

Grey Long 03-04

Table of Contents

Old iii: Meditation ... NEW IV: Elementary Meditation & XXIII: Advanced Contemplation.....	1
Visualisation	53
III	57
Old iv: The Path ... NEW I: Overview of the Quest	129
Interior Word	215
IV	216

Editor's Note: This is the second of the "Grey Long" series of PB's notebooks. They get their name from their shape: they were typed on A5 paper – which is 148 x 210 mm, or 5.8 inches wide and 8.3 inches long. These particular pages have two holes at the top of the page instead of two or three holes in the left margin. This allowed PB to type right to the edge of the page (and beyond) which he did with some problematic results. Because these notebooks have to be held vertically rather than horizontally, they came to be called "long;" and this particular group were originally housed in binders that were covered with silvery-grey paper – hence "Grey Long." Each binder in the series holds about the same number of pages, but not the same number of Categories. The binders are grouped as follows: 1 – 2; 3 – 4; 5 – 7; 8 – 13; 14 – 19; and 20 – 28.

As for the current volume, the two categories are entirely self-contained. Old Category iii has one section with the specific heading "Visualisation" which is self-explanatory. Old Category iv has a brief section headed "Interior Word;" further paras on this topic can be found throughout this file and others of the same category. There are also a number of paras marked "The Dark Night of the Soul" or simply "The Dark Night;" these deal with a specific state that follows upon an extended period of spiritual illumination wherein the ego surges back to the fore.

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

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

(1-1)¹ When, some years ago, I stayed in an ashram in Western India and idly looked through the volumes on its library shelves, I found a highly-abridged version of a work called Yogavasishta, I realised that I had also found one of those Eastern writings which deserve Western readers, too. That version had been made by an Indian scholar long before, had apparently never circulated beyond the Indian shores, and try as I might, I could not secure another copy to take away with me. I think it had been privately published, but anyway it was out of print. The contents were so interesting that I never forgot the Sanskrit title. – Now another and new abridgment is in my hands. Its reading has given me pleasurable hours, interesting hours and thought-provoking hours. It is a book that should be also in the hands of every mentalist.

(1-2) The expanding interest in yoga is in part due to its value as a technique of increasing our understanding of ourselves, achieving more happiness and peace of mind. It can be applied to normal living by normal persons, and its use is not limited only to hermits and monks.

(1-3) It comes to this, that we have to learn the art of doing nothing! It would seem that everyone could practise this without the slightest preparation or training but the fact is that hardly anyone can do so. For the phrase ‘doing nothing’ must be interpreted in an absolute sense. We must learn to be totally without action, without thought – without any tension or manifestation of the ego. The Biblical phrase, ‘Be still!’ says exactly the same thing but says it positively where the phrase says it negatively. If we really succeed in learning this art, and sit absolutely still for long periods of time, we shall be given the best of all rewards, the one promised by the Bible. We shall “know that I am God.”

(1-4) If a student is not purified enough, nor informed enough, it is better not to endeavour to reach the trance stage. He should devote his efforts to the control of thoughts and the search for inner tranquillity along with this self-purification and improvement of knowledge.

(1-5) It is a useful exercise to spend time recollecting the previous day’s actions, situations and happenings in the same order in which they manifested. Those persons who appear in them should be recalled as vividly as they were then seen, and their voices heard as clearly.

(1-6) It is most important to practise regularly, for every lapse throws success farther away quite disproportionately to the time lost.

¹ The paras on this page are numbered 1 through 7.

(1-7) Perhaps the only part of the body which is not to be allowed to fall into this relaxed state is its back.

2²

III

3

III

(3-1)³ If he holds firmly to his purpose, the day must come when the meditation period will be regarded as one of daily blessing, one to be enjoyed and no longer merely worked through. Indeed, the more he deepens his inner life the more he will want to be alone for these practices. He will take care to keep away from unnecessary meetings with others. For him the hours of useless idle talk are at an end. The delight and fruit of meditation replace them. Time is now a part of his most precious possessions and no longer to be thrown away thoughtlessly.

(3-2) The picture must be perfectly vivid and sharply formed. It must be held for a little while. Then let it slowly fade away into the still centre of your being, absorbed by its light and love.

(3-3) A housewife wrote to me that she found herself too busy with her duties to sit down and meditate but by thinking about spiritual subjects as she went about her work, she found with time that this not only lightened its drudgery but also developed into a kind of meditation itself.

(3-4) Some meditation exercises are not without danger but this is because most exercises share such danger. Hence, they are usually prescribed along with the religious devotions, intellectual training and moral disciplines intended to eliminate their danger. Where these safeguards have been absent, unfortunate results may be perceived both in the Orient and the Occident, both in the past annals of mysticism and the present ones. The philosophic discipline and the purificatory preparation are also intended to guard against the danger of inflation of the ego. The cultivation of humility, the moral re-education, the rigorous self-examination and the honest self-criticism form part of these preparations.

(3-5) The belief that reality can be touched only in the trance state implies that its attainment is an intermittent condition and that a man would have to spend twenty-four hours every day to sustain it if he wished to remain perfectly enlightened. This is

² Blank page

³ The paras on this page are numbered 8 through 15, making them consecutive with the previous page.

an error, a case of confusion between the end and only one of the means to this end. It is the love which he brings to the task which really matters. Prolonged trances, set meditations and formal reflections are, after all, only instruments whereas such love is the dynamic power that wields them.

(3-6) At this point where concentration has been fully achieved all striving should cease. The mind is then able to repose in itself.

(3-7) At first you will find that you cannot keep your attention on the selected idea. But pull your thoughts back to it again and again.

(3-8) Always close your meditation or end your prayer with a thought for others, such as; "May all beings be truly happy."

4⁴

III

5

III

(5-1)⁵ Nor should the physical preparation neglect the hands. Free them too from tensions, the fingers from being taut. Let them rest lightly on the knees or, one palm inside the other, on the lap. Relax the hands – and it will be easier to relax the thoughts.

(5-2) After some practice he will less and less consciously think of the technique and more and more instinctively follow it.

(5-3) Meditation ordinarily needs quiet surroundings and closed eyes.

(5-4) The reason why a lying-down position is to be avoided is that it tends to sleep.

(5-5) All bodily movements should be brought to an end until the close of the session.

(5-6) The deeper he penetrates the closer he comes to his true self.

(5-7) Let him immerse himself in that feeling and little by little a powerful sense of well-being will penetrate his heart.

⁴ Blank page

⁵ The paras on this page are numbered 16 through 30, making them consecutive with the previous page.

(5-8) The ability to bring the mind to controlled one-pointedness is extremely difficult and its achievement may require some years of effort and determination. He need not allow himself to become discouraged but should accept the challenge thus offered for what it is.

(5-9) It is better to take plenty of time, to sit as unhurriedly and as leisurely as possible, and thus get the correct form established from the beginning.

(5-10) When his thoughts are brought into a stilled condition and his awareness fully introverted, a state resembling sleep will supervene but unlike sleep will be illumined by consciousness.

(5-11) In this exercise he thinks back to the time that is not too near the present nor yet too far from it. He tries to reconstruct imaginatively a major episode which affected his feelings to the uttermost. But while doing so he also judges those feelings from his present standpoint and knowledge – philosophically.

(5-12) During that blessed hour when he sits in contemplation he finds his true self.

(5-13) It is not advisable to keep the eyes too widely open, for this will tire them. (Trataka⁶):

(5-14) It would be easy at certain stages to feel this fascination of interior states so powerfully as to become alienated from everyday existence.

(5-15) Whenever a glimpse is given to him, he should stretch its duration to the utmost. This can be markedly helped by being very careful to keep his physical position unchanged, by not even slightly moving hand or foot or trunk. The perfectly still body offers the best condition for retaining the perfectly still mind. If attention is to be placed anywhere in the body, it should be placed in the region of the heart.

6⁷

III

7

III

(7-1)⁸ The practice of self-inquiry begins with the self's environment and ends with its centre. It asks, "What is the world?" Then, "What is the Body?" Next, "What is the

⁶ "Tratalsa" in the original. "Trāṭaka" in Sanskrit means "an ascetic's method of fixing the eye on one object" – a technique mentioned by PB himself often. – TJS '15

⁷ Blank page

Mind?" Then, "What is the source of happiness?" And finally, "What am I?" at the threshold of its innermost being.

(7-2) The first step in mind control is to restrict the area in which thoughts can move about. This is done by taking a single subject, a single object or a single sentence and, for a period of time daily, limiting attention to it.

(7-3) This practice of picturing oneself as one ought to be, of visualising the man free from negative qualities and radiant with positive ones that is part of the Quest's ideal, has near magical results.

(7-4) The thought-flow may be stopped by forcible means such as breath control but the result will then be only a transient and superficial one. If a deeper and more durable result is desired, it is essential to conjoin the breath control with other kinds of self control, with a discipline of the senses and a cleansing of the thoughts.

(7-5) Meditation needs to become very intense and very deep before the last phases of the second stage can be left behind. It is in these phases that the great truths concerning the ego, the self, God and the world can be most profitably held before the mind.

(7-6) Getting the practice underway during the first stage requires cutting loose from memories of the day's earlier acts. The more incisive and determined this beginning is, the quicker he will be able to finish this stage and pass into the next one.

(7-7) In the Lotus Posture the hands are placed in the lap, one on top of the other. There is both a symbolical and practical meaning in this posture. The hands folded in the lap stand for complete rest from all earthly labours and worldly activities. By stilling the mind and body, the man withdraws from the Not-Self into his meditational quest of the True Self.

(7-8) It is important to give the mind a definite idea to hold and mull over or a definite line to follow and concentrate on. It must be positive in this early stage before it can safely become passive in a later stage.

(7-9) It may seem curious that the physical preparation for a mental process like meditation should involve the feet, as is evidenced for example in statures of the Buddha sitting with loosed ankles. This is because there are nerve centres and endings in the soles which when pressed or when the blood flow is inhibited, have a reflex action on their opposite number – the head.

⁸ The paras on this page are numbered 31 through 40, making them consecutive with the previous page.

(7-10) This first stage is devoted to gaining prompt and effective control of attention.

8⁹

III

9

III

(9-1)¹⁰ Could one of these yogis practise his meditation while assailed by the deafening noise of a steel girder riveting machine operating outside his cave? Is it practicable to follow the advice of the Maharshi,¹¹ which I heard him give a would-be meditator complaining about being bitten by mosquitoes, to ignore them? Let it be noted that no person who is trying to practise this art could be distracted if he did not attend to the sense affected, whether it be hearing aroused by a machine or feeling aroused by a mosquito.

(9-2) The shoulders come in first for attention because any tenseness of feeling is reflected in them. Loosen the shoulder muscles and then shake the nape of the neck a few times to free it from strains.

(9-3) The miseries and errors of the past are all obliterated in the intense peacefulness of the present.

(9-4) The mind can be influenced by the five senses only when it attends to them.

(9-5) Before anyone starts the practice of meditation, it is advisable that he first make some effort and some progress toward becoming a well-adjusted person. Otherwise he will either profit little from his attempt or else the capacity he does develop will be erratic, deceptive and possibly even harmful in its results.

(9-6) [At a certain depth of penetration into his inward being, pain of the body and misery of the emotions are unable to exist. They disappear from the meditator's consciousness.]¹²

(9-7) The second stage of meditation shows its largest fruits when the meditations are practised with patience and they become deep, long and intense.

⁹ Blank page

¹⁰ The paras on this page are numbered 41 through 51, making them consecutive with the previous page.

¹¹ "Maharishi" in the original.

¹² PB himself heavily edited this para by hand. It originally read: "At a certain depth of penetration by the meditator into his inward being, pain of the body and misery of the emotions are unable to exist and disappear."

(9-8) The more time you give yourself for these exercises, the less hurried you will feel. And this in turn will allow you to express more successfully the qualities of patience and reverence which an approach to the Overself must necessarily have.

(9-9) Withdraw attention from everything outside and imagine a radiant shining Presence within the heart. Visualise it as a pure golden sunny light. Think of it as being pure Spirit.

(9-10) The philosophical system of meditation combines all those varied methods and diverse subjects which are needed for an all-round, well-balanced development. Therefore it combines several techniques, such as the constructive use of imagination in character building with the passive waiting for intuition in cultivating awareness. It brings together one form which calms the mind, with another which stimulates it.

(9-11) One thing which he is likely to derive from the regular practise of meditation when some proficiency is attained, is a sense of inner growth, a definite awareness that progress is being made.

10¹³

III

11

III

(11-1)¹⁴ If he cannot fit this period into the early morning or late night, let him fit it into any time of the day that is convenient to him. But if, in the pressure and busy-ness of modern city living, he cannot even do that, then he can adopt the two practises of first beginning and closing the day with short prayers and second, repeating a declaration semi-mechanically during the day's activities.

(11-2) A fit theme for his meditations is to take an attribute of the Overself.

(11-3) In the meditational work upon eradicating the fault, he may begin by trying to remember as many occasions as he can where he showed it, and express repentance for them.

¹³ Blank page

¹⁴ The paras on this page are numbered 52 through 60, making them consecutive with the previous page.

(11-4) When he can sit still and composed, shutting the door of his thought and room on the endless agitation of worldly business or worldly pleasure, these hours will grant him the true significance of his own life.

(11-5) During the first period, which may extend to half an hour, when nothing seems to happen and the line of thought or awareness is wobbly and uncertain, discouragement irksomeness and impatience quite often overcome the practiser. They may induce him to abandon the session for that day. Such a surrender to defeatism is unwise. Even in the case of those who have practised for some years the tedious initial waiting period may still have to be endured. For it is the period during which thoughts settle slowly down just as a glass of muddy water slowly clears as the mud settles to the bottom. The proper attitude to hold while this process continues is patience. This is quite indispensable.

(11-6) It is an art in which he learns first to absent himself from his surroundings by concentrating on a thought and later, to absorb himself in the Spiritual Mind by dismissing all thought.

(11-7) A new day can bring a new hopefulness to the most wretched of men provided he begins it with a meditation at dawn. For then life is really fresh, the mind is quite unfatigued and contact with the intuitive self a little easier to get. A meditation at such a crucial yet glorious hour can fix the whole day's pattern.

(11-8) He is unlikely to be able to get settled in the first stage if his body is disturbed by stinging mosquitoes or uncomfortable seating, by freezing cold or sweltering heat. It is prudent to take the requisite preventive measures before sitting down to practice rather than to have to abandon the attempt after pursuing it in vain.

(11-9) If, in the middle or later part of his practice someone speaks to him but gets no reaction from him, he can be sure that this first stage has been mastered and that the second stage is well advanced.

12¹⁵

III

13

III

(13-1)¹⁶ It is one purpose of such meditation to create, for a short period and under favourable circumstances, those new and higher qualities, as well as that power of

¹⁵ Blank page

mastery over his being, which the aspirant will one day be able to express continuously and under the most difficult circumstances.

(13-2) All the work he is called on to do in the first stage is to secure the right conditions in the place around him, to calm the emotions, control the breathing and concentrate the attention. Only when all this has been sufficiently achieved is he ready for the second stage – meditation proper – when the objective is to turn yearningly towards his higher self. Everything before this is merely preparatory work, to enable him to keep his mind steadily upon the principal objective which emerges later during the second stage.

(13-3) (Visualisation Exercise): It will help him if, for a few minutes he stops whatever exercise he is engaged with and projects the mental image of himself doing it successfully.

(13-4) How can a few feeble minutes produce great results? We need to take more time, to sacrifice some non-essential activity and to fill in the many momentary interludes during and between the essential ones with spiritual recollection.

(13-5) What is the best bodily position to assume for the practice of meditation? The answer depends on the particular kind of exercise to be done, on its objective, on the previous experience, or lack of it, of the meditator himself, but most of all it depends on what he finds easiest and comfortable. But once started, he should try to sit perfectly still and not to move his seat or fidget his hands. It is better to sit upright than to slouch or to recline.

(13-6) In this matter of attending to his exercise, he should be strict with himself. If he is faithful, he will develop slowly to the degree where habit will lead him to the meditation room at the appointed hour even if he has forgotten his duty.

(13-7) The sublime peace of meditation can only be had by forgetting the world and its worries, by turning attention partially or wholly away from the personal life and physical surroundings.

(13-8) It takes determination and persistence to bring the mind during these practice periods into a fixed concentrated state. The man who gives up too soon and too easily is evidently not ready yet and must work at preparing himself in other ways.

(13-9) It would be a foolish waste of time to approach the meditation period under a sense of pressure, with half the mind already looking forward to its termination. It would defeat whatever effort is made and doom it from the start.

¹⁶ The paras on this page are numbered 61 through 70, making them consecutive with the previous page.

(13-10) The second stage is fully attained when his mind becomes so absorbed in the object or subject of its attention as to forget itself utterly as a result.

14¹⁷

III

15

III

(15-1)¹⁸ When he feels the first signs of a mood favourable to meditation, he ought not to let the chance go. It ought to be sufficient excuse for putting aside either his laziness or his other activity.

(15-2) Bringing the imagination to his help and making a mental image of the kind of man he desires to be is a useful form of meditation.

(15-3) The eyes are to be closed or outward and visible distractions will claim his attention.

(15-4) The simplest position for a Western-born student is to sit in a straight-backed chair, to place the hands on the knees with palms down resting on them, to hold the chin in and head up. The place where he practises should be one where he can be alone, see no people and hear no voices.

(15-5) A Jain Yoga Meditation Standing posture is shown by Colossus at Shravana Belgola, Mysore. The figure stands erect, toes slightly turned out, feet three inches apart, arms hanging down at sides and the palms of hands touching the side of thighs.

(15-6) When the intensely positive work of the first stage is over, then – and not before – he can let himself go as if ready to float idly on a stream.

(15-7) He may, if he holds on and succeeds in crossing the border of the intermediate stage, begin to feel a sense of impending discovery.

(15-8) In this state, he becomes oblivious to the passing of time.

(15-9) He must pursue this faint feeling as it bears him into the inmost recesses of his being. The farther he travels with it in that direction, the stronger will it become.

¹⁷ Blank page

¹⁸ The paras on this page are numbered 71 through 83, making them consecutive with the previous page.

(15-10) The most prudent arrangement is to set himself a fixed hour for the practise from the beginning, and to allow no excuse, no pretext, to cause him to deviate from it.

(15-11) He should sit down by the seashore or on a hillside or on the roof of a tall building, or in any other place where he can get a long uninterrupted view of ocean and sky [or sky alone.]¹⁹ If no other place is available, let him lie on the ground and gaze at the sky. Then let him think of the Spirit as being like this vast expanse in its freedom and uniqueness but infinite and boundless where the other is not.

(15-12) Ordinarily our minds have too limited and too ego-centred a range. It is needful to broaden them by reflections and meditations which are highly abstract and totally impersonal. "The universe is infinite and unmeasurable. How tiny and insignificant is this planet Earth in relation to it! How trivial and unimportant are earthly things, if the planet itself is such! How ridiculous to let oneself be captured and imprisoned by momentary sensual pleasures which have not even the duration of most of these things!" Such is one sample of how this exercise could begin.

(15-13) At this great depth of consciousness nothing from the body's world is heard or seen or registered.

16²⁰

III

17

III

(17-1)²¹ The second and third stages may have five stations from start to finish, although this is not the experience of all aspirants. In the first the body becomes numb and its weight vanishes. In the second, a fiery burning force uplifts the emotions and energises the will. In the third a sensation of being surrounded by light is felt. In the fourth the man is alone in a dark void. In the fifth he seems to dissolve until there is nothing but the infinite formless being of God.

(17-2) Let him pause in the day's routine once every hour to recollect himself.

(17-3) It was sweet to be in the temple of true consciousness but I could not stay indefinitely. I roused myself to ordinary waking consciousness.

¹⁹ "or sky alone" was typed above the line and inserted with a caret.

²⁰ Blank page

²¹ The paras on this page are numbered 84 through 98, making them consecutive with the previous page.

(17-4) The most balanced procedure is to alter the themes and exercises from time to time to meet the different requirements of his all-round development as well as the different intuitive urges and passing moods which may manifest themselves.

(17-5) Whenever the fixed hour is indicated by the clock but not by his memory, or, whenever it is overlooked under the press of business, the invitation to meditate will silently and sweetly be delivered to his conscious mind by the subconscious.

(17-6) There are techniques which enable him to achieve this state of mind.

(17-7) It is not helpful to meditation if one becomes aware of the presence of others. The awareness will interrupt the attempt to concentrate. This is one reason why solitude is nearly always prescribed.

(17-8) The superior type of aspirant can dispense with symbols but this type is much less to be found.

(17-9) Once he has assumed his position for meditation, it is better not to shift it, and it is certainly essential not to fidget.

(17-10) The aim is to work, little by little, toward slowing down the action of thinking first and stilling it altogether later.

(17-11) The intenser the longing for enlightenment, the easier it is to practise recollection.

(17-12) By this single act of recollection, he brings several benefits in its wake.

(17-13) More Medieval Christians practised the techniques of meditation than modern ones do. But a principal reason for that was the existence of more monasteries and convents to take care of the meditators. Those who did not care to be buffeted about in the storms of the world found plenty of harbours of refuge to which they could turn their boats.

(17-14) He will come in time to start the period with ardour and to spend it joyfully, its minutes will be regarded as precious ones; its high peaks of achieved stillness as Elysian interludes.

(17-15) In all relaxation and meditation exercises which involve sitting [but not squatting]²² in a chair, both feet should rest flat on the floor.

²² PB himself inserted "but not squatting" by hand.

(19-1)²⁴ He must train himself during solitary hours in the qualities he seeks to express during active ones. Creative imagination and concentrated thinking are the means for this self-training.

(19-2) When all movements are at an end, and all physical actions are suspended, he can enter into the most interesting of all states.

(19-3) Whether in a monastery, a church or an ashram, I never cared for group prayer or group meditation. It seemed that the people were too conscious of one another when they ought to have been conscious of what was going on in themselves.

(19-4) The art of meditation cannot be mastered in a hurry or learnt as a hobby. One must give it the patience and importance it merits.

(19-5) When he can give total attention to the thought, and sustain it to the end, concentration will have been achieved.

(19-6) When he closes his eyelids to meditate, he should close out the world and its cares.

(19-7) The ecstasy of that state is rare, the abundant happiness it yields is unforgettable.

(19-8) The aim is to make such recollection a continuous affair ultimately.

(19-9) He is a sailor, taking spiritual soundings in the deeper water of his own being.

(19-10) The first drawback of meditating in the prone position is that it is more favourable to drowsiness.

(19-11) It needs only a brief interval now and then to practise this self-recollection during the day; it is only a matter of two or three minutes.

²³ Blank page

²⁴ The paras on this page are numbered 99 through 117, making them consecutive with the previous page.

(19-12) The clearness of mind which pervades this state is extraordinarily intense. It lights up every person and every incident coming into the area of thought but even more, himself.

(19-13) The practise will have no chance to succeed unless it is begun in a mood that knows no haste.

(19-14) When body, mind feeling and Overself are all in harmony, the highest goal of meditation has been attained.

(19-15) The semi-darkness, the shut door and shuttered windows help to cut off disturbances from without; the [fixed topic and the positive attitude]²⁵ help to cut off distractions from within.

(19-16) The man who is impatient for quick results will soon find meditation exercises irksome, dull or forced labour. This is an art which yields little result to dabbling but great one to slow steady plodding effort.

(19-17) He must wait in the stillness until there is a sudden catch at his heart, an abrupt intake of breath.

(19-18) The initial period is comparable to the initial "warming-up" period which electronic and radio tubes require before becoming active.

(19-19) In the complete meditation the surrender of self is also complete. The Overself alone is then present.

20²⁶

III

21

III

(21-1)²⁷ [These physical details are important so that he may [make himself] sufficiently comfortable to forget his body.]²⁸

²⁵ PB himself inserted "fixed topic and the positive attitude" by hand.

²⁶ Blank page

²⁷ The paras on this page are numbered 118 through 134, making them consecutive with the previous page.

²⁸ PB himself heavily edited this para by hand. It originally read: "These physical details are important partly so that he may be sufficiently comfortable to forget his body and partly because"

(21-2) If the initial period of distracted, wandering over-active or restless thoughts irks him by its length, he should remember that this shows the state of his mind during most of the day.

(21-3) The hour when the sun either appears or sets on the horizon is a good one to practise these exercises.

(21-4) The ego dissolves into that infinity of relaxed being which is unforgettable and therapeutic. All strains fade out, all pressures vanish with the gentle influx of this peace-filled mood.

(21-5) He begins to practise real meditation only when he begins to reach the silence of feelings and thoughts inside himself. Until then he is merely manoeuvring around to attain this position.

(21-6) Shutting the eyes is only the first step toward shutting all the senses. That in its turn is only a step towards the still harder task of shutting out all thoughts and all ordinary everyday feelings.

(21-7) It is as if he were bodiless, a purely mental being.

(21-8) Concentration is the opposite of diffusion.

(21-9) He is determined to stop the mind's wanderings and to impose his command upon it.

(21-10) In that deeper state when the body is held still with concentration, the mind paradoxically feels most liberated.

(21-11) It refreshes the heart and renews the will in the most extraordinary way if we sit, with hands crossed in the lap or open on the knees and with mind surrendered, quiet, empty.

(21-12) That desirable inner state is close to us, but its attainment is elusive to us. The mind is more slippery than an eel when one touches the fringe of the state for, usually, the next minute one loses it in a flash.

(21-13) If he emerges from this deep state, he will recognise his surroundings by slow gradations only. His reluctance to leave that region of absolute delight may account for this slowness.

(21-14) What man could do anything but succeed if he started meditating with the attitude that no matter how long he has to wait for the feeling of contact with the Overself, he will continue to sit there.

(21-15) [In daytime draw down the blinds; in night time switch off the light. Place the feet together.]²⁹

(21-16) Let the hands rest relaxed on the thighs or in the lap.

(21-17) It is something far deeper than mere restful quietness, something dynamic and intense.³⁰

22³¹

III

23

III

(23-1)³² He feels that he is gazing down at himself from a height seeing his personal ego for the trivial thing that it is.

(23-2) There are definite stages which mark his progress. First he forgets the larger world, then his immediate surroundings, then his body and finally his ego.

(23-3) The exercise of watching a thought arise and vanish and then intently holding on to the interval before the next thought arises, is a hard one. It needs months and years of patient practice. But the reward, when it comes, is immense.

(23-4) In the deeper phases, certain thoughts which come to him can be taken as divine guidance. "Thy will."

(23-5) The most important of the several purposes of this period is not achieved until he is able to withdraw from being the person bearing his name and from playing the role which he habitually appears on life's stage.

(23-6) Sit in reverence before the setting or rising sun.

²⁹ PB himself heavily edited this para by hand. It originally read: "In daytime draw the blinds in day or switch off the light in nighttime. Place the feet together."

³⁰ Handwritten note in the lower right margin reads "(III)."

³¹ Blank page

³² The paras on this page are numbered 135 through 151, making them consecutive with the previous page.

(23-7) Those who have tried it know how much harder real meditation is than mere thinking. The two are not the same.

(23-8) As he enters this fourth dimension of the Soul, infinite well-being pervades him.

(23-9) He will arrive at the happy stage of being aware in his deepest mind of this holy sanctuary.

(23-10)³³ His virtue is not cold and selfish and self-admiring, although it may seem so to those who [have insufficient knowledge of these matters.]³⁴

III

(23-11) Winter marks the opening of that period from just before Christmas and culminating with Easter when the inner forces of Nature make it possible for man to make quicker progress than during the rest of the year. It is a suitable period to intensify aspiration, increase study and meditate more.

(23-12) At this point he may lose touch with the outer world and no longer see or sense it in any way. The consciousness sinks away from place and form, the passing of time and the solidity of matter, into its own being.

(23-13) He will no longer feel the weight of his body pressing on its seat. Instead, it will feel as light as air.

(23-14) There is no experience in ordinary life equal to it, no joy so perfect.

(23-15) The five senses serve us well in the ordinary hours of actual life but tyrannise over us when we try to transcend it and enter the spiritual life.

(23-16) The hours of long meditation will fix in time a serene expression upon his face.

(23-17) If he is responsive to music, he may employ its help to stir spiritual feelings as a preparation for the actual period of meditation.

24³⁵

III

³³ PB himself categorized this para as "VI" by hand.

³⁴ PB himself inserted "have insufficient knowledge of these matters." by hand.

³⁵ Blank page

(25-1)³⁶ When thoughts are utterly quiescent and the body utterly immobile, the meditation has finished its second stage.

(25-2) Within a few minutes of starting the exercise they feel exhausted. The effort to concentrate the mind is hard enough but to concentrate and introvert it at the same time is too much for them.

(25-3) The experience may begin with highly-charged emotional tension, more compulsive than anything he has ordinarily experienced.

(25-4) The wisdom of Jesus warned men not to let the sun come down on their wrath, for their prayers would be profitless, their God unhearing. For the same reason do not approach meditation with hatred towards someone in your heart. If you cannot get over the sense of injury he has created, practice some relaxation exercises first, slow and deepen the breath-cycle, make it even and rhythmic. Stretch the body out flat on a couch and let it lie still for five minutes. Only after all these preliminaries have cooled your indignation, may you begin to meditate.

(25-5) There is the silence of the mentally dull and spiritually inactive. There is also the silence of the wise and illumined.

(25-6) He has developed the capacity to open the door of his inner being. He has reached the stillness which envelops its threshold. But this is only a beginning, not the end. He has now to pass beyond it and find out what the light itself holds for him.

(25-7) It is an innate character of the untrained intellect to resist the effort its owner is making for it soon goes off in directions other than the one he has chosen. He soon finds that he has let it become occupied with a different topic, usually with several different topics. If he uses his power of will to achieve his objective, there will be a great struggle to keep out irrelevant ideas and wandering imaginations.

(25-8) It is as if he was looking at a distant self of years ago and now a stranger to him.

(25-9) But why must the mind be stilled, it will be asked, to know God? Because God moves in and through the universe itself so silently and in such stillness that atheists doubt whether this divine power is really there. In the state of rapt mental quiet the

³⁶ The paras on this page are numbered 152 through 162, making them consecutive with the previous page.

human mind approaches the divine mind and, as the quietness deepens, is able to make its first conscious contact with it.

(25-10) Those who continue the regular exercises in meditation are outnumbered by those who give them up. The pressure of modern existence is too much for them.

(25-11) Observe how still our whole being spontaneously becomes when we want to be fully receptive just before some important announcement. If it is of the highest possible importance, we almost hold our breath, such is the intense stillness needed to take it in to the utmost degree and to miss nothing. How much more should we be still throughout every part of mind and body when waiting to hear the silent pronouncements of the Overself!³⁷

26³⁸

III

27

III

(27-1)³⁹ In this matter of meditation we must penetrate the mind's layers more deeply if we would let in more light on it.

(27-2) Although the practice of sitting still is the commonest physical position, it is not the only one. There are other ways of reaching the higher level of consciousness. A swaying of the body, to-and-fro or round and round, is another. A sacred silent rhythmic dance still another.

(27-3) Those who love to see the sun in its mystery-laden risings or witness its equally mystery-laden settings bear outward testimony to an inward relationship.

(27-4) When they are at the very threshold of the Void men shrink and recoil from it. There is fear of the unknown or of the possibility of annihilation. There is fright at the likelihood of utter blankness. There is a suspicion that the 'I' may discover its own illusoriness.

(27-5) The catching of the breath happens partly by itself, partly done deliberately to help bring the body into harmony with a deeper level of mental absorption.

³⁷ This section is continued in the paras on page 33.

³⁸ Blank page

³⁹ The paras on this page are numbered 1 through 13, and are not consecutive with the previous page.

(27-6) Japa is a mantra specifically restricted in meaning to a name of God. Like all mantras it is constantly repeated. It is not only one way of prayerful remembrance of God but also a simple easy method of overcoming the mind's tendency to wander about and to bring it into concentration. It can also be assisted by harmonising its syllables with the incoming and outgoing breaths.

(27-7) A feeling of drawing nearer to the essence of his own consciousness may grow slowly. A few riper souls may be astonished by a swifter result.

(27-8) None of these other ways of getting absorbed is absolutely pre-requisite; the essential thing is to catch the delicate feeling of being indrawn and to go along with it.

(27-9) Little by little if in addition to the practice he does some preparatory or accompanying work on himself to clear a way through the obstacles which thoughts, emotions, passions, foolishness and environment have accumulated, some encouraging result may begin to show.

(27-10) Those who do not recline or half-recline on a couch but follow the usual Oriental style of sitting erect may find themselves moving their legs every few minutes as their position becomes uncomfortable. This distracts mind and disturbs concentration. It is best to find which posture and seat is most comfortable.

(27-11) The difference between practice of Japa and practice of mantra is former uses only sacred words or names but latter may use non-sacred, secular or even meaningless words.

(27-12) He becomes sensitive at times even psychic, getting the feeling of what someone nearby is thinking or feeling.

(27-13) Learn to free yourself from all the inner and outer bindings as the spirit wafts you into utter lightness and [stillness.]⁴⁰

28⁴¹

III

29

III

(29-1)⁴² Consider the tranquillity which comes, either to the mind or the body, or both, when men live more in harmony with Nature, at sunset. The orb descends in a blaze of

⁴⁰ PB himself inserted "stillness." by hand.

⁴¹ Blank page

glory in the West. Consider further the Greek idea of the “blessed Western isles” and the Chinese “happy realm of the West” pertaining to the soul.

(29-2) This inward light reflects itself physically as a sort of lightness both in the air and in the body itself.

(29-3) It is not essential to enter the trance state in order to experience sufficient depth of meditation, although many do seek it in the popular belief of its necessity. The advanced Short Path treader develops the capacity without the necessity. That is to say, he can enjoy the benefits of a stilled mind in an instant whenever outer circumstances permit him to relax but without having to fall into a condition oblivious of outside scenes, sounds and shapes.

(29-4) To find your way to the major truths it is not enough to use the intellect alone, however sharpened it may be. Join intuition to it: then you will have intelligence. But how does one unfold intuition? By penetrating deeper and hushing the noise of thoughts.

(29-5) Yoga is, in the earlier stages, a bodily position to be assumed and a mental practice to be done. But in the advanced stage it seeks to transcend the other two, to move up to relaxed forgetfulness of them and peaceful self-absorption in the Overself.

(29-6) One may sink inward to the point of being tightly-held by the delicious Stillness, unable for a while to move limb or body into activity.

(29-7) Many members of a group use their master’s face for the purpose. Many Hindus choose the deity they worship for the mental image to be meditated on. Jesuits choose Christ’s figure, the Rosicrucians a rose.

(29-8) The breath should be brought in with measured attention, slow spiritual aspiration as the background, until a pleasant high quality calm is felt.

(29-9) Nature produces new or nobler feelings in the more sensitive wanderers into her domain. The sunset’s peace, the dawn’s promise of hope and the pleasure of beauty’s presence are always worth while and should fill us with gratitude.

⁴² The paras on this page are numbered 14 through 22, making them consecutive with the previous page.

⁴³ Blank page

(31-1)⁴⁴ At times he may feel as if apart from his physical body, a strangely-detached spectator of it.

(33-1)⁴⁶ It borders on but does not actually enter the state of trance. It seems to have the utter fixity of that condition, the deep oblivion of outer surroundings, but actually there is a slight awareness outside of the body.

(33-2) (5-fold Prayer Ex:)⁴⁷ The dervishes stand with [the]⁴⁸ palm of [their]⁴⁹ right hand turned up and the palm of [their]⁵⁰ left hand turned downward.

(33-3) The disinclination to start practising meditation and the inability to sustain it for long when started, are due in part to the mind's strong habit of being preoccupied with worldly matters or being attached to personal desires. This is why the study of wholly abstract metaphysical and impersonal topics are part of the Philosophic Path.

(33-4) The mind is dragged hither and thither by its desires or interest, dragged to fleeting and ephemeral things.

(33-5) There are different kinds of meditation. The elementary is concerned with holding certain thoughts firmly in the mind. The advanced is concerned with keeping all thoughts completely out of the mind. The highest is concerned with merging the mind blissfully in the Overself.

⁴⁴ The para on this page is numbered 23, making it consecutive with the previous page.

⁴⁵ Blank page

⁴⁶ The paras on this page are numbered 163, 163a, and 164 through 176; they are not consecutive with the previous page, but follow the paras on page 25.

⁴⁷ PB himself underlined "(5-fold Prayer Ex:)" by hand. 5-fold Prayer Exercise refers to an exercise that can be found in "The Religious Urge." – TJS '15

⁴⁸ PB himself inserted "the" by hand.

⁴⁹ PB himself inserted "their" by hand.

⁵⁰ PB himself inserted "their" by hand.

(33-6) At this stage his direct efforts must cease, his urgent seeking must withdraw. Instead he must wait patiently and quietly, with heart emptied of all else save the faith that infinite being may reveal itself at any moment.

(33-7) As his competence grows his desire to escape into this inner secret region grows with it.

(33-8) As man's consciousness grows in depth, it grows also in power.

(33-9) It is a process which detaches consciousness from things, reasonings, and events, from all its possible objects, in order to centre it in its own self.

(33-10) The body seems far away, but I seem closer than ever. For I feel that now I am in my mind and no longer the body's captive. There is a sense of release. I am as free as Space itself.

(33-11) Where attention is being fixedly held on a single topic by the power of a strong interest in it, there will be little regard given to the passage of time.

(33-12) To anticipate the sunset hour or await the dawn break, with body unmoving and mind absorbed, is one timing of this exercise which allies itself with Nature's helpful rhythm.

(33-13) To sit in the same spot, on the same chair, in the same room and at the same hour every day is to gain the powerful help of regular habit.

(33-14) It is as if the world had never entered his experience and never even existed.

(33-15) The practice of meditation during any one day may allowably be intermittent and irregular but not from one day to another.

34⁵¹

III

35

III

(35-1)⁵² Where there are no thoughts at all, where the active intellect is silent, there arises the possibility of creative joy, peace [and]⁵³ truth

⁵¹ Blank page

⁵² The paras on this page are numbered 177 through 193, making them consecutive with the previous page.

(35-2) It is not correct to assume that because the condition of muscular rigidity and bodily coma has so often followed the condition of emotional spiritual ecstasy, it must necessarily and always do so. It is enough in proficient and experienced cases for the ordinary state to be partially obscured

(35-3) Each method is merely a point of departure, not a place or arrival. It is a focusing of thoughts upon a special object or subject with a view to travelling later beyond all thoughts into the stage of contemplation.

(35-4) Failures in meditation can be due to different causes but one prominent cause is half-interest, half the mind being given to the exercise and the other half to earthly things or to other persons.

(35-5) The set period is to be used creatively, for the work to be done in it is no less than self-transformation.

(35-6) Out of this stillness will come the light he seeks, the guide he needs, the strength he requires.

(35-7) The primary objective of meditation is so to deepen consciousness as to reach the egoless self.

(35-8) He feels himself slipping from one part of his being to another.

(35-9) During such meditations the place around may seem to be filled to overflowing with a sense of the divine presence.

(35-10) In the deepest phase of contemplation all power of speech will temporarily desert him, so rapt inwardly will he become.

(35-11) It is as if the Overself were hypnotising him out of his lower nature.

(35-12) The seeker who is willing to take up his position in the same seat at the same hour every day and then sit still while he waits for truth or beauty to appear, rejecting boredom or dissatisfaction, will achieve good results by this patience in time.

(35-13) It is imprudent to arise from the meditation seat with a sharp jerk or to plunge straightway into busy toil.

(35-14) His mind is quickly entangled in the ordinary thoughts again.

⁵³ PB himself changed a comma to “and” by hand.

(35-15) Every other thought is to be swept clear out of his mind.

(35-16) As I watch the pair of cranes, themselves watching with perfect concentration the sun's last diurnal glow before the coming of twilight, I smile at the thought of what they are able to achieve with such instinctive ease while humans, who are supposedly higher in evolution, struggle vainly for years to achieve it.

(35-17) From these practices he receives a feeling of courage which in turn enables him to confront the hard situations of life without flinching.

36⁵⁴

III

37

III

(37-1)⁵⁵ The disciple who practises this kind of yoga imagines himself to be the master, thinks and behaves accordingly. He plays this role as if he were acting in a stage drama. He is to imitate the Master's way of meditating, including even the expression of his face at the time, not only in pictorial vision but also in self-identified feeling. The exercise can be done both during the formal daily sessions of his regular program but even at odd moments or in unexpected leisure at other times of the day. The formula is two-fold: remembering the master and identifying oneself with him.

(37-2) The eyes being the most active of the sense organs, the act of seeing tends to reproduce itself even when the physical world is being shut out in meditation. This is recognised by science in its noting of the "after-images" as a visual phenomenon. But even after the image vanishes, the tendency remains and a half-conscious activity in the optic nerves continues. This is one of the causes which, combined, make for a feeling of tightness or tension in the head and which impede the relaxation so essential to the successful attainment of proper meditation.

(37-3) The exercise is practised when he retires for the night and is lying in the dark. He goes backward in time recalls all that has happened during the day, the persons he has met, the places he has visited and what he has done. The picture should be made as fully detailed as possible and cover the entire field from the moment he awoke in the morning until the moment he lay down to begin the exercise. If he has talked with

⁵⁴ Blank page

⁵⁵ The paras on this page are numbered 194 through 199, making them consecutive with the previous page.

others he notes the particular tone and accent of their voices, as well as {hearing}⁵⁶ the sentences themselves. He tries to insert as many little items into his visualisation as will render it sharp, realistic and convincing. Out of this background he selects those of his actions and words, as well as those of his feelings and thoughts, which call for amendment or correction or discipline. He is to cull out of the day's episodes and happenings not only what his conscience or judgment tell him call for corrective work in meditation but also what is most significant for his spiritual purpose and what is likely to prove most fruitful for his creative work in meditation.

(37-4) When the brain is too active, its energies obstruct the gentle influx of intuitive feeling. When they are extroverted, they obstruct that listening attitude which is needed to hear the Overself's gentle voice speak to the inner silence. Mental quiet must be the goal. We must develop a new kind of hearing.

(37-5) Meditation is easiest to practise when utterly alone in a silent place.

(37-6) The undisciplined mind will inevitably resist the effects needed for these exercises. This is a difficult period for the practiser.

38⁵⁷

III

39

III

(continued from the previous page) The remedy is to arouse himself, "summon up the will," and return again and again to the fight until the mind, like a horse, begins to accept its training and learns to obey.

(39-1)⁵⁸ It may help him to bear this patient waiting if he learns and remembers that it is an essential part of the actual procedure of meditation exercise.

(39-2) It is needful to impose a forceful will on the vague drifting condition of his mind and thus drive it commandingly into firm concentration.

(39-3) By combining deep breathing with gentle smiling, both acts being done quite slowly; and by keeping the mind solely attentive to the body's condition, a relaxed half-drowsy state will develop. No other thoughts should be allowed to enter, the whole of

⁵⁶ We have changed "hear" to "hearing" for grammar's sake. —TJS '20

⁵⁷ Blank page

⁵⁸ The paras on this page are numbered 200 through 213, making them consecutive with the previous page.

his being should lie completely reposed in the rhythmic breathing and happily hypnotised by the lazy smile. Everything should be light and effortless. This is the Yoga of the Liberating Smile.

(39-4) The repetition of doing an exercise brings skill in it.

(39-5) He must keep very very still.

(39-6) To prepare himself for meditation, he should allow a couple of minutes to become collected, poised and settled.

(39-7) The effect may not reveal itself all at once but may work its way into his conscious self by slow degrees or almost imperceptibly.

(39-8) What he finds so deeply within himself is neither a thought nor an emotion. It is a fused knowing-feeling.

(39-9) The exercises must be practised daily for what is to be achieved by them will need plenty of time and repeated work.

(39-10) The essential difference is this: that in the fulfilment of the second phase consciousness of the outer surroundings of the world, vanishes; but in the fulfilment of the third phase, consciousness of the ego, the person, also vanishes. Then there is left behind only Pure Consciousness in itself.

(39-11) When concentration reaches a full degree of intensity, and when its object is a highly spiritual one, it passes over into meditation by itself

(39-12) To come back out of these meditations to the world as it is, is to be dropped on the ground, bumped and jarred.

(39-13) The sufferer from a painful disease can hardly help thinking of it when he is trying to sit still and practise meditation. So long as the body is troubled and disturbed, it will keep reminding him of its existence.

(39-14) It is unlikely that any noticeable result will come during this first phase. Here will be a test of his patience. He needs "to wait on the Lord" in Biblical phrase.

(39-15) His ears may be present at a concert but his mind may be away with a distant friend. Consequently, he does not really hear the music.

(41-1)⁶⁰ In the depth of meditation his sense-impressions are revoked. He finds himself sitting, not in time but in eternity, not in matter but in pure Spirit.

(41-2) Every time he has attained a really successful meditation he should, afterwards, study every detail of its course, analyse all its important experiences, and observe carefully what ideas and feelings came to him by themselves out of the deeper unconscious level. Above all, he should apply the same studies to the moments when the feeling of inner stimulus, contact and inspiration made itself known. They require special attention.

(41-3) He should try to remember the inner and outer conditions under which the glimpse came to him and, temporarily, try to make them again part of himself and his surroundings. He is to do so as if he were an actor appearing in this part on a stage. For the time being, he must think, feel and live as if the experience is really happening, the glimpse really recurring. For the time being he must enter the world of imagination and copy the remembered details, the treasured impressions, as specifically as he can. The image which his past supplies is to be transferred to his present, brought to life again and reincarnated afresh. If he is unable to achieve such similarity at the first trial, this need not deter him from making a third, a seventh and a twentieth trial on later days.

(41-4) Do not approach the meditation seat if you are in a hurry to rise from it again. Allow yourself enough time to be patient, [and]⁶¹ to work diligently at gaining control of your [thoughts]⁶²

(41-5) Hold the picture of the Ideal repeatedly and firmly in your mind and it will, it must, have some influence on your character.

(41-6) Now that he has entered the blank silence he must be prepared to wait patiently for what is about to unfold itself. This next development cannot be forced or hurried, indeed that attempt would effectively prevent its manifestation.

⁵⁹ Blank page

⁶⁰ The paras on this page are numbered 214 through 224, making them consecutive with the previous page.

⁶¹ PB himself moved "and" from after "thoughts" by hand.

⁶² PB himself deleted "to" from after "thoughts" by hand.

(41-7) The improvement of character is both a necessary prelude to, and essential accompaniment of, any course in these practices of meditation. Without it, self-reproach for transgressions or weaknesses will penetrate the peace of the silent hour and disturb it.

(41-8) A tremendous patience is needful here, a willingness to come to the meditation room as if he is going to sit there forever. The Overself may not be hurried.

(41-9) He should clearly discriminate what good is to be had from, and what evil is to be avoided in, these various practices.

(41-10) The purpose of this first phase is to quieten deepen and stabilise the mind, to bring the agitations of thought and up-heavings of emotion to an end. But this is only a preparation for the work to fulfil meditation's real purpose.

(41-11) Meditation first collects our forces in a single channel and then directs them toward the Overself.

42⁶³

III

43

III

(43-1)⁶⁴ Mystical customs in this matter are not the same in every land. The Persian Sufi closes his eyes during the time that he is sitting, but the Indian Hatha yogi opens them.

(43-2) All that consciousness holds must be reduced to nothing.

(43-3) If he comes to the practice holding the attitude that here is a duty which is tiring and monotonous and which he is to get over and done with as soon as possible, he defeats it from the start and ensures its failure. Better not to come at all, than [in]⁶⁵ this negative [way.]⁶⁶

(43-4) In this meditation he reproduces the conditions which surrounded him at the time the Glimpse came. He fills in every tiny detail of the picture – the furnishings of a

⁶³ Blank page

⁶⁴ The paras on this page are numbered 225 through 233, making them consecutive with the previous page.

⁶⁵ PB himself inserted "in" by hand.

⁶⁶ PB himself inserted "way" by hand.

room perhaps; the faces and voices of other persons who were present; and especially how he became aware of the first onset of the Glimpse.

(43-5) The mystic learns to go inside himself, to discover what is hidden there and to listen to what it has to tell him. The practice itself is called meditation.

(43-6) The attempt to enter these inner worlds of man's being without proper knowledge and without sufficient purification is involved in certain perils.

(43-7) He is to picture to himself the exact quality he seeks to gain, just as it feels within himself and expresses through his actions.

(43-8) A fixed point upon which he can rally his scattered thoughts and eliminate all loss of energy, is needed.

(43-9) HANS-ULRICH RIEKER:⁶⁷ THE SECRET OF MEDITATION

"Many things will disturb us, and these cannot be ignored completely; feeling hot or cold, a desire to cough, toothache, fatigue, etc. All these can be "forgotten" but never by force.

"Feeling cold is no worse than feeling hot, but cold can be prevented by blankets and warm clothes. In the beginning a strong cough or a toothache will put a stop to all meditation for the whole duration of the complaint: similarly, if we always feel tired just at the chosen time, it is advisable to change the hour, or even to do a special exercise to rouse us beforehand, as is generally done by many Asiatic schools of meditation.

"In the Japanese Zen-Monasteries this exercise often takes the form of a run. If we have not the necessary space, we can do gymnastic exercises instead, but even better, we can use the following breathing exercise of Hatha Yoga. This is most beneficial, for it increases the oxygen content of the blood evenly and naturally and not only removes fatigue but also improves our general physical state."

44⁶⁸

III

45

III

(45-1)⁶⁹ As he enters the higher self there is a great intensification of consciousness.

⁶⁷ "Richer" in the original.

⁶⁸ Blank page

⁶⁹ The paras on this page are numbered 1 through 13; they are not consecutive with the previous page.

(45-2) He must begin this meditation not only by isolating himself in thought from the world but also from other men. He is not to be afraid of being inwardly alone. Only so can he find the great Friend who shall appear and speak to him out of the stillness.

(45-3) The end of a meditation, which attains such a high state may find him unable to return at once to the body's activity. It is prudent in that case to wait patiently for warmth, force and movement to return to it. There need be no concern about this condition, which is quite familiar to practising mystics.

(45-4) There are various forms of meditative practice and various aspects of meditation itself but none of these are the heart of the matter.

(45-5) What they do not know, and have to learn, is that there is a false silence within the mind as well as a true one. The one may resemble the other in certain points, and does, but it is a psychic state, not a spiritual one. It can deceive and lead astray, or reflect earthly things correctly, but cannot let them hear the voice of the Overself.

(45-6) In that deep state the mind is at perfect equilibrium. The forces which ordinarily drive it into conflict or passion are thoroughly restrained.

(45-7) He will know that he has mastered the practice when it becomes completely satisfying to him, and a way of achieving the highest pleasure.

(45-8) How can a man unify his consciousness with the Overself without first putting his mind under some sort of a training to strengthen it, so that he will not let go but will be able to hold on when a Glimpse comes?

(45-9) Where the heart goes, there soon or late the other faculties will follow. This is why it is so important to let the Overself take possession of the heart by its total surrender in, and to, the Stillness.

(45-10) He concentrates daily on the image which he desires to create and sustain in his mind.

(45-11) The divine essence is within us, not somewhere else. This shows us the correct direction in which to look for it. The attention with the interest and desire which move it, must be withdrawn from outside things and beings.

(45-12) The more love he can bring into this practice, the more he is likely to succeed with it. If he cannot yet feel any love for the Overself, then let him bring joy into it, the joy of knowing that he is on the most worthwhile journey in life.

(45-13) He is to take complete possession of this image, to take hold of it inch by inch.

46⁷⁰

III

47

III

(47-1)⁷¹ Thinking is mental action, just as moving is physical action. The admonition "Be still and know that I am God," refers not only to the body but to the mind. Both are to cease from activity if the higher consciousness is to be attained.

(47-2) Let no one believe that these techniques are the same as, or sympathetic to, those which are employed by spiritualist mediums to enter the trance state, or by spiritualist believers to secure automatic writing. The wary student cannot afford, and should not expose himself to the peril of letting unknown psychic forces take possession of his body.

(47-3) The monks of Mount Athos were advised to seat themselves in a corner of their cell, when about to practise meditation privately, why?

Clearly there is a protective value in this position, for two walls will partially enclose the meditator. He will then be in a partial cave. The advantages of such a place for retreat purposes have been described in my other books. A further curious counsel to the Mount Athos monks was to recline their chin on their breast so as to gaze at the navel

(47-4) It is quite possible to sit for meditation without adopting any conspicuous posture, without chanting peculiar exotic words or otherwise making public announcement of the fact.

(47-5) He must not only keep his attention fixed on the idea but also keep it there for a very long time, otherwise it will wander from topic to topic or from one bodily impression to another.

(47-6) Meditation, rightly used and sufficiently developed, will silence his personal opinions so that he may hear the Overself's Voice. But wrongly used or superficially developed, it will only confirm those opinions and, if they are erroneous, lead him further astray.

⁷⁰ Blank page

⁷¹ The paras on this page are numbered 14 through 21, making them consecutive with the previous page.

(47-7) What happens next comes from no effort on his part and depends on nothing that he does. He is simply to remain still, perfectly still in body and mind. Then from above, from the Overself, grace descends and he begins to experience the joy of feeling the divine presence.

(47-8) In these first two stages, the will must be used, for the attention must not only be driven along one line and kept there but must also penetrate deeper and deeper. It is only when the frontier of the third stage is reached that all this work ceases and that there is an abandonment of the use of the will, a total surrender of it, and effortless passive yielding to the Overself is alone needed.

48⁷²

III

49

III

(49-1)⁷³ One important error made too often by beginners is to sit down to their exercise in the wrong frame of mind. They come to it demanding, wanting or expecting a mystical experience, that is, a bestowal of Grace. They will get a better result if they reverse and replace this attitude by a giving of themselves, a loving offering of their heart and a feeling of joy at being able to sit down with the thought of the Beloved without interference by any other activity. If they will only give before they try to get, they will have much less cause to complain of their failures in meditation.

(49-2) If your meditations are barren and dry, one or more of several different reasons may be the cause, and consequently one or more of several different remedies may be needed. Among these, a useful but neglected remedy is to pray for, or meditate on, the inner welfare of others, either specific persons or humanity in general. In that case do not confine yourself exclusively to those in your family dearest to you, for they are extensions of yourself, and your interest in them is egoistic. To help others in this secret way will bring others to your help in your own time of need.

(49-3) For a time at least the personal ego merges in the impersonal Overself.

(49-4) Whatever topic will interest him soonest, engage his attention more firmly and absorb it more fully is the best topic to meditate upon.

⁷² Blank page

⁷³ The paras on this page are numbered 22 through 34, making them consecutive with the previous page.

(49-5) If he is willing to accept this emptiness with all the annihilation of self that goes with it, he will succeed in passing the hardest of ordeals and the most rigorous of tests.

(49-6) His mind must discard all its contents for a while and suspend all its operations. Then it must wait in the stillness.

(49-7) The memorable events which stand out of his past, its graver hours and greater occasions, are to be explored calmly, with the personal equation left out and the impersonal meaning put in.

(49-8) All kinds of meditation exercises are useful and should be done at different periods of the year or different stages of his spiritual career.

(49-9) He must let himself be entirely transported by whichever of these two feelings comes to him: indrawnness or upliftment.

(49-10) The more he goes into himself, the less he is aware of the ego.

(49-11) The mechanical operation of the lungs and heart may be markedly slowed down as the working of the intellect is itself slowed down or, in some cases, it may come very close to suspension.

(49-12) If he can bring himself to love the Overself, and not only to reflect intellectually about it, the dryness of his attempts at meditation may vanish.

(49-13) The exercise is best done in the morning before the day's work is begun.

50⁷⁴

III

51

III

(51-1)⁷⁵ That beautiful interlude between day and night which hushes the busy scene and turns the fatigued consciousness toward repose, is good for meditation.

(51-2) The test of a meditation's success is whether it can keep his mind off personal affairs. The exceptions to this rule would include the practice of intercessory prayer for others or mystical blessing on them.

⁷⁴ Blank page

⁷⁵ The paras on this page are numbered 35 through 50, making them consecutive with the previous page.

(51-3) He knows and feels that he is near measureless inner peace.

(51-4) Whenever he is still, silent, concentrated and reverent, he will be able to place his mind in rapport with the Overself.

(51-5) At this stage his business is to wait patiently, looking as deeply inward as he can while waiting. Any attempt to grasp at the Overself would now defeat itself, for the ego's willed effort could only get the ego itself back. But the willingness to sit still with hands metaphorically outstretched like a beggar's, and for a sufficient stretch of time may lead one day to a moment when the Overself takes him by surprise as it suddenly takes hold of his mind. The much sought and memorable Glimpse will then be his. He has applied for discipleship and this is his sign of acceptance.

(51-6) A useful exercise is to meditate on the wisdom written in the book of the universe.

(51-7) The mind then becomes so serene and immobile that there is not even the thought of a thought.

(51-8) The intuitive element has to be awaited with much patience and vigilant attention.

(51-9) If he is to remember the Overself with all his undivided attention, he must forget everything and everyone else without exception.

(51-10) In the Tibetan work "The Buddha's Law Among the Birds,"⁷⁶ there is a single line which contains an entire technique in its few words. "Put your inmost mind into a state of non-action," it runs.

(51-11) He should not engage in muscular contractions of the forehead and muscular stiffening of the eyebrows. This frowning is the wrong way to concentrate attention. It is also an exhausting way.

(51-12) By the trance state I mean one where meditation becomes so deep that the senses of bodily sight and hearing are suspended.

(51-13) If meditation is properly done and worthily directed it has a purifying effect upon the ego.

⁷⁶ "Buddha Doctrine Among the Birds" in the original.

(51-14) Regularity of practice, sitting at the same time every day, will enable him to benefit in various ways by the automatic tendency of the mind to follow habit patterns.

(51-15) Just as the snail withdraws into its shell, so the mind is to withdraw into itself.

(51-16) A meditation which is not stirred love, love for the highest, may produce its fruit but cannot produce its best fruit.

52⁷⁷

III

53

III

(53-1)⁷⁸ What he brings out of his meditation is important or not according to the depth he has penetrated.

(53-2) To enter into these high states of consciousness at will requires a very great degree of advancement.

(53-3) Long practice of precise exercises in internal quietude removes us from continuous immersion in the world. This in turn enables us to detach ourselves from its lures more effectually. Such detachment leads to a calmness which more and more permeates our entire being. In this way whatever is lost by the physical inaction of these exercises is well compensated by the spiritual gain.

(53-4) The whole of his being will find rest, peace and harmony in this blessed state.

(53-5) If he brings joy to these exercises, the joy of being embarked on the most wonderful quest in the world, he will make them more fruitful.

(53-6) He is to sit as quietly and as unmovingly in body as he is to be still and attentive in mind.

(53-7) These meditations which turn his past experiences over in his mind and make them serve a higher purpose.

⁷⁷ Blank page

⁷⁸ The paras on this page are numbered 51 through 62, and 64 through 68, making them consecutive with the previous page.

(53-8) In his beginning experiments he may meet with little success. He need not blame himself or find fault with his procedures. This result is common enough and to be expected.

(53-9) Dr Surahman, an Indonesian herbalist guru-yogi, found privacy at home hard to get, so [he]⁷⁹ meditated in a lidded coffin. This was a sign to his young wife [and children]⁸⁰ that he was not to be disturbed.

(53-10) If he is willing to submit to the Overself's gentle drawing, he must first be able to recognise it for what it is.

(53-11) Here is a condition where the only world is the world of pure blissful being itself.

(53-12) He should not resist the gentle current but let himself be drawn into himself.

(53-13) The kind of meditation called discursive tries to think actively about an idea or a truth until it is fully penetrated.

(53-14) It is a strange state wherein he literally becomes as nothing – without thoughts or will, bereft of the flesh yet not merged in any higher consciousness.

(53-15) Part of his consciousness – the lower, the animal, and the pettier human part – seems blocked off.

(53-16) The mystic averts his gaze from the world and turns it inside himself.

(53-17) It is a device for dismantling his extroverted attention to objects, a method of turning it the other way.

54⁸¹

III

55

III

(55-1)⁸² The feeling of dreamy contentedness prevails long after a good meditation.

⁷⁹ PB himself inserted "he" by hand.

⁸⁰ PB himself inserted "and children" by hand.

⁸¹ Blank page

⁸² The paras on this page are numbered 1 through 9; they are not consecutive with the previous page. Pages 55 through 71 are duplicates of pages 81 through 97 in Carbons 32 (1939 Notebook).

(55-2) There is an air of venerable dignity about a figure sunk in meditative quiet and withdrawn from earthly concerns.

(55-3) The passage of the Sun across the heavens, its entrance and exit on the horizon, marks the best periods for the practice of meditation.

(55-4) Proper conditions help him to realise the first aim, which is to become wholly absorbed in the subject of his thoughts.

(55-5) The mind flutters from subject to subject like a butterfly from flower to flower, and is unable to stay where we want it.

(55-6) Those who think that because I have described Martinus' views on meditation, I have therefore denied those that readers have come to know as my own, are quite mistaken.

(55-7) When these mystical exercises are used by persons possessing no mystical knowledge or guidance and used recklessly, certain dangers are incurred.

(55-8) The most advanced mystics in the Pope's circle used the subterranean crypt of the Vatican for prayer and meditation. It is the equivalent to the Indian yogi's use of a cave.

(55-9) To attempt the elimination of all thoughts as they arise with the aim of keeping consciousness entirely empty of all content, is another method which some Yogis and not a few Occidentals try to practice. It is not as easy as it seems and {is not frequently successful.}⁸³ Philosophy does not use this rash method, does not recommend making the mind just a blank. There are two perils in it. The first is that it lays a man open to psychic invasion from outside himself, or failing that, from inside himself. In the first case, he becomes a spiritualistic medium, passively surrenders himself to any unseen entity which may pass through the door thus left open, and risks being taken possession of by this entity. It may be earthbound, foolish, lying or evil, at worst. In the second case, he unlooses the controls of the conscious self and lets into it forces that he has long outgrown, but not fully eliminated, past selves that are dying and would be best left alone, subconscious impulses that lead into evil or insane hallucinations, masquerading as occult perceptions or powers. Now it is correct to say that the mind must be completely {mastered}⁸⁴ and that a vacuum will arise in the process, but this is still not the way to do it. The better way is to focus the mind

⁸³ We have changed "frequent as success" to "is not frequently successful" for clarity.

⁸⁴ We have changed "master" to "mastered" for clarity.

(continued from the previous page) so unwaveringly on some one thing, thought or image or phrase so elevated that a point will be reached where the higher self itself suddenly obliterates the thoughts.

(57-1)⁸⁶ The deepest trance state involves the slowing down of all bodily activities to an almost imperceptible level. Even the working of the cells comes nearly, but not quite to an end. The state, therefore, is a kind of death and indeed, if prolonged too far, may sometimes result in death.

(57-2) The teaching of 'the practice of the presence of God' by Brother Lawrence seems very simple to follow and very easy to do. After all, did he not succeed in it for upwards of forty years? But let us remember that he combined it with merely mechanical kitchen work. It did not and could not distract him from carrying out his tasks. But to combine it with intellectual desk work is quite another matter. Obviously this is far more difficult labour than combining it with simple manual labour.

(57-3) What is the practical use of enquiring, "To whom is this experience happening? To whom this pain, this joy, this distress or this good fortune?" First, it makes him remember the quest upon which he is embarked by reminding him that it is the ego which is feeling these changes and that he is not to identify himself with it and thus limit his possibilities if he really seeks the higher self behind it. Second, it suggests that he look for the root of his ego and with it his hidden "I" instead of merely being swept away by what is happening within the ego itself.

(57-4) The self-absorbed state possesses different degrees of intensity.

(57-5) The first value of these few minutes, be they heart aspiring in prayer or mind-emptying in meditation, is that they create a more conscious link with the higher self.

(57-6) He should first ask himself what he means by it and what he expects from it.

(57-7) Even advanced types who are fit in character and intelligence are still ill-advised to practise meditation, much more to fall into trance.

⁸⁵ Blank page

⁸⁶ The paras on this page are numbered 10 through 18, making them consecutive with the previous page.

(57-8) The end of all this thinking is to be not-thinking, mental quiet. This state comes hard to everyone; it leads many to utter boredom, but a few to utter peace.

(57-9) It is true that it may now be desirable to spread the knowledge of contemplative practices as an urgent necessity

58⁸⁷

III

59

III

(continued from the previous page) for the masses, but it would be quite undesirable to do so without proper safeguards against the abuses and repeated warnings against the dangers involved. And it is equally true that only few have achieved the state which is the goal of these practices, so difficult are they to follow

(59-1)⁸⁸ Only those who have done these exercises and not merely read about them, only the practitioners of the art of meditation, can appreciate the relief which comes when this initial irksomeness vanishes and struggling apprenticeship passes into smooth proficiency.

(59-2) The marks of an authentic intuition include conclusiveness and finality.

(59-3) Lost within himself in utter self-absorption, numb to everything that traces back to the world of action, no longer held by the power and limit of the senses, he becomes pure mind, disembodied spirit.

(59-4) When a man first approaches the infinite in actual experience, as he stands on its verge, he experiences some moments of fear or even terror. He does not know what awaits him in its mysterious depths. The possibility of indefinite self-anaesthesia or even utter self-annihilation confront him.

(59-5) He must not only practice sitting perfectly still and thus stop squandering the body's energies, but also, and at the same time, practice emptying the mind of thoughts and thus conserve his mental energies, too. The whole effort is indeed intended to "stop the out-going energies, "in the Gita's phrase. This is why sports, long walks,

⁸⁷ Blank page

⁸⁸ The paras on this page are numbered 19 through 25, making them consecutive with the previous page.

protracted manual labour and especially sexual intercourse are prohibited to the would-be yogi.

(59-6) SU TUNG-P'O:⁸⁹ "Hold your breath, for this is most important in Taoist art. Close eyes, relax mind, clear it of all thoughts, maintain a mental void. In consequence you will find respiration gradually slowed down. Wait until you can no longer hold breath and then let it out gradually and noiselessly."

(59-7) The mind rests on the summit of this Olympus where-from it gazes on the sorrows and cares of this burdened existence and wonders why they were ever permitted to disturb it. For on this mountain-top, life seems so clear, so right, so tranquil.

60⁹⁰

III

61

III

(61-1)⁹¹ The meditation exercises are not without danger, but this is because most exercises share such danger. Hence they are usually prescribed along with the religious devotions, intellectual training and moral disciplines intended to eliminate their danger. Where these safeguards have been absent, unfortunate results may be perceived in the annals of mysticism, both in the Orient and the Occident, both in the past and the present. The philosophic disciple and the purificatory preparation are also intended to guard against the danger of inflation of the ego. The cultivation of humility, the moral re-education, the rigorous self-examination and the honest self-criticism form a slight part of these preparations.

(61-2) It is better that what passes in those meditative periods remains a secret between him and his higher self. They are sacred, anyhow. What is coming to birth in them is so delicate, so subtle, so tender and so sensitive that other peoples' intruding thoughts may deal roughly with it and hurt it.

(61-3) It is a fact of mere observation that most Western men live throughout their wakeful existence from morning to night without finding a few minutes - or even caring to find them - for the liberating practice of meditation exercises. They are virtually imprisoned in the five senses and in the thoughts arising from each sense-

⁸⁹ Referring to Su Shi.

⁹⁰ Blank page

⁹¹ The paras on this page are numbered 26 through 31, making them consecutive with the previous page.

activity. This fact is a lamentable one. For how can they hope to cultivate a higher life if this essential aid be neglected?

(61-4) It is not necessary that every seeker of the Spiritual Truth should pass through the trance state. A few do, most others do not, on their way to the goal yet both groups arrive at the same goal. It is indeed not advisable for the average wisdom-seeker deliberately to try to get into trance, when his environment is not specially suitable for it and may even be dangerous.

(61-5) If the concentrated attention can penetrate to a certain level of the mind in meditation, it will penetrate to a source of power and knowledge that is ordinarily hidden, unknown, neglected or untapped. From this source one can draw guidance, engender strength and obtain instruction.

(61-6) It is a custom among the yogis, and one laid down in the traditional texts, to begin meditation by paying homage to God and to the master. The purpose of this is to attract help from these sources.

62⁹²

III

63

III

(63-1)⁹³ The third stage is successfully reached when he forgets the world outside, when he neither sees nor touches it, neither hears nor smells it with his body, when memory and personality dissolve in a vacuum as the attention is wholly and utterly absorbed in the thought of, and identity with, the Overself.

(63-2) Silence often falls upon a group only to embarrass them, to fill their minds with discomfort, and to oppress their hearts with disquiet. Yet it could be made, through contemplation, to bring exquisite felicity.

(63-3) It is necessary to add the reflections of philosophy to the practices of yoga, if the glimpses of reality received during these practices are to become permanent.

(63-4) The womb of mysterious nothingness out of which the soul emerged is God, the World-mind. When, in deep meditation, the ego faces the soul and is then led by it to

⁹² Blank page

⁹³ The paras on this page are numbered 32 through 43, making them consecutive with the previous page.

that nothingness, the first reaction is, at worst, terrifying fear of annihilation, or at best an almost equally terrifying fear of utter aloneness.

(63-5) Some have felt in the nitrous oxide gas experience of anaesthesia, a terrifying loneliness, a frightening experience of being alone in the whole cosmos.

(63-6) "All discursive operations cease in mystic ecstasy," wrote an ancient. The mind's winding in and out of a subject, its thoughts running to and fro, its interests running among varied topics, come to an end.

(63-7) He must study these inspired sayings as a lapidary might study a gem - with loving care and joyous feeling.

(63-8) The eyes are not in focus, they are staring into space, for the mind is not resting on the scene that is before them.

(63-9) The unbalanced seeker will do better to limit the time he gives to meditation and use it to try to adjust himself to the world instead of running away from it.

(63-10) This condition, this entry into the Void, is a kind of death. Everything is taken away from him; he is nothing and has nothing; yet he still feels one thing which utterly compensates for this loss. He feels the presence of the Overself.

(63-11) In these first moments when he feels the Void opening up in the centre of his being, an intense expectancy thrills him.

(63-12) He needs to be alone for this practice, so he needs a place for it where he can sit unnoticed.

64⁹⁴

III

65

III

(65-1)⁹⁵ Here he is to enter into real as well as apparent solitude. So he must cast out all thoughts which connect him with, or recall the presence of other people.

⁹⁴ Blank page

⁹⁵ The paras on this page are numbered 44 through 50, making them consecutive with the previous page.

(65-2) If he is to become aware – however briefly – of his spiritual self as it really is on its own level, then he must become unaware of his lesser self for a time. This is to say philosophically what the Old Testament says in a different way: “No one hath seen the face of God.”

(65-3) There are two mental workings which can profitably be used by the aspirant to self-betterment. One is imagination; the other is reason. With the one he can create pictures in his mind of the kind of man he aspires to be. With the other he can create ideas on the lessons to be learnt from experience and observation.

(65-4) He does not need to take a posture of languid meditative recumbence every time he seeks to take counsel, or commune with, his higher self.

(65-5) The advocacy of meditation in a non-spiritual medico-psychological form, would probably meet the situation of a number of individuals. However, there ought to be side by side and along with it another effort to advocate meditation in a religious and aspirational form for the sake of other individuals who are ready to emerge from narrow orthodoxy, but still wish to keep their religious faith. In both cases, it is necessary to point out that all kinds of meditation must be safe-guarded by some effort at self-purification and at strengthening intellectual balance. Otherwise it may do harm as well as good.

(65-6) The three little manuals of devotion (1) “Bhagavad Gita” (2) “Voice of the Silence” (3) “Light on the Path” used by so many, form a perfect and excellent trio and surely belong to the philosophical teaching.

(65-7) The power which is felt is what the Hindus call Kundalini, and it is gradually generated over the many years through which he practised meditation and sublimated sex. Usually when allowed to pass out of the head it leads to a spiritual experience of ecstatic illumination, but of course that can be done only when it is accepted without fear and in full faith. Its activity sometimes interferes with sleep for several months, but not usually longer.

66⁹⁶

III

67

III

(67-1)⁹⁷ The query as to whether the seat of the Overself is in the heart or in the pineal gland is a problem which has long excited controversy. The yogis are divided upon this

⁹⁶ Blank page

issue. My own research leads to the following view: From the standpoint of Yoga practice both answers are correct because at one stage of the quest, it is necessary to meditate upon the Overself as being in the heart. But at a different stage it is necessary to meditate upon it as being in the pineal gland in the head. This is because the different stages have different objectives each of which is quite proper in its own place. However, from the philosophical standpoint which is arrived at after these two stages are passed through the idea of the position of the Overself is then dropped for the effort is then to be made to transcend the body-belief altogether. From this ultimate standpoint, space is regarded as being merely an idea for the mind whilst the mind itself is regarded as being outside both position and distance. Hence the philosophic meditation seeks to know the Overself by direct insight into its timeless, spaceless nature and not indirectly by bringing it into relation with a particular point in the physical body.

(67-2) All thinking is a movement in consciousness and must stop at a certain stage, that even thoughts of the highest metaphysical character should then also be rejected.

(67-3) Certain parts of a country are more favourable to contemplation than others. The rules laid down in the old Yoga text books are that the place for meditation should be secluded, quiet, at a distance from city or village and preferably in the forest, on a mountain, in a cave or possibly a running stream. The chief points to look for are the grandeur of landscape and the freedom from noise, disturbance and intrusion.

(67-4) He must aim at carrying this concentration to a deeper level.

(67-5) Few men overcome the mind's natural restlessness until after years of repeated daily exercises. This may disappoint them, but it should not be allowed to discourage them.

(67-6) Just as one has to learn by practise and in no other way the physical manoeuvre of balancing oneself on a bicycle, so with the mental-emotional manoeuvre of meditation "skill in inner balance" as the Gita defines it.

68⁹⁸

III

69

III

⁹⁷ The paras on this page are numbered 51 through 56, making them consecutive with the previous page.

⁹⁸ Blank page

(69-1)⁹⁹ The brain tends to rest from sunset to midnight, if not artificially stimulated or deliberately provoked. This is Nature's hint to us that its own quietening down provides the best time for practice of meditation.

(69-2) He who would solve the riddle of human consciousness must solve it by penetrating through thoughts to thought itself.

(69-3) He must harness himself to the main thought again and again. He must resolutely keep the mantra a chained captive.

(69-4) LIN YUTANG: "The whole effort of yoga practice may be described as an effort to think less and less until one thinks of nothing at all. (Instead of letting the mind keep wandering from one thought to another related thought, it aims at concentration on one point, concentration (dharana). In the higher stage it advances to pointless meditation (dhyana) and finally to the trance, (samadhi). This, although similar to sleep and a condition of auto-suggestion, is different from these other states in that the mind retains complete consciousness of itself and remembers vividly everything that happens."

(69-5) To keep up the habit of daily meditation until we love it, is the way to success.

(69-6) The ancient Yoga texts enjoin concentration of a steadfast gaze upon a small object until the eyes begin to shed tears. The result of such practices is a cataleptic state in which the mind becomes fixed and unmoving while the body becomes stiff as wood.

(69-7) He feels very far away from the world.

(69-8) We need certain times and a special place for meditation because their association with the exercise helps us to drill the mind and body. The habit thus created becomes a source of power.

(69-9) In this deep state of meditation which assumes for the outer observer the signs of trance, or half-trance, there will be some transitional moments when consciousness itself disappears, when the deepened bliss of the experience is broken by utter insensibility, when its growing light is met by darkness and when the meditator's own awareness of any kind of being at all lapses. If his moral and intellectual preparations have been sufficiently and properly made, he need have no fear of this temporary state, which will be quite brief in any event. The Indians call it "Yoga sleep," and indeed, it is as pleasant and as harmless as ordinary sleep.

Before the higher functions of the human entity's psychological

⁹⁹ The paras on this page are numbered 57 through 65, making them consecutive with the previous page.

(continued from the previous page) machinery can displace the lower ones, it seems that Nature requires in most cases this interruption in existence, this discontinuity of awareness to take place for a few moments.

(71-1)¹⁰¹ There is, in this third stage, a condition that never fails to arouse the greatest wonder when initiation into it begins. In certain ways it corresponds to, and mentally parallels, the condition of the embryo in a mother's womb. Therefore, it is called by mystics who have experienced it, "the second birth." The mind is drawn so deeply into itself and becomes so engrossed in itself that the outer world vanishes utterly. The sensation of being enclosed all round by a greater presence, at once protective and benevolent, is strong. There is a feeling of being completely at rest in this soothing presence. The breathing becomes very quiet and hardly perceptible. One is aware also that nourishment is being mysteriously and rhythmically drawn from [the universal life-force.]¹⁰² Of course, there is no intellectual activity, no thinking and no need of it. Instead, there is a knowing. There are no desires, no wishes, no [wants. A]¹⁰³ happy peacefulness, almost verging on bliss, as human love might be without its passions and pettinesses, holds one in magical thrall. In its freedom from mental working and perturbation, from passionate movement and emotional agitation, the condition bears something of infantile innocence. Hence Jesus saying: "Except ye become as little children ye shall in no wise enter the kingdom of Heaven." But essentially it is a return to a spiritual womb, to being born again into a new world of being where [at the beginning]¹⁰⁴ he is personally as helpless, as weak and as dependent as the physical embryo itself.

(71-2) Prolonged concentration is required of him who would penetrate to the sources of real being.

(71-3) It is a giving-away from oneself from the little ego to the large cosmic being.

¹⁰⁰ Blank page

¹⁰¹ The paras on this page are numbered 66 through 70, making them consecutive with the previous page.

¹⁰² PB himself changed "it" to "the universal life-force" by hand.

¹⁰³ PB himself changed "wants a" to "wants. A" by hand.

¹⁰⁴ PB himself inserted "at the beginning" by hand.

(71-4) In this third stage all thinking is thrust aside. He simply looks directly at the Overself, remaining inwardly quite still until he feels himself being drawn into the Overself.

(71-5) Do not move your hands about, nor drum with your fingers nor shift your feet uneasily

(71-6) Keep your back very straight, your hands very still.¹⁰⁵

72¹⁰⁶

III

73

III

(73-1)¹⁰⁷ In the third stage; contemplation, the mind ceases to think and simply, without words, worships loves and adores the Divine.

(73-2) [There is a Verse in Gen. XXIV which says, "And Isaac went]¹⁰⁸ out, to meditate in the field, at the eventide."

M. Henry: "In meditation we converse with ourselves; in prayer we converse with God."¹⁰⁹

Anon. "The little nothings of occupied life leave a man no time for his duty."¹¹⁰

(73-3) Chinese Poet, T'ao Yuan-ming (365-427 AD):¹¹¹

"I have built my cottage within men's borders,

But there is no noise of carriage of horses

Do you know how this is possible?

When the heart is remote, the place becomes like it."

(73-4) Chou Tun-i:¹¹² (Eleventh century Chinese philosopher) "The Sage makes stillness the ruling consideration."

¹⁰⁵ PB himself inserted a period by hand.

¹⁰⁶ Blank page

¹⁰⁷ The paras on this page are numbered 1 through 10; they are not consecutive with the previous page. In addition, there is an unnumbered para at the top of the page, and para 1 was split into paras 1a and 1b.

¹⁰⁸ PB himself changed "Gen. XXIV. And _____ went" to "There is a verse in Gen. XXIV. "And Isaac went" by hand.

¹⁰⁹ PB himself underlined "M. Henry" and inserted quotation marks by hand.

¹¹⁰ PB himself underlined "Anon" and inserted quotation marks by hand.

¹¹¹ PB himself underlined "Chinese Poet, T'ao Yuan-Mind" and inserted a colon by hand.

¹¹² "Chou Tun-Yi" in the original. PB himself underlined "Chou Tun-Yi" by hand.

(73-5) Tremendous spiritual reserves are hidden in those silences.

(73-6) To sit in the stainless silence, watchful yet passive, is the proper art of contemplation.

(73-7) It is not easy for a man to believe that a greater wisdom may be received by his mind if he keeps it still than if he stirs it into activity.

(73-8) In this strange experience he seems to be doing nothing at all, to be mentally quite inactive, all his forces having reached a full stop. Yet [the]¹¹³ Overself is intensely active.

(73-9) He who would find his Soul has to press deep into his mind.

(73-10) The process of meditation resembles the letting down of a bucket into a well. If the bucket is not let down far enough, the water is not reached. In that case all the time given and trouble taken achieve nothing. If there is no patience in the meditator there will be no success in getting to the calmer depths of the mind where lives its godlike essence.

(73-11) Meditation can be misused. It is then no longer a help toward the spiritual liberation of man but another captivity to keep him from it. It is misused {in}¹¹⁴ men when the object is to gain occult powers. These merely cater to the ego's aggrandisement. It is misused when the object is to become a prophet teacher or reformer who will influence or lead people. This merely caters to the ego's spiritual ambition, which is the same force as worldly ambition working on a higher level.

74¹¹⁵

III

75

III

(75-1)¹¹⁶ Intercessory meditation may be practised for the benefit of others, the illumination of others and the healing of others. But these intercessions should never

¹¹³ 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. PB himself later inserted "the" into the space by hand.

¹¹⁴ We have inserted "in" for clarity.

¹¹⁵ Blank page

¹¹⁶ The paras on this page are numbered 11 through 17, making them consecutive with the previous page.

precede communion with the source; they should always follow it. All petitions are best presented at the end of a prayer, never at its beginning.

(75-2) Even if the mind resists these efforts to induce a meditative condition, it will usually break down if a longer time is allowed for the efforts. Like the inhabitants of a besieged fortress, if the besiegers can wait outside long enough they will be starved into surrender.

(75-3) Of what avail will it be to sit there, travelling round and round in self-centred thought, closeted with his ego and still held tightly in its embrace? Only by breaking out of this closed circle will the new awareness, the higher life, become a realisable possibility.

(75-4) Just as there are different aspects of the main objective, and different preparatory qualifications needed for it, so there are different types of meditation to suit these purposes.

(75-5) Do not expect to practise easily in a place where doors are frequently banged and voices raised to shout. Do not expect to move smoothly toward the inner stillness if you are startled again and again by other violent noises. Do not even expect that flight to an Indian ashram may solve your problem for if it removes some distractions it may replace them by new ones – such as mosquitoes zooming down to attack and steamy heat oppressing flesh or nerve relentlessly.

(75-6) Only after he has passed through the preliminaries of a contest with the mind's restlessness and wandering proclivities and emerged successfully will real meditation start.

(75-7) Meditation has as its first object an increasing withdrawal of the mind from the things of this world, and also from the thoughts of this world, until it is stilled, passive, self-centred. But before it can achieve any object at all, attention must be made as keenly concentrated as an eagle's stare.¹¹⁷

76¹¹⁸

III

77¹¹⁹

III

¹¹⁷ This section is continued in the paras on page 89.

¹¹⁸ Blank page

¹¹⁹ PB himself deleted typed "RED Series." from the top of the page by hand.

(77-1)¹²⁰ It is true that Yoga and meditation are best learned from a personal teacher rather than from written description. This is partly because a process of osmosis and telepathy develops at a certain stage. But since a competent and genuine teacher is hard to come by for most people, the written description must suffice and can be a great help.

(77-2) There are some persons whose past lives predispose them to sit cross legged. This is the posture indicated for their practice. But others are hindered by it and should use a chair.

(77-3) The art of sitting perfectly still, without a flicker of movement, comes more easily to certain temperaments and less easily to extroverted and excessively active types.

(77-4) It is not at all necessary to assume unbearable physical positions and torment oneself trying to maintain them. The less attention one need give to the presence of one's own body the better will be the conditions for successful practice. What is really necessary is to obey one simple rule – keep the body still, refuse to move it about or to fidget any limb. This physical quiet is both the prelude to and preparation for, mental quiet. Any position in which one feels able to settle down comfortably and sit immobile is a good position.

(77-5) Any posture which is painful to the body, or which soon tires it, should be tried for a limited period only before being abandoned. If it continues to be uncomfortable then it ought to be [discarded.]¹²¹

(77-6) It is better for many aspirants to begin their exercise with long deep breaths. This helps them to (a) banish negative thoughts and (b) arouse the spirit-fire. Only after this initial phase should they try the shallow breathing recommended in The Secret Path.

78¹²²
III

79
III¹²³

¹²⁰ The paras on this page are numbered 28 through 32 and 32a; they are not consecutive with the previous page.

¹²¹ PB himself deleted the two paras following this para by hand. The first deleted para is a duplicate of para 77-5. The second originally read: "The mind is ever active in some way, ever spurting up its thoughts."

¹²² Blank page

¹²³ This page is marked "II" in the original, but given its content, we have labelled it "III." – TJS
'20

(79-1)¹²⁴ Although falling sleep is listed as one of obstacles to yoga by Patanjali, whether it really is so depends both on the kind of sleep and the circumstances in which it develops. If very deep and very refreshing it has some positive value, either in conferring temporary peace of mind or in healing some bodily ill. And if it occurs while practising conjointly with, and in the presence of a master, it is definitely conducive to spiritual progress. But any other kind is certainly a waste of meditational time. To prevent it happening, or to arouse the sleeper from it if it has already happened, the Japanese Zen monks sitting in the meditation hall are supervised by a prefect who either slaps the drowsing man on the shoulder with the broad end of an oar-like pole or else rings a bell every twenty minutes. A different method is used in Siam and Ceylon by monks who meditate in solitude. A few pieces of wood are fastened to a candle about one inch apart. As the candle burns down, the pieces fall at intervals, thus awakening the monk if he is asleep.

(79-2) The Sumarah mystics of Indonesia often perform their meditations while standing [on their feet.]¹²⁵

(79-3) During the period of practice breathe as slowly as possible without feeling discomfort. This is done in order to come nearer to the possibility of holding the breath altogether, for in the arrest of its movement an arrest of the movement of thoughts automatically follows. The slowness is achieved by prolonging the time given to inhaling as well as the time given to exhaling. This must be done by degrees, gently not forcibly. It is really an attempt to imitate the slower breath rhythm observable in a sleeping man, for the layers of consciousness through which the meditator must pass are comparable to those which accompany the dreaming and dreamless states. Holding the breath means holding the inhaled breath – a physiological condition in which there are certain dangers to the lungs, the blood-vessels and the brain. Consequently a grave warning must always go out to those who risk health and sanity by [carrying]¹²⁶ breathing exercises to this extreme extent.

80¹²⁷

III

81

III

Visualisation

¹²⁴ The paras on this page are numbered 43 through 45; they are not consecutive with the previous page.

¹²⁵ PB himself inserted “on their feet.” by hand.

¹²⁶ PB himself inserted “carrying” by hand.

¹²⁷ Blank page

(81-1)¹²⁸ These rare natures who dispense good-will and radiate tolerance, who rise calmly and without apparent effort above the anger-provoking situations and highly-irritating persons, represent an ideal. It is not an impossible one and may be realised little by little if he faithfully practises constructive meditation upon the benefits of calmness as well as upon the disadvantages of anger.

(81-2) All dominant tendencies and ruling ideas which are of an undesirable character constitute fruitful sources of future action. If, by such creative meditation, we eradicate them we also eradicate the possibility of undesirable action in the future.

(81-3) The disciplined use of imagination will promote the attainment of ideals through imagination but the wild use of fancy will retard it.

(81-4) Out of these quiet moments there will emerge into active day-to-day life those controls of character, those disciplines of emotion, which elevate the human entity.

(81-5) When you have climbed the peak of this meditation, you have entered into your most powerful creative moments. It is well therefore at such a time to make your first step in descent to ordinary consciousness a step in self-improvement. Take some defect in character that needs to be overcome and imaginatively treat yourself for it like a doctor treating a patient.

(81-6) No man has complete freedom to use his creative thought-power to its most magical extent, for all men have to share it with the Overself which, being their ruler, also rules the results of their efforts. In a divinely-ordered world it would be anarchical to vest full power in unredeemed man.

(81-7) The meditation practices of the Jesuits were based on the same principle. Their exercises transformed men's character. The student had to experience imaginatively what he hoped to realise one day physically. The duality which is affirmed and pictured intensely in meditation becomes materialised in time.

(81-8) The trained meditator can make any episode of his own past seem as real and near as the present. He is able to create distinct and vivid images of it after so long a time as even several years.

82¹²⁹

III

Visualisation

¹²⁸ The paras on this page are numbered 1 through 8; they are not consecutive with the previous page.

¹²⁹ Blank page

(83-1)¹³⁰ Such constructive meditation or positive qualities will help to eliminate wrong fears from a man's life and increase his strength to endure the vicissitudes of modern existence.

(83-2) Let him try to recall those incidents in his past which impressed him most and use them as bases for analytic meditation. He should select especially those which are rich in lessons and instructive in significance.

(83-3) If these hurtful scenes are made to reappear before his mind's eye, it is only that their last lesson may be wrung out of them and they themselves banished forever.

(83-4) There are two factors which retard or accelerate, prevent or consummate the result he seeks to achieve by the creative use of thought. The first is his individual destiny, pre-ordained from birth. The second is the harmony or disharmony between his personal wish and the Overself's impersonal will for his own evolution. The more he can take a detached view of his life, separating his needs from his desires, the more is his wish likely to be fulfilled by the use of this method.

(83-5)¹³¹ He may imaginatively recreate past events or situations in which he acted wrongly. But this time he should see himself acting rightly, as with his present development he would now, and then ought to have acted.

(83-6)¹³² By constantly meditating upon the Ideal, the creative power of imagination gradually implants the likeness of its qualities, attributes, and virtues in him. It becomes, indeed, a second self {with}¹³³ which he increasingly identifies himself.

(83-7) He should, for the purposes of this exercise look back a number of years to the points in his personal history where opportunity was missed or decision was wrong or action could have been better. Then, using his imaginative faculty, he should reconstruct the situations and mentally correcting his past errors, do what he ought then to have done. From there he should proceed to trace the probable consequences down through the years.

¹³⁰ The paras on this page are numbered 9 through 15, making them consecutive with the previous page.

¹³¹ This para is a duplicate of para 249-6 in Carbons 27 (First Series Notebook).

¹³² This para is a duplicate of para 249-7 in Carbons 27 (First Series Notebook).

¹³³ We have inserted "with" for clarity.

(85-1)¹³⁵ He should think back to, and imaginatively try to recapture, the mental and emotional conditions which accompanied the glimpse, try to feel once again its liberating quality and elevating influence. In this attempt to transfer a past state of mind to the present he will be helped by the vividness, the clarity and the detail which he puts into it.

(85-2) Meditation directed towards the [reform and improvement]¹³⁶ of character should have a two-fold approach. On the one hand it should be analytic and logical, self-criticism, exposing the faults and weaknesses, the unpleasant results to which they lead both for oneself and for others. On the other hand it should be creative and imaginative, picturing of the virtues and qualities which are the contrary opposites of the faults and shortcomings exposed by the other approach. The meditator should picture himself expressing these traits in action.

(85-3) If we can gradually put ourselves in this state of absorbed, fascinated reverie, this condition of being almost lost to the external world only because we have become intensely alive to an internal one, we awaken powerful, creative possibilities.

(85-4) Let him picture his own self as if it were at the end of its quest. Let him see it enthroned on the summit of power and engaged in tranquil meditation for his own joy and for mankind's welfare.

(85-5) The work of meditation may eventually become a transforming one. If the meditator, while resting in this creative quietude earnestly strives to re-educate his character, impersonalise his attitude and strengthen his spirituality he can develop an inner life that must inevitably bring marked and deep changes in his outer life.

¹³⁴ Blank page

¹³⁵ The paras on this page are numbered 16 through 23, making them consecutive with the previous page.

¹³⁶ 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. PB himself later inserted "reform and improvement" by hand.

(85-6) From his recollections of the past, from his experiences of the present, from the events reactions and deeds of each passing day, he will draw material for this secret work upon himself.

(85-7) The materials for these analytic meditations will come directly out of his present circumstances and past experiences, out of the lives of other people he has known, out of the pages of books he has read.

(85-8) And it is through such persistent reflections upon experience that his character slowly alters, thus confirming Socrates' saying: "Virtue can be learned." The ideal pictures for him the sort of man he wants to be.

86¹³⁷

III

Visualisation

87

III

(87-1)¹³⁸ Because the art of meditation is unfamiliar to most Western people, mistakes in its practice are easily made. To detect them, it is well to describe one's experiences to a more proficient student if a qualified teacher is not available, and have them checked in the light of his knowledge.

(87-2) It is a work of leading the attention more and more inward until it reaches to the plane beneath thoughts, where peaceful being alone holds and satisfies it.

(87-3) During the course of a single session, the meditator may touch the transcendent consciousness quite a few times.

(87-4) The third stage of practice, contemplation, is definitely a joyous one. There is a subtle feeling of great comfort, sublime ease, at times even expanding into a rich and refined blissfulness.

88¹³⁹

III

89

¹³⁷ Blank page

¹³⁸ The paras on this page are numbered 1 through 4; they are not consecutive with the previous page.

¹³⁹ Blank page

(89-1)¹⁴⁰ To achieve even moderate proficiency in this art requires patient determination and repeated efforts at the very least.

(89-2) There is an interaction between the body and the mind. The practice of physical immobility, done deliberately and regularly with high intent, sitting like a [sculptured]¹⁴¹ figure for awhile, helps to bring mental immobility.

(89-3) Concentrate on the remembered delight, the lovely silence, of some past Glimpse. Try to bring it into sharp vivid focus.

(89-4) He may reach the point where he can successfully produce this golden state at will.

(89-5) The feeling of being half-bodiless is of course an illusory one. It arises from becoming aware of and sufficiently attentive to, the stillness behind mental activity.

(89-6) The body is only distantly present in his consciousness.

(89-7) Although only the proficient and protected can safely exercise in a completely dark room, and may even welcome it, the beginner, the novice and the unprotected will be helped by drawing the shades down just enough to leave a dim light.

(89-8) To quieten thoughts, it is helpful to some practicants to visualise a globe of light blue - the so-called "Wedgwood" or "powder blue" - and to concentrate on it as fixedly as they can.

(89-9) Among physical objects a flower, a stick or a flame have traditionally been used.

(89-10) A pleasant relaxed feeling comes over his body. With sufficient time, and after he enters into a deeper state, the arms may become as limp as rope and numbness may develop in the legs.

(89-11)¹⁴² The practice was at first undertaken because of the benefit he hoped to get from it. But, with some proficiency, it is [now]¹⁴³ continued also because of the pleasure it gives him.

¹⁴⁰ The paras on this page are numbered 18 through 28; they are not consecutive with the previous page, but follow the paras on page 75.

¹⁴¹ 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. PB himself later inserted "sculptured" into the space by hand.

(91-1)¹⁴⁵ This art of meditation is in the end a matter of reaching ever-greater depth within oneself, until one penetrates beneath the ego and enters pure being.

(91-2) An outwardly similar condition can be induced by artificial methods – such as suspension of breath, fixation of the gaze or even hypnotisation of the mind – but it is only a counterfeit, only useful on its own physical and mental level, never on the mystical level which it is unable to touch. It has as much spiritual value as the hibernation of animals has. For the true condition does not really come through such effort of the ego, it comes by Grace. This is why the hatha yogi is warned not to get stuck in hatha yoga but to climb higher.

(91-3) One of the hindrances to success in meditation to be overcome with great difficulty is the tendency of the intellect – and especially of the modern Western intellect – to think of the activity to which it could be attending if it were not trying to meditate, or to look forward to what it will be doing as soon as the meditation ends, or to project itself into imaginations and predictions about the next few hours or the next day. The only way to deal with this when it happens is forcibly to drag the mind's attention away from its wanderings and hold it to the Now, as if nothing else exists or can ever exist.

(91-4) There are many widely different kinds of meditation. All are useful for their particular purposes and in their proper places. But in the end the ultimate degree to which they must lead is to think of nothing but the Overself, not even of his own reactions to, or relations with it.

(91-5) It is a common mistake to believe that because no fruit seems to grow out of the exercise, no feeling and no experience result from it, the time given to it is wasted. This is why so many abandon it after a short or long trial. But how can the ego know that even the simple act of sitting like a beggar at the Overself's door, in resigned humility

¹⁴² This para was typed on a different typewriter than the rest of the page, presumably at a later date.

¹⁴³ PB himself inserted "now" by hand.

¹⁴⁴ Blank page

¹⁴⁵ The paras on this page are numbered 1 through 8; they are not consecutive with the previous page. In addition, there is an unnumbered para at the top of the page that appears to have been added later.

and patience and perseverance, is an act of faith for which the reward is certain, even though the form of this reward may not be.

(91-6) The meditation may serve a useful or helpful or constructive purpose but it will not serve its highest purpose unless it transforms itself into contemplation. That is to say, unless it transforms itself from an effort-making activity to an effortless experience by taking him out of himself. His own will cannot do it but divine Grace can.

(91-7) Not all are ready to displace meditation and concentration by contemplation and there ought to be definite direction before starting on it. This may come either from within, intuitively, or from without, by advice from a spiritual guide.

(91-8) What practical procedures can be used to achieve this result?

(91-9) How relaxing it is to feel all tension dissolve within him!

92¹⁴⁶

III

93

III

(93-1)¹⁴⁷ Every state other than this perfect stillness is a manifestation of the ego, even if it be an inner mystical "experience." To be in the Overself one must be out of the ego, and consequently out of the ego's experiences, thoughts, fancies or images. All these may have their fit place and use at other times but not when the consciousness is to be raised completely to the Overself.

(93-2) Every time a thought rears its head, evaluate it for what it is and then push it aside. Every time an emotion rushes up, recognise it too for what it is and detach yourself from it. This is the path of Self-Enquiry for as you do these things hold the will directed towards finding the centre of your being. Do them with dogged persistence. Do them in your consciousness and in your feeling.

(93-3) A fidgeting body is one of the first obstructions to many who want to practise meditation. They cannot make progress until they learn to sit still. A stable body is necessary to sustain the stability of a meditation.

¹⁴⁶ Blank page

¹⁴⁷ The paras on this page are numbered 9 through 17, making them consecutive with the previous page.

(93-4) The feeling of eagerly waiting for something to happen gives birth to impatience. This frustrates the very purpose of meditation, for it creates in its turn a sense of hurry, tension, nervous agitation – the extreme opposites of inner stillness. They shut it out.

(93-5) Concentration, from the standpoint of mystical development, may be regarded as achieved when attention is kept on one idea all the time, without being divided up over several different ideas. It is not achieved if kept on one subject all the time through considering several related ideas: that is ordinary concentrated thinking.

(93-6) In this interim waiting period nothing happens, only the thoughts bubble along as they usually do during an idle time, except that there is some strain, some constriction whenever he remembers that there is a purpose in his sitting here, a control needed to achieve it.

(93-7) It would be an error entirely to omit the daily practice merely because some other duty or engagement came in its way. In that case, he should choose any other time when it can be done rather than miss it altogether.

(93-8) Whatever posture he adopts and whether he sits in the ordinary way or squats in some special way, once adopted it should be held with rigid stillness. It will then serve a threefold purpose. First, by refraining from any kind of movement he will refrain from expressing impatience – a quality which simply defeats meditation. Second, the body's quietness helps to induce the same condition in the mind. Third, such outer physical rigidity is a perfect symbol of the inner ego's death, the cessation of the ego's will.

(93-9) How can anyone attain such inwardness? Practice is the answer.

94¹⁴⁸

III

95

III

(95-1)¹⁴⁹ He must sit patiently, oh! so patiently, and wait for the miraculous shift of awareness to happen.

¹⁴⁸ Blank page

¹⁴⁹ The paras on this page are numbered 18 through 26, making them consecutive with the previous page.

(95-2) Entry into the third or contemplative stage may be marked by a momentary lapse from any consciousness at all. Yet it will be such a deep lapse that the meditator will not know on recovery whether it has endured a few seconds or a whole hour.

(95-3) The question "Who am I?" is asked somewhere in that monumental ancient book, The Yoga Vasistha. It was often included centuries later by St Francis in his prayers. But Sri Ramana Maharshi¹⁵⁰ gave it central importance in his advice to spiritual seekers and meditators.

(95-4) I cannot recommend group meditations. The presence of so many other persons interferes with his own concentration. This is not only because they introduce unnecessary noises of movement and coughing and fidgeting but also because they introduce psychic distractions through the impact of their auras.

(95-5) The second stage will often occupy a man for several years and although it lacks the altogether different quality of contemplation, it yields its own benefits and gains. These are valuable and necessary, even though they are the product of concentrated intellect or creative imagination. They prepare him for the next stage and remove the obstructions to its entry.

(95-6) The mere physical act of sitting down to practise meditation is both a symbolic gesture of withdrawal from the world and an actual severance from it. Each time it is done the meditator temporarily renounces his outer personal life, renders himself oblivious of it and of the world in which it is lived. What other withdrawal is needed? Is this not enough? Therefore anyone may continue to remain a householder and need not take monastic vows, may be active in the world provided such daily periods of meditation successfully take him out of it.

(95-7) What patience and perseverance are needed during this preliminary period when all kinds of thoughts are racing through the mind and a calm settled inactive condition seems inaccessible!

(95-8) The practice of meditating on the mental image of the master is helpful at the proper time but the meditator should understand that it is not the most advanced practice. If at any time during it, or after attempting it, he feels drawn to the Void exercise, or to any of the exercises dealing with the formless spirit of Mind, he ought to let himself slip away from the pictorial meditation and pass up into the pure contemplation. He need have no reluctance or hesitation in doing so.

(95-9) He is to begin by giving a disciplined attention to the workings of his own mind.

¹⁵⁰ "Maharishee" in the original.

(97-1)¹⁵² If meditation may have unfortunate results when its concentrative power is applied negatively or selfishly, contemplation – its higher phase – may have similar results when its passive condition is entered without previous purification or preparation. Michael de Molinos knew this well and therefore put a warning in the preface of his book “The Spiritual Guide” which treats with the authority of an expert the subject of contemplation. “The doctrine of this book,” he announced, “instructs not all sorts of persons, but those only who keep the senses and passions well mortified, who have already advanced and made progress in Prayer.”

(97-2) The use of the words “this day” in the Lord’s Prayer is an indication that Jesus advises his followers to pray or meditate in the morning. The suggestion is of high importance, though it usually escapes notice. We can set the keynote of the entire day’s activities by the attitude adopted during the first hour after waking.

(97-3) Thinking must stop, but if it stops at the level of the little ego only a psychical experience or a mediumistic possession may result. If however it stops at a deeper level after right preparation and sufficient purification, the mind’s emptiness may be filled by a realisation of identity with the Overself.

(97-4) It is a process of withdrawing his attention from his surroundings and directing it inside himself. It must be done carefully, properly, and for limited periods only if he has to live and work in the world and retain his normal capacity for dealing with the world.

(97-5) Sitting still may appear to be a very ordinary and common thing. But the man who can sit perfectly still, without twiddling his fingers, fidgeting a limb or moving an inch and keep the same position for at least fifteen minutes, has done something unusual. He has also taken the best of all postures as well as undertaken an excellent discipline for the body.

(97-6) A place where agitations, quarrels and passions have often marred the mental atmosphere is unsuited for meditation because they make it more difficult.

¹⁵¹ Blank page

¹⁵² The paras on this page are numbered 27 through 35, making them consecutive with the previous page.

(97-7) A Neapolitan Archbishop complaining in a letter to the Pope of the spread of meditation among lay folk, described their condition during its practice in a striking phrase: "When they pray they remain as quiet and as silent as if they were dumb or dead."

(97-8) Constant practice is more important for success in meditation than any other single factor.

(97-9) Thoughts will drift past in ever changing variety but he will learn to give them no attention even though he is aware of them.

98¹⁵³

III

99

III

(99-1)¹⁵⁴ How can you do God's will unless you know what is God's will? How can you know this unless you are able to communicate with God? And how can this happen unless you can go deep into yourself in meditation?

(99-2) "Be still and know that I am God," sings the Biblical Psalmist. This simply means that the movement of thoughts and emotions is to be brought to an end by entering the deepest degree of contemplation. The same teaching is given in the Bhagavad Gita. "As the wick of an oil lamp placed in a wind-free spot is flickerless, so is the yogi of mastered mind who practises union with the God-Self."

(99-3) There are traditionally certain hours of the day which are the most profitable for meditation practices. They are daybreak, sunset, midnight, and the time when one was born.

(99-4) In this exercise he is to search his memory for those moments of transcendental calm which his past history may contain and, so far as is possible, attempt to relive them again.

(99-5) As the mind's movement ebbs away and its turnings slow down, the ego's desires for, and attempt to hold on to, its world drop away. What ensues is a real mental quiet. The man discovers himself, his Overself.

¹⁵³ Blank page

¹⁵⁴ The paras on this page are numbered 36 through 48, making them consecutive with the previous page.

(99-6) The ideas upon which he is to fix his attention should be of an uplifting and broadening kind, should take him out of the daily round of personal or petty matters.

(99-7) For now he is acutely conscious of the very principle whereby he knows the outside world, instead of merely knowing the world alone as in ordinary awareness.

(99-8) In the deepest state of contemplation he is not able to be concerned about himself. How then can he be concerned about other men? "At such times" said Bonaventura "one must not think of creatures."

(99-9) Both the necessity and justification of meditation lie in this, that man is so pre-occupied with his own thoughts that he is never aware of the mind out of which they arise and in which they vanish. The process of stilling these thoughts, or advanced meditation, makes this awareness possible.

(99-10) Once these preliminaries have been fulfilled and the ego's active devotions have subsided, all that he can do is to wait, watchfully, for the arising of intuitive feelings and then devote his utmost attention to them.

(99-11) There must be outward quiet not only in his physical surroundings but also in his physical body. Hands, fingers and feet must share this stillness.

(99-12) His development becomes mature when the hour for meditation no longer remains outside the day but perfumes its every minute.

(99-13) A single colourful flower placed in a slim vase may be used for the gazing exercise.

100¹⁵⁵

III

101

III

(101-1)¹⁵⁶ When the mind is distracted by its surroundings, it is prevented from perceiving itself. This is easy to understand. When it is distracted by the body, it is also prevented from gaining such perception. This is harder but still possible to understand. But when the mind is distracted from attending to itself by its own thoughts, this is the hardest of all its situations to understand.

¹⁵⁵ Blank page

¹⁵⁶ The paras on this page are numbered 49 through 62, making them consecutive with the previous page.

(101-2) The act of continuous concentration – if carried on for some time – draws an extra and unusual quantity of blood to the brain. This causes pleasurable sensations which may increase to an ecstatic degree.

(101-3) First he has to become thoroughly familiar with the conditions needed to produce the sought-for results. Then he has to become expert in producing them by repetition at each session.

(101-4) You may seek to commune with the Overself in any posture that suits you – squatting like a Hindu, kneeling like a Christian, sitting or standing.

(101-5) His aim should be to attain the greatest possible concentration of mind and to keep its energy from dissipating itself on a variety of topics.

(101-6) If, on awakening in the morning, your sleep has been satisfying, deep and refreshing, you have the best bodily condition for meditation.

(101-7) Some imaginative minds can make profitable use of the vastness of the ocean or the immensity of space as topics on which to meditate in the advanced stages.

(101-8) From these sessions he can draw attractive qualities – strong in willpower, relaxed in nerves and ever-smiling in face. From them too he is likely to renew more courageously than before his personal commitment to the Quest.

(101-9) A point will be arrived at where he will break into the depths of his own being.

(101-10) He must train himself by sheer hard will-power to give the continuity of attention which this exercise requires.

(101-11) When he is going to practise any exercise – whether mystical or physical – his mind should be thoroughly concentrated on it and not on anything else. All thought and energy should go into it, if it is to be successfully done.

(101-12) It is a valuable, important and fruitful topic of meditation to think of the Divine Principle as it is in its real nature and essential being, not as theologians have thought it to be or visionaries have imagined it to be.

(101-13) This last stage, contemplation, is neither deep reflective thinking nor self-hypnotic trance. It is intense awareness, without the intrusion of the little ego or the large world.

(101-14) Is this sacred self to be met with only during a meditation period?¹⁵⁷

102¹⁵⁸

III

103

III

(103-1)¹⁵⁹ The freshness of air, the quiet of environment and above all the purity of the mind, are all so much more in the early morning that meditation comes more easily and more quickly and more naturally at such a time. But the objection is often made by Western man that he rises under the pressure of preparing for and travelling to his work, so that strain and pre-occupation and clock-watching interfere with meditation and make it unsatisfactory. Even the obvious remedy of retiring earlier and rising earlier has some disadvantage because of the colder morning temperature. Against this is the great advantage of sounding a keynote for the whole day by quieting and directing the mind at its beginning.

(103-2) Although the inner conditions needed for meditation are best had on an empty stomach, the outer conditions may not always make this possible. One may be unable to be alone except when allowed to lie down and rest after a meal. In that case the rest period may be turned into the meditation period. The mind will have to be trained to the practice while the body is recumbent, and the rule concerning an erect spine will have to be ignored. Good results can still be secured, although not so good as they otherwise could have been.

(103-3) Meditation is not achieved if the concentrated mind is directed toward a subject of personal and worldly nature. Reflecting on the subject will give a deeper knowledge of it and a fuller perception of its meaning, but it will not give anything more. However concentrated the mind may become, it will not escape from the ego, nor does it seek to do so. Meditation is achieved if the concentrated mind is used to reflect on the Overself or the way to it.

(103-4) After the Spirit-Energy awakes and begins to mount up the trunk, a double sensation is felt. From the meditator's own breathing, thinking and willing activities he himself seems to be pushing the force upwards. But from what he also experiences psychically and intuitively, something overhead seems to be magnetically pulling his

¹⁵⁷ This section is continued in the paras on page 125.

¹⁵⁸ Blank page

¹⁵⁹ The paras on this page are numbered 1 through 7; they are not consecutive with the previous page.

head up and elongating his body and drawing the Spirit-Energy up to itself. The two influences do not counter-balance each other but prevail alternatively by turns.

(103-5) At this point he gets so lost in the Void that he forgets who it is who is meditating. Then and thus he receives a further answer to the question "Who am I?"

(103-6) If you prefer sitting in a chair I recommend using one whose seat is lower than the average.

(103-7) As mental tension subsides, his spiritual exaltation increases.

104¹⁶⁰

III

105

III

(105-1)¹⁶¹ The world, at this stage, is no longer a part of his experience.

(105-2) Few are born to this mental control but many could train themselves to it if they tried and persevered.

(105-3) The Catholic Christian mystics distinguish three different stages of advancement in meditation; the Buddha distinguished ten, and the oldest Hindu authorities, five.

(105-4) It is as if he were looking at himself, at his characteristics of thought, feeling and conduct, from outside.

(105-5) In the early stages of meditation the body dominates his experience and it is ostrich-like to ignore this fact. No matter how he tries to do so, it will keep on stepping into his field of consciousness, and even taking control of it. Let him try to meditate, without proper precautions, while a thousand mosquitoes torment him or a low temperature freezes him!

(105-6) The value of taking this kind of a backward look at the day just finished is far more than it seems. For everything in him will benefit – his character, his destiny and even his after-death experience.

¹⁶⁰ Blank page

¹⁶¹ The paras on this page are numbered 8 through 21, making them consecutive with the previous page.

(105-7) He should analytically study, warmly admire and imaginatively possess the characteristic qualities of Sagehood. They form an excellent topic for dwelling on during the meditation period.

(105-8) The squatting position can be made easier, for those unaccustomed to it, by keeping the legs one in front of the other, instead of pressing it down on top of the other.

(105-9) The will, driving the attention to a fine pinpoint of concentration, sinks through layer after layer of the mind till it reaches the noblest, the wisest and the happiest of them all.

(105-10) These different phases of meditation are really degrees of penetration into the various layers of the mind. Most people stop at varying points of approach to meditation's final objective and few show the patience or ability to attain its full course.

(105-11) It takes a long time in most cases for the practice to become spontaneous and unforced, easy and even delightful.

(105-12) He finds himself in an enchanted world of being where what was hitherto as nothing, changes place with a consciousness of the intensest reality.

(105-13) Meditation when successful, flings a magic spell over the man, one that is benign and blessed.

(105-14) The mind is at its quietest in the early morning, the character at its best.

106¹⁶²

III

107

III

(107-1)¹⁶³ The breath-watching exercise is done with closed eyes. It begins with attentively noting the upward and downward movements of the abdomen as breath passes in and out of the body. The rate of this passing must not be quickened nor itself deepened specially for this exercise but should be the usual one. Otherwise fatigue will be induced and the meditation obstructed. Aim at making a perfectly clear mental picture of the regular rise and fall in abdomen and breathing. Continue with this

¹⁶² Blank page

¹⁶³ The paras on this page are numbered 22 through 32, making them consecutive with the previous page.

patiently and unwaveringly throughout the time of exercising. It is important to become fully aware of what has happened each time the mind wanders from the objective set before it, after which pull the mind forcibly back to this objective. Once he is familiar with and practised in this method of achieving concentration, the aspirant will find it very easy and very simple to do.

(107-2) If the utmost benefit is to be extracted from this kind of exercise he should, at the end and before he rises to resume the ordinary daily life, briefly repeat to himself its leading points and then sum up in concentrated emphasis its final lesson.

(107-3) Among the Tibetans the prescribed period of meditation will not be used for this purpose if the man is overcome by anger. He is advised to lie down and wait until his temper cools.

(107-4) In this work he has to practise, by firm acts of the will, putting a stop to the intellect's incessant activity.

(107-5) Unrest of mind is not alone in keeping him from achieving this concentration. Fatigue of body can also do it.

(107-6) You do not need to enter a special building for this purpose, be it a church or an ashram, but you may do so if it helps you.

(107-7) What is the best time of the day for this practice? Those who can manage it will find the early morning to be so.

(107-8) When his last thought at night and first thought in the morning refers to the Overself, he may appraise his progress as excellent.

(107-9) Whoever undertakes this patient search into himself, gains more than the world suspects.

(107-10) The first stage must be entered with a positive attitude, and using a determined will to hold to the one subject selected.

(107-11) He is to take such a mighty spiritual truth or philosophic maxim into deepest consideration and deepest feeling.

(109-1)¹⁶⁵ The novice must be warned that certain ways of practising concentration, such as visualising diagrams or repeating declarations, as well as emptying the mind to seek guidance, must not be confused with the true way of meditation. This has no other object than to surrender the ego to the Overself and uses no other method than prayerful aspiration, loving devotion and mental quiet.

(109-2) The state of concentration acquired during a worldly pursuit differs from that acquired during mystical meditation in that the first is usually directed toward outward things and the experience of sense-pleasures, whereas the second is directed toward inward being and rejects sense-pleasures. Thus the two states are at opposite poles – one belonging to the ego-seeking man, and the other to the Overself-seeking man.

(109-3) The body soon begins to protest against the unaccustomed stillness suddenly enforced on it; the mind soon starts to rebel against the tedium and boredom of the early stages, and the habitual unrest of both will have to be faced again and again.

(109-4) He need not get either perturbed or puzzled if, after a certain period of the session has elapsed and a certain depth of concentration reached, there is a momentary disappearance of consciousness. This will be a prologue to, as well as a sign of, entrance into the third state, contemplation. The immediate after-effect of the lapse is somewhat like that which follows deep dreamless sleep. There is a delicious awakening into a mind very quiet, emotions gently stilled and nerves greatly soothed.

(109-5) Although he may collect together only those thoughts which refer to the chosen subject, he may take different sides of it by turns.

(109-6) Even the large range of possible meditations upon spiritual principles, mental ideas, imagined pictures and physical objects, does not exhaust the list. He may use his own body too. The gaze may be concentrated between the eyebrows, down the nose or upon the naval. The process of breathing may be closely watched.

(109-7) Whatever thinking is done during the exercise, one ought to strive for the utmost clearness and the fullest alertness in it.

(109-8) At such a time he is to put aside his own ideas and wait patiently for the Overself-inspired ideas to come to him.

¹⁶⁵ The paras on this page are numbered 33 through 42, making them consecutive with the previous page.

(109-9) Come to the meditation seat as reverently and as gently as you would come into a noble and ancient cathedral.

(109-10) A sensation of intense lightness will be imparted to the body, which will feel as light as air.

110¹⁶⁶

III

111

III

(111-1)¹⁶⁷ The act with which you start the day and that with which you finish it are particularly important. They can become, if you wish, the means of promoting spiritual progress.

(111-2) Where is the expert in meditational theory and practice greater than the Buddha? His recommendation for those who earnestly sought to master the act was to establish two basic conditions – solitude without and perseverance within.

(111-3) It is possible to watch, by introspection, the happenings in the mind. But to do this accurately and adequately, the detachment fostered by the witness-attitude must be present. Part of his consciousness must stand aside, cool, untouched by emotions and independent of ego.

(111-4) To the extent that a man keeps inwardly still, to that extent he unfolds himself and lets the ever-perfect Overself shine forth.

(111-5) The consciousness beyond the usual everyday consciousness can be reached only after a disciplined training of the mind. This suppresses its activity in thinking and banishes its extroverted worldliness of character.

(111-6) The breathing exercises end up in holding the breath for short or long periods which in turn holds up brain activity. The stillness which follows is very pleasant, very unusual and very satisfying. But it is not the same as the mystical stillness in which there is a definite experience of knowing the Overself.

(111-7) How useless, how disorderly are the thoughts which tumble one after another through his head as he sits waiting for the real beginning of meditation! How they

¹⁶⁶ Blank page

¹⁶⁷ The paras on this page are numbered 43 through 53, making them consecutive with the previous page.

quickly lose themselves through the mere chance of associated ideas in other topics, which carry him far away from the one he set out to consider.

(111-8) Love gives real force and renewed fire to meditation. Without it the struggle is much harder, and the successful result much slower to attain.

(111-9) The meditator seeks to penetrate the various strata of mental consciousness, all of which are tinted with ego-love, until he reaches That which lies hidden beneath them all.

(111-10) Meditation that is not accompanied by a deep and warm feeling of reverence, will take much longer to reach its goal, if it reaches it at all.

(111-11) In this state the thought-making activity comes to an end, the intellect itself is absorbed in the still centre of being, and a luminous peace enfolds the man.

112¹⁶⁸

III

113

III

(113-1)¹⁶⁹ It is a simple exercise to combine the work of watching the in-and-out breathing while quietening the mental activities or concentrating them. Yet it is also an effective exercise. And when it has been sufficiently practised he may go farther and combine the watching with moral discipline or reflections instead.

(113-2) The whole bodily and mental purificatory regime contributes both to the proper development of meditation and the proper reception of intuitive knowledge. This is apart from, and in addition to, its direct physical and personal benefits.

(113-3) If the practice is regularly made in a room, it is prudent to lock the door. During the early attempts to attain the first stage this may not be necessary but during the later periods when proficiency has been reached, it is necessary for self-protection. If a condition of deep self absorption is present, and if another person were to burst into the room unexpectedly and abruptly, the nervous shock given would be severe.

(113-4) The drowsy torpor of a lazy mind is not the true void to be desired and sought.

¹⁶⁸ Blank page

¹⁶⁹ The paras on this page are numbered 54 through 60, making them consecutive with the previous page.

(113-5) It would be a serious error to believe that he is to continue with any particular exercise or chosen theme, with any special declaration or analysis or question, no matter what happens in the course of a session. On the contrary; if at any moment he feels the onset of deeper feelings, or stronger aspirations, or notable peace, he ought to stop the exercise or abandon the method and give himself up entirely to the interior visitant. He ought to have no hesitation and no fear in considering himself free to do so.

(113-6) The nasal gaze meditation exercise is both easy and quieting. It is mentioned in "Gita." The half-closed eyes look down on the tip of one's nose. They must not wink during the gaze or be closed. When tired, close them and rest. Avoid strain, staring and popping the eyes wide open. The action should be one of relaxation, restful. All attention of an alert and concentrated mind should be fixed on the gazing. This exercise gives control over the optic nerve and contributes towards steadiness of mind.

(113-7) The Overself takes his thoughts about it, limited and remote though they are, and guides them closer and closer to its own high level. Such illumined thinking is not the same as ordinary thinking. Its qualitative height and mystical depth are immensely superior. But when his thoughts can go no farther, the Overself's Grace touches and silences them. In that moment he knows.

114¹⁷⁰

III

115

III

(115-1)¹⁷¹ If the meditative act is used aright by the intellect, will and imagination, it can become a means to an inspiration and an ecstasy beyond itself. It can be used as a stimulus to creative achievement in any field, including the spiritual and the artistic fields. It should be practised just before beginning to work. The technique is to hold on to the inspired attitude or the joyous feeling after meditation is completed and not to let it fade away. Then approach the work to be done and carry the attitude into it. It will be done with more power, more effectiveness, and especially more creativeness. Anyone who loves his task in this deeper way does it more easily and successfully than he who does not.

(115-2) The use of imagined forms, scenes and persons is only for beginners in meditation: it is to be left behind when the object has been sufficiently achieved. As St John of the Cross says, "For though such forms and methods of meditation may be

¹⁷⁰ Blank page

¹⁷¹ The paras on this page are numbered 61 through 67, making them consecutive with the previous page.

necessary in order to inflame and fill their souls with love through the instrumentality of sense, and though they may serve as remote means of union, through which souls must usually pass to the goal of spiritual repose – still they must so make use of them as to pass beyond them, and not dwell upon them for ever.” Such a use of pictured forms must include the master’s too. St John of the Cross even includes Christ’s. For many this practice is a step forward but aspirants must not linger all their lifetime on a particular step if they really seek to climb higher.

(115-3) He should try to let the mood thus created be carried over into his ordinary life. This will be exceedingly hard at first for he will find every thing and everyone seems to drag him out of it. The secret of success is to “remember to remember,” for success depends on keeping his aim in view.

(115-4) As regards the subject for reflecting upon, he may select one that accords with his personal need of self-improvement or one that is totally impersonal and concerned with his conception of God, the Soul, etc.

(115-5) Only when he becomes entirely engrossed in the one idea, unconscious of any other idea, can he be said to have achieved concentration, the first stage.

(115-6) If his meditations are to be kept out of harm’s reach, certain physical, mental and moral regulations have to be obeyed.

(115-7) The same outer things which help him to achieve concentration, may also hinder him from continuing in meditation if he stays in thought with them too long.

116¹⁷²
III

117
III

(117-1)¹⁷³ Let him throw all his experiences into this scrupulous analysis. It does not matter whether, on the surface, they are important or not. So long as there is some instructive significance to be distilled from them, some moral lesson, philosophic principle, practical guidance or metaphysical truth, they are grist for his mill. Most events and episodes that he can remember, the trivial as well as the tragic, are to be reconsidered from this strictly impersonal point of view and made to serve his spiritual development.

¹⁷² Blank page

¹⁷³ The paras on this page are numbered 68 through 79, making them consecutive with the previous page.

(117-2) The power of meditation to build virtues and dissolve faults exists in its ability to impregnate the mind with causative patterns.

(117-3) Among the visions which are possible, there is one of great beauty but which comes more often to Far Eastern disciples than to Euro-American ones. It depicts the sun rising out of the sea and throwing a straight trail of light across the dark waters.

(117-4) The question of what meditative posture to adopt is important only in the case of those exercises whose objective is the awakening of Spirit-Energy, and unimportant in the case of most others.

(117-5) He may deliberately choose a fresh subject each day or let the spontaneous urge of the moment choose it for him. Or he may take again one that has served him well before.

(117-6) Time, and plenty of it, is needed for this mystical operation. The deeper you go into yourself, the longer it takes to arrive there.

(117-7) Almost any symbolic vision is possible but certain ones have repeated themselves down through the centuries as to become classic. They may appear to the same man only rarely, but each time they will act as bearers of fresh hope, power or beauty and as incentives to acquire needed humility, purity or discipline.

(117-8) It is a principle of philosophy that what you can know is limited by what you are. A deep man may know a deep truth but a shallow man, never. This indeed is one of its reasons for taking up the practice of meditation.

(117-9) The gazing exercise may be alternated by simply looking towards a point midway between both half-closed, half-opened eyes and keeping them fixed in this position.

(117-10) Ought he to choose one particular exercise as opposed to all the others and make it his habitual daily task?

(117-11) Whether we renounce the world or whether we accept it, the need of mental control still remains the same.

(117-12) Each must find, by trial and experiment, what is best for himself.

(119-1)¹⁷⁵ It is pathetic to contrast the hard, disciplined training of the Tibetan lamas with the feeble efforts of many westerners who abandon trying to learn meditation if the ten or fifteen minutes a day they give to it do not yield striking mystical experiences within a few weeks or months. First its very start is a test of endurance, the red-robed monks being compelled to sit in one position hour after hour without stirring and without fidgeting. They are not even allowed to flicker an eyelash.

(119-2) During this brief period he is to undertake a strange task – to separate himself from the petty and the passionate, from the affairs of his personal career and family relationship, and to seek to unite himself with the grand truths, the impersonal principles of spiritual being.

(119-3) Meditation rises to its proper level when the meditator thinks only of the relation or the aspiration between himself and the Overself, and it rises to its supreme level when he drops even such ideas and thinks of nothing save the Overself.

(119-4) The inner movement is like no other which he has experienced for it must guide itself, must move forward searchingly into darkness without knowing where it will arrive. He must take some chances here, yet he need not be afraid. They will be reasonable and safe chances if he abides by the advice given in these pages.

(119-5) The higher objective of meditation is to transcend the personal self, which must include of necessity the power to forget it. This cannot be accomplished so long as the physical house of that self – the body – keeps on forcing itself into the area of attention by reason of its own acute discomfort.

(119-6) If it were an easy practice many more westerners would be engaged in it than the relatively few who are to be found doing it today. But it is not. Beginners too often complain that they cannot centre their thoughts, nor tranquillise their minds, nor get any response from divine being within.

(119-7) The exercise deals with persons, things, situations and problems which exist only in imaginary circumstances inside his own mind. But otherwise he is to give it all the reality he can, to see, hear, touch and smell internally as vividly as if he were using

¹⁷⁵ The paras on this page are numbered 80 through 87, making them consecutive with the previous page.

these same senses externally. Except for any special modification which the philosophic discipline may call for, every act is to be done mentally just as he would do it in real life.

(119-8) The meditator reaches a point where he stops in terror on the edge of an unknown nothingness, into which he would otherwise soon pass.

120¹⁷⁶

III

121

III

(121-1)¹⁷⁷ It is a means of severing attention from its ever-changing objects, and then enabling the freed mental force to study its own source.

(121-2) Those who are sceptical of the higher origin of this phenomenon, who assert it to be the work of auto-suggestion, that it is of a mind able to impress its own imaginings upon itself to such an extent that it mistakes them for realities, are themselves guilty of auto-suggestion, for they have impressed their sceptical theories to such an extent upon their own minds that there is no reason for anything else than these complexes.

(121-3) The mind must fold inward upon itself, passing deeper and deeper into the fullness of concentration until it excludes all, or nearly all, physical consciousness.

(121-4) There is a state of mental silence, when no analytic thinking, logical deliberation or argumentative discussion is possible. The mind is so stilled that all its discursive operations stop completely. By its very nature this state cannot last. It is temporary - from a few minutes to a few days.

(121-5) When this gentle inward pull is felt, concentrate all attention, all feeling and all desire upon it. Give yourself up to it, for you are receiving a visitation from the Lord, and the more you do so, the closer He will come.

(121-6) Those who try to grasp Tao, lose it, declared Lao-Tzu.¹⁷⁸ Why? Because they are using will-power, personal will-power, instead of becoming passive and letting the Tao use them, their minds and bodies, as if they were its instruments. This elimination of the self-will is what Jesus meant when he counselled his followers to lose their life in order to find life.

¹⁷⁶ Blank page

¹⁷⁷ The paras on this page are numbered 88 through 99, making them consecutive with the previous page.

¹⁷⁸ "Lao Tse" in the original.

(121-7) The middle-aged especially need to use this precaution for they have a tendency to be stooped or round-shouldered in a slight or large measure. Let them straighten up the neck, drawing in the throat and chin, and feel the head pulled-up.

(121-8) Just as the Japanese and Burmese monks used tea to keep alert for their pre-dawn meditations, so the dervishes of Mecca used coffee to keep awake for their all-night prayers.

(121-9) Without dramatic happening or sensational incident, the mind slips at long last into the Great Silence.

(121-10) No time spent in the attempt to learn this art, is vainly spent. Even when, as often happens, the effort seems to be without result, the latter does and must appear later somehow.

(121-11) Without deep meditation man's mind yields him only knowledge of the surfaces of things.

(121-12) The most advanced man can enter immediately into the contemplative state.

122¹⁷⁹

III

123

III

(123-1)¹⁸⁰ The concentration on that "Other" is to be so complete that he can echo the words of Therese Neumann:¹⁸¹ "I am so completely alone with the dear saviour that I could not possibly have any time to think about myself."

(123-2) This is the stage of adoration, when the Overself's beauty and tranquillity begin to take possession of his heart. He should then cease from any further thinking discursively about it or communing verbally with it. It is a time for complete inner silence. Let him engage himself solely in beholding, loving and eventually uniting with the gracious source of these feelings.

¹⁷⁹ Blank page

Handwritten note on a post-it reads: "4g missing."

¹⁸⁰ The paras on this page are numbered 100 through 110, making them consecutive with the previous page.

¹⁸¹ "Theresa Newmann" in the original.

(123-3) At the deepest point of this condition, he loses the power to make any physical movement: he sits or lies quite deprived of the bodily will.

(123-4) He will find in the teachings, the principles and the truths of philosophy, plenty of material from which to select a daily subject for meditation.

(123-5) The kind of meditation in which the meditator ponders persistently what his source is, what the 'I' really is, has the eventual effect of de-hypnotising him from these false and limiting identifications with the body, the desires and the intellect.

(123-6) "Be still and know that I am God" is not only to be interpreted as enjoining the practice of meditation but as enjoining it to the farthest possible extent – the coma-like, rigid trance experienced by St Catherine of Siena and the young Maharshi.¹⁸²

(123-7) The higher purpose of meditation is missed if it does not end in the peace, the stillness, that emanates from the real self. However slightly it may be felt, this is the essential work which meditation must do for us.

(123-8) Several persons have told, or written me, of having had a like experience during a surgical operation when the waking consciousness was drugged by an anaesthetic, or when they were just emerging from it.

(123-9) A rabble of thoughts pursue him into the silence period, as if determined to keep his mind from ever becoming still.

(123-10) When the Chinese philosophers used the phrase "sitting in forgetfulness" they meant what the Hindu yogis called "sitting in meditation." The forgetfulness refers to the world and its affairs, its scenes and events, as well as to the physical body.

(123-11) It must be a topic very distant from, and quite unconnected with his ordinary occupations of the day. He must release himself altogether from their problems and pleasures.¹⁸³

124¹⁸⁴

III

125

III

¹⁸² "Maharishee" in the original.

¹⁸³ This section is continued in the paras on page 127.

¹⁸⁴ Blank page

(125-1)¹⁸⁵ Contemplation is attained when your thinking about a spiritual truth or about the spiritual goal, suddenly ceases of itself. The mind then enters into a perfectly still and rapt condition.

(125-2) That alone may be called the fulfilment of meditation, and its real practice, which shuts out of the mind everything except the Overself.

(125-3) It was quite correct to seek in the earlier stages understanding of what is happening to him, but not in this later stage. Here he is to be like a dumb creature, letting the Overself do its cleansing, ego-stilling work in him.

(125-4) He remains blissfully without thoughts, without even the thought that he has no thoughts.

(125-5) The lack of enjoyable result following the practice does not mean that it has been in vain. The belief that he is sitting in the presence of the Overself, if clung to despite the meditation's dryness, will one day bring him a Glimpse at least. But he must come to it faithfully each day.

(125-6) Thought may ennoble a man or debase him. It is not to be dismissed as unimportant. If conquering it is so necessary, stilling it is even more important and more necessary.

(125-7) How many Westerners have tried to get in the Buddha posture only to get cramps.

(125-8) The contemplation deepens until it reaches a point where reasoned thinking and judgment, as well as memory, are suspended, so that only the mind's knowing faculty is left.

(125-9) Is it necessary for the body to assume a special position to enable the mind properly to meditate?

(125-10) If, in one sense, it is a searching for himself, in another sense it is a looking away from himself.

(125-11) Open the door and let the Light in. It is as simple – and as hard – as that.

126¹⁸⁶

¹⁸⁵ The paras on this page are numbered 63 through 73; they are not consecutive with the previous page, but follow the paras on page 101.

¹⁸⁶ Blank page

(127-1)¹⁸⁷ If the meditation attempts prove completely arid they may be prefaced by slow thought-out reading punctuated by reflective pauses when the book is to be put aside. It is during such pauses that the impetus to the inner movement may be felt. The book's work is then done.

(127-2) The outsiders may hardly believe that anyone could remain so quiet, so utterly without a sign of fidgeting.

(127-3) The more he practises at such times a thinking that is sense-free and beyond the physical, that is metaphysical in the truest sense, the better will he be prepared to receive the intuitive influx from the Overself.

(127-4) With sufficient, well-directed practice, he should fix the ideal of being able to attain a capacity of withdrawing attention from the world and concentrating it within himself without losing a single minute.

(127-5) The ability to dispel the wandering of his thoughts comes only, and usually, after long persistent practice.

(127-6) He will become aware, as if by a sixth sense, of the arrival or the nearness of meditation time.

(127-7) Anything that attracts attention away from the principal theme of the meditation, hinders the meditation itself. This applies both to physical things and to mental ones.

(127-8) Too much of a group's time is taken up with making itself absorbed, for the thoughts of individual members are too much taken up with the presence and appearance of the others.

(127-9) It is an affair between the Overself and himself, which is to be conducted unperceived by others around him, unknown to them and unadvertised to the larger world.

¹⁸⁷ The paras on this page are numbered 111 through 124; they are not consecutive with the previous page, but follow the paras on 123.

(127-10) Although closing the eyes is best for most beginners, it has the disadvantages of inducing sleepiness in some cases.

(127-11) In this state he lets go of the world outside, cuts off its links with him, and folds in upon himself.

(127-12) His attention must be absolute and perfect if it is to be effectual and creative in producing this result.

(127-13) Since these sessions are to be constantly recurring, the place chosen for them should be quiet or, if that is not possible, anti-noise precautions – such as the use of ear-stoppers – should be taken.

(127-14) Add to my essay on ‘Yoga of Head versus heart:’ But the Japanese Zen master offers a third choice: “Think with the abdomen,” he advises the practiser of koan meditation exercises. The Tibetan Tantric masters offer even a fourth choice: “Think with the generative organ and sublimate its feelings.” Should all this not show that no method is of exclusive importance?

The Advaita Vedantins go still farther. “Think quite abstractly, not of the body at all” they counsel.

128¹⁸⁸

III

129

III

(129-1)¹⁸⁹ 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 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.

(129-2) The aspirant should vigilantly detect and immediately appreciate those rare mystical moments which come of their own accord. They should be ardently cherished

¹⁸⁸ Blank page

¹⁸⁹ The paras on this page are numbered 1 through 10; they are not consecutive with the previous page.

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.

(129-3) 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.

(129-4) 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.

(129-5) If facility can come only after many years of constant practice, even that is not too high a price to pay for it.

(129-6) 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.

(129-7) He needs for his purpose a place where his practice will not be interrupted and where his attention will not be distracted.

(129-8) The delicious calm which makes itself felt when meditation settles down after the initial struggling period.

(129-9) 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.

(129-10) "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.

130¹⁹⁰
III

131
III

¹⁹⁰ Blank page

(131-1)¹⁹¹ 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, [which by reaction,]¹⁹² arouses a certain force, the Spirit-Energy, which acts for a short time to prepare him for deeper, more concentrated contemplation.

(131-2) If he will devotedly pursue the exercises, despite repeated failure, such perseverance will sooner or later find a reward.

(131-3) If it is to profit him, the student must not allow his meditation to become nebulous and vague.

(131-4) 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.

(131-5) 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.

(131-6) 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!

(131-7) Charles Morgan¹⁹³ 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..."

(131-8) 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.

(131-9) 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.

¹⁹¹ The paras on this page are numbered 11 through 25, making them consecutive with the previous page.

¹⁹² 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. PB himself later changed a period to a comma and inserted "which by reaction," into the space by hand.

¹⁹³ Referring to Charles Langbridge Morgan.

(131-10) 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.

(131-11) 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.

(131-12) 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.

(131-13) This centre of his own being never moves. It is forever in stillness.

(131-14) Certain helps to facilitate the realisation of these aims have been suggested.

(131-15) If the thoughts wander, as they will do, it is necessary to recall them.¹⁹⁴

132¹⁹⁵

III

133

III

(133-1)¹⁹⁶ What is the difference between the state of deepest contemplation, which the Hindus call Nirvikalpa Samadhi, and that which they call Sahaja Samadhi? The first is only a temporary experience, that is it begins and ends but the man actually experiences an uplift of consciousness, he gains a new and higher outlook. But Sahaja is continuous unbroken realisation that as Overself he always was, is and shall be. It is not a feeling that something new and higher has been gained. What is the absolute test which distinguishes one condition from the other, since both are awareness of the Overself? In N. the ego vanishes but reappears when the ordinary state is resumed: hence it has only been lulled, even though it has been slightly weakened by the process. In Sahaja the ego is rooted out once and for all! It not only vanishes, but it cannot reappear.

(133-2) Write up lit para for Class. Fit up a private shrine corner in home where meditation is practised or study is done, decorated with leafy plants or colourful flowers. Keep up this contact with Nature, if immured in a city apartment. But cut flowers should not be used as they are dead, bereft of a soul and are mere empty forms. Use only living ones or potted plants or climbing, trailing ferns in pots.

¹⁹⁴ This section is continued in the paras on page 141.

¹⁹⁵ Blank page

¹⁹⁶ The paras on this page are numbered 1 through 8; they are not consecutive with the previous page.

(133-3) The pursuit of the self comes at last to an irreducible element. The analyser cuts his way through all intermediate regions of the mind.

(133-4) The Russian Staretz Silouan,¹⁹⁷ who lived and died on Mount Athos, objected to the presence of a clock in his cell, and again in the hospital because its ticking sound disturbed his meditations and prayers.

(133-5) "Surangama Sutra" chooses, as the best meditation method for the present historic cycle, the one used by Avalokitesvara. It disengages bodily hearing from outward sound, then penetrates still deeper into the void beyond this duality, then beyond ego and its object, until all opposites and dualities vanish leaving absoluteness. Nirvana follows as a natural consequence. In other words, disengage consciousness from the senses and return to pure Consciousness itself.

(133-6) St John of the Cross, whenever he stayed at the Monastery of Iznatoraf, would climb to a tiny attic room in the belfry and there remain for a long time looking out fixedly through a tiny window at the silent valley. When he was Prior of the Hermitage of El Calvario, in Andalusia, one of the exercises he taught the monks was to sit and contemplate where there was a view of open sky, hills, trees, fields and growing plants and to call on the beauty of these things to praise God. We know from his writings that he made imageless contemplation the last stage in all such exercises.

(133-7) The awakening of this power comes mainly by meditation: it helps him to be good and to do good, to intuit spiritual truths and penetrate spiritual symbols. But it does not turn him into a superman.

(133-8) Letting go all thoughts – the ego-thought, the world-thought, even the God-thought – until absolutely none is present in mind: it is as simple as that!

134¹⁹⁸

III

135

III

(135-1)¹⁹⁹ The morning meditation exercise practised on waking up is excellent, only if the sleep has not been marked by dreams. They require mental activity, just the same

¹⁹⁷ Referring to St Silouan the Athonite.

¹⁹⁸ Blank page

¹⁹⁹ The paras on this page are numbered 9 through 22, making them consecutive with the previous page.

as the daytime existence. But there still remain three advantages over the latter. The body is rested and relaxed. Nothing has yet happened to create complexes, moods, emotions or passions that detract from, or obstruct, the course of meditation. And most dreams are broken – there are some intervals of deep empty sleep during the night.

(135-2) Some of us have found our way to the glorious stillness which is so deep within the self, have heard its silent message, received its mysterious grace, and been comforted, helped, pacified.

(135-3) In this deep stillness there occurs the event which will hold his remembrance for long afterwards – the passage from his mere existence to his glorious essence. It is brief but transforming.

(135-4) Thinking must be reduced more and more until it goes. But by no deliberate act of will can he bring on contemplation. All he can do is to be passive and wait in patience and keep the correct attitude – aspiring, loving, watching but devoid of any kind of tension.

(135-5) If seen at all, the Light as a Lightning Flash is ordinarily seen at the beginning and near the end of the Quest. In the first case it appears as a slender ray and inclines the man toward spiritual things or wakes him up to their existence. In the second case it appears as a mass of living brilliance pulsating inside, through and around him, or throughout the universe, and brings him close to union with God.

(135-6) The very way he habitually uses his mind may be so wrong that if it inserts itself into his approach to meditation, the result is self-defeating. His practice of the exercise may be faithful and persistent but yet so wrongly carried out that no other result is possible.

(135-7) In this deep state the body, while one's consciousness of it remains, assumes a fixed position of its own accord. A powerful force surges through it, straightening the spine, lifting the head and stretching the feet.

(135-8) The meditation has been successfully accomplished when all thoughts have come to an end, and when the presence of Divinity is felt within this emptiness.

(135-9) The aim is to disentangle Consciousness-in-itself from the thoughts. The method is to keep brushing off the thoughts.

(135-10) Eastern Church used, among other Hesychastic methods of making meditation more successful, the pressing of the chin against the chest.

(135-11) The peace of contemplation, when achieved, falls upon us like eventide's hush. The brain's busy travail stops, the world's frantic pressure upon the nerves ends.

(135-12) The first secret of successful meditation is patience – and still more patience.

(135-13) The stillness is not a cold one: it is living, radiant.

(135-14) Concentration requires a capacity for continuous attention.²⁰⁰

136²⁰¹

III

137

III

(137-1)²⁰² Any feeling of fret over results, hurry to finish the session and resume normal work or activity, strained effort which makes meditation depend entirely on your own will and your own concern – as if the higher self had nothing to do with the matter – any of these things impede the practice and reduce the chances of bringing the meditation to success.

(137-2) This withdrawal of attention from the immediate environment which occurs when deeply immersed in thought, looking at the distant part of a landscape, or, raptly listening to inspired music, is the 'I' coming closer to its innermost nature. At the deepest level of this experience, the ego-thought vanishes and 'I-myself' becomes merged in the impersonal Consciousness.

(137-3) Meditation proves its worth, shows its best value, and merges into contemplation, when it is deepest. For then thoughts cease to flutter, the ego is lulled, the world vanishes and the burden of the flesh with it.

(137-4) When Socrates thought and talked, he walked about but when the transcendental experience struck him, holding him enraptured and thought-free, he remained rigidly still, standing where it caught him. No probing questions then engaged him, no arguments with his friends then interested him.

(137-5) The mind slips into the deeper consciousness, at first almost unwittingly but soon recognising its precious value and exulting in its transcendental quality.

²⁰⁰ This section is continued in the paras on page 139.

²⁰¹ Blank page

²⁰² The paras on this page are numbered 1 through 12; they are not consecutive with the previous page.

(137-6) He may settle down comfortably in a chair or on a rug, shut his eyes and begin to meditate. But he is likely to find that the thoughts are unwilling to settle down too.

(137-7) Consciousness continues to receive impulses from the muscles even when a sleeper lies on a bed in a dark quiet room. This may help to explain why successful accomplishment in meditation requires the body's muscles to be well relaxed or even motionless.

(137-8) He needs patience to work his way through the first layers of boredom, distraction and frustration. But once this has been achieved, he can begin to thrust attention more surely, more quickly, towards the higher goal.

(137-9) Once a professor at leading Indian universities, and then on attainment of independence a Minister in the Indian Government, the late Radhakumud Mookerji²⁰³ was a co-disciple of the same guru who sent Yogananda, founder of S.R.F. to America! Once when we meditated together Mookerji swayed as he sat, moving head and shoulders from left to right in a circular fashion. At first this rotation was quite slow, but it picked up a little speed as it went on.

(137-10) So much patience, so much capacity to wait is needed to get down far enough into those little-known, little-touched layers of consciousness.

(137-11) He who is unwilling to endure concentration sustained to the point of fatigue will not be able to penetrate to the deep level where truth abides. But when he does succeed the fatigue vanishes, an intense exhilaration replaces it.

(137-12) Place the mind where it belongs – at the Centre.²⁰⁴

138²⁰⁵

III

139

III

(139-1)²⁰⁶ To sit in this delicate tender exquisite stillness, aloof from all that is ugly, coarse, violent or brutish is a lovely experience.

²⁰³ "Radhakumud Mukerjee" in the original (also spelled Radha Kumud Mukherjee).

²⁰⁴ This section is continued in the paras on page 143.

²⁰⁵ Blank page

²⁰⁶ The paras on this page are numbered 23 through 28; they are not consecutive with the previous page, but follow the paras on page 135.

(139-2) It may happen, more often than he likes, that no peace is reached, no positive result gained, from the session.

(139-3) Menander. "Earth's noblest sights, the sunset and the dawn."

(139-4) St John of the Cross varied his customary sitting posture by lying on the ground under an olive tree in a garden, stretched out in the shape of a cross.

(139-5) All thoughts, and most important the world-thought and the ego-thought, melt little by little into the stillness.

(139-6) When there is no consciousness of the world, yet Consciousness-in-itself remains, ecstasy follows.

140²⁰⁷

III

141

III

(141-1)²⁰⁸ "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.

(141-2) 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.

(141-3) 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.

(141-4) 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!

(141-5) 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.

²⁰⁷ Blank page

²⁰⁸ The paras on this page are numbered 26 through 37; they are not consecutive with the previous page, but follow the paras on page 131.

(141-6) 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.

(141-7) When the meditation deepens sufficiently, he may feel that higher forces seize 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.

(141-8) 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.

(141-9) To search around inside oneself may be a morbid or a dangerous affair, if it has no high objective.

(141-10) "Meditate on the mind as Brahman (the Supreme Being)" counsels an ancient Indian text.

(141-11) Some of the exercises will be of no benefit if practised too soon by unready minds, and may even do some harm.

(141-12) There is a feeling of the Overself's closeness when the deepest point in meditation is reached.

142²⁰⁹

III

143

III

(143-1)²¹⁰ Many persons feel they ought to take up this practice, or that they would like to do it but find when attempting it they cannot. The mind strays, thoughts wander, the body gets fidgety.

(143-2) Few have had the urge, the desire, the will, or the capacity to work so hard at thought control as to bring it under their complete command.

²⁰⁹ Blank page

²¹⁰ The paras on this page are numbered 13 through 26; they are not consecutive with the previous page, but follow the paras on page 137.

(143-3) To concentrate on the guru's mental image is a favourite practice of many Indian techniques.

(143-4) He must practise regularly if his work is to be fruitful.

(143-5) The welcome hour when dusk gathers in the room is fit for meditation.

(143-6) Thoughts unwind themselves unendingly, like a long serial.

(143-7) His consciousness, freed of thoughts, is then in itself, unmixed and unprojected.

(143-8) This power over thoughts produces a great calm in the soul.

(143-9) What shall they do with their eyes during meditation? It is best for beginners to shut them entirely and thus avoid distracting sight-impressions from the outer world. For moderately advanced practisers it is better to begin with shut eyes and at an appropriate point sometime later in the meditation, to half-open them, directing the gaze downwards and some feet beyond, and to keep it so until the meditation period is ended. But it is easiest for highly advanced proficient to pass quickly through the earlier positions of shut and half-shut and then, at a time prompted for them by inward guidance to keep their eyes open fully until the practice period is over, or until the guidance reverses itself. These are the general rules governing the three chief degrees.

(143-10) What is so extraordinary about the practice is that whereas to meditate is correctly regarded as concentrated pondering and sustained musing – in other words producing more associated thoughts from the first original one – it leads, at its most successful end, to losing the capacity to ponder or muse. At the point where meditation becomes contemplation, thinking paralyses itself and brings about its own temporary death!

(143-11) A useful meditation exercise is to create in advance through imagination, any meeting with others likely to happen in the near future or with those he lives with, works with, or is associated with, which may result in provocation, irritability or anger. The student should see the incident in his mind's eye before it actually happens on the physical plane, and constructively picture himself going through it calmly, serenely, and self-controlled – just as he would like himself to be, or ought to be, at the time.

(143-12) What wonderful experiences or realisations, awarenesses or confirmations await the man who successfully contemplates, and becomes absorbed in himself! But it must be the inward deeper part.

(143-13) Recall the glimpse as vividly as possible. Select the highest experience that stands out in memory and recast it.

(143-14) From the moment he shuts the door of his room, to resume his daily practice, he should become a different person, assume an unwonted identity. All that is not connected with his quest should be forgotten.

144²¹¹

III

145

III

(145-1)²¹² “Not stopping until you are through” was the slogan Frank Irving Fletcher, an advert writer in New York used to describe the standard, goal, set himself with many jobs. He found that by sticking to each piece of work until he completed it, he was able to tap a further reserve of resources which carried him along and enabled him to do what otherwise would be too demanding, too exhausting. The resulting work was not only done more quickly, which was not necessarily the aim, but more brilliantly. Certainly Fletcher’s work drew special attention for its outstanding character and unusual quality. He became the highest paid free-lance adwriter in the metropolis.

Business schools, like the famous Pitman School in England, are using new teaching methods for shorthand and typewriting, ‘crash courses’ as they are often called, which claim to give results within 36 tuition hours that took three months by the older methods. The courses are highly intensive and call for very much more determination and persistence than the other students need but the success in achieving goals has been dramatic.

The Berlitz Language Schools, world’s leading institution of its kind have a “Total Immersion” course which sets as a goal fluency in a new language plus a knowledge of 1,600 words, within three weeks. The students are subjected by instructors to a merciless high-tension concentration on learning, pronouncing, speaking, answering, all day long during this period until they are exhausted and dazed. They are then able almost unconsciously (like children) to absorb the instruction. Several do not respond: those who cannot are rejected from finishing the course.

In a Japanese Zen monastery, there is a short week-long course of continuous training and meditation by a master. Its target is to give the practiser at the end a temporary glimpse.

²¹¹ Blank page

²¹² The paras on this page are numbered 27 through 31, making them consecutive with the previous page.

At Gurdjieff's "Institute for the Harmonious Development of Man" one of the training features was a forced and strenuous use of personal capacities, physical or mental, to the point of exhaustion. When he could do no more, the pupil was bidden to summon untouched resources.

(145-2) The body sits, squats or lies like a motionless statue; the senses are lulled and lethargic, but the mind is quite conscious of where the meditator is and what is happening around him. Only in the next and deeper stage does this consciousness pass away, does the physical self involved in place and time as it is lose both: only then is the body robbed of its capacity to move and act.

(145-3) This is a critical moment in meditation, when vague fear rises up because of the uncertainty of what is to happen next, when the feeling that personal identity is about to be lost overwhelms him, when he is somewhat terrified because his annihilation seems to be impending and with it the end of all consciousness.

(145-4) It is not just ceasing to think although it pre-requires that, but something more: it is also a positive alertness to the Divine Presence.

(145-5) Contemplation is a deeper stage: no thinking is involved in it.

146²¹³

III

147

III

(147-1)²¹⁴ The Eastern Orthodox Christian mystics of Russia recommend sitting on a low stool, for practice of their mantra, "Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner."

(147-2) His progress into the deeper state is retarded if, while trying to hold his attention on the chosen theme, he lets some of it remain self-consciously alert at the same time to what he is doing and what his surroundings are like.

(147-3) The first stage of this exercise consists in withdrawing attention from the object or landscape at which he is looking, and using it instead to observe the eyes themselves; they remain open. The second stage is to withdraw attention still further and try to become aware of the observing mind alone.

²¹³ Blank page

²¹⁴ The paras on this page are numbered 32 through 44, making them consecutive with the previous page.

(147-4) To reflect upon THAT which we are will one day bring IT into consciousness. To contemplate IT by seeking the stillness in which IT abides, will one day make it a palpable presence.

(147-5) When impressions through the five senses of the outside world's existence, when ideas, fancies, images and thoughts no longer arise in the mind, then its control by yoga, meditation, has been achieved. The methods used may vary, but in the end what is reached is the residue, consciousness-in-itself, subject without an object.

(147-6) The soft beauty of twilight is companion to its beneficence. What a fitting time it provides for the irradiating practice and transforming ritual of meditation.

(147-7) Jonathan Swift wrote "A Meditation upon a Broomstick" in which he brilliantly compared the human entity to the wooden one. An American, writing nearly a couple of centuries later put out a work "Meditations in Wall Street." It is still more curious that Swift wrote, "sitting with his legs interwoven under him" like an Oriental meditator!

(147-8) Not many would-be mediators attain the uncommon experience of the Void: most of those who reach the beginning rarely continue farther. For when the ego finds itself being sucked away from its own familiar identity into a vast emptiness, it hesitates, then draws back in fear.

(147-9) Few have noticed that part of the spiritual effects felt just after waking from sleep is due to the fixed and sustained bodily posture it involves. For the physical rule for meditation - being still - is faithfully followed through the night.

(147-10) This was the amazing paradox of those meditational evenings, that as the outward light grew less and less, the inward light grew more and more.

(147-11) He retired within himself, carried consciousness to an ever-deepening point.

(147-12) To sit, with silent motionless stare looking blankly ahead into space may give the eyeballs a glazed appearance under this fixation.

(147-13) One part of his consciousness still remains vaguely aware of the room in which he is sitting, of his physical surroundings, and he can pull himself back to them at any time. He never really loses contact with them at any time.

(149-1)²¹⁶ Contemplation, in its fullest measure, is a rehearsal for death. For in letting all thoughts go, we let the world go, we let possessions go, and lastly we let the body go!

(149-2) All kinds of idle thoughts may wander through his head at first.

(149-3) The sensation of being drawn gently inside will be felt.

(149-4) They complain that the demands of meditation go beyond their resources, that they simply cannot sustain attention and compel concentration to a fruitful length of time.

(149-5) Few can abandon their thinking activity.

(149-6) This is a daily ritual for those who watch the retreating sun as a form of meditation.

(149-7) Meditation is more fruitful if part of it is devoted to reflection on ideals, qualities and truths needed by the student at the time.

(149-8) "Keep the head still" advises many a golf instructor.

(149-9) He begins by collecting his scattered thoughts.

(149-10) If this exercise is conscientiously and regularly employed, it will quieten the ego's continuous activity.

²¹⁶ The paras on this page are numbered 45 through 54, making them consecutive with the previous page.

²¹⁷ Blank page

(151-1)²¹⁸ Standing aside from one's thoughts, as if one were no longer identified with them, observing their nature and results quite critically, becomes a means of self-betterment if repeated regularly.

(151-2) To make the mind acquainted with itself by watching its thought while in a state of detachment, is a main purpose of such spiritual exercises.

(151-3) A mere emptiness of mind is not enough, is not the objective of these practices. Some idiots possess this naturally but they do not possess the wisdom of the Overself, the understanding of Who and What they are.

(151-4) The gazing exercise can be suitably applied to the empty sky by day or night, to a star, a tree, etc.

(151-5) The session comes to an end; and then he must go about his worldly business. Between the two states of consciousness there is a deep abyss. How to construct a bridge across it, to make contemplation meaningful in action.

(151-6) There is a strange dislocation of consciousness's seat, pushing it out of his body slightly, up above his head and somewhat behind his torso.

(151-7) Meditation can be informally practised, as when walking or working, or formally, which means when sitting.

(151-8) Exclude all thoughts other than the one which is the point of concentration. If, as is likely, you weaken and permit them to intrude, renew the battle and drive them out by will. Return again and again if necessary to your focus.

(151-9) He feels that to advance a single step farther is to place himself at the mercy of unpredictable forces and unfamiliar powers.

(151-10) If thoughts cannot be kept out of the mind, patience can be kept in it.

(151-11) Heavy curtains help to protect the meditation-chamber from disturbing sounds.

(151-12) The instructions and directions which are of first importance must be separated from those which are merely second in importance or confusion will result.

²¹⁸ The paras on this page are unnumbered.

(151-13) It is difficult, often impossible, to stop thinking by one's own effort. But by grace's help it gets done. With thinking no longer in the way, consciousness ceases to be broken up, nothing is there to impede movement into stillness.

(151-14) Quietness of breathing is also important, during most of the meditation period.

(151-15) At predetermined times the mind's attention must be made to move more slowly than it usually does. This effort of control may last a few minutes or an entire hour, as one wishes or progresses.

(151-16)²¹⁹ The Russian Staretz Silouan, who lived in Mount Athos, shut out sights and sounds by pulling his woollen cap over his ears and eyes.

(151-17) Impressions gathered during the day, associations rising out of the past may mix themselves in with the ideas he wants to hold before him.

(151-18) If he wishes to enter the stage of contemplation he must let go of every thought as it rises, however high or holy it seems, for it is sure to bring associated thoughts in its train. However, interesting or attractive these bypaths may be at other times, they are now just that - bypaths. He must rigidly seek the Void

152²²⁰

III

153

III

(153-1)²²¹ What can I do to improve my meditation? How can I get better control of the unwanted, and sometimes undesirable, thoughts which distract the sessions devoted to it?

(153-2) Voodoo musicians and African witch doctors use the rhythmic beating of drums to induce either the trance state or emotional crescendos.

(153-3) In this state the world is presented to consciousness consequently none of the problems associated with it is present. No ego is active with personal emotions and particular thoughts. No inner conflicts disturb the still centre of being.

²¹⁹ This para and the two following were added at a later time; they are from a different typewriter and in red ink.

²²⁰ Blank page

²²¹ The paras on this page are unnumbered.

(153-4) Those who know this method and can practise it successfully, know also the extraordinary change which comes over their whole being when the mind is stilled.

(153-5) When the mind is uneasy, the body uncomfortable, the feelings disturbed or excited, meditation practices cannot bear fruit.

(153-6) There are different kinds of resistances to his beginning meditation, and different kinds of obstructions to his continuing after he has begun.

(153-7) "Little by little, and by constant practice" as the Gita says, this act of sitting mentally still is learnt.

(153-8) The dilettantes soon tire of the hard work, unremitting patience and regular practice which meditation calls for.

(153-9) If he has succeeded in holding his mind somewhat still and empty, his next step is to find his centre.

(153-10) It is important to note that the two (or even more) hour meditation period which is the rule in most Zen monasteries is prescribed for their particular milieu and not for the world outside it. Thus a modern Zen master told his American disciple that a third to a half hour daily would suffice for meditation when back in his own country.

(153-11) "The action of the mind which is best" declared St Gregory Palamas, Greek Orthodox Archbishop of Thessalonica 700 years ago "is that in which it is sometimes raised above itself and unites with God."

(153-12) If the innate capacity is lacking, as it usually is, then the aspirant requires some skill gathered from repeated experience, to shut out sounds which bring the mind back to physical situations.

(153-13) The ego is so taken up with itself that the time of meditation, which ought to be its gradual emptying-out, remains merely another field for its own activity.

(153-14) Only he is able to think his own thought, uninfluenced by others, who has trained himself to enter the Stillness, where alone he is able to transcend all thought.

(153-15) Any method which settles the mind upon a fixed subject, or concentrates attention upon a single object, may be used. But the result must be elevating and in accord with his ultimate purpose.

(153-16) Memory goes, the personal will leaves, and thinking simply ceases, as he enters this deep phase.

(153-17) It is when the mind is still that high spiritual forces, be they from God or guru, can reach a man.

154²²²

III

155

III

(155-1)²²³ Getting intensely absorbed in a true spiritual idea may, if it penetrates to a sufficient depth, put one into communication with the Universal Mind. This in turn enables him to receive, intuitively, what could not be found intellectually.

(155-2) To sit down for meditation with the secret expectation, the half-hidden hope, or the fully conscious desire for a dramatic glimpse, a sudden transformation or a speedy result is to introduce the ego and thus block the way to the egoless plane of the Overself.

(155-3) The practices are to be done in daily sessions, each lasting from fifteen minutes in the case of beginners, to sixty in that of sufficiently advanced.

(155-4) The principle behind it is that once this contact with the Overself has been established during the third stage, it is only necessary²²⁴ first, to prolong and second, to repeat the contact for spiritual evolution to be assured.

(155-5) Although the overdoing of meditation is unlikely by most Westerners and unprofitable by philosophic standards, yet to practise it by the clock is uncouth and undesirable. For it is an attempt to touch the eternal, to lift the meditator to a region which no watch-dial and no pendulum-movement can measure.

(155-6) To sustain this concentrated mental condition is hard, and much practice is needed to overcome the difficulty.

(155-7) There is a distinct feeling of something like a valve opening in the region of the heart.

²²² Blank page

²²³ The paras on this page are numbered 45 through 57; they are not consecutive with the previous page, but follow the paras on page 161.

This para was typed on a different typewriter than the rest of the page, presumably at a later date.

²²⁴ We have removed "to" from after "necessary" for clarity.

(155-8) It is a mysterious condition of the mind, which lies between sleeping and waking, and one that is almost indescribable by typewriter.

(155-9) He feels himself to be on the very edge of existence, with a dark annihilating void just in front and the lighted, safe, solidity of familiar ground just behind him.

(155-10) To the extent that he can get away from his personal consciousness, to that extent he comes nearer to the Real. In that sense, meditation is simply a device to accomplish this state. But it can do so only temporarily. Its benefit is great but brief.

(155-11) He who has reached this stage of his meditation may well pray: "O Lord, grant the capacity to go deeper into Thy presence and to stay longer in it."

(155-12)²²⁵ Even if a man claims that he is too busy to practice this 'On-Awaking' meditation he can at least go through the gesture of doing so for one to two minutes: even this will benefit him

(155-13) It is not enough to practise mechanically: one should love this sunset-watching exercise and never tire of waiting for [the sun to go down, never weary of staring at the shimmering fading colours]²²⁶

156²²⁷

III

157

III

(157-1)²²⁸ In these sacred minutes one must have solitude. Human presences, voices and glances – unless they are of a quality far superior to one's own – become disturbing and discomforting.

(157-2) We enter into paradise when, in contemplation, we enter into awareness of the Overself.

²²⁵ The last two paras on this page were typed on a different typewriter than the rest of the page, presumably at a later date.

²²⁶ PB himself inserted "the sun to go down, never weary of staring at the shimmering fading colours" by hand.

²²⁷ Blank page

²²⁸ The paras on this page are numbered 55a and 56 through 68; making them consecutive with the previous page.

(157-3) Only in perfect stillness of the mind, when all discursive and invading thoughts are expelled, can the true purity be attained and the ego expelled with them.

(157-4) If he is really deep in meditation, not a single muscle of his body will move.

(157-5) Meditation fulfils itself when it succeeds in climaxing its third stage and banishes all thoughts from the field of awareness. Then the mind is utterly calm and utterly clear.

(157-6) The thinking power is suspended, the mind being left as empty as a vacuum.

(157-7) If he were standing there, looking at someone else undergoing this experience, it could not be more objective, more impersonal, than now.

(157-8) The world, as Carlyle wrote “retires into the distance” and even personal affairs seem a long way off.

(157-9) To those who do not understand what is happening inside him, the stillness of body and eye seems uncanny.

(157-10) It is an aim of meditation to approach closer and closer to the Centre of one’s being.

(157-11) Real meditation is not formal but spontaneous, not set by the intellect but prompted by the heart.

(157-12) There is tremendous power in the Stillness.

(157-13) The mind that is properly used, and perfectly stilled when not used, becomes a mirror reflecting Truth.

(157-14) The topic selected for practise may be quite personal to begin with provided it is suitable to help bring about self-improvement of a positive kind such as removing faults and cultivating virtues. But, this is only preparatory since it is still concerned with the ego and designed to improve concentration. When experience and regular practise have reached a sufficient development then the topic should be one which makes him feel highly reverential and should be directed to the OVERSELF not to the ego, not even for the ego’s improvement spiritually.

(159-1)²³⁰ He will not easily forget this feeling of weightlessness,²³¹ of being out of the body and in the air.

(159-2) At this point he should turn all his inner attention on the 'emptiness' and firmly hold it there.

(159-3)²³² Buddhist Meditation. Be aware of your breathing, which should be from solar plexus. Observe the abdomen's rise and fall with it.

(159-4) In this state of 'conscious sleep' there is no awareness of the physical body and no movement of thoughts succeeding one another. The Stillness alone reigns.

(159-5) Discussion of the methods of meditation, and critical scrutiny of its nature and results can only be of value, if not of interest, to the [handful of initiates]²³³ who have practised one of the methods and experienced some of the results. All others will be dependent on what they have heard or read about meditation. To them such discussion and such scrutiny will be either incomprehensible or unprofitable or bewildering.

(159-6) When the practiser is really proficient he may encounter a very profound state of 'yoga sleep.' This is difficult to describe. It is mysterious and enigmatic. He will not even be quite sure whether or not it happened, but will probably deduce its factuality from the length of time that must have been spent in it. He will not²³⁴ remember anything about it since he is very vaguely aware that total unconsciousness did not occur [that it was not ordinary dreamless sleep]²³⁵ that some kind of spiritual experience was present of which he can form no conception and obtain no understanding. The end result after emerging will be satisfying and pleasant, calming and detaching.

(159-7) When a pronounced uplifting feeling comes, identify yourself with it, not with thoughts about it.

²³⁰ The paras on this page are numbered 1 through 13; they are not consecutive with the previous page. In addition, there are two paras at the top of the page, one numbered 1A and the other unnumbered.

²³¹ The original editor inserted a comma by hand.

²³² This para was typed on a different typewriter than the rest of the page; its placement suggests that it was typed first.

²³³ "handful of initiates" was typed below the line and inserted with an arrow by PB himself.

²³⁴ We have deleted "be" from after "not" for clarity.

²³⁵ "that it was not ordinary dreamless sleep" was typed below the line and inserted with an arrow by PB himself.

(159-8) A valuable exercise is one which practises transferring awareness to the body as [and when]²³⁶ it is being used. This is done by moving across a room, a courtyard, an open space, with slow-walking feet, as slow as one can make them. The physical movement must be accompanied by a deliberate effort to know what one is doing, fully mindful and concentrated on each step forward.

(159-9) This all-attentive inward search must go on determinedly, or intrusive thoughts will soon take over again and cause him to wander off into bypaths.

(159-10) The stage of contemplation has its own definite signs. Prominent among them are its thought-free emptiness, its utter tranquillity, its absence of personal selfishness.

(159-11) The capacity to sit absolutely still for prolonged periods – so common in the Orient, so uncommon in the Occident – can be got by persistently cultivating it. How difficult the unpractised find it was illustrated by Stephane Mallarmé's case. This distinguished French writer, critic, poet, considered a master by many who became famous later, sat for his portrait to Edvard Munch. Within twenty minutes he told the astounded painter that to keep still any longer had become unbearable to him, that he could endure it no longer, and that he could go on with the project no further. So it is with most here: there is no rest within their being hence their bodies are restless too.

(159-12) Spiritual truth passes more easily into a mind emptied of its thoughts, its cares, its desires.

(159-13) When he attains the state of void, all thoughts cease for then pure Thought thinks itself alone.

(159-14) If the effort brings no immediate response, but the thoughts continue their usual race, do not let that be a source of discouragement. For regular [persistent]²³⁷ practice, even when it yields no satisfactory result, is contributing towards eventual success.

(159-15) From this inner centre, support will come for daily living.

(159-16) It is important that the practiser should be able to recognise and detect the advent of a higher power: it may present itself in several different ways and forms. One of them is to make itself felt as a mysterious gripping of the head and neck quite involuntarily, and swivelling them round to one side, and holding them rigidly there.

²³⁶ "and when" was typed below this line and added here with a caret by PB himself.

²³⁷ "persistent" was typed below the line and inserted with an arrow by PB himself.

Or they may slowly, at intervals, be moved in a semi-circle. He should accept the happening, go along with it until it ends by itself

160²³⁸

III

161

III

(161-1)²³⁹ The body becomes strangely still, the sinews quite relaxed, the breathing greatly subdued, sometimes even the head droops.

(161-2) Refuse to think about the multitude of topics which ordinarily crowd into, and through, your mind. Centre it again and again until it is held tight.

(161-3) The mind is ever active in some way, ever spurting up its thoughts.

(161-4) The focus of his attention shrinks until it becomes engaged with a single object.

(161-5) There were sound reasons why the Buddha included fidgeting of the body along with agitation of the mind in the list of hindrances to the would-be meditator which he formulated as a warning. There is a direct line of connection between the two. Those who would heed this warning need to remember that this bad and ugly habit must be avoided in everyday life if it is not to intrude into meditation practice.

(161-6) Those who lack patience will lack the power to meditate.

(161-7) Generally, [in the early and middle stages of development,]²⁴⁰ it is best to meditate with nearly-closed eyes but beginners do better with fully-closed ones.

(161-8) Can absolute vacuity of mind be attained?

(161-9) As soon as one thought is suppressed, a new one arises to replace it. The intellect's capacity to keep up its own activity is tremendous. Hence the goal is not best reached by crushing each separate thought but by practising some other and more deeply penetrative method. That is, seek out the very source of thought itself.

²³⁸ Blank page

²³⁹ The paras on this page are numbered 32 through 44; they are not consecutive with the previous page.

²⁴⁰ PB himself inserted "in the early and middle stages of development," by hand.

(161-10) Attention must not waver, thought must not wander. This is the ideal, of course, and not approached, let alone reached until after long practice.

(161-11) As a support for the beginning period of practice itself, as a means to fix attention, a particular physical object or sound may be chosen. He may gaze at a chink of light shining in a dark room or listen to the pendulum-swing of a metronome. Whatever is thus isolated from the outer world for concentration, is used merely as a jumping off platform from which to enter the inner world.

(161-12)²⁴¹ In this third phase, contemplation²⁴¹, there is a feeling of being surrounded by the immensity of infinite space with one's own being somehow connected with it.

(161-13) Whether they are positive or negative, let all thoughts die. Then there will remain only Mind, which is always there, which is the Real.²⁴²

162²⁴³

III

163

III

(163-1)²⁴⁴ When intellect lies exhausted and prostrated, at the end of its self-directed efforts, and gives up, it may then be ready to receive what, earlier, it could not.

(163-2) Relax from your own selfhood, let the ego go, and discover the peace which can then well up from within. It is yours, a covered hidden part of your being, unknown before because ignored and unsearched for.

(163-3) "It came to be my favourite place. It was there that I usually... gazed, as I never could do enough, at the setting sun." — Johann Wolfgang Goethe

(163-4) A continuous ringing of large heavy old church bells, if intently concentrated upon, may produce in a person appreciative of the music in them, a suitable starting point for introverting attention.

²⁴¹ The last two paras on this page were typed on a different typewriter, presumably on a later date.

²⁴² This section is continued in the paras on page 155.

²⁴³ Blank page

²⁴⁴ The paras on this page are numbered 1 through 12; they are not consecutive with the previous page.

(163-5) At a deeper level the feet and legs seem to pass out of the area of awareness; at a still deeper level it seems confined to the head and chest.

(163-6) When he is settled down in this final stage, his mind takes on a diamond-like quality – hard and unchangeable in its identification with its deepest layer, bright and positive in its radiation.

(163-7) Sitting there in the quiet dusky room, coming out of his deep meditation into a world soon peopled by remembered faces, passing them with a benedictory smile and upward-pointing call he returns to a different kind of atmosphere and has to adjust himself to its unpleasantness, its materialism and its turmoil.

(163-8) The contemplative inner work of a Buddha, as exemplified by his seated statues, is a gentle one, not like the austere determined self-combative yogi's. It is also a patient one, as if he had all the time in the world.

(163-9) The great Light-experience is uncommon. If it happens once in a lifetime that is enough for it will never be forgotten. But the Stillness experience can happen every day, if you seek it by retreating inward.

(163-10) If he is sufficiently advanced he needs make no verbal formulation to prepare a point of concentration or make no pictured image, but can begin straightway in an abstract wordless pressure towards the heart.

(163-11) The time to break off his meditation will be determined by the circumstances of his life or an inner urge.

(163-12) Lao-Tzu:²⁴⁵ "The excellence of a mind is its profundity."

164²⁴⁶

III

165

III

(165-1)²⁴⁷ Drawing from its own deeper levels of being, the mind has to deliver itself of truth and goodness, of beautiful presence and peacefulness. Whoever comes within the

²⁴⁵ "Lao-Tze" in the original.

²⁴⁶ Blank page

²⁴⁷ The paras on this page are numbered 13 through 24, making them consecutive with the previous page.

aura which emanates from it comes into blessed moments and happy feelings. Such is the work of enlightenment but only a small minority of²⁴⁸

(165-2) It is no longer a matter of discursive thinking which flows by orderly and logical transition from one idea to the next – that was proper until grace came in – but of putting all thoughts aside and waiting passively, quietly, letting awareness sink deeper.

(165-3) All will come under review periodically – the management of his relationships with others, his personal, social and professional activities; the management of his life. But all this scrutiny is to be done from a stand-point higher than the ordinary one, less ego-governed and more impersonal. Therefore it should be done only and preferably at such times as this mood is upon him, if it is to be effectively done.

(165-4) The yogi who squats with crossed limbs, and the Zen Buddhist²⁴⁹ who sits with legs tucked under him, use physical forms to suit the particular doctrine they are following.

(165-5) As attention sinks inward, its outward-turned strength gets reduced until physical objects appear blurred.

(165-6) The growing discomfort of sitting with contorted limbs like a would-be Buddha-figure or upon raised heels like a Japanese Zen votary imposes quite a task.

(165-7) To sit quite still for awhile without body movement but with thought as nearly suspended as possible is no easy thing.

(165-8) Many subjects may occupy his mind before the meditation session is over.

(165-9) In those moments of suspense when light is yielding so reluctantly to the dark, there is an opportunity to look within and come closer to the Overself.

(165-10) Sitting like a yogi with feet crossed on the floor and hands crossed in his lap he may turn inwards toward the inner life.

(165-11) Breathing is a bodily function but it can be used to help the inner work of mental control.

(165-12) He develops, with practice, the ability to keep out every thought but that particular one he chooses.

²⁴⁸ Incomplete para – the end of this para was not found in this file.

²⁴⁹ “Zennist” in the original.

166²⁵⁰
III

167
III

(167-1)²⁵¹ The experience brings him to the very edge of the higher consciousness.

(167-2) Who has achieved complete impersonality outside of those nirvikalpic samadhis and outside of the imaginings of adoring disciples?

168²⁵²
III

169
III

(169-1)²⁵³ There are different postures each of which is suitable for a different kind of meditation. The yoga pose, straight-backed, erect-spine is only one of them. The Dervish pose – back bent forward, head lowered to raised knees – is still another one.

(169-2) Facility comes with time, provided all other conditions and requirements are fulfilled. Attention passes through two progressive stages. The first holds it intently on an image, an idea or an object. The second keeps these out and holds it in a sublime empty stillness.

(169-3) To achieve this kind of concentration where attention is withdrawn from the outer world and held tightly in itself a determined attitude of not stopping until this sharply pointed state is reached. All other thoughts are rejected in the very moment that they arise. If at the start there is aspiration and devotion toward the Overself, and in the course of the effort too, then eventually the stress falls away and the Stillness replaces it.

(169-4) Tratak is a technique for focussing the eyes, as unblinkingly as possible on a special point: this could be a black dot inside a black circle on a white sheet or wall, until tears fill them.

²⁵⁰ Blank page

²⁵¹ The paras on this page are numbered 25 through 26, making them consecutive with the previous page.

²⁵² Blank page

²⁵³ The paras on this page are numbered 1 through 13; they are not consecutive with the previous page.

(169-5) The notion that meditating in an assembly is easier or better or stronger than meditating alone, can only have been fostered by someone who has never experienced the deep penetration which Hindu yogis call “nirvikalpa samadhi.”

(169-6) Those who have gone into meditation but who have not gone into it at enough depth, will need to possess exceptional patience.

(169-7) All exercises in this advanced stage should have one common goal – to free the mind from its thinking-activity.

(169-8) Those whose minds are neurotically or psychotically disordered, will do better to take some treatment first before embarking on a meditation course.

(169-9) Meditation may also be made on a colour which, if harmonious to the meditator, will lead him by deepening concentration into a mystical state.

(169-10) All these practices are necessary only to shake off a man’s impressions and thoughts of the world, to cut off the person’s affairs, to stop the mind’s constant movement, and thus to bring him to the threshold of a deeper consciousness.

(169-11) Seamen dropped their oars and listened, fascinated and enchanted, when they heard the fabled sirens singing on an island which the boat was passing. In the same manner must the call to meditation be heeded when grace visits by pulling inside.

(169-12) If desires arise during his meditation and take him away from its holy subject, it is better to close the session and try again at another time.

(169-13) In a way this profound annulment of ordinary activity is an image of death.

170²⁵⁴

III

171

III

(171-1)²⁵⁵ In this condition with mind shifted away from sensory experience into a fixed self-absorption and stilled to the utmost degree, the meditator may be said to have mastered contemplation.

²⁵⁴ Blank page

²⁵⁵ The paras on this page are numbered 14 through 27, making them consecutive with the previous page.

(171-2) The longer a sitting meditative position is held and the boredom resisted, the more effective becomes this preliminary work.

(171-3) This work of pushing attention inwards, back to its very source, and the sense of 'I-ness' back with it, is to be accompanied by thinking only until the latter can be stopped or itself stops. This work is then continued by a stilled and steady search. When the need of search comes to an end, the searcher vanishes, the 'I' becomes pure 'Being,' has found its source. In these daily or nightly sessions, it is his work to turn away from the diffused attention which is his normal condition to the concentrated attention which is indispensable for progress, and to sustain it.

(171-4) Just as with any other art, the meditation can be learnt and improved by frequent practice.

(171-5) In the attempt to scrutinise, analyse and define the perceptions, the sensations and the successive changes of consciousness which meditation produced, I questioned many a practisant, studied many a text, interviewed the few real experts I could find and, finally, looked at my own inner experience.

(171-6) The mind is called pure not only when passions and desires have ceased surging through it, but also when thoughts and pictures have ceased to arise, especially the personal self-thought.

(171-7) The true state of meditation is reached when there is awareness of awareness, without the intrusion of any thoughts whatever. But this condition is not the ultimate. Beyond it lies the stage where all awareness vanishes without the total loss of consciousness that this normally brings.

(171-8) Admittedly it is not easy to discipline the thoughts, to train the mind into this unfamiliar and uncommon kind of practice.

(171-9) A seat too hard, too high or too low may produce enough discomfort to interfere with, or obstruct altogether, the effort to meditate. Elderly persons may get a tormenting ache in the small of the back from a hard seat; long-legged ones may feel awkward in a low one.

(171-10) Just as some persons get rid of the distraction coming from noisy sounds by using wax or cotton ear plugs, so others get rid of the distraction coming from visual sensations by using silk, cotton or plastic eyeshades.

(171-11) The thoughts which crawl through his brain during this initial period are multitudinous. To expect an end of them now seems hopeless.

(171-12) With all attention gathered in, listen to the beating of the heart.

(171-13) The effect is stupendous. It is as if he had been released from a mesmerised stupor.

(171-14) The truth germinates in Silence.

172²⁵⁶

III

173

III

(173-1)²⁵⁷ As the mind closes upon the outer world the eyes in sympathy may close on it too: or they may remain open and glaze over little by little. Or they may stare far-seeing.

(173-2) It is hardly necessary to point out that stronger drinks, like whisky and cocktails, are obstructive to meditation, and should not be taken during the two or three hours preceding the practice: better if renounced altogether in favour of the milder wines or beers.

(173-3) Whatever he chooses as the object to be concentrated on, is used as a thought to blot out the other thoughts.

(173-4) This is the paradox of the contemplative: that he shuts himself within himself in order to get away from himself!

(173-5) Out of his own large experience of meditation, "Fear not the stillness," wrote A.E. in a poem.

(173-6) The subject chosen, the object accepted or the master turned to, thereby become a support for meditation.

(173-7) He is so sunk in this inward attention that outer sounds reach him either less and less or as from a distance.

²⁵⁶ Blank page

²⁵⁷ The paras on this page are numbered 28 through 45, making them consecutive with the previous page.

(173-8) There are not only special periods like sunset, awakening from sleep and going to sleep, but even special moments at no predictable time of the day when he may be more susceptible to the inward pull of meditation.

(173-9) We spend so much of the day concentrating on our personal selves. Can we not spend a half hour concentrating on the higher self?

(173-10) The eyes look out on the landscape in a vague general way, without focussing on any particular object. This belongs to the second stage, whereas specific concentration belongs to the first and more elementary one.

(173-11) Meditation may succeed in touching the Overself but yet remain mingled with thoughts. However satisfying this state may be to the meditator, obviously he must not stop there but must go farther.

(173-12) If the penetration goes deep enough, attention may or may not any longer notice the outside surroundings, the external world.

(173-13) He should find a posture of the body which is not only comfortable and convenient but which he can maintain steadily for several minutes, or even, when well enough advanced and expert, for a half-hour or hour.

(173-14) The attitude that you have all the time you need, is not only a necessary one but also a delightful one.

(173-15) Let the chin fall upon the breast if it is inclined to do so.

(173-16) Although there are some general features common to most techniques, there is also in each case something which is personally needed to suit the particular temperament, character and status.

(173-17) Too often does he yield to thoughts which distract him from his lofty theme {rather}²⁵⁸ than resist them.

(173-18) Sit like an Egyptian statue, hands reposing on knees, the whole body kept in concentrated power.

²⁵⁸ We have inserted "rather" for clarity.

²⁵⁹ Blank page

(175-1)²⁶⁰ He needs to work assiduously if he is to reach the real and actual meaning of meditation, and to practise persistently if he is to quieten the mental waves.

(175-2) If the air of a room is heavy with incense smoke, the meditator gets a little sleepy: this is useful for those who have difficulty drawing the mind inwards. But carried too far it may carry him into sleep!

(175-3) The ecstasy which the beginner so eagerly welcomes is regarded as a disturbance by the proficient meditator.

(175-4) Most of these techniques are preliminary, intended to bring the mind into one-pointed concentration. They do not lead to the real enlightenment.

(175-5) It is habitual, hence called natural, for present-day humanity to go along with the mental flow to outside things. Meditation reverses this direction and tries to bring the little mind back to its origin – Mind.

(175-6) That the simple act of sitting down for a length of time as immoving as the heron-bird watching its prey could provide the first condition for self-knowledge may seem strange.

(175-7) What is he to seek in this art of meditation, as in the ideas of philosophy? Depth! This calls for profound consistent attention.

(175-8) It is a kind of self-emptying to which he is called: will he obey?

(175-9) Only the regular deep breathing shows that the spirit has not withdrawn from the body.

(175-10) He is learning to walk in a new world – that of mental purity, of mind-in-itself unadulterated by thoughts – and both time and practice are required to develop sufficient stability in the new consciousness.

(175-11) The idea of doing these exercises every day, of regular attendance at drill even though it is only mental drill, is for many persons a cheerless one. They prefer to wait for the urge to come by itself from time to time. They feel such a spontaneous and casual practice is more ‘natural.’

²⁶⁰ The paras on this page are numbered 46 through 61, making them consecutive with the previous page.

(175-12) At different periods in his career there will be the need of – and consequently the attraction to – different subjects for meditation. Thus: the beauty of a flower, the ugliness of a corpse, the attributes of a sage, the infinitude of space, the changes of adolescence, middle and old age.

(175-13) Man meditating successfully is man at his highest moment.

(175-14) Most people venture only a little way down and seem to tire of the effort needed to go still farther down and to wait in patience.

(175-15) As if staring at some (to others) invisible object, he sits still and unmoving.

(175-16) But this daily training of the thoughts brings them in the end to some measure of obedience.

176²⁶¹

III

177

III

(177-1)²⁶² Meditation is not really a safe term to use nowadays. For instance for most people it means thinking about a theme, but for other groups it holds the very opposite meaning – non-thinking.

(177-2) Trace consciousness back to itself, unmixed with bodily sense-reports, emotional moods or mental thoughts. This can be done successfully only by withdrawing it inwards as you analyse. The process becomes a meditation. In the final term you are aware of nothing else, that is, of nothing but being aware. But at this point you cannot know it as a second thing, an object, but only by being it.

(177-3) Meditation needs a loving commitment to it and a warm devotion to its object if success is to be achieved. Merely to practise it mechanically like a physical exercise is not enough.

(177-4) Others know the condition in which the yogi is, when they are so absorbed in the story of a book as not to hear when spoken to; when they are so lost in a line of thought that the immediate surroundings are banished; when the imagined is the real;

²⁶¹ Blank page

²⁶² The paras on this page are numbered 62 through 72, making them consecutive with the previous page.

when tranced feeling and held mind alone exist, separated from the physical actuality. But there is this vital difference - that their total absorption usually concerns a personal or a worldly matter, whereas the yogi's concerns That which transcends both.

(177-5) When the incantatory words of a mantra by constant practice {become}²⁶³ fully activated it becomes fully automatic and circles round and round inside the head or the heart just like a revolving wheel. At this deep stage he is not concerned with its translated or verbal meaning but only with the kind of consciousness it produces. For now it is not a matter of what he is doing but of what is being done to him. The mantra has brought him into a region of released forces which are very active in him.

(177-6) A specific fixed course of thought should be maintained from the start. Attention must be kept concentrated.

(177-7) He may fall into a daze which, the longer it lasts the longer it will take for him to emerge from it. But Nature will have her way and bring him out of the condition.

(177-8) The mantra is mentally or vocally chanted so many times that the mind is brain-washed: it can resist no longer and from then on the phrase keeps revolving by itself over and over again in consciousness.

(177-9) The effort to hold thoughts back, to touch their calm source deep below them, must be made.

(177-10) ZEN CLASS INSTRUCTION Each session is 1 hour long, consists of two concentrations of 20 minutes interrupted by a walk based on the rhythm of breathing during 10 minutes.

(177-11) Meditation is practised so briefly that most of the time allotted is used up in wandering with his thoughts, so that neither concentration nor mental quiet is achieved. All this is still on the mind's surface. Meditation answers to its name only when experienced in depth.

178²⁶⁴

III

179

III

²⁶³ We have changed "becomes" to "become" for clarity.

²⁶⁴ Blank page

(179-1)²⁶⁵ He should approach the meditation seat with gentle reverence, with subdued delight in the opportunity it gives him.

(179-2) If the work and result of meditation seem strange and unearthly, artificial and abnormal, this is only because the average person is not yet a fully human being but is only in the process of becoming one.

(179-3) At this critical point consciousness shifts from forced willed attention, that is concentration, to passive receptive attention, or contemplation. This happens by itself, by grace.

(179-4) The deeper he goes into the trance, the slower becomes his pulse-beat.

(179-5) To keep the attention away from any other than the chosen subject is the work of this first stage. The better this is sustained the deeper is the penetration into the subject.

(179-6) Attention is likely to wander off. Every time this happens the will must impose itself and make it come back.

(179-7) "Hum" in the famous Tibetan mantra stands for the heart, whereas the first word "OM" stands for the inner reality, the unseen power behind all things.

(179-8) For meditation or worship it is a fitting posture to face the east where the sun rises, the west where it sets or the south where it is strongest. But the north is less desirable, not only because it is sunless but because it is the direction whence come the powers active in the body during sleep.

(179-9) The mind then enters into itself, not its negative petty self, but its best purest and deepest one.

(179-10) Take attention away from the everyday egoistic self and you may open a gate to the Overself. This is one method - and the harder one. Let attention be held by a glimpse so that the everyday self drifts out of focus - this is another method - and the easier. The first is yoga and depends on active personal effort. The second is passive and depends on absorption in art, music, landscape or a visitation.

(179-11) The expert may be luckier but for most persons it is most likely that meditation can be practised with less difficulty in one place than in another. This is to say that they can go farther into its deep parts because the interferences are less.

²⁶⁵ The paras on this page are numbered 73 through 89, making them consecutive with the previous page.

(179-12) He must give it all his absorbed attention.

(179-13) serious without being stiffly earnest

(179-14) With most people a completely thought-free mind may be impossible to attain in their present situation, but a tranquillised mind is possible.

(179-15) He cannot really get closer to what he is already, his self, but he can push away the distractions which obscure it. And this is precisely what meditation does.

(179-16) The poet Keats knew the richness of this hour, which left "the reader (of poetry) breathless... in the luxury of twilight."

(179-17) When the mind is rendered immobile, yoga has been achieved.

180²⁶⁶

III

181

III

(181-1)²⁶⁷ Meditation may begin as a dialogue between the meditator and his imagined higher self; it may pass beyond that into a real dialogue with his Overself. But if he is to go farther all dialogue must cease, all attempt to communicate must end in the Stillness.

(181-2) A mind filled with thoughts about things, persons and events, with desires, passions and moods, with worries, fears and disturbances, is in no fit condition to make contact with that which transcends them all. It must first be quietened and emptied.

(181-3) The stage of concentration is evaluated as having been established when it can be sustained long enough to let attention become sufficiently abstracted from surroundings, sufficiently absorbed in the mental object, and for the practise itself to be easy, unhindered, attractive.

(181-4) There are certain persons who belong by birth and temperament to the type of spiritistic medium. Until they have strengthened their higher nature, purified their feelings and obtained sufficient knowledge, they should avoid meditation. The risk of being used by inferior spirits, even of obsession, is present.

²⁶⁶ Blank page

²⁶⁷ The paras on this page are numbered 90 through 97, making them consecutive with the previous page.

(181-5) As mental agitations and emotional dominations fall away through this patient waiting, a hush falls upon the inner being. This is a delicate, gentle and important state, for it is approaching the threshold where a new and rare kind of experience may be near.

(181-6) The sun sinks and vanishes but his admiration does not vanish: it deepens and sinks into love, till he can repeat the seventeenth century poet Herbert's²⁶⁸ lines

"Thou art my loveliness, my life, my light,
Beautie alone to me;"

(181-7) Meditation may be done individually at home or in groups at their meetings. A beginner may benefit by their joint work only if a competent leader is there, and to a lesser extent, if some among the other members present are more advanced than he. Against this, he may be disturbed by the restlessness, the fidgetiness of others. A developed meditator will prefer to sit alone and avoid a group. The impingement of auras is a nuisance.

(181-8) If in meditation, he goes down sufficiently far through the levels of consciousness he will come to a depth where the phenomenal world disappears from consciousness, where time, thoughts and place cease to exist, where the personal self dissolves and seems no more. If there is no disturbance caused by violent intrusion from the physical world, this phase of complete inner thought-free stillness may continue for a long period but in the end Nature reclaims the meditator and brings him back to this world. It is only an experience, with the transiency of all experiences, but it will make its contribution to the final State, which is – permanent establishment in the innermost being, whether in the depth of silent meditation or in the midst of worldly turmoil and activity.

182²⁶⁹

III

183

III

(183-1)²⁷⁰ A remarkable, unusual and excellent exercise in self-perception is to imagine himself sitting down to the work of meditation, and going through with it to successful fulfilment of his purpose, all obstacles seen, fought and eventually pushed aside. All

²⁶⁸ Referring to George Herbert.

²⁶⁹ Blank page

²⁷⁰ The paras on this page are numbered 98 through 110, making them consecutive with the previous page.

this is to be done in his mind, his own person and its doings becomes the object of concentration. In short he paints a mental portrait of a meditating man, who is himself.

(183-2) Look for the moment when grace intervenes. Do not, in ignorance, fail to intercept it, letting it pass by unheeded and therefore lost. There is a feeling of mystery in this moment which, if lingered with, turns to sacredness. This is the signal; seek to be alone, let go of everything else, cease other activities, begin not meditation but contemplation, the thought-free state.

(183-3) If he begins the practise with a physical object, he will have to end with an imagined one. But these are only phases of concentration. The quest goes on beyond them, to a stilled picture-less mind.

(183-4) Whatever distracts attention openly and violently, like the passions, or subtly and insidiously, like curiosity; or preoccupies it with cares and anxieties, like business, is likely to interfere with the mind during practice sessions either in concentration or exaltation.

(183-5) When the attempt at control is stopped, awareness arises that thinking itself has stopped. This stillness then continues by itself, effortlessly. If through inexperience, lack of instruction, unfamiliarity or unpreparedness fear is felt, fear of death, annihilation of consciousness, this extremely subtle and delicate experience will suddenly come to an end. The opportunity is lost.

(183-6) A favoured posture used by Sufi mystics for meditation practice imitates one of the positions of the human embryo when curled up in its mother's womb. The meditator sits on the floor, with knees drawn up and chin held just above the knees, and hands covering the eyes.

(183-7) It is claimed that ordinary methods involve conscious deliberate thinking but mantra method of meditation does not. It by-passes them all and directly reaches thought-free stillness.

(183-8) His body follows his mind, his mind follows its body, both being rigid, the one on its seat, the other in its concentration. But all this is only a preparation for the further and higher work.

(183-9) The seated figure of Gautama with its symmetry and equipoise.

(183-10) Keep head, torso and hips faithful to the central line of straight upright spine.

(183-11) Try to draw awareness away from the world into yourself.

(183-12) He is submerged in the peace as though it were a great wave.

(183-13) A far-away look may come into the eyes as meditation deepens.

184²⁷¹

III

185

III

(185-1)²⁷² The mind becomes as still as if he were in the deepest largest cave penetrating a mountain side.

(185-2) These daily efforts to get closer to the Real are not wasted, even if they seem to bear no fruit at the time.

(185-3) The Indian yogi sits with his legs gathered inwards, the Japanese Zen monk sits with his legs gathered under him, but the philosopher sits as comfortably as he can.

(185-4) Mental quiet, if fully attained, frees the time-bound consciousness, which then floats all-too-briefly into Timelessness.

(185-5) He is to push attention outside himself to inside. He is then to push away extraneous thoughts while he concentrates on the feeling-search for his innermost self.

(185-6) Again and again he will have to collect his thoughts and bring his attention to the central point.

(185-7) The methods used to induce this absorbed trance-like state have been as many as they are varied, from the loud bull-like roars of the Pashupata²⁷³ yogis to the aesthetic whirlings of the Mevlevi Dervishes.

(185-8) Quite a number of dervishes and Sufis practise meditation in a posture quite different from that of the yogis: they sit with head sunk on breast.

(185-9) Too often does he lose his way and leave the high subject of his meditation for thoughts about personal affairs and worldly topics.

²⁷¹ Blank page

²⁷² The paras on this page are numbered 111 through 127, making them consecutive with the previous page.

²⁷³ "Pasupata" in the original.

(185-10) Holding the high aspiration strongly but relaxing the thoughts and personal pressures opens the way.

(185-11) The witch-doctor who, or whose assistant, beats out a rhythm on his drum accomplishes a concentration of mind; a lulling of the senses and a recession from the world for his hearers, to a farther extent than they would have been able to accomplish for themselves alone.

(185-12) In the earlier stages of the session he must feel his way to the inwardness, the quietness.

(185-13) Whether looking straight to the front or drooping the head toward the knees, whether the eyelids remain wide apart and unflickering, in the end the purpose is to pass through the stage of concentration to that of withdrawal, absorption.

(185-14) The lovely colours brought into the sky by the fall of eventide make a fit object for meditation.

(185-15) In the deepest contemplation there is, as regards what is happening in the outer world and its objects, a kind of amnesia.

(185-16) It is an act of self-discipline to make up for a period lost by practising at the earliest possible time after it. This bespeaks devotion and appreciation.

(185-17) The very sounds of the music which brings him to this exalted state will fall away and paradoxically get lost as he passes into a sound-free state, rapt in mental stillness and inward silence.

186²⁷⁴

III

187

III

(187-1)²⁷⁵ It may help the meditator to picture the world along with his body dissolving into space until all distinctions stop.

(187-2) It is not only thoughts that come up in the form of words that have to be brought under control, but also those that come up in the form of images. So long as

²⁷⁴ Blank page

²⁷⁵ The paras on this page are numbered 128 through 140, making them consecutive with the previous page.

consciousness is peopled by the activities of imagination, so long does its stillness and emptiness remain unreached. That certain yoga exercises use either of these forms to reach their goal does not falsify this statement. For even there the method practised has to be abandoned at a particular point, or stop there by itself.

(187-3) Some are frightened by this very proposal to look deep down into the mind, and turn away in emotional refusal.

(187-4) Various postures have been prescribed for meditative work but the commonest is the sitting one. The others are usually related to some special temperament or need, and may call for stretching of arms or legs combined with breath controls.

(187-5) In this state the feeling of the passage of time and the perception of forms in space may or may not vanish, according to its depth.

(187-6) When the mind is too active and thoughts succeed each other too quickly, as in the case of very nervous or very intellectual persons, physical methods are indicated for practice. These may be breathing exercises, repetition of a sound or listening to music of a repetitive nature, gazing at a landscape, figure, work of art or symbolic pattern.

(187-7) There is a disadvantage in these practices, too. If they penetrate deep enough he becomes sensitive to the unseen emanations from other people, to their thought, feeling, character.

(187-8) Even if his meditations seem so fruitless as to be not worth the time and trouble, it is better not to forsake them. If he continues to go through their outer form patiently, maybe pathetically, reduce the time-period if he likes, there will be a benefit in the end.

(187-9) It is a slipping of the mind into gentle passivity, which leads in the end to a kind of mediumship, not for wandering spooks but for the medium's own Overself.

(187-10) The hard fact is that the would-be meditator has to learn to wait during practice. If he gets impatient because no sign of improvement or benefit appears, he merely makes it harder for himself.

(187-11) Whether stricken and humbled in penitence or uplifted and exalted in meditation a man should come back to the central calm.

(187-12) Attention is projected on a thought which keeps away all other thoughts, is kept in rigid concentration on it. This is the first achievement and, for most practisers, the farthest they can go. But beyond that is another, the thought-less void. This needs complete privacy.

(187-13) It is not a dreamy or drowsy state. He is more lucidly and vitally conscious than ever before.

188²⁷⁶

III

189

III

(189-1)²⁷⁷ There are two difficulties here: first, to concentrate the mind and second, to keep it so for long stretches of time.

(189-2) “The truth discloses itself, as Shunyata²⁷⁸ the Great Void, after tireless meditation.” – Tibetan monk in M. Boss’ book.

(189-3) If it is true to say that in the earlier stages of his quest he holds on to the Still Thought-less state, in the later and more settled state he is held by It.

(189-4) His consciousness slips down into a vast emptiness, completely light-filled or merely bright.

(189-5) When concentration is held, and meditation sustained, with practised skill, all these difficulties vanish. What was formerly boring or tiring, now becomes pleasing and satisfying.

(189-6) Seventy years ago an English Professor could allude in a lecture to “those wretched recluses who contemplate their own navel.” Nowadays he would have to speak more warily, for the notion of meditation is better understood and getting to be practised in the West.

(189-7) By putting a space between his actions and himself through such an exercise, he may get this other viewpoint from which to judge them better, may see himself more clearly. (Review of the Past Day Exercise²⁷⁹)

(189-8) Buddhist ancient text gives the following blocks to meditational work: (a) A settled residence whose maintenance becomes a cause of anxiety. (b) family connections whose troubles require attention. (c) fame drawing admirers who demand

²⁷⁶ Blank page

²⁷⁷ The paras on this page are numbered 141 through 154, making them consecutive with the previous page.

²⁷⁸ “Sunyata” in the original

²⁷⁹ “Ex.” in the original.

attention or drawing gifts which create obligations having the same result. (d) acceptance of disciples or pupils and giving them instruction (e) getting involved in various public or private works (f) frequent journeys (g) friends or relatives requiring services (h) illness (i) study without application in practice (j) yielding to the fascination of occult powers. All these things take up time which has to be taken from that needed for meditation – this is the objection to them however worthy they may be in themselves. However it must be remembered that the text itself – Visuddhimagga²⁸⁰ – was compiled by, and for, monks.

(189-9) If he finds only ignorance, bewilderment or ordinariness, then he needs to go farther into himself. The revelation is there but at a deep level.

(189-10) Too much systematisation complicates the study of yoga and makes it more difficult. Intellectual over-analysis of yoga does the same. Both tend to miss the spirit of yoga.

(189-11) An intense quest will naturally lead to more regularity in meditation. It is a skill, and like all skills, developed by regular practice.

(189-12) Some can only find a cessation of irritating, disturbing or annoying sounds in the night when the world sleeps.

(189-13) The quality of a meditative session is not to be measured by its timed length but by its effective contact with Reality.

(189-14) The awareness being indrawn, totally absorbed within itself, must be transferred to the highest level of his aspirations.

190²⁸¹

III

191

III

(191-1)²⁸² When the mind has really plunged very deep in contemplation, when attention has travelled very far away from its normal plane, recalling oneself to that plane is best done slowly, gently, little by little.

²⁸⁰ “Vishudi-Magga” in the original.

²⁸¹ Blank page

²⁸² The paras on this page are numbered 155 through 167, making them consecutive with the previous page.

(191-2) To bring his scattered thoughts to heel, to give undivided attention to the intuitive feeling which would lead to the secret spiritual self – this is the first task.

(191-3) It is an interesting fact for the Western psychologist with his modern theories of the subconscious and its activity, that the advanced Buddhist monk is instructed to set a time limit in advance before entering the deepest final meditation which merges into trance, and at its expiry he automatically emerges. The same procedure is followed in yoga before being “buried alive” in a special underground box.

(191-4) The world is more and more shut off as his concentrated attention moves inward until it vanishes altogether. It is then that he may become aware of his unknown “soul” and its peace.

(191-5) The mandala is a diagrammatic representation, used by Tibetans and Jains for concentration, usually featuring a square enclosing a circle. Each side of the square has an opening. At the centre of the circle is a figure which is the important part of the picture and to which attention must find its way through the openings and put to rest there, until the deeper mind is reached.

(191-6) The world outside may become lost to his consciousness if he gets deep enough in his meditation. But then it is regained when he returns to the prosaic ordinary state.

(191-7) In the crouched-together, knees-up position of the original Sufi mystics and the chin-locked, leg-tucked figure of the original yogi meditators, there is obedience to and harmony with Nature’s instinctive dictate. For Nature so arranges the body of an unborn child inside the mother’s own body.

(191-8) It is not easy for most who have a way of life and programme of practices to keep them realised while part of a society which feels differently about them.

(191-9) If he can enter the state of contemplation at any time he wishes to do so, and can sustain it as long as desired, he is said to be an adept in meditation.

(191-10) Courage to face and accept the unknown is needed at this deep level of meditation. But if there is insufficient information and insufficient purification, it might be well to pause at this point and make oneself better ready for this momentous step.

(191-11) The mind’s faculties are all brought together in an intense projection out of himself into the unpicturable but inwardly sensed Presence, the Overself.

(191-12) In these earlier stages what matters is how deeply absorbed his attention becomes in the subject, how strongly held is his control over the thoughts which come

into the area of awareness, how far away he withdraws from activity of the body's senses.

(191-13) The aim is to clear all thoughts out of the mind so that it can be experienced for what it is, pure, unmixed.

192²⁸³

III

193

III

(193-1)²⁸⁴ Noises and sights may be still present in the background of consciousness but the pull and fascination of the inner being will be strong enough to hold him and they will not be able to move his attention away from it. This, of course, is an advanced state but once mastered and familiar, it must yield to the next one. Here, as if passing from this waking world to a dream one, there is a slip-over into universal space, incredibly vast and totally empty. Consciousness is there but, as he discovers later, this too is only a phase through which it passes. Where, and when, will it all end? When Consciousness is led – by Grace – to itself, beyond its states, phases and conditions where man, at last, is fit to meet God.

(193-2) As he sits there, hieratically immobile, in peaceful surrender, his mind turned away from everyday matters, he feels the Presence little by little.

(193-3) If he means to make a serious effort, he must impose a routine upon himself, must make the daily practice a habit.

(193-4) The deepening of inhalation is a prelude, and then an accompaniment, to the deepening of meditation. It comes of itself, or can be deliberately done to help the inner work.

(193-5) Most devotees of the mid- and far-Eastern faiths turn eastwards when they worship. My instinct and practice is the contrary one, for I turn westwards to the sunken lingering sun.

(193-6) It is not enough to carry the concentrated awareness away from outward things: it must then be kept there. This also is hard, because all tendencies rebel at first.

²⁸³ Blank page

²⁸⁴ The paras on this page are numbered 168 through 177, making them consecutive with the previous page.

(193-7) Putting aside one's own internal and personal pressures is a pre-condition which sooner or later lets in the Overself's peace.

(193-8) It is possible to practise badly and thus bring about negative results. Such meditation can degenerate into mediumship, so that new, strange facets of personality appear. Or, a loss of efficiency may become manifest, a kind of apathy, indifference, will turn the man into a dreamer.

(193-9) If meditation is to be mastered two fundamental conditions must be remembered. The first is, ever and again bring attention back from its straying. The second is, ever probe with it deeper and deeper, until the still Void is entered. At the end let yourself become one with the Void.

(193-10) It is a valuable exercise to review at night the events of the past day or to preview in the morning those which can be expected in the coming day.

194²⁸⁵

III

195²⁸⁶

III

196²⁸⁷

III

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

197

IV

(197-1)²⁸⁸ A few come to this quest after the shock produced by the unreasonableness and unfairness and stupidity of the treatment they received from the organisation, the group, the sect, the Church, the party, to which they belonged. Some crisis in their lives, such as the need to get married or to get divorced, blocked by a solemn bleak dogma or decision, became the occasion of the shock. Or, as in Gandhi's case when he was thrown out of a railway compartment by an arrogant member of the ruling race,

²⁸⁵ Blank page

²⁸⁶ Blank page

This page is a tabbed divider labelled "3" - it separates the Category III material from the Category IV material.

²⁸⁷ Void page

²⁸⁸ The paras on this page are numbered 1 through 7; they are not consecutive with the previous page.

heartless discourtesy provoked swift disillusionment. A single jarring incident, a single deliberate injustice or hurt, or insult, was enough to bring on such resentment and indignation penetrating as sharply as a hypodermic needle, that character change and a new outlook was inaugurated. Some have even come to the quest, not because they had any real vocation for it but because they had nowhere else to go, because the world had lost all meaning, all hope, for them through some ghastly tragedy or some heartbreaking loss, and this was a better way than committing suicide. But the best way to come to the quest is of course to fulfil the higher possibilities as a human being.

(197-2) Those who seek to learn singing as an art, as also speakers who study voice production discover, if they have an enquiring mind, that several different systems and methods exist and that the advocates of each way often commend their own and criticise the others. Systems conflict, methods contradict, teachers disagree. Such a situation prevails also, to a certain extent, in the circles of spiritual and metaphysical theories and training. But most of these doctrines can, again to a certain extent, be reconciled if it is recognised that because human beings are not all alike, the approaches they use to the spiritual goal also need not be alike. Routes may differ, destinations remain the same. The belief that the seeker must restrict himself to a particular named way only, is a narrow one. It over-simplifies the truth at the cost of truth.

(197-3) That the truth of life must be deeper than what we see and hear and touch, is suspected by intuitive persons, believed or felt by pious persons, and directly known by wise persons. What the surface story tells us is not the whole of it, they say.

(197-4) There is no hint in Jesus' words that he wanted men to form themselves into an organised religion, to appoint a hierarchy, to create a liturgy. Was he himself not in protest against the Hebrew version of these things? Did not he suffer from its tyranny, and in the end die by it? Why should he want to set up a new institution, which would inevitably end in the same way?

(197-5) Each religious group, teacher, cult tries to shape all its members, followers, votaries into a single rigid form. The individual with his own unique characteristics, his own particular possibilities is not considered.

(197-6) There are many who, by lack of capacity, interest, character or inwardness, are unable to arrive at more than a partial possession of truth at best, at more than its counterfeits at worst.

(197-7) How can I hasten my development? is a question aspirants often ask.²⁸⁹

²⁸⁹ This section is continued in the paras on page 223.

(199-1)²⁹¹ Organisations are for most people the only way in which they can receive religious help or acquire religious belief. This however does not mean that they will always remain so, for a time comes when they are seen for what they are – elementary stages usually, intermediary stages sometimes.

(199-2) People try to put others into groups, to affix tags to them. The philosopher may not regard himself as a member of any group but these people will insist, all the same, on labelling him.

(199-3) The true philosopher is not commonly affiliated with any mystical organisation.

(199-4) Since the real essence of philosophy has only an inner content, which must be felt intuitively and grasped intellectually, but no outer form, it cannot become material for a cult, an organised group. It must lead each person on his own individual way, letting him grow naturally from within. His quest will then take the independent course proper for him, not made to conform to one suitable only to others.

(199-5) Old people are more patient more tranquil and more composed.

(199-6) Why believe with the middle-aged, the conservative, the traditionalist, that the old alone is good, or with the younger, the rebellious, the discontented, that the new alone is good? Why must we settle down to a single [narrow and confining]²⁹² set of values, and thus become congealed, rigid, perhaps even stagnant, when life itself is forever changing, swiftly or [slowly, and]²⁹³ flowing on?

(199-7) There is no single way or method suited to all aspirants. The history of the quest varies from one man to another and even from time to time in the same man.

(199-8) Men try to escape their responsibility in this matter by handing it over to an official Church, or Spiritual Guide, or referred to Scripture. But they fail to see that in

²⁹⁰ Blank page

²⁹¹ The paras on this page are numbered 151 through 158, and 158a; they are not consecutive with the previous page. In addition, there is 1 unnumbered para at the top of the page.

The paras on this page appear to have been typed on four separate typewriters; the precise sequence is unclear. The four groups are: 199-1, 199-2 through 199-7, 199-8 through 199-9, and 199-10.

²⁹² PB himself inserted “narrow and confining” by hand.

²⁹³ PB himself changed “slowly” to “slowly, and” by hand.

the end it is they themselves who judge between doctrines, decide upon beliefs, choose spiritual paths, request ceremonies and accept observances, and finally and personally pronounce the words: This is Truth! To accept belief is unconsciously or consciously to pass a judgment, one's own judgement, on that belief.

(199-9) Those who are satisfied with centring themselves within the ego will not be drawn to such teachings, which educate the pupils to cultivate constantly a withdrawal from the ego.

(199-10) The young have more difficulty in practising self-control than the elderly: passion is stronger while reason is weaker

200²⁹⁴

IV

201

IV

(201-1)²⁹⁵ 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.

(201-2) 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.

(201-3) 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?

(201-4) 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

²⁹⁴ Blank page

²⁹⁵ The paras on this page are numbered 1 through 11; they are not consecutive with the previous page.

art, ungraven in image. But this was too much to ask of sentimental, devotional and emotional humanity.

(201-5) The all-knowing attitude which they adopt requires an all-believing attitude on the part of their disciples.

(201-6) 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.

(201-7) 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.

(201-8) A man who stays outside all the crusading sects and organising societies, the formal religions and personal cults, is condemned to live in exile.

(201-9) He is saved from spiritual snobbishness by the practice of humility, and from spiritual priggishness by the sense of humour.

(201-10) He would not be happy confined in a group, an organisation or a sect.

(201-11) The fact is that most people are quite uninterested in such a quest.

202²⁹⁶

IV

203

IV

(203-1)²⁹⁷ 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 miss the true way.

(203-2) If they are tempted at times to abandon the dreams of higher attainment which accompanied their entry on the quest, who can blame them?

(203-3) He may succeed in his aim only if he succeeds in not getting entangled by irrelevant activities and intruding persons.

²⁹⁶ Blank page

²⁹⁷ The paras on this page are numbered 12 through 27, making them consecutive with the previous page.

(203-4) He finds himself in that suspended and desolate state, the Dark Night of the Soul.

(203-5) 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.

(203-6) 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.

(203-7) Too often sects breed tyranny, uncharitableness and fanaticism. They shut out the freedom which permits spiritual adventure and hence true spiritual seeking.

(203-8) 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.

(203-9) Too many parrot phrases circulate among the followers of gurus and the members of movements.

(203-10) 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.

(203-11) 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's story)

(203-12) The profound meaning of life is not put before our eyes. We have to dig for it with much patience and much perseverance.

(203-13) It is this continuing and determined pursuit of truth which brings a rewarding result.

(203-14) It becomes, in the end, what is after all the very opposite of what it began with, a search for impersonality.

(203-15) He assuredly has at least the correct approach, is following the right direction.

(203-16) It is to the Overself that he must give his ultimate allegiance.

204²⁹⁸

IV

205

IV

(205-1)²⁹⁹ No seeker is so ardent but he has times when effort relaxes and feeling stagnates.

(205-2) Truth is not confined to any sect but fragments of it may be found scattered here and there.

(205-3) 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.

(205-4) It is very significant that a recent Chinese translator of Tao Teh Ching³⁰⁰ claimed that it was a collection of sayings for old men.

(205-5) The course of each quester is not necessarily invariable nor his experiences always inevitable.

(205-6) Organised forms are necessary to worldly enterprises but not to the philosophical quest. It is too highly individual an affair.

(205-7) Lest the complacent consciousness of progress should give rise to spiritual pride, let him remember that a change of circumstances may shatter it.

(205-8) Sectarianism, zealotry and bigotry develop by stages in the minds of followers.

(205-9) Far from the din and disparagements of jarring sects, he lives unlabelled and free.

(205-10) 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 environment where that body moves.

²⁹⁸ Blank page

²⁹⁹ The paras on this page are numbered 28 through 44, making them consecutive with the previous page.

³⁰⁰ "Tao-Teh King" in the original.

(205-11) Worse is the belief that this futility must go on for ever, that his quest is defeated at the start.

(205-12) 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?

(205-13) Whether it be mere dalliance with occultism or serious quest for reality, it is still a turn for the better.

(205-14) 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.

(205-15) 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.

(205-16) 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?

(205-17) 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.

206³⁰¹

IV

207

IV

(207-1)³⁰² 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.

³⁰¹ Blank page

³⁰² The paras on this page are numbered 45 through 56, making them consecutive with the previous page.

(207-2) 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 protection, offers them a mode of expression, and the teaching a mode of preservation.

(207-3) 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.

(207-4) 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.

(207-5) 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.

(207-6) 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.

(207-7) 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.

(207-8) 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.

(207-9) 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 lead many who have broken away to fear and distrust such authoritarian forms altogether.

(207-10) It is essential to reject negative thoughts, to accept and hold only the affirmative ones.

(207-11) How few are those who feel the call to such a quest.

(207-12) All mankind must pass this way.

208³⁰³

IV

209

IV

(209-1)³⁰⁴ 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!

(209-2) 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.

(209-3) 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.

(209-4) 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.

(209-5) The quest, with its thrilling comprehensions and encouraging consolations, would still be worth while if it were merely a help to living and nothing more.

(209-6) He may quite likely meet with inertia inside himself and hostility outside himself, for the quest is too demanding.

(209-7) 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 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

³⁰³ Blank page

³⁰⁴ The paras on this page are numbered 57 through 69, making them consecutive with the previous page.

being questers, who were even enthusiastic although they had had no inner experiences and made no dramatic progress. They were positive, not negative, thinkers.

(209-8) The quester who has reached a sufficiently advanced stage becomes keenly aware of the paradoxes and contrarities of his life.

(209-9) When the forces of religion become incorporated in a collective body, it becomes an instrument to impede those forces!

(209-10) 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.

(209-11) 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.

(209-12) The wisest master lets the disciple develop in his own way, according to his own individuality.

(209-13) When men act together in a religious or political organisation, they often act worse than they would do as individuals.³⁰⁵

210³⁰⁶
IV

211
IV

(211-1)³⁰⁷ The folly of refusing to recognise that his guru is certainly not as all-knowing as God, is a defect in this type of disciple. Nor can the guru himself stand exempt from censure if he allows the error to remain.

(211-2) The young Beatniks and Popniks rebel against their parents as well as all that the latter stood for. Their behaviour is a [blind reckless]³⁰⁸ protest, their manner is a [mere]³⁰⁹ pose, their poetry and painting a [futile]³¹⁰ chaos.

³⁰⁵ This section is continued in the paras on page 221.

³⁰⁶ Blank page

³⁰⁷ The paras on this page are numbered 1 through 8; they are not consecutive with the previous page.

³⁰⁸ PB himself inserted “blind reckless” by hand.

³⁰⁹ PB himself inserted “mere” by hand.

³¹⁰ PB himself inserted “futile” by hand.

(211-3) Sophocles, in his calm, wise but afflicted old age, wrote, "...At the end Age, housed with sorrow, claims us" and also, sadly expectant, "At last, to make an end ...the dance done, [every guest has gone]³¹¹ save Death, the one last friend."

(211-4) He becomes aware of receiving communications, though not on the usual verbal level.

(211-5) Timid souls, young inexperienced persons, emotional hero-worshippers and others who care for that sort of attitude may welcome the guru's paternalism (Ramdas was actually called "papa!" by his circle of disciples).

(211-6) They will all have to come to it in the end – the naive and the sophisticated, the bad ones and the good ones, the cruel and the kind.

(211-7) Everybody makes a judgement, acts as a judge, even where he seems not to do so at all: For by accepting the organisation's view, he actually judges them (and it).

(211-8) [Whoever does not understand that the guide must lead him to where he will seek his own way, will go on endlessly looking for teachers, one after the other, or else become a spiritual hypochondriac a semi-invalid needing the guru-doctor to dance constantly in attendance on his ego-centred symptoms.]³¹²

212³¹³
IV

213
IV

(213-1³¹⁴) Those who pass the Biblical age for exits from this world may be beyond passion and beyond ambition.

(213-2) That the Quest has its own peculiar pitfalls is admitted; that the quester may suffer mishaps is possible.

(213-3) Who is likely to enter on this quest if there is no prospect of some results?

³¹¹ PB himself inserted "every guest has gone" by hand.

³¹² This para was entirely handwritten by PB himself.

³¹³ Blank page

³¹⁴ The paras on this page are numbered 1a, 1b, 1c, and 1 through 11; they are not consecutive with the previous page. The first 3 paras were typed on a separate typewriter, presumably at a later point.

(213-4) "If you have peace of mind, contentment, old age is no unbearable burden. Without that both youth and age are painful." said Greek Sophocles to a much younger questioner.

(213-5) They think of [him as]³¹⁵ a paragon of all the human virtues.

(213-6) [When]³¹⁶ he compares what he would have liked to achieve with what he actually achieved, he may come to despond.

(213-7) The independent-minded seeker will welcome truth from any quarter, any era, will be avid for whatever fragments of it he can find, and wherever he may find it.

(213-8) Not all come to the quest of truth for its own sake. Some come for its by-products: for relief from disappointment, defence against sorrow or compensation for age.

(213-9) The satisfaction which comes from trying to fulfil the high purpose for which he has been put on earth, is a grand feeling.

(213-10) People are put under the influence of suggestion today by the varied propagandist means now available, so that they think alike, they act in droves, and live in herds.

(213-11) There are those who come to this quest simply because they are disillusioned with the world. Wearied with the self-seeking disputations of political schemers, repelled by the heartless treatment of non-followers by political extremists, they turn away and look elsewhere for truth, honesty, goodness.

(213-12) Whether on college campus or life's school, the higher laws have to be learnt at some time, in some birth; whether by instruction when young or by experience when older, the fact of their existence may be disregarded at our own peril.

(213-13) As much as anything else one needs [personal]³¹⁷ freedom in this search after truth. Every form of interference and obstruction comes from sources which have acquired only a partial or false insight into truth. But such freedom is permissive only in so far as one is good enough, wise enough, balanced enough, judicious enough and

³¹⁵ 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. PB himself inserted "him as" into the space by hand at a later point.

³¹⁶ PB himself deleted "He may despond" from before "when" by hand.

³¹⁷ "personal" was typed above this line and inserted with a caret by PB himself.

discriminating³¹⁸ enough to use it properly. Otherwise it leads to non-truth and self-deception.

(213-14) He is not a joiner because of several reasons: one of them is that joiners are too often too one-sided [in approach,]³¹⁹ too limited in outlook, too exclusive to let truth in when it happens to appear in a sect different from his own. Another reason is that too frequently there is a tyranny from above, and imitated by followers, which forbids any independent thought and does not tolerate any real search

(213-15) The guru whose ego still harbours vanity will find it flattered by every new disciple, will be endangered afresh by every widening of his personal influence.

(213-16) The beauty in a bird's song, the peace in a sage's face, the intelligence in Nature's actions, these offer hints and clues, as well as topics for meditation, to truth seeking, ideal-aspiring men.

214³²⁰
IV

215
IV

(215-1)³²¹ Several different [methods of]³²² spiritual [development]³²³ have been offered to humanity. Some have more merit than others and some are more effective than others. But so much depends on the particular needs and status of each person, that the value of a method cannot be generalised with fairness.

(215-2) What does he gain and what does he lose, who chooses to follow a spiritual path alone rather than in association with others?

(215-3) The path, in its precise detail, is relative to personal need and situation, the character and inclination, the age and condition, hence it differs from pupil to pupil.

(215-4) The path is essentially individual and personal in the course it takes. Men and women vary so much that they cannot find a single way to suit all their particular needs.

³¹⁸ We have changed "discrimination" to "discriminating" for clarity.

³¹⁹ "in approach," was typed below this line and inserted with a caret by PB himself.

³²⁰ Blank page

³²¹ The paras on this page are numbered 91 through 100; they are not consecutive with the previous page. In addition, there is an unnumbered para at the top of the page.

³²² "methods of" was typed above this line and inserted with a caret by PB himself.

³²³ "development" was typed above this line and inserted with a caret by PB himself.

(215-5) It is not easy to follow a path of such hardy independence.

(215-6) The endeavour after independence can achieve only a partial success, never a total one. We find that we are tied to other people.

(215-7) Those of us who have been born and brought up in democratic countries like England and the USA rightly resent the idea of living under oppressive dictatorship. Yet we tend to overlook the fact that even in such countries the State³²⁴ is itself becoming more and [more formidably dictatorial]³²⁵ as it becomes more and more centralised. Those of us who value individuality and freedom are coming into inner conflict with it; some us even into outer conflict.

(215-8) [With the years – the world being what it is and human beings what they are – experience often turns the idealism of the young into the disillusionment of the middle-aged or the cynicism of the old. Only a coming into awareness of the higher spiritual nature can balance and correct this condition with the higher truth of the World-Idea, thus renewing hope and giving peace.]³²⁶

(215-9) A terrible inner numbness,³²⁷ an unbearable emptiness,³²⁸ is a prominent feature of the spiritual dark night.

(215-10)³²⁹ Whether or not we can foresee the events yet to come and forefeel their likely effects upon us, we may all be certain that if we live to reach old age, certain physical changes and mental effects are inescapable and inevitable.

(215-11)³³⁰ The Quester needs much study, some meditation and much application of these teachings if he is to adjust the conditions of his life to them. This will come about either in a gradual way or by spurts and starts.

³²⁴ PB himself capitalized “State” by hand.

³²⁵ PB himself changed “more of a formidable dictatorship” to “more of formidably dictatorial” by hand; we have deleted “of” for readability.

³²⁶ PB himself heavily edited this para by hand. It originally read: “With the years - the world being what it is and human beings what they are, experience often turns idealism of the young into the disillusionment of the middle-aged, or the cynicism of the old. Only the coming into awareness of the higher spiritual nature can balance and correct this condition with the higher truth of the World-Idea, renewing hope and giving peace.”

³²⁷ PB himself inserted a comma by hand.

³²⁸ PB himself inserted a comma by hand.

³²⁹ This para was typed on a different typewriter than the rest of the page, presumably at a later date.

³³⁰ This para was pasted on the page from another source.

(217-1)³³² That few seekers ever get so far as to bring their thoughts under full control, even to the point of utter standstill, does not mean that great advantages and benefits can not accrue to those of lesser attainment. They can

(217-2) Most persons need a drastic shock, and enforced awakening, a sharp arousal from that long sleep which is the egoic existence, if they are ever to come alive spiritually. This {is}³³³ effective only if it breaks old habits, trends and inclinations, thus making a new man. It may come about through healing or reading a teacher like Krishnamurti or Gurdjieff, or through harsh events like malignant illness, or unexpected bereavement.

(217-3) What human being can arrive at total knowledge or live in perfect love? It is not the ultimate destination but the general direction which really counts. And it is right direction which the quest gives.

(217-4) By "Quest" I mean the deliberate and conscious dedication to the search for spiritual truth, freedom or awareness.

(217-5) Each man must someday take to this quest. This is as certain as the sun's rising for is it not said, on high authority that we can not live by bread alone?

(217-6) They fear the quest because they fear that, if they get involved in it too seriously, they might have to repress some inclination in their nature or renounce some habit in their way of living. So they take from it only what appeals to them, and discard the rest.

(217-7) The average man is disinclined to make so much of an effort as the Quest requires.

(217-8) Is he searching for what is findable, striving to reach what is unattainable?

³³¹ Blank page

³³² The paras on this page are numbered 98a and 99 through 112, making them consecutive with the previous page. These paras were typed on separate occasions, forming three groups: paras 217-2 through 217-11; 217-12 through 217-13; and 217-1, 217-14, 217-15.

³³³ We have inserted "is" for clarity.

(217-9) Is he a self-deceiving pilgrim to unreachable heights?

(217-10) The aspiration must not only be a desirable one, it must also be attainable.

(217-11) When results are so poor it is not improper that he should begin to question his procedures.

(217-12) Unless the longing becomes insistent and constant, he is not likely to go far on this quest.

(217-13) There are several systems, methods, groups and organisations, but of acceptable ones there are only few.

(217-14) Let him welcome each as a source of some truth, without binding himself to a single source.

(217-15) It is the desire to do for himself what Life wishes him to do, to realise his higher potentials, that puts him on this Quest

218³³⁴

IV

219

IV

(219-1)³³⁵ During the dark night the will is apathetic, the emotions depressed, the thoughts futile and inconclusive.

(219-2) There is no single approach which is the only true one, the only true religion. God is waiting at the end of all roads. But some suit us better than others.

(219-3) Old age brings its infirmities and enfeeblements, its humiliations and lonelinesses, its feelings of being useless and being unwanted.

(219-4) The ordinary mind, unlit by truth, pushed hither and thither by impulse, guided by egoistic instinct, ignorant of the karmic law, misconceives life's purpose and meaning.

³³⁴ Blank page

³³⁵ The paras on this page are numbered 41 through 48; they are not consecutive with the previous page, but follow the paras on page 225.

(219-5) His gurules independence keeps him sect-free, staying outside organisations and not joining communal groups.

(219-6) However genuinely idealistic an institution may have been in the beginning, it tends to become corrupted with time.

(219-7) Give questers this order of Daily Exercise: (1) Prayer in posture. (2) Breathing in posture. (3) Affirmations in mantra-semi-meditation. (4) Full meditation.

(219-8) And so they come here to this quest because they learn at last to put a proper value on inner peace. They seek it not only to heal wounds but to sustain them in the world.

220³³⁶

IV

221

IV

(221-1)³³⁷ 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.

(221-2) 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?

(221-3) The decision to follow the Quest and the determination to carry out the necessary work.

(221-4) 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.

(221-5) 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.

³³⁶ Blank page

³³⁷ The paras on this page are numbered 70 through 83; they are not consecutive with the previous page, but follow the paras on page 209.

(221-6) Is this a futile quest for a state of beatitude beyond human grasp? Is it merely an eccentric folly?

(221-7) 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.

(221-8) He pulls back when any group or organisation wants to hold him or put its classifying label on him.

(221-9) I would revise an oft-quoted sentence so that it reads: "When the master is ready, the pupil appears!"

(221-10) The individualist cannot fit into the life of human anthills.

(221-11) He makes his own world-view rather than inherits it with his body, i.e. he thinks for himself, without inherited bias and prejudice.

(221-12) An experience so lovely, yielding a memory so precious, is worth the effort of seeking.

(221-13) He becomes mentally ambitious, searching for truths that will enlarge his horizons and open up his consciousness.

(221-14) His inner experiences should be [checked by those]³³⁸ of the great sages and philosophic seers.

222³³⁹
IV

223
IV

(223-1)³⁴⁰ Cicero wrote a rosy essay on the several and varied blessings of old age. But when one sees one of these allegedly fortunate creatures creeping along the streets supporting his arthritic body with stick, or sticks, one wonders.

³³⁸ 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. PB himself later inserted "checked by those" into the space by hand.

³³⁹ Blank page

³⁴⁰ The paras on this page are numbered 8 through 23; they are not consecutive with the previous page, but follow the paras on page 197.

(223-2) To sit in a public vehicle or popular cafe and be stared at by others is discomfoting to the sensitive person. He knows by his own experience that the glance carries with it mental characteristics, projects the others' thought and feeling of the moment.

(223-3) The rarity of competent living guides in this strange territory of contemplation was noted and deplored by the Russian writer on asceticism, Ignatius³⁴¹ Brianchaninov more than a century ago. He advised seekers to turn to the books left behind by such guides as the only resort, despite its risks of self-delusion which he acknowledged. He stated that books for beginners, giving detailed instructions and definite exercises, were even specially written by a few of the remaining mystics to counterbalance the scarcity.

(223-4) Because the Higher Power is present in the whole world, it is present in everyone too. Because few seek the awareness of It, fewer still find it.

(223-5) The purpose of all paths being to bring the traveller to the same single destination – union with God – any path which either fulfils this purpose or partially helps to do so, is acceptable.

(223-6) If God is everywhere, as He must be, then He is in man too. This fact makes possible his discovery, under certain conditions, of a diviner element in his being which is ordinarily obscured.

(223-7) Men are apt to complain of old age: Buddha even listed it as one of the sights which set him on his course to search for a way out of life's suffering. But there is one advantage of being an old man: one will not easily accept illusions for the sake of their false comfort.

(223-8) When life has cheated their hopes and illness has darkened their years, their shallowness and frivolity may appear insufficient and inadequate.

(223-9) He makes choices whether or not to adhere to a certain moral code, belong to a particular organised group or institution, follow some spiritual guide or teaching. This is the fact, whatever he may assume, believe or assert to escape personal responsibility.

(223-10) He may be glad, like Cicero, to reach old age, with its comparative calm. But most men dread its onset.

(223-11) Men are brought into life without any knowledge of its object. This they have to find later for themselves, or at least receive, and be satisfied with, other men's opinion of it.

³⁴¹ "Ignatii" in the original.

(223-12) His aloneness is not a cause of suffering, as it is with so many people. Because he uses it aright it becomes a grace.

(223-13) He is always ready to revise his methods, habits, dogmas, because he is always ready to learn by experience.

(223-14) Do not use the technical terms “quest” or “disciple” but write in general terms.

(223-15) He must not only seek truth, but must seek it eagerly.

(223-16) Are there any easy methods for attaining this condition of enlightenment?

224³⁴²

IV

225

IV

(225-1)³⁴³ When this craving for a guru becomes excessive, inordinate, it is a sign of weakness, an attempt to escape one’s own personal responsibility and to place it squarely on somebody else’s shoulders, a manifestation of inferiority complex such as we are accustomed to see in races that have been long enslaved by others.

(225-2) In sheltering from the need to think for himself, he joins the flock of sheep which follows Authority – an understandable act – but which does so quite blindly – a reprehensible act. This does not free him from personal responsibility for the decisions, actions and results, however much he deludes himself otherwise.

(225-3) Three subjects of study: the natures of man, the universe, God. Three duties are owed: to yourself, to other living creatures – human and animal – to God.

(225-4) Man can find truth if he uses all the power of his faculties. But he may not find it quickly: a whole lifetime may be involved.

(225-5) If the literature on these subjects is so much larger today, the problem of choosing correctly what is most reliable is so much more difficult.

³⁴² Blank page

³⁴³ The paras on this page are numbered 24 through 40, making them consecutive with the previous page.

(225-6) Too often the clinging to a particular teacher, the membership of a particular group, leads at best to a naive faith in the self-sufficiency of the tenets advocated, at worst, to a new sectarianism.

(225-7) That critical, mysterious and desolate period called 'the dark night,' when the quester finds himself [suffering]³⁴⁴ from spiritual paralysis.

(225-8) If any path, technique, exercise or practice arouses his dislike, he need not engage himself in it.

(225-9) If 'being different' is an honest result of the search for higher truth, it must be acceptable. But when it is merely a disguised egocentric exhibitionism, it becomes reprehensible.

(225-10) It is particularly the young who ought to feel the wish to better character and enoble life, the desire for self-improvement.

(225-11) The work of overcoming the illusions which enthrall all mankind, and of removing the obscurations which prevent spiritual self-knowledge, belongs to this quest.

(225-12) Unwittingly, he never really escapes from the act of pronouncing judgment – be it on worldly or spiritual affairs, no matter how much he shelters behind an institution, an authority, a leader or a religion.

(225-13) But if the Quest has its suffering frustrations, it has also its joyous satisfactions: if it has seemingly unscalable walls, it has also easily trodden floors.

(225-14) He who determines, at a comparatively early age, to seek wisdom and practise virtue, is a fortunate man.

(225-15) The Dark Night is much less a dark night when he believes, understands, or possibly knows that it is a work of the Overself, a movement of Its grace.

(225-16) Each person is an individual, unique, and in the end must find his own path to self-discovery.

(225-17) The slow gradual enlightenment of views will finish his development.³⁴⁵

³⁴⁴ 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. PB himself inserted "suffering" into the space by hand at a later point.

³⁴⁵ This section is continued in the paras on page 219.

226³⁴⁶
IV

227
IV

(227-1)³⁴⁷ Youth – and in some cases it extends into the thirties – with its inexperience, naivete, imaginativeness, romanticism and immaturity – easily falls into illusion, glamour or a sloppy sentimentality.

228³⁴⁸
IV

229
IV

(229-1)³⁴⁹ The dogmatic established church viewpoint does not permit any variant of its own doctrine to arise within its enclosure; does not acknowledge, and allow for, the differing capacities of reception.

(229-2) If he comes to the quest with his whole being, turning every side of it to the quest's light and discipline, he may confidently expect the full insight, the full transformation and not a partial, incomplete result.

(229-3) To concentrate attention and devotion upon the guru with fanatic extremism, is to desert correct balance, to stray from the middle way.

(229-4) Youth, with its vigour gets needed action; with its hope formulates needed changes.

(229-5) What should be done to travel this path, and what should be avoided to remove its obstructions.

(229-6) Too often organised institutions have become hindrances to the spread of that very truth they were supposed to foster.

³⁴⁶ Blank page

³⁴⁷ The para on this page is numbered 205; it is not consecutive with the previous page.

³⁴⁸ Blank page

³⁴⁹ The paras on this page are unnumbered.

(229-7) The Indian sage Vasistha, like the Chinese sage Confucius, praised the values of old age.

(229-8) How often does man pass by the truth, leaving it unrecognised, ignored or rejected.

(229-9) The feeling of complete abandonment which comes during “the dark night” brings an acute depression.

(229-10) The disciples who turn themselves into copies of their guru do well for themselves up to a certain point. But after that their [aping]³⁵⁰ actually retards their growth.

(229-11) If he joins a monastic order he will usually have to take a vow to practise certain restraints and renunciations. To a lesser degree this also occurs with joining certain groups and circles in the world outside such orders. The value of the vow is that it sets up a standard to be followed, a course to be travelled and a goal to be reached. He may fall from the standard, deviate from the course and fail to approach the goal, but their existence may help him come closer to the object of the vow than he might otherwise have come. On the other hand, the layman who is not interested in vows but simply resolves to improve himself lacks their stimulus. There is nothing but the inner force of his own ideal to keep him from abandoning the self-imposed rigours of his discipline. He depends on the power which he will have to summon up from somewhere within himself. The weakness of binding himself to the new regime, which he himself has imposed, is that it can easily be shirked at any time, that if he yields to the inclination to do so, the restraints upon it will be weaker and fewer.

(229-12) The enthusiastic devotion to a guru has its value and renders the disciple good service at certain stages. But they are stages: the goal of life does not end in a person, however noble he be.

(229-13)³⁵¹ The feeling of futility enters his attitude toward worldly activities: their daily recurrence becomes wearisome if it does not lead, or does not make any contribution, to the spiritual goal. The urge to break away from it all will come up from time to time.

(229-14) Too often does the behaviour and beliefs, the dress and speech, the morals and manners of youthful contemporaries, [along with all the catering to youthful taste and

³⁵⁰ PB himself changed “mimesis” to “aping” by hand.

³⁵¹ This para and the following para were typed on a different typewriter than the rest of the page, presumably at a later date.

emphasis on youthful appearance]³⁵² make some of us oldsters feel we belong to a bygone age.

230³⁵³

IV

231

IV

(231-1)³⁵⁴ But where some turn away from world for negative reasons because of their misery and disappointment, others come to the quest for positive reasons; they have sensed or suspected, felt, or been told of, a higher plane of existence: they respond to a divine call.

(231-2) If he wishes to enter the portal of philosophy he will most likely begin with others, with what philosophers have thought and taught, but in the end he must make a second beginning – with himself. He will have to re-examine his own psyche, his own personality, but from a detached position, standing far to one side. He will have to decide each hour of each day how to apply the truth, gathered from books and teachers, to the events, duties, occasions and thoughts of that day.

(231-3) If you are looking for truth, it is not enough to look only at your own country's, your own religion's statement of it, nor just this century's. You need also to look elsewhere, to heed the wiser voices of other centuries and to feel free to move East and West or into B.C. as well as A.D. But above all these things you must look into the mystery of your own consciousness. Uncover it layer after layer until you meet the Overself. All this is included in the Quest.

(231-4) The belief that any institution or organisation is divine has led to much superstition and unnecessary strife: the true belief that all such things are strictly human, and therefore fallible, as history repeatedly confirms, would have saved mankind much suffering.

(231-5) The seeker must elicit these things for himself, and from within himself: reading about them is not enough, hearing about them from gurus, or at lectures, is not enough.

³⁵² PB himself inserted "along with all the catering to youthful taste and emphasis on youthful appearance" by hand.

³⁵³ Blank page

³⁵⁴ The paras on this page are numbered 1 through 10; they are not consecutive with the previous page.

(231-6) It is not only those who have exhausted all their limited means of attaining happiness who turn away and come to this quest: there are others whose capacity for enjoyment still remains but having had the experience of a single 'glimpse' or understood the pointers given by inspired art, they are attracted towards living on a higher plane.

(231-7) It would be too wide-sweeping a generalisation to assert that all entrants on the quest come out of disgust with the worldly life. This may be true of Indians, for several reasons, but it is not so true of Westerners. For among the latter there are those whose approach to life is through art, through sensitivity to beauty and joy or through science, through the pursuit of truth about the universe. Such persons are not unhappy, not alienated from earthly affairs, but they know that a deeper basis to their present satisfaction is needed.

(231-8) He finds that he is receiving influences from others all the time. It is necessary to protect himself against them or, in a few cases, where uplift comes, open himself to them.

(231-9) The effect of age on the mind is as various as human beings but there is a general effect which is common to most persons.

(231-10) The instinctive urge to go back home after a period of absence comes to young children and to old men. Not only is some comfort expected there, but also a kind of safety, a form of security. It might even be called a private refuge from the all-too-public world.

232³⁵⁵
IV

233
IV

(233-1)³⁵⁶ The difference is that the seeker consciously enters on this quest whereas the ordinary man although also pursuing it, does so blindly and unknowingly.

(233-2) Whoever seeks a more intimate communication with the Overself must be willing to fit himself for it. The quest must be accompanied by a certain discipline of life and thought.

³⁵⁵ Blank page

³⁵⁶ The paras on this page are numbered 11 through 26, making them consecutive with the previous page.

(233-3) What a contrast is the difference between the large-hearted, broad-minded, spiritually generous outlook of the true philosopher and the small-hearted, petty-minded and prejudiced outlook of the sectarian follower of the personality devotee!

(233-4) It was not through the guidance of a guru or an institution alone that some aspirants came to self-realisation, but also through their own deep reflections and stilled contemplations.

(233-5) Let him take from different teachings what suits his mind and purpose: the study of comparative religion and mysticism may assist him here. But this is for a beginning; later he will need to specialise each period to its needed idea.

(233-6) If he is not to compromise the philosophic ideal he may have to find a more independent way of life, perhaps outside the conventional and accepted categories, if no other is possible.

(233-7) Without belonging to any group, without tying himself to the guidance of any one guru in particular or pledging his complete obedience to any monastic Order, he is able to find his way to the truth.

(233-8) As long ago as the 16th century, Abu al-Fazal,³⁵⁷ the son of a famous Sheikh and the friend of Emperor Akbar, could write: "My mind had no rest, and my soul felt itself drawn to the sages of Mongolia, or to the hermits of Lebanon; I longed for interviews with the Lamas of Tibet."

(233-9) The Dark Night brings with it a sense of futility, a weariness of living, an apathy of emotion and a disinclination to act.

(233-10) If this is a quest where so many have failed to finish successfully, we must remember that there are other lifetimes coming.

(233-11) It is said that in the end truth must prevail. But why and when remains obscure. Still, if this saying about truth is itself true, then for the aspiring quester it is an attainable object even if it remains a rarity.

(233-12) There is no general and single prescription which will suit all those who want to know what to do about their spiritual urge. For each person being unique, his way cannot be the same for other persons.

(233-13) After he has exhausted all worldly means and hopes, in any particular direction, where else can a man turn except backward – back to his own divine source?

³⁵⁷ "Abul Fazl" in the original.

(233-14) He wants to be faithful to “the Glowing Light” within, as it has been called by Far Eastern Mystics, not subjected to, and obstructed by an outside authoritarianism.

(233-15) The shock of undesired and undesirable events may compel him to look closely at the aims, targets and goals of his life.

(233-16) It is not through anyone else, much less through an institution or a group organisation, that he will find his way to his innermost Self, but through penetrating himself.

234³⁵⁸

IV

235

IV

(235-1)³⁵⁹ They feel dominated by the guru, seldom question his self-realisation, and become subservient in every way.

(235-2) He is independent. He does not automatically and unthinkingly conform to the patterns shaped by others, just because those around him are doing so.

(235-3) Once allured by the benefits of being free from tensions, some of them will naturally want to taste for themselves the benefits of more advanced techniques, which lead to truth.

(235-4) In old age he accepts the need to release himself from ties which formerly held so much interest for him, but now assume the shape of burdens; or else of obligations for which the strength is lacking.

(235-5) It is the shortest step in humility that we can take to admit that we are all en route, and leave it to others to talk of final attainments. In an infinite realm of nature, the possibilities are also infinite.

(235-6) He refuses to accept a label; he feels himself to be outside all the common categories.

(235-7) In the evening of one’s life, there should be the proper attribute – dignity.

³⁵⁸ Blank page

³⁵⁹ The paras on this page are numbered 27 through 42, making them consecutive with the previous page.

(235-8) Authority and individuality need not contend with one another in a man's mind.

(235-9) It is a quest which is continuing and unending.

(235-10) Most people live below the level of spiritual awareness.

(235-11) It is understandable that most people like the feeling of warmth which they get from membership in a definite group. It removes loneliness and offers assurance.

(235-12) Rough stones are on his path, precipices beside his way.

(235-13) Everybody makes a judgment, acts as a judge, even where he seems not to do so at all: merely by accepting an organisation's view, or a religion's creed, he actually judges the organisation or religion and the view. He may seem to depend on authority, to submit to the hierarchy of the organisation or religion with its supposedly superior knowledge or power, but in actuality he unwittingly pronounces judgment in its favour. In the end, the responsibility for this decision is primarily his own.

An ancient Sanskrit work The "Yoga Vasistha Ramayana" by Valmiki pertinently says: "Judgement is the sole resource of seekers; they have no other way for their intellect to shun evil and attain good. The state of spiritual release which is boundless freedom is brought about by the help of judgment."

(235-14) It is said that old persons like to indulge in personal reminiscence. This would be useful if they did so to learn the lessons enclosed in it but this is mostly not the case. Their memories of the past are only a clinging to, or bolstering of, their own egos.

(235-15) He ought not to leave everything to others: he must try to teach himself some of the truth.

(235-16) It is an urge which is felt more often than it is understood.

236³⁶⁰

IV

237

IV

(237-1)³⁶¹ The hour of awakening must come to every man, even if it has to come at the hour of death and when it does it will be with utter amazement and stupefaction at

³⁶⁰ Blank page

best, or else with all the force of an explosive shock. For he is a member of the human species not of the animal one, and shares its destiny.

(237-2) This increasing loss of memory which afflicts so many elderly people need not be a cause of emotional depression, as it so often is: we have more likelihood of some measure of mental peace when the burden of unneeded or excessive memories falls away. It is something for which to be grateful.

(237-3) They live with the commonplace and the obvious: their days are as ordinary as their thoughts, their emotions as small-circled as both. What wonder no question on life's meaning, no feeling for humanity's larger fate, penetrates their mind? Engagement in an enterprise like the Quest just cannot arise.

(237-4) The philosopher is non-partisan in the sense that he maintains his freedom to think independently and to make individual judgments throughout. He is free from bias and prejudice. If his conclusions happen to coincide with those of any group or denomination he will note the fact but does not necessarily support their other doctrines nor join their ranks.

(237-5) The old, the elderly, and even the middle-aged become subject to anxieties pertaining to health or fortune, relationships or events, which the young seldom have. If it be true, as Cicero asserted, that age gives them the peace of freedom from passions - which if true is only partially so - then the price has to be paid in the currency of these anxieties.

(237-6) John Locke's well-known "An Essay Concerning the Human Understanding," mentions his discovery that "It came into my thoughts that we took a wrong course, and that, before we set ourselves upon inquiries of that nature, it was necessary to examine our own abilities, and see what objects our understandings were, or were not, fitted to deal with." Applied to the search for spiritual truth, the same point of this need to develop suitable qualifications, to make oneself first fit for truth, was well emphasised by Shankaracharya³⁶² as a preliminary part of his teaching on Vedanta. It has also been described, in a modern context, by PB in his "The Hidden Teaching Beyond Yoga."

(237-7) If a man is born with spiritual capacity but refuses to use it, and even deliberately shuts it away, a day will come when it will thrust itself up into his conscious self, for acceptance and use. If he continues to deny it, the capacity will then

³⁶¹ The paras on this page are numbered 43 through 51, making them consecutive with the previous page.

³⁶² "Shankaracarya" in the original, referring to Adi-Shankara (not the 68th whom PB met). – TJS '20

operate against him, until his sanity becomes questionable or his fortunes become adverse.

(237-8) Guidance, instruction, warning and counsel are all needed by the seeker. There are blockages, dangers and even precipices on the way.

(237-9) Failings in personal character and failures in personal career may humble the ego to the point of despair. This is the Overself's chance.

238³⁶³

IV

239

IV

(239-1)³⁶⁴ Age, which once took precedence over youth must now let the reverse situation take over.

(239-2) The elderly person receives good advice from the Sanskrit verse: "Should such pursuits and thoughts engage a mortal more than half his age?"

(239-3) There is no one way which all men travel from ignorance to insight: with each man it is unique, different, personal, even though the differences are not so deep as to shut out the similarities.

(239-4) All too many people take to this quest who are not really ready for it, who need to become human beings before seeking the more massive achievement of becoming superhuman ones, who ought to attain personal decency, balance, discipline, practicality and calmness before losing themselves in the theoretical flights of metaphysical doctrines like Vedanta.

(239-5) Buddha was right when he preached _____³⁶⁵

Shakespeare was right when he wrote, "And then from hour to hour we rot and rot." This business of getting older and older is not a pleasant one, nor the final one of dying a thinkable one.

³⁶³ Blank page

³⁶⁴ The paras on this page are numbered 52 through 64, making them consecutive with the previous page.

³⁶⁵ 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.

(239-6) At the ordinary level he has the ordinary outlook, the habitual desires, but there are times when he finds himself at another and higher level where he is unsympathetic to both.

(239-7) The inner nature becomes stiff, muscle-bound, unresponsive to the joyous evidences and serene intimations of the Overself. What is even worse, bringing a dark hopelessness with it, is the fear that this will become a permanent state. This is the famed Dark Night.

(239-8) Amusements, Sports, Gossip, Theatres, even Sex protects the thoughtless masses from having to confront the higher challenges of life, from having to let into their minds basic questions. It allows them to escape all through the length of their incarnation from the one thing they were put here on earth to face. In short, they hide from the Quest.

(239-9) Age brings loneliness and lowered vitality. Friends move away, fall away, or die off, their reassuring nearness is no more. Stairs become harder to climb, streets harder to walk. Life seems futile: a heavy fatalism settles over the will.

(239-10) It is sometimes beneficial to throw away the manuals of spirituality, the text books of holiness!

(239-11) Seldom do those who lack this sensitivity lament the deficiency – such is the power of Society's slavish dictate on what constitutes a 'normal' or 'average' human being, this being the praiseworthy standard.

(239-12) The enlightened man can 'establish' truth gleaned by insight, not put together by intellect through any organised institution or printed publication.

(239-13) We may take Buddha's half-smile as an encouragement: both to set our footsteps on the Way and to set all desires aside, to be content even with a slight result from our spiritual efforts.

240³⁶⁶

IV

241

IV

(241-1)³⁶⁷ The old urges begin to fall away, the egoistic motivations start shifting to a higher level.

³⁶⁶ Blank page

(241-2) The same kind of shock experienced by two different kinds of men may have entirely opposite effects. The extremely materialistic may find the ground slipping under their feet and may feel, for the first time, the urge to seek spiritual help. The extremely unworldly may fall for the first time into a dark night which casts doubt upon the truth of their treasured beliefs and which drives them toward a worldlier outlook as being closer to the real facts. Great traumatic suffering, whether bodily or mental, points two ways.

(241-3) The extroverted over-active Westerner is pulled up, suddenly or slowly, by sickness or old age, or certain kinds of misfortune, and given the chance to question what he is doing so busily, or what life is all about, or the validity of his attitudes.

(241-4) Only the young are capable of a strong passion for truth but only the old are capable of living by it. This is the irony and the tragedy of the Quest.

(241-5) The ardent enthusiasms, the daring aspirations and visionary rebellions of the young are based on emotion. They may be well-meaning and may possess a position that is needed and beneficial. But they lack the checks of long experience, matured reasoning and foresight into ultimate consequences, as well as the discipline of personal self-control.

(241-6) They search in vain for the school of truth, thus beginning and ending in perplexity. They have never felt the uplift of a Glimpse, never known its rapt peace.

(241-7) The actual events and experiences on the Quest do not at all times resemble those which were expected: some may even be unpalatable and undesirable.

(241-8) It is fair for him to ask himself, "What do I bring to the quest: what equipment, qualities and virtues to entitle me to ask for the results I seek?"

(241-9) The young feel too fresh, too alive, to concede that they also will grow old, feeble, haggard.

(241-10) Whether he wants to take part in it or not, every man is taking part in this quest.

(241-11) Old age brings to many people sickness, decrepitude, ugliness, unwantedness, senility and other limitations.

³⁶⁷ The paras on this page are numbered 65 through 80, making them consecutive with the previous page.

(241-12) Before he discovers the essential inner loneliness of man, many years and much experience may have to pass.

(241-13) He who wants to co-operate with the World-Idea, which is inherent in all things, all beings, all the universe, to live in harmony with it and with his fellow-creatures, will be attracted to this quest sooner or later.

(241-14) If he refuses to commit himself to any one sect or school, he possesses good and valid reasons for doing so.

(241-15) That the Overself not only is, but is attainable, is the premise and promise of true philosophy.

(241-16) Those who feel the hopelessness of old age probably outnumber those who reconcile themselves to it resignedly.

242³⁶⁸

IV

243

IV

(243-1)³⁶⁹ The difference between what he once was and what he is now, he owes to the Quest.

(243-2) During my travels I have watched so many aspirants make so many unavailing attempts to gain this higher awareness that I would have been unobservant indeed if I had not drawn the lesson. This was that those who were most easily discouraged and disheartened, failing to try out new roads or to persevere in the old one, were too frequently those who sank into the apathy of accepted failure.

(243-3) The search for first causes, when done only intellectually and metaphysically, may become a shadow, or a looking-glass image of the real search. For this must, and can only be done, on a deeper level, the intuitive. The process to be used is meditation.

(243-4) To search for truth in its full integrity, putting aside all the pitiful substitutes which content little, less honest minds, requires not only an independence that creates intellectual, if not personal loneliness, but also a willingness to abandon egoism and surrender its worldly advantages.

³⁶⁸ Blank page

³⁶⁹ The paras on this page are numbered 81 through 95, making them consecutive with the previous page.

(243-5) Those who search for a faultless perfect guru search in vain. If they come to believe otherwise then either they are caught by their own fantasy or time will correct the error.

(243-6) A few people come to the truth after diligent search for it, but many more hide their face from it. Fewer still become so desperate that the search for a guru becomes a search for a saviour.

(243-7) If so many turn to this quest because they are disappointed in life, others turn to it because they are enthused by its high possibilities.

(243-8) So long as men persist in organising themselves into religious groups, so long will they run the real risk of failing to get into the real spirit of truth, only its letter at best.

(243-9) It is right that a young man should want to rise higher in his chosen career, should struggle for the best and strive for the Ideal.

(243-10) The elderly who have come at last to accept the unlikeable fact of their age, but who do so with rebellious groans and emotional melancholy, learn by bitter experience in every department of their existence that it is a fact which cannot be ignored.

(243-11) His mind is not set in hard rigid dogmas, but left open, flexible and free.

(243-12) The life of mere existence does not appeal to him. If there be a meaning to the world, he must find it. If a higher purpose is possible for himself, he is ready to accept it.

(243-13) Those who depend on other persons to make decisions for them or to solve problems, lose the chance of self-development which the situation offers them.

(243-14) Age may bring a fussy fretfulness in the behaviour, along with the aches, malfunctionings and pains in the body, the line-seams in the face.

(243-15) Why woo disappointment by engaging in unrealisable expectations?

244³⁷⁰

IV

245

(245-1)³⁷¹ What can the elderly hope for?

(245-2) At this stage of the inner life he comes to feel how right was the perception of Ibsen when writing: "That man is strongest who stands most alone."

(245-3) He may fall into some of the errors which beset the inexperienced seeker.

(245-4) We who are {the}³⁷² survivals of a vanished epoch could easily become bewildered by the veneration paid to youth were we not annoyed by it.

(245-5) A few men, who prefer to spend their energies in the pursuit of truth, may become questers but most men are plainly not interested.

(245-6) If the Ideal is beyond reach, why not seek the Possible, which is within reach?

(245-7) Do the increasing years bring a man more peace?

(245-8) There are not many who take to this quest, the real quest, though more play on its fringes. If a man cuts himself off from the herd, he will find himself alone. But in his heart he knows that this is better than being traitor to his Ideal, surrendering standards.

(245-9) The young are preoccupied with the sensual invitation of sex.

(245-10) By comparison with the previous generation, today's younger ones feel distinctly superior in their word, boldness and colour.

(245-11) If, wearied and perplexed, a man finally comes to this quest, he will not come in vain.

(245-12) The quest will probably not be pursued without some abatement at some time, some periods when fatigue sets in or pessimism takes over.

(245-13) In the end each man has to look for his own way.

(245-14) His attitude would then be free, without falsely invoked authority, unbiased.

³⁷¹ The paras on this page are numbered 96 through 111, making them consecutive with the previous page.

³⁷² We have inserted "the" into the text for clarity. ("Survival" here means: an object or practice that has continued to exist from an earlier time. – TJS '15)

(245-15) Some come to the truth in a roundabout way. The Quest is direct.

(245-16) The misery of increasing decrepitude must be borne with resignation.

246³⁷³

IV

247

IV

(247-1)³⁷⁴ We sometimes hear impatient words about the elderly and the old-aged with their censorious attitudes toward the young, their real or imaginary grievances, their fondness for talking about themselves or their past.

(247-2) It was formerly believed that one advantage – or disadvantage, depending on the point of view – of old age was the reduction or even disappearance of youthful passions, especially sexual passions. But this is true in some cases, not in others.

(247-3) The ‘dark night’ does more to detach a man from his ego, his interests and his desires than the rapturous joys and emotional ecstasies. The awful feeling of being separated from, or even lost forever to the higher power, works as a hidden training and secret discipline of all personal feelings.

(247-4) This is the secret way inside a man’s heart and mind. Those who search for it search also for what, in the end, will also be his only way.

(247-5) Disciples will seldom accept their guru for what he is – human, and all that – but must endow him with perfections and powers that would be more fitting for angels at least, the gods at most.

(247-6) The pressure to make all people members of organisations, to herd them together and affix labels, is a kind of mania. Why should there not be room for untrammelled, independent minds, who prefer to remain free and uninfluenced, untied to any one group.

(247-7) Deterioration of the body moves in as middle age moves out. This may encourage the kind of pessimistic view which Buddha held in India, the author of Ecclesiastes in Israel, and Schopenhauer in Germany, and turn the mind toward

³⁷³ Blank page

³⁷⁴ The paras on this page are unnumbered. (They may be consecutive with the paras on page 229.)

spiritual consolation and spiritual seeking. If it does not, it may even have the very opposite effect.

(247-8) His intellect needs to understand what are the real facts of his situation, while his moral nature needs to be willing to fulfil the sacrificial and disciplinary demands made.

(247-9) It is when one reaches the end of a particular phase and has first to find, then to begin a new one that help from outside is useful. The same is true when one reaches a difficult place on the Quest. This help may be found in a book, a lecture, a guru, a chance meeting, or in some way.

(247-10) The man who announces his readiness to go upon this quest usually looks forward to its exhilarations and illuminations. Does he understand that he must be ready also for its vicissitudes, must expect its depressions and darknesses?

(247-11) Emerson: "People wish to be settled: only as far as they are unsettled is there any hope for them!"

(247-12) Think more deeply than the conventional mass of guru-followers dare to do and you will come to perceive that in the end there is only one Teacher for each man, his own Overself; that all other and outer gurus are merely channels which IT uses. "It is He who lives inside and speaks through the outer guru's voice," declares a Tibetan text. Why not go direct to the source?

(247-13) Those who take philosophic truth seriously take to the Quest.

248³⁷⁵

IV

249

IV

(249-1)³⁷⁶ It is a mark of the quester that he is utterly sincere in seeking truth, and that he has some depth, enough not to be content with shallow presentations of it.

(249-2) Every puzzle which fascinates innumerable persons and induces them to attempt its solution – be it mathematical and profound or ordinary and simple – is an echo on a lower level of the Supreme Enigma that is forever accompanying man and

³⁷⁵ Blank page

³⁷⁶ The paras on this page are unnumbered.

demanding an answer: What is he, whence and whither? The quester puts the problem into his conscious mind and keeps it there.

(249-3) The student who rushes to narrate to everyone his inner experiences, his occult visions or messages, his high glimpses, may fall into the pit of self-advertisement, vanity, conceit. He may then lose through the ego what he has gained through his efforts.

(249-4) The young naturally need good models – whether in social behaviour or in written penmanship – for sedulous imitation; they will profit by it. Those who are young in quest experience need them too but it will not be easy to find them. This is why the beginner who finds one, may attach himself as a disciple without loss. The time will come, however, when he must stop this copying, or else stop his own creative progress.

(249-5) It is unfortunate and regrettable but all history bears out the fact that among religious believers and mystical followers, organisation soon or late leads to exploitation. It is more likely to happen of course, after the prophet, teacher, guru, has passed away but in a number of recent cases it was by no means absent even during his lifetime.

(249-6) The coming of middle age brings a process which the coming of old age completes – youthful dreams are shown up as impracticable; naive illusions are relinquished as unrealistic.

(249-7) All observation and experience suggests that when the things of the spirit are brought into organised forms, such as societies and sects, the harm done to members counterbalances the good.

(249-8) Meditation is a practice which cannot be sundered from the quest, which is essential to it.

(249-9) He may deem himself ill-repaid for the long years of interest, time, study, sacrifice and effort given to this quest.

(249-10) The young must be taught to govern themselves, and how it is best done. They must be instructed in the higher laws and especially the law of consequences, so that they may avoid punishing themselves. They must learn the power of thought, the harm of anger, the benefit of surrendering the ego. They must regain the old-fashioned virtues of good manners, tolerance and respect for the older generation.

(249-11) What can he gain by adhesion to a spiritual organisation? The beginner may gain a limited profit, the proficient may retrogress.

(249-12) I like Browning's line: "Man is not man as yet."

(249-13) Zen Master Fan-Chi: "Everyone will be fully realised."

(249-14) Woman's capacity to love is supposed to exceed man's by far.

250³⁷⁷

IV

251

IV

(251-1)³⁷⁸ I have never forgotten the statement made to me somewhere in India by a young man who had recently joined the Society of Friends and been sent out to what was then a famine-stricken tropic country on a Quaker relief project. "Why, when you admit to all these queries and doubts, and feel you are searching, do you then make yourself a member of a sect, admittedly one of the noblest and finest of all, but still a sect, with all the limitations which go with it?" I had asked him. He thought for a while and then broke the long silence to reply: "I quite understand and admit what you say about sectarian limitations. But I feel my youth and inexperience and weakness. At my age there is need for some kind of support from outside, some group to give me not merely fellowship but also a feeling of solidity and stability, something to lean upon, in short." What he said taught me a lesson and made me understand sympathetically that the love of independence to ensure a free search, and the desire for self-reliance do not belong to everybody, and that others, certainly most people, have other needs, prefer other ways, for which there is room in human life too.

(251-2) There is no single universal rule for all men: their outer circumstances and inner conditions, their historical background and geographical locality, their karmic destiny and evolutionary need, their differences in competence, renders it unwise, unfair and impracticable to write a single prescription for them.

(251-3) Anyone may launch himself on the sea of life without having learnt navigation, without having been equipped with the needed training, knowledge and qualifications which fit him to assume life's responsibilities - be they choosing a wife, rearing a family, following a profession or keeping his body healthy. A true education would prepare the young adequately from kindergarten to university in the art of how to live. The prevalence of so much avoidable distress, misery, ignorance and evil shows up this lack. But the teachers, the masters and the professors themselves need to be taught first.

³⁷⁷ Blank page

³⁷⁸ The paras on this page are unnumbered.

(251-4) The organisation usually comes in the end to consider the furthering of its own interest as more important than that of the message which it was supposed to spread or preserve.

(251-5) For some persons the truth needs only to be stated by a knowing person or a printed book for it to be recognised; but others have to battle their way toward it over the years.

(251-6) To believe that this quest is only for religious people, or for impractical dreamers, and not for reasonable people or for men active in the world is to believe something that is untrue.

(251-7) To keep to this inner work steadfastly and persistently, to make of its exercises and practices a regular routine, is to make the undertaking easier for oneself in the end, as well as more successful in its results.

(251-8) Truth is open to all, if only all can receive it. But they cannot – until a preparation and purification open the way.

(251-9) The only group he is likely to be a member of is the human race!

252³⁷⁹

IV

253

IV

(253-1)³⁸⁰ When he is unreceptive to new ideas unless they have first been authenticated by a certain particular teacher, cult or book, he is trapped in a closed system.

(253-2) We need instruction while yet young in the proper use of our bodies and the proper management of our minds and feelings. The place where this should be given is the school at elementary levels and the college at advanced one. But we get little of such instruction, err, and suffer.

(253-3) The ancient civilisations of China and India traditionally respected, even venerated the aged. Such was the high value assigned to experience. But modern civilisation has reversed this attitude, denounced its older generation, and let its

³⁷⁹ Blank page

³⁸⁰ The paras on this page are unnumbered.

younger ones take the lead. The less experience, the more honours! The defiant ones, the angry ones, the rebellious ones, shape our thought, clothes, ideas, manners, morals.

(253-4) The constricting pressure which an institution exercises on a free mind must be accommodated if the man is to continue living in, or with, it. But if a point is reached where this pressure becomes intolerable, then the time for parting may have come, the time to change into an uncommitted and unengaged person.

(253-5) This is the higher purpose of life; to this men must in the end dedicate themselves: for this they must work, study and meditate.

(253-6) The world has enough fenced-in cults which keep their members within rigidly limited views, which are more concerned with their entanglements of money, power and prestige, than with the higher aims they are supposed to pursue.

(253-7) All men seek for truth either consciously and deliberately, or unconsciously and blindly, but they can seek only according to their capacity and ability, circumstances and preparedness.

(253-8) How can any institution, whether it be the family or the government or the church, be of better character than the character of the persons who comprise it, and certainly of those who rule or lead it?

(253-9) We must not only acknowledge the differences between men but respect them. Consequently we must accept the fact of variations in responsive capacity and not demand that all should think alike, believe alike, behave alike.

(253-10) The organised group too often falls into the hands of one man, or a few men, whose personal ambitions make them sooner or later oppressors and tyrants, imposing their will, ideas, demands upon the others.

(253-11) Let him look to the condition of his consciousness: Is it steady or fluctuating? Is it permeated with egoism to the point of being shrivelled-up? Is it widely impersonal? These and several other signs may give the measure of his progress.

(253-12) He is not likely to take most institutions at their own appraisal.

(253-13) In what way can the seeker's enquiring mind protect itself from errors?

(255-1)³⁸² To all those students who complain of inability to get correct guidance on their problems and confusion in their worldly lives, answer: This is because they are not practising what they have studied. They are not applying the philosophy. They allow negative moods emotions and thoughts to take possession, instead of firmly exercising their will to resist beginnings and crush the danger in the bud. They want the guidance without having prepared the conditions which make guidance possible. If aspirants do not try to deny themselves in certain ways, they remain unprepared and therefore unfit for illumination: They must firmly resolve to lift themselves above the level of blind animal impulse or mere inert drifting. Otherwise, what is the difference between them and the multitude of ordinary folk who do not even know there is a Quest? This quest is not for weaklings. Let such go back to popular religion. It is only for those who are ready to be steeled in will and shorn of self-pity. Real aspirants show they are such because they do not weary in their efforts and remain uninfluenced by the setbacks and difficulties that they meet with on the way. There is good hope for a man no matter how much of a beginner he is, but only if he is eager to see his mistakes, if he is his own harshest critic and if he puts forth a continuous and persistent effort to amend his life.

(255-2) The mind is prevented from knowing the truth by its own defects limitations or deficiencies, by its own passions self-centeredness and possessiveness. The philosophical discipline sets up as an objective the elimination of these hindrances. Such disciplines are physical, mental and emotional

(255-3) He may become unduly sensitive to other people's thoughts during the period. He should take care to separate himself from them.

(255-4) He can recognise the usefulness of an institution or organisation or a group without wishing to identify himself with it. For he knows at the same time that there is also a limitation in it which would stop the freedom of his search for truth.

(255-5) The achievements of such personal self-sufficiency, of such detachment from the world of agitations and desires, is, he will say, something entirely superhuman. "Why ask frail mortals to look at such unclimbable peaks, such unattainable summits?" Philosophy answers, "Yes, the peaks are high, the summits do cause us to strain our necks upwards. [But it is wrong to say that]³⁸³ they are unclimbable. There is a way of

³⁸² The paras on this page are numbered 1 through 5; they are not consecutive with the previous page.

³⁸³ PB himself changed "But he is wrong in saying that" to "But it is wrong to say that" by hand.

climbing them, little by little, under competent guidance, and that way is called the Quest. True, it involves certain disciplines, but then, what is there in life worth getting which can be got without paying some price in self-discipline for it? The aim of these disciplines is to secure a better controlled mind, a more virtuous life, and a more reverent fundamental mood.

256³⁸⁴

IV

257

IV

(257-1)³⁸⁵ If his earlier aspirations have not been realised and a gnawing regret is the sad consequence, he may still hold the compensatory thought that the effort put forth must produce some result, must have some effect. It will not be wasted.

(257-2) The objection is made that to engage in the total approach – hatha, bhakti, raja and jnana yogas – is too large a program for any man outside an ashram, too impossible in the case of the average man in the world. Who after the work of his business or livelihood has the requisite energy for its study or practice? Who, with a family – wife and children – has the requisite time? My answer is: “True! But you can do a little of each Yoga. Make the best of the situation and thus tempt the Grace of the Overself to ease the situation.”

(257-3) The feeling which draws him to the Quest also prevents him from putting it out of his thoughts for any long time.

(257-4) It takes much inner experience, much reflection on the immutable laws and much outer experience that confirms those laws before his confidence in the divine wisdom becomes as unshakable as a rock, and before all negative moods become powerless to touch him.

(257-5) Any man who has reached the middle or late period of his life has reached an age when the most important activity he can undertake is to try to fulfil as much as possible of the higher purpose of his life on earth. The basis for this activity must necessarily be self-improvement, the building of character and the overcoming of the ego.

³⁸⁴ Blank page

³⁸⁵ The paras on this page are numbered 6 through 17, making them consecutive with the previous page.

(257-6) The means needed for the quest have been listed in Buddha's eightfold path: 1) right belief - 2) right decision - 3) right words - 4) right dealings - 5) right livelihood - 6) right tendency - 7) right thinking - 8) right meditative immersion into oneself.

(257-7) He may admit that the Quest is a wise undertaking but he will put it off and procrastinate none the less.

(257-8) It is [not]³⁸⁶ the primary purpose of a book to give individual instruction. Nor could it do so. Its statements are necessarily general and therefore need making and taking with caution.

(257-9) It is inevitable that the aspirant who follows only a single way of approach becomes so attached to it that he is likely to regard other ways as inferior.

(257-10) If the faculties of mind and the qualities of character which the successful man of affairs already possesses were to be transferred to the field of understanding and mastering life itself, he could quickly progress in it.

(257-11) There is no specified route which will suit all persons. There are as many routes as there are individuals.

(257-12) Some drift through life, others follow a zig-zag course. But the man who accepts this ideal and faithfully works for its realisation, knows where he is going.

258³⁸⁷

IV

259

IV

(259-1)³⁸⁸ He should accept and encourage the inner promptings that urge him to get quiet times and occasional retreats for meditation and self-recollection.

(259-2) The young man who has the wisdom to devote some of his abundant energies to this quest will one day be the envy of the old man who would devote only his slackened forces and shortened days to it.

(259-3) BEGIN IT!

³⁸⁶ PB himself inserted "not" by hand.

³⁸⁷ Blank page

³⁸⁸ The paras on this page are numbered 18 through 27, making them consecutive with the previous page.

Lose this day loitering – 't'will be the same story
Tomorrow – and the next more dilatory
Then indecision brings its own delays,
And days are lost lamenting over days.
Are YOU in earnest? Seize this very minute –
What you can do, or dream you can, begin it
Courage has genius, power and magic in it
Only engage, and then the mind grows heated –
Begin it and the work will be completed! –Goethe³⁸⁹

(259-4) Why are they seeking truth? Because they have at last become sensitive enough to respond to the existence of the diviner self within them, the Overself in which only truth exists. The fact of its existence has pressed them subconsciously from within and finally provoked them into feeling a need to become aware of, and co-operative with, the Overself.

(259-5) So hard is the task that he alone is likely to succeed who is willing to take rebuff after rebuff, who refuses to be turned aside who perseveres until the goal is reached.

(259-6) As the years go by he may find retrogression instead, that the pressure of materialistic environment affects him more and more until his actions are no longer coincident with his high-minded ideals.

(259-7) It would be welcome indeed to learn that an aspirant could accomplish this at a single and sudden bound. But neither life nor the quest is so easy as that. There must be a linked continuity between the goal and his preliminary efforts. The talk of Satori, or sudden enlightenment in Zen Buddhism often leads to misunderstanding of this point.

(259-8) Those who do not find that they make the expected progress and throw up the Quest in disappointment, reveal not only their own impatience but also insufficient understanding of what it is that they undertook.

(259-9) Only some aspirants can take up in their fullness and at once courses of rigorous self-discipline and adopt habits of self-denial. Most ought not be expected to do so without long and sufficient previous preparation.

(259-10) Why does the oldest Indian text, the Upanishad, assert that the seeker after Truth and Reality must tread a path so hard that it is likened to the sharp edge of a razor?

³⁸⁹ This quote has been paraphrased from "Passage from Faust" by Johann Wolfgang Von Goethe.

(261-1)³⁹¹ If the aged have a rich store of experience wherewith to feed their deeper reflections upon life, they also have physical infirmities which engage much of the attention which is needed for those reflections.

(261-2) My advice is often asked about forming a little group of people to study my books. Ordinarily, there is no objection to a few people meeting together for such study, as they might help answer mutual questions. But it is best not to let the group increase its size. There are several reasons why it is better to restrict the class to a small number than to let everyone who wishes enter it. Quality should be the only consideration in such admissions, quantity would in the end disintegrate the group. Let the effort be limited to study, clearing up questions and talks. Group meditation should not be practised among beginners if there is no powerful uplifting leader in their midst to protect them. There is a right time and a wrong time for personal endeavour to lead and assist a spiritual group. The right time will come only with competence. Until then there is the ever-present task of the student's own self-improvement. That is above all else.

(261-3) To play with fancies of lofty mystical experience but to do nothing toward obtaining them is not enough.

(261-4) [Both]³⁹² wisdom and prudence call for an exact appraisal of such situations; he cannot afford either to under-assess the forces to be dealt with nor to over-assess them.

(261-5) The quest may seem a long and difficult affair: it is. But since even a little effort in travelling it brings a noticeable reward, while saving some avoidable suffering; and since the questless life is in comparison a useless effort to hold on to many illusions: it still offers enough inducement to make a start and exert oneself to enter on the first stage.

(261-6) What if the goal seems too distant or the climb too steep! Do as much or as little as you can to advance. If you lack the strength to go all the way, then go some of the

³⁹⁰ Blank page

³⁹¹ The paras on this page are numbered 28 through 36, making them consecutive with the previous page.

³⁹² "Both" was typed below the line and inserted with a caret.

way. Your spiritual longings and labours will influence the nature of your next body and the conditions of your next incarnation. Nothing will be lost. Higher capacities and more favourable circumstances will then be ours if we have deserved them. Every virtue deliberately cultivated leads to a pleasanter rebirth. Every weakness remedied leads to the cancellation of an unpleasant one.

(261-7) It is not by joining a group or belonging to denomination that the Quest is entered. This is done only by personal effort.

(261-8) There is something within us which will not let us rest in what we are, which urges us to think of still higher possibilities.

(261-9) He needs a humbleness like that of the grass which is trodden by all feet, a patience like that of the tree which is exposed to all weathers.

262³⁹³

IV

263

IV

(263-1)³⁹⁴ "I indeed baptize you with {water}³⁹⁵ unto repentance; but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire." – St Matthew, Chapter 3; Verse 11.

Water has been universally used in sacred literature as a symbol of the emotional nature of man. The fluidic character of both is the reason for the use of this symbol. What John called, "Baptism by water," means therefore such a cleansing of the dominance of his animal passions, desires and appetites. Consider further that it is the tendency of water always to flow downwards in obedience to the law of gravity, and then note the striking contrast of the tendency of fire whose sparks always soar upwards. "Baptism by fire," therefore refers to a process on an entirely higher level, not to a merely negative purification but to a positive illumination. Light is one of the effects of fire. The work of John the Baptist was concerned with clearing the way for Jesus, the light-bringer, a preparation that was not only outward and annunciatory, but also inward and purificatory. John collected "followers" for Jesus; they were the masses who sought physical help and emotional comfort in their troubles and sicknesses. But Jesus, when he came in person, not only gathered all these followers but also collected "disciples;" they were those who had no necessity to seek such help and comfort, but

³⁹³ Blank page

³⁹⁴ The paras on this page are numbered 37 through 39, making them consecutive with the previous page.

³⁹⁵ We have inserted "water" for clarity.

were attracted by the Spirit itself as it shone through Jesus. They were the few who received the baptism of fire and by the Holy Ghost. Many people became followers but few became disciples.

There is further, a difference between the baptism by the Holy Ghost and the baptism by fire. The baptism by the Holy Ghost arouses and awakens the potentialities of the dynamic Life-force, raising its voltage far above the ordinary. This process is usually accompanied by thrills, ecstasies or mystical raptures. It represents the first awakening on the spiritual level as it filters through the partially cleansed emotional nature. Baptism by fire represents the next and highest stage after this event, when the thrill of the new birth has subsided and when in a calmer and steadier condition, the intelligence itself becomes illumined in addition to the feelings, thus balancing them.

(263-2)³⁹⁶ Book teaching is too general. It makes no allowance for individual differences, for the wide variation from one person to another. [It is always necessary for the readers to]³⁹⁷ adapt the teaching to [their]³⁹⁸ own sex, age, character strength and circumstances.

(263-3) This tormenting feeling of the lack of a spiritual state in his own experience, will drive him to continual search for it. But his whole life must constitute the search and his whole being must engage in it.

264³⁹⁹

IV

265

IV

(265-1)⁴⁰⁰ If the aspirant discovers after several years that Nature is still resistant, that the leopard spots are too deeply dyed to change easily, and that his character keeps its weaknesses despite all his efforts to dislodge {them, then}⁴⁰¹ the hopes with which he began the quest may begin to fade in this grey dawn. He realises that they were over-exultant and over-optimistic. He despairs of ever remaking himself successfully. He even has thoughts of abandoning the quest entirely. But does this discovery really call for such defeatism and such despondency? No, it calls for a resigned acceptance of the

³⁹⁶ This para is a duplicate of para 271-4. Different edits have been marked on the two paras.

³⁹⁷ 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. PB himself later inserted "It is always necessary for the readers to" into the space by hand.

³⁹⁸ PB himself changed "the" to "their" by hand.

³⁹⁹ Blank page

⁴⁰⁰ The paras on this page are numbered 40 through 42, making them consecutive with the previous page.

⁴⁰¹ We have changed "them. Then" to "them, then" for clarity.

situation as it is, for a realistic measurement of what can be done within the limits of a single lifetime, for a recognition of the wisdom of Nature in providing him with numerous future reincarnations in which to achieve his purpose. He must refuse to follow the common error and identify himself with this one physical body of the present incarnation. Rather, he must identify himself with his mental being, and feel this as something immortal, something reappearing on earth time after time and coming closer and closer with each appearance, to the goal. He must believe in the truth of evolution, even while he perceives that it takes time, plenty of time, for such evolution to become a fact. He must admit that he is not left without signs by the way, nor without glimpses to inspire him, or tokens to encourage him. Against the pessimistic moan that the leopard cannot change his spots, there is the optimistic teaching of Socrates that "Virtue can be learned." Against the worldling's sneer that the quest sets itself an impossible task, there is the encouragement of every religious prophet and seer history has known. The last gift that lies waiting with cheerful patience in Pandora's box, the voice of hope, is for him. Admit that the discipline is hard, attainment is rare, and few are in a position to turn their minds away from the pressure of environment, and circumstance in which they find themselves. However, glimpses, intuitions, uplifts do come at times, even if after long intervals. Most people can and should get a correct sense of general direction for the course of their inner life. This alone is a great gain.

(265-2) Even a teacher can only help him to help himself. It must be his own effort that will uncover the wisdom and beauty he seeks and that are within him. Continuous, courageous and never-ending attempts in the face of repeated failures are necessary parts of this effort.

(265-3) Before anyone can make progress in the inner life, he must acquire the needed qualifications for it.

266⁴⁰²

IV

267

IV

(267-1)⁴⁰³ His devotion to the quest is something that he may not usually talk about to others, something that he finds himself forced to hide like a secret love. He dare not speak one word about it for fear that it will be received with utter incomprehension or open ridicule. This may be true of his family or his friends, his associates or his chance

⁴⁰² Blank page

⁴⁰³ The paras on this page are numbered 43 through 54, making them consecutive with the previous page.

contacts. A shyness develops which may make him unable to seek help even from those who are more advanced on the same quest.

(267-2) He can use books as a preliminary guide to working on himself. The study and observation of his conduct, the analysis of his past and present experiences in the light of his highest aspirations, the attempt to be impartially aware of himself in various situations, will open the way more direct to guidance through intuitions from his higher self.

(267-3) Attentive study; faithful practise of the exercises given in my books; and the re-education of character and conduct along positive lines will help to prepare him for glimpses of enlightenment.

(267-4) If you want to know the purpose of life read (Acts XVII, 2): "God made man to the end that he should seek the Lord."

(267-5) The preliminary phases of the quest are too far from the terminal ones, for any easy short-cut to be possible.

(267-6) If it is right to forgive others their sins against us, it must also be right to forgive ourselves and not constantly condemn ourselves to self-reproach. But we ought not do so prematurely.

(267-7) By maintaining the humility of the learner and the questing spirit of a seeker, he improves his own usefulness as a channel to help other people.

(267-8) There is no permanent way of escaping difficulties other than the way of seeking spiritual realisation. That is what we have really incarnated for. This may seem hard on us, but life on earth as it is known today is also hard for many people.

(267-9) Aspirants come from the low, the middle and the high strata of life - with most probably from the middle.

(267-10) However different personal reactions will necessarily be with every individual seeker, there will still remain certain experiences requirements and conditions - and these are the most important ones - along his path which must be the same for every other seeker too.

(267-11) The uninformed man is blind to the work of spiritual evolution which goes on within him and consequently thwarts and obstructs it unwittingly. The informed man sees the work and cooperates with it consciously.

(267-12) Those who embark on the quest must pay for their journey with personal self-denial and unceasing self-struggle.

268⁴⁰⁴

IV

269

IV

(269-1)⁴⁰⁵ A passionate eagerness to find the Overself is a necessary basis for all the other qualifications in its pursuit.

(269-2) Under great strain and amid grave dangers the aspirant will find courage and endurance in the talismanic power of remembering the Higher Self. It is always there.

(269-3) He will need to keep up this inner work until the old self dies and the new one is born.

(269-4) The sparseness of the following for these ideas forces the individual student of them to live in isolation from his spiritual kin.

(269-5) Since⁴⁰⁶ each man's path is peculiarly an individual one, no book {can guide all his steps. A book} may help him through some situations, inform him about the general course of inner development and warn him against the probable mistakes and chief pitfalls.

(269-6) Because in the past it was invariably men who appeared as prophets or founded religions whilst women became their followers, since the nineteenth century we have witnessed the beginnings of a reversal of this situation. That became evident when a number of minor sects arose in England, all started by women, and when Mrs Eddy, in America, founded Christian-Science, a religion to which many men have attached themselves.

(269-7) Do not let the past hold you down. Do not let dust-laden memories keep you down. Make today a fresh day, a new beginning.

⁴⁰⁴ Blank page

⁴⁰⁵ The paras on this page are numbered 55 through 69, making them consecutive with the previous page.

⁴⁰⁶ "A book" and "(can guide all his steps" were both typed at the end of the para, but without an arrow to indicate placement. We have inserted them where they make the most sense in context.

(269-8) After every period of stagnation, he should resolve to go on with the quest as keenly as ever. In the meantime, he may have made some growth in understanding.

(269-9) What use is it to undertake ascetic tasks beyond his own capacity and endurance?

(269-10) He will know that he is growing when peace seeps into his heart and strength into his will.

(269-11) To have right direction, to have gone a little way along it, these are good things and he should be glad because of them, not depressed because he has not gone farther.

(269-12) The quest follows both a zigzag course as well as an up-and-down one.

(269-13) The danger of taking to these breathing exercises for the sake of developing personal powers is that if the powers are finally gained, the spiritual path is often lost.

(269-14) Those who feel their own path or school or cult calls to them should heed it. It is right for them. But they should not be so narrow as to proclaim it to be the only way to God.

(269-15) All men are moving, through advances and retrogressions alike, toward this discovery of the Overself.

270⁴⁰⁷

IV

271

IV

(271-1)⁴⁰⁸ The awakening of serpent-fire gives a tremendous stimulation to the nervous system. There may be difficulty in sleeping as a result

(271-2) It is a wise rule of aspiration not to seek for more power than you are able to use or more knowledge than you are willing to apply.

(271-3) Even before one begins to get a mere fraction of knowledge of what life is about one has to spend away half of it.

⁴⁰⁷ Blank page

⁴⁰⁸ The paras on this page are numbered 70 through 80, making them consecutive with the previous page.

(271-4)⁴⁰⁹ Book teaching is too general. It makes no allowance for individual differences, for the wide variations from one person to [another. The reader should adapt the teaching to his or her own sex, age, character,]⁴¹⁰ strength and circumstances.

(271-5) He is a lucky aspirant who does not encounter at some time persons, situations or appearances which seek to separate him from his teacher or teaching.

(271-6) The earlier the age at which a man begins these studies and practices the better for him. To be born into a family where they already prevail, is to have an exceedingly good destiny. But however late in life anyone comes to them, it is never too late. He will have to contend with set ways and fixed habits that will need changing, it is true.

(271-7) There is a pattern of growth in all the different parts of a human being. If man reaches his physical maturity in the twenties, he reaches his intellectual maturity in the thirties, emotional maturity in the forties and intuitional in the fifties. This is one of the reasons why those who are really interested in religion and mysticism come so largely from the middle-aged and elderly group.

(271-8) The experience of the Interior Word brings with it, or is heard in an intensely concentrated state. With it there is a positive feeling of being the assured master of one's mind, emotions and body.

(271-9) It is {a}⁴¹¹ wrong and yet common notion to believe that one is not in a position to start out on the Quest. The business man pleads his business cares, the sinner his sins, the old man his age and the young man his youth as excuse for failing to make any beginning at all.

(271-10) Those who come to the Quest through necessity of finding consolatory peace are more numerous than those who come through desire of finding truth. But all are welcome.

(271-11) The statement is true but not encouraging to trembling beginners, in whom it is likely to induce an attitude of despondency.

272⁴¹²

IV

⁴⁰⁹ This para is a duplicate of para 263-2. Different edits have been marked on the two paras.

⁴¹⁰ PB himself changed "another _____ adapt the teaching to the readers own sex, age character strength" to "another. The reader should adapt the teaching to his or her own sex, age, character," by hand.

⁴¹¹ We have inserted "a" for clarity.

⁴¹² Blank page

(273-1)⁴¹³ The passions obscure the advantages of young manhood. The man of middle years is more cautious about falling into a temper and less addicted to falling under the sway of sex.

(273-2) When he has travelled to this stage of his journey; when he can close the door of his chamber, lie down and listen to the Interior Voice; when the silence within becomes audible with clearly-formulated instructions then only is he ready to speak to others or write for others, and teach them. Until then he is a deaf mute, unable to hear and untrained to speak the sacred language. Now the Pentecostal power has descended on him and he is able not only to see the truth through the surrounding darkness but also to give it to those among his people who can take it.

(273-3) There is no universal experience which makes the spiritual progress of all aspirants exactly the same. With some it is slow and steady, with others nearly imperceptible or apparently absent, with a third group it is quicker but followed by lapses and losses, with a fourth group it is slight for long periods and then dramatically advances by series of forward leaps and abrupt awakenings; with a fifth it shows haphazardly and erratically; with a sixth it is a powerful climax to aspiration and discipline, releasing new and added energies for achievement in a particular desired direction.

(273-4) Just when he has fallen into the depressing belief that he will have to accustom himself to a spiritually [arid]⁴¹⁴ existence, something may happen and hope may light up anew.

(273-5) The very name "Quest" implies movement, traveling journey; those who remain stationary cannot be said to be on the "Quest." By this I do not mean those who find themselves stagnating against their will, but those who make no effort inwardly to advance.

(273-6) Progress is not constant from one year to another. Rather is it an erratic movement. This is because human feelings are the raw material being worked on, not wood or iron. It moves over long monotonous plateaus where, apparently, no upward ascent is happening, as well as over steep hills where height is gained with every step.

⁴¹³ The paras on this page are numbered 81 through 91, making them consecutive with the previous page.

⁴¹⁴ "arid" was typed below the line and inserted with a caret by PB himself.

(273-7) Although the middle-aged and elderly, being more experienced, are more receptive to his ideas of emotional control and personal detachment, philosophy is not necessarily a subject fit only for those in their sunset years.

(273-8) The ideas which come to his mind through the Interior Word come stamped with the certitude of truth.

(273-9) He should fit his aspiration to his estimated capacity but, in order not to miss unknown possibilities which might yet emerge to the surface, he should do so loosely and not rigidly.

(273-10) The more developed a man is, in intelligence character and spiritual consciousness, the larger is the auric field around him.

(273-11) He is likely to attribute it to his own incapacity when it is really caused by the operations of his destiny.

274⁴¹⁵

IV

275

IV

(275-1)⁴¹⁶ The phenomenon of the Interior Word does not ordinarily appear before he is able to carry the mind to a certain depth or intensity of concentration, and to hold it there continuously for not less than about a half hour.

(275-2) He starts out with enthusiastic easily-held and passionate hopes but time does not seem to fulfil them. In this disappointment his ideals become first isolated and then forgotten.

(275-3) Here are some of which, if recognised, may enable him to gauge his progress.

(275-4) The Quest provides an aim to a man's life, an ideal for his character, and a technique to enable him to transform himself.

(275-5) Can he stay fixed in his purpose until the last day?

⁴¹⁵ Blank page

⁴¹⁶ The paras on this page are numbered 92 through 109, making them consecutive with the previous page.

(275-6) Through the heart we feel, through the will we act and through the intellect we understand. Illumination must be brought into all three, and sought by all three, if it is to be complete.

(275-7) His road lies through doubts and vacillations, uncertainties and conflicts, so that the Quest which ought to bring him peace, brings him torment instead.

(275-8) Can they continue when the first enthusiasm is over?

(275-9) The Interior Word carries an authoritative and commanding tone.

(275-10) He gives an irremovable [loyalty in faith to the Overself and an]⁴¹⁷ unwavering dedication to its Quest.

(275-11) He feels he has gained some measure of peace but is still not satisfied since it is not perfect peace.

(275-12) He will study his own character and other people's with the utmost impartiality.

(275-13) No church, no monastery, no ashram can shut in the divine life behind its walls. THAT is for all.

(275-14) The Interior Word is not heard with the reasoning mind, even though its statements may be very reasonable. It is not connected with the intellect at all, as are all our ordinary words. It is received in the heart, felt intensively and deeply.

(275-15) We have not yet become what we were meant to be. The conscious and deliberate attempt to do so constitutes the Quest.

(275-16) Once committed to the Quest, he will find that it is no light relationship. It exacts obedience, imposes responsibility and demands consideration in the most trivial and the most important departments of this business of living.

(275-17) All do not start with equal capacities for the quest. Each is qualified to go only a certain distance upon it. Those who exaggerate their capacities harm themselves by their presumption. Those who underrate them practise a false modesty. It is an error either to deceive oneself about one's aspirations or to deter oneself unduly.

⁴¹⁷ PB himself changed "loyalty to the Overself an" to "loyalty in faith to the Overself and an" by hand.

(275-18) He will need much courage for the Quest because he will be confronted by two powerful enemies. One is himself, the other is society. Within himself he will have to do battle against the great desires. Within society he will have to contend against the great traditions.

276⁴¹⁸

IV

277

IV

(277-1)⁴¹⁹ Some reject the whole system for such reasons as “I do not want to become a saint,” or “I have to earn my livelihood.” This is an unwise attitude.

(277-2) He has made his decision and set his course. The next thing is to give himself time to travel it. This calls for patience.

(277-3) The journey from anticipation to realisation is a long one. On this Quest the curiosity to know what lies ahead can never be satisfied with perfect correctness because it must necessarily differ with different individuals.

(277-4) Now that he has developed the capacity to hear, there sounds forth out of the obscure recesses of his being a silent voice, a messenger without name or form. It is the Word.

(277-5) The system he studies has become a mere trap. The thoughts he utters or writes are borrowed clothes. The moves he makes deprive him of the lessons of experience.

(277-6) They must try to work out interpretations of scripture and life for themselves, not remain tied to obligatory ones imposed from without. They must begin to stand on their own individual resources or they will never rise to the level of direct spiritual communion at all. The tendency to look to one man or one organisation as the sole repository of spiritual wisdom may become dangerous to their further progress. In The Wisdom of the Overself it was mentioned that the currents of evolution and the circumstances of modernity have created new cultural values which in turn have lessened the need of such dependence. One proof of this assertion lies in the fact that the same line of change may be seen also in the social, political and economic spheres.

⁴¹⁸ Blank page

⁴¹⁹ The paras on this page are numbered 110 through 120, making them consecutive with the previous page.

(277-7) There is one quality which re-enters man [when the spring season re-enters]⁴²⁰ the yearly cycle. It is hope.

(277-8) The man who has never been tempted to rise above himself, never yearned for more rays of light to penetrate the dark room of his life, will not be able to understand why other men and women have forsaken themselves or fled the world in search of God.

(277-9) The expectation that progress will be constant and steady fills many beginners until time and experience teach otherwise. They have failed to allow for the possibility that there may be steps back and aside as well as interminably long pauses. Some go still farther and expect Grace, whether direct or through a master, to come prematurely or to work some spiritual conjuring-trick and change their nature almost overnight.⁴²¹

[The error of these [egoistic]⁴²² expectations [should]⁴²³ be replaced by [the]⁴²⁴ correct attitude which is hope. This is inspired by nothing less than the Overself. It is a [genuinely]⁴²⁵ intuitive leading. But it must be followed in patience and without imposing the ego's false emotions upon it]⁴²⁶

(277-10) In that state of inspired communion when the Interior Word is heard, thoughts keep coming into consciousness from a source deeper than the personal mind. The ego is not directly thinking them but instead experiences them as being impressed upon it or released into it.

(277-11) Alas! it is easy to stray aside unwittingly or take a misstep weakly.

278⁴²⁷

IV

279

IV

⁴²⁰ PB himself changed "when spring reenters" to "when the spring season reenters" by hand.

⁴²¹ This paragraph was heavily edited by PB himself. It originally read:

"The expectation that his progress will be constant and steady fills many beginners until time and experience teach otherwise. There are steps back and aside as well as interminably long pauses. Some go farther and expect Grace, whether direct or through a master, to work some spiritual conjuring-trick and change their nature almost overnight."

⁴²² PB himself inserted "egoistic" by hand.

⁴²³ PB himself changed "is to" to "should" by hand.

⁴²⁴ PB himself deleted "truth that" from after "the" by hand.

⁴²⁵ PB himself inserted "genuinely" by hand.

⁴²⁶ PB himself inserted "See over re 118" after "overnight." and the paragraph from "The error" to "upon it" on the back of the page by hand.

⁴²⁷ Blank page

(279-1)⁴²⁸ The world crisis as a sign that mankind are passing through a spiritual turning-point includes truth-seekers also. It is time for them to stop living by other men's spiritual experience and to start living by their own.

(279-2) The iron strength of his purpose will shield him from temptations, the intense force of his loyalty to the truth will carry him through obstacles and barriers. He is astonished to find how easily the man who knows what he wants can conquer his way to it, if his will is able to go straight to its mark.

(279-3) It is the fulfilment of his quest, achieved through the accumulation of every little undramatic resistance to the lower nature and every little discipline of the wandering mind.

(279-4) Once he has engaged himself seriously in this Quest, lapses from within and setbacks from without can only slacken his pace, never withdraw him from the enterprise itself. Its goal is the thing he must find if he is to fulfil his deepest urge.

(279-5) When a man passes from the self-seeking motives of the multitude to the Overself-seeking aspirations of the Quest, he passes [to conscious cooperation with the Divine World-Idea.]⁴²⁹

(279-6) The evolution of spiritual mindedness may go on quietly and slowly until a crisis gives it a sudden jolt.

(279-7) The decision to embark on this Quest may ripen for a long time in his unconscious mind before it is openly and slowly made, or it may explode impulsively in a wholly unpremeditated way.

(279-8) At this stage of his spiritual career, the more he obeys these inner promptings the better will he make progress.

(279-9) The slowness of his progress may be punctuated at long intervals by a spiritual jump forward.

(279-10) When the truth explodes suddenly like a blast of dynamite beneath the traditions or beliefs or habits which held him captive in untruth, the light may dazzle and bewilder him or it may set him free from them in a way and with a speed which could not have existed ordinarily.

⁴²⁸ The paras on this page are numbered 121 through 133, making them consecutive with the previous page.

⁴²⁹ PB himself inserted "to conscious cooperation with the Divine World-Idea." by hand.

(279-11) The path that suits and helps someone else will not necessarily suit him and may only waste his time if he tries it.

(279-12) The Interior Word is never enigmatic and puzzling but always direct and simple. Only the revelations of occultism are obscure, never the revelations of truth itself.

(279-13) [If his exercises are to succeed in ridding him of his emotional and mental deformities, he must work at them in great patience and confidence, he must give himself plenty of years in which to make himself their master.]⁴³⁰

280⁴³¹

IV

281

IV

(281-1)⁴³² It is a necessary rule of the aspirant's life, laid down by the yogic manuals of old and proven by experience today, that regularity should be faithfully observed in meditation practice and at least attempted in the other important duties of his spiritual career.

(281-2) The truth seems so stubbornly elusive, so persistently unapproachable.

(281-3) After all, his spiritual endeavours rest upon this unshakable conviction that there is such a thing as Spirit.

(281-4) Only time and experience will bring him to consider the fuller implications of the Quest and its graver consequences. He may then feel alarm or even repulsion; or he may find gratification and even joy.

(281-5) Most men are happy enough with the flesh, satisfied enough to live in the body alone or the body and intellect together. Few want the Overself, most are not even ready for it and would be blinded by its light.

⁴³⁰ This para was heavily edited by PB himself. It originally read:

"If his exercises are to succeed in ridding himself of his emotional and mental deformities he must work at them in great patience and confidence, giving himself plenty of years"

⁴³¹ Blank page

⁴³² The paras on this page are numbered 134 through 146, making them consecutive with the previous page.

(281-6) Only the uninformed can be deceived by the outside appearance of unity in these organised groups. The struggles and conflicts and factions which really exist inside them are a better indication of their moral grade than their tall talk in print or lecture.

(281-7) Before he joins the crowd pressing down the road, he wants to inquire where they are going, and whether it is right or reasonable and then to choose whether he wants to go their way at all.

(281-8) If he allows other people to influence him to abandon a worthy endeavour, he must blame only himself, only his own weakness, not them. If, too, he allows obstructive circumstance to influence him in the same way, he is again to blame. This fault is harder to see and to admit than the first one. But the Quest cannot be played with, nor undertaken only for his easier and more comfortable hours. It is a master to whom he has been indentured for lifelong obedience. It is a duty from which he must let nothing swerve him.

(281-9) What Rousseau and Koestler found many a Westernised Oriental is finding, that in middle age he has to return again and submit to the spirit.

(281-10) The sudden acceleration of progress which comes at [certain times should be fully exploited by humble prayer, by further effort and by resisting the tendency to rest complacently in it]⁴³³

(281-11) Time itself is an opportunity to be used or wasted.

(281-12) Even if the full accomplishment of his new goals is apparently impossible, the partial or even large accomplishment of them is not.

(281-13) The Quest must become obsessive without becoming unbalancing.

282⁴³⁴

IV

283

IV

(283-1)⁴³⁵ From the day when the resolution forms itself to live up, however partially, to the philosophic ideal, until the day when he is near the threshold of its full realisation,

⁴³³ PB himself changed "this time" to "certain times should be fully exploited by humble prayer by further effort and by resisting the tendency to rest complacently in it" by hand.

⁴³⁴ Blank page

the aspirant will have to face and overcome the opposition which this very attitude has aroused not only in himself but also in those outside, not only through weaknesses in his character and promptings in his heart but also through troubles or temptations in his environment.

(283-2) He can draw courage and strength from an inspired writing or an inspiring meditation, and they will urge him to go on when hindrances or obstructions appear in his road.

(283-3) How often have I heard, in talk or writing, that the philosophic requirements are set too high and are beyond average human compliance. My answer is that time and patience and work keep on pushing back the measure of what is possible to a man, that grace may fitfully bless him if he sustains effort and aspiration or recognises opportunity and inspiration and that these requirements are not set for immediate attainment but as an ultimate goal to be striven for little by little and to give correct direction to his life. "Hope on and hold on," I told Rom Landau at an outwardly dark and mentally depressed moment of his life. He did! – and later found himself, his own peace, and became in turn through his lectures and books a help to many fellow Christians.

(283-4) It is a tradition in mystical circles that anyone who has ever felt the truth power or beauty of mystical teaching, however briefly, will not be able to escape being drawn to its practical consequence, the Quest, one day, however long deferred it may be.

(283-5) The organisation or institution tends to become an entity separate from its initial purpose and mission. It seeks its own aggrandisement and ignores or despoils or injures that purpose and mission while doing so.

(283-6) From several different sources a variety of suggestive influences play upon the student's mind and habits, influences which may be all very well for others but which may be harmful to his own individuality at his particular stage of spiritual progress. This is true not only of the trivial affairs of everyday living but also of the loftier affairs of aspirational living. White truths and black falsehoods, cleverly-combined half-truths and half-falsehoods are continually being presented to his consciousness. Not only his physical life, but also his mental life must become a process of careful acceptance and vigilant rejection. At a certain stage of this quest the seeker must be particularly careful to be on his guard against the skilfully suggested "truths" of others who mistake their own candle-glimmer for the sun's glory and the prejudices born of their own narrow experience for the wisdom born of insight. This caution is especially necessary in the sphere of mystical experience.

⁴³⁵ The paras on this page are numbered 147 through 152, making them consecutive with the previous page.

(285-1)⁴³⁷ In ancient times the spiritual – the religious and mystical (but not the philosophic) – teachers, as a class, [imposed]⁴³⁸ rules or accepted obedience without encouraging questions or clearing doubts on the devotee’s part. Today the mentality of most people is more developed and seekers will not submit so blindly and so completely as in former times. This is in natural accord with the greater individual freedom of the present democratic epoch.

(285-2) This is not for those who are so satisfied with themselves that they want to preserve their egos just as they are. It is for those who feel the need of self-improvement, and feel it so keenly that, they are willing to work hard for this objective and to take time for it. The Quest is for those who have looked at their own faults and turned their head away from the unattractive and disconcerting sight with downcast eyes. But although their weaknesses have clung in the past to them like limpets, philosophy bids them take hope and take to the Quest which can liberate and strengthen them in the future.

(285-3) The longing for personal affection to come from another person will fall away just as, at an earlier stage, the craving for physical gratification fell away.

(285-4) The Quest will reach its end and the absolute certainty he longed for will be his. This is what must happen if he holds to the course, however badly, weakly or erratically.

(285-5) The individual mystic’s lack of status is regrettable but expectable. For it is the penalty he must pay for refusing to be overawed by the dogmas current in his time and the traditions inherited from his peoples’ past. What chance has this teaching when its adherents form only a small unrecognised entirely scattered cult whereas the adherents of orthodoxy are numbered by the million? And even those of unorthodoxy are numbered by the thousand or hundred? Must all importance, all truth, all significance in religion be limited to organised groups alone? Are there no inspired persons and no ordinary individuals who do not choose to belong to any such groups at all? Why

⁴³⁶ Blank page

⁴³⁷ The paras on this page are numbered 153 through 158, making them consecutive with the previous page.

⁴³⁸ PB himself deleted “their” from after “imposed” by hand.

should orthodoxy and unorthodoxy, merely because they are organised into churches and labelled as denominations, alone represent the voice of religion.

(285-6) Few are willing to sacrifice their desire for the gregarious support offered by joining an organisation and therefore few see how this binds them to its dogmas, imprisons them in its practices or methods and obstructs their free hearing of the intuitive voice of their own soul.

286⁴³⁹

IV

287

IV

(287-1)⁴⁴⁰ In ancient times, Buddha predicted the earlier decay of his monastic order if women were allowed to enter it. In our times, the leaders of Protestant churches which refuse to ordain women as ministers give among their reasons the likelihood of personal cults and sectarian heresies [arising.]⁴⁴¹

(287-2) It is better for him to have a reputation for taciturnity than be so intimidated by the crowd as to conduct himself and confuse his speech to common, shallow, obvious and vulgar ways.

(287-3) The discrimination of values is a capacity which comes more easily to older persons.

(287-4) Let him take from this literature what seems to apply to his own case, what seems to help his own need. It will not help to follow a path specifically intended for other cases and other needs.

(287-5) The Quest is not easy. One victory ought not to lead to self-complacency but to the awareness that there will be other hard struggles before the word can be spelled with a capital "V." Despite this he knows that there is no other way of life for him than the Quest's.

(287-6) He must be careful not to accept other peoples' moods, not to assimilate their thoughts but to detect such intruders and reject them.

⁴³⁹ Blank page

⁴⁴⁰ The paras on this page are numbered 159 through 172, making them consecutive with the previous page.

⁴⁴¹ PB himself inserted "arising." by hand.

(287-7) Those who are tired of the vapidness of their conventional lives, will find a worthy aim in the Quest.

(287-8) Man is made in God's image in the sense that he latently possesses certain godlike qualities. But these have to be developed by evolution, which can be slow, through the path of normal experience or swift, through the Quest.

(287-9) All that he now experiences will be seen by the glow of its better light, while the memory of all that he experienced in the past, however distressing or vile, will be transmuted into effective educational forms.

(287-10) Philosophy does not need to be institutionalised.

(287-11) Blavatsky herself, at the height of Theosophy's power and influence, stated that hardly six of her followers understood the Goal and had any favourable prospect of reaching it. Does it follow that a reasonable man will be too disheartened to enter on the path to such an inaccessible goal? No - he need not be.

(287-12) He will find the Path leads him away from the crowd into solitude; and,⁴⁴² later,⁴⁴³ away from the thoughts of the crowd that people solitude⁴⁴⁴ into himself.

(287-13) He begins to perceive for the first time the inner nature of people and the inner purpose of events.

(287-14) These brief enlightenments give us clues to both the true way and the true goal. They point within.

288⁴⁴⁵

IV

289

IV

(289-1)⁴⁴⁶ The man of independent temperament cannot fit easily into monastic existence with its formal patterns and clock-timed bell-signalled regularity.

⁴⁴² PB himself inserted a comma by hand.

⁴⁴³ PB himself inserted a comma by hand.

⁴⁴⁴ Modern usage would have "populate solitude" here, but the meaning is correct as written. – TJS '20

⁴⁴⁵ Blank page

⁴⁴⁶ The paras on this page are numbered 173 through 187, making them consecutive with the previous page.

(289-2) The full discipline of the Quest is too much and too intense for the Westerner in ordinary circumstances to carry it into successful performance but a modified discipline is not.

(289-3) In the elderly man desires are gradually outlived and dropped, ambitions begin to come to a natural death. But in the philosophic man they pass through the same process through his own deliberate choice and at an earlier age.

(289-4) There is always a valid reason for disparity between the sought-for objective and the actual performance. Those who begin hopefully and enthusiastically but find themselves disappointed and without result, ought to look first to their understanding of the Quest and correct it, to their picture of the Goal and redraw it.

(289-5) The utterance of the Interior Word can be heard only in heaven, only in a state detached from the animality and triviality of the common state.

(289-6) There is little place today as ever for the spiritual individualist, the man who cannot betray himself and deny truth for the sake of peaceably settling down in one of society's organised groups or established institutions. The climate is hostile to him. He must remain a lone thinker, self-exiled, paying a price but getting his money's worth.

(289-7) Only one man here and there among thousands takes to philosophy. Yet in some ways the world is better prepared to understand it now than in earlier times.

(289-8) Each man's approach must inevitably be individualistic yet each will also share in common with all the essentials which constitute the Quest.

(289-9) There is a common belief that the Quest is full of mystery and full of difficulty.

(289-10) If the elderly man is to be saddened because the energy and enthusiasm for his best actions lie behind him in the past, he is also to be gladdened because the same impulsion toward his worst actions lie there too.

(289-11) The Quest being a journey, it must have stations on the way and grades of advancement.

(289-12) The stages of the Quest pass by degrees from the disciplining of the ego to the opening of consciousness to the Overself.

(289-13) The young are eagerly looking forward to living; the old have had time to weigh it all up.

(289-14) Not many can take the rigors and disciplines of the training period: too many slink away from it or break up under it.

(289-15) To enter deliberately upon the Quest is too large an undertaking for the average man.

290⁴⁴⁷

IV

291

IV

(291-1)⁴⁴⁸ He must not forget that he is only a short way from the start of his journey, and should not assume attitudes or prerogatives suitable only to the man who is well advanced.

(291-2) If he is really to attain Truth, he will have to learn how to stand solidly by himself, how to live within himself and how to be satisfied with his inner purpose as his only companion.

(291-3) The young man who has not yet been ambushed and captured by ambition and sensuality is susceptible to enthusiastic idealism.

(291-4) As man grows older he concentrates on different aspects of his being, nurtures different qualities, functions and phases of his nature.

(291-5) The faults and deficiencies and errors of his past are unquestionably there. He may have groaned long and often over them. But perhaps there is enough good left in it to cancel some of them out to a large extent.

(291-6) He accepts the beliefs and ideas, the limitations and the narrowness of the group which he joins and to which he surrenders his mind. If better ideas and superior beliefs exist, they are shut out.

(291-7) No age is unsuited to the study and practice of philosophy. No one is too young to begin it, nor too late.

(291-8) Those who are seeking personal help are immeasurably more numerous than those who are seeking the impersonal Truth.

⁴⁴⁷ Blank page

⁴⁴⁸ The paras on this page are numbered 188 through 203, making them consecutive with the previous page.

(291-9) The unattached independent seeker has advantages over the intellectually bound spiritually-tied seeker who is part of a group, institution or society.

(291-10) Anyone who pursued the Quest with the same zeal with which everyone pursues earthly things, would soon come within sight of its goal.

(291-11) Freedom can hardly be had without bunking convention and disregarding tradition.

(291-12) The temptation to forsake the Quest may come and may even deflect him for a while.

(291-13) There is a mental magnetic field around the body. It is the aura.

(291-14) He will have to recognise that not only the Universe outside but his own nature inside is governed by precise laws, and that his Spiritual progression is subject to such laws too.

(291-15) How far are these disciplines within human ability? If too far it would be useless torment to impose them. If unnecessarily hard and fanatically severe, they would breed fresh evils.

(291-16) The difficulty of this enterprise must be admitted. Gita speaks of millions who seek but few who find. In the Middle Ages the German aspirants made the same complaints to their masters: "You give us beautiful words, but we have seen nothing."⁴⁴⁹

292⁴⁵⁰

IV

293

IV

(293-1)⁴⁵¹ Let them not cheapen themselves by dismissing the quest as too high-flown or too troublesome. The human being has a higher potential value than enters his ordinary consciousness.

⁴⁴⁹ This section is continued in the paras on page 299.

⁴⁵⁰ Blank page

⁴⁵¹ The paras on this page are numbered 1 through 14; they are not consecutive with the previous page.

(293-2) It should not be thought that all those who read some literature, or attend such lectures, or even join such movements, are seeking more than a simple glimpse. Perhaps most are ordinary people who are satisfied with having a credo to support their lives which enlarges their traditional religion or belief.

(293-3) If there were nothing more – no exciting or dramatic inner experience – possible than this ameliorating peace, this extra deep feeling of stillness, it would be enough to make the time and care given to it worth while. But there is more for those who want also to know something of its source, its workings and connections. Beyond that little measure of knowledge, be content for the Great Mystery swallows all who find it. Yet there is nothing to fear.

(293-4) The person, young or old, who has his mind set on higher things than pleasures of the moment and is willing to sacrifice a fragment of time, attention and interest to such studies and such meditations, will find his refusal to conform to other peoples' ways is repaid in inner growth on the quest.

(293-5) A young man should read the inspired utterances which men have given us in Europe and Asia; yes⁴⁵² in America too!⁴⁵³ Or rather, men's minds and hands have been used as instruments to give the world [such inner help, or hope, beauty or wisdom.]⁴⁵⁴

(293-6) The kind of question he asks and even the way in which he puts it helps to show where he stands on the path to Truth and how much he has understood.

(293-7) Not many aspire to pursue this quest but many more might do so if they knew its importance.

(293-8) If the ideal resists your too-weak efforts to realise it, then keep moving at least in its direction.

(293-9) No contribution to the human race could be better made by anyone than this transformation of himself.

(293-10) Clues to what is coming, indications of probable happenings and pictures from karmic programming may at times show themselves in various ways.

(293-11) An adventure like the quest may show a man what are his basic virtues and weaknesses.

⁴⁵² PB himself changed "Asia, Yes" to "Asia; yes" by hand.

⁴⁵³ PB himself changed a period to an exclamation mark by hand.

⁴⁵⁴ PB himself inserted "such inner help, or hope, beauty or wisdom." by hand.

(293-12) It is a sign of inner growth when a man lets go of anxieties in his mind while doing what he can in his body.

(293-13) It is easier to turn over responsibility for a decision to a group's leaders than to accept it oneself because it can be turned into an escape.

(293-14) He could study various teachings, noting the good in them yet rejecting the unacceptable, thus not losing himself in any one of them.

294⁴⁵⁵

IV

295

IV

(295-1)⁴⁵⁶ This enterprise of the quest is the most serious in which a man can engage. We must treat it as such. But let this not cause anyone to lose the sense of humour.

(295-2) It is a common phrase in the literature instructions and rules of totalitarian movements, especially political movements, to say that not the slightest deviation may be made from the line laid down by the authority.

(295-3) He should sometimes ask himself for how many more years still may he hope to be given the chance which every life-time gives a man to transcend himself.

(295-4) But those who can stand alone are always smaller in number: most persons will frankly admit that they cannot: certainly most young and most old persons. This is the justification for the need of organisations, groups, churches and priesthoods. They offer what seems fixed support in life, stable in doctrine, superior nobler holier and wiser than what the ordinary person finds in himself. This is why philosophy attracts the few, those who are, or who can be trained to become, strong enough to walk a lonely path.

(295-5) Why should he expose the whole bulk and depth of his knowledge to those who can grasp and appreciate only a part of it? If more should be given out, at the right time it will assuredly be given.

⁴⁵⁵ Blank page

⁴⁵⁶ The paras on this page are numbered 15 through 24, making them consecutive with the previous page.

(295-6) It is easy, if he submits to the flattery of unqualified persons and the pressure of naive beginners, to fall into the trap of believing himself to be more advanced than he really is.

(295-7) If he finds the same tenet in ten different religious creeds or metaphysical codes he is glad to get their repeated confirmation. But in the end he must get it for himself from within his own self – the Overself. It is the firmest base of life.

(295-8) Those who come to this quest for enlightenment must prepare themselves for certain difficulties, sacrifices and disciplines. But it would be a mistake to think the Way is a gloomy one. On the contrary there will also be joys, helps and sublime moments.

(295-9) Many persons have never had the access to books on these subjects, nor the chance to get tuition personally. But now all that is changed. For all who can read can uncover today the once-hidden wisdom of the East. But, also today the proportion of those who can read is not only immensely larger but is rapidly enlarging.

(295-10) Life requires him to make certain renunciations anyway; no man escapes this demand: but the quest compels him to choose between what does and what does not help or impede its inner work.

296⁴⁵⁷
IV

297
IV

(297-1)⁴⁵⁸ It is a stage on the way which the developing human mind will find, pass through, and outgrow. Valid for a time only, too limiting later.

(297-2) Is any man willing to leave the materialism which blinds him?

298⁴⁵⁹
IV

299
IV

⁴⁵⁷ Blank page

⁴⁵⁸ The paras on this page are numbered 25 through 26, making them consecutive with the previous page.

⁴⁵⁹ Blank page

(299-1)⁴⁶⁰ All human beings differ in some respects and in mind as well as in body. Each is unique. Each needs to find his own individual path. For in each aspirant there exists a certain direction, tendency, capacity, attribute or gift along which line the possibility of his spiritual development can open up more quickly, freely and easily than along any other. It is on this line that he should concentrate more effort and so take advantage of what Nature has given him. But to detect and recognise what is his best potentiality requires exploration and search, not only by his ordinary faculties but also and especially by his more sensitive and intuitive ones. It will not be found all at once but only after much groping around and feeling his way. Time is needed because this hidden possibility does not exist at surface level. The earth which surrounds this gem obscures its whereabouts. If he is in a hurry and insists on a premature discovery instead of keeping up the search, he will identify the wrong stone. Once having found it let him stay with it as often and as long as he can.

(299-2) He is naturally impatient to get results as quickly as possible, and generally the result which he most wants is a dynamic mystical experience. He will welcome the improvement of character and increase of knowledge if they do come but these do not thrill or attract him a quarter as much as the experience itself would

(299-3) So long as experience and results have not established sufficient confidence in his intuitive guidance and sufficient trust in his philosophic knowledge, he needs to continue travelling with a teacher.

(299-4) Working along the line that the teacher found suitable for himself, slavishly and artificially trying to produce a copy of him, will in the end not even produce that but a caricature instead. For only the teacher's bodily acts will be imitated; his Spirit is invisible and therefore cannot be imitated.

(299-5) His progress should not be appraised only by the distance he has travelled but just as much by the direction he has chosen, not only by achieved results but also by established ideal.

(299-6) What he learns from outside himself, from teacher or tradition, will never lead to his true fulfilment until he joins it with what he learns in the stillness from inside himself.

(299-7) There are many who are not seeking for the quickest attainment of the highest goal. They feel, quite pardonably, that the demands of training for it are too great for their modest equipment. But they are seeking for occasional inspiration and they

⁴⁶⁰ The paras on this page are numbered 204 through 210; they are not consecutive with the previous page, but follow the paras on page 291.

would be content with just a few glimpses during their lifetime. Although these people are not fully committed to the Quest, they are in general sympathetic with it.

300⁴⁶¹

IV

301

IV

(301-1)⁴⁶² The childish worship of every illumined man as if he were the World-Mind itself and the blind reception of his every utterance as if it were sacrosanct – these are defects to be regretted. And they occur not only among the Orientals, where it is to be expected, but also among the increasing number of those Occidentals who accept the doctrine of the Orientals and imitate their attitudes. They point to excessive attachment to the limited personality of their spiritual leader, so that it is disproportionate to the pure impersonal Spirit of which he is but the channel. They reveal the devotee to be on the religio-mystical level, to have advanced beyond popular religion but not to have travelled sufficiently far into mysticism proper to feel comfortable there. He has escaped from the crowd, which is so taken in by the mere outward forms of religious observance but he cannot yet escape from the olden habit or need of depending on some outward thing or person. So, transfers to his master's body the devotion he formerly gave to popular pieties.

(301-2) The man who is captured by a particular religion, sect, group or organisation frequently builds a wall around it, sets up a barrier between himself and non-members, excludes [every approach to God other than his own.]⁴⁶³

(301-3) The uncertainties of the Quest may lead, especially in the neurotic temperament, to a variety of unhappy moods and unhealthy emotions as the years pass by. The student may at such times turn against himself in morbid masochism, or against the teaching he has been following, or against the personal instructor if he has one.

(301-4) There is a period in the lives of some aspirants, but not all, when they look back at the results of entering the Quest and become dissatisfied with them. They still have no satisfying mystical experience to record, or if they have it is too far back in time and too transient in nature. They are definitely unhappy about their present situation, afflicted by morbid discouragement and tormented by intruding doubts as it is. It is a testing period a dark night not of the soul but of the emotions and thoughts.

⁴⁶¹ Blank page

⁴⁶² The paras on this page are numbered 211 through 216, making them consecutive with the previous page.

⁴⁶³ PB himself inserted "every approach to God other than his own." by hand.

(301-5) What chance has the single-handed individual spiritual educator to continue his work when public and government alike accept the false suggestion that only through large organised groups and recognised traditional institutions can people be correctly led? The end of such a trend can only be as it has been in the past – monopoly dictatorial religion, centralised tyrannical power, heresy hunting persecution and the death of individualism, which means the death of truth. Jesus, Buddha, Spinoza were all individualists.

(301-6) If he is not connected with any religious association or mystical tradition, any institution or monastery, he is looked upon askance. For who or what is there to validate the “correctness”

302⁴⁶⁴

IV

303

IV

(continued from the previous page) of his teaching and the {credentials of}⁴⁶⁵ the man himself? They look for a doctrine that is “official” and a revelator certified by “authority.”

(303-1)⁴⁶⁶ Aged people discover not only that the world does not want them, but they also do not want the world. The withdrawal from one another tends to be mutual. I speak of course only of those who keep to Nature’s rhythms, not of those modern creatures who ignore its message that age is a time for reflection not bustling action, for severance of attachments not for clinging harder to them. This artificial juvenility which they affect would have been pitied by Manu, the ancient Hindu lawgiver, who allotted four age-periods to each human life, the last for concentration on spiritual concerns.

(303-2) What if he is groping his way about and stumbling with wearying slowness? If he has surrendered his allegiance to philosophy, then this is surely better than moving more quickly on a wrong road?

(303-3) Each aspirant has a body, an individuality, a character and a mentality that is uniquely his own.

⁴⁶⁴ PB deleted this page; it is a duplicate of page 303.

⁴⁶⁵ We have changed “credential” to “credentials of” for clarity. – TJS ‘15

⁴⁶⁶ The paras on this page are numbered 217 through 223, making them consecutive with the previous page.

(303-4) Although in certain ways human beings are much the same the world over, in other ways they are much different. More, and a great deal more, they are even individually different. Therefore only persons of dogmatic or despotic temperament attempt to prescribe a single technique of spiritual unfoldment for everyone alike.

(303-5) Those beginners who expect too much and too soon from the adoption of philosophy may end their first period in frustration and disappointment. The fault is their own – perhaps a tendency toward exaggerated emotions of hope and optimism, or toward wishful thinking, or perhaps because of a fallacious comprehension of philosophy itself – of what it is or what it can do.

(303-6) How can the lone philosopher hope to lift successfully a quiet voice above the world's clamour, let alone above the louder proclamations of those organised sects? "They have authority – the centuries are behind them," he will be told, "power, wealth, buildings, prestige and social influence are with them – but you? You have nothing."

(303-7) The average teacher takes from his own personal experience what helped him most or what his own teacher led him to, and passes it on to the student, as being "the Path," the only way to God, the sole method of arriving at truth. Whether this particular way or method suits the individual type or his degree of development or not. He almost forces it on the student, even if it is contrary to the latter's entire temperament or need. The poor student finds himself imprisoned and locked up in his teacher's personal opinions and practices, as if nothing good existed outside them,

304⁴⁶⁷

IV

305

IV

(305-1)⁴⁶⁸ The belief that only an institutional church has the right to speak for religion – and a recognised one at that – is so rooted in the public mind that it is very hard to get rid of it.

(305-2) It is easy to feel so carried away by the tremendous meaning and value of the teaching that he yearns to be one of its evangelists.

(305-3) Of those who seek the Quest's goal how many seem to miss it!

⁴⁶⁷ Blank page

⁴⁶⁸ The paras on this page are numbered 224 through 241, making them consecutive with the previous page.

(305-4) Although huge [established]⁴⁶⁹ organisations command respect and claim authority in religion there is real need of detached independents in this same field.

(305-5) Observation shows that the attempt to confine spiritual work in self-training to rigid patterns is to deviate from the way a human being is able to develop successfully. All patterns must be adapted and tailor-fitted to the need of each individual aspirant.

(305-6) The reward is commensurate with the ardour of his striving, the faithfulness of his practice and the determination behind his disciplinary regime.

(305-7) Such an isolated position, outside groups and without labels, offers this advantage, that he is able to take from all, to accept and reconcile fragments of widely different and apparently contradictory teachings.

(305-8) The order of progress is from belief to knowledge, and thence to love of that which is known.

(305-9) There are long stretched-out intervals of spiritually impotent inspirationally lifeless existence.

(305-10) Pitfalls and illusions beset the path of seeker of spiritual Truth. It is necessary to heed these warnings well.

(305-11) The disciple who stays too long clutching the coat of a master, retards his own growth.

(305-12) Progress is not made evenly nor consistently. It is unsteady and even uncertain.

(305-13) He should always be receptive to ideas and practices which might enrich those he already knows.

(305-14) The routine devotions of an institution do not appeal to this type of temperament - sensitive, moody and independent as it is.

(305-15) This Quest is not an undertaking of a few weeks or months. It is, as I have often said, a lifetime's work: Patience is required from us and must be given by us.

(305-16) They do not progress with perfect straightness and utter smoothness. Rather do they digress at some times and retrogress at other times.

⁴⁶⁹ "established" was typed at the end of the line and inserted with a caret.

(305-17) It is as true for the well seasoned proficient as for the newly-begun, upward-gazing aspirant.

(305-18) If he has found the correct path and has travelled with a teacher as far as this stage, thenceforth he may travel by himself. He is now free for he is now able to guide himself.

306⁴⁷⁰
IV

307
IV

(307-1)⁴⁷¹ They imagine that the Quest will take their life beyond everyday common things or that it will bring them dramatic occult powers that can be shown off to their friends. In some cases, it is mere vanity which is the source of these beliefs but in others it is simple misunderstanding or ignorance.

(307-2) Two trustworthy evidences of real progress are attainment of balance and attenuation of ego.

(307-3) He is very very far from the time when he can say that the Quest has been achieved and its purposes accomplished.

(307-4) Elderly people tend to tire easily or to be ailing more often than younger ones.

(307-5) The entire enterprise itself must be reviewed from time to time.

(307-6) (Interior Word): Out of this blankness something will begin to speak to him. It will not be a sound heard with the body's ears. That would be a low psychic manifestation which must be stopped at once, if it happened.

(307-7) To withdraw from sectarian community life and walk alone requires qualities that only few possess. There is security, comfort, moral and worldly support in it. To be able to abandon these things a man must have a strong inner urge as well as a continuous clear perception of philosophy's meaning.

⁴⁷⁰ Blank page

⁴⁷¹ The paras on this page are numbered 242 through 256, making them consecutive with the previous page.

(307-8) Not all men understand just at what time, what date, their quest of the Overself was started. This may be because it did not happen all at once.

(307-9) As he draws closer to the consciousness of Truth, the fact will make itself known to him in various ways.

(307-10) Is this ideal state a possible one? Are the stories of men who have attained it mere fictions or real facts?

(307-11) If he has to analyse problems for himself and has no one else to do it for him, the endeavour may help him to learn discrimination and good judgement.

(307-12) Where is the man who has his own self, and not one made for him by others? Heredity and environment, society and suggestion, convention and education heavily contribute to forming an "I" that is not his own "I,"⁴⁷² to making a pseudo-individual that is not himself but passes for it.

(307-13) To tie oneself to a sectarian group and to its ideas is to form another attachment for the ego.

(307-14) The instrument of reception must be accurately tuned, if God's messages are to be heard aright. (Interior⁴⁷³ Word)

(307-15) To bring others a message which elevates them and a truth which inspires them, the Interior Word will speak through him as him. This is a wonderful phenomenon when it happens.

308⁴⁷⁴

IV

309

IV

(309-1)⁴⁷⁵ "Not only one kind of being is inclined toward this Quest," said Plotinus

(309-2) The official ministers of established religions possess a formal authority in the public view which the lone independent philosopher cannot hope to possess. What

⁴⁷² We have inserted a comma for clarity.

⁴⁷³ "Int." in the original.

⁴⁷⁴ Blank page

⁴⁷⁵ The paras on this page are numbered 257 through 267, making them consecutive with the previous page.

they say is 'reliable;' what he says is mere opinion. Since he is not a member of any church, he is not 'recognised.' Do you wonder that he keeps silent?

(309-3) Again and again one observes that the technique, exercise, method or rule which brings good results for one person, fails to do so for another. It is absurd to make a single uniform prescription and expect all persons to get a single uniform result from it. What has been done here is to give some of the best ones and let each reader find out what suits him most, not what suits his friend or another reader most.

(309-4) The independent seeker, who affiliates himself with no sectarian group, no fanatic organisation, no narrowing cult, avoids the tensions and discards the prejudices which such affiliation usually brings with it. For contact with other denominations then creates the need of defending the selfish interests and [the]⁴⁷⁶ given dogmas of his own, either directly or obliquely by attacking the others. In this way the tensions and prejudices arise and subsist. They cannot come to an end until this exclusiveness itself comes to an end. How many evils, hatreds, fights and injustices come from it! How many unjust malignments of character does it lead to! How much blind bigotry does it cause, a bigotry which refuses to allow, and is unable to see, the good in cults other than its own!

(309-5) But there is a place [and a need]⁴⁷⁷ for the cohesion of a group, for the sustained teamwork of an organisation and for the discipline imposed on individuals by a church.

(309-6) There are times to intensify the quest, to hasten its tempo and stiffen its disciplines.

(309-7) There are certain principal phenomena, especially visions that are seen, rapturous ecstasies that are felt, revelations that are impressed on the mind and communications that are uttered within by an interior voice, which may appear at various stages (or may not).

(309-8) Some of them write for beginners as if the latter were, like the adepts, already on the summits.

(309-9) The more he progresses as a result of these labours the more will he be able to enjoy spiritual benefits such as the falling away of fears and worries.

(309-10) If anyone really wants to progress, let alone succeed, I do not know any way of escaping these two indispensable conditions: exercise and perseverance.

⁴⁷⁶ PB himself inserted "the" by hand.

⁴⁷⁷ "and a need" was typed above this line and inserted with a caret by PB himself.

(311-1)⁴⁷⁹ There is the ever-growing awareness of trans-material existence, the deepening peace of it, and the increasing accumulation of inspiring knowledge.

(311-2) An outward organisation may be useful to those who are still on the religious and mystical levels but for the purposes of philosophic advancement it is unnecessary. Public societies are mere babels of dogmatic opinion and lead in the end to confusion. The correct history of many⁴⁸⁰ spiritual organisations is not an edifying one. No formal association or institution is of any real worth here. Every student must work hard on and for himself. Outside of that he may catch inspiration and receive help from an expert guide. The few who are able to walk together with him on this path will come along with time; the others would only be a drag. But if he wants to join with other really interested persons in studying the books together in an informal way, with no external bond, he may try it.

(311-3) What the German mystics called 'the Interior Word' is precisely the same as what two thousand years earlier the Chinese mystics called "the Voice of Heaven."

(311-4) The source of inspiration for his messages may be superior to that of the ordinary spiritualistic source, yet⁴⁸¹ still not be quite reliable, because it is still not what⁴⁸² it purports to be.

(311-5) The pattern of recent events may point to the fact that he is in a new and better cycle. Yet its most important fruits are not only the contentment he feels but rather the new inspiration and greater self-control that he shows.

(311-6) When the student on this path assumes failure will be the only outcome of his efforts to spiritually progress, this pessimistic attitude overlooks the fact of grace. Admittedly the actuality of forgiveness for past errors does depend on sincere, humble repentance in prayer and to a certain extent on self-denying amendment and self-disciplining reform. If this is done, a basis for hope does exist and can be sought.

⁴⁷⁸ Blank page

⁴⁷⁹ The paras on this page are unnumbered; they are not consecutive with the previous page.

⁴⁸⁰ PB himself inserted "many" by hand, because it was cut away by a hole punch in the original.

⁴⁸¹ PB himself inserted "yet" by hand because it was cut away by a hole punch in the original.

⁴⁸² PB himself inserted "what" by hand because it was cut away by a hole punch in the original.

Even if for any reason immediate achievements are not possible, there yet exist other motives for striving to do what⁴⁸³ he can in self-improvement. By that the remaining years of his lifetime would be assisted and protected in different ways and, at the last, the next reincarnation would be made so much better and probably easier. If he really accepts the principle of rebirth then both the long view and the immediate possibility counsel a continuance of aspiration and endeavour. Hope is dead only when faith is dead.

312⁴⁸⁴

IV

313

IV

(313-1)⁴⁸⁵ The⁴⁸⁶ ordinary person does not have the time to search intellectually or the desire to search adventurously for truth. This is partly because his other personal activities absorb his day. But a man who dedicates his entire time to this quest, who is willing to pay its cost, is more likely to find the truth. Yet time is only part of the price; he must also be willing to sacrifice dishonesty in his thinking

(313-2) He will not gladly bear any label, for he considers truth a state of being rather than a set of dogmas, and he prefers the freedom to search and hold it to the shackles of sectarian connection. But if the world insists on his identifying himself, he will take the name of philosopher, as being broader, more universal, and less restrictive than any other. It is a name which links and limits him to no religious denomination, which detaches him from all intellectual schools,⁴⁸⁷ and which puts him under no organisational, party or sectarian roof.

(313-3) If a man is seriously embarked on this quest, he will understand that when a desirable object or being {is}⁴⁸⁸ put into his possession, or torn away from it, his sincerity will be tested by the impersonality with which he regards the event and deduces its meaning.

⁴⁸³ PB himself inserted "what" by hand because it was cut away by a hole punch in the original.

⁴⁸⁴ Void page

⁴⁸⁵ The paras on this page are numbered 1 through 7; they are not consecutive with the previous page. In addition, there is 1 unnumbered para at the top of the page.

⁴⁸⁶ This para was added at a later point than the others on this page; it was typed through "because his other" at the top of the page and continued with "personal activities" at the bottom of the page.

⁴⁸⁷ We have inserted a comma after "denomination" and after "schools" for clarity.

⁴⁸⁸ We have inserted "is" for clarity.

(313-4) What they do not see, what they cannot see, is that the ashram is only a means to achieve a certain end. It is not the end itself. For that is entirely an inward affair, leaving the man entirely free to live in or out of ashrams. If a monk says that the spiritual attainment is possible only in a monastery, this proves that – however reputed or revered he may be – his own attainment is a limited one.

(313-5) To quote in justification of group work or church gatherings Christ's words: "Wheresoever two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them," is no justification at all. For most groups are anything from ten to a hundred in number, most church gatherings range from twenty to a thousand in number. Christ did not say that he would be present with a dozen, a score, two or three hundred, he precisely stated the number should be two or three.

(313-6) Where a man is ready for this Quest but stubbornly clings to his old familiar way of thought and life the Overself may or may not release karma that will tear him away from it. His ego's desires will then be macerated by suffering until its will to live gets weaker and weaker.

(313-7) Thousands have practised meditation sporadically perhaps or regularly in some cases, but to little avail. Others have refused satisfaction to their appetites and repulsed their passions but again illumination still eludes them. Why, they ask, lament, or complain, are they unable to achieve even a modest success?

(313-8) That few persons out of many seekers succeed in finding this spiritual fulfilment to more than a relative extent is undeniable. Why this should be so is not only due to the difficulty of complying with all the requirements of the Quest but also to the kind of nervous system inherited from parents; to the character of the destiny allotted by the Law of Recompense; to the environment and education conditioning the earlier years of childhood, adolescence and young manhood; and finally to the rarity of competent teachers or guides.

314⁴⁸⁹

IV

315

IV

(315-1)⁴⁹⁰ It is the worship of outer formal success and ignorance of the inner spiritual reality in religion which has led so often to the triumph of error and defeat of truth, to officialdom, organisation and worldliness. It is the same worship which in a different

⁴⁸⁹ Blank page

⁴⁹⁰ The para on this page is numbered 8, making it consecutive with the previous page.

sphere, is applied in history to the same unworthy objects with the same deceptive results. The belief that the nations like the religions go from bad to good to better, is as falsely but frequently taught as is the belief that power and progress travel together. The same suffocation which overcame the original purity of Christianity overcame many of the finer elements who were crushed by the power of arms, cunning or treachery. It is this worship of material splendour and military force – so far distant from true heroism – which has made the Roman Empire a subject for so much praise in so many books. Yet the ruthless brutality and vast bloodshed which accompanied both the growth and maintenance of that empire receive little denunciation. Writers and readers are impressed by the splendid buildings and straight roads but know little or nothing about the destroyed spiritual culture of the conquered “barbarians.” The official history of religions is as much a mixture of the false with the true as the official history of nations. Those who are capable of independent thought, and who are willing to make the required research among the mutilated records salvaged from deliberate destruction, may hope to find out some part of what really happened and what was originally and really taught by the prophets. All others will have to be satisfied – and generally are – with substitutions, frauds and perversions among which a remnant of the pure truth shines out the more brilliantly by contrast with its setting. For it was impossible to exclude all the truth from the teaching and the records nor let it be said in justice to the official teachers and historians, was it desired to do so.

He who is fully aware of this state of affairs, because he has explored the neglected by-currents of religious history and discovered things which can bring no reward of position, promotion, honour or money, who has also devoted his time and life to learning the secret of time and understanding the meaning of life, – such a lone individual will not be so imprudent as to oppose his forces against this universal current of admiration for what is spurious but successful, false but powerful, dishonest but accepted. If he does not seek martyrdom, he will prefer to remain withdrawn obscure, retired, and dispense his knowledge or grace to the few who really seek Truth. As for the others, the multitude, who must attend throughout the day to their physical wants and have neither the leisure nor facilities nor inclination to probe such matters – what are they to do? Knowing no better what else can they do than accept the lies along with the

316⁴⁹¹

IV

317

IV

(continued from the previous page) truths, the impostures along with the authenticities, the whole dubious mixture of good and bad. Until quite recently this lone individual

⁴⁹¹ Blank page

could not even help them even if he wished for the attempt would at once call down official persecution and extinction. All that he could do was what in fact he did do, pass the truth to a closed circle and thence let it be transmitted in the same secret way to other closed circles through the centuries.

If today so much has been publicly released as to constitute a veritable revelation, we must thank these pioneers and initiates {who}⁴⁹² in Europe, the Near-East and India, kept the teachings intact during earlier times. And although nothing can still equal the personal initiation by a master in effectiveness, nevertheless the wider intellectual initiation of our times is itself an immense advance on the secrecy formerly imposed by harsh necessity and makes most of the teaching available to the multitude.

(317-1)⁴⁹³ If men who lack sincerity, purity and humility take up such a practice as meditation, it will harm them and increase their capacity to harm others. Moral character not only cannot be neglected in this sphere but is quite foundational.

(317-2) There will be moods in which he will feel quite incapable of making the effort.

(317-3) The prestige of institutional mysticism, like that of official religion, mesmerises nearly everyone interested in the subject. The independent mystic, who refuses all affiliation with any sect, school, ashram, monastery, group or society is suspect and finds himself left in an almost isolation. But although this may seem unfortunate, it is so only in some ways. In other ways, it leaves him entirely free from the bonds of dogma, free to remain faithful to truth irrespective of all other considerations, free to speak in a voice whose authority comes not from worldly power but from spiritual status.

(317-4) The habit of regularity will be greatly helpful if carried into worship, study and meditation.

(317-5) He should remind himself that the Quest is a magnificent venture and that the difficulties and delays encountered on it do not lessen this magnificence.

(317-6) They can measure progress less by these things than by how much they have mastered the lower nature, how often they deny the ego its desire to preponderate and how willing they are to detach themselves from emotional reactions.

⁴⁹² We have changed "initiates who both in Europe the Near-East and India," to "initiates who in Europe, the Near-East and India" for clarity.

⁴⁹³ The paras on this page are numbered 9 through 16, making them consecutive with the previous page.

(317-7) The refusal to join any ecclesiastical church or religious society does not leave a man spiritually homeless. If he faithfully exercises himself in meditation and seeks to practice the presence of God, what better 'home' could he have?

(317-8) His fidelity to the Quest will be tested, both by specially critical periods and by everyday happenings. On the one side, temptations will call him; on the other side difficulties will deter

318⁴⁹⁴

IV

319

IV

(continued from the previous page) him. Will he bend the knee before the world's idols? Will he stand strong amid the world's turmoil? Only when the hour of testing comes can he know.

(319-1)⁴⁹⁵ The need to identify himself with an organised group, established religion or particular sect, or indeed with any cause, is at base the need to identify himself with the god within. He unwittingly wants to belong to something larger than his own little ego. Such membership helps to achieve this because it removes the sense of separateness and the feeling of loneliness. But it does so only at surface level. With the efflux of time, he finds it necessary to search for satisfaction at a deeper level. For the group, the church or the institution are outside him and give it only temporarily, partially or spottily. A durable and fuller result is possible only by turning around and looking within his own being. For there, in the hidden presence of the Spiritual self, he will find that larger Cause, Source, Mystery, with which he can identify himself in the perfect way.

(319-2) Because he feels it is safer to follow the crowd into an organised society or an orthodox church [and practise conformity,]⁴⁹⁶ the average man does so. Because his inspiration brings forth new unfamiliar and original thoughts, the creative prophet must walk alone and become his own audience.

(319-3) The longing for inner peace may be intermittent and vague, as with most ordinary people, or it may be persistent and acute as with most spiritual aspirants.

⁴⁹⁴ Blank page

⁴⁹⁵ The paras on this page are numbered 17 through 25, making them consecutive with the previous page.

⁴⁹⁶ "and practice conformity" was typed below the line, but there was no caret to indicate its placement. We have inserted it here per context.

(319-4) It is understandable that some do not want to set the highest as their objective, but prefer to stop half-way on the Quest. They are entitled to do so. But they must not be surprised to find that when they do reach that point, an inner conflict or vacillation will develop which will make it difficult to stay there in peace.

(319-5) The faculty of memory, rightly used, can incite him to further efforts and sustain them despite discouragement.

(319-6) Something in him is constantly urging him to press onward in the quest, to labour and struggle for self-mastery.

(319-7) The first duty of man, which takes precedence of all other duties, is to become conscious of his Overself. This is the highest duty and every other duty must bow before it. Even domestic happiness must not stand in the way of spiritual salvation when, and if, the two collide. The training which makes this possible may be largely unpracticable in his particular circumstances but it is never entirely so. The difficulty of performing this duty is not enough excuse to relieve him of it.

(319-8) It is natural and pardonable to seek the social support of an organised group or church to uphold him.

(319-9) Every quester has his ascents and falls.

320⁴⁹⁷

IV

321

IV

Interior Word

(321-1)⁴⁹⁸ When the mind can be trained to attend with sufficient concentration to listen inwardly, it may hear the Interior Word.

(321-2) Chinese wisdom calls the Interior Word “the Voice of Heaven.”

(321-3) Until the internal Word speaks in him he is really incapable of helping others spiritually. He may be able to do so intellectually or to comfort them emotionally but that is a different and inferior thing.

⁴⁹⁷ Blank page

⁴⁹⁸ The paras on this page are numbered 26 through 39, making them consecutive with the previous page.

(321-4) At this stage he discovers to his growing wonder that he is able both to communicate with the Overself [and]⁴⁹⁹ to cooperate with it.

(321-5) It is a process of inner dialogue of mental conversation with the other self and of emotional communion with it, flowing under his thoughts to and fro.

(321-6) If the Interior Word bids him move in any direction which seems encompassed by difficulties or blocked by obstacles so that he can see no way before him, let him not doubt or fear. A way will be made by the power of the Overself. He need only obey, relax and trust the guidance.

(321-7) When the Inner Word begins to speak to him, he may begin to speak to others – not before. For only then will what he says bear any creative power, spiritual inspiration, enlightenment or healing in it.

IV⁵⁰⁰

(321-8) There are some who respect the truth of mysticism and recognise the existence of its quest, but who do not want to enter personally into either one or the other.

(321-9) A strongly individualistic temperament cannot be at ease in the collective membership of an organisation where dogmas are set up like fences and where patriotism rejects salvation for those outside. Such a temperament needs the free air of unfettered thinking and uncircumscribed goodwill. It can sympathise intellectually with many different points of view without losing itself in any one of them, but it can do so only because it belongs to none.

(321-10) If blunders and falls appear in his own spiritual career, he may remember that they do so in the career of many other aspirants.

(321-11) Whoever would become a philosopher must outgrow adolescent attitudes and intellectual frailties.

(321-12) His dedication to the Quest must be as [proportionately complete as his desire for its success.]⁵⁰¹ It must become his life. Nothing and no one should be allowed to

⁴⁹⁹ PB himself inserted “and” by hand.

⁵⁰⁰ This is the end of the sub-category “Interior Word.”

⁵⁰¹ PB himself changed “nearly complete as he wants it to succeed.” to “proportionately complete as his desire for its success.” by hand.

lead him off it to some side issue where he may lose either valuable years,⁵⁰² or himself. He must think only of it.

(321-13) The ordinary man, takes his everyday consciousness and existence for granted, feels no need to transcend them, to purify and sublimate them. The Quester takes a contrary position and strives to do these things and thus redeem himself.

(321-14) Pursue the quest, practise its exercises and undergo its disciplines with a patience that does not halt for an instant. If you do this, the time will come when the Overself can hold out no longer. It will then no longer dwell in secret but in your heart.

322⁵⁰³

IV

323

IV

(323-1)⁵⁰⁴ To say, as some mystics do, that no method can be formulated for the progress of man toward spiritual self-realisation is to confess their own inadequacy. Did not the foremost of Spanish mystics, St John of the Cross, write out an almost mathematical chart of this progress?

(323-2) The Quest is a drawn-out affair, usually much longer than anyone wishes it to be. Aspirants are apt to lose patience with the long wait and, spasmodically, to fall into depression or even despair.

(323-3) The multitude is so impressed by the big number that it paralyzes their capacity for logical thought and correct judgment. The success among them is taken as endorsement of truth or worth, quantity as the equivalent of quality.

(323-4) The guidance for each man's path must in the end come from within himself and be individually suited to himself.

(323-5) It would be easy and pardonable for anyone to get dismayed at the number of requirements, regimes, disciplines, exercises and practices necessary before their object can be attained.

⁵⁰² PB himself inserted a comma by hand.

⁵⁰³ Blank page

⁵⁰⁴ The paras on this page are numbered 40 through 52, making them consecutive with the previous page.

(323-6) The more successful type of Quester is the one who can keep his interest, enthusiasm and practices in a stable unwaning condition

(323-7) In all matters spiritual, mystical and religious humanity is bewitched both by the spell of the past and the prestige of the institution.

(323-8) He will meet with obstructions on the road. There they will lie until he uses enough energy and exertion to remove them.

(323-9) The biggest deceiver in religio-mystical life is the institutional establishment, the organisational group. For here the followers have the experience of being nourished when in actuality only the social need is being nourished. Here the truth and its virtue, beauty, strength, reality, above all its transcendence, which is totally outside ordinary worldly experience, are imitated effectually and successfully. So the followers are satisfied and fall into complacency. The Quest is deserted and the copy which is substituted for it has the advantage of being much easier and pleasanter for all concerned.

(323-10) Is it not the hope of a successful result which supports his efforts during all those years? Would he undertake them, could he ever have been induced to undertake them if he had been told beforehand that the goal was so distant that his chances of reaching it were too slight to be counted?

(323-11) There will always be tests enough for the man who decides that he will no longer think with the prejudices of society or behave as the multitude ordinarily behaves.

(323-12) The potency of his thoughts will be upheld by the consecration of his faculties.

(323-13) If some dally on the way, others stray from it altogether.

324⁵⁰⁵

IV

325

IV

(325-1)⁵⁰⁶ If he is to keep loyal to Truth, he cannot keep loyal to any established or official religious organisation. Its character may be good even high, its work may be

⁵⁰⁵ Blank page

⁵⁰⁶ The paras on this page are numbered 53 through 63, making them consecutive with the previous page.

useful, even necessary, but the Spirit's freedom - as reflected in his intellect - requires him to remain outside it.

(325-2) The Quester is a man who is seeking higher and higher ground.

(325-3) For the masses on a religious level and for the beginners on a mystical level, the desire will be to join an institutional activity.

(325-4) How few are the aspirants who look for mastery of themselves as a reward not less gratifying than experience of spirit, for triumph over temper as being just as satisfactory as a mystical phenomenon!

(325-5) Have we not witnessed in our own times how, on the pretext of doing good, great evil has been wrought? But it is not only in worldly circles that this is possible, for the same thing can be witnessed in spiritual circles, especially their organisations and institutions.

(325-6) There are inherent differences in people, differences of character, energy, intelligence and temperament. For the quester to succeed, he must recognise this fact and not let himself become the slave of a system which is unsuited to him, or of a method which conflicts with his external circumstances.

(325-7) He is to be an individual, with his own way of reaching a conclusion or his own way of looking at life.

(325-8) How many men think and say that when their material fortunes improve, or their family problems are solved, or their living place changed, they will be able to give time and effort to the spiritual quest, but until then they must wait! But in actual fact this seldom happens. For when the improvement, solution or change does take place, new matters call for their attention or new attachments are formed for the ego, and so the spiritual effort gets postponed again.

(325-9) If the Overself did not lead him into and through the final dark night, where he becomes as helpless as an infant, as bereft of interior personal possessions as a destitute pauper, how else would he learn that it is not by his own powers and capacities that he can rise at last into enduring illumination?

(325-10) The independent seeker, uncommitted to any cult may be a sheep without a fold but he is not necessarily without a shepherd. The inner voice can guide and care for him no less than a man in the flesh.

(325-11) It is easy to stray from the path, hard to keep faithfully on it. Sometimes a thread's width alone separates the straightway from the deviation.

326⁵⁰⁷
IV

327
IV

(327-1)⁵⁰⁸ He must come on this quest not for a few years but for all his life.

(327-2) It will lead him, if faithfully followed, beyond the confines of any organisation.

(327-3) Here is an ideal worth working for, worth whatever struggles and patience it calls for.

(327-4) He will be a Stoic to the extent that he accepts the necessity of patience and knows how to wait.

(327-5) It is not necessary to call meetings or organise societies in order to propagate truth.

(327-6) Why must he always conform to other peoples' standards of thought and behaviour?

(327-7) Is it a hopeless pursuit of the unreachable?

(327-8) What is the next step needed to take him onwards?

328⁵⁰⁹
IV

329
IV

(329-1)⁵¹⁰ If, on the inward journey from ego to Overself, a man has to give up everything, on the outward journey he may pick up everything again. If he has to become a little child in order to enter the kingdom of heaven, he will return from that

⁵⁰⁷ Blank page

⁵⁰⁸ The paras on this page are numbered 96 through 100; they are not consecutive with the previous page. There are 3 unnumbered paras at the bottom of the page.

⁵⁰⁹ Blank page

⁵¹⁰ The paras on this page are numbered 1 through 8; they are not consecutive with the previous page.

kingdom and become a man again, yet without losing all that was worthy in the child-like faith. Whatever the aspirant has sacrificed for the sake of finding God, God may restore to him afterwards.

(329-2) The vain man, the stupid man, or the lustful man cannot enter the kingdom of heaven. He must first be humble enough to silence the ego, intuitive enough to expose its deception, and strong enough to overcome its desires.

(329-3) The aspirant enters on the Quest of the heavenly kingdom from the first moment that he becomes willing to try to give up his ego. It does not matter that it will engage his whole lifetime, that success may only be found in some future incarnation. From that first moment he becomes a disciple of the Overself, and a candidate for the kingdom of heaven.

(329-4) It is the business of philosophy to show up the falsity of numerous pseudo-dilemmas such as: "Either you remain in the world and become bad or you enter into a monastery and become good." Or "Either you support the capitalist system and support permanent misery for the masses or you support the communist system, and bring permanent happiness to them." And it not only shows them up but propounds a third alternative which is better than the other two.

(329-5) It is not a doctrine of life only for ageing hermits, but quite as much for keen young men who wish to do something in the world. It is a practical goal which could also be a practicable one for millions who now think it beyond their reach, if only they would accept and act on the psychological truth that "thinking makes it so." It is a strengthening reassurance to minds awakening from the slavish dreams of lust that they need not stay slaves forever. It is not an asceticism that is happy only in making itself miserable, but a comprehension that weighs values and abides by the result.

(329-6) The testimony of history in every age and land proves convincingly that this is no fruitless search for undiscoverable treasures, no mocking quest for unattainable nirvanas.

(329-7) Such delightful minutes are rare guests in our life.

(329-8) Is it beyond the achievement of ordinary mortals?

330⁵¹¹

IV

331

⁵¹¹ Blank page

(331-1)⁵¹² No man is freed from the necessity of developing his thinking capacities merely because he is developing his mystical ones. The reverse is just as true. Nature is not satisfied if he is a good mystic, but a bad thinker.

(331-2) In short, he possess a kind of double entity, harbouring at times within his breast a life and consciousness that seems higher than what was originally and still is normally his own.

(331-3) Where an aspirant has sincerely tried, but failed to gain any spiritual experience during his lifetime, the hidden tradition affirms that he will certainly gain it at the time of passing out of his earthly body.

(331-4) He is not set free from the evolutionary task of developing his personality because he has developed the capacity to enter mystical states. He must fulfil this task and thus bring all his capabilities into equilibrium and until he has done this, his enjoyment of the divine bliss will be only a sporadic and broken one. But this task fulfilled, it will become a natural and continuous one.

(331-5) Glimpses will come to him now and then; they will cheer his heart and enlighten his mind; but a constant level of serene perception will be quite beyond the orbit of his experience.

(331-6) In those moments of inward glory all his life expands. His intelligence advances and his goodness perceives new vistas of growth. Heaven opens out for a while in his emotional world.

(331-7) This beautiful state of heart has yet to become natural and continuous. And that cannot happen until the personal ego is laid low and until the whole psyche of the man engages in the struggle for self-conquest.

(331-8) Grace will shatter the power of an evil past.

(331-9) The grace of an infinite being is itself infinite.

(331-10) The acknowledgment of evil done in the past and the confession of weakness experienced in the present are indispensable preliminaries.

(331-11) The seeker of mystical experience now becomes the achiever of it.

⁵¹² The paras on this page are numbered 9 through 22, making them consecutive with the previous page.

(331-12) His serenity will be tested whether it can remain uncorroded by whatever cards and pressures the day may bring him.

(331-13) He has to become serenely detached without becoming a walking mummy.

(331-14) What he feels during those moments he has to become during the years that follow.

332⁵¹³

IV

333

IV

(333-1)⁵¹⁴ The principle which makes union with the Overself possible is always the same, albeit on different levels. Whether it appears as humility in prayer, passivity to intuition, stillness in meditation, or serenity despite untoward circumstances, these attitudes temporarily weaken the ego and lessen its domination. They temporarily silence the ego and give the Overself the opportunity to touch us or work through us. So long as the ego dominates us, we are outside the reach of the Overself and separated from its help.

(333-2) Let him be vigilant about the way in which he reacts to experiences and circumstances, to men and women. Let him be on guard against the attractions and repulsions which they engender, the emotions which they excite, and the desires which they arouse.

(333-3) Few disciples have a record of uninterrupted progress to show on this quest of the timeless. Because most have to struggle so hard against tendencies which grew up during many lives of the past, most have a record of rise and fall, of success and failure, of struggle and reversal, to show. The knowledge of this fact and the hope it should give him should support every individual aspirant during this period of discouragement.

(333-4) He will have to learn the art of standing aside from himself, of observing his actions and analysing his motives as though they belonged to some other person. He may cease to practice this art only when his actions reflect the calm wisdom of the Overself and when his motives reflect its detached impersonality.

⁵¹³ Blank page

⁵¹⁴ The paras on this page are numbered 23 through 29, making them consecutive with the previous page.

(333-5) He who seeks to gain truth in the quickest way must combine the search within himself with revelation from outside himself.

(333-6) It will be hard to ferret out the blunders into which his own egoism will lead him, for it will deceive itself as it will deceive him, by using the guises of virtuous feeling or logical thinking. His supposedly selfless motives may be, in reality, other than what they seem. His superficially sound reasoning may be an attempt on the part of his ego to retain its hold upon him by plausible self-justification.

(333-7) The setting of rules and the chalking out of a path are only for beginners. When a man has made sufficient advance to become aware of inner promptings from his higher self, he should allow them to become active in guiding him and

334⁵¹⁵

IV

335

IV

(continued from the previous page) should let them take him freely on his spiritual life course.

(335-1)⁵¹⁶ Illumination may crowd into a single day or spread over several years.

(335-2) Philosophy demands the purity and experience of a sage not the purity and ignorance of a child.

(335-3) He will have to stand various tests by life itself before he can pass to higher levels of being.

(335-4) It is easy not to be on the quest. The only requirement for that is to be born human.

(335-5) No true adept thinks these powers are his own. He knows that he is merely instrumental for them. They belong to and are manifestations of the One Infinite Mind, not himself.

⁵¹⁵ Blank page

⁵¹⁶ The paras on this page are numbered 30 through 39, making them consecutive with the previous page.

(335-6) In each test there exists the chance, through success, to gain strength and pass up in Initiation to a higher level or, through failure, to display weakness and fall in conduct to a lower one.

(335-7) It is not in the actual owning of things that the wrong lies; it is in such blind attachments to them that their ephemeral character and hidden penalties are left unrecognised. The Beautiful and Useful have their proper place in home and life. Their offering may be accepted if it is kept within our understanding of truth and does not displace it and if our sense of values is not smothered by it.

(335-8) From the first momentary glimpse of the soul till the final rest in it, he is being led to accept the truth that the love which he wants and hopes to find outside himself must be found within himself. The true beloved is not a person but a presence. When genuine love in its intensest form utterly overwhelms him, he will find that its physical form is a mere caricature of it and that its human form is a pale reflection from it. Instead of having to beg some woman or some man for crumbs of affection from their table, he will find a veritable fountain of ever-flowing love deep within his heart, and therefore ever available to him in the fullest measure. This is the one beloved who can never desert him, the unique soul mate who will forever remain with him, the only twinsoul he can seek with the absolute certainty that it is truly his own.

(335-9) First, he has vague feeling of being attracted towards the Overself. Then he bestows more attention upon it, thinks of it frequently; at length attention grows into concentration and this, in turn, culminates in absorption. In the end, he

336⁵¹⁷

IV

337

IV

(continued from the previous page) can say, with al Hallaj: "I live not in myself; only in Thee. Last night I loved. This morning I am Love."

(337-1)⁵¹⁸ He has to continue a resolute and ceaseless war against the forces of greed and lust, the manias of hate and wrath, the eruptions of resentment and envy.

⁵¹⁷ Blank page

⁵¹⁸ The paras on this page are numbered 40 through 50, making them consecutive with the previous page.

(337-2) The only real satisfaction is in finding the Overself. Every other kind is tainted by imperfection, spoiled by brevity, or not, after attainment, what it seemed before attainment.

(337-3) He will have to correct and complete the materialistic evidence of his senses as he will have to discipline and over-come their animalistic outgoing tendency.

(337-4) The philosophical seeker must practice as fervid a devotion towards this higher Being as the sectarian missionary practices towards a narrower concept of God.

(337-5) He must meet the demands of his whole psyche if he is to have the proper equipment with which to find the whole truth.

(337-6) The goodness which must come into his willing is not separate nor separable from the truth which must come into his thinking.

(337-7) If, however, he dwells upon his spiritual development and changes of mood, his sins and faults all the time and with all his mind, he is likely to overbalance himself. An extravagant preoccupation with his own ego would then result. This would not be true progress. A wise spiritual director, if he has one, could do no better than thoroughly shake him and tell him to go out and get some social enjoyment or see some funny plays, where he can forget himself and lose this unhealthy obsession with his self-centred thoughts and morbid emotions.

(337-8) It is hard to become as impersonal towards one's own personality as the mathematician becomes towards a geometrical problem. Yet it has to be and has been done.

(337-9) It is one sign of coming Grace when he begins to despise himself for his weaknesses, when he begins to criticise his lower nature to the point of hating it.

(337-10) No two aspirants are alike: all are different from each other in psychological build and past experience. Hence their needs are different. Each aspirant is a special case.

(337-11) If the aspirant has any grievance against another person or if he be conscious of feelings of anger, resentment or hatred against another person, he should follow Jesus' advice and let not the sun go down on his wrath. Which means that he must see him as expressing the result of all his own long experience

(continued from the previous page) and personal thinking about life and therefore the victim of his own past, not acting better only because he does not know any better. The aspirant should then comprehend that whatever wrongs have been done will automatically be brought under the penalty of karmic retribution. Consequently, it is not his affair to condemn or to punish the other person, but to stand aloof and let the law of karma take care of him. It is his affair to understand and not to blame. He must learn to accept a person just as he is, uncondemned. He certainly should try not to feel any emotional resentment or express any personal ill-will against that person. He must keep his own consciousness above the evil, the wrong-doing, the weaknesses or the faults of the other man and not let them enter his own consciousness – which is what happens if he allows them to provoke negative reactions in his lower self. He should make immediate and constant effort to root such weeds out of his emotional life. But the way to do this is not by blinding himself to the faults, the defects and the wrongdoings of the other. Nor is it to be done by going out of his way to associate with undesirables.

(339-1)⁵²⁰ These very hindrances and set backs should not turn him from his task but instead awaken him to more determined efforts than ever.

(339-2) It is not intellectual considerations that primarily move man to changes of life or attitude, but emotional ones.

(339-3) Enlightenment is both a bestowal by grace and achievement by self.

(339-4) A man who sets out to wage war against his own thoughts and to constrain his own impulses may properly be called a warrior. Let him not look for peace until the enemy is defeated and since the enemy will not yield for a long time, but will resist with the utmost desperation, the man will need all the patience he can gather and all the endurance he can muster.

(339-5) However stubborn and intransigent his character may seem, let him never despair of himself. Even if he keeps making mistakes let him pick himself up and try again. However slow and laborious such a procedure seems, it will still be effectual in the end.

⁵²⁰ The paras on this page are numbered 51 through 56, making them consecutive with the previous page.

(339-6) At first he will find nothing more on the path than what his efforts can secure for him. This is why the earlier years often seem so long, so sterile and so monotonous. But

340⁵²¹

IV

341

IV

(continued from the previous page) during the next period grace mingles with his efforts and encouraging results then appear. The third and last stage witnesses the gifts of the Overself falling like ripe plums into his lap without any further efforts on his part. Here all is done by the simple working of grace. Then the major virtues of life will come into his possession, not as arbitrary compulsions of an unwilling ego, but as⁵²² ripe fruit falling into his hands from a sap-filled tree. For although it is often said that the spiritually evolved man undergoes a profound self-loss, which penetrates his whole nature and affects his whole expression, the truth is that he does not really lose himself in the new consciousness which has taken possession of him. He loses only his frailty and ignorance, his egoistic pettiness and mental distractedness, his body-based materialism and useless sorrow.

(341-1)⁵²³ In India the traditional view has allotted women an inferior role to that of man. It is generally held that fewer women than men have ever attained the higher goals. Indeed, in some of the sacred works which have come down from ancient times and which still govern much of the thinking upon the subject today, the spiritual aspirant who has obtained a male birth is regarded as being much more fortunate than one who has obtained a female one.

One of the major reasons why women have been assigned a lower status for so long a time has been, aside from the selfish social exploitation of her physical weakness, the asceticism which belongs to the mystical stage of development. Such asceticism has often taken an extreme and unbalanced form with the result that the values and virtues of monastic celibacy have been over-rated and the dangers symbolised by women have been exaggerated. On the philosophic level the balance is restored, extreme fanatic views are dispelled and the natural relationship between the sexes seen in its true light. Philosophy has no use for mere asceticism although it has plenty of use for self-discipline. According to this teaching there are three states of spiritual development, first religious, second mystical or metaphysical, third philosophical. In the first stage,

⁵²¹ Blank page

⁵²² This para, from "as" onward, is a duplicate of para 108-2 in Carbons 30 (4th Series Notebook).

⁵²³ The para on this page is numbered 57, making it consecutive with the previous page.

women are overwhelmingly ahead of men. In the second stage, women and men are roughly equal in the success of their attainment. In the third and final stage, it is mostly men who succeed. A brief explanation why this

342⁵²⁴

IV

343

IV

(continued from the previous page) is so appears on page 138 of "The Hidden Teaching Beyond Yoga."

This said all souls are of equal importance before God. The soul, in the sense of the true self, has no sex whatever. Personalities, which are its projections, may vary their sex from birth to birth, if we accept the theory of re-incarnation, and therefore the important thing is not the sex to which we belong, but the inner mental being that we are. Of great importance are the evolutionary changes through which mankind in general has been passing during recent centuries. Women have been exploited and subjected by men for ages past and it is only within recent times that they have begun to come into their own and claim the rights and privileges which are their just due. In the coming age balance will be restored and woman will take her rightful place alongside of man in the leadership of the whole race.

To sum up, it is no longer a question of what the ancients believed about women or how the modern Indians regard them, but a question of accepting the evolutionary trend of things which is bringing the human race closer and closer to enlightenment and thus making it possible for every woman to claim and receive what is best in life if she wishes.

(343-1)⁵²⁵ Any aspirant who looks to a personal attachment or earthly love for a durable and ultimate happiness will find that sooner or later his illusion will be removed and his mistake corrected by the painful tutorship of experience. If good fortune brings it to him he may enjoy it, but only if he can enjoy it inside his Quest and not outside it. If it separates him from his ideals and lowers his values, then he cannot keep to it and to the Quest too - then in his hour of need it will be lost by him or it will turn from him.

(343-2) If a man has been following the Quest, but subsequently deserts it, he will lose whatever control he has over his personal welfare until he returns to the path again. The more he refuses to heed the sacred call, the more will he move to his own

⁵²⁴ Blank page

⁵²⁵ The paras on this page are numbered 58 through 61, making them consecutive with the previous page.

destruction. His only hope of mending his fortunes is to return to the path which he has deserted.

(343-3) Not to be continually wanting to get things, but to be released from wanting them, is the way towards real peace of mind.

(343-4) Growth is to be measured in terms of consciousness and understanding, character and intelligence, intuition and balance

344⁵²⁶

IV

345

IV

(continued from the previous page) in their totality, and not in terms of any single one of these alone.

(345-1)⁵²⁷ He must put down the lower emotions every time they rear their heads. The ordinary unquesting man may allow resentment, jealousy, anger, lust, hate, and greed to appear and act without restraint on the scene of his life, but the disciple cannot. Self-purification is both his need and his duty.

(345-2) During the 'dark night of the soul,' as it is called by Spanish mystics, the abrupt yet brief joy of the first awakening to existence of a diviner life is succeeded and thrown into vivid contrast by the long melancholy years of its loss. There will come to him terrible periods when the quest will seem to have been lost, when his personal shortcomings will magnify themselves formidably before his eyes and when meditation will be dry sterile and even distasteful. Not only will it seem that the Divine is saddeningly remote, but also that it is impossible of access. Let him know this and be forewarned, know that even its seeming loss is actually a part of the quest's usual course. Hope must sustain him during such dark periods, and time will show it to be neither a groundless nor an unfulfilled feeling. Those years may be bitter indeed for the ego, may even seem wasted ones, but they have their meaning. First, they bring up to the surface and into kinetic activity all hidden faults, all potential weaknesses, all latent evil, so that they may be exposed for what they are and got rid of - often after their resultant sufferings.

All the aspirant's latent wickedness (as well as virtue) is actualised by degrees; all of his dormant tempting passions are aroused in turn; all of his animal propensities

⁵²⁶ Blank page

⁵²⁷ The paras on this page are numbered 61, 62, and 62-a, making them consecutive with the previous page.

are brought into play against his worthier ideals; all his insincerities and greeds, untruthfulnesses and vanities sprout quickly from the seed stage into full-grown plants. The good qualities show themselves too at the same time, so that there is a terrible struggle within him, a struggle which the laws of the quest ordain he shall endure and complete alone. He becomes a dual personality. No master and no God may interfere with this momentous testing of a human soul at this critical stage of its evolution when the relation between the lower and higher selves is sought to be entirely changed. For it may not pass over into the new and higher life forever unless and until it is really ready for such life. All this happens through events

346⁵²⁸

IV

347

IV

(continued from the previous page) and circumstances both ordinary and extraordinary by a natural law which governs all efforts to rend the mystic veil.

(347-1)⁵²⁹ The disciple has to pass through different stages of evolution. Each stage has its own special requirements and difficulties, gains and tests, as well as its own point of view.

(347-2) The Quest is not to be looked upon as something added to his life. Rather it is to be his life itself.

(347-3) If he clings to this spiritual quest under all circumstances a rich inner reward will manifest itself eventually.

(347-4) A wise man will seek to study himself, a fool will be busy meddling with others.

(347-5) Between the clear-cut solidity of the outer life in the sense-world and the impalpable delicacy of the inner life in the divine spirit, there is a region which many aspirants have to cross, but which a few succeed in avoiding. This is a region of illusion, fantasy, and psychism, where the ego uses its most cunning devices to entrap his emotions and entangle his passions, weaves its most specious flattery to seduce his intellect and imagination. On this part of his journey sensuality assumes the subtlest forms, fancy weaves the strangest occult experiences. Vanity receives the greatest encouragement through oracular or mission-bestowing messages, and unbalance is

⁵²⁸ Blank page

⁵²⁹ The paras on this page are numbered 63 through 68, making them consecutive with the previous page.

heightened to the pitch of neuroticism, hysteria, or even insanity. In this psychological stage of his development where error masquerades as truth, he will unconsciously impose upon the world of reality forms which properly belong to the world of sense. Here visions and messages, experiences and phenomena, things seen, heard, or touched by the imagination will constitute a subtle materialism designed to lead him astray. He must protect himself by drawing upon a strong, impartial self-criticism and self-denial, a strong, impersonal intelligence, and by seeking the counsel of a competent guide.

(347-6) His quest will not only have to take him out of the body's toxicity, negative feelings, lustful desires and aggressive passions of the lower nature, not only out of the intellect's curiosity and restlessness, but also out of the ego's vain and disorderly imagination. It is from this source that so many false psychological experiences and hallucinatory revelations, so many prophetic messages and deceptive visions arise.

348⁵³⁰

IV

349

IV

(continued from the previous page) The prudent aspirant will not blindly accept any self-flattering intimation or prediction, but will check it against the appraisals of informed persons, against the nature of his own conduct or the egolessness of his own character.

(349-1)⁵³¹ The dangers of wrong meditation or of rapid mystical development unaccompanied by moral purification or of great renunciation lacking proper mental preparation are especially neuroticism, hysteria and even insanity.

(349-2) The teacher does not care to make the pupil falsely happy by flattering him and remaining silent about his short-comings. It is better that the teacher speak out about them, so that something may be done to correct.

(349-3) If the Master had no patience with his disciples, he and they would soon part. If he had no belief in their eventual evolution, he and they would never join.

(349-4) At this stage a question will constantly arise in his mind and repeatedly confront him. It is: Where can I find guidance and inspiration for this mystical journey?

⁵³⁰ Blank page

⁵³¹ The paras on this page are numbered 69 through 75, making them consecutive with the previous page.

(349-5) If he refuses to seek and cling to the human personality of any Master, but resolves to keep all the strength of his devotion for the divine impersonal Self back of his own, that will not bar his further progress. It, too, is a way whereby the goal can be successfully reached. But it is a harder way.

(349-6) What does getting rid of the ego's dominance mean? Until we see this clearly, we shall not see what effort we have to make to achieve it. First, it means constant training to regard ourselves and our fortunes as coolly, disinterestedly and impartially as we regard other men and their fortunes. Secondly, it means constant vigilance to keep out the distorting, befogging and perverting interference of personal habits of thought and feeling. It is the blind following of these tendencies of our nature, accumulated since a far past, that makes up most of the ego's life. Thirdly, it means constant practice in repressing thoughts and emotions while cultivating mental stillness.

(349-7) Both Spanish St John of the Cross and Hebrew Job of the Bible experienced and wrote of the darkness of the soul that falls on God's good earnest devotee.

(349-8) The dark night is a tragic period. Hardly anyone emerges from it without bitter murmuring and rebellious complaint against the Divinity he earlier professed to adore.

350⁵³²

IV

351

IV

(continued from the previous page) Wherever the man turns he can find no relief for his suffering. His conduct, under the suggestion of helplessness, becomes aimless and meaningless.

(351-1)⁵³³ Entry into the soul's dark night is an unpleasant affair, marked by a loss of the capacity to practise meditation upon spiritual themes, an inability to enter into the mood of spiritual ecstasy, and yet a repulsion toward giving his mind over to anything else. Although he does not know it, although he feels bereft and forlorn, this is actually a result of the Overself's working within the subconscious regions of his being. It is intended to carry his development to a further stage which can appear only when the dark night comes to an end. And although it may seem useless in his own [view]⁵³⁴ to

⁵³² Blank page

⁵³³ The paras on this page are numbered 76 through 83, making them consecutive with the previous page.

⁵³⁴ PB himself inserted "view" by hand.

impose such seemingly unprofitable suffering upon him, it is bringing him more and more out of the clutches of his ego. Quite often, he fears that this is some punishment fallen upon him for his own errors or omissions, but he is wrong.

(351-2) He is forced into the seeming darkness by the processes of Nature. She wishes him to turn back and, on the one hand, purify those parts of his character and on the other hand to develop those parts of his psyche which have remained undeveloped.

(351-3) Nature requires him to counterbalance the qualities he possesses by the qualities he lacks.

(351-4) The spiritual quest is not a romantic or dramatic adventure, but a stern self-discipline. Nevertheless there is an element of mystery in it which at times can be quite thrilling.

(351-5) Each seeker's needs are different, so that the path to be prescribed for him must be different too.

(351-6) The disciple must not shirk the isolation of his inner position, must not resent the loneliness of his spiritual path. He must accept what is in the very nature of the thing he is attempting to do.

(351-7) It is passions and desires which push men towards acts and deeds that are harmful to themselves or to others. It is these which form the greatest hindrance to the novice, his heaviest cross.

(351-8) Those who are willing to take themselves in hand, ready to trample on their lower natures, are alone fit for this quest. They are few. The others, who come to it for its sensational, dramatic, psychical and occult possibilities, hover around the entrance, but never get on the path itself.

352⁵³⁵

IV

353

IV

(353-1)⁵³⁶ The thought of becoming part of an organisation [such as]⁵³⁷ an ashram may make him feel uneasy.

⁵³⁵ Blank page

(353-2) The prudent seeker will not be swept off his feet by [the]⁵³⁸ impressive but theatrical appearance of a proclaimed master, nor stupefied by the grandiose claims, titles, organisation and theories which accompany the proclamation

(353-3) Those who seek philosophic achievement are today as always, necessarily few since it belittles the ego and incites aspirants to overcome or crush it.

(353-4) Authenticity of being is a necessary requirement in a would-be disciple. The insincere had better stay away from the quest.

(353-5) The philosopher is not discouraged because the number of those who adopt philosophical ideas is so small. He is not seeking the success of a movement, group, program or sect. Even if he were the only man who held these ideas he would still not be discouraged. For he knows that he has not been put in the world to reform it but to reform himself.

(353-6) The fact is that the truth has forever been open to mankind but mankind has rarely opened himself to the truth.

(353-7) Among those who come to the quest for reasons other than the search for truth, which usually means for emotional reasons, there are those who come to it at the end of a period of mental depression and those who come at the beginning of a period of mental elation. The first kind may be unhappy because of past personal experiences and seek comfort, consolation. The second kind is prone to exaggerated hopes because of a somewhat neurotic enthusiastic temperament. The one may find his peace and the other {his}⁵³⁹ joy but both may overlook the need for determined work and self-discipline as the cost.

(353-8) How does the quest remove his fears? By providing him sooner or later with firm assurance that the Overself's gracious power is not only illuminative but also protective.

(353-9) The man who finds in his declining years that he seems to be no closer to the illuminative experience than he was a couple of decades earlier, that the Real apparently refuses to obey his call despite his practices and disciplines, may also find

⁵³⁶ The paras on this page are numbered 1 through 7; they are not consecutive with the previous page. In addition, there are two unnumbered paras at the top of the page, and one para numbered 7 at the bottom of the page.

⁵³⁷ "such as" was typed below the line and inserted with an arrow by PB himself.

⁵³⁸ "the" was typed above the line and inserted with a caret by PB himself.

⁵³⁹ We have changed "its" to "his" to match "his peace" in the first clause. – TJS '20

himself suffering emotionally from sadness, frustration, pessimism or irritation. Such moods explain why, for instance, a man like Aldous Huxley turns first, to a drug like mescaline and later, to a cult like Subud.⁵⁴⁰

(353-10) Those who are tired of the falsities and inanities accepted by so many, who want to come to a true life, must come to the quest.

354⁵⁴¹

IV

355

IV

(355-1)⁵⁴² He seeks no one's applause and is insensitive to every criticism. He maintains an equable good-humoured temperament, an elegant poise, amid the world's tumult and society's abrasions.

(355-2) He will not find true security by depending on another man for it –⁵⁴³ even if that man be his spiritual master. He must build it within himself, by himself, for himself. The genuine master can contribute toward this work but cannot perform it [for him.]⁵⁴⁴

(355-3) There is an independence which gives a man special strength for it allows him to possess complete purity of motive. It does not come easily for he has to stay clear of all attempts to organise the truth, of all the orthodoxies, groups, factions, parties and sects which claim to be united with it. He may align himself with none of those. Therefore he can take up no defined position, no particular program. Is he then a neutral? No and yes. Is he an individualist? Yes and no.

(355-4) He must start by believing that concealed somewhere within his mind there is the intuition of truth.

(355-5) He becomes afflicted with doubts. What is the use of adopting an ideal which is not realisable in life as it is? or perhaps the truth is that there is no Truth. If he is mentally adolescent or emotionally unbalanced, he may push his scepticism to

⁵⁴⁰ "Sabud" in the original.

⁵⁴¹ Blank page

⁵⁴² The paras on this page are numbered 8 through 14, making them consecutive with the previous page.

⁵⁴³ PB himself inserted a dash by hand.

⁵⁴⁴ PB himself changed "himself" to "for him" by hand.

extremes. The Quest's values may then seem quite spurious, the tranquillity it promises quite bleak.

(355-6) "Is there not an unnatural air about the quest?" This is a question which is sometimes asked. The answer depends, of course, upon a definition of terms. The multitude of non-questers are certainly not living close to Nature. What the questioner really wants to say is that the quest seems to lift a man out of the herd, to make him no longer average, to mark him different from the other men around him. Its goals do not accord with the ordinary human desires and the common instincts.

(355-7) If you try to grow spiritually too soon and too fast there will have to be a crucifixion of the emotions and the ego. It is very difficult and painful to acquire growth in this way but it is easier and pleasanter by a slower process.

356⁵⁴⁵

IV

357

IV

(357-1)⁵⁴⁶ No two persons travel the same path.

(357-2) The quest is the most important adventure in human experience.

(357-3) All sorts of people come to this quest – the truth seekers, the hallucinated, the ambitious and the Meek, the highly intuitive and the utter imbecile, the joyous and the embittered failures, the really intelligent and the merely curious – but few stay on it. Most are caught soon or late on the detours, the side tracks and the return-tracks.

(357-4) There is a common Indian belief – picked up by and transferred to, some Western cults, that without submission to a leader, master, guru, whose guidance is to lead them and whose power is to lift them into Nirvana, they can never win access to this goal. It is an exaggerated belief when it refers to authentically enlightened men and a false one when refers to all others. Blind acceptance of it has precipitated a nervous breakdown in some cases, and much feeling of morbid frustration in most cases where seekers have failed to find a guru or, finding, have become disappointed or disillusioned afterwards.

⁵⁴⁵ Blank page

⁵⁴⁶ The paras on this page are numbered 15 through 22, making them consecutive with the previous page.

(357-5) Those who are distrustful of organisation for religious purposes find good reasons in history for their attitude. The records betray its inner failure, how it really substitutes one kind of worldliness for another, how it merely offers ambition a different stage to play on, or how it replaces personal self-seeking by the corporate kind.

(357-6) He is too unrepentantly independent-minded to join any group, any sect.

(357-7) Mentally he cannot fit himself into any of the accepted categories which the society of his place and time provide, so an independent and solitary path attracts him. Physically, he may have to make an uneasy compromise with society, with the result that both benefit by their mutual services. Thus without doing violence to his chief principles he yet finds a way to live among those who have no use for them.

(357-8) So far as a convention is reasonable and helpful, he will respect it, but when it becomes a hollow formality or stuffy pomposity, he will not.

358⁵⁴⁷

IV

359

IV

(359-1)⁵⁴⁸ It is to be found in the privacy of your own mind: no cult, group or church to provide it.

(359-2) Some shrink away - frightened - from the quest or its guides, instinctively feeling that it is something that is too big for them.

(359-3) It is easy to become discouraged on this quest, and even rebellious. It demands so much from us and we are able to give it so little.

(359-4) The quester moves from beginning to end - if it could be said that there really is an end - under a higher will. It is not only the point that he sets out to reach that matters but also the point that he will be permitted to reach. But this is not arbitrarily and capriciously predetermined. His own karma comes into play here.

⁵⁴⁷ Blank page

⁵⁴⁸ The paras on this page are numbered 23 through 31, making them consecutive with the previous page.

(359-5) Such unwavering trust in philosophic principles and unclouded confidence in philosophic truths do not come until after they have been well tested over a long course of years.

(359-6) He comes to see that the quest is worthwhile in its own right, quite irrespective of any rewards or benefits to which it may lead.

(359-7) The hour comes when prompted by disappointment, bereavement or revelation, he is driven to find out the reasons for all his activities. He is beginning to feel their insufficiency, their shallowness. Such inquiry, if persisted in, will in the end put him upon the quest.

(359-8) The Dark Night is a tragic experience. He is not only deprived of the presence of the Overself but even of the desire for it. A gloomy apathy settles upon him.

(359-9) That paralysing emotional dryness and intellectual deadness which is the Dark Night. He has lost the world and the flesh but he has not received heaven and the Spirit in return for them. Like a statue he wants nothing, expects nothing. He pretends to be alive but is really a mere spectator of a meaningless life.

360⁵⁴⁹

IV

361

IV

(361-1)⁵⁵⁰ With some the experience of the Dark Night becomes so protracted and so crushing a one that they feel utterly annihilated.

(361-2) With the dark night a condition of mental dullness sets in. Real sustained thinking becomes a strain. This is because the mind loses its interest in things, being apathetic.

(361-3) There is no need to lament the fact that so few persons agree with our beliefs. So long as human beings continue to be born different from each other, so long must we expect them to hold different opinions. And when some of them have climbed into the rarefied atmosphere which philosophy breathes, their opinions will not only be different but also [rare.]⁵⁵¹

⁵⁴⁹ Blank page

⁵⁵⁰ The paras on this page are numbered 32 through 36, making them consecutive with the previous page.

⁵⁵¹ PB himself deleted the para after this para by hand. It originally read:

(361-4) What lures a man to this quest? It may be that the ideas by which, and with which, he has lived for a long time have proved insufficient, false or feeble. It may be that bereavement, calamity or suffering have brought him to cherish peace. It may be nothing else than the simple need for a higher quality of living. It may even be that he comes to this quest, as some undoubtedly do, because he seeks a special benefit – healing, relief, amendment of fortune, perhaps. But in that case he must remain on it because he seeks the Overself, alone. Lastly let it be noted that if for some the first step on this quest is the final step down a long road of increasing desperation, for most it ought to be the first step up a garden path of increasing joy.

(361-5) You are Yourself your biggest problem. You cannot hand it over to anyone else, be he saviour or master, and escape from it, except in delusive imagination or in erroneous belief.

362⁵⁵²

IV

363

IV

(363-1)⁵⁵³ They start with unrealistic and impossible conceptions. It is therefore inevitable that these must be abandoned before further progress can be made.

(363-2) A patient determination to penetrate through these varied obstructions in his own self is required.

(363-3) In the end each seeker has to become his own teacher, by putting all his experience, his beliefs, his ideas, to the test.

(363-4) The longer I live the more I am impressed, to the point even of awe, by the tremendous power of suggestion on the human mind. Where is the person who is able to cultivate his own intelligence without being conditioned by ideas and examples put into it by his environment or by his reading, by his religion or his family, by his social

“It may even be that he comes to this quest, as some undoubtedly do, because he seeks a special benefit—healing, relief amendment of fortune, perhaps. But in that case he must remain on it because he seeks the Overself, alone. Lastly let it be noted that if for some the first stop on this quest is the final step down a long road of increasing desperation, for most it ought to be the first step up a garden path of (below)”

⁵⁵² Blank page

⁵⁵³ The paras on this page are numbered 37 through 43, making them consecutive with the previous page.

tradition or by the {personal}⁵⁵⁴ fears and desires connected with others? It is others,⁵⁵⁵ whether of the long-dead past or of the living present who partly or wholly imprison him in their thoughts and imaginations, their conflicts.

(363-5) Few people know what a free existence really is; most people live caged in by fear of, or enslavement to, the opinion of others. Even the rich do not know it for their cages are gilt and comfortable. Even the spiritual do not know it for they merely echo back what these others want them to think about God. Complete freedom is possible only to those who have a special character, one that is devoid of tyrannising ambitions and despotic cravings, and even of unworldly strivings.

(363-6) The quest is so much an individual affair that, although all questers must arrive at the same destination, each will do so by his own separate way, by his own special experiences. Any spiritual guide who ignores this fact merely tries to make his disciples mere copies of himself. This cannot possibly happen although both may exhaust themselves in the attempt. There are no two things, no two creatures and no two quests identically alike [anywhere]⁵⁵⁶ in Nature.

(363-7) If he knew at the beginning that it was so far and so long, and so troubled a journey, would he have embarked on the quest at all? That depends on the nature of the man himself, on the nature of his impelling motive, and on the strength behind it.⁵⁵⁷

364⁵⁵⁸

IV

365

IV

(365-1)⁵⁵⁹ It is a fact that the strivings for this blissful state are rarely satisfied.

(365-2) He who is discontented with conventional dogmas, and who {disagrees}⁵⁶⁰ with orthodox authorities must be willing to think in isolation.

⁵⁵⁴ We have changed "person" to "personal" for clarity.

⁵⁵⁵ PB himself underlined "others" by hand.

⁵⁵⁶ PB himself changed "any" to "anywhere" by hand.

⁵⁵⁷ Typed note at the end of the para reads "(You can say that again) MG." "MG" may refer to Myra Ginsparg. – TJS '20

⁵⁵⁸ Blank page

⁵⁵⁹ The paras on this page are numbered 44 through 55, making them consecutive with the previous page.

⁵⁶⁰ We have inserted a comma after "dogmas" and changed "disagreeing" to "disagrees" for clarity. – TJS '20

(365-3) Without elevating oneself to the proud position of a master one can yet quietly pass to others some of the things picked up – often with great pain – on the way.

(365-4) If others find strength and support by allying themselves with a group, he finds welcome relief in not having to enrol himself or sign a membership form.

(365-5) There comes a time when a man must cease to compromise with petty norms when, if he feels a higher urge, he must be himself.

(365-6) His advancement towards full philosophic adult maturity may be measured in several ways but one of them is to note how much less the ego {dominates}⁵⁶¹ him now than formerly.

(365-7) It is not what you own but your attitude toward what you own that brings a good or bad result spiritually.

(365-8) There are some people who mistake mere truculence for high principle, and temperamental intransigence for fine integrity.

(365-9) Personal privacy includes the right to live one's own way without interference, discussion or comment by others: the delight of being unwatched by others and ungossiped about by them. Such a completely free existence is almost unobtainable in any society.

(365-10) His mind is bound by no religious dogmas, his conduct by no prohibitions or commandments. But this does not mean he is free to do what he pleases.

(365-11) Why must he follow a path predetermined by others? Why can he not let the needs of his own individuality point the direction?

(365-12) The quest would have to be entered with a realisation of all its complexity and with a comprehension that his good intentions could be frustrated by adverse circumstances if he lets his thoughts about them become negative.

366⁵⁶²

IV

367

IV

⁵⁶¹ We have deleted "now" from before "dominates" for grammar's sake. – TJS '20

⁵⁶² Blank page

(367-1)⁵⁶³ The tendency to abandon further effort as soon as an obstacle appears, is another neuroticism which must itself be abandoned.

(367-2) They become dissatisfied with the small returns for the large interest they have put into the quest, discouraged by the inability to feel any sort of higher consciousness or mystic experience at all. They are too summary in their judgement, for they want an early result. They do not allow, not merely sufficient time but a sufficient number of life-times, to reach the Summit.

(367-3) When hopes are set too high for a man's capacity, or their fulfilment too soon for what is involved, disappointment will come at an early period.

(367-4) Let him not deceive himself. [Few]⁵⁶⁴ have ever really entered that exquisite awareness and remained there. Others seem to have done so but the fact is that they merely touched its outermost fringe for a few moments and then passed into an egoistic conceited state which has trapped them.

(367-5) Most women who aspire to [the Divine]⁵⁶⁵ look for, and find comfort with, the [idea or the]⁵⁶⁶ image of a Personal God. For them the path [of]⁵⁶⁷ devotional love is more attractive than any other path. The strength of their emotional nature accounts for this. [But male]⁵⁶⁸ aspirants are more willing to take to the various non-devotional approaches. [Their]⁵⁶⁹ intellectual nature and their power of will are stronger than those of women's. It is easier for them to [comprehend, and also to accept,]⁵⁷⁰ the idea of an Impersonal God. For these, and for other reasons, although there have been many successful female mystics in history, there have been few successful female philosophers.

⁵⁶³ The paras on this page are numbered 56 through 61, making them consecutive with the previous page.

⁵⁶⁴ 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. PB himself later inserted "Few" by hand.

⁵⁶⁵ PB himself changed "divine" to "the Divine" by hand.

⁵⁶⁶ PB himself inserted "idea or the" by hand.

⁵⁶⁷ 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. PB himself later inserted "of" by hand.

⁵⁶⁸ PB himself changed "Male" to "But male" by hand.

⁵⁶⁹ PB himself changed "The" to "Their" by hand.

⁵⁷⁰ PB himself changed "comprehend _____ to accept" to "comprehend, and also to accept," by hand.

(367-6) In "The Secret Path" I presented the quest as shorter and easier than most people found it to be; in "The Spiritual Crisis of Man" I presented it as harder and longer, in an effort to redress the balance.

368⁵⁷¹

IV

369

IV⁵⁷²

(369-1)⁵⁷³ We have been put here on this earth for a purpose. It can not be fulfilled by proxy so that we can evade the effort. No "Master" can carry us to the goal.

(369-2) Consciously or unwittingly, most of us are suggestible. We accept the thoughts which other persons want to put into our heads. And we do so to such an extent that we live vicariously: we do not really live our own lives. This is quite fitting and proper to the childhood and adolescent years, but how can it [be]⁵⁷⁴ worthy of the adult ones?

(369-3) Since the connection between him and the Universal Spirit is a direct one, any submission of his inner being to another man – even if for the ostensible purpose of realising (his connection and attaining fuller awareness of it) would not be a help but an interference, not a continuance of the path travelled towards this objective but a deviation from it.

(369-4) Their devotion to the guru, the cult or the group is, in terms of real spiritual progress, both a help and a hindrance. As a sign, and in so far as it is a measure, of aspiration to rise toward a superior state of being it is a help. But as another bar added to the cage in which they live, shutting out all those who are not co-followers or co-members, it increases partisanship and widens prejudice.

(369-5) The worst of this guru-chela relationship is that, by exploiting one another, both are prevented from having a free growth.

(369-6) In their beglamoured eyes there is not the slightest fault in him; he is a perfect model for them.

⁵⁷¹ Blank page

⁵⁷² PB himself deleted "Second series" from after "(IV)" by hand.

⁵⁷³ The paras on this page are numbered 62 through 70, making them consecutive with the previous page.

⁵⁷⁴ 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. PB himself later inserted "be" into the space by hand.

(369-7) Is he to become an authentic original or only a mere copy?

(369-8) They imitate the outward appearance – and that lamely – but are unable to assimilate the inward intention.

(369-9) The teacher who takes from a pupil the responsibility for his own spiritual growth, prevents that growth.

370⁵⁷⁵

IV

371

IV

(371-1)⁵⁷⁶ The self-centred neurotic especially, but also various other types, will pressingly invite you to become involved in his personal affairs. If you accept, you merely postpone the day when he must learn to handle them for himself. This does not mean that the wise counsel, the kindly world, may not be dropped here and there, now and then. But there is always the danger that pressure will be put on you to repeat yourself constantly, to live in his ego and in his past, present or future with your disciple.

(371-2) Why must we be always grabbing at others, staking out claims and making demands upon them? Why not leave them free?

(371-3) When too much is made of an organisation or institution and too little of the idea behind it, the leaders become tyrannical and the followers fanatical. That is, their character is corrupted.

(371-4) It is inevitable that those who have committed themselves to a particular cult or joined a particular organisation active in spiritual work, will seek comparisons between it and other ones. It is equally inevitable that the thinking will always be hostile to the latter's teachings or personalities or training and the conclusion will always be to the latter's detriment.

(371-5) The first mistake of an organised religio-mystic group is to behave as if it were here among men for its own sake, to make its own cause higher than the cause of truth or compassion.

⁵⁷⁵ Blank page

⁵⁷⁶ The paras on this page are numbered 71 through 78, making them consecutive with the previous page.

(371-6) When they shut themselves up inside a particular sect, cult or group, they not only exclude all the others but quite often denigrate them merely because they happen to be outside.

(371-7) Even where an organisation is not actually obstructive or misleading, it is often cumbersome and unnecessary.

(371-8) The guide who wants to impose his own views on others, who is eager to make disciples, will always be more popular than the one who wants to open their minds and encourage them to struggle alone until they can find truth for themselves.

372⁵⁷⁷

IV

373

IV

(373-1)⁵⁷⁸ I admire Krishnamurti for his utter integrity when it is so easy to let himself be sucked into that bog of teachers who exploit disciples, and disciples who exploit teachers and in his case still easier because of his world wide fame, he resolutely turns his back upon it and goes in the opposite direction.

(373-2) When all men are holy in the divine sight, why proclaim a few only and set them apart from others?

(373-3) The Sufis say that "The Ways unto God are as many as the number of men's souls."

(373-4) How can he bring himself to join any group, cult or sect when he believes all of them to be right, only some are more right than others, and all of them to be wrong, only some are more wrong than others? There is not one whose limitations {he}⁵⁷⁹ does not see. He prefers truthfulness of being uncommitted to any 'ism, and the freedom of being unjoined to any group.

(373-5) Why restrict his search foolishly by undue attachment to a single spiritual leader or a single cult?

⁵⁷⁷ Blank page

⁵⁷⁸ The paras on this page are numbered 79 through 90, making them consecutive with the previous page.

⁵⁷⁹ We have changed "who" to "he" for clarity.

(373-6) The Kingdom is within you, not somewhere else, not in an ashram, not even at the feet of a guru: Jesus' declaration is literally accurate.

(373-7) If he values freedom he will join no organised sect or group but extract what is suited to him from every sect or group which interests him.

(373-8) He is unwilling to give up his independence to sectarian organisation, to mortgage his spiritual future to a dogmatic system.

(373-9) Those who have the courage to swing loose of the little sects and large organised groups will gain in the end.

(373-10) It is not for the average man but only for the exceptional man – for the one who is determined to pursue the meaning of life to the uttermost.

(373-11) Since each is a distinct individual, all cannot follow the same path.

(373-12) He is too great a lover of independent thought to submit his mental movements to a cramping creed.

374⁵⁸⁰

IV

375

IV

(375-1)⁵⁸¹ If some come to this quest because of disgust with the world and its ways, or of disappointment with life and its experiences, others come to it because of disgust, disappointment or dissatisfaction with themselves. Only a few come because of the hunger for truth for its own sake, or because of the sense of incompleteness of a merely materialistic existence.

(375-2) A man who wants to pursue this quest will have to become a different man – different from what he was in the past because the old innate tendencies have to be replaced by new ones, and different from other men because he must refuse to be led unresistingly into the thoughtlessness, the irreverence and the coarseness which pervades them.

⁵⁸⁰ Blank page

⁵⁸¹ The paras on this page are numbered 109 through 116; they are not consecutive with the previous page.

(375-3) In the world we see the mediocrity and conformity, which satisfy so many people, and the mysticism, which draws so few, those who can no longer keep to the herd's slow pace.

(375-4) Not a few have enough aspiration to take to the quest but not enough to persevere through its long stagnant intervals or practise its harder non-conformities.

(375-5) The truths which he learns both from life and from meditation will sustain his quest, as the annual balance-sheet of results will justify it.

(375-6) Even if the goal seems too far off, the attainment too high up, for their limited capacities, even if it seems that one would have to be far better than ordinary to have any chance at all, that does not mean they should not embark on this quest. For even if they are able to travel only a modest part of the way the efforts involved are still well worth-while.

(375-7) In the earlier stages of his development the aspirant is helped by being told exactly what to do. But in the later stages the less this is done the better for him.

(375-8) He must not only be patient on this quest; he must also be trustful in the guidance that comes to him from the teaching of the great historic masters.

376⁵⁸²

IV

377

IV

(377-1)⁵⁸³ The modern seeker is fortunate in this that he has a wealth of teachings to choose from – or by which to be bewildered.

(377-2) If a book gives correct teaching about the quest and necessary warning about its pitfalls, it should be studied with proper care and respect.

(377-3) Few people come to this quest by choice; most come by necessity. Its invitation, addressed to a reluctant world, is heard and considered only when under great pressure and suffering or after great moral or mental or aesthetic growth.

⁵⁸² Blank page

⁵⁸³ The paras on this page are numbered 117 through 127, making them consecutive with the previous page.

(377-4) Progress in this quest seems to {be}⁵⁸⁴ made by a series of explosions, with long flat intervals between them.

(377-5) He may have his doubts, hesitations, criticisms and even rebellions later, they may stretch out far in time, but in the end they cannot alter his course. For the quest he was born; to the quest he must surrender. The obligation is a lifelong one.

(377-6) They alternate, in a periodically repeated cycle, between over-confidence or over-enthusiasm and disappointment or discouragement. The equanimity which would lift them above both extremes must be cultivated.

(377-7) Will his quest survive those long thwarting and frustrating periods that beset it?

(377-8) If people stop half-way or quarter-way on this path, who can blame them? The more they come to know what is really demanded of them, the more they come to see its difficulty, even its seeming impossibility.

(377-9) Their very eagerness to advance incapacitates them from advancing, for it merely swells the ego from which they want to run away.

(377-10) When nothing mystical, exciting or revelatory happens to them, they lose faith in the teaching or in the teacher.

(377-11) How is man to find the way to his inner being, his diviner self? The answer is given in his own history, by his own records.

378⁵⁸⁵

IV

379

IV

(379-1)⁵⁸⁶ Just as time strengthens some friendships but weakens other ones, so it strengthens some men's devotion to and persistence on the quest but weakens other men's.

(379-2) What is so easily taken in their stride by a few becomes harshly difficult for most.

⁵⁸⁴ We have inserted "be" into the text for clarity.

⁵⁸⁵ Blank page

⁵⁸⁶ The paras on this page are numbered 128 through 139, making them consecutive with the previous page.

(379-3) If he knew in advance the difficulties, the frustrations and stagnations he would meet on this quest, would anyone embark on it? It is understandable that quite a number turn away from it, at least for a period of years or through the apathy of age, as setting up a goal which is unreachable, a level of consciousness which is undiscoverable.

(379-4) It is inevitable that all questers should complain at some time. For where is the character without a flaw, the life without an obstruction?

(379-5) He is hardly likely to shape a direct, continuous progressive course in this quest. He is more likely to have periods when zig-zags are more prominent.

(379-6) Too easily do they become discouraged by the slow rate of their progress, and fall away from the quest for a while or altogether.

(379-7) They are in too much of a hurry to achieve their end; in the result they fail to achieve it.

(379-8) Sometimes the pressure to search for truth may come from events, meetings or readings, but more often from inner necessity.

(379-9) There is in the lifetime of every diligent aspirant a favourable period which, if taken advantage of, will advance him nearer the goal more quickly than he can advance at any other period. It is then that a little effort brings a far larger reward.

(379-10) His quest can come to an end only when the unveiled Truth is seen, not in momentary glimpses, but for the rest of his lifetime without a break.

(379-11) Here on the quest, it is not only possible for him to meet the profoundest thoughts of the human mind but also its highest experiences.

(379-12) He feels as if he were a mere spectator at a theatrical play, with the whole world for stage. More, he feels himself to be a ghostly spectator.

380⁵⁸⁷

IV

381

IV

(381-1)⁵⁸⁸ It is as if another being spoke inside me – not with audible voice but with mental voice – imposed itself strongly on my own mind.

(381-2) Let us value these encounters with the Divine⁵⁸⁹ and be glad [and]⁵⁹⁰ truly grateful when they happen. They are significant and important. But [let us also remember that]⁵⁹¹ they are special events. The quest does not run through them alone. It runs just as much through ordinary daily life in which our experiences are shared in common with so many people.

(381-3) He becomes, or is innately sensitive to the atmospheres people bring with them.

(381-4) As he travels through life he can turn all that he meets on the way to the quest's profit.

(381-5) Although he will feel greater humility as he advances, it is also true that he will feel greater certainty.

(381-6) It is this faith that there is World-Idea and that we must adjust our lives to it or suffer unnecessarily which marks him out from the herd.

(381-7) He carries about an image of himself as he would like to be, as of one who has overcome his baser feelings and stands firmly above all temptation.

(381-8) He is resolved to make an end of all this trifling and faltering to learn the lesson now and forever. Peace is not to be had free of cost; it is the product of determined self-discipline.

(381-9) Reflection reveals and history shows that it is impossible to save the whole world. So he prudently keeps his energies for the task that holds much more favourable possibility – saving himself. It is only the individual person here and there, not the entire mass, who is ever led out of ignorance and slavery to wisdom and freedom.

(381-10) Ideals of spiritual excellence are a necessity if society is to survive and not destroy itself.

⁵⁸⁸ The paras on this page are numbered 140 through 150, making them consecutive with the previous page.

⁵⁸⁹ PB himself capitalized "Divine" by hand.

⁵⁹⁰ 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. PB himself later inserted "and" into the space by hand.

⁵⁹¹ PB himself inserted "let us also remember that" by hand.

(381-11) No quester can be completely fitted to textbook rules. Each provides an individual case.

382⁵⁹²

IV

383

IV

(383-1)⁵⁹³ Many are the aspirants who complain that they have had no mystical experiences, no rapt ecstatic exaltations, no great awe-inspiring enlightenments. "Give me just a single Glimpse," they cry disheartened, "and I will then be sure that your path is correct, your way is the one for me. Otherwise - ." Some of them drift away to join sects, teachers, cults or to embrace new doctrines, techniques, systems. Some remain but are half-hearted, apathetic and often critical. A few concern themselves with fundamental issues and work patiently on, holding the view that this quest must be followed to the end for its own sake, whether Glimpses do or do not come.

(383-2) To enter into the inmost part of his being calls for a terrific struggle, a terrific strength and a terrific concentration. All his powers need to be called to the task. They must therefore be brought up out of latency and developed to a sufficient degree before the inward journey can even be started, if it is to have any likelihood of success at all. Such development requires systematic working on himself and cannot be left to merely chance and random spontaneity.

(383-3) He would be a rash man who promised everyone who embarked upon this quest definite experiences of a mystical, occult, extraordinary, ecstatic, supernatural or any such kind. Such results sometimes come, sometimes not, but the persons who follow the regimes or endure the disciplines chiefly in expectation of them may well be disappointed, may even end in distrusting their teachers and teachings. A wiser type of aspirant will not insist on such experiences but will understand that there are more important and more lasting things.

(383-4) Only those who are willing to make a total commitment to the quest are likely to reach this stage. Only those who have swum outside the stream of conformity and found higher standards than the masses can generate sufficient inner strength to achieve this kind of satisfaction.

⁵⁹² Blank page

⁵⁹³ The paras on this page are numbered 1 through 7; they are not consecutive with the previous page.

(383-5) It is an ironic truth that on every level of development from the most primitive to the most cultivated, from the most materialistic to the most spiritual, every man says "I know!" He says this either quite openly in discussion or quite unconsciously in attitude. Real humility is a rare quality. This amazing arrogance is generally self-justified by supporting experiences or vindicating feelings of the individual himself.

(383-6) The world is apt to regard these self-improvers as smug and complacent, selfish and conceited, and the world is sometimes right. But it is also sometimes wrong.

(383-7) What the quester does of his own free choice today, the generality of men will be obliged to do tomorrow.

384⁵⁹⁴

IV

385

IV

(385-1)⁵⁹⁵ Philosophy can maintain its non-sectarian nature only by maintaining its non-organisational and non-institutional character. Although certain societies and groups profess to be non-sectarian, their actual history shows plainly their inability to sustain this ideal. He who would be a true philosopher must turn to the only source of true philosophy – the fount within himself. That is he must turn inward, not outward to a group.

(385-2) Do not look for any group formation created by a philosopher, for you will find none. He is sponsored by no church, no sect, no cult, no organisation of any kind, for he needs none. His credentials come from within, not from any outside source. He requires no one to flatter his personal importance. If therefore, you hear of such a group be assured it is a religious or religio-mystical one, not a philosophic one.

(385-3) If the Infinite Being is trying to express its own nature within the limitations of this earth – and therefore trying to express itself through us too, it is our highest duty to search for and cultivate our diviner attributes. Only in this way do we really fulfil ourselves. This search and this cultivation constitute the Quest.

(385-4) A practical discipline is needed if the aspirant is to advance from his ordinary state of enslavement to lusts, entanglement with emotions and deception by ideas to a higher state of self-mastery and inner freedom to receive the truth.

⁵⁹⁴ Blank page

⁵⁹⁵ The paras on this page are numbered 8 through 16, making them consecutive with the previous page.

(385-5) The novice in this enterprise scarcely knows what a variety of contradictory emotions he will feel during the years of its course, what hope alternating later with despair, what suspense and certainty, what glamour and disappointment! Perhaps if he did he would give it up and flee back to quiet if commonplace refuge among the unambitious Philistines.

(385-6) Their enthusiasm wanes when results do not come as quickly as expected, or desired. Their effort becomes intermittent instead of sustained. Strong doubts whether the quest is really worth this effort, or whether its claims have not been misrepresented, begin to appear.

(385-7) It is not to be expected that the herd likes his outlook or his views. It finds his unfamiliar impersonality horrid, his unsocial solitariness revolting. Its own idols and illusions would be shattered if it ventured to give him even a sympathetic understanding, so it remains where it is – unfriendly, suspicious and cold.

(385-8) The aspirant has such a task to perform that he must needs husband his strength for it. He must keep his fingers lithe and nimble for his starry work, untrammelled by the behests of other taskmasters.

(385-9) How can I come closer to the Overself?

386⁵⁹⁶

IV

387

IV

(387-1)⁵⁹⁷ If he complains about the long stretches of uneventful straight road in his spiritual course, let him remember that human redemption from age-old darkness cannot come in a single week-end. And let him also take hope from the fact that there are points of abrupt arrival at the sharpest bends in this course.

(387-2) The truth is sometimes so spiky and so uncomfortable that people hide from it. Entry on the quest is a sign that enough courage has been gathered to face it. Those who assert that they are questers but who are too much in love with their own fancies are incapable of facing the realities behind those fancies. To this extent their quest is a bogus one, although not usually a consciously bogus one.

⁵⁹⁶ Blank page

⁵⁹⁷ The paras on this page are numbered 17 through 25, making them consecutive with the previous page.

(387-3) He who would follow an independent path must, to some extent, be fearless. He must refuse to be intimidated by the power, prestige, claims or size of established organisations, just as he must refuse to be deluded by the idealisations of themselves which they hold before the public.

(387-4) For several reasons he is not a joiner. Most sects have only partial and limited views, most mix some error with their truth and most develop ugly dogmatic tyrannies. Furthermore their adherents, believing that they alone possess the truth, generally exclude all others from the warmer temperatures of their goodwill – if they do not openly dislike them. But the largest reason for his refusal is that the Overself is unlimited, unconfined; he wants to express this freedom.

(387-5) From the outside, by means of events, persons or books; from the inside by means of intuitions, thoughts, feelings and urges. This is how the way is shown him by the Overself.

(387-6) The issue is plain. Is he to be an obedient member of the herd, copying his fellows and accepting their traditions, or is he to be a defiant nonconformist, thinking independently and searching for truth? Is he to be “a good citizen” gregarious in mind and body, or is he to follow the counsel and example of Lao-tse, Socrates, Buddha and Jesus and refuse to adapt himself to evil conditions?

(387-7) What of those who fail in their efforts to achieve any measurable progress on this path? Those who do succeed regard them with compassion.

(387-8) He may be sure of one thing, that his fidelity to ideas and ideals, to teacher and teachings will be tested. This is inescapable if his will is to be surrendered to the higher will, if his character is to be purified and his attitude cleansed of its egoism.

(387-9) He is free in the sense that the lead-strings of no sect can hamper him, or confine his movements toward the highest truth.

388⁵⁹⁸

IV

389

IV

(389-1)⁵⁹⁹ The highest spiritual opportunities come only one time in a man's life. Although other opportunities may come, they will not be of the same magnitude nor will the man be able to take advantage of them with the same force.

(389-2) He has entered a new and happier phase of his life. The problems of the past have disappeared. The door to inner light is always ready to open at his mere push.

(389-3) He who has done his best to the limit of his possibilities may patiently wait for the time when those possibilities will stretch themselves of their own accord.

(389-4) The aspirant who frequently measures how far he has advanced, or retrograded, upon this path, or how long he has stood still, is seeking something to be gained for himself, is looking all the time at himself. He is measuring the ego instead of trying to transcend it altogether. He is clinging to self, instead of obeying Jesus' injunction to deny it. Looking at the ego, he unwittingly stands with his back to the Overself. If he is ever to become enlightened, he must turn round, cease this endless self-measurement, stop fussing over little steps forward or backward, let all thoughts about his own backwardness or greatness cease, and look directly at the goal itself.

(389-5) It is because God is hidden in all creatures that all creatures are searching all the time for God. This remains just as true even though in their ignorance they usually mistake the object of their search and believe that it is something else. Only on the quest does this search attain self-consciousness.

(389-6) It is one of the tested facts of the inner life that without a powerful aspiration and sustained determination an aspirant is likely to fail to stay the course, or to flit futilely from cult to cult, teacher to teacher. Only the other day one woman who had spent four years wholeheartedly given up to the Quest, abandoned it altogether because she had received no results in the shape of mystic experiences or inner revelations. This was the outward and conscious excuse given. But my own reading gave a very different inward and real cause. This was simply that she had fallen overwhelmingly in love with a man who was a materialist and atheist, and that she being a very suggestible and he a very strong personality, had fallen at the same time completely under his influence.

(389-7) After the first enthusiasm has washed away, it will be easy to waver back and forth in aspiration or become unstable in doing the exercises.

(389-8) The tests will come, inevitably. Can he keep his serenity amid crushing trouble, in destructive loss, under sore bereavement?

⁵⁹⁹ The paras on this page are numbered 26 through 34, making them consecutive with the previous page.

(389-9) Is the Quest an impossible enterprise?

390⁶⁰⁰

IV

391

IV

(391-1)⁶⁰¹ There are those who draw back after some years, or desert altogether, complaining that the disciplines and regimes of the Quest are too much for them, and that even the few successes took too many years out of a lifetime to be worth waiting for. There is no adequate reply for such complaints. Nobody is asked, forced or cajoled to go on this quest. Each must come to it of his own free choice. Those who remain do so because they consider the worldly alternative to be worse.

(391-2) When Jesus declared “Knock, and it shall be opened unto you” he did not declare that this would happen after a single knock, nor even after a hundred knocks. If he meant anything at all, he meant ceaselessly repeated knocking.

(391-3) Only those men who know the value of the Truth are likely to furnish the candidates to search for it, and only those who search for it are likely to produce the few who find it.

(391-4) The first meaning of his suffering is obviously to teach him to beware of the fault in himself or the error in his judgment which led directly to it. The second meaning is to warn him that the quest must come first in his life. If he learns both and is enriched by the results, its pain will be compensated and the bitterness, which might otherwise have come out of it, will be largely diminished or even completely avoided.

(391-5) Both Shankaracharya⁶⁰² in India and Thomas Aquinas in Europe – two of the most celebrated religious metaphysicians of earlier times – shared the notion that women could not attain to truth.

(391-6) Why not apply creative imagination to these testing periods? When you know that you are about to enter one of them, imagine that you will pass through it quite successfully, see yourself in your mind’s eye measuring up to ideal conduct.

⁶⁰⁰ Blank page

⁶⁰¹ The paras on this page are numbered 35 through 45, making them consecutive with the previous page.

⁶⁰² “Shankara Acharya” in the original, referring to the first, Adi-Shankara.

(391-7) It is as if no one existed but these two – the listening mind and the soundless voice. This is real solitude, this is the true cloister to which a man may retire in order to find God, this is the desert, cave or mountain where, mentally, he renounces the world's business and abandons friends, family and all humanity.

(391-8) So long as men feel the need of inner support and mental direction, of moral uplift and emotional consolation, so long will they continue to study, to follow and to practise philosophy, that is, to enter upon the quest.

(391-9) The great error which so many make is to seek outside themselves for the help of a power which is inside themselves.

(391-10) If a man falls away from the true quest because of worldly trouble or spiritual dryness, it is because he is seeking to keep within his ego rather than to get out of it.

(391-11) The journey from illusion to illumination is a long one.

392⁶⁰³

IV

393

IV

(393-1)⁶⁰⁴ [The chaos and confusion of the age show that]⁶⁰⁵ this [is]⁶⁰⁶ a transition period. They show too that the traditional methods, ways, yogas ill-fit the modern mind. New ones must be formulated out of its special needs

(393-2) It is easier for most persons to lay down their distressing burdens at the door of faith in formal religion than turn to the quest which explains the very presence of these burdens and prescribes the technique to remove them.

(393-3) The mass of people are apathetic toward the quest; the poor for one set of reasons, the rich for another. Only the few capable of individual judgment, the defiant and independent thinkers, will be capable of rising up out of the mass.

⁶⁰³ Blank page

⁶⁰⁴ The paras on this page are numbered 46 through 56, making them consecutive with the previous page. In addition, there is an unnumbered para at the top of the page.

⁶⁰⁵ "The chaos and confusion of the age show that" was typed below the line and inserted with a caret by PB himself.

⁶⁰⁶ PB himself deleted "so obviously" from after "is" by hand.

(393-4) We need not be perturbed if, along with all his fine aspirations, there is an occasional undercurrent of doubts and lapses. It is in the nature of human beings to have these inner conflicts and opposite trends.

(393-5) Any sort of ambition in the spiritual sphere becomes a danger, for it will not merely stop his growth by fattening his ego but also dig pitfalls for him. Humble aspiration – yes, personal ambition – no!

(393-6) Both Hindu and Buddhist teachers concur in regarding the human creature as being the most fortunate of all living creatures, because he alone has the potential capacity and opportunity to become spiritually “aware.”

(393-7) Many are satisfied if they can attain just a glimpse of the Overself. But a few are not. They seek permanent abidance in the Overself, and that in the greatest possible degree.

(393-8) It would be wrong to believe that it is sufficient for the aspirant to join right theory with self-correction and right action to secure the highest result. The fourth item needed to complete his effort is even more important. It is proper meditation.

(393-9) If a man is determined to succeed in this enterprise and optimistically believes that he will succeed, his efforts will increase and be strengthened, chances will be taken from which he would otherwise shrink, and even if he falls short of his hopes the going is likely to be farther. What the Maharshi⁶⁰⁷ said to me at our first meeting is apposite: “That is the surest way to handicap oneself,” he exclaimed, “this burdening of one’s mind with the fear of failure and the thought of one’s failings. The greatest error of a man is to think that he is weak by nature... One can and must conquer.”

(393-10) The man who does not know why he is living, or what he is living for – beyond the obvious animal reasons – who has no worth while cause for which to work, no higher justification for his existence, has pathetically little.

(393-11) There is nothing wrong with the group idea if its members meet for fellowship.

(393-12) It may be said with truth that all men are always seeking the Overself, even though few men are seeking it with awareness and deliberation and choice.

⁶⁰⁷ “Maharishee” in the original.

⁶⁰⁸ Blank page

(395-1)⁶⁰⁹ The quest is a lonely enterprise. Those who join cults, groups, societies, ashrams or sects in order to escape this loneliness do so only in appearance, not in reality.

(395-2) The aspirant who gets discouraged because no light falls upon his path, no Glimpse flashes into his mind, no mystical experience comes to delight his heart, no revelation opens secret doors, may make a last attempt to secure one by threatening to leave the quest altogether unless it is received quickly! A neophyte I knew practised a certain exercise for about a year, then gave it up, folded his tent and left; another delivered a challenge to the higher power, giving It two months in which to appear. Otherwise he, too, would abandon the quest, which he did when the time passed. What was this second man doing but dictating to the Overself and demanding that It conform to his little ego's requirements? The correct attitude would have been to declare that even if he died before any encouraging experience occurred, he would still be faithful to the quest. It is still worth while for its own sake, quite apart from its rewards. If these impatient aspirants really understood its preciousness they would then understand that it is not the distance travelled but the direction taken which really matters!

(395-3) The old Sanskrit texts tell us of the 'little purpose' of human life and of the 'great purpose.' All know the one but few know the other, fewer still seek to realise it.

(395-4) To give time is to give life. To be master of one's time, for an hour or a week, free and independent, is to be master of one's life for an hour or a week.

(395-5) Those who seek a cult because they seek a rule by which to live and a method by which to learn, are entitled to do so. They comprise the majority.

(395-6) We do not ordinarily develop at an even steady pace. Most of us alas! do not even feel for long stretches that we are developing at all.

(395-7) Why become miserable because you have not realised any or all of the hopes for your inner life, or experienced the joys of its successful fruition? Is it nothing that he has learnt the truths, found the direction and taken the first steps on the road to such realisation?

⁶⁰⁹ The paras on this page are numbered 57 through 66, making them consecutive with the previous page.

(395-8) What we mean is that modern man has to become more self-reliant, has to throw off the remnants of tribal consciousness which still rule him, has to learn to think for himself.

(395-9) On this path haste and impatience will not help him, however much they may do so on the worldly path. They will only dissipate his strength and obstruct the opening of the bud of intuition.

(395-10) His personality will come to possess a double life: an inner and an outer.

396⁶¹⁰

IV

397

IV

(397-1)⁶¹¹ Bring again and again into remembrance the fact that you are a pilgrim, that this world is but a camp, and that the situations in which you find yourself, or create for yourself, should be regarded not from the worldly point of view only, but still more from that of this quest of the Overself.

(397-2) With the coming of middle-age a man begins to appraise his life's course, work, fortunes, and in the end - himself. Quite often the results are not very satisfactory, perhaps even disappointing.

(397-3) He is indeed a seeker after truth whose mind is kept free and not committed permanently to some 'ism or set of dogmas, some sect or flock of human sheep.

(397-4) The thought of what the Quest demands from them - or more particularly that preparatory and disciplinary part of it called the Long Path - brings dismay to many enquirers and frightens them away.

(397-5) The effort required for independent thinking is too much for most people. They find it far easier to receive their ideas ready-made from inherited tradition or orthodox suggestion.

(397-6) If some come to the quest needing balm for deep wounds and utter anguish, others come from a higher motive - the need to know truth.

⁶¹⁰ Blank page

⁶¹¹ The paras on this page are numbered 67 through 82, making them consecutive with the previous page.

(397-7) Older persons have had more time to test their values, to find out which ones are worth while and which worth dropping.

(397-8) He ought to ask as much of himself as he asks for himself from Life. Everything must be paid for. It is a delusion that anything can be had for nothing.

(397-9) It is the longing for peace of mind, a deeper happiness than any earthly one, which pushes him forward along the Path to endure its disciplines, work on his shortcomings and practise its exercises.

(397-10) Practise their methods, if these are helpful, but do not join their organisations.

(397-11) Nothing which will help him in his strivings toward illumination should be neglected.

(397-12) The quest's requirements are elastic, its disciplines flexible. This must be so because the quest itself is a highly individualised affair.

(397-13) The usefulness of organisations makes them a necessity. The appointment of men to administer those organisations is unavoidable.

(397-14) How few have succeeded in gaining any sort of enlightenment at all, let alone total enlightenment. Why is this?

(397-15) The aspiration has gotten into his blood stream and every act, every thought follows inevitably from this one primal fact.

(397-16) There are recognisable stages along this Path.

398⁶¹²

IV

399

IV

(399-1)⁶¹³ He is unwilling to be tied to any sect or coterie, established orthodoxy or organisational unorthodoxy. He may even refuse to fit into any of the accepted patterns. He has to follow a light of his own. Such an anarchistic attitude is likely to provoke hostility and create detractors.

⁶¹² Blank page

⁶¹³ The paras on this page are numbered 83 through 95, making them consecutive with the previous page.

(399-2) Although it is true that he must find his own way to the goal, he need not do so as if he exists alone on this planet! He may be helped by drawing creatively on the experience gained by others even while he critically judges it.

(399-3) All the experiences of life are in the end intended to induce us to seek wholeheartedly for the Overself. That is, to lead us to the very portal of the Quest.

(399-4) If he is ever to learn and practise abnegation of the will, then this plumbing of the depths of the dark night is an essential experience. But it is essential only if he previously revelled emotionally in the ecstatic elation of the Glimpse.

(399-5) In this matter of their fitness for philosophy, it must be said, with Keats, "Women appear to me as children."

(399-6) Interruptions in his growth, breaks in his onward progress, even lapses backward, must be expected.

(399-7) Any institution dedicated to training for the life of the Spirit will always keep out the Spirit. It cannot be found through any formal performances, nor through any organised group work. And all that training can do is to open a way wherethrough, if It is already coming or willing to come, it may pass.

(399-8) The quester who stops somewhere on the way, either dismayed by his own transgressions or exhausted by the paucity of results, is excusably human. The sooner he gets back to the herd the better for his comfort. The fact is that no results can be promised: all results are only probable. If he expects to obtain a mystical experience, he must not forget that Grace is the giver of it, not his own efforts.

(399-9) He endeavours to live his own life in his own way, as much as circumstances allow and prudence dictates.

(399-10) Many beginners are not really on this quest of the Overself at all, although they tell themselves and others that they are. Their quest is for a group to which they can belong, an organisation they can join or a sect with which they can affiliate.

(399-11) Those who gather emotional security or personal companionship from membership in a group are gathering something which they need. They are not yet ready for the higher stage.

(399-12) Few seek the mystical path and even of those who do only a very few successfully pass through the various stages.

(399-13) Every man may use his life and strength as he will.

400⁶¹⁴

IV

401

IV

(401-1)⁶¹⁵ There is magical power in the thoughts of such a man. The mind, the animal, and the ego in him, being mastered, many other things become mastered as a consequence. Rabbi Gamaliel who once taught Saul and prepared him to become Paul, has put this secret into these words: "Do His will as if it were thy will, that He may do thy will as if it were His will. Annul thy will before His will, that He may annul the will of others before thy will." Jesus put it somewhat differently: "Seek ye first the kingdom of heaven and all these things shall be added to you... Ask whatsoever ye will and it shall be done unto you." Those religionists who take the latter words as applicable to any and all prayers are woefully ignorant. They cannot properly be said of persons who have not attained some or sufficient mastery of self, who give nothing from within themselves except wishes and the words which clothe them.

(401-2) Before a man will undertake the moral purifications with which the quest must begin, and the mental trainings which must complement them, he must have some incentive to do so. Where will he find it? The answer is different with different men, since it depends on his stage of evolution, character and destiny. If some find it in the sadness produced by world-weariness, others find it in the joy produced by a Glimpse. Still others are prompted by the hunger for Truth or by the thirst for self-improvement, or even blindly by the tendencies brought over from previous births.

(401-3) Whoever perceives the inferiority of his environment to what it could be, as well as the imperfection of his nature in the light of its undeveloped possibilities, and who sets out to improve the one and amend the other, has taken a first step to the quest.

(401-4) INTERIOR⁶¹⁶ WORD. In the New Testament John introduces the idea of the logos, the Word which speaks in every man who comes into the world. Every man is not able to hear it although it is always there, always immanent.

(401-5) Before a man comes to this path he may have to grope and stumble and struggle for years.

⁶¹⁴ Blank page

⁶¹⁵ The paras on this page are numbered 1 through 9; they are not consecutive with the previous page.

⁶¹⁶ "INT." in the original.

(401-6) It offers a destination at which they never seem to arrive and a course on which they can never stop travelling.

(401-7) They have vague mystical aspirations but do not know precisely what it is that they seek.

(401-8) However distant the goal may seem from his present position, he is far better placed than those who have not yet embarked on the quest.

(401-9) There is no higher purpose to which a human being can give himself.

402⁶¹⁷

IV

403

IV

(403-1)⁶¹⁸ Murmurings against the paucity of dramatic or phenomenal or ecstatic results, and lamentations over the hardships of a quester's lot, may be expected but must be rejected. Did he anticipate a special good fortune because he took to the quest? Was he to become exempt from the darker side of the human condition as a reward? Did he not see, then, and does he not realise today, that the search for truth is long and difficult by its very nature?

(403-2) Instead of wasting time excessively on sad recollection of vanished years, elderly people can use it for comforting meditation on life's highest meanings, and especially on one of the highest of them all: MIND is all there is.

(403-3) The feeling of being isolated, the sense of walking a lonely path, is true outwardly but untrue inwardly. For there he is companioned by the Overself's gentle ever-drawing love. He has only to grope within sufficiently to know this for himself, and to know it with absolute certitude.

(403-4) If the last step is realisation of the truth, the first is its recognition as such. Why then should any quester lament his lot when he has already taken and gone beyond this initial step?

⁶¹⁷ Blank page

⁶¹⁸ The paras on this page are numbered 10 through 19, making them consecutive with the previous page.

(403-5) If you take to the Quest and want its benefits, then you must take to it ardently and remain on it persistently. It is not a fad for a year but a pursuit for a life.

(403-6) If you want to find out why so many fail to reach the Quest's objective and so few succeed in doing so, first find out what the Quest really is. Then you will understand that the failures are not failures at all; that so large a project to change human nature and human consciousness cannot be finished in a little time.

(403-7) Even a lifetime is not too long a period to devote toward gaining such a great objective. What we give must be commensurate with what we want to receive. Moreover the effort required, being worthy in itself and necessary to attain the full development of manhood, is its own reward whether there is any other or not. Why then should anyone relax his effort or fall into despair because he has been able to make only little or limited progress toward the goal?

(403-8) The term "Quest" or "Path" being only a figurative one, may lead to misconceptions if taken too literally.

(403-9) An emotional state of weariness with the world often precedes the joyous discovery of the Quest.

(403-10) Where enthusiasm is fresh and experience is new, over-statement or mis-statement may easily happen.

404⁶¹⁹
IV

405
IV

(405-1)⁶²⁰ Each person has his own peculiarities and idiosyncrasies of temperament, his own asymmetries and disproportions of mentality. Some of these may be very pronounced. Yet he is expected to follow the same system, in the same way, and to the same extent, as every other person! How can such a dictatorial imposition from outside - so unrelated in part to his actual and unique psychological constitution - truly serve his real needs?

(405-2) The human being will bring about its own redemption, if only we would allow it to do so. But instead we hypnotise the mind with ideas that may suit other persons but

⁶¹⁹ Blank page

⁶²⁰ The paras on this page are numbered 20 through 28, making them consecutive with the previous page.

are unsuited to us, we practise techniques that warp our proper development, we follow leaders who know only the way they have themselves walked and who insist on crowding all seekers on it regardless of suitability and we join groups which obstruct our special line of natural growth.

(405-3) Only arrogance will reject the experience of other men, but only weakness will support itself solely on such experience. A wiser attitude will use it discriminatingly.

(405-4) (KUNDALINI CHAPTER) Not all yogas make so much of the quality of peace as an object to be secured by their means: there is one which makes even more of power. It frankly seeks enhancement of the spiritual and psychical energies, as well as the acquisition of new ones. Their exploitation leads to the diverse powers and 'gifts of the Spirit.'

(405-5) Instead of finding out the particular needs and special tendencies of the individual seeker, they will be ignored and even suppressed in the endeavour to conform him to the system. There is both good and bad in this. Which of these he will receive depends upon the competence of the teacher, if he has one, or the mental attitude he takes toward the system itself, upon his blind slavish adherence to it or intelligent open-eyed use of it.

(405-6) For those who have a proper sense of values no other interest in life is comparable to the search after truth.

(405-7) The quest has its moments of surprise, some of them quite painful but others quite pleasant.

(405-8) Despite all set-backs, the outcome of this endeavour can be only the fulfilment of hope. For that is God's will.

(405-9) The consciousness of his own imperfection sooner or later awakens in him an urge to seek perfection, that is, to enter on the Quest.

406⁶²¹

IV

407

IV

(407-1)⁶²² He should not mention his mystical experiences to unsympathetic persons nor discuss them with incompetent ones. It is better to keep them to himself and talk about

⁶²¹ Blank page

them only to a spiritual director or a much more advanced aspirant on the road than he is.

(407-2) He who can keep himself from joining any creedal organisation, keeps himself free from the partisanship and the narrow sectarian spirit, which usually accompany it.

(407-3) This looking to, and leaning upon, one man, may come to dominate the mind to such an extent that the creative powers and discriminative judgment of that mind may be wholly suppressed.

(407-4) If he does not feel continuously the exultation of making progress, he need not feel disappointment instead. For patience is an indispensable virtue on the quest.

(407-5) The Interior Word must not be mistaken for any of the psychic voices cultivated by separatists and mediums. The two are on entirely different planes, even though they are both within.

(407-6) It is just as easy, or as hard, for a man to find God outside the established religions as inside them. For he can succeed in doing so only by going within himself, an achievement which is independent of his membership of any religious group.

(407-7) They will not grant that theirs is only one of the ways to Reality and not the sole way. Or, admitting this obvious fact, they claim that theirs is by far the best way!

(407-8) The sensible attitude toward authority is to recognise that it must be of some value to him, because it represents accumulated experience, but that also it must be approached discriminately and responsibly.

(407-9) The Tibetan monk is generally told not to talk privately about any occult power he develops or display it publicly: that would cater to his vanity and bring on the punishment of a shortening of his life span.

(407-10) (KUNDALINI CHAPTER) Paul Dukes says that kundalini descriptions in books, as coiled sleeping serpent, is a symbolic term chosen to conceal its real meaning from the uninitiated.

(407-11) The belief that it is necessary to join a religious community in order to follow some spiritual discipline, is held more widely than wisely.

⁶²² The paras on this page are numbered 29 through 40, making them consecutive with the previous page.

(407-12) For months or years they wait or hope for, expect or seek this ecstatic experience. But alas! it does not come and life remains commonplace, the quest a dull affair. Then either disappointment or apathy sets in, sometimes even doubt.

408⁶²³

IV

409

IV

(409-1)⁶²⁴ The organisation of a church, group or society along the usual lines is too often motivated by a mixture of urges – some creditable but others not. If there is the desire to spread what is believed to be true, there may also be the desire to occupy a prominent leading position in the organisation, the ambition to dominate others.

(409-2) Listening to someone else's teaching, or reading it, will only be a temporary makeshift until the day when he can establish communication with his own intuitive self and receive from it the teaching which he, as a unique individual, needs. From no other source can he get such specially suitable instruction.

(409-3) If the world fails to stop another world war eventuating, it will be because highly centralised government is as much a colossal failure as highly organised religion. Some organisation in both spheres is inescapable but it is also destructive of their true purposes when carried to an autocratic point.

(409-4) Only this total independence of all cults, creeds, groups and organisations can enable him to find the facts as they are, rather than imaginary pictures of the facts.

(409-5) The individual uniqueness of each aspirant cries out to have its special needs attended to, but suggestion from outside or mesmerism from authority causes him to approach the Quest with fixed opinions as to what should be done. Others are being allowed to mould him instead of letting the inner voice do so, using their contributions solely to carry out or to supplement its guidance.

(409-6) Men come to this quest simply because they seek truth, because they want to learn what their life means and what the universe means and the relation of both, which is the best of all reasons. But others come because of shaken self-respect or after a bereavement which leaves them without a dearly loved one. Still others come in reaction to disillusionment, frustration or calamity. And lastly there are those who

⁶²³ Blank page

⁶²⁴ The paras on this page are numbered 41 through 49, making them consecutive with the previous page.

come out of utter fatigue with the senseless world and disgust with its evil ways, which is the second best of all reasons.

(409-7) If the quest were super-human in its demands and unrealisable in its goal, it would never have been pursued in East and West through so many centuries.

(409-8) Philosophy's daring religious concepts attract the young while its reflective metaphysical ones attract the middle-aged and elderly.

(409-9) If the goal is really unattainable, then the Quest is futile. If it is no more than approachable then surely the Quest is well worth while. But in fact the goal is both attainable and approachable.

410⁶²⁵

IV

411

IV

(411-1)⁶²⁶ As an expression of the divine life-power he is unique. In the end, he will always have to take his guidance from within, that is to say, direct from that life-power which has made him what he is.

(411-2) It is perhaps pardonable that he should feel frustrated as the fulfilment of his aspirations, the matching of his perfectionist dreams, seems to slip farther away with the vanishing years.

(411-3) Let him take up whatever path is most convenient to his personal circumstances and individual character and not force himself into one utterly unsuited to both, merely because it has proven right for other people.

(411-4) No philosopher has ever turned away from these teachings. No student of philosophy has ever done so without returning again after, with time and experience, he had more thoroughly tested its comparative worth or truth against whatever else he had tried.

(411-5) He himself has sought this self-cleansing. He must be prepared to witness the rising up to the surface of negative qualities that have lain inert or only half-active, as well as the throwing into focus by outer events of those which have already been fully

⁶²⁵ Blank page

⁶²⁶ The paras on this page are numbered 50 through 59, making them consecutive with the previous page.

active. He will now have to deal with these qualities, usually one at a time, and to deal with them repeatedly so long as they are not thoroughly transmuted. It is all a part of the work of purification, resulting from the co-operation of his own higher self. As such it is not to be regretted but expected, not to be deplored but to be calmly dealt with.

(411-6) The years roll on since that first spellbound discovery and those early enthusiastic studies, as he pauses to reflect over what he was then, what he is now and what he had hoped to become.

(411-7) It must become something as central to his life as eating, as necessary as breathing and as welcome as great music.

(411-8) The Bhagavad-Gita not only emphasises the need of solitude for practising yoga but also warns us that the duty, the path, the way of life of other men may be full of danger to us. Thus it also preaches the need of individualism.

(411-9) Each man is unique so each quest must be unique too. Everyone must find, in the end, his own path through his own life. All attempts to copy someone else, however reputed, will fail to lead him to self-realisation although they may advance him to a certain point.

(411-10) There are no two questers alike, and the personal instruction to suit one may be useless to another.

412⁶²⁷
IV

413
IV

(413-1)⁶²⁸ Plato suggests the age of fifty to be a suitable turning point for a man to pass over from mere experience of life to constant meditation upon the higher purpose of life. Cephalus, the patriarch in Plato's Republic was glad to be free from the lusts of youth, which he denounced as tyrannical, and to be in the state of relative peace which, he asserted, comes with old age.

Youth cries out for romance and love. The silencing of that cry naturally and properly belongs to age. Yet it seems a pity that this early enthusiasm and tumultuous energy which could in most cases partially, in some cases even wholly, be devoted to the quest, should not be so used.

⁶²⁷ Blank page

⁶²⁸ The paras on this page are numbered 60 through 62, making them consecutive with the previous page.

Youth is progressive, age is conservative. Both tendencies are needed, but they are not needed in equal proportions. Sometimes the one should be emphasised more weightily, sometimes the other.

Those who have reached the middle years are likely to know more about life than those who have not. They are certainly more capable of sustaining attention and concentration than callow youths. Hence they are better able to receive the truth and to accept the value of philosophy than the young. Old age ought to become the tranquil period which ruminates over the folly and wisdom of its memories, it is to reflect upon, and study well, the lessons garnered from experience.

Why is it that elderly persons tend to become more religious as well as more sickly than younger ones? All the usual answers may be quite correct on their own levels but there is one on another and deeper level which is the ultimate answer. The life-energy of the Overself flowing into and pervading the physical body begins, in middle age,⁶²⁹ a reaction toward its source. The individual's resistance to the attack of disease is consequently less than it was before. His interest in, and attraction to the objects of physical desires begin to grow less too, while the force that went into them now begins to go toward the Overself. When this reversal expresses itself in its simplest form, the individual becomes religious. When the energy ceases to pervade the body, death follows.

(413-2) One man and one God are all the organisation needed. More is a superfluity. The seeker who cherishes his independent path and individual thought cannot comfortably fit into a group where all alike must be pressed into the same shape.

(413-3) It is not by sedulously aping other questers that one follows the quest, not by conforming to a rigid pattern. Its requirements must change with each individual and even with his circumstances.

414⁶³⁰
IV

415
IV

(415-1)⁶³¹ The way must begin with a general quietening down of your mind, calming of your emotions, an overcoming of your passions, and a regular practice of meditation.

⁶²⁹ We have inserted a comma for grammar's sake and clarity. – TJS '20

⁶³⁰ Blank page

⁶³¹ The paras on this page are numbered 63 through 73, making them consecutive with the previous page.

(415-2) Having no official connection with any group, sect, organisation or church leaves me free to help anyone, anywhere.

(415-3) Those who repine pessimistically at the slowness of their growth, who talk in disenchanted tones about the futility of the Quest, need to feel the invigorating and blessing touch of Grace.

(415-4) The philosophic approach does not limit the seeker rigidly to a single specific technique. While it asks him to follow the basic path and fulfil the fundamental requirements which all beginners must follow, it also points out that this is only a general preparation. A point will be reached when he is ready for more advanced work, and when the personal characteristics and circumstances which are particularly his own must be brought in for adjustment if he is to receive the greatest benefit. No two seekers and the surrounding conditions are ever exactly alike and, at a certain stage, what is helpful to one will be time-wasting to another.

(415-5) Is he sincerely desirous of receiving truth (rather than comfort for his illusions and confirmation for his beliefs) from the Overself? Is he earnestly willing to obey its leading?

(415-6) The notion that the Overself's voice is necessarily accompanied by occult phenomena or heard clairaudiently inside oneself is a very limited one. It may be totally unaccompanied by anything strange or as if it were {consciously}⁶³² felt rather than heard. Or it may speak to one indirectly through any other man or any circumstantial event that touches his path.

(415-7) So far as conformity connotes pretence and insincerity and timid blind imitation he is not one to favour it, but so far as it connotes decency in behaviour, consideration for others and experience-tested proved standards, he is for it.

(415-8) Those who complain about the quest's difficulties or delays, should remember that nothing in Nature is made easy for them to attain.

(415-9) The weary traveller on this path may well exclaim "Will a time ever come when the Overself shall reveal itself?"

(415-10) Those who lack perseverance, who forget that the nature of the task they have undertaken calls for time and patience, who abandon the quest after a shorter or longer time, ought never to have taken to the quest.

(415-11) Such is the quest and such is the satisfaction it leads to.

⁶³² We have changed "conscience" to "consciously" for clarity.

(417-1)⁶³⁴ "Straight is the way and narrow the gate thereof" said Jesus. The Hindu Upanishads, which are the sacred and formerly secret works containing some of the highest wisdom of India, have a similar phrase: "The path which is as narrow as the edge of a razor." What do these words mean. They do not tell of a path to moral perfection, however desirable it may be to be morally perfect. No! the way they speak of is the Ultimate Path which demands from us utter and complete rectitude of thought and feeling. Every movement made in the heart and mind must be completely straight, undeflected and undistorted. The mental activity must be true in every sense of the word. Life must become one-pointed, perfectly concentrated, moving always in a straight line. When ideas are warped by prejudices, or distorted by preconceptions, or clouded by illusions, or inflamed by excitements, then the movement of the mind is not straight but wavering from side to side. It may even turn round and move backwards. We inevitably approach life with a predetermined outlook which has gradually developed from the many influences played upon us since childhood. Rare indeed is the man who is immune to them. This bias tends to overload with personal feeling all judgment, and to raise selfish emotion to the status of a test of truth.

(417-2) The Interior Word did not speak to me for myself alone, to prepare, teach and direct me. It spoke also for others. It required me to write down its messages for them even more than for me.

(417-3) The irony is that in religion most people distrust the new, and under-estimate the unorganised. They feel that in the old, the traditional and the established religious group they can take hold of what is solid and firm, reliable and safe.

(417-4) Too many aspirants complain about their seeming lack of progress, their failure to get encouraging inner experiences in payment for their effort. If they were humble enough they would not complain, for then they would not be measuring how high they had grown. If they must look at all, it would be better to look for a finer character than for stranger phenomena.

⁶³³ Blank page

⁶³⁴ The paras on this page are numbered 74 through 79, making them consecutive with the previous page.

(417-5) The decision to embark on this quest – so new, uncommon and untried to the average westerner – becomes especially hard to the man seeking alone, with no companion or relative to fortify his resolution.

(417-6) Those who are disturbed by events or dismayed by intolerable conditions may seek emotional comfort, security or peace in various ways, either outward or inward.

418⁶³⁵

IV

419

IV

(419-1)⁶³⁶ The man who is fifty years old is not necessarily fifty years more aware of the truth about himself or fifty years closer to the attainment of spiritual reality.

(419-2) He is perfectly entitled to clear his own pathway to the Spirit for himself, and without the help of any contemporary, any neighbour or any leader who lived in the past centuries. But will this independence and this isolation be a gain or a loss? The answer must always be an individual one: it cannot always be one or the other alone. It depends on what sort of a man he is, what sort of teaching and what sort of teacher he has access to.

(419-3) The drum-tattoos to drive away evil spirits I heard in primitive Africa, and the charcoal-blackened faces to achieve the same purpose which I saw in primitive Malaya, did not depend on either sounds or sights for their main effect. They depended on the concentrated thought behind them.

(419-4) The good effects of their mystical practices or beliefs have not been obtained, while their own defects have been strengthened and exaggerated.

(419-5) Society requires him to conform to its customs, adjust himself to its demands, and suppress each inner urge to follow contrary ways. Who is he to dispute authority and disrupt convention in these matters?

(419-6) Once the quest throws its spell over him, he is its prisoner for life. He may escape from time to time. He may shun its disciplines and deny its self-denials when fatigue or circumstance prompts him to do so. But always its mysterious fascination

⁶³⁵ Blank page

⁶³⁶ The paras on this page are numbered 80 through 91, making them consecutive with the previous page.

will force him to return eventually. The length of the period of his desertion may be a month or a dozen years; that is irrelevant.

(419-7) For some persons adolescence was a painful period when adjustment after adjustment had to be made. They look back on it with dread. But is not adult life itself a kind of spiritual adolescence in which we all have to learn to make a further and higher series of adjustments?

(419-8) The Interior Word cannot speak frequently until there is complete silence within the man's being.

(419-9) His mind is on his Quest all the time. But it is not on the Quest so neurotically or so morbidly as to make him unbalanced.

(419-10) That we too are capable of doing what they did, of achieving what they achieved, is true in some cases only.

(419-11) He must accept the fact that he is not, and does not want to be, like the majority of people.

(419-12) If the struggle for holiness becomes desperate, if the probing into his spiritual state becomes constant, then the effort is excessive and unbalanced.

420⁶³⁷
IV

421
IV

(421-1)⁶³⁸ The man who is ready to desert his quest or his master because no visible grace comes his way, because no joyous mystical ecstasies visit him, because nothing seems to happen in his inner life, needs to become acquainted with three facts of that life. The first is that grace may come and not be recognised for what it is. The second is that his personal emotions are not necessarily a correct measure of his spiritual progress. The third is that the true quest leads for a time through the dark lonely forest of inner poverty, where the man has nothing to boast of, is nothing to be proud of, and experiences nothing to compensate for the worldly life which he has sacrificed. It is indeed a dark night of the soul.

⁶³⁷ Blank page

⁶³⁸ The paras on this page are numbered 92 through 95, making them consecutive with the previous page.

(421-2) The Interior Word: When another personality speaks from the entranced or semi-entranced body, be the latter a spiritualist medium, a hypnotised person or a psychologically auto-suggested one, we have a phenomenon in which no true mystic would take part. When this same personality announces itself to be Jesus, Krishna, St Francis, Mrs Eddy or Mdme Blavatsky, it may immediately be labelled as spurious. Whether the phenomenon be produced by actual spirit-possession (when usually a lying spirit is the operating agent) or by psychological self-obsession, with the wakeful personality unconscious of what the other has said; in both cases it is one which ought to be avoided. The Catholic Church, with its very wide experience in such matters, has cautioned its adherents against being seduced either into allowing the thing to happen or into believing the teaching given by the mysterious visitor. The Pope Benedict XIV went so far as to ascribe a diabolic origin to the voice. From the standpoint of philosophy it may be said that the Inner Word speaks only to a man, never through him to others. Nor is it heard clairaudiently and therefore psycho-physically; it is heard only mentally and inwardly.

(421-3) It is here that the beautiful balance of philosophy rejects at one and the same time two opposing ways which appear in the history of mysticism. The one would, through over-systematisation and burdensome detail, turn its methods into rigid frozen complicated mechanisms, as if the inner being were a piece of engineering rather than a living thing to be nourished and warmed. The other would, through vague foundations, the pretext of freedom and excessive individualism, turn its teachings into an anarchy of conflicting ideas and personal phantasies or an arena for contending personal ambitions.

(421-4) Man not only needs a discipline of habit but also, at times, a discipline against habit.

422⁶³⁹

IV

423

IV

(423-1)⁶⁴⁰ The religious individualist who is unwilling to put his mind under the yoke of any organisation, who is unaffiliated with any group, has at least as much chance to find truth as the members of such organisations and groups and, as history shows, most probably a better one.

⁶³⁹ Blank page

⁶⁴⁰ The paras on this page are numbered 96 through 106, making them consecutive with the previous page.

(423-2) Men, filled with pardonable anxiety or natural eagerness, often ask: How long will it take me to accomplish this spiritual work? A definite period in years cannot be stated in the answer. Whoever thinks in this way will never be able to succeed in the task. For how can he enter the Eternal while he thinks only of time? All hurry must be abandoned. Let results take care of themselves, is the Bhagavad Gita's advice in this matter.

(423-3) The assertion that spiritual chaos and anarchy are the alternative to spiritual institutionalism and organisation is absurd, for the contradictory claims and teachings of the various institutions themselves lead to a chaotic situation.

(423-4) If we try to compute the number of those who are not overawed by the prestige, the success and the organisation of a religion, sect, cult or group, and who seek truth with a better measure than these things, we shall find only a small remnant is left out of all those who profess an interest in the things of spirit.

(423-5) "When one has worked at this for a long time," wrote Chu Hsi, "a day will dawn when suddenly everything will become clear. The mind will be enlightened."

(423-6) Let others do what they wish with this human life but he can and must use it in no other way than to fulfil its higher purpose.

(423-7) Is it always his own fault if he does not make progress? Do not his surroundings and his destiny affect the result?

(423-8) He must not let himself be intimidated by the Quest's difficulties. He may heed the counsel of Lu Chiu-yuan to "burn the thorns in your path and wash away the mire."⁶⁴¹

(423-9) His general attitude towards all cults and groups ought to be an independent one. It should prevent affiliation. This leaves him free to seek and take whatever of truth he can find in any or all of them.

(423-10) The dark nights which come to the inner man, when he feels deprived of peace and hope or especially when he feels utterly deserted by the Overself, are as necessary to educate him as the bright days when joy fills him because of the divine nearness.

(423-11) He is a man alone, belonging to no sect or school, no group or organised creed.

424⁶⁴²

⁶⁴¹ PB himself quotes the two rivals Chu Hsi and Lu Chiu-yuan on the same page. – TJS '15

⁶⁴² Blank page

(425-1)⁶⁴³ I am not criticising those who follow such ways or advocate such teachings, nor venturing to judge their rightness or wrongness. The need for, and the usefulness of group organisation is admitted. But I feel there is an equal need for a different approach, for independence from all group organisations, there is room for a path which avoids "joining." This need not be misunderstood. There are those who like the first way and they will have to follow it. There are others who will prefer the second way. I am among them. Both ways are needed but by different people.

(425-2) It is essential to make clear that none should take to this Quest in order to follow or depend on some particular man, or to gain certain mystic experiences for if he is disappointed in the man or frustrated in reaching the experiences, he will be inclined to abandon the Quest. No! - he should take to it for its own sake, because it is immeasurably worth while and because its rewards in improved character and developed understanding are sufficient in themselves to pay for his effort. If the Quest helps him to become aware of, and to eradicate, bad faults in himself, in his outlook on life and in his approach to others, it has justified itself. Even if the mystical consciousness fails to show itself, or to show itself often enough to please him, he has still had his money's worth.

(425-3) DARK NIGHT of the SOUL: In passing through this, the greatest humiliation he has ever experienced, and passing through it resignedly, patiently and without rebellion, he reduces the ego to a cipher, and destroys its power over him.

(425-4) This attainment does not come for nothing; it requires self-training, the following of practices, the doing of exercises.

(425-5) When he measures his accomplishments against his goals, he may get discouraged. But who is to judge him in this matter? Neither he nor his friends nor his enemies can do so without emotionalism or sentimentality warping, covering or colouring the judgment.

(425-6) Each seeker will have to find the approach which best suits his particular need and temperament.

⁶⁴³ The paras on this page are numbered 107 through 115, making them consecutive with the previous page.

(425-7) The experiences which he has along the path have to be correctly interpreted, the teaching which he obtains has to be correctly understood.

(425-8) He must be willing and even determined to think and feel differently from those around him. How can it be otherwise when his goal is different from theirs, too?

(425-9) He is quite willing to take the credit for his successes but quite unwilling to take the blame for his failures.

426⁶⁴⁴

IV

427

IV

(427-1)⁶⁴⁵ If the recent scientific computation of the earth's age as four thousand million years be correct, we get some idea how long it takes to make a man. How much longer then to make a superman?

(427-2) It is a mistake to believe that something must happen inwardly to show that he is making progress, that some dramatic experience or stimulating revelation must come to him as a reward for his taking time out to meditate. It is wiser to be satisfied with settling down and being calm, with the patient surrender to the Overself's will. He must learn how to wait.

(427-3) Not only are the lusts and passions enemies to his inner tranquillity but also ambition and curiosity, even the wish to influence, sway or persuade other men.

(427-4) Did he not know that when he put himself on this Quest, he put himself under the likelihood of having to endure the trials, the oppositions and the self-denials that often mark its course?

(427-5) Christianity, as it has become in its organised and institutionalised state, presents the good citizen as its model. Taoism as it originally was, presented quite the opposite non-conforming citizen as its own model. So long as society is itself ignorant of where it is going wrong in its appraisal of the nature of man and mesmerised by institutional prestige while neglectful of inner light, so long ought its demand for conformity to be treated with cold reserve, asserted the Taoist sages.

⁶⁴⁴ Blank page

⁶⁴⁵ The paras on this page are numbered 116 through 126, making them consecutive with the previous page.

(427-6) The observing part of his mind will note with merciless detachment his deviations from the Path, his lapses from its standards.

(427-7) Just as there is not a single radius only from the centre of a circle to its circumference but countless ones, so there is not a single path only from man to God but as many paths as there are men. Each has to find the way most appropriate to him, to the meaning and experience of truth.

(427-8) He should not let others, not even his friends or family, influence him to doing what his conscience tells is bad, or weaken his faith in what his intelligence and intuition tell him is true.

(427-9) DARK NIGHT of the SOUL: The owl is blinded by light, which is therefore darkness to it.

(427-10) It will begin to appear not only in the large events of his life but also in the ordinary activity of each day.

(427-11) No other man's experience can be worth the same as his own, or mean the same to him.

428⁶⁴⁶

IV

429

IV

(429-1)⁶⁴⁷ They call themselves 'drop-outs' because they refuse to join a competitive society, which they regard as mad, selfish, hypocritical and materialistic. So they refuse to give it their services. But, to be consistent they ought also to drop-out from its rewards. This they seldom do. They do no real work, live as parasites, and take what they can beg, borrow or even steal.

(429-2) The young drift and drug themselves, or fall into the ranks of those who are "against authority." They have not found themselves of course, and cannot yet evaluate correctly their trends of thought and action. They perhaps better than their elders do however see that the increasingly specialised education of today leaves little room to get a generalised view of life itself and its meaning for them. This situation makes it more useful to introduce some philosophy into their learning period.

⁶⁴⁶ Blank page

⁶⁴⁷ The paras on this page are numbered 1 through 7; they are not consecutive with the previous page.

(429-3) One must have suffered to the point of being weary of living, or one must be old and infirm, or one must have reflected very honestly and deeply to believe that it is better to be without the predominance of the personal consciousness. And to be willing to work for this end must seem mad to young eager vital men and women enjoying their lives.

(429-4) Group emotion is worked up until it becomes a substitute for personal inspiration. Either through ignorance of, or inability to practice meditation, or both, the group members are happy to share, and are satisfied with, a common experience on the shallowest level. But nothing will replace individual work at self-development leading to deeper experience and higher knowledge.

(429-5) This guru is not a non-human or super-human being. Take away the prestige, the ashram, the theatrical settings and he is left a person, perhaps on a superior level but not infallible, still liable to make mistakes.

(429-6) Truth is discoverable but not by everyone. It is not discoverable by the criminals who break every ethical law, by the lazy who won't pause and look within each day, by the cynics who sneer at the quality of reverence, by those who do not value it enough to cultivate their true intelligence.

(429-7) He should learn to transform his experiences into judgments on himself.

430⁶⁴⁸

IV

431

IV

(431-1)⁶⁴⁹ In the Orient it is the general belief that a man turns toward this quest for either of two reasons. If he is young, it is because he has an inborn genius for it. If he is somewhat older, it is because he is dissatisfied with life, disappointed in it, or bereaved by its calamities. But the philosophical view, while including these reasons, goes farther, and wider. For it sees that some, notably those who are aesthetically sensitive and those who are maritally fulfilled, are indeed satisfied with their existing form of life. Only, they sense the greater possibilities open to a human being and wish to expand it to realise them more completely.

⁶⁴⁸ Blank page

⁶⁴⁹ The paras on this page are numbered 8 through 14, making them consecutive with the previous page.

(431-2) When spirituality turns professional, when it begins to wear special clothes, possess particular titles, advertise its presence in certain men –⁶⁵⁰ it begins to become an artificial pretentious thing. It is no longer its pure self but an adulteration of itself, no longer spontaneous and natural but forced and self-conscious.

(431-3) In the beginning an organisation is 'pure,' that is, seeks earnestly and sincerely to perform its proper function. In the end, its original ambition realised, its success established, it deviates into other purposes. It becomes power-hungry, tyrannical, selfish, more interested in its own perpetuation than in serving the early ideal, more eager for membership and money than in the common welfare... And this is true of religious as of political organisations, of trade unions and commercial associations.

(431-4) How far has he involved himself in this quest; how much of his life has he dedicated to it? This is the test – sometimes the unwelcome test which life uncannily provides through events or environments.

(431-5) Philosophy has its disciplines which follow logically from its doctrines. It is not easy to apply and live, just as its metaphysics are not easy to grasp at first study. Its tenets must not be adulterated or diluted to render them suitable for popular consumption. But bits and pieces of them can be put into symbolic dress or simple but meaningful tales for such consumption: that is where public religion finds its area of service.

(431-6) Organised sectarianism and societies may lead in the end to tyranny and despotism.

(431-7) The young have no use for sham consolations.

432⁶⁵¹

IV

433

IV

(433-1)⁶⁵² The position of personal responsibility in which he finds himself may pass unnoticed or evaded, but it is there present in each important decision, each serious action. Whether knowingly or unwittingly he pronounces judgment on each occasion: the faculty of discrimination is always exercised, even by taking shelter under the rigid

⁶⁵⁰ We have changed the comma after "men" to a dash for clarity and grammar's sake. – TJS '20

⁶⁵¹ Blank page

⁶⁵² The paras on this page are numbered 15 through 20, making them consecutive with the previous page.

dogmas of ancient institutions. They may rob him of this feeling of responsibility but its actuality remains.

(433-2) He is too fastidious to accept the unwashed dirty clothes and bodies, the jerky slangy careless speech, the crude, often rude, arrogant ill-bred manners of the boorish, without some feeling of repulsion. After all, even Lao-Tzu⁶⁵³ was a protester, but he still remained a refined gentleman in manners.

These beatniks and hippies as they are called have now invaded the domain of spiritual search and vary their drug taking with going to India on guru hunts.

(433-3) In so far as it is possible to do so why not put some of this traditional knowledge in a modern dress? And why not let it be enriched by culture, by art, even by science, so long as its great truths remain untouched and unharmed? Finally why not humanise its practical disciplines and ethical demands, in particular its required sacrifices and worldly renunciations; and thus learn to look on them as they were among the wiser Greeks – trainings to make perceptions clearer and reactions healthier so that the mind serves truth and the animal existence kept in its place?

(433-4) The disadvantage of being an adherent of any organised group or established faith is that he has to hold the doctrines or stay within the dogmas because he is expected to, even when he finds they clash with his own or others' experience, or when new discoveries clash with them.

(433-5) The idea of total submission to a guru is widely prevalent among Oriental seekers but does not appeal so much to Occidental ones. They fear demands may be made on them, because of their loss of autonomy, that would involve them in unpleasant sacrifices, deprivations or renunciations.

(433-6) The Glimpse is a presage of what he could become.

434⁶⁵⁴

IV

435

IV

(435-1)⁶⁵⁵ The question: how can I improve myself? will naturally arise as the study shows up the connections between a man's destiny and his character, deeds, thoughts and desires.

⁶⁵³ "Lao-tse" in the original.

⁶⁵⁴ Blank page

(435-2) A movement may begin and seek to keep itself free from organisation administration and authority but it is unlikely to remain so. For human beings, fallible or ambitious, frail or emotional,⁶⁵⁶ will sooner or later seek to impose their ideas, will, or themselves, on the others.

(435-3) So much happens in the subconscious before they are quite aware of it, that only when a new decision, a new orientation of feeling or thought is firmly arrived at, and openly appears, do they discover and define what they have been led to by outer and inner developments.

(435-4) The philosopher must learn to stand on his own legs, not on those of a group, sect or organisation, however large, ancient, successful or well-established it be. But his legs must themselves stand on solid ground. This they can do because he looks to the Eternal Being for ultimate strength.

(435-5) The name 'quester' has its connotation of being a member of some special tribe, and its vanity of belonging to some chosen race: yet it might be pleasanter to be an ordinary person, not set apart from the mass in any way.

(435-6) There is hope if only he is determined to wake up and begin afresh, to supplant negatives with positives, and to give more of himself to the Short Path.

(435-7) From whatever side the truth comes to him, to that side he turns his face and welcomes it. But that is possible only because he keeps his freedom and refuses to enter self-made gaol.

(435-8) Of an afflicted old age we often hear, but of afflicted teen age, with its secret problems, uncertainties and self-doubts, we seldom hear.

(435-9) Those who newly come to old knowledge need instructors. Those who create new knowledge need research. But not all who want the first are apt pupils while some of the second group are inept.

(435-10) Sometimes, in the middle of the night, he awakens and sees himself as a minute atom in a titanic cosmic process, an awesome and even frightening picture. But sanity returns: the presence of divinity redeems it all.

⁶⁵⁵ The paras on this page are numbered 21 through 31, making them consecutive with the previous page.

⁶⁵⁶ We have inserted commas after "emotional," "will," and "themselves" for grammar's sake.
– TJS '20

(435-11) A purified refined character which emerges from this self-training.

436⁶⁵⁷

IV

437

IV

(437-1)⁶⁵⁸ When he is well into old age important moods, new discoveries and neglected interests may arise. Whether in his own experience or in that of others close or known to him, sickness, accident, bereavement come to be seen as inevitable and may awaken an interest in topics like survival, religion, spiritual healing and in allied subjects.

(437-2) Where gurus who are mainly intent on personally profiting from their work of instruction, they may reap this profit but the unfortunate pupils receive little or no real benefit.

(437-3) It is not often worth all the troubles and pains of being born and enduring all its consequences, even allowing for the pleasant interludes. Buddha would certainly not agree with any optimist about this matter.

(437-4) It would be untrue to say that the pursuit demands hard tests and difficult sacrifices from a man, hard enough to frighten many away. On the contrary there are cheerful rewarding and even practical facets of this quest.

(437-5) It is important for the study of philosophy and especially for the practice of its Short Path to avoid negative thoughts or feelings, to rebut them as soon and as often as they arise. This is not only a moral necessity but also a practical one: Such avoidance helps the mind to reach or keep the delicate condition of intuitive transcendent understanding.

(437-6) The responsibility must be placed where it belongs – on the aspirant himself, not on his guide whatever the latter claims.

(437-7) The test will come with every major crisis, every minor ordeal. If his inner work has been well done he will be surprised at the calmness with which he meets and passes the event, astonished at his strength.

⁶⁵⁷ Blank page

⁶⁵⁸ The paras on this page are numbered 32 through 40, making them consecutive with the previous page.

(437-8) Once past the age of puberty it is to be expected that young persons want experience for they know that this is the period of initiation into life's possibilities and of preparation for adulthood. But through their very ignorance they fall more easily into the lures of drugs, promiscuity, alcohol.

(437-9) The pathetic bleakness of old age is balanced by the wisdom of experience. The pleasures of the senses may be less or even no longer available. But the fruition of knowledge is.

438⁶⁵⁹

IV

439

IV

(439-1)⁶⁶⁰ Cynicism comes easily to the old, idealism to the young, but one day – in a later incarnation perhaps – both may learn that they cannot have life on their own terms: destiny predominates for there is a World-idea and a karmic adjustment.

(439-2) The quester must get this for himself. The belief that someone else – a guru or whatever – will or can give it to him free of cost is illusory.

(439-3) There are dangers in the theatrical exhibitionism to which neurotic excess and unbalanced posturing may lead. Self-deception, fanaticism, irresponsibility and misleading of the young are some of them.

(439-4) It ought to be the guru's task to get his disciples to act nobly or discipline self not because he orders them to do so but because they feel it is what they want to do of their own accord. Such subtle inner work is uncommon for such gurus are uncommon.

(439-5) The young people despise the old – regarded by them as the failed generation which made such a mess of the world.

(439-6) The ignorant are unwilling to abandon their ignorance because they are unwilling to make the needed effort and get to work on themselves.

(439-7) Their attitudes towards the older men and women is too often deplorable.

⁶⁵⁹ Blank page

⁶⁶⁰ The paras on this page are numbered 41 through 51, making them consecutive with the previous page.

(439-8) The main object of his inner work at this stage is to try to keep perfectly calm in whatever situation he finds himself during each day's different changes, and this whether it be provocative, pleasurable or troublesome.

(439-9) To increase his personal capacities for undertaking tasks demanded by his environment, may be a worthy ambition but is not the primary aim of this work. To move away from such identification with the ego is now to be his purpose.

(439-10) A single lifetime seems too short to achieve this purpose. Caught as we are by environment and events, we feel helpless to do more than a little in this direction.

(439-11) As the old questions about existence – whether of man, the universe or God – clamour in the mind for answers, a conflict goes on inside the young and educated about what they are to do with their lives.

440⁶⁶¹

IV

441

IV

(441-1)⁶⁶² Whether a man is a Zionist or a Zennist, whether he seeks the Christian Salvation or the Japanese Satori, the fundamental approach is more or less the same.

(441-2) He proposes to reorder his ways, to engage in the work of self-control, but finds that he has an intractable ego to deal with and obstinate passions to contend with.

(441-3) Counsel to a Seeker: First hear or study, reflect and understand what you, the world and God are. Then enter the Stillness, love it. The Stillness will take care of you, and of your problems.

(441-4) Respect-worthy persons are now taking up these studies in self-improvement through yoga, meditation, metaphysics, essential religion and allied topics.

(441-5) Where is the truth to be found in all this bewildering array of doctrines, creeds, claims, systems and beliefs? That is the reaction of many young aspirants toward a life higher than the materialistic one offered them by society today. Theirs is the choice: the responsibility cannot be evaded. There may be long mental struggle or easy swift

⁶⁶¹ Blank page

⁶⁶² The paras on this page are numbered 52 through 59, making them consecutive with the previous page.

emotional acceptance but the consequences belong to them. Through all these things they learn, develop, discover and find their way in the end.

(441-6) But the generations move on and these young persons will become old ones.

(441-7) Let him avoid the narrowness of sectarian views, the confinement of intolerant groups.

(441-8) If the meaning of it all is obscure to him today the quest may light it up for him tomorrow.

442⁶⁶³

IV

443

IV

(443-1)⁶⁶⁴ There are remarkable experiences on the way, each of which may seem to signal the finding of God and lead him to tell others about it or to set out to advise and help them. But they are pseudo-enlightenments in the sense that the goal is still farther away.

(443-2) The young do not like to admit it but at their age level they have neither the information nor the equipment to make wise or balanced judgments.

(443-3) The proper attitude for a young person not too far from the threshold of adulthood is to keep his mind open, not shut in dogmatic slogans, too often themselves the result of half-true, half-false suggestion, received from other minds.

(443-4) The man who is travelling this inner way soon finds and feels its loneliness. He may try to get rid of the feeling by joining a group, but this can give only a partial liberation and in the end, only a temporary one. But this loneliness need not be a cause of suffering. Rather he may come to enjoy it.

(443-5) In humility the quest is to be begun: in even greater humility it is to be fulfilled.

(443-6) The transformation of the whole inner man may happen slowly and imperceptibly or through a series of experiences brought on by crises. With it comes the

⁶⁶³ Blank page

⁶⁶⁴ The paras on this page are numbered 65 through 78; they are not consecutive with the previous page.

purification of his character, the maturation of his intelligence and the self-discipline of the ego.

(443-7) The zest for living which younger men so often feel is reduced or even lost by older men. "I have lost interest; I am tired of it all" muttered Churchill several times during his last decade.

(443-8) He finds himself confronted with a critical choice: either imposing control to eliminate wayward thoughts or confining himself to theoretical interest only.

(443-9) The kind of spiritual approach which a man follows⁶⁶⁵ depends upon his predominant temperament, faculties, capacities, preferences and evolutionary level.

(443-10) The mere number of years of existence is not enough basis on which to judge a man's wisdom. The body's age is quite separate from the soul's.

(443-11) It is one of the special services of youth to prod its elders into action, and to spur a trend or reform into faster pace.

(443-12) What man is so perfect that an honest examination of himself does not give rise to saddening troubling truths? But what man among us is eager – let alone willing – to make such an examination?

(443-13) Whether it be failing passion or fading memory, the inner losses brought on by elderly years are not all necessarily deplorable. Much depends on the standpoint. Some losses may even be a cause for gratitude.

(443-14) No one except the man himself can develop the needed qualities and practise them.

444⁶⁶⁶

IV

445

IV

(445-1)⁶⁶⁷ Whatever helps consciousness come nearer to high moods is a useful spiritual path to someone.

⁶⁶⁵ We have removed a comma from after "follows" for grammar's sake. – TJS '20

⁶⁶⁶ Blank page

⁶⁶⁷ The paras on this page are numbered 79 through 94, making them consecutive with the previous page.

(445-2) He may believe that, with the material he is born with, his quest is unlikely to come anywhere near success. But that is not the point. That is where grace enters the picture. What he is concerned with is the attempt itself.

(445-3) Whenever he comes to a crucial turn in the road, where a personal choice must be made with serious consequences, he finds a warning waiting for him.

(445-4) Was Buddha right or wrong to dwell so much on the unpleasant prospect of becoming aged, weary, sick and lonely?

(445-5) He learns the lesson of the relativity of all things, especially human things. Time is the great scene shifter. From careless vivacious youth to fussy stiff old age, the perceptions change, the objects thought about change as the ageing process creeps in, settles in, bringing new problems.

(445-6) The Dark Night is not the result of any physical suffering or personal misfortune: it comes from a subtler cause. It induces a depression of enormous weight.

(445-7) He must begin with what he is and where he is: that's the starting point. But after looking at the goal, and the direction leading to it, he looks for the next step.

(445-8) If he has a protest to make, let him do so in a civilised manner. Being young does not excuse him (any more than being old) from the requirement of normal decency, that he conduct himself properly when among others, with some measure of self-control and self-restraint.

(445-9) Youth rightly refuses to be overwhelmed by tradition but wrongly refuses to take up its share of tradition

(445-10) The mental condition and physical appearance of two persons are never identical. This is not less true of their spiritual development. The path must be suited to the man.

(445-11) In youth emotions, instincts, passions and impulses are dominant. We do not expect them to be well-informed, reasonable and balanced but we do expect them to gain something of these attributes when they pass into adulthood, and especially if they pursue a higher education.

(445-12) The young protesters make all sorts of demands on society, take for granted all that it gives them, but they do not seem to think that they have responsibilities towards it.

(445-13) It is said in an ancient text that {those}⁶⁶⁸ who are fatigued with living, its cares, repetitions, futilities and disappointments, provide recruits for the small army of questers.

(445-14) He continues to pursue the quest because although his hope of success gets less and less, the alternative – shallow purposeless existence – is even more hopeless.

(445-15) Are they engaged in a quest for what may be virtually unattainable and whose existence is unsure?

(445-16) when integrity is combined with intelligence.

446⁶⁶⁹

IV

447

IV

(447-1)⁶⁷⁰ They who reject the Quest live to no purpose beyond living itself, to no higher end than satisfying natural necessities.

(447-2) Is he striving for the impossible? For something quite outside the range of human capacity?

(447-3) The want of inner affinity may make it advisable, after a time, to be content with what one has learned from a teaching, a school, a sect, even a religion, and move on elsewhere.

(447-4) He who can commune with his soul by himself does not need a church, a labelled religion. Society has no right to impose it on him. In their naive adolescent groupings, the young who discard their traditional form of religion, feel something of this truth.

(447-5) Properly regarded, the Quest is an inspiring endeavour despite all its failures and despairs.

⁶⁶⁸ We have inserted “those” for clarity.

⁶⁶⁹ Blank page

⁶⁷⁰ The paras on this page are numbered 95 through 106, making them consecutive with the previous page.

(447-6) The Master Jalal ad-Din⁶⁷¹ Rumi did not allow disciples to have constant contact with him. At a certain point he dismissed them. They had henceforth to work alone upon the foundations laid down. He was an original Teacher, and a successful one.

(447-7) Although most persons do spend several lives on this quest there is no rule which condemns them to give so much time. What they seek is close enough, within themselves, but it is they who must bring the mind, heart and will into a condition necessary to find it. "He is a happy man," says the Bhagavad Gita, "who during his lifetime is able to conquer the passions."

(447-8) That which really is, as opposed to that which appears to be, behind all the countless objects of this varied universe, is one alone, beginningless, endless, the source of all, the parent of the 'I'-consciousness. This truth provides the final hope for man. Somewhere along his way he will discover it, act upon it, and be redeemed. This will be his last conversion, his final salvation, his best quest. Then only will the horrors he has contributed to the race's history begin to fade out. All else is utopian chimera based upon wishful thoughts and fanciful imaginations.

(447-9) He is still on the way and has much farther to go but the point is that this movement is in the right direction, towards the correct place.

(447-10) Al-Ghazali⁶⁷² kept back a part of his doctrine, formulated after many years of intellectual study and reflection, mystical contemplation and experience in religious circles. His reason - it would throw confusion into the minds of the less informed, little educated believing masses if the striking paradoxes and seeming contradictions of the truth were hurled at them all at once without their being sufficiently prepared for it.

(447-11) It is good as a beginning to believe in God. It is admirable as the next step to try to come closer to God by worship - but it is not enough. It is a fulfilment of a still higher duty to try to know that in us which is the link with God, which in contrast to man is of a godlike nature.

(447-12) His quest for God has reached its terminus but his quest in God will now start its course. Henceforth his life, experience and consciousness are wrapped in mystery.⁶⁷³

448⁶⁷⁴

IV

⁶⁷¹ "Jalaluddin" in the original.

⁶⁷² "Al-Ghazzali" in the original.

⁶⁷³ This section is continued in the paras on page 457.

⁶⁷⁴ Blank page

(449-1)⁶⁷⁵ Some withdraw from society as the only way to preserve their individuality and protect their independence, in a search for truth.

(449-2) He may find that his hopes may have been set higher than the facts permit.

(449-3) Youth, restless and dissatisfied, seeks a better order of things for its future but lacks practical knowledge and balanced judgment to bring this into realisation in the best way.

(449-4) They read books, attend lectures, join classes because they hope that somewhere, somehow they will find a clue.

(449-5) If the quest seems too far from one's environment or circumstances, it is still a good time to start, for the reward will be better savoured.

(449-6) Always there is this image in front of him – what he could become and what life wants him to become in the end.

(449-7) What other recourse can they have, after trying the usual ways – drink, sex, drug or religion – than to this quest?

(449-8) Some affiliations and organisations are actually hostile to the purpose, the spirit, the teaching of their founders.

(449-9) There are those – and they are many – who do not want such a quest: its disciplines frighten them away or its studies bore them or its isolation makes too daring a demand on their gregariousness.

(449-10) Art, spiritual paths, teas – all are a matter of taste. Select what you personally prefer!

(449-11) Like blind men they seek the unseen. Like mystics they want the unknown centre of their being, but the conscious mind does not yet share in this desire. Everything they try must in the end fail them, since life itself fails them at death.

⁶⁷⁵ The paras on this page are numbered 1 through 18; they are not consecutive with the previous page.

(449-12) There are those who feel after a trial, they are too limited in their capacities for this quest and give up the effort. In going so far as this abandonment they show a lack of patience.

(449-13) The theory of detachment may seem cold and heartless if applied to human relationships also, and its practice positively cruel. Yet life itself enforces it upon us in the end. There is no avoidance.

(449-14) Here it is, the human creature put upon this round planet and left to make nothing from life, merely survive, or to make something out of it, and hold the great vision of the World-Idea, in company with the gods.

(449-15) There may be occasional days when conflicts or resistances show themselves, spreading depression or producing doubt.

(449-16) The idea of being associated with a guru or a group appeals to most people. They feel the need of support; the guru to lean on, the group to provide gregarious comfort.

(449-17) Everyone at some time in his existence begins to walk this quest.

(449-18) It is rare to find a man who is in full possession of himself.

450⁶⁷⁶
IV

451
IV

(451-1)⁶⁷⁷ In most cases this quest requires a change in the way of life, both mental and physical. But the aspirant may set his own pace if he is unwilling or unable to make the change more drastically or more rapidly: the essential point is that he knows and accepts the direction and the ideal – both.

(451-2) It is not by joining churches, sects, groups or societies that his real progress toward truth is secured but by lining up with deeper thought and wider knowledge.

⁶⁷⁶ Blank page

⁶⁷⁷ The paras on this page are numbered 19 through 33, making them consecutive with the previous page.

(451-3) Just as there are different stages of body growth from sperm, embryo, baby, child, adolescent to adult, so there are different stages of inner growth from novice to adept.

(451-4) These peaks of the inner being are not really any more inaccessible than those peaks of the Italian Ligurian Alps or Apennine⁶⁷⁸ ranges which trained climbers ascend often during the season. But this presupposes not only the training: there must also be the grace, or in earthly mountaineering terms the good fortune.

(451-5) Something more is needed than what books or even gurus can give him. This can only be found within himself. The courage needed for such a standpoint must also be found, and can be, within himself.

(451-6) If an unbalanced dreamer is not brought to actuality and reality by experience, he had better leave the quest alone. Oh yes, this is not to say that he cannot get mystical experiences in plenty, but that they will have little true worth for insight.

(451-7) If age makes more people more rigid and less doubtful about their opinions and beliefs, it makes a few humbler, questioning.

(451-8) It is true that the aspiration for Overself is also a desire and must eventually also go. But it is useful and helpful in getting free from lesser or lower desires.

(451-9) The passionate contempt for organised authority, or its complete rejection may be only a cover for weakness: the inability to undergo a course of discipline, much less undertake it for oneself.

(451-10) If the quest parts him from certain ways, habits, wishes and things, he is free to choose to go slower if he prefers to do so.

(451-11) His first need is to choose a general goal, not necessarily an exact point but enough to orient himself, to give him a direction.

(451-12) It is a sign directing him towards his goal, showing him which way to go.

(451-13) The quest has its benefits. But these have to be paid for by its obligations.

(451-14) Traditional virtues, praised qualities, are being turned upside down by the young.

(451-15) Can quite ordinary people follow this quest and rise to this attainment?

⁶⁷⁸ "Appenine" in the original.

(453-1)⁶⁸⁰ There are definite stages wherein the feelings become purer, nobler and calmer, the desires thinner, lesser and more refined, the thoughts positive, larger and more concentrated.

(453-2) Ever mindful of the presence of the World-Idea in all events and all history, of the working of the World-Mind through cosmic change, development and decay, his conviction becomes ever stronger as proof accumulates.

(453-3) He may feel the Quest's demands are superior to his capabilities and that he can not ever achieve the impersonality it sets up as a goal for which to strive. In short, it is beyond him and his desires in every way.

(453-4) The prospect of becoming too old to stir out of the house, or too ill to stir out of bed, too helpless to depend on their own efforts, frightens prouder souls.

(453-5) They may regret that they have come to the intellectual acquaintance with truth at an age which seems too late to be able to profit enough by it.

(453-6) From the clues, hints and indications which search and experience give us, we learn in the end what is the true way to the God within us.

(453-7) Those who have reached the 'segregation age' of 30 to 50 are too often despised by the young, while those others who are beyond 50 are considered unspeakable.

(453-8) So much depends on the person himself whether he can advance forward into the right condition - mentally, emotionally, and even physically - in his nature, character, temperament, intelligence, balance and attitudes, the condition on which philosophy can make an impact.

(453-9) The ageing man who has not previously done so ought to look to his spiritual foundations, with youthful hot-headedness far behind him, with naivete, ignorance and imbalance somewhat lessened by accumulated experience.

⁶⁷⁹ Blank page

⁶⁸⁰ The paras on this page are numbered 34 through 48, making them consecutive with the previous page.

(453-10) There is hope for all, benediction for the poor and the rich, the good and the bad, for every man may come into this great light. But – some men may come more easily, more quickly, while others may drag their way.

(453-11) He has done well but not well enough. For if this part of his self is striving hard to further his quest, there is another part – his vanity – which is obstructing it.

(453-12) As with so much else in life, old age has two sides. If one is physically ugly and mentally depressing, the other side, if advantage is taken of it, can be tranquil and gracious.

(453-13) An old man's mentality may be more rigid than a younger one's but he can now afford to judge himself and his past history like a spectator.

(453-14) The real path is not only a lone one but also an intensely lonely one.

(453-15) Let him take his own time for growth, set his own pace.

454⁶⁸¹

IV

455

IV

(455-1)⁶⁸² Organisations and institutions become in the end more interested in their own perpetuation (and power) than in higher aims. They are no longer 'pure' – if they ever were.

(455-2) I have seen criticism vaporise into discipleship as the years passed, and I have also seen other cases where discipleship has evaporated into criticism.

(455-3) There comes a time when he has to turn his back on the past, for the old man is becoming a stranger and a new man is coming to birth. Memories would obstruct this process.

(455-4) There is both good and bad in the spirit of revolt which so many students show. The good is a challenge to seek truth, an alarm to wake up from moral sleep and mental sloth.

⁶⁸¹ Blank page

⁶⁸² The paras on this page are numbered 49 through 64, making them consecutive with the previous page.

(455-5) There is a peril at this stage of becoming careless of his behaviour, reckless in his affairs and overconfident about his vulnerability.

(455-6) But independence of mind has its own perils, for it may lead to stubbornness in error, to arrogance in behaviour, and to fanaticism in attitude.

(455-7) The fear of losing their fixed ground in the worldly life causes some to withdraw from the quest. They sense danger to those things on which they depend for security, or else danger to the values which they believe necessary to maintain survival in the worldly struggle and competition.

(455-8) He can make a determined practice of ruling his feelings, dominating his reactions and controlling his reflexes. This will not be easy but with time it could become a habit, that is, second nature.

(455-9) Keep what is worth keeping in past way of thought and life, custom and character: it took so long to come into being.

(455-10) Refinement shows itself not only – as is commonly known – in quality, taste and speech, in manner and behaviour, but also in thought and diet, sensitivity and awareness.

(455-11) The presence of the Overself within us sooner or later, when the mind is sufficiently developed, creates of itself the craving for truth and the abstract questions about life, God and man.

(455-12) Few imagine their capacity extends to such a lofty attainment and so few seek it. Most of those who engage on this quest have a modest desire – to get somewhere along the way where they have more control over their mind and life than their unsatisfactory present condition affords.

(455-13) Let him avoid the spread-out nets of organised cults and hold on to the freedom to take his mind through the best thought of mankind and the deepest findings of seers and sages. Independent search has its difficulties but also its rewards.

(455-14) If he hides his inner life from others, it may be that he has good reason to do so.

(455-15) The quest requires his continued endeavour.

(455-16) Some come to the Quest because they have no choice: they are forced to accept it.

(457-1)⁶⁸⁴ Beginners come to this quest with little knowledge and much indoctrination, so that sectarian attitudes soon appear again, although clothed in a different jargon.

(457-2) An atmosphere favourable to such pursuits is always helpful and sometimes a necessity. This is not easy to get, in the present world conditions, so he must then use existing and surrounding conditions by modifying them as far as possible. A firm will may be necessary here.

(457-3) What things oppose his quest? In the end they all lead back to himself. Habits of thought, directions taken by natural energies, turn him outward through the body's senses. Release from past tendencies, return inwards, needs tremendous sustained determination.

(457-4) Such encouragements as the feeling that the road he is travelling and the direction he is taking are the right ones, will come to him.

(457-5) By remaining open to truths from different sources, and fitting them together like mosaics we get eventually some sort of a pattern.

(457-6) So many persons of my generation have passed on that it is hard to remember which ones are still living and which are not. It is all a grim reminder of my own precarious position. The menace is countered by two qualities the years have taught me to seek: resignation and calm.

(457-7) The service of a guide is helpful to beginners to direct their way, to point out where it lies and, if he is inspired, if they are sufficiently receptive, if their personal karma is favourable and, if the World-Mind uses him for the purpose, to give them the important experience of a Glimpse. Beyond this he cannot go, despite all the gross exaggerations which surround this subject in most Oriental circles and which, if believed and followed, actually keep aspirants back from making real rather than fictitious advance. They themselves must do the travelling.

⁶⁸³ Blank page

⁶⁸⁴ The paras on this page are numbered 107 through 119; they are not consecutive with the previous page, but follow the paras on page 447.

(457-8) Youth, with its energy and enthusiasm, has always been an inspiration to rebellion against authority, government, society or tradition. But in our time it has wildly over-reacted.

(457-9) Just as sickness creates appreciation of the value of good health, so life's anxieties create appreciation of inner peace. But this peace cannot be had without a measure of self-control and self-reform, which calls for use of the will.

(457-10) What chance have they to approach, let alone attain, such a distant goal?

(457-11) First let go of attachment, then let go of the ego itself. First let go of all things – physical and mental, all creatures, all that is past – in the end nothing is really yours. This inner separation, this detachment, is the true freedom.

(457-12) He may walk haltingly on this path and come into view of its more meaningful phases only belatedly.

(457-13) He deals with problems as they come and not with regrets over their past origins.

458⁶⁸⁵

IV

459

IV

(459-1)⁶⁸⁶ If an experience points out his weaknesses, his illusions or his prejudices, that experience becomes his challenge.

(459-2) For every person the quest assumes a different form, suited to his type and character, history and circumstances, but certain features remain the same in all forms.

(459-3) Those who recur often to thoughts of their past get trapped by it and kept prisoner of the ego. Remorse for sins committed and self-pity for being the victim of other people's sinning – both are soon overdone and create more obstacles to be overcome on the quest.

(459-4) Should there always be unquestioning submission to authority? The young of our time have given their own answer.

⁶⁸⁵ Blank page

⁶⁸⁶ The paras on this page are numbered 120 through 134, making them consecutive with the previous page.

(459-5) They bring their own preconceptions to the quest, and imagine it as a steep rise to saintliness.

(459-6) That a higher existence is possible for mankind may be a strong intuitive feeling or a strong religious belief. It can develop through experience of a mystical glimpse into personal realisation or more lastingly, more truthfully, through experience of philosophic insight.

(459-7) A mighty longing for liberation from one's present condition is a pre-requisite for the philosophic quest.

(459-8) He learns to be completely collected within himself, all his faculties gathered up but without tension. This is possible only because they are held and checked by a higher force.

(459-9) The advantage of joining a group and concentrating on a system belongs mostly to beginners: they often need a reference point and this gives it to them.

(459-10) I have written elsewhere that growth usually comes slowly, gently, almost imperceptibly. But sometimes it forces itself upon us with a fierce abruptness, and imperious command. It is then that we are able to make, and have to make the heroic decisions which involve a sacrifice of some attachment or initiate a demanding new course in some department of active life.

(459-11) He will find his proper place in the cosmic order, neither too low nor too high, and know his proper relationship to the divine intelligence behind that order, the World-Mind.

(459-12) It is sufficient for those who lack spirituality and do not feel able to pursue it, if they will admire its possessors and appreciate its worth.

(459-13) Each man should be himself, not represent and copy another man. But he should be his best self, not his worst, his lower, his lesser. This calls for growth, aspiration, effort, on his part. That is to say, it calls for a quest.

(459-14) When they come to believe that the obstacles against them, outside and inside themselves, are too formidable, they may become disheartened and lose interest in continuing the quest actively, stopping with a merely occasional or theoretical acquaintance with it.

(459-15) As he comes more and more under the spirit's influence, neurotic fixations and compulsive habits fall away from him.

(461-1)⁶⁸⁸ Expert advice is always useful, often essential, in several lines of activity. But advising someone is not the same as dominating or tyrannising over him.

(461-2) The Quest cannot be evaded: in the end all must come to it: otherwise they will be pulled or pushed along it however unwilling or reluctant they may be.

(461-3) Jesus said that the way to eternal life is straight and narrow. He could have added that it is also long and difficult. Yet the beginner should not let these things discourage him. There is help within and without.

(461-4) All these energies which drag men into attachments that impede progress toward a higher level can be transmuted.

(461-5) Shall we say that all humans are travelling on this quest of the Overself but most humans do so unconsciously and unwillingly? For then the person technically called a "quester" simply differs from other persons by his awareness of the journey, the demands it makes upon him, and his willingness to co-operate in satisfying those demands

(461-6) Every negative thought which may arise within himself or be picked up unconsciously from others becomes an aggression against this quest.

(461-7) If a man cannot find in society or surroundings the standards which suit his character, then he must find his own. It is this that makes him a quester.

(461-8) If they look on old age with horror, because it steals so much away from them, this is a pathetic human emotion which can be excused.

(461-9) The full grown person finds in his experience of the world and in the knowledge of himself sufficient subject matter for thought about human affairs. He then asks questions, the great questions, which men have asked since earliest antiquity: What am I? Whither do I go?

⁶⁸⁷ Blank page

⁶⁸⁸ The paras on this page are numbered 135 through 148, making them consecutive with the previous page.

(461-10) Do not attempt to make people act on a level beyond their comfortable traditional one if they neither want nor understand the higher one. They will resist or resent your attempt, which necessarily must fail.

(461-11) There is a way suited to the particular individuality of each separate person, which will bring out all his spiritual possibilities as no other way could.

(461-12) We cannot live in the achievements of other men alone, however inspiring: our business is with ourselves. There is work to be done by ourselves for ourselves.

(461-13) He is already on the way to being something more than an animal which has lost some talents or senses and gained some talents or faculties who stops to ponder a single question; what is the source of his consciousness?

(461-14) Old age approaches everyone and brings unpleasant disheartening thoughts. A mental and physical readjustment must be made.

462⁶⁸⁹

IV

463

IV

(463-1)⁶⁹⁰ Those who make a fetish of their quest, more especially the 'drop-outs' the escapists to Indian Ashrams and the guru-worshippers,⁶⁹¹ will in no long time become narrow-sectarians, still on the religio-mystic level.

(463-2) If the young are not brought up to behave in a civilised manner, they are not properly brought up at all.

(463-3) The danger of organisations and institutions, of human structures, is that they become self-centred and selfish with time. Then, keeping themselves in power, promoting their own personal welfare engages their energies more than the service they first started to render, so that somewhere along the way truth gets twisted and hypocrisy takes over.

⁶⁸⁹ Blank page

⁶⁹⁰ The paras on this page are numbered 149 through 161, making them consecutive with the previous page.

⁶⁹¹ We have inserted a comma for clarity. – TJS '20

(463-4) I am too conscious of belonging to a generation widely different from theirs, alien in too many ways from theirs, so that as old friends die off or move into distant silence I do not venture to replace them. Solitude surrounds me more and more, but I accept it contentedly.

(463-5) If consciousness is to be enlarged, if the mind's dark places are to be lit up, if a blessed inspiration for living, work or virtue is to be discovered, then this self-quest must be started.

(463-6) Whether they are unable to cope with life's problems or feel too hurt by it, they seek and find in this kind of teaching a help, a relief and a consolation.

(463-7) Little by little youth, strength, beauty pass away but for those who have used their time well there are inner compensations for these disagreeable events, which at least help to put a better balance on life's account.

(463-8) It is unpleasant for a woman, and sometimes for a man, to think of the time when the face will be lined with age.

(463-9) It gives the ordinary man a chance to become someone better, finer, worth while. It lifts him out of the conventional crowd.

(463-10) Some are initiated into the quest by a teacher, a book or a lecture, by a piece of music, a landscape or a picture. But most come into it imperceptibly, through experience and subsequent reflection, through the joys and sorrows which accompany living in this world.

(463-11) Out of his own free choice and his own initiative, the human being has to respond to this divine presence hidden in his mind and even body, has to grow and ripen inwardly as he has already done physically. Here, in this point, he departs from animal existence.

(463-12) The emotions of raw youth, its passions unbridled by experience or discipline, can become dangerous to itself and society when they become wholly negative and destructive. There have been many melancholy examples of this in recent times.

(463-13) He thinks he can shed personal responsibility by taking shelter under the aegis of a group or organisation.

(465-1)⁶⁹³ He feels denuded of virtue, weak and depressed. Yet the dark night is a necessary part of his preparation (others built differently need a different kind of preparation).

(465-2) Should he join an organisation, a community of students or a group of seekers? Some are hindered by such a move, others feel they are helped; all in the end will have to come to themselves, will have to look inward rather than outward.

(465-3) Too many men take their truth from others: too few know the joy of discovering it for themselves.

(465-4) He is a prophet without a church, a teacher without a school, a reformer without an institution.

(465-5) He must start from his present position, and with the qualities – good and bad – which are his.

(465-6) He has begun this quest and tried to develop himself in accord with it. This at least is a satisfaction he can have.

(465-7) How does it come about that those without mature experience, with limited knowledge, adolescent emotionally and confused intellectually, should be setting the pace for the entire society of a country, almost of a continent? Why is the present trend so upside-down that juniors set out to lead seniors, that those who are impulsive and irresponsible, erroneous in observation and wrong in interpretation, seek to impose their opinion and will on those who hold well-considered views based on facts?

(465-8) Even if he does not fully succeed in this quest, which is admittedly so difficult a one, he can say to himself: "I have now got the chart of life, and a map of the way. I have travelled some steps forward. There are other lives yet to come when this quest will go on.

(465-9) Their minds are mostly occupied by personal matters, both petty and large, leaving little or no space in them for thoughts about life in general. How then can there be interest in the quest?

⁶⁹³ The paras on this page are numbered 162 through 176, making them consecutive with the previous page.

(465-10) After the optimists have had their say and the Advaitins have preached, the hard fact will be echoed back by experience: the goal is set so far, his powers so limited, that he has to call on the quality of patience and make it his own.

(465-11) If a guide who is knowledgeable, capable and reliable is not available (and for this kind of mountain climbing he is rare) then the next best thing, and much easier to find, is a track cut by a pioneer and described in a book.

(465-12) Why not accept the best of the past? It is at the least as valuable as the best of the present, while having the added advantage of having been tested by time.

(465-13) A state is reached when it persists stubbornly in his thoughts, becomes indeed his principal thought so that all others come to be regarded as diversionary of his purpose in living.

(465-14) Living in a society where there is so much folly and ignorance, evil and unbalance, he must protect himself mentally, emotionally, physically and even psychically.

(465-15) He passes through various stages of his inner life.

466⁶⁹⁴

IV

467

IV

(467-1)⁶⁹⁵ If mental restlessness, a discontent with ignorance, with the recurring trivialities of a life which does not offer any higher meaning, put him on the Quest, he may find himself suffering from mental loneliness.

(467-2) Let us not unwisely assert that old age gives more peace of mind, more understanding of life, than does younger age but rather that it offers more possibility of having these things.

(467-3) If he is not willing to wait, this quest does not offer much for him. It is not only in meditation although primarily in that patience is a requisite, but also in the work of purifying and ennobling character.

⁶⁹⁴ Blank page

⁶⁹⁵ The paras on this page are numbered 177 through 191, making them consecutive with the previous page.

(467-4) He who learns the essence of spiritual questing and the basic need in practical living, learns that he must come into command of himself.

(467-5) He may come to this quest out of disappointment with personal life or out of a search for truth or out of a need for relief from tension and acquirement of inner peace.

(467-6) We humans recoil from the bleak picture of an impersonality without feeling, a life without passion or survival without ego. Yet it seems bleak because it is rarely known or seen in experience, and also because it is unfamiliar and unrealised.

(467-7) In time he tires of these frustrations and vanities, of the fleeting character of all earthly satisfactions, the fragile life of good health and good fortune. It is then that he may come to the quest.

(467-8) The difficulties of being completely honest, truthful and sincere, of keeping to idealism in a materialistic or mad world afflict only the living. The dead are luckier. Not for them the compromises, the white lies, the half-measures and the glib hypocrisies.

(467-9) What does it mean to be a human being? The full answer to this question is not taught to the young (as it ought to be) because few parents, teachers and religious ministers really know it by experience.

(467-10) Not everyone is apt to this inner work even among those who are attracted to it and believe in its utility.

(467-11) Many come to this quest in the beginning because of some personal desire. This personal satisfaction is their primary goal. It may be that later, with growth, harmony with the Overself becomes not less important. A few in the end will come to see that nothing short of pure devotion to the Overself for its own sake is their proper goal.

(467-12) The lack of balance and the failure to see things in perspective are obvious flaws in the young today.

(467-13) A paralysis of the will comes with the dark night of the soul.

(467-14) His contemporaries cannot influence him where they err; fashion is rejected where it betrays bad taste.

(467-15) The young advance eagerly toward the embrace of life, the old withdraw from it.

(469-1)⁶⁹⁷ Those who have a small memory for the high truths they happen to read but a large one for the gossipy trivialities they hear, are unlikely to like this concept of the Quest.

(469-2) Is it a path which goes in the end into mere abstractions, which traverses a course to nowhither?

(469-3) Not everyone is willing to submit to the discipline even among those who appreciate its worth.

(469-4) The young do not know the melancholy ponderings on the brevity of human experience which come to the generation whose time is nearly run out, or the subsequent futility of all those ambitions which drive men through the vital years, or the final emptiness of all those fleshly experiences which titillate the senses. Buddha has persistently emphasised these frustrations in his teachings, yet it is the need and work of a philosopher to come to terms with age, to accommodate more equably with the other things in his life.

(469-5) Those who come to this quest in their early years - with all the hopes, enthusiasms and energies of youth - are lucky. But they have also the naiveté, inexperience, imbalance and unrealistic expectations of youth.

(469-6) This encounter with the divine takes place at such a deep level in his being, that a man may easily lose patience, tire of waiting, and give up the quest. But one day he must return...

(469-7) Is it a realisable purpose, or has it left actuality so far behind that it unfits those who take it up, rendering their lives futile and themselves quixotic.

(469-8) He has found the clue, the first signs showing in which direction he is to look further. Now he must be willing to go along this way.

⁶⁹⁶ Blank page

⁶⁹⁷ The paras on this page are numbered 192 through 204, making them consecutive with the previous page.

(469-9) He who has nurtured the thoughts and cultivated the stillness and behaved by the injunctions which philosophy has offered him will, when the late evening of his life comes, not only never regret it but be glad for it.

(469-10) Beginners come to this quest with little knowledge and much indoctrination, so that sectarian attitudes soon appear again, although clothed in a different jargon.

(469-11) It is possible by a single day's sudden and excessive reversal of the way of life to lose part of the good results so far obtained.

(469-12) The personal man needs to grow and develop adequately as man. Only after this does he reach the stage when it is safe, and not premature, to undo the ego, and destroy its rule. For after this point the latter becomes a tyranny when the task now is to make it a subserviency.

(469-13) If anyone is prematurely presented with the fully developed truth it is less than helpful to him, for he falls into bewilderment.

470⁶⁹⁸

IV

471

IV

(471-1)⁶⁹⁹ Youth – and in some cases it extends into the thirties – with its inexperience, naiveté, imaginativeness, romanticism and immaturity – easily falls into illusion, glamour or a sloppy sentimentality.

472⁷⁰⁰

IV

⁶⁹⁸ Blank page

⁶⁹⁹ The para on this page is numbered 205, making it consecutive with the previous page.

⁷⁰⁰ Blank page