster on Parliamentary benches, and those who sleep in another part across the road, under Abbey tombstones, share this in common.

(95-20) The mere spectator who is on the outside can sometimes see more clearly than the active participant who is inside events.

(95-21) What is so seldom understood is that this course is advised not because it is more meritorious but because it is more convenient.

(95-22) They need to reverse their outlook; this is not a matter for condolence but for congratulation! One day, if their mind develops, they may come to perceive and accept such a positive view.

(95-23) Whether led to it by truth, or led to it by necessity, the end result is what matters.

96
XXIV

(96-1)¹⁷⁴ Hippocrates, the Greek Father of Medicine, believed strongly in the influence of climate on human beings, as his writings show.

(96-2) It is the difference between the expert and the amateur, the specialist and the hobbyist.

(96-3) This is a decision on which there can be no universal and general recommendation, so it is left to his own choice.

(96-4) These truths have survived from the most ancient times until our own day. But to state them in a twentieth century context may test the reader's credulity.

(96-5) Between two alternatives it is better to choose that which is least bad.

(96-6) These names and terms have been misapplied by many people who thus brought them into disrepute.

(96-7) But this is only half of the truth. Without fitting the other half to it, there will be a serious danger of being misled.

(96-8) A beard can be picturesque, suggestive, attractive or repulsive.

(96-9) Such ideas were usually ignored or else distrusted, mostly because they were miscomprehended.

¹⁷⁴ The paras on this page are numbered 24 through 40, making them consecutive with the previous page.

(96-10) To believe such a narrow conception is to libel the Universal Mind.

(96-11) What is it but selfishness wearing a deceptive mask?

(96-12) It is foolish to ignore any facts merely because they are unwelcome.

(96-13) There are no clear answers to these difficult questions.

(96-14) He is accustomed to looking out on the world in a certain way.

(96-15) The masses pathetically put their faith in politics and politicians.

(96-16) These ideas have not come to large acceptance in the West.

(96-17) The herd mentality dislikes what is unlike itself, is suspicious of the new.

Old xxv: Human Experience ... NEW XIII: Human Experience

97
XXV

(97-1)¹⁷⁵ He may have to learn the acrobatic art of keeping his ideals intact yet making certain wise and prudent concessions in practice.

(97-2) It is not the mere succession of events that make up the essence of a man's life: it is what he extracts from those events.

(97-3) Even a limited amount of the practice of philosophy produces disproportionately larger gains.

(97-4) Assets become problems by the fluctuation of fate. But problems can be turned into assets by the wisdom of man.

(97-5) Philosophy does not deny anything that is worthwhile in human activity, but on the contrary sustains it.

(97-6) He who is faithful to his inner call at all times, whether in ideals, ego-sacrifice, meditation practice, and the like, loses nothing of worldly advantage in the end – except

¹⁷⁵ The paras on this page are numbered 17 through 30; they are not consecutive with the previous page – but follow the paras on page 98.

what ought to be let go. Providence is rightly named.

(97-7) He sees in the end that all his life and business, relationships and contacts, in the world really constitute a contest with his own self; that all have the forming and finding of himself as the ultimate result and ultimate fulfilment.

(97-8) He himself does not know where to go, what to do, how to decide, in the different and difficult situations that beset human life periodically. But the Overself does know and to It he looks, on It he depends for help in these situations. Whenever the results are unfortunate, it is invariably because he has not heeded the inner voice.

(97-9) If, in looking over the past, he feels shame over the crowd of his frailties, it is well. It is not good to forget experiences from which he has not thoroughly absorbed the lessons. But when he has done so, the sense of shame will depart and the sense of having been cleansed will take its place. He has been granted absolution, and may be at peace.

(97-10) If these ideas about the power of thought are true, they ought to be utilised for all humanity's benefit.

(97-11) The experiences of daily living in the world become, for the quester, occasions for working on himself, for co-operating with the World-Idea as it concerns himself.

(97-12) The Zen layman, living in the world and not in a monastery, tries to transcend whatever enters his life.

(97-13) The faculties which successfully deal with ordinary problems, may prove insufficient to deal with special crisis.

(97-14) He may come in time to feel a certain amusement at watching his own performance on the stage of life.

98

XXV

(98-1)¹⁷⁶ Are the sacred things of life to be kept forever apart from the profane?

(98-2) What is wrong if we claim some happiness from this world provided we keep our balance, the heart anchored to an allegiance higher than the world, the mind always remembering for what it is really here?

¹⁷⁶ The paras on this page are numbered 1 through 16.

(98-3) But the physical world cannot be ignored. It is still there even after you have derided it as an illusion or denounced it as the source of iniquity. You still find it the predominant fact of your experience. The direct sense of its physical existence cannot be disowned, do what you may. So you simply have to come to terms with it.

(98-4) He renders himself as free of the future as he can. In this unplanned life, what he ought to do may come to him as he goes along.

(98-5) To recognise any situation as factual is one thing, but to reconcile it with spiritual life is another.

(98-6) Despite St Francis it must be stated that a wide observation and experience shows poverty to be not necessarily holy, nor prosperity evil.

(98-7) Can he pursue his way calmly ignoring external events?

(98-8) That true philosophy is not merely theoretical as so many who confound it with academic philosophy may believe, is discovered by those who penetrate deeply enough. Its purposes are eminently practical.

(98-9) It can be said with certainty that the study and practice of philosophy enable one to meet life with a certain kind of assurance, its tribulations with some measure of tranquillity, its fluctuations with reconciliation, and its temptations with some measure of judgment.

(98-10) But if experience makes you bitter or cynical, smug or selfish, then it has served you ill. The passing of years can teach wisdom but only if you receive their message aright.

(98-11) When his fine sensitivity comes up against the rough, selfish or materialistic commonplace life of the world as it is, he receives jars and shocks.

(98-12) He is blissfully happy when deep in meditation and mentally peaceful when active in the world.

(98-13) Even the most bliss-wrapt mystic has to descend from his solipsistic world and find the wherewithal to pay his grocer and his landlord.

(98-14) Philosophy leaves the physical plane only to return to it, lets go of activities only to take them up again. For the physical world is as much its proper concern as any other. Everything is revered, every act turned into a religious rite.

(98-15) He has to learn a new art - that of remaining relaxed and at ease, almost an

impassive observer, while his body or his intellect does its work in the world, performs in the role set for it.

(98-16) The belief that this kind of beatitude is valueless for practical life can only be expunged by personal experience.¹⁷⁷

Old xxvi: Mind-Body in Health and Sickness ... NEW X: Healing of the Self

99

XXVI

(99-1)¹⁷⁸ Many an illness or the malfunctioning of an organ or a disease begins with a strong negative thought, and by the latter's constant repetition until it hardens into a chronic mental-emotional condition, builds up to a crisis in a subsequent year.

(99-2) The human body is a part of consciousness, indeed a major part, but consciousness itself is only a part of a larger and deeper consciousness of which we are normally unaware. Yet it is in this mysterious region that the creative origin of the body-idea lies. If the ordinary 'I' cannot make the body keep well by merely holding the thought, this is because the creative power lies in an 'I' which transcends it. The ego which identifies itself with the body, thereby stultifies its latent powers. But as soon as it begins to identify itself with pure Mind, certain powers may begin to unfold. Many cases of mystic phenomena, such as the stigmata of Catholic saints, confirms this.

(99-3) Macmillan touched the area or organ about which the patient complained and stroked it lightly. Soon there was a rise of temperature in that particular part of the body.

(99-4) If the pain is there, racking the physical life, the peace exists behind it, permeating the inner life.

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XXVI

Old xxvii: The Peace Within ... NEW XXIV: The Peace Within You

¹⁷⁷ This section is continued in the paras on page 97.

¹⁷⁸ The paras on this page are numbered 1 through 4.

¹⁷⁹ Blank page

(101-1)¹⁸⁰ None of those humanist qualities which are really worthwhile need be discarded. They ought indeed to be preserved. But they are put into their proper place by philosophy, evaluated at their correct price. For they, as everything else, must be subordinated to, and coordinated with, the life divine.

(101-2) Philosophy brings a man to serenity, it is often said. But it also brings him to the capacity for gentle laughter, for the humanist power of enjoying life.

(101-3) Han Suyin writes "Sadness is so ungrateful."

(101-4) We ask for contradictory and impossible things. For instance, unchanging happiness in a changing world.

(101-5) The quest is a joyful labour: its glimpses afford a bewitching happiness. But it is not a blind labour. There are moments and moods when it acknowledges the suffering inevitably interwoven with human life, the sadness of some of the fundamental inescapable human experiences.

(101-6) Pain lessens or even destroys attachment to the world and the body. Its misery is not all loss or waste. Attachments hold shut the door to heaven: removed or reduced, we get the door to open much more easily.

(101-7) If some people find an underlying melancholy in life, a few find an underlying joy in it.

Old xxviii: Practices for the Quest ... NEW IV: Elementary Meditation

(103-1)¹⁸² The basis of this kind of Affirmation is the change induced by losing oneself in the particular thought through concentration and repetition.

¹⁸⁰ The paras on this page are numbered 1 through 7.

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¹⁸² The paras on this page are numbered 1 through 3.

(103-2) Nicephorus¹⁸³ the Solitary wrote “We know from experience that if you keep on praying in this manner, that if you practice the ‘Prayer of Jesus’ with attention, the whole host of virtues will come to you: love, joy and peace.”

(103-3) The venerable heavily bearded Father Joseph, of Mount Athos, and a teacher of other monks, claims that the “Prayer of Jesus” becomes with time an unstopping activity, productive of enlightening revelation, and purifying from passions. His own disciples spend several hours every day on the mental repetition of this short prayer.

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XXVIII

Paul Brunton: The Discipline of Speech

105
THE DISCIPLINE OF SPEECH¹⁸⁵

(105-1)¹⁸⁶ Too many people use their voices to hinder what is good in their own character, or even to despoil it, instead of using them as instruments of service. How pitiful to see so many employ their tongue in empty chatter and idle gossip for most of their lifetime! When anyone becomes a quester, this matter may no longer be ignored. Buddha did not ask laymen to undergo the rigours which he asked monks to undergo but he did state a few rules of self-discipline which were essential for all alike. Among them he included “Abstain from foolish talk and harsh speech.”

Since no utterance can be recalled into the silence whence it came, the quester will be more than ordinarily scrupulous about all his utterances. This does not mean that he is to abjure all trivial talk, certainly not all humorous talk, but it does mean that he is to bring some degree of discipline to bear upon his vocal activity.

He will not for instance waste time in uncharitably analysing the character of others when no business in which he and they are involved really calls for any analysis at all, let alone the backbiting uncharitable kind. This practice of criticism and slander is a common one and is often the result of the habit of gossiping. It helps no one but hurts everyone – the speaker, the persons spoken about and those who readily listen to condemnatory gossip.

He must attend to his own life, even to the extent of often refraining from talking about other persons. If this calls for a quality of generosity it is he who will be the gainer in the end. If he cannot say anything good about a person, he will prefer to say

¹⁸³ “Nicephoros” in the original.

¹⁸⁴ Blank page

¹⁸⁵ PB himself inserted “(DUP)” by hand.

¹⁸⁶ The para on this page is unnumbered.

nothing at all. If he cannot praise, he will practise silence. And if the situation is one where doing that would ultimately lead to a worse result, then he will criticise helpfully and entirely constructively, not condemn hatefully. If he finds it necessary to be outspoken, he avoids making personal attacks. Sometimes it may be needful to speak sharply, to utter words which may be odious to the other man's ego but necessary to his welfare but in those cases he should first put himself in the calmest, quietest mood and second, speak in the kindest possible way. Is it not better to disagree gently with the other man without being disagreeable to him? When he hears someone filling speech with negative statements and there is no duty laid on him to correct them, he puts his mental attention elsewhere. Better still, he starts affirming and holding the positive ideas which counteract the other person's remarks.

It will help a quester overcome the fault of habitually speaking harsh words or occasionally speaking angry ones, if he practises the following exercise. Let him sit for meditation and think in turn of some of the persons whom he has offended in this way. Then seeing the other person's face and form before him, he is in imagination to speak with the utmost kindness in the one case or with the utmost calmness in the other. He may take any situation or incident which usually provokes his fault into expression. Let him do so with closed eyes and as vividly as he can bring them before his mind's eye.

Further, the discipline of speech requires him to pause momentarily but long enough to consider the effect his words will have on those who hear them. Too many people – and of course especially impulsive people – are too eager to speak before they are ready, or before their words are chosen. The quester tries to avoid using words without awareness of their meaning or responsibility for their effect.

Since experience properly assimilated tinges the character with caution and the speech with reticence, even the right thing if said at an unpropitious time may too easily become the wrong thing. If energy is often squandered in needless talking and

(continued from the previous page) trivial babble, the capacity to concentrate the mind on its deeper levels becomes weakened. This is why "The Mahabharata" praises the practice of silence for the would-be yogi. "The Mahabharata" even asserts that the practice of silence is conducive toward gaining the capacity to discriminate between good and evil.

He will not allow a single word to fall from his lips which does not fall in harmony with the ideal in his mind. Even the slightest deviation from this ideal may be followed by uneasiness.

Speech brings down to the physical level, and so puts into swifter activity, what thought has initiated. To a slight or large extent – depending on the individual power – it may be creative. Hence a person whose daily talk is mostly negative, filled with reports of dislikes and aversions, wrongs, evils, mishaps and sicknesses is a person who is better avoided by those whose own inner weakness makes them susceptible to the

influences carried by others.

If evil things are falsely said about him, he is neither to be surprised nor be annoyed. People see themselves in him, as in a mirror, and he must learn to accept what must needs be. Instead of feeling insulted or hurt, he should thank those who criticise him, for letting him see what may be true about himself and therefore need correcting.

Under this discipline he should recognise that searching for truth must begin with speaking it. To be a liar and a hypocrite is as obstructive to the pursuit of truth as it is distorting to the reception of truth. Every lie – and even to a lesser extent – every “white” lie – obstructs the light on his path and to that extent prevents him from finding his way to that region where the false simply does not and cannot exist. He will be as truthful in his most trivial utterance as in his most solemn one. He will take care to avoid exaggerations and to shun misstatements.

The pursuit of truthfulness must be inflexible, even in situations when it becomes uncomfortable. All questions ought to be answered correctly but awkward questions may be answered with part of the truth, if that will be less harmful than the whole of the truth. The changing circumstances of life will present him with temptations from time to time when it will be much easier to speak falsely than truthfully, or with opportunities to exaggerate for the sake of personal vanity or selfish gain.

If he has trained himself to love truth and abhor falsehood, to fortify the respect for factuality and avoid even the slightest tendency to desert it, there may grow up inside his consciousness a remarkable power. He may be able to detect instinctively when other persons are lying to him. But whatever unusual psychic power unfolds in him, he must protect it well. In this matter prudence puts a bridle on his tongue, which he uses to conceal rather than to reveal, if that should prove necessary. He may not talk to others about the higher teaching or the inner experiences if the act of talking about them makes him feel self-important, if it is stained with conceit and egotism. He must discipline himself to keep silent about them and, when this power has been attained, to give truths and revelations to others under the restriction of their real need and degree of receptivity. It is a foolish aspirant who rushes to tell of each new inner experience, each fresh glimpse that he gets, each little psychic happening or occult revelation that comes to him. The price of babbling verbosely and egoistically about his experiences and beliefs may be a definite inner loss or stagnation. As his ability to practise meditation enters its deeper phases, he will naturally become less talkative and more silent. The quietness which he finds there begins to reflect itself in his speech. But if he speaks fewer words, they carry greater significance behind them and greater responsibility for them.

(continued from the previous page) Some Indian Gurus go so far as to throw out of their uttered speech and written communication all use of the personal pronoun ‘I,’

referring to themselves by name in the third person, that is, as if they were referring to someone else. Certain Catholic Orders of nuns discard the possessives “my” and “mine” from their speech. Is it an affectation, a pose, or a sign of tremendous advancement, to speak of oneself always in the third person? The answer is that it could be any one of these things: only each particular case could provide its own material for a correct judgment.

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THE DISCIPLINE OF SPEECH

¹⁸⁷ Blank page