

# Lectures and Prague Talks

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*Editor's Note: PB first established an association with spiritual seekers in (then) Czechoslovakia sometime in the early 1930s. Everyone was already quite aware of the immanence of a second world war, and that intensified their desire to find an inner source of refuge from the coming storm. PB visited them many times, until his trip to India held him there for the full duration of the war. We know for sure that he visited Prague and other places between the end of WWII and the Communist crackdown in 1953. In fact, it is likely that some of these talks were given in 1951 when PB visited Europe with his new bride, Evangeline Glass. PB stayed in contact with these people well into the 1960s when he withdrew from most public contact. There are a number of letters from various Czech individuals which can be found in the letters file. These talks were most likely transcribed by someone in Czechoslovakia with some limitations on their English. We have typed them "as is" for the most part, only making changes where a word was obviously misheard or mistranslated.*

*The first section "Can We Communicate with the Dead" has no title in this file, but it is a partial duplicate of an essay found on page 147 of the pdf of Carbons 21 (Shorter Essays). The second section "The Cleansing of the Body" is a duplicate (for the most part) of an essay found on page 467 of the pdf of Unrevised Essays." The third section "Notes on Hatha Yoga" is also from Carbons 21, page 189ff in the pdf. The final section "Prague Talks" exists only in this document.*

*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*

# Can We Communicate with the Dead<sup>1</sup>

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(1-1)<sup>3</sup> It<sup>4</sup> is inevitable that the philosophically untrained medium should mistake a mere thought-form for a veritable disembodied spirit. This is most often the case when the supposed spirit shows no sign of the presence of the embodied observer but it can also be the case even when a house is haunted by a ghost which is visible at times. Here are two interesting stories. When [the]<sup>5</sup> Manchester Ship Canal was first opened, Prof Ernest Wood's father attended a grand exhibition held there to celebrate it. One of the exhibits was a duplicate of a prison-ship cell<sup>6</sup> on a ship used to transport convicts to Botany Bay. There was a life-like full size wax figure of a matted-hair, unhappy-looking convict sitting in the [cell. The]<sup>7</sup> windows were barred, straw [was]<sup>8</sup> on the floor and gloom [pervaded the place.]<sup>9</sup> Several months later, when his father had forgotten the incident, he visited a professional medium. She accurately described the prison-ship scene and the convict but said it was the figure of a disincarnate spirit and that she had a message from him to give!<sup>10</sup> In the other case, a novelist went to a medium who reeled off several incidents purporting to be from his own life career. She had in fact quite accurately described several incidents from a story he was writing and which was still [in]<sup>11</sup> incomplete manuscript form. It is obvious that both these cases were cases of mind-reading, of thought-forms<sup>12</sup> clairvoyantly seen. In the one case, the form was a memory, in the other an imagination. Prof Wood himself told us about the first case and someone we met in a train told us about the other.

What is philosophy's comment here? Just as the dream-mind dramatises itself into various personalities, so the medium's subconscious mind dramatises itself (in many cases) into 'spirit guides' and 'spirit controls.' The same dream-mind which, in the sleeping person, dramatises itself into various personalities, in the mediumistic person dramatises itself into various 'spirit-controls.' It is a part of the medium's own mind, so these 'controls' have no separate existence. Such knowledge as they furnish and such messages as they transmit are 'tappings' from the sitters mind. Many a

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<sup>1</sup> This is an excerpt from an essay in Carbons 21 with this title. For the full essay see that file. – TJS '20

<sup>2</sup> The original editor inserted and then deleted "150" from the top right of the page by hand and later inserted "86" by hand.

<sup>3</sup> The paras in this document are all unnumbered, except where otherwise noted.

<sup>4</sup> This page is a duplicate of page 149 in Carbons 21.

<sup>5</sup> PB himself inserted "the" by hand.

<sup>6</sup> PB himself deleted a comma by hand.

<sup>7</sup> PB himself changed "cell, the" to "cell. The" by hand.

<sup>8</sup> PB himself inserted "was" by hand.

<sup>9</sup> PB himself inserted "pervaded the place" by hand.

<sup>10</sup> PB himself changed a period to an exclamation point by hand.

<sup>11</sup> PB himself inserted "in" by hand.

<sup>12</sup> PB himself changed "thought forms" to "thought-forms" by hand.

medium has quite vividly seen and correctly described the face and figure, the mannerisms and character of some deceased person whose spirit is at the time supposed to be near the sitter. But in most cases it is not a spirit at all but a picture already held either consciously or unconsciously in the sitter's mind. There has been [no]<sup>13</sup> separate discarnate spirit actually present at all as a reality but only the mental image of a spirit. The medium, however, being philosophically untrained, has not been able to recognise one from the other. Notwithstanding this, she may be quite honest, quite psychic, and her communicated message may still have a certain value in it.

This said, there is still a residue of experiences which may really be attributed to the 'other world.' For philosophy agrees that the real man, the conscious thinking and feeling entity, does survive when his term of existence in the flesh comes to an end. It endorses the words of the nineteenth-century Yugoslav writer, Ljudevit Vulicevic "Look down into the loathsome grave and you will see the remains of one who is no more. Where is the mind, reason and intelligence? They are not in the grave."<sup>14</sup> The [first]<sup>15</sup> test which will indicate the presence or absence of a spirit, which will reveal whether the voice is animated by a supernatural or subconscious force, is a physical<sup>16</sup> one. If he feels something like a cold breath pass agitatedly through his body, causing him almost to shiver, then a disembodied entity

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(continued from the previous page) is most probably there. But at this point it [is]<sup>19</sup> needful to enquire about the identity of the communicating spirit. Is he the one whom [he]<sup>20</sup> purports to be? To discover and verify the real identity of the communicating spirits, has been the second great problem for all investigators who are sufficiently and actively intelligent and it is harder to solve than the first one.

The attempt to bring the so-called dead into communication with those on earth may be harmful to both sides, but in fact it rarely succeeds. When it does succeed, lying

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<sup>13</sup> PB himself changed "a" to "no" by hand.

<sup>14</sup> PB himself changed a question mark to a period after "grave" by hand.

<sup>15</sup> PB himself inserted "first" by hand.

<sup>16</sup> There is an "X" with a line in the left margin; that is most likely a typist's mark warning them they're reaching the end of the page (PB used as small a margin as possible, sometimes making the paper twist as it was being typed on) – TJS '20

<sup>17</sup> Blank page

<sup>18</sup> The original editor inserted and then deleted "151" from the top right of the page by hand and later inserted "87" by hand. The original page was oversized and this page and the next one (3 and 5) are Xeroxes of the top and bottom of the original page. We have moved all the text from both scans onto this page.

<sup>19</sup> PB himself inserted "is" by hand.

<sup>20</sup> PB himself changed "it" to "he" by hand.

spirits often seize the opportunity to manifest in disguise. For it is they with whom our side most easily comes into contact. There is great deception in such intercourse but people are deluded by the proffered 'evidences' – which certainly exist – into imagining that they have established communication with their departed relative when they have established communication [only]<sup>21</sup> with evil spirits, to whom the providing of such impressive 'evidence' is easy. The enquirer should beware of them. It is easier for invisible demons to personate successfully the character of some departed friend than it is for accomplished theatrical actors to personate characters in Shakespeare's<sup>22</sup> plays. Their false voices may tell him flatteringly how good he is, how [great]<sup>23</sup> his future will be. The true voice of the higher self tells him {how}<sup>24</sup> sinful he is, how needed is his purification. It is an incontrovertible historical fact that, with one or two exceptions, all the well-known spiritualist mediums in England, guided or being used by their possessing spirits or 'controls,' [in the months and years before September, 1939]<sup>25</sup> predicted emphatically that there would be no [war, whereas]<sup>26</sup> H.G. Wells and several other writers, guided by nothing more than reason, predicted that there would be war. That was a specimen of deliberate and dangerous misleading on a wide scale. The question whether or not spirits can read the future has nothing to do with the viciousness of this deed.

The majority of mediumistic communications are unreliable and dubious, whilst although much of the remainder emanates from genuinely super-physical sources, it is still deceptive. In these circumstances the average person has very little possibility of communicating with authentic 'spirits.' Nature has quite rightly thrown a veil across their world which renders penetration almost impossible, except in a few [gifted cases.]<sup>27</sup> [Philosophy's]<sup>28</sup> counsel is that the subject should be practically dealt with [only]<sup>29</sup> by highly-trained [investigators. All]<sup>30</sup> amateurs are not only liable to be deceived but also to incur grave risks to their morality and sanity. But everyone may theoretically deal with it [by]<sup>31</sup> reading its voluminous literature.

Mentalist doctrine points out the private character of each man's post-mortem state. This is [a]<sup>32</sup> lesser reason why the Buddha himself declined to give a definite answer to the question what happens to man after death. Nevertheless, his monkish

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<sup>21</sup> PB himself moved "only" from after "have" to after "communication" by hand.

<sup>22</sup> Referring to William Shakespeare.

<sup>23</sup> PB himself deleted "is" from after "great" by hand.

<sup>24</sup> We have inserted "how" into the text for clarity.

<sup>25</sup> PB himself moved "in the months and years before September, 1939" from after "England," to after "'controls,'" by hand.

<sup>26</sup> PB himself changed "war. Whereas" to "war, whereas" by hand.

<sup>27</sup> PB himself changed "cases gifted" to "gifted cases" by hand.

<sup>28</sup> PB himself changed "Philosophy" to "Philosophy's" by hand.

<sup>29</sup> PB himself moved "only" from after "should" to after "with" by hand.

<sup>30</sup> PB himself changed "investigators, all" to "investigators. All" by hand.

<sup>31</sup> PB himself inserted "by" by hand.

<sup>32</sup> PB himself changed "the" to "a" by hand.

followers compare favourably with the colourful varieties furnished by other creeds. We may best understand the after-death state by likening it to the dream, which it largely is and just as it is extremely difficult to penetrate the dreamer's consciousness without awakening him, so in the case of spirits. After this intermediate period of dreaming, there is a lapse into deep unconscious sleep, a state which is quite impenetrable by living entities. Communication can be established [only]<sup>33</sup> in the first [period and]<sup>34</sup> not during the second one.

The<sup>35</sup> dead can sometimes speak to us, but not in our ordinary earth languages or earthly words. Wherever messages purporting to come from spirits are written down in words be sure that the medium or other channel has himself supplied the words, getting from the spirits only the feeling or the inner meaning which he subconsciously [translates into the language of words.]<sup>36</sup> It is in this translation that he may or may not [adulterate]<sup>37</sup> the message. Usually he [does,]<sup>38</sup> and [mixes in]<sup>39</sup> his own human opinion and fancy during the [process.]<sup>40</sup> However communication does sometimes take place with the so called dead, but it does not take place in the way in which the average [spiritist]<sup>41</sup> believes, nor with the [results]<sup>42</sup> which [he receives.]<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> PB himself moved "only" from after "can" to after "established" by hand.

<sup>34</sup> PB himself changed "period," to "period and" by hand.

<sup>35</sup> The original editor inserted "This is on the next page" and "cd" (with a circle around it) by hand with an arrow pointing to the beginning of this paragraph. "cd" is likely initials.

<sup>36</sup> PB himself changed "translated into an earth language" to "translates into the language of words" by hand.

<sup>37</sup> PB himself changed "have adulterated" to "adulterate" by hand.

<sup>38</sup> PB himself changed "has" to "does" by hand.

<sup>39</sup> PB himself changed "supplies a great deal of" to "mixes in" by hand.

<sup>40</sup> PB himself changed "transition" to "process" by hand.

<sup>41</sup> PB himself changed "spiritualist" to "spiritist" by hand.

<sup>42</sup> PB himself deleted "with" from after "results" by hand.

<sup>43</sup> PB himself changed an illegible section of text cut off by the bottom of the page to "he receives." by hand.

<sup>44</sup> Blank page

<sup>45</sup> The original editor inserted "88" in the top right corner of this page by hand. The original page was oversized and this page and the previous one (3 and 5) are Xeroxes of the top and bottom of the original page. We have moved all the text from both scans onto the previous page.

<sup>46</sup> Blank page

(Continued from the previous page) Although it is generally inadvisable to develop mediumship, owing to its dangers, something depends on the kind of mediumship practised. [Thus those strongly-harmonious souls]<sup>48</sup> whom circumstance or convention kept apart while on earth can come together without restraint and find the fruition of their own love in the heavenly after-death sphere. Until then,<sup>49</sup> during a state of deep reverie,<sup>50</sup> a vision of the [departed]<sup>51</sup> may come to one left behind on the earth plane. [Again, if]<sup>52</sup> mediumship is merely a clairvoyant seeing of visions, there is little danger and this [development]<sup>53</sup> often comes to the practiser of ordinary yoga, too. If, however, it means a surrendering completely to the control of an unknown spirit, a departed soul, then this cannot be recommended. Nevertheless, [although]<sup>54</sup> we personally regard spiritism as a tricky subject,<sup>55</sup> we are not opposed to it. We would not stop anyone who wished to from entering its dark and dubious portals. If he finds it more attractive than mysticism; if he must have its dubieties rather than the rock-like certainties bestowed by philosophy, that is his affair. The communications which purport {to}<sup>56</sup> come from spirits {of}<sup>57</sup> whom he has no certainty whatsoever, require much more proof of their authenticity than [those which come]<sup>58</sup> from his own reason, from his own inherent power of recognising truth. The philosophical evidence on behalf of immortality is impeccable and is infinity preferable to the tainted data of necromantic spiritism.

The only kind of self-surrender which it is perfectly safe to practise is that where one feels the pure presence of God, it is then most beneficial and even necessary to give oneself up completely to this beautiful<sup>59</sup> blessed and sacred presence. Then one discovers that it is just as mysterious to be alive as it is to be a spirit of the so-called dead. The mystic's aim is not merely, as it is with so many mediums,<sup>60</sup> to substitute a different space-time level of perception for his present one<sup>61</sup> but to lift himself right out

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<sup>47</sup> The original editor inserted and then deleted "152" from the top right of the page by hand and later inserted "89" by hand.

<sup>48</sup> PB himself changed "And those" to "Thus those strongly-harmonious souls" by hand.

<sup>49</sup> PB himself inserted a comma by hand.

<sup>50</sup> PB himself inserted a comma by hand.

<sup>51</sup> PB himself deleted "one" from after "departed" by hand.

<sup>52</sup> PB himself changed "If" to "Again, if" by hand.

<sup>53</sup> PB himself changed "experience" to "development" by hand.

<sup>54</sup> PB himself inserted "although" by hand.

<sup>55</sup> PB himself inserted a comma by hand.

<sup>56</sup> We have deleted "be" after "to" for grammar's sake. — TJS '20

<sup>57</sup> We have corrected "or" to "of."

<sup>58</sup> PB himself changed "that which comes" to "those which come" by hand.

<sup>59</sup> PB himself deleted a comma after "beautiful" by hand.

<sup>60</sup> PB himself inserted a comma by hand.

<sup>61</sup> PB himself deleted a comma after "one" by hand.

of the bondage to such perceptions altogether into the region of Infinite Duration<sup>62</sup> and Infinite<sup>63</sup> Space.

8<sup>64</sup>

## The Cleansing of the Body<sup>65</sup>

9<sup>66</sup>

### THE CLEANSING OF THE BODY<sup>67</sup>

(9-1) Let us begin by considering the case of drink. There is an essence, an ethereal essence in alcohol which is so subtle that it does affect the mind, and the proof of this exists in the drunkard. You may see a sedate, sober citizen turned by drink into a complete clown, or even worse, into a complete criminal. What has happened? His mind has been affected. So there can be no doubt of the fact that strong alcoholic spirits do affect the mind. And if you are seriously trying to practise meditation, trying to experience subtler, more refined states of mind then you can estimate what havoc such spirits would [cause].<sup>68</sup> Therefore it [is]<sup>69</sup> advisable for those who [want]<sup>70</sup> to succeed in [meditation],<sup>71</sup> not to drink [hard]<sup>72</sup> liquors like whiskey. Brandy is much less harmful than whiskey, but is yet strong enough to hinder the work of concentrating thought for higher purposes.

There are however a group of weaker liquors, such as most beers and [even]<sup>73</sup> some wines, which if drunk in moderation will [interfere only a little]<sup>74</sup> with this [inner]<sup>75</sup> work. But that means you have to find out what moderation means. [Physically]<sup>76</sup> we are all built in different ways, and each must find his own individual definition of what constitutes moderation. This will not be accurately arrived at by blindly imitating Asiatic ascetics. But in any case you should wait an hour or two after

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<sup>62</sup> PB himself capitalised "duration" by hand.

<sup>63</sup> PB himself capitalised "infinite" by hand.

<sup>64</sup> Blank page

<sup>65</sup> PB himself inserted "The Cleansing of the Body" at the top of the page by hand.

<sup>66</sup> PB himself inserted and then deleted "2" and "111" from the top right corner of the page by hand. PB later inserted "39" by hand.

<sup>67</sup> This section is duplicated in Unrevised Essays, pages 469 through 497, with different edits.

<sup>68</sup> PB himself changed "occur" to "cause" by hand.

<sup>69</sup> PB himself deleted "most" from after "is" by hand.

<sup>70</sup> PB himself changed "seek" to "want" by hand.

<sup>71</sup> PB himself deleted "and not to fail" from after "meditation" by hand.

<sup>72</sup> PB himself inserted "hard" by hand.

<sup>73</sup> PB himself inserted "even" by hand.

<sup>74</sup> PB himself changed "not interfere" to "interfere only a little" by hand.

<sup>75</sup> PB himself inserted "inner" by hand.

<sup>76</sup> PB himself capitalised "physically" and moved it from after "ways" to the beginning of the sentence by hand.

drinking alcohol of any kind before you meditate. This rule refers to beginners, which most of us are. But if you have attained comparative success in meditation,<sup>77</sup> then you are no longer a novice and can drink with much less fear for your mind will most likely remain unaffected. You have conquered thought, achieved poise and there is little that can dislodge you. You will just stay mentally where you already are. But if you have not reached that point then you must be extremely careful [not to put hindrances unnecessarily in your path.]<sup>78</sup>

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## THE CLEANSING OF THE BODY

11<sup>80</sup>

## THE CLEANSING OF THE BODY

(Continued from the previous page) And now consider smoking. Why do we smoke? Some<sup>81</sup> do get a distinct pleasure from a pipe or cigar, but for most of us it is not to pacify our nerves, to relieve the abnormal tensions, irritations or anxieties to which the busy modern existence subjects us? We feel the soothing influence of a cigarette but within a few minutes, alas, it becomes but a heap of burnt ash and our momentary respite has ended. So we feel forced to light another cigarette. Thus “chain-smokers” are eventually bred. And the breaking of this habit may prove a formidable difficulty. Now how does smoking affect the mind of a man who is practising yoga?<sup>82</sup>

A<sup>83</sup> little common sense will [be helpful here.]<sup>84</sup> If you indulge in a little smoking every day,<sup>85</sup> it won't interfere with your practice of yoga. Indiscriminate denunciation of the habit is as unwise as indiscriminate approbation. He who lives an entirely materialist existence, with no thoughts more elevated than the animal desires of the body, does not react to smoking in the same way as does the follower of these yogic practices. For the latter has rendered his nervous system more sensitive, his physical body more refined, and consequently smoking will certainly have a slight [adverse]<sup>86</sup>

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<sup>77</sup> PB himself inserted a comma by hand.

<sup>78</sup> PB himself deleted the period after “careful” and inserted “ not to put hindrances unnecessarily in your path.” by hand.

<sup>79</sup> Blank page

<sup>80</sup> The original editor inserted “40” in the top right corner of the page by hand.

<sup>81</sup> PB deleted a comma from after “Some” by hand.

<sup>82</sup> PB himself inserted “Continuation of page 2” below the line by hand.

<sup>83</sup> PB himself inserted “112” and “3” in the space above the beginning of this paragraph by hand.

<sup>84</sup> PB himself changed “here be helpful” to “be helpful here” by hand.

<sup>85</sup> PB himself inserted a comma by hand.

<sup>86</sup> PB himself inserted “adverse” by hand.



effect on him. It will dull his sensitivity to finer forces,<sup>87</sup> albeit not to any marked extent. The truth is that if we do not smoke to extremes,<sup>88</sup> the effect will be quite negligible compared to the effect of excessive drinking of alcohol. If we indulge in a little smoking every day it will not interfere with our practice of meditation. But we should not overdo it. And we should not smoke within an hour prior to the time of meditation. If,<sup>89</sup> however,<sup>90</sup> we know that we have advanced to the point where we have our mind under proper control, we may smoke fifty cigarettes a day and it won't hurt us mentally, although [because nicotine is unquestionably poisonous,]<sup>91</sup> it [will certainly]<sup>92</sup> hurt us physically.

We simply must not make a fetish of our habits.

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THE CLEANSING OF THE BODY

13<sup>94</sup>

THE CLEANSING OF THE BODY

(Continued from the previous page) Nevertheless,<sup>95</sup> after all is said, smoking is not a cleanly habit and [we ought to]<sup>96</sup> look forward to that far-off day when the race will outgrow this habit.

And then there is the controversy about eating meat. Although I personally have long been a [practising]<sup>97</sup> vegetarian, usually I have hitherto never alluded to the

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THE CLEANSING OF THE BODY

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<sup>87</sup> PB himself inserted a comma by hand.

<sup>88</sup> PB himself inserted a comma by hand.

<sup>89</sup> PB himself inserted a comma by hand.

<sup>90</sup> PB himself inserted a comma by hand.

<sup>91</sup> PB himself inserted "because nicotine is unquestionably poisonous," by hand.

<sup>92</sup> PB himself changed what was most likely "may" to "will certainly". PB's insertion is partially cut off by the right margin, only "will cert-" is visible in the original.

<sup>93</sup> Blank page

<sup>94</sup> PB himself inserted "41" in the top right corner of the page and "(page 3)" and "(2)" at the bottom of the page by hand.

<sup>95</sup> PB himself inserted a comma by hand.

<sup>96</sup> PB himself changed "I" to "we ought to" by hand.

<sup>97</sup> PB himself inserted "practising" by hand.

<sup>98</sup> Blank page

## THE CLEANSING OF THE BODY

(continued from the previous page) desirability of vegetarianism simply because I refuse to make a religion out of carrots! I refuse to shift the centre of emphasis from the mind to the body. I will certainly give the body its place in this quest but I will not give it prime place. It is a gross exaggeration to set up the non-eating of a particular food as an essential qualification for the realisation of truth. We enter the kingdom of heaven with our heart and mind, not with our teeth and stomach.

The Buddha preached and practised the gospel of kindness to all creatures as he preached and practised an ascetic monkish life. Yet when an effort was made to induce him to issue an order forbidding his followers from eating meat, the teacher who had laid down a rigid precept for his monks that they should not knowingly deprive even a crawling worm or a creeping ant of life, replied that they might eat whatever was customary in the countries where they were. He further pointed out that it was as possible to become pure-minded whilst using flesh food as whilst abstaining from it. And how insufficient and ineffective alone is the power of a vegetarian diet profoundly to alter human character, as demonstrated in by the case [of Hitler.]<sup>100</sup>

This<sup>101</sup> said, a non-flesh diet is certainly to be commended to those who are able to adopt it,<sup>102</sup> for such a diet does slightly help to promote tranquillity of mind and diminishes the physical fidgetiness which is a hindrance to meditation practice. Its chief recommendation, however, is as a humanitarian and aesthetic gesture to the animal kingdom which compassionate, sensitive refined temperaments may well make. It is kindlier not to kill animals for one's food, whether the slaughter be done directly by oneself or indirectly through a butcher. "Death is regarded as undesirable by all creatures," says the Mahabharata. "All creatures tremble at the time of death." And when the human race reaches a level of evolution which now it only faintly envisages, it is inconceivable that it will continue this gross, barbaric and cruel custom of shedding innocent blood to support its own existence when Nature has provided adequately for this purpose through the cereals, grains, plants, fruits and vegetables. Because of ancient habits and ingrained tastes,<sup>103</sup> we must continue to tolerate flesh as food. But it is certain that in the distant future a more refined, kindlier and wiser race will constitute its diet from the products of the earth, the trees and the dairy and not from the victims of slaughter house.

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<sup>99</sup> PB himself inserted and then deleted "113" from the top right corner of the page by hand. PB later inserted "42" in the top right corner of the page and "(4)" in the bottom right corner of the page by hand.

<sup>100</sup> PB himself inserted "of Hitler" by hand. Referring to Adolf Hitler.

<sup>101</sup> This paragraph was typed on a different typewriter and paper, and appended here; it appears that PB intended for it to be continuous with the preceding one so we have not added a new para number. – TJS '20

<sup>102</sup> PB himself inserted a comma by hand.

<sup>103</sup> PB himself inserted a comma by hand.

(15-1) Many people think that marriage is forbidden to the seeker who wishes to make the highest possible flight in this realm. This is the general attitude in Asia particularly. Here again there is much confused thinking. The sexual passions have been known to play havoc with man's loftier aspirations when they have obtruded themselves unduly, just as they have been known to bring him to social ruin and personal disaster when they have been given an undisciplined free play. But there is nothing intrinsically wrong in them. Primarily, they constitute Nature's orderly

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(continued from the previous page) arrangement to ensure the continuation of the race; and secondarily, they teach man an important if gross lesson of Love.

Now flame, rightly applied, serves a hundred good interests in the home or workshop; wrongly used it injures or destroys both. In the same way the strength of a man's passions does not therefore make them evil; it is what he becomes passionate about that stamps them as being good or evil. If his passion is for truth, it can do nothing but good. How far the sex passion is deserving of denunciation is a matter which cannot be properly decided either by monks or libertines, for both of them are biased in their thinking and it is man's thinking about sex which determines its good or evil nature. It depends entirely upon a man's own mind whether sex will pollute him or not.

Those who are bound by mere beliefs cling to the ascetic doctrine of celibacy or argue in favour of the commoner notion of marriage. But perception of higher truth has little to do with whether you prefer to live alone or live with a wife. It has everything to do with the kind of intelligence, the quality of discrimination, the freedom of egoism and the capacity for meditation which you manifest. To place a paramount value upon celibacy is to worship ascetism and not truth as the highest goal. Marriage may be a bar and hindrance or an aid and inspiration to the higher life. Much depends on the mood which informs it, and more on the ideals which guide it. If both husband and wife walk close together on this quest, they will walk in peace and blessing. He who is engaged upon such a quest should, therefore, when he decides to marry, link his future with that of a fellow pilgrim who is likewise engaged upon it. And he must be sure that she accepts his ideals through inner understanding not merely through a desire to please him.

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<sup>104</sup> Blank page

<sup>105</sup> PB himself inserted and then deleted "114" from the top right corner of the page by hand. PB later inserted "43" in the top right corner of the page by hand. PB also deleted "5" from the top of the page by hand.

The problem of sex is [to be neither avoided nor]<sup>106</sup> evaded, but then nor is it to be unduly provoked or sought after. It must not be hugged and it need not be hated. At a certain stage of self-discipline strict asceticism may have to be followed, while for the protection of society certain rules may have to be laid down. It is no easy task, this controlling the impulses which arise from sex. But that does not mean that abstinence from sex is the only way of getting mastery over the thought of it. It is certainly one way, but alone it can never suffice and for many people it is indeed an unsuitable way. Continence should come naturally, else it is superficial and external and had better not come at all, for the rejections are likely to be as severe and as extreme as is often the effort to achieve it.

When the materialist pushes his attitude to the end of its logical demands in practical life,<sup>107</sup> he is in danger of swinging into extreme animalism. Whenever a mystic does the same, he is in danger of swinging in extreme asceticism. It is only the philosopher who has found the point of fine balance which liberates him from both these dangers. Balance is needed by the mind as much as by the body. An unbalanced body would always be falling to the right or left, to the front or the back. An unbalanced mind is in equal danger. Anything – whether it be sex or Satan – which deflects a man from the higher purpose for which he has incarnated, calls for discipline and this is the point where asceticism may fitly enter. To fall into either extremes is to err. If,<sup>108</sup> however,<sup>109</sup> he learns how to keep himself balanced, he will be able to find room in his heart both for a wife whom he loves and for the Overself which he seeks. Marriage, like all else, must be divinised.

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(19-1) This is why yoga is called by Krishna “skill in action.” This is sanity. If however he is unable to attain balance then he had better practise some asceticism for awhile. The structure of human life must be built on larger lines than a timid shrinking from the world, a lean benumbed asceticism. We must not become enslaved to worldly things but we need not minimise their value either.

Because the East is notoriously the home of asceticism and monasticism, I must now turn my head [eastwards. Because]<sup>112</sup> many [there]<sup>113</sup> follow their monkish tutors

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<sup>106</sup> PB himself changed “neither to be avoided or” to “to be neither avoided nor” by hand.

<sup>107</sup> PB himself inserted a comma by hand.

<sup>108</sup> PB himself inserted a comma by hand.

<sup>109</sup> PB himself inserted a comma by hand.

<sup>110</sup> Blank page

<sup>111</sup> PB himself inserted and then deleted “115” and “(6)” from the top of the page by hand. PB later inserted “44” in the top right corner by hand.

like a flock of sheep, [they]<sup>114</sup> will be {wrathful}<sup>115</sup> at the words previously written. It is difficult to deal with them because they [will]<sup>116</sup> quote texts freely but [will probably]<sup>117</sup> fail to see farther than the mist-laden horizon of the letter rather than the spirit, fail to pierce through the outer sound to the inner sense. Although ancient obsessions depart slowly, it might be as well to decide a long-drawn controversy with the monkish fraternity and to silence such critics once and for all with [four]<sup>118</sup> incontrovertible past pronouncements on the subject from Eastern Scripture themselves. The first is from The Majjhima Nikaya (Discourses of the Buddha), wherein Asia's most venerated sage expressed some words which few readers have ever noted. He said: "If this doctrine should be attainable only for Lord Gautama and the monks and nuns but not for his male and female adherents, living the household life and satisfying their desires, then this holy life would be incomplete just because of this. But because this doctrine may be attained by the Lord Gautama and the monks and nuns, as well as by the male and female adherents, living the household life, satisfying their desires, therefore this holy life is perfect, just because of this."

[Firstly,<sup>119</sup> let it be noted that]<sup>120</sup> the Buddha wisely does not attempt to define the scope of the word 'desires'<sup>121</sup> which he [here]<sup>122</sup> uses, for he well knows that the more a man begins to understand truth, the more will he inevitably re-order his desires in proportion to the wisdom he gains. The aspirant's desires at an early stage of the path will not be wholly akin to his desires at a later one. It is thus a term which can be used only relatively in such a connection. [Secondly,]<sup>123</sup> this [quotation]<sup>124</sup> is taken from a text written in the Pali language, which alone the narrow Southern school of Buddhism recognises as orthodox. But for those who, like myself, recognise the Sanskrit texts of the more liberal Northern school in addition as being [very largely]<sup>125</sup> authentic because they contain [much]<sup>126</sup> of the esoteric teaching,

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<sup>112</sup> PB himself changed "eastwards because " to "eastwards. Because" by hand.

<sup>113</sup> PB himself deleted an indecipherable word from after "many" and inserted "there" by moving it from after "sheep," to after "many" by hand.

<sup>114</sup> PB himself inserted "they" by hand.

<sup>115</sup> "wrath" changed to "wrathful" for clarity.

<sup>116</sup> PB himself inserted "will" by hand.

<sup>117</sup> PB himself changed "usually" to "will probably" by hand.

<sup>118</sup> PB himself changed "three" to "four" by hand.

<sup>119</sup> The entire section of this paragraph from "Firstly," to "Secondly," was initially typed at the bottom of the page. PB himself marked it as a new paragraph and inserted at the beginning of the paragraph by hand.

<sup>120</sup> PB himself changed "Incidentally" to "Firstly, let it be noted that" by hand.

<sup>121</sup> PB himself inserted single quotation marks around "desires" by hand.

<sup>122</sup> PB himself inserted "here" by hand.

<sup>123</sup> PB himself inserted "Secondly," by hand.

<sup>124</sup> PB himself inserted "quotation" by hand.

<sup>125</sup> PB himself changed an indecipherable deleted section to "very largely" by hand.

<sup>126</sup> PB himself changed a deleted word (may be "fragments") to "much" by hand.

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*{Editor's note: the contents of this page are a continuation of the previous page, which was oversized and was then xeroxed onto two pages. As such, we have moved the text onto the previous page.}*

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(continued from the previous page) there is presented the following quotation, taken from Asvaghosha's life of Buddha called Buddhacarita.<sup>131</sup> (XII, v 100/102). Gautama was so disillusioned by his experiences of six years of asceticism during the period before he became Buddha, that he exclaimed: "Wearied with hunger, with his mind no longer self-possessed through fatigue, how should one who is not absolutely calm reach the end which is to be attained by his mind? True calm is properly obtained by the constant satisfaction of the senses; the mind's self-possession is only obtained by the senses being perfectly satisfied. True meditation is produced in him who mind is self-possessed and at rest."

The third quotation is from a Hindu scripture, held in the highest respect because it contains the sacred laws laid by the Indian Moses, Manu. "The Vedas declare the householder (i.e. family man) to be the highest social stage. As all streams and rivers flow to rest in the ocean, so all the stages flow to rest in the householder." — The Laws of Manu, VI. 89-90.

The fourth quotation is a Muhammadan one. "No monks in Islam," commanded the Prophet, a command which was disobeyed only by the Dervishes but one whose value holds to this day.

Because of its interest I shall add a fifth quotation but, because it is more of a paraphrase than a literal translation, I offer it particularly to Western readers. It is taken

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<sup>127</sup> Blank page

<sup>128</sup> PB himself inserted "45" in the top right corner of the page by hand.

<sup>129</sup> Blank page

<sup>130</sup> PB himself deleted "7" and inserted and then deleted "116" from the top of the page by hand. PB later inserted "46" in the top right corner of the page by hand.

<sup>131</sup> "Buddha Karita" in the original.

from the well-known work of Paul Carus, "The Gospel of Buddha According to Old Records."

"In the record of an interview between Gautama<sup>132</sup> and Anathapindika,<sup>133</sup> Anathapindika says:- "My soul yearns to do what is right, and to be a blessing unto my fellow-beings. Let me, then, ask you, 'Must I give up my wealth, my business enterprises, and, like you, go into homelessness in order to attain the bliss of a religious life?'"

And Buddha replied:- "The bliss of a religious life is attainable by every one who walks in the noble eight-fold path. He that cleaves to wealth had better cast it away than allow his heart to be poisoned by it; but he who does not cleave to wealth, and, possessing riches, uses them rightly, will be a blessing unto his fellow-beings.

"I say unto thee, remain in thy station of life and apply thyself with diligence to thy enterprise. It is not life and wealth and power that enslave men, but the cleaving to life and wealth and power.

"The Bikkhu who retires from the world in order to lead a life of leisure will have no gain, for a life of indolence is an abomination, and lack of energy is to be despised.

"The dharma of the Tathagata does not require a man to go into homelessness, or to resign {from}<sup>134</sup> the world unless he feels called upon to do so; but the dharma of Tathagata requires every man to free himself from the illusion of self, to give up his thirst for pleasure and lead a life of righteousness.

"And whatever men do, whether they remain as artisans, merchants, and officers of the king, or retire from the world and devote themselves to a life of religion and meditation, let them put their whole heart into the task, let them be diligent and energetic, and, if they are like the lotus, which, although it grows in the water, yet remains untouched by the water, if they struggle in life without cherishing envy or hatred, if they live in the world not a life of self but a life of truth, then surely joy, peace, and bliss will dwell in their minds."

Now in the first and fifth quotations, the Buddha plainly admits in his incisive phrasing that men may live in the world, work amid its trials and temptations, marry and rear a family, yet all this cannot prevent them from realising the truth. Why then did he invite so many to enter grand but gloomy portals of his monastic order?

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<sup>132</sup> "Gotama" in the original.

<sup>133</sup> "Anatha-pindika" in the original.

<sup>134</sup> We have inserted "from" for clarity and to match the style of this paragraph. — TJS '20

<sup>135</sup> Blank page

<sup>136</sup> PB himself inserted "47" in the top right corner of the page by hand. PB deleted the contents of this page by hand. It originally read: "It is not merely that consciousness is presupposed in seeking hearing tasting touching and smelling but a self-consciousness, an 'I', which unites all

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(Continued from the previous page) [Firstly, it]<sup>139</sup> is evident that whilst he was alive [to]<sup>140</sup> guide them, {men}<sup>141</sup> had a rare opportunity of extremely rapid attainment, if only they would free themselves from every entanglement and follow him on his wanderings. It is an axiom of esoteric tradition that personal face-to-face discussion with a sage together with mystic meditation in his presence are needed both to remove the numerous doubts and difficulties which beset the ultimate path, as well as to bring the beginner's mind to a concentration beyond his ordinary power. The abandonment of all worldly cares freed Buddha's followers to concentrate their whole time, their undivided attention and their enthusiastic interest upon his talks and meditation.

Secondly, it cannot be doubted that the monastic order was also instituted because the Buddha wished to segregate and leave to humanity a group of men who had renounced worldly comfort and earthly ambition, personal attachments and individual careers, not as an easy means of living by mendicancy but as a hard means of

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the isolated impressions into an orderly whole. Therefore mind is also the basis of our bodies. What we understand by body is in reality something pertaining to the mind.

The materialist wholly overlooks the role played by thinking in his experience. He overlooks that he has to think the body into his consciousness before he can even know of its existence at all. Mind must present the man's body as an idea and then only is there awareness of it. The brain itself is but a mental product in a mentally produced world. It is the mind which makes us aware of the brain's existence, so how can the brain be the originator of this function? In short, the mind of a man who accepts materialism has forgotten to consider itself.

Consciousness i.e. thoughts impressions and feelings, is not a property of the body, because the latter is as much an object to consciousness as any other idea, i.e. body passes in and out of consciousness, as in sleep. How much less then must it be a function of the brain which is merely a part of the body. Consciousness indeed is a property belonging to Mind.

The problem of the relation between the mind and the body disappears when we grasp these great truths, that the body is only an experience of the mind and that such an experience can be felt as being external [during wakefulness] or internal [during dream]. The body does not stand for an actuality apart from the consciousness of it. All the long controversies and variable theories of the relations existing between the two are empty"

<sup>137</sup> Blank page

<sup>138</sup> PB himself inserted and then deleted "8" and "117" from the top of the page by hand. PB later inserted "48" in the top right corner of the page by hand.

<sup>139</sup> PB himself changed an indecipherable phrase to "Firstly, it" by hand.

<sup>140</sup> PB himself inserted "to" by hand.

<sup>141</sup> This word got smudged in the original; "men" is the most likely word. – TJS '20



devoting themselves entirely to the service of society. The Buddhist monk was bidden as a duty to study and contemplate only [that]<sup>142</sup> he might thereafter engage himself in instruction others, for he was definitely ordered to go out of the monastery regularly into cities and villages to teach men whatever truth he had learnt. This unselfish motive made all the difference between him and those other cenobitic ascetics who were interested only in their own narrow existences, their own self-development.

But the Buddha knew that this was only one path to the kingdom of heaven and that there were others. He knew that many men were temperamentally unfitted for the austere life and that others were so karmically circumstanced that it would be a sin against their dependents to flee the world. [He knew too that it is easy enough to mistake a passing aversion from the world for a permanent renunciation of the world.]<sup>143</sup> Therefore,<sup>144</sup> he points out in the quoted paragraph, that even if a man take the harder climb of household (i.e. non-monastic) existence – harder only because of the many distractions which inevitably arise – even such a man need not despair but should strive for insight into the truth because he also may win the goal.

Now Christ, on the other hand, preached extreme asceticism and made no concession to worldliness, as did the Buddha. When asked to arbitrate in a case of disputed property he replied that it was no business of his and added, “Beware of covetousness.”

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(Continued from the previous page) Nevertheless Jesus’ asceticism was not the harsh intolerant pitiless kind which chills its beholders. For he had something which the votaries of such a cold doctrine often lack. He had love. When the self-righteous expounder of an ascetic yoga tells us disdainfully that only the virtuous shall be saved, it is time to turn over the pages of the “New Testament” and read again the consoling words of a greater man, the compassionate pronouncement of Jesus that there is more rejoicing in heaven over one sinner who repenteth [than over others.]<sup>147</sup>

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<sup>142</sup> PB himself changed “what” to “that” by hand.

<sup>143</sup> “He knew too that it is easy enough to mistake a passing aversion from the world for a permanent renunciation of the world.” was typed above the paragraph. PB himself inserted it after “world.” by hand.

<sup>144</sup> PB himself inserted a comma by hand.

<sup>145</sup> Blank page

<sup>146</sup> PB himself inserted and then deleted “9” from the top of the page by hand. PB later inserted “49” in the top right corner of the page by hand.

<sup>147</sup> PB himself inserted “than over others.” by hand.

The Buddha declared life to be unsatisfactory and vain; consequently he called men and women to the practical remedy of deserting the world, renouncing the family, giving up work, taking the ascetic vows and retiring into monasteries. But this is not conclusive evidence that the Buddha necessarily considered such a remedy to be perfect for all people under all circumstances and for all time. Only when it is understood that a teaching sage like the Buddha bears two messages for deliverance, an esoteric one for the few and an exoteric one for the many, will it be understood that his public message is addressed to a particular section of mankind [and]<sup>148</sup> not to all. In the Buddha's case this section comprised those who were sick of the tragedy and tired of the folly of human life, those indeed whom suffering had made ripe for his exoteric teaching. No teacher has yet arisen and no teacher is likely to arise who will be so unperceptive as to address a general message alleged to be suited to all mankind. For a true sage sees that there are always those who have advanced far in their spiritual evolution just as there are those who have lagged lamentably behind. Between these two [extreme]<sup>149</sup> groups there are many other groups occupying every intermediate stage, and it is as natural for a group of people who are all mentally at the same stage of cultural progress to hold world-views which roughly coincide and agree with each other,<sup>150</sup> as it is natural for many other groups to hold views which are vehemently opposed to theirs. What seems true to one seems false to another and what seems good to the first seems bad to the second. A scientific fact or a metaphysical tenet which is perfectly clear to a few men may be darkly obscure to most men.

Each of us stands at a different stage of understanding, culture and development. And even within a single individual life these different stages [unfold]<sup>151</sup> themselves as it passes from childhood to old age. No two men are exactly alike in body, thought or feeling. Relativity is at work here as elsewhere. It would be foolish therefore for a sage to lay down an absolute system of ideas and ideals which [should]<sup>152</sup> suit everybody. The evolutionary situation being what it is, he must accept the fact that differences between human beings do indeed exist and refrain from seeking an artificial [uniformity. And]<sup>153</sup> all this is truer than ever today – when there are no less than two thousand million human inhabitants [upon]<sup>154</sup> this planet and when processes of mental individualisation [are]<sup>155</sup> at work amongst them – and would of itself render absurd a call to universal asceticism. The call today is to be in the world but not of it, to make it better and not flee it in disgust.

The confusion between being spiritually-minded and being ascetically-minded is a common one. This is because few people have risen to the philosophical view point.

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<sup>148</sup> PB himself inserted "and" by hand.

<sup>149</sup> PB himself inserted "extreme" by hand.

<sup>150</sup> PB himself inserted a comma by hand.

<sup>151</sup> PB himself changed an indecipherable deleted word to "unfold" by hand.

<sup>152</sup> PB himself changed "shall" to "should" by hand.

<sup>153</sup> PB himself changed "uniformity and" to "uniformity. And" by hand.

<sup>154</sup> PB himself changed "of" to "upon" by hand.

<sup>155</sup> PB himself inserted "are" by hand.

Those who have not reached metaphysical clearness do not understand that most ascetic injunctions were made in a particular connection and not for universal application, relatively and not absolutely. For they were made expressly for monks and recluses only and not for householders and laymen who seek to follow the higher philosophic teaching of being in the world but not of it.

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(continued from previous page) [And]<sup>160</sup> if, by effort and grace, he can learn to keep his peace anywhere he will be far better off in the end than the monk because he will not need to escape difficult and disturbing environments which might easily shatter the monk's cloister-bred or ashram-coddled peace. Moreover he can best serve his suffering fellows if he is present among them than if he hides his face from them.

After all it is not that the body must give external signs of sacrifice; the mind too can play the hermit and play it perfectly though in the midst of {temptation.}<sup>161</sup> The exchange of a [black]<sup>162</sup> dress-suit for a [brown]<sup>163</sup> monkish robe is a public and open advertisement of one's holiness, whereas entrance to the kingdom of heaven is a private and secret affair which depends entirely on one's heart and mind and not on one's

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<sup>156</sup> Blank page

<sup>157</sup> The original editor inserted "50" in the top right corner of the page by hand. PB deleted the contents of this page by hand. It originally read: "They were the millions who voted against him at the elections before he seized power. It is not just to make them also suffer for the crimes of the Nazi gangsters. They [should] {be} treated differently for many of them were quite helpless under the Gestapo [and had] to do what they were [told] to do. There should be a differentiation between the rank and file".

<sup>158</sup> Blank page

<sup>159</sup> PB himself inserted and then deleted "119" from next to the para by hand. The original editor later inserted "51" in the top right corner of the page by hand.

<sup>160</sup> PB himself deleted "the monk who overdoes meditation" from before "And" by hand.

<sup>161</sup> The word was cut off by the right margin. Only "temptat-" is visible in the original.

<sup>162</sup> "black" was typed above the line and inserted with an arrow by PB himself.

<sup>163</sup> "crown" was typed above the line and inserted with an arrow by PB himself.

clothes:<sup>164</sup> ["The<sup>165</sup> robe of the ascetic does not shield him from worldly thoughts," are the shrewd words of the Chinese Fo-sho-hing-tsan-king.]<sup>166</sup> Those who hide in monastic fear or emotional disappointment from the busy world may only succeed in achieving an artificial development which [will vanish]<sup>167</sup> at the hard touch of actuality.

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(continued from the previous page) When we examine the past history of Oriental mysticism, we find that because everybody could see what a man was doing, eating or wearing and nobody could see what he was thinking or feeling, ascetic self-advertisement was soon emphasised to the exclusion of less visible factors. Such outward renunciations usually and unfortunately came to occupy a disproportionate place in most mystic systems. Intended as a preliminary means, they became a permanent end. Intended for mere beginners, they were eventually looked upon as the hall-mark of matured yogis. The ascetic discipline is useful as a preparation for life but it is not to be regarded as life itself. The ascetic rules and prohibitive regulations, the hard discipline and formal practices so often associated with mysticism are useful or needful only in the early stages of the quest. If a man has to hide behind them, be sure he is still trying to become more virtuous. Those who are virtuous have their body naturally and effortlessly under control. Consequently, they are interested in the spirit of conduct whereas the ascetic is interested in its letter.

The five moral injunctions laid down by Patanjali as a preliminary to the practice of Yoga are of such character that few modern Western aspirants could ever hope to fulfil them successfully. The fifth, for instance, requires him to own no property beyond the food needed for the day and the clothes he can carry about with him. The third injunction would compel celibacy and forbid marriage. They were obviously intended for men who could withdraw from society and live a completely ascetic existence, not for men like ourselves who cannot withdraw and who cannot imitate an immobile hibernating marmot.

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<sup>164</sup> PB himself changed a period to a colon by hand.

<sup>165</sup> "'The robe of the ascetic does not shield him from worldly thoughts,' are the shrewd words of the Chinese Fo-sho-hing-tsan-king." was typed at below the para and inserted after "clothes:" by PB himself.

<sup>166</sup> "Foshohing Tsanking" in the original. Referring to the book by Aśvaghōṣa.

<sup>167</sup> PB himself changed "vanishes" to "will vanish" by hand.

<sup>168</sup> Blank page

<sup>169</sup> The original editor deleted "(11)" and inserted "52" in the top right corner of the page by hand.

But instead of jumping to the hasty conclusion to which so many Indians have jumped and concluding that yoga is not for us,<sup>170</sup> it would be wiser to ascertain first why these injunctions were laid down at all. If we do so thoroughly and penetratingly,<sup>171</sup> we shall then find that they were intended to diminish the intrusion of disturbing thoughts during meditation practice and thus bring success nearer. So such thoughts arise out of man's attachments to earthly things. The real virtue lay in this diminution, not in ascetically doing without the things themselves.

The aspirant is required to fight against passions and struggle against his desires not because such asceticism is admired for its own sake but because his passions and desires hold his mind in a grip which prevents the power of concentration upon higher things and upon transcendental principles from being developed. Ordinarily he may not perceive this but in the practice of meditation or the exercise of reflection he will. But [if]<sup>172</sup> it is true that he must overthrow the passions which rage within him before meditation can attain its highest effectiveness and yield its fairest fruits, this is not to say that he must not practice meditation before they are overthrown. On the contrary, such practice will assist in overthrowing them if it is specially directed towards that end.

The psycho-analysts who liberate man from his wrong inhibitions also liberate him from his right ones. The abject surrender to sexual excitations is not liberation but bondage. Hence,<sup>173</sup> he has to pass through an ascetic disciplinary stage before he can succeed in living philosophically. In the end the aspirant should desire only to be desireless!

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(Continued from the previous page) The mistake of the ascetic or mystic who makes his asceticism or mysticism his sole activity, is to turn a means into an end, to magnify an exercise for disciplining life into life itself, to elevate a step into the final goal. He is unable to live wisely because he excludes too much. The philosopher will regard his body as being intended neither for passionate enjoyment of the world nor for passionate renunciation of the world. Between extremes he will walk a sensible middle path. He is not asked to give anything up merely because it is pleasant but to find the

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<sup>170</sup> PB himself inserted a comma by hand.

<sup>171</sup> PB himself inserted a comma by hand.

<sup>172</sup> "if" was typed before "But" and inserted after "But" with a handwritten arrow.

<sup>173</sup> PB himself inserted a comma by hand.

<sup>174</sup> Blank page

<sup>175</sup> The original editor deleted "(11-A)", inserted and deleted "(12)", and later inserted "52" in the top right corner of the page by hand.

proper limits within which its exercise is useful or good or non-harmful. He wisely combines and harmonises the ascetic ideal with the aesthetic one whereas the ascetic opposes them against each other. Because the goal is mental happiness, there is no need to disdain physical happiness. Progress in the quest is not measurable by progress in melancholy.

Philosophy asks nobody to crush out all human affections or all aesthetic appreciations but only to ennoble and refine them. Let those who wish it have satisfaction in life by all means; let them enjoy the perfumes of the rose, the ravishments of music, the softness of woman and the delights of poetry, but let them not become their victims! They need to have an ascetic spirit whilst in the very midst of these things, the power which yoga practice can give, the power to detach themselves instantly from these physical allurements, to withdraw the mind from those physical tentacles at any moment and return to their eternal home. Thus,<sup>176</sup> it regards such self-discipline as being only a stage in one's onward progress. It does not accept asceticism, which would set up this negative ideal as the ultimate goal for humanity, simply because its more mature insight into truth compels it to affirm and not negate life.

This philosopher is too conscious of the ever-presence and every-where-ness of reality to react in any other than a positive way towards the world. Therefore, he will remain amongst mankind, where he is needed, and not flee to the caves, where he is not. The world will indeed become his monastery, for its pleasures will be unable to corrupt him and its turmoils will be unable to dislodge him from the quest. If a man shrinks from contact with his less evolved fellows and fears lest he be polluted by them, be sure that he is not a student of philosophy although he may be a student of yoga. The former will not be perpetually and morbidly on his guard like the ascetics against his less evolved fellows, lest they suborn his morals or mentality, because he has already fought out his battles in the silence and solitude of his mind and he does not need to fight [against]<sup>177</sup> society. He knows that the great drama of human life is really enacted in consciousness, that external asceticism is at best merely a technical aid for the correction of wrong thinking<sup>178</sup> and that its physical disciplines can never be a substitute for the discipline of thinking itself. The primitive mentality takes to merely physical asceticism because it thinks itself to be the body and must curb the flesh. The advanced mentality takes to creative disciplinary meditation instead because it thinks it is the mind and<sup>179</sup> must curb the thoughts of flesh. He who can go to the root of the trouble inside himself does not need to do anything more. But he who has not understood that matter is an illusion and has not trained his power of concentrative creative thought must fast from food, hide from society, refrain from marriage and shiver.<sup>180</sup>

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<sup>176</sup> PB himself inserted a comma by hand. He also x'd out a word after "it"

<sup>177</sup> PB himself changed "again" to "against" by hand.

<sup>178</sup> PB himself deleted a comma from after "thinking" by hand.

<sup>179</sup> A word was x'd out after "and."

<sup>180</sup> PB himself inserted "p 13 cancelled" in the right margin at the bottom of the page by hand.

(continued from the previous page) Since<sup>183</sup> Nature has made [no two people exactly]<sup>184</sup> alike in their [physical body]<sup>185</sup> and since no two have developed alike in temperament, intellect, feeling, will, moral character, intuition, and behaviour no single way of spiritual approach is sufficient for all mankind. Allowance must be made for [these]<sup>186</sup> individual differences.

The<sup>187</sup> circle is a perfect symbol of this aspect of the Quest. It has numerable radii yet all lead to one and the same centre.

Although all paths must necessarily seek to subjugate the lower nature to the [higher, the]<sup>188</sup> methods whereby this may be [achieved]<sup>189</sup> vary as the individuals following them necessarily vary. It is a narrow and fanatical demand which would have every spirant follow a single method alone. These observations are specially referable to the matter of asceticism. Because one man [finds]<sup>190</sup> his way to the higher self by following a rigidly ascetic path, embracing the vows of poverty and celibacy, subjecting himself to constant and prolonged fastings and vigils, he considers that this is the only way for all other men. Such an assertion is [a]<sup>191</sup> mistaken one.

During the course of world-wide travels I have [had the good fortune to meet]<sup>192</sup> a few Orientals and Occidentals who have succeeded in attaining awareness of the higher self. Yet in every case their approach was different. It is true that some were rigidly ascetic, withdrawing from social existence into lonely mountain retreats, but other lived the household life, discharging their family and worldly responsibilities.

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<sup>181</sup> Blank page

<sup>182</sup> PB himself inserted and deleted "122" from the top right of the text by hand. PB himself later inserted "page 14" above the beginning of the text by hand. The original editor also inserted "54" in the top right corner of the page.

<sup>183</sup> PB himself marked this as the start of a new paragraph by hand.

<sup>184</sup> PB himself changed "not two people" to "no two people exactly" by hand.

<sup>185</sup> PB himself changed "appearance" to "physical body" by hand.

<sup>186</sup> PB himself changed "such" to "these" by hand.

<sup>187</sup> PB himself marked this as the start of a new paragraph by hand.

<sup>188</sup> PB himself changed "higher. The" to "higher, the" by hand.

<sup>189</sup> PB himself deleted "may" from after "achieved" by hand.

<sup>190</sup> PB himself changed "found" to "finds" by hand.

<sup>191</sup> PB himself inserted "a" by hand.

<sup>192</sup> PB himself changed "met at least" to "had the good fortune to meet" by hand.

Thus I was able to verify by personal [observation]<sup>193</sup> what philosophy already taught me, that the Overself can and does draw men by various paths. [The idea that there is only a single pattern of self-liberation – the pattern with which he is familiar through his own personal experience – is a narrow and an unphilosophical one. The only common ground which emerges in all authentic paths, which all share alike and none leave out, is the necessity of crushing the ego.]<sup>194</sup>

The<sup>195</sup> lesson of this is the necessity of avoiding fanaticism, of holding a wide and comprehensive attitude, of being tolerant towards the ideas and practices different from our own so long as they all share in common the goal of surrender of the animal to the human and the human to the divine.<sup>196</sup>

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## THE CLEANSING OF THE BODY

### Notes on Hatha Yoga<sup>198</sup>

41<sup>199</sup>

## NOTES ON HATHA YOGA

(41-1)<sup>200</sup><sup>201</sup> equally necessary to have during the earlier attempts the watchful supervision or veto of a qualified medical man who understands the anatomical dangers and physiological changes involved.

A modern Indian holy man, {Shukracharya},<sup>202</sup> of the province of Gujarat,<sup>203</sup> who died as recently as 1929 and who had thousands of followers who regarded him as a divine incarnation, told his disciples in one of his discourses; “Your Guru has practised all of the hatha yoga asanas for quite a long time and it is his definite verdict that it’s all labour wasted, in so far as the ideal of self-realisation is concerned. In fact, the human

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<sup>193</sup> PB himself changed “experience” to “observation” by hand.

<sup>194</sup> The following section was typed at the bottom of the page and inserted after “paths.” with a handwritten arrow: “The idea that there is only a single pattern of self-liberation – the pattern with which he is familiar through his own personal experience – is a narrow and an unphilosophical one. The only common ground which emerges in all authentic paths, which all share alike and none leave out, is the necessity of crushing the ego.”

<sup>195</sup> PB himself marked this as the start of a new paragraph by hand.

<sup>196</sup> PB himself inserted “Finis” at the bottom of the page by hand.

<sup>197</sup> Blank page

<sup>198</sup> This section was title “Notes on Hatha Yoga” in Carbons 21, so we have imported that title here.

<sup>199</sup> “2” in the original. PB himself inserted “160” in the top right corner of the page by hand.

<sup>200</sup> Incomplete – the beginning of this para was not found in this file.

<sup>201</sup> This page is a duplicate of page 193 in Carbons 21.

<sup>202</sup> “Shukacharya” in the original, we have changed it to the more likely Shukacharya, but we have no further information about this individual. – TJS ’20

<sup>203</sup> “Gujerat” in the original.



mind is the home of all maladies; it is vulnerable at each end and it is necessary to purge it of all diseases and to stitch all leakages; if it is so, where is the earthly sense in wrestling with the muscles? The primary concern, therefore, is to treat the mind and not the body.”

He may practise meditation until Doomsday,<sup>204</sup> mutter the hundred and eight different mystic spells, sit in all the sixty-four postures of the yoga of body control, hold his breath for a whole hour or vary its rhythm in every conceivable manner, but the Overself will remain stubbornly remote unless he frankly faces and successfully fights out his struggle against his own ego in his own heart. No physical contortion, exercise or manipulation can ever take its place. Such yoga exercises can discipline his body, give him control over it, but they cannot provide a passport into the higher region. This and this alone is the only yoga that really counts in the end on this strange quest, because demanding all it gives all. Indeed it is of the utmost importance that

Again, the yoga of body control is merely an aid to those practices and can never become a substitute for them. It is an aid only for beginners who may use it for a time and then cast it completely aside without compunction.

There are many yogis who have sat for years contemplating their own nose or their own navel. How many understood that this was but a preliminary exercise to unfold the power of one-pointed attention? How many believed that it would lead to a union with the ‘Supreme Spirit’? As if the Supreme dwelt exclusively and finally in the nose or the navel!

The technique which suited those ancient conditions will not quite suit our modern ones. Those who disregard this fact open a door to mental derangement.

The Buddha tried them all during his six years apprenticeship to yoga but discarded them all. He went indeed to extremes to which few are likely to venture in our own times. He held his breath longer than any of our amateur modern body-controllers are likely to hold it, “to pursue” as he said, “the ecstatic trance which comes from stopped breathing.” What was his final judgement at the end of all these experiments? “With all these severe disciplines I failed to transcend ordinary human limits and to rise to the heights of superior understanding and insight.” Thus, he said, he was driven to ask himself, “Could there be another path to enlightenment?” (Add to above quote a similar one from Shankara<sup>205</sup> re: hatha yoga pranayama<sup>206</sup> given in my leather-bound Volume<sup>207</sup> “ADVAITA” section “Aparokshanubhuti”<sup>208</sup> page 64/65.) Hence,<sup>209</sup> too,<sup>210</sup> when thousands of years ago a young Aryan youth {went},<sup>211</sup> in quest

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<sup>204</sup> PB himself inserted a comma by hand.

<sup>205</sup> Refers to Adi Shankara.

<sup>206</sup> “pranyam” in the original.

<sup>207</sup> “Vol” in the original.

<sup>208</sup> “Aparaokshanbuti” in the original.

<sup>209</sup> PB himself inserted a comma by hand.

<sup>210</sup> PB himself inserted a comma by hand.

<sup>211</sup> We have changed “when” to “went” for clarity. – TJS ‘20

of truth, to the mysterious sage Sanat Kumara<sup>212</sup> and said: "I have become a master of mantra. Yet I have secured no peace for my soul. Pray tell me why" the reply was as subtle as it seemed simple: "Oh Narada, your whole study is limited by name and form."

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NOTES ON HATHA YOGA

## Prague Talks

43<sup>214</sup>

PRAGUE TALKS

Healing Exercises for Sick Students

(43-1) INTRODUCTION: There is in every cell of the physical body the Life-Force which sustains the body. This force flows into the body from the one infinite ocean of life, which is everywhere. In its work of maintaining the body, the force {automatically}<sup>215</sup> tries to keep it in good order whenever there is any disease of the organs. To communicate to us what we should do to cooperate in this activity, the force expresses itself through the natural instincts of the body. Unfortunately partly owing to the ignorance unbalance and depravity of the human ego in its present stage of evolution and partly because of the artificial habits of living which modern materialistic civilisation has introduced, such communication is badly affected. The consequences are that the instincts of today are perverted ones, and that the ego mismanages the body in such a way as to interfere with and even prevent the recuperative healing efforts of the Life-Power.

In many cases, it is possible either to effect a complete cure or at least some alleviation of a sickness by giving Nature a chance to do this. Two ways may be followed either separately or in combination.

THE WAY OF FASTING: This is the method of periodically undertaking short fasts. In this one abstains from eating any solid food for a period of 24 hours. Water may be sipped however, but where work has to be done and body feels weak diluted fruit juices may be drunk, although this turns the fast into a partial one and consequently not quite so effective.

44<sup>216</sup>

PRAGUE TALKS

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<sup>212</sup> "Sanatkimara" in the original. Also known as "Sanatkumara".

<sup>213</sup> Blank page

<sup>214</sup> "1" in the original. PB himself inserted "By PB in Prague" and "161" in the top right corner of the page by hand.

<sup>215</sup> "authomat" in the original.

<sup>216</sup> Blank page

(Continued from the previous page) Hence it is usually easiest for most persons to fast on a Sunday, as this is a day of rest. This 24-hour fast can be repeated at intervals of 10 days in an average case or even one week in more serious cases. When the sufferer has got familiar with the idea and practice of fasting he may even extend it to 36 hours, but not longer.

THE WAY OF RELAXING: At the beginning the sufferer should recline (lie with his back on a couch),<sup>218</sup> or even on a rug placed on the floor, and let himself go completely limp. He should practice in fact what has been described in "A Search in Secret India" as the "corpse posture" (page 65). Every muscle and limb of the body should be relaxed all tensions should be dissolved. The practiser should keep the body as still and as unmoving as if it were dead.

The breathing too should be made quiet gentle and shallow.

The mind should be emptied of all other thoughts and distractions and concentrated on the following ideas successively: It should first imagine the body as being surrounded and interpenetrated by an ocean of the Life-Power. Then it is to be concentrated on one of the nervous-centres through which that power flows into the body. These centres are distributed in various parts of the body but for the purpose of this exercise it is enough to mention three of them. There is one in the middle of the forehead, another in the chest about the region of the heart and a third in each of the palms of the hands.

Any of the centres may be used for the concentration but the sufferer should try to be guided by his instinctive feeling as to which is the most suitable for<sup>219</sup>

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<sup>217</sup> "2" in the original. PB himself inserted "162" in the top right corner of the page by hand.

<sup>218</sup> The parentheses were slashes in the original, suggesting this was typed on a non-English typewriter. – TJS '20

<sup>219</sup> Incomplete – the end of this para was not found in this file.

<sup>220</sup> Blank page

<sup>221</sup> "10" in the original. PB himself inserted "163" in the top right corner of the page by hand.

(continued from the previous page)<sup>222</sup> the philosophical prayer has been appointed.

In these iron times prayer has become as necessary to our inner life as food is to our bodily life. Let no one neglect it who is harassed by the modern environment but let every aspirant put into prayer all the intensity and favour of his heart. Nevertheless let every aspirant do as much as he can in [this]<sup>223</sup> direction and let him be assured that no effort will be wasted.

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PRAGUE TALKS  
Healing Exercises for Sick Students

49<sup>225</sup>

PRAGUE TALKS  
The Question of Vegetarianism

(49-1) For those whose circumstances and inclination allow it the giving up of a flesh diet is recommended.

This is for various reasons:-

1. Human pity: The animals wish to live on this earth just as much as we do. During the few seconds before being killed in the slaughter-house their instincts tell them what is going to happen and they are filled with great fear. Those who are following the spiritual path should try to obey the rule not to injure other living creatures, whenever possible, nor bring suffering to them.

2. Avoiding Karma: The wholesale taking of life unnecessarily through many centuries is a habit which should belong only to savages and tribes in a primitive state of evolution. That is, it is fit only for those creatures who have entered most recently into human reincarnation, and who have not so long ago themselves left animal forms. The more developed kind of human being should outgrow this savage [habit - through]<sup>226</sup> this his own moral evolution. When he fails to do this, he creates bad Karma which expresses itself in different ways. One of these ways is war.

3. Meat unnecessary: Nature has given man enough food in the plants and dairy produce to support his bodily life. If he could not continue to exist without flesh-food it would be quite permissible for him, as a higher form of evolutionary life, to kill the lower forms in order himself to live. But no such necessity really exists. There are perfectly nourishing substitutes for flesh-diet which will keep him strong and alive.

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<sup>222</sup> Incomplete - the beginning of this para was not found in this file.

<sup>223</sup> PB himself changed "his" to "this" by hand.

<sup>224</sup> Blank page

<sup>225</sup> PB himself inserted "164" in the top right corner of the page and "Prague talks" at the top of the page by hand.

<sup>226</sup> PB himself changed "habit. Through" to "habit - through" by hand.

4. Good health: Uric acid poisons are introduced into the body when too much meat is eaten. In the course of a number of the accumulation of these poisons begins to create diseases.

5. Influence on the mind: The psychic vibrations of an animal's nature permeates its flesh. Whoever eats this flesh is mixing these vibrations with his own. Therefore the appetites and

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PRAGUE TALKS  
The Question of Vegetarianism

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PRAGUE TALKS  
The Question of Vegetarianism

(continued from the previous page) passions of the animal whose flesh he eats for a number of years, begin slightly to affect his own character.

To those who do not feel able to make a complete change over it will be enough to give up red meats and eat only the white meats such as lamb, and fowl. To those who are able to give up even this but not to take a complete vegetable diet, fish may be eaten to replace meat. For those who wish to go still more in the direction of vegetarianism, the fish may be given up in favour of eggs. Although many vegetarians include eggs in their diet, nevertheless a total vegetarian diet will leave even them out. But unless the change over is made with some knowledge of food values, so that the meat protein is replaced by the same quantity of vegetable protein, the person will become weaker and, therefore, in the course of time dissatisfied.

The following foods are very nourishing and either alone or in combination with the others will be enough to replace meats satisfactorily:-

1. Cheese
2. Milk and butter
3. Nuts
4. Yellow peas, green peas
5. Lentils (Linsen)
6. Brown beans, white beans
7. Large beans

In England and in America many vegetarians make imitation meat-rissoles which look and taste like meat. These are made from nuts grafted into powder and then mixed with tomato pulp, a little flour,<sup>229</sup> little butter and spices to give it taste, bread crumbs, and fried, all well mixed together.

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<sup>227</sup> Blank page

<sup>228</sup> "2" in the original. PB himself inserted "165" in the top right corner of the page by hand.

<sup>229</sup> PB himself inserted a comma by hand.

Because of the dangers of family conflicts and the domestic inharmony which might be aroused, it has hitherto been advisable to leave it to people themselves to answer this question of whether or not to become a vegetarian. But the time has come now when a clear stand in its favour must be made

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PRAGUE TALKS  
The Question of Vegetarianism