



THE SUFI MESSAGE
OF
HAZRAT INAYAT KHAN

VOLUME XI

PHILOSOPHY, PSYCHOLOGY, MYSTICISM

APHORISMS

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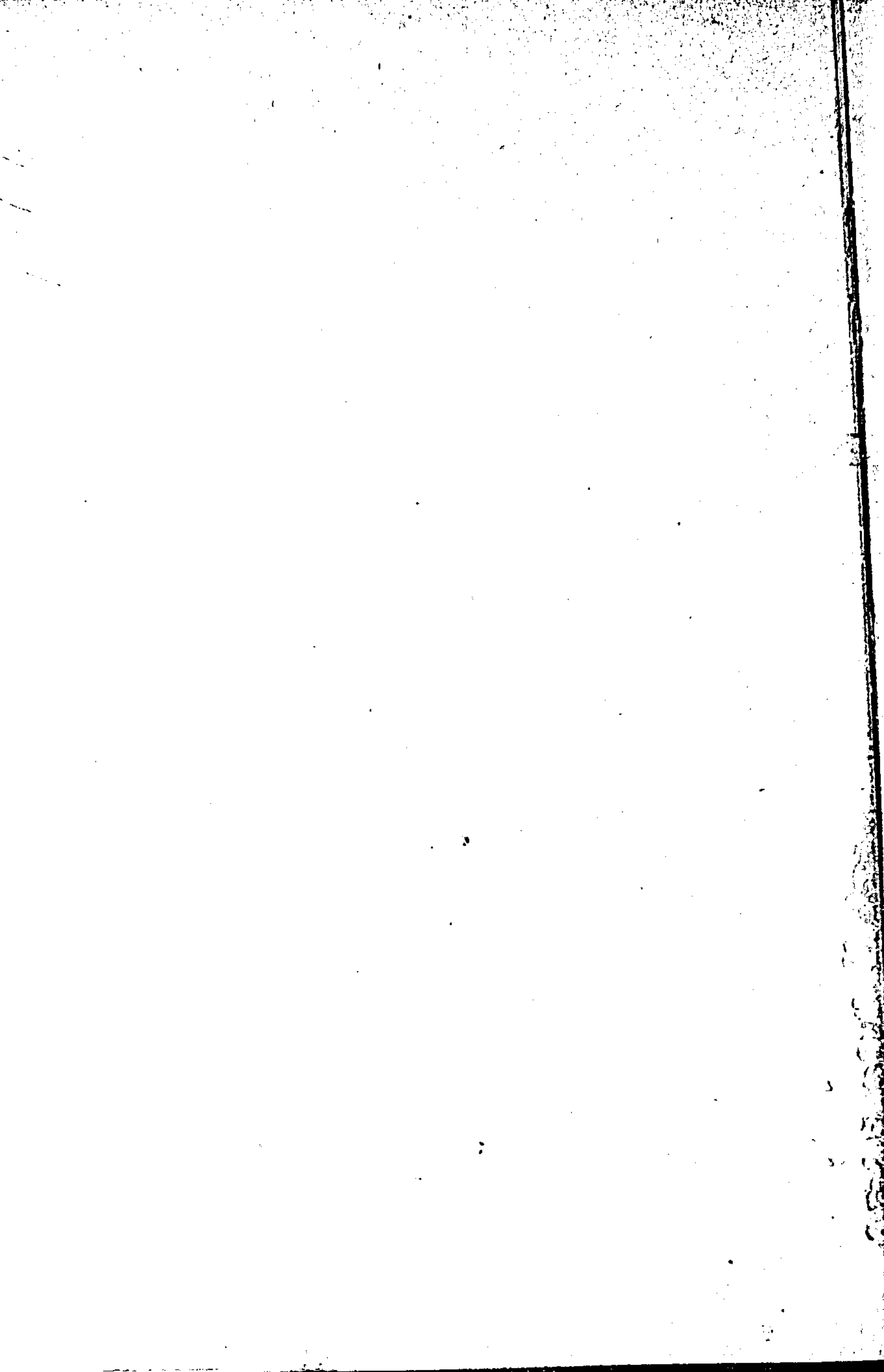
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PREFACE

IT HAS already been observed in the preface to Volume I of *The Sufi Message of Hazrat Inayat Khan*, that to arrange systematically the Sufi mystic's work would be a very difficult task. Practically all the subject-matter contained in these volumes consists of transcripts of lectures given by him during the years he lived and taught in the West from 1910 to 1926. The range and diversity of his subjects were remarkable, and very often the same theme was taken up again after an interval of several years and treated in a somewhat different way and in another context. Thus Hazrat Inayat's ontological teachings are dispersed over most of the volumes of this series. But in the last two years of his life he gave, in three sets of lectures delivered during the Summer Schools at Suresnes in 1925 and 1926, a highly interesting synopsis of the subjects he called *Philosophy, Psychology, and Mysticism*, in the particular sense he attached to these terms. The resulting book may possibly be regarded as the master's magnum opus.

After having been used for a number of years as instructive papers at the Summer Schools subsequent to Hazrat Inayat Khan's death, they were published for the first time in 1956. This new edition differs slightly from the former in that the text, which had been kept so close to the spoken word that to read it was not always easy, has now been better adapted to the printed page. Naturally great care has been taken not to change the exact meaning of Inayat Khan's teaching. The chapters 15, 16, and 17 of Part I, on the subjects of sound and voice, have been omitted, as they were already included in *Music* (see Volume II), and a few minor alterations have been made in the sequence of the remaining chapters.

The present volume ends with a reissue of a collection of *Aphorisms*, which were first published in a very limited *édition de luxe* in 1927 and also in *The Sufi Quarterly* (Vol. III, 3, 4; Vol. IV, 1, 2, 3, 4; Vol. V, 1, 2; Vol. VI, 3). They consist of sayings and statements of Hazrat Inayat Khan which were collected by one of his pupils, but before authorizing their publication Inayat Khan himself checked and carefully revised them.



INTRODUCTION

THERE ARE three steps which lead the seeker to the altar of divine wisdom. One is philosophy, the next is psychology, and the third is mysticism. Philosophy is learnt by the analysis and synthesis of all that we perceive through the five senses, psychology is learnt by the analysis and synthesis of all that we can feel in human nature and in our character, and mysticism is learnt by the analysis and synthesis of the whole of life, both that which is seen and that which is unseen. Philosophy therefore is learnt by the study of things, psychology is learnt by thinking, and mysticism is learnt by meditation.

The one who takes these three steps towards divine knowledge completes his life's study; but when he omits the first or the second step, philosophy or psychology, and arrives directly at mysticism, he leaves behind some knowledge that could have helped him to understand life better and to impart his knowledge to others. Therefore it is most essential that these three steps be taken one after the other.

The words philosophy, psychology, and mysticism should not be interpreted in the sense in which they are generally used today. By philosophy is not meant a certain philosophy, by psychology is not meant a certain system, by mysticism is not meant a certain occult science; but by philosophy is meant the knowledge of things perceived through the intelligence or intuition, by psychology the knowledge of the human character and of human nature, and by mysticism the knowledge of being.

PART I

PHILOSOPHY

ILLUSION AND REALITY

WHEN A spiritual man talks about all being illusion, the materialistic man says, 'Show me then where reality is!' Very often people use the word illusion without having studied this question fully. When a person says to another who is in pain, 'It is all illusion', the one who is suffering will say, 'It is a reality to me. If you were the one who is suffering you would not say that it is an illusion!' And when this problem is not solved, a person may try to call an illness an illusion as long as his patience is not exhausted, but the moment his patience gives out he can no longer call it an illusion; he begins to call it a reality. When one begins from the end one ends at the beginning, and to call something that our senses perceive an illusion we must first understand its nature and character, in order to prove to ourselves and to others that it is an illusion.

Through any study we take up, no matter what it be, we shall be able to find out that when we look at things they first appear in a certain form, but as we go on looking at them they appear differently. A certain chemical is called by a certain name, but when we see what its origin is, where it comes from, we trace at its root something quite different. When we find its origin we begin to think, 'Why do we call it by that name? Its name should be quite different.' In studying a mechanism and the various names and forms connected with it, we find when we get to the bottom of it that what makes it work is something quite different from its outward appearance. All this shows that the surface of all things covers the secret of their origin from our eyes; and yet we recognize all things from their surface. In order to know the secret of things we must dig deep and get to the bottom of them.

When we study modern biology we begin to wonder about the origin of man; and even if the missing link between man and monkey were to be found, we should still not have probed the depths of human origin. If such is the character and nature of

things on the surface, how can we stamp them with names which we invent from our limited knowledge of them? The deeper we go into things, the less we shall think we can call them so and so, or such and such. Everything in the world is under a cover, and when it is uncovered there is another cover; so one thing is found inside the other thing, and one cannot get at the bottom of things unless one knows the secret of how to get there. It is for this reason that the learned of this world, who study and study all their lives, go only so far and no further. We may ask the most learned man in the world, who has perhaps propounded a thousand theories, what is at the bottom of it all, and he will answer, 'I do not know, but I would like to know if I could.'

To understand the nature of illusion there are two points to be considered: first, that what is changeable is an illusion, and secondly, that what is unstable is also an illusion; for what is unstable and changeable is and at the same time is not. Then there are two laws: one law is that a thing changes, and the other law is that a thing is dissolved, destroyed, decomposed. The only difference is that although both are changes, it is only in one process that we can pursue that which changes. When coal has turned into a diamond we can pursue it, but when camphor has dissolved we cannot pursue it so easily.

If we call the appearance of what is changeable and what is subject to destruction a reality, then what is illusion, why do we have this word? This word denotes something which is not dependable, which is not constant. We use the words 'false' and 'true' according to our conception of things. For instance gold metal is called gold, and its imitation is called imitation gold. At the first glance both are the same; it is only by observing them more keenly that we distinguish between gold and its imitation. It is the stability of gold which makes us call it real; we call it real gold because it is stable. It is the same when one says that a friendship is real. What is stable is real, what fades away is false. And when we look in this way at the whole of manifestation we see illusion in all things; if there is a reality to be found it is at the bottom of it all. The illusion is the cover, and reality is the depths of all things. It is just like body and soul: the body is an illusion,

the soul a reality. It is the same with the flower and its fragrance: the flower is an illusion, but the fragrance is a reality; it stays as a spirit, it lives.

The longer a thing lives, the greater reality it shows, and yet that which can truly be called reality is still deeper. In our everyday language we use the word reality, but to know what reality is, is a different thing; for to know reality is to know all that is to be known. This knowledge is acquired by finding that one reality which is beyond all things. It is the search for reality which is the true education, the real knowledge, and the learning which is really worth while. To appreciate this reality, to admire it, to love it, brings us nearer and nearer towards the goal, the goal which is reality itself.

When we begin to realize that our wish, our desire, the object of our love, and all that we pursue throughout life are illusion, and that we are in pursuit of this illusion day and night, we feel disappointed. We often wonder what there is that can be called reality if all we know, see, and feel is illusion. Not everybody thinks about it in his daily life; but to the wise this thought comes naturally and engages him in the search for reality. In olden times it was the task of religion to awaken the world to reality; but unfortunately today in the absence of religion the modern educational system awakens interest in all that is illusion instead of promoting the search for reality. Nevertheless, we cannot run away from reality. It draws us, it attracts us. Even through our interest in science, literature, philosophy, art, or psychology we are unconsciously searching for reality. But looking for reality in illusion is like trying to see the moon on the earth. People want to see the face of reality with the eyes of illusion, and with the ears of illusion they want to hear its voice. But it is the reality in themselves that finds reality.

There is some purpose in this manifestation which is illusion. If there were no illusion, then reality could not be found, for everything is revealed by its contrast, even reality. We look for reality when we discover illusion; if we had never known illusion we would never have known reality. Reality finds itself.

One might consider abstract thought to be a method of knowing reality, but it depends upon what one understands by abstract

thought. There are people who live in the abstract, and yet they are far away from reality. There is an Indian story about a fish which went to the queen of the fishes and said, 'I have always heard about the sea, but where is the sea?' Then the queen explained to this fish who had come to her to learn, 'You live, move, and have your being in the sea. The sea is within you and outside you, and you are made of sea and you will end in the sea. The sea is that which surrounds you and is your origin and your end and your own being.' Just as the fish was ignorant of the sea, so even those who experience the abstract may be ignorant of its reality. One may stand near the water all one's life and yet remain thirsty, not realizing that it is water.

One day a man asked Buddha, 'What is ignorance? You have spoken so often about it; can you illustrate it, can you explain it?' Buddha said, 'There was a man who was clinging to the branch of a tree on a very dark night. All night he clung to that branch, and in the morning he saw that the ground was only one foot beneath his feet. And all the fear and anguish and torture he had felt throughout the whole night vanished with the breaking of dawn.'

Such is the nature of ignorance and reality. A person may continue to be unaware of the truth throughout his life and suffer all the consequences of this ignorance, for there is no greater misfortune than ignorance. It is the root of all unhappiness and misery. One may continue to suffer one's whole life through ignorance, when the knowledge of reality is quite near if one only cared to find it.

The other difficulty is that human nature begins to look for complexity, for the nature of illusion is complex; man values complexity and thinks that what is complex is valuable and worth while, and that what is simple is worthless. Truth however is simple, simpler than all the knowledge of illusion, but for that very reason man cannot value it, for he has valued the illusion so much that he cannot value reality.

And yet for us limited human beings to say that this world has no reality seems blasphemy. It is all right for us to feel this, but it is not right to say it, because if we are to say it we must prove it, prove it by our independence of this illusion—which we cannot

always do as we are too dependent upon it. A claim which has not been put into practice is not a good claim; that is why a mystic will always refrain from saying such a thing as that all this is an illusion; but he tries to feel it more and more every day. And when it happens that he does not feel this way he is sorry, he thinks that he is far from reality; but when a glimpse of it comes to him he realizes that he is face to face with his Lord, because then he stands in the light of reality.

CHAPTER II

CAPACITY

THE SECRET of the whole of creation can be traced to the understanding of what is meant by capacity. Capacity is, so to speak, the egg of creation; all of this manifestation which is known to us, as well as that which is unknown to us, is formed in some capacity. The sky is a capacity. Capacity is that which makes a hollow in which the action of the all-pervading existence may produce a substance. All the stars and planets which we have discovered and those which are not yet discovered, what are they? They are all capacities. And what do they contain? They contain, each one according to its capacity, whatever that capacity is able to preserve within it and give birth to; that is why one planet is not like another planet nor one star like another star.

Just as the sea is a capacity in which all the animals of the water are born and live and die, so the air is a capacity in which many creatures live and move and have their being, and the earth is a capacity which conceives within itself the plants, the trees, and all the different stones, metals, minerals, and other substances which come out of it. Again, everything, the stone, the tree, or a fruit or a flower, is a capacity in which a perfume may be formed, or a savour. Thus the living being is a capacity, and man is a finished capacity.

The Hindu name for capacity is *Akasha*. People generally think that *Akasha* means the sky, but in reality it means everything. Everything in its turn is an *Akasha*, just as all substance is a capacity; and according to that capacity it produces what it is meant to produce.

By studying anatomy one will find that the organs of the senses are all capacities according to their construction; and when that capacity is clogged, broken, or in any way troubled, then that organ of sense does not function properly. The tubes and veins of the body are capacities for the blood to circulate in, and when this capacity becomes stopped up, however strong the body may

be life cannot circulate and congestion and illness come. Again, every blood-cell is a capacity. If it keeps itself open life comes into it and the person feels healthy, but when a blood-cell loses this capacity life does not function any more in it and all kinds of diseases develop. So with the pores of the skin: each pore is a capacity; and when for some reason or other this capacity is clogged, then the life cannot circulate there; it stops and diseases become manifest. The digestive organs, the lungs, are all capacities which breathe life in and function according to the life that is breathed in, that is radiated through them; and when they do not function properly illness and disorder follow.

Then there are the intuitive centres in this physical body of man, each centre being a capacity. Few know about them, and they become clogged because man leads such a material life and consequently the intuitive faculties become blunted. All the mystical practices which are followed by the adepts are given in order that these capacities may be opened up and activated, may be put in order so that through them man may experience that which is meant to be experienced. It is lack of air and energy and magnetism which blocks these capacities and these centres; and it is this which blunts the intuitive faculties. Thus a person who never gives a thought to this question loses his intuitive faculties, and this itself shows that by thinking about something one produces a capacity, just as one does by action, by movement; and when that movement is dull, when it is not active, then this capacity remains unemployed.

It is capacity which makes the soul a soul; otherwise it would be spirit. For instance, when the sun comes into our house in the morning, the sunlight passing through the window will be square or round according to that window, or triangular if the window is shaped like that. The sun is not triangular or square; it is the window which is that shape. We say it is the sun that comes into the house, but we could call it something else. The sun may be likened to the spirit, and its entry through the window, which is a capacity and which gives it a form—triangular, square, or whatever it may be—may be called the soul. The soul becomes identified with qualities and merits because of the capacity through which it expresses itself; if not it would be spirit.

Life has two divisions, of which one is accepted but the other is not yet. The accepted division of life is what we call substance; the division of life which is not yet accepted can be called vacuum. If we speak to a person about oxygen, he understands that there is oxygen in space; but if we speak about vacuum he does not understand. He says, 'What is it? It must be something. If my instrument registers something, I can say that it is something; if it does not, then it is nothing.' But in reality vacuum is everything and all things. In certain periods of the world's history man has discovered a finer substance; scientists have come to atoms and electrons and still finer particles. But then what? Then, they say, there is nothing. The fact is that man wishes to perceive that which is called vacuum by the same method with which he perceives substance, and this is not possible. Therefore, however far he may advance in the discovery of life, he can only reach the most extremely fine substance. In this way people may search for thousands of years and they may succeed in finding a still finer substance, perhaps even a most useful substance, but it will still be a substance and not a vacuum.

Capacity is matter. It is not merely matter in the everyday sense of the word, for in reality all that is perceptible is matter. It is substance; even if it is the finest substance it is still a substance. That which is above substance is spirit. Spirit is the absence of matter even in its finest condition. Spirit is beyond that, and thus the finest capacity will still be a substance.

Now we come to the following question: If all this manifestation comes from one source, one life, one spirit, then why is there such a variety of things and beings, each different in its nature and character?

There are two principal reasons for this. One is the speed of vibrations, the other is the direction that a certain action takes. In order to make this comprehensible one may divide the speed of vibrations into three stages: slow, moderate, and quick, or as they are called in Sanskrit: Satva, Rajas, and Tamas. The first stage is creative in its effect, the second stage is progressive, and the third stage is destructive. This gives us the reason for death and decay and destruction: every living being and every object

decays or dies when it strikes that particular speed which is destructive. Besides, as every object looks different when seen from different angles, so every creative force manifests differently when it takes different directions. This explains why a person's right hand is stronger than his left, with few exceptions; and why the right leg is always inclined to go forward first and not the left leg. There is always more strength in the right side of a person than in the left side. It is the law of direction which causes this. For a man to be left-handed is exceptional, it is not normal; it is normal for the right side to be stronger, and if a person is left-handed this shows that his right side has not the proper energy. It does not mean that the left side is stronger than the right side or that the left side takes the place of the right side; it only means that the right side has been weakened and that the left side therefore seems stronger than the right side. It does not mean that this man's positive side is the left and his negative side the right.

The three rhythms mentioned above may also be called mobile, regular, and irregular. It is because of them that manifestation has various forms, qualities, colours, and features. The rhythm which is mobile goes straight; the rhythm which is regular strikes right and left, first forming the perpendicular line and next the horizontal line; and the third is destructive, it is zig-zag or irregular. This can also be seen when one examines one's breath: the breath which is flowing through the right nostril gives power; when it flows through the left nostril it takes away that power; and its flow through both nostrils at the same time causes destruction.

What was there before creation? Was there stillness or was there motion? As far as science can reach it finds that there is motion behind it all. This is true; for what we call stillness is in reality an imperceptible motion. That is why mountains can exist and trees can live and man can act and animals can move by the power of movement, vibration. Their health, their joy, their sorrow, and their destruction are all caused by a quicker speed or a slower speed or a particular activity of these vibrations. Disease and health both depend upon the law of vibrations.

A diamond is bright because it is vibrating; it is the vibration of the diamond which makes it brilliant. And so is the brilliant

person whose intelligence is vibrating; according to the rhythm of its vibration it is capable of understanding. One will always see that it is the brilliant person who understands more quickly, more deeply, and better; and it is the one who is not brilliant who takes time to understand.

In conclusion we arrive at the understanding that the whole phenomenon is a phenomenon of capacity, and according to that capacity all that it contains is formed. As each thing or being vibrates, it acts in accordance with the capacity, and the results are in accordance with this capacity too. We ourselves are also Akashas, and in our Akasha we get the resonance of our rhythm. This resonance is like the feelings we have when we are tired, depressed, joyous, or strengthened. All these different conditions which we feel, it is our Akasha that feels them; and what causes this is our rhythm.

Every word once it is spoken, every deed that is done, every sentiment felt is recorded somewhere; it has not gone, it is not lost. We do not see it because it is not always recorded on the ground. If a seed is sown in the ground, it is recorded in the ground; it comes out in big letters, proving 'I am an apple-tree', 'I am a rose-bush'. But when something is thrown into space, space does not lose it either. It has received it and it holds it; and it shows it to those who can build a capacity round the space and get its reflection in that capacity. There is a capacity which is the whole of life; in fact everything is a recording capacity; but then there is a reading capacity and that we have to make ourselves. We must be able to make a capacity in order to read what is written there. In the Qur'an it is said, 'Their hands shall speak and their feet shall bear witness of their deeds', which means the same thing: that everything is recorded, written down. When a thief comes from the house where he has stolen something, he may have dug a hole in the ground and buried his spoils and appear with nothing in his hands, yet there is something written on his face about what he has done. It is written, he cannot efface it; and those who can read will read it. Nothing of what we say, do, or think is lost; it is recorded somewhere, if we only know how to read it.

CHAPTER III

VIBRATIONS (1)

ALL EXISTING things which we see or hear, which we perceive, vibrate. If it were not for vibration, the precious stones would not show us their colour and their brilliance; it is vibration which makes the trees grow, the fruit ripen, and the flowers bloom. Our existence is also according to the law of vibrations, not only the existence of our physical body but also of our thoughts and feelings. If it were not for vibrations, drugs and herbs would not have any affect upon us. If any explanation of electricity can be given, it is that its mystery lies only in vibrations. Vibrations are productive and produce electricity; electricity is composed of vibrations. In other words that aspect of vibration which produces form could not do so if it could not first produce light. The Bible hints at this when it says that first there was light and that then the world was produced. Light is the first form, all other forms come afterwards.

Vibrations can be understood both as cause and as effect. Vibration causes movement, rotation, circulation; but on the other hand it is the rotation of the planets and the circulation of the blood which cause vibration. Thus the cause as well as the effect of all that exists is vibration.

It depends upon the speed of the vibrations as to whether a thing is visible or audible, perceptible or imperceptible. Everything that is visible is audible at the same time, and everything that is audible is visible also. If it does not appear so, this only signifies the limitation of our organs of perception. What our physical eyes cannot see we say is not visible; but this only means that it is not visible to us; in itself it is visible. And what we cannot hear we say is not audible; but it is only inaudible to our ears; in itself it is audible.

This means that everything has its sound and its form. Even things which are perceptible by us though not visible have a form. In the first place they could not be intelligible if they had

no form; although they have no physical form they have a form just the same, and it is through that form that we can perceive them. If our physical eyes do not see that form, the eyes of our mind can see it and recognize it. This explains to us why there are things which are felt and things which are seen or heard. It is only a difference of vibrations, and of the planes on which the vibrations take place. Vibrations cause life to take form; and it is the different degrees of vibrations which make that form either visible or otherwise perceptible.

What we know about vibration is only what we perceive through man-made instruments; what is moving beyond this we do not recognize as vibration. But as there is no other word this is the only one we can use for it, for it is the same force which sets everything in motion on the physical plane, and this continues on all the other planes of existence, setting them all in motion. It also explains to us that it is vibration, a certain degree of vibration, which brings to the earth the things of the inner world, the world that is perceived though not seen; and a change of vibrations takes away the things that are seen into the unseen world.

What we call life and death are both a recognized existence within a certain degree of vibrations. For instance when a person says, 'This leaf is dead', what has made it dead is the change of vibrations. It has no longer the same vibrations that it had when it was on the tree; and yet it has not lost its vibrations, it still has them. Thus according to the vibrations it is not dead; it has only changed into a different rhythm of vibrations. If that leaf were dead then herbs would not have any effect upon a man when he takes them as medicine.

And so it is with the dead body of an animal or a man. We may say that life has gone out of it, but it is only the life which we recognize as life that has gone out of it, for we recognize as life only a certain pitch of vibrations; anything beyond it or below it we do not recognize as living. Yet it has not died; it is still vibrating. It is still going on, for nothing can exist and not vibrate, and nothing can vibrate and not be living in the real sense of the word. One might say that there is no movement in a dead body, that there is no heat in it, but do we not use fish

and flesh of slaughtered animals as food? If these did not possess any life we would not be benefited by eating them, for it is only life which can help life to go on. If they were really dead, if all the property which is called life were gone from them, they would do us harm instead of good. This shows that though we call them dead there is some life left in them, and that this change is only a question of degree in the vibrations.

When a fruit has decayed, when a flower has faded, there has been a change of vibrations. It is wonderful to watch a flower when it is still a bud and to see how it grows every day, how it vibrates differently every moment of the day until it comes to such a culmination that it begins to radiate, reflecting the sun. Besides its colour and form we can see something living in the flower, something sparkling. It can best be seen when the flower is still on the plant. And then, when it has reached its culmination, it begins gradually to fade, and that again is according to the law of vibrations. But even when its petals have dropped there is still a form of life left, for even in the dry leaves of the rose there is a fragrance, and from the dried rose-leaves an effective medicine can be made. This medicine has a certain action on the blood and it also nourishes the intestines; it is most purifying. In ancient Greek medicine the rose was used in many ways. It is very cooling, it cools the blood as well as being very strengthening.

There is a great difference between the eating of fresh vegetables and of preserved vegetables, a difference of vibrations. The former are nearer to our life, and the latter which have gone further from our life have less influence on us. And so it is with everything. When we begin to see life from this point of view it will appear that birth and death are only our conceptions of life, that there is no such thing as death and that all is living. It only changes from one form to the other, subject to the law of vibrations. The difference in the vibrations of dead and living bodies is a difference of their speed; it is a difference of rhythm.

Furthermore, the different stages of life such as infancy, childhood, youth, and old age, and the different tendencies arising naturally out of them, are all phenomena of vibration. Strength and weakness, the tendencies to action and repose, all come from the different speed of the vibrations. And it is no

exaggeration to say that hidden behind every illness are wrong vibrations which are its cause; vibrations are the cause, and they are also the effect. It is interesting that a scientist¹ should have reached this conclusion too and tried his best to use it in medical science. He did not live long, but if he had he would surely have accomplished something wonderful. By this system he tried to discover the nature and character of diseases, and to treat them according to the law of vibrations. No doubt its development will be the work of perhaps hundreds of years of experiment, but even to initiate such a method is a step forward. The greater a thing is, the longer it takes to develop. Some people are already benefiting from this system, though it will be a long time before it is brought to that perfection which will make it *the way* of treatment, surpassing everything else.

¹ Hazrat Inayat Khan refers to the San Francisco physician Dr. Abrams, whose theories and experiments in healing diseases through vibrations produced by electricity attracted his attention. See also 'Music', *The Sufi Message of Hazrat Inayat Khan*, Vol. II, p. 107.

VIBRATIONS (2)

WHEN AN object such as a fruit, a leaf, or a flower changes its colour, this means that it has begun to vibrate at a different rate; and when an object changes its savour, turning from sour to sweet or from sweet to bitter, this also means that it is changing from one rate of vibrations to another. It is a well-known fact, too, that between cold and heat all the different degrees are nothing but changes of vibrations which make things feel cold or hot to us; and it is also by the change of vibrations that the fragrance of flowers and fruit changes. A ripe fruit smells different from the fruit which is not yet ripe, and the quality of the fruit also can be distinguished by the sense of smell through the medium of vibrations. This shows that all things that we perceive through our five senses become intelligible to us, and we are able to distinguish them, by feeling the different degrees of vibrations through our senses. We give names to this phenomenon of vibration: sweet, sour, or salt; green, blue, or red; cold, warm, or hot; because the purpose of each sense is to feel that particular phenomenon of vibrations which is related to it, the eyes seeing, the ears hearing, and the nose smelling.

The five senses differ in quality, and one can look at this question from a gross point of view or from a finer point of view. The gross point of view is that of the form, which outwardly shows the difference of perception between one sense and the other; and the finer point of view is when the mechanism of the capacity which is inside every organ is distinguished. Science only approaches this question from the outside and not from the inside. It is most ethereal, it is most subtle, it is most inexplicable, and the more one thinks about it, the more one sees the skill of the Creator.

But the innermost sense in us perceives these vibrations in quite a different way; it does not perceive them in the same way as the outer senses. Thus one might ask whether the inner sense

perceives for instance a colour as a colour, or whether it perceives a certain sensation which could be measured by numbers. The answer is that the inner sense perceives a colour, but it is distinguished by the outer sense. What the inner sense perceives is the sensation it gives, its essence. And as to numbers, the further we advance in the inner life, the less we can count numbers, for numbers belong to the outer world. The physical world is more distinct, and therefore we can calculate numbers easily, whereas the inner worlds are less distinct and this makes it more difficult to calculate numbers.

For instance when we are smelling a flower, hearing a sound, or seeing a colour, we distinguish this as smell perceived by the nostrils, as sound heard by the ears, or as colour seen by the eyes; but that in us which perceives is the one sense that is behind the five senses. Thus outwardly everything we perceive as a sensation is distinguished as such and such, but immediately there comes a reaction, and that reaction is that our inner sense reflects what it has perceived on all the organs of the senses and on all the nerves of the body, touching each atom of our being. That is why it is not only the ears which have heard, but in its reaction the sound has echoed in the brain, in the mouth, in the throat, in the whole body. If it is a fragrance it has touched each atom of our body; and if it is a colour it has not only touched our eyes, but it has spread its influence upon every atom of our being.

Although our first impression is that we have heard music, seen a beautiful picture, or tasted a delicious savour, yet in reality we can say in general terms that we have experienced every sensation that comes to us through each atom of our body. And if that is so, then all colours and savours and perfumes and sounds have their definite and particular effect on our health, our moods, and the condition of our mind.

It is the ever-changing condition of our physical body, caused either by outer sensations or by its particular activity, which submits our vitality to different conditions. Each person has a different rhythm. But when we say 'a person' we mean a person as we generally understand this concept: the person with his body, or the person with his mind, or the person with his soul. Many will not recognize him as a mind but only as a body, and many

will not recognize him as a soul but only as mind and body. This is because the rate of vibrations of his body is different from that of his mind, and the rate of vibrations of his mind is again different from that of his soul. In fact every plane of his being has a different rhythm, although all the planes of his being are in some way related to what is happening on certain of these planes. In other words, all his inner bodies are vibrating, and they are related to one another in regard to the speed of their vibrations. When we say, 'I am tired' or 'I feel better' or 'I feel strong', this really means that we are vibrating at a certain rate, and that it is this which caused us to say what we did.

Then, different feelings such as cheerfulness and depression very often arise in a person, producing great changes in him, and these are also caused by the rate at which his body is vibrating. This disease of depression, a depression which has no apparent cause, no reason, comes from the slowing down or stopping of the vibration of the inner centres. No doubt all such feelings as grief, wonder, passion, humour, fear, attachment, anger, cheerfulness, and indifference come from the condition created by the speed of the vibrations activating the mechanism of the body and causing the blood to circulate; but these feelings also cause the vibrations of the body to change its rhythm. In this way the feelings affect the body and the body affects the feelings.

Vibrations can be changed by understanding the vibrations of one's own life, which means one's own self. In the first place one can study the vibrations of the physical body. And the chief way in which they can be understood and controlled is through the study and understanding of breathing, for the pulsation of the heart, head, and body, upon which circulation depends, is based upon the rhythm of breath. The next step is to understand the rhythm of the mind. People who think, 'I will do this', and then at once decide to do something else, or who begin one thing and then go on to another, show that their mind is not in its proper rhythm.

When a man is laughing one moment and shedding tears the next, when he is happy one moment and unhappy the next, his mind is not in a right rhythm. The one whose mind has a right rhythm is decided and knows what he says, what he does, what he

thinks. He sticks to his decisions, he sticks to his word. That is why people in ancient times attached great importance to a man's word. When a man has given his word, it is given; he knows what he has said. But when a person is wobbling, this shows that he has not yet learnt how to walk; and when his mind wobbles between 'Shall I or shall I not?' 'Will this thing be done or will it not?' it has not yet got the right rhythm, and therefore there will always be trouble with such a person.

Music which is only very skilful and technically correct cannot have a magic effect upon the listeners. It can only appeal to their curiosity, and if they do not understand music they can be easily satisfied with it. If music possesses any quality of its own which does not depend upon man-made techniques and forms, it lies in the harmonious grouping of the waves of vibrations—how harmoniously they work. It is this which affects not only the soul of the listener but even his physical body. On each atom of his person it has a harmonious effect which penetrates all the different planes of life, touching the depths of his soul.

Also, it is not a group of colours put on a canvas which produces a harmonious painting, although this is very often done these days. It may be that someone has the idea of throwing a number of colours together, and another brings it to you saying, 'Now look if you can see something in it'. And when these people make a mystery out of this the curious mind thinks, 'I must say it is wonderful, though I cannot understand what it is'. Perhaps after having said, 'How wonderful?' this person has gone home with a headache, but in front of the others he says that it is wonderful. What really impresses a person deeply, however, is a harmonious blending of colours which do not jar the vibrations of body and mind. Sometimes a really harmoniously painted picture or landscape gives peace through the effect of the colours.

Knowing that colour has such an effect, some people have tried crude and undesirable combinations to cure the sick, but instead of curing them they have sometimes made them worse. For instance there is a system of reflecting light through coloured glass upon the patient. It is the most crude way of making use of colours, and it is not thus that colours can have any effect upon a person. To produce a harmonious effect of colours they

must be used artistically; and in that way they will prove to be useful in curing people.

One might ask how it is then with the blind and the deaf, if perfect harmony of vibrations is attained through colour and sound. The answer is that although people thus afflicted lack one sense, they have the others to experience the world of sense with. If the deaf have not heard with the ears, the effect of the conversation has reached their inner ears just the same.

CHAPTER V

ATMOSPHERE

THE PULSE of space beats to the same rhythm that it is charged with, and this we call atmosphere. Space itself has not got an atmosphere. Space is negative in that it allows its pulse to beat to the rhythm that it is charged with, and at the same time it is positive in that it absorbs and assimilates all, sooner or later. When a person says that the atmosphere of a place is quiet, or exciting, this only means that the impression of someone who has charged the atmosphere of that place lingers there.

Atmosphere can be of two kinds: the atmosphere of presence and the atmosphere of absence. The atmosphere of presence changes with the change that takes place in someone. When a person is sitting in meditation, when he is practising silence or repose, the atmosphere is quietening; when a person is restless, uneasy, cross, or agitated the atmosphere takes on the same rhythm. The reason for this is that the atmosphere is made of vibrations, and the life-substance in it is charged with the same rate of vibrations as that of the person who happens to be there.

The atmosphere one creates and leaves in a place remains unchanged, although in time it loses its vitality. But it is difficult to believe how long an atmosphere created by someone in a certain place remains vibrating; it stays there much longer than one would think.

Not only does man create an atmosphere, but an atmosphere is also created in man. A peaceful person can feel uneasy where there is an atmosphere of restlessness, and a very restless person may feel quiet in an atmosphere of peace. To those who can perceive it, the atmosphere tells stories. One may ask how a person can read the atmosphere which is nothing but vibrations, but the perception of vibrations is in itself the understanding of a language, just as to a musician every note says something. In his mind it is distinct; he knows what note it is, what chord it is, what theme it is; he knows its feeling, its nature, its character, its sense, its effect.

To anyone who is not a musician music may be comforting, healing, and soothing; but to him who understands music it is a living thing, it speaks to him, his soul communicates with it. In the same way the one who perceives atmosphere fully, knows all about it.

There is another way of looking at this question: not only does every person have his particular atmosphere, but everything one feels, thinks, says, and does is creative of an atmosphere. The wicked will create a wicked atmosphere; the pious will create an atmosphere of piety; a singer by singing, a player by playing, a dancer by dancing, a painter by painting will create an atmosphere expressive of his action. Each feeling such as humour, grief, anger, passion, wonder, attachment, fear, or indifference shows its distinct character in the atmosphere which it has created. No matter what a person may try to hide, his atmosphere will speak of it. No one is ever able to create a false atmosphere, that is to say an atmosphere which is different from his own condition. Someone once asked my murshid what the sign of the godly is. He said, 'Judge him not by what he says or by what he does; feel his atmosphere, and his atmosphere will tell you whether he is godly or not.' People do not differ much from one another in size, but the difference in the horizons that their atmosphere occupies is so great that very often there is no comparison possible, and this is the secret which is behind the personalities of the sages, saints, and prophets, as well as behind their work and their influence in the world.

Since there must be something to hold everything that is significant, what is it that holds the atmosphere in space? It is capacity; space offers capacity. In other words, in space a capacity is formed of an element invisible to our eyes and yet solid enough to hold the vibrations within it. This will become clearer if we study the mystery of the wireless and of mirage. Why does not the air scatter the sounds and words spoken many miles away? It is true that the air-waves carry them a certain distance, but what holds them? It is the capacity; it is a fine element which surrounds them, not allowing them to break up, although our ears do not ordinarily hear them in space. It is the same with the phenomenon of mirage. One sees in the desert a picture which is nothing but a

reflection on the waves of light of something really existing. But what holds this picture intact, not allowing it to be scattered, is the capacity, which in Sanskrit is called Akasha.

Is the atmosphere visible? All that is intelligible is audible and visible in the finer sense of these words. Our ears may not hear it, yet we may feel that we have heard it; our eyes may not see it, and yet we may feel that we have seen it. What is audible is visible, and what is visible is audible at the same time; it is only to our senses that it is either audible or visible. If a certain thing appeals to our sense of sight, it makes an impression upon that sense and our sense of hearing does not pay any attention to it; and if a thing appeals to our sense of hearing our sense of sight does not take any interest in it. This is because two senses cannot both experience something fully at the same time.

Even when two senses perceive a thing simultaneously, what they experience at that time will not be a full experience. Only the experiencing of everything through one sense at a time can give satisfaction. But apart from experiencing fully through two senses, do not think that it is an exaggeration to say that even two eyes cannot see as fully as one eye. When we close one eye in order to see a thing more clearly, we see it much better, we get a fuller vision of it; for fuller experience needs a single ray of penetration, which reveals the nature, the secret, and the mystery of the object one looks at. One particular sense is capable of experiencing vibrations according to its own capacity, and the vibrations which appeal to a particular sense engage that sense which experiences them; the other senses experience the same, but indirectly, through the sense which is actually experiencing them.

The visible atmosphere is called the aura. Those who do not feel its vibrations sometimes see it in the form of colours or light. There are some quite unevolved people who see auras for the same reason that some very unevolved people also communicate with spirits, which is really something that only an evolved person should venture upon. But they are made like that by nature, and it is the same as someone who has never been trained in the technique of art yet he draws a beautiful picture. It is in him, it is a gift, it is his finer soul and his nervous temperament that are susceptible to finer vibrations.

The aura therefore may be called a visible atmosphere, or the atmosphere an invisible aura. Just as different degrees of the vibrations of the atmosphere have a distinct influence upon the person who perceives them, so the different colours of the aura have their particular effect upon those who see this aura. There are many who are not yet awakened to perceive an atmosphere, to see an aura, although they will feel it in the depths of their being; they cannot help it.

This shows us that there is another world besides the world that our physical eyes can see and whose sound our physical ears can hear, and it is not even very far away. We live in it and we feel it and we are influenced by it, whether we know it or not. This is the world of the atmosphere, which is finer than the physical world, though in a sense it is physical too. It is something we feel, it is something that will touch our body; and though the body may not perceive it, yet it is influenced by it. The mind perceives it more clearly. And if we are asked to what plane atmosphere belongs, we can only say that it is a bridge between the physical and the mental planes; it is on both planes.

CHAPTER VI

LIGHT

LIGHT HAS three principal aspects: the source of all light, the perpetual light, and light in the ordinary sense of the word. The first kind is the light which we perceive as intelligence, the next kind is the light which we see as the sun, and the third kind of light is what we use in our daily life, the light of a candle, an electric lamp, or any such light. Science today considers intelligence to be an outcome of this manifestation, gradually developing through a process of which man is the culmination, man who compared with all other living beings shows intelligence in its fullness. As we understand the word intelligence, it does not convey to us the meaning, 'the source of light', except in a very limited form; intelligence in its original condition is something quite different from what we ordinarily understand by that word.

Intelligence can be divided again into three different aspects: intelligence in its original state, intelligence in the process of development, and intelligence in the sense in which we mostly use it, as a knowing faculty of man.

In the first or principal aspect intelligence is the knowing Being, the only Being; in the next aspect it is not knowing but knowledge, the knowledge of being; and in the third aspect it becomes limited because it shows itself through a capacity, and that capacity is the heart of man. To put it plainly, the first aspect may be called unawakened intelligence, the next awakened intelligence, and the third divided and limited intelligence.

In all these three aspects intelligence is one and the same. In the first aspect it is the only Being, in the next aspect it is omniscient, and in the third aspect it is the mind, or what the mind contains. One may be called the intelligence of God, the next heavenly intelligence, and the third human intelligence. The origin of intelligence is pure intelligence, the intelligence of God; but that intelligence is not intelligent, it *becomes* intelligent;

that is to say it begins to feel its existence. It is just like a man who is intelligent, but when he is asleep his intelligence is not intelligent; it is only when he is awake that he knows of his existence. That is another aspect of intelligence.

The next aspect of light, which is the light of the sun, is made of the dense part of the vibrating intelligence which has centralized in one spot, and its nature of being in perpetual motion makes it bright. It is this light which manifests through all things as heat and light. In the light of the sun all things show themselves, and in the absence of the sun we do not see them properly. Also, it is the light of the sun which functions in the moon, and it is the same light which the stars reflect; and if it were not for the moon the whole of manifestation would be burnt to ashes, the sun would be so strong.

Very often a capacity is made for something that is expressive, something that has a strong action, and if there were no such capacity then it would destroy all that is around it until it destroyed itself. The moon, therefore, is the capacity in which the strongest light of the sun functions. That is why it is so cooling to be in the moonlight, because the moon takes the light of the sun upon itself and burns itself; and by doing so it allows the horizon, the spheres, to be lighted while at the same time it is cool. It is just like a talkative person, someone who is very fond of speaking, who will go mad if he has no one near to listen to him.

The third aspect is the light of all things. Each thing, every object, has its own light, all differing in degree. It is this difference which we distinguish as different colours. And every substance, such as iron or gold, shows its light through radiation; but it also partakes of the light of the sun, and in accordance with its faculty of partaking of the light of the sun it shines.

When we consider the question of light in our own lives, we can again divide it into three aspects. First there is the light which shows us an object, the light of the sun or some other form of sunlight such as the light of a candle or an electric bulb. The next aspect is the capability of our organ of sight, our eyes, which see the object. And the third aspect is the radiance belonging to the substance which shows itself, such as phosphorus or radium or many other elements and chemicals which do not need

other light but show themselves through their own radiance if they are kept in the dark.

Both the light of the sun and light in other forms help an object to be seen, because the object reflects the light that shows it up, but it is also true that an object has a light of its own; therefore if an object is visible it is not only because the other light shows it up, but also because it has its own light.

One can also look at this question from another point of view, and that is that every person has a certain amount of intelligence, but everyone who sees him or speaks to him adds something to his intelligence or deducts something from it; he either gives it to him or he takes it away from him. And a third aspect is that in the light of the intelligence of some people one can see life more clearly. This is not a passing light; it shines on just as the light of the sun shining on the earth is not in any way diminished by it.

The one who adds to a person's intelligence does this in two different ways. One way is that for the moment his presence enlightens the other person's heart; and the second way is that his intelligence kindles the other's intelligence. But neither is done intentionally; they work automatically. An intelligent person brings light to another as a matter of course; if not always, then sometimes. By saying something, by the power of his glance, or by the very magnetism of his presence he kindles to a certain extent the light, if there is any, of the other. One day a lady said to me, 'My husband has changed altogether since he came to see you'. I said, 'I am very glad'. But then some time after I had left that place I received a letter, saying, 'He is just the same as before!'

We also sometimes hear people say, 'He has confused my mind,' 'He has driven me crazy,' 'He has made me more puzzled than I ever was before.' This happens because there are people who bring with them shades or clouds which keep the light from falling directly upon our mind. That is why the presence of foolish people is very often stupefying.

CHAPTER VII

INTELLIGENCE

INTELLIGENCE in its most dense form appears in things and beings as radiance. From a mystical point of view it would not be wrong to say that the freshness of the leaf, the colour of the flower, the brightness of the precious stone, and the expression of man's countenance are the light of intelligence in its dense form. No object can be visible without radiance. Although we need the light of the sun in order to make an object more visible to our sight, yet every object is radiant in itself. It cannot exist, it cannot be visible if it is not radiant. If we made a synthesis of all the things in the world which we have separated by analysis and called by various names, we could safely and rightly say that all things and beings are made of light, or that all things and beings are the manifestation of the light of intelligence.

What about the sun and the moon and the stars? There is intelligence in all of these. If the planet on which we live had no intelligence it could not have intelligent beings on it. For what is nature? Nature is the development of the planet. The planet has developed into organic nature and has culminated in human beings, intelligent beings; and it still remains a planet.

No doubt that which exists as a capacity is robbed of its intelligence by what is conceived in it. For instance the body is robbed of its intelligence by the mind, and the mind is robbed of its intelligence by the soul. The larger the power, the more it absorbs. If the body is more muscular, denser, it naturally absorbs the power of the mind, and very often a person with a highly developed brain is found to be not very spiritual, as his brain absorbs the light of the soul. But in the same way it is natural that the soul, which is intelligence in itself, should rob the mind of its intelligence; and the mind in turn robs the body of its extra physical strength if it is powerful. It is natural, therefore, for the intelligence of the planet as a whole not to be manifest to view. If it can be seen, it is in the intelligence of an individual;

but the collective working of many minds as one single idea, and the activity of the whole world in a certain direction, are governed by the intelligence of the planet. We speak of the mentality of a particular person, the mentality of a nation, or the mentality of a race, and so the intelligence of the whole planet has an effect upon all those living on the planet.

There is a certain characteristic peculiar to this planet, for each planet has a certain degree of intelligence. For instance, the fact that at this time and at this stage of human civilization and evolution, when hardly one in a thousand individuals wants to make war, such dreadful wars should have taken place, is due to the influence of the planet working through the minds of those who live on it. This is the secret behind war and peace. They were not foolish, those who worshipped the sun and taught sun worship; they were not ignorant, those who recognized the sacredness of fire and flame; for they saw intelligence even in the dense form. The sun is the source of the intelligence of all the planets, but the real source of intelligence is God.

The highest form of intelligence is that which shows itself in man. In man intelligence begins to show itself, in a similar if not in exactly the same form as that which may be called the primitive intelligence, the intelligence which existed as such even before manifestation.

In human intelligence we can distinguish three aspects: perception, conception, and assimilation. One is expressive, the other receptive, and the third is all-powerful. Perception can again be divided into three aspects: all that one perceives through the medium of the five senses, all that one perceives independently of the medium of the five senses, and all that one feels and that one cannot interpret even to oneself in an intelligible form.

Conception also has three aspects: all that one conceives as an understanding, all that one conceives and develops, and all that one conceives and maintains in the same way that it was conceived.

Assimilation is the highest form of intelligence, more powerful and perfect, for it is the power of intelligence that assimilates things, and it is perfect because it assimilates. If we put some dye, some colour, in a bottle of water, that colour will stay, because the

water in the bottle has no power to assimilate it. But if we put the same dye into the sea, the sea will sooner or later assimilate it. This shows that assimilation is the greatest power of intelligence.

How can one speed up assimilation and make it more complete? By meditation and concentration? Meditation and concentration apart, one can do so by becoming thoughtful, considerate, deep, responsive, sincere, and serious. To assimilate is the most difficult thing there is. We can have many friends in the world, but a friend whom we can really trust is hard to find. And if during our life we have found one, we should be most thankful to have one friend who can keep our secret. Ordinary people apart, kings and emperors who have to deal with thousands and millions of people, have great difficulty in finding one person whom they can trust completely, in whom they have confidence, and they consider themselves most fortunate if they do. And it is the power of assimilation which enables one to keep a secret and prove worthy of confidence. The one who has the power of assimilation is the treasure-house of all those who confide in him. It is such a one who arrives at the stage of the Master.

CHAPTER VIII

THE LAW OF RHYTHM

THE LAW of rhythm is a great law which is hidden behind nature. It is in accordance with this law that every form is made and that every condition manifests to view. The creation, therefore, is not merely a phenomenon of vibrations without any restrictions. If there were no rhythm, if it were not for the law of rhythm, we would not have distinct forms and intelligible conditions. There is no movement which has no sound, and there is no sound which has no rhythm. In order to show rhythm we need not take a conductor's baton and beat 'one-two'; we only need to wave our hand. Divide one and it is two; double one and it is two. This shows that in one there is two; it proves that duality comes from unity.

Then, if we look at it from another point of view, we shall see that duality is in fact nothing but unity, in other words that two is one; and the most interesting point in this is that as soon as we see two, each of the two at once takes a different and particular position in our view. This is clear with man and woman, but also our right hand and our left hand each shows a particular power and a particular function, and the right foot and the left foot each has its peculiar place in life. The right foot is distinctly different from the left foot, and also the sight of the two eyes is not the same. One eye is always better and stronger than the other, or at least different from the other, and if there were no difference the eyes would not be a proper instrument for seeing. If there were no difference between the power and strength of man's left side and his right side, he could not live.

It is this difference which causes duality, and it is this duality which maintains the existence of things. The finer aspect of this phenomenon can be seen in musical rhythm. When we say, 'one—two, one—two', then we understand what it is that makes us emphasize the one, and what it is that makes the two like an echo, a reflection, something that responds to the one. And suppose

we do not say, 'one—two', that we only say, 'one—one—one—one—one', all with the same emphasis, this will not satisfy us. We will not feel any rhythm until the one becomes accented and the two, or whatever we say next, follows it; then it becomes perfect. We see the same happening with the action of walking, which is accomplished by both legs: if we practise walking on one leg we will find something missing in the rhythm.

This shows that rhythm is a hidden law of nature. The rising and the setting of the sun, the waxing and the waning of the moon, the regular change of the tides in the sea, and the seasons as they come and go, all show rhythm. It is rhythm that makes the birds fly, it is rhythm that makes the creatures of the earth walk. And if we delve deeper into the science of rhythm we shall find that it is rhythm which causes a certain thing to be made in a certain way. If it is made triangular or square or round or five-pointed or whatever geometrical form has been given to it, the reason behind its form is the rhythm of the power that has made it; it is that rhythm which is the cause of its formation.

Harmonious forms are manifestations of a right rhythm, and inharmonious forms are manifestations of a disorder in the rhythm. Colours such as blue and green and red and yellow appear distinct and different for the very reason that a particular colour vibrates according to a certain rhythm, and it is this rhythm which gives to the colours the appearance which makes us distinguish them.

There is the law of rhythm behind good weather and bad weather; and it is the influence of the good or bad weather which, acting on the living beings, creates a similar result in their lives. Good weather gives a desirable rhythm to living beings, and bad weather brings about an undesirable result in their health. It would therefore not be an exaggeration to say with the ancient Yogis that birth and death, as well as the limited time which separates birth from death, are the fulfilment of a certain appointed rhythm. And if we go a little further in exploring this idea, then we shall see, as the ancient Yogis have seen, that by controlling this rhythm one can prolong one's life, and that by neglecting this rhythm one can also shorten it.

Why is it that music which emphasizes rhythm gives everyone

the desire to dance? Even horses begin to move to the rhythm of the band playing before the cavalry. Even the most downhearted and discouraged soldiers feel encouraged when they hear the emphatic rhythm of a march played by the military band. An infant is soothed when the mother is patting it on its back; the mother without knowing it instinctively gives a rhythm to its body. By waving our hand we give our departing friend a rhythm against the regret or despair with which he leaves, in order to keep him rhythmic on all planes of life.

What repulses or attracts us in a person is very often his rhythm. One man is rhythmic, and his influence is soothing; another is out of rhythm, and he upsets everybody. Have we not all heard a maid say some time or other, 'Whenever I see the cook I get upset'?

Why should rhythm have such an influence upon us? Because we ourselves are rhythm. The beating of our heart, our pulse throbbing in wrist or head, our circulation, the working of the whole mechanism of our body is rhythmic. And when this rhythm is obstructed, then disorder and illness come; all discomfort, despair, and disappointment follow the breaking of the rhythm.

When we look at this question symbolically we find that our gain and our loss, our success and our failure, have much to do with the rhythm with which we pursue our motive in life. It will always prove to be true that when a person takes no heed of rhythm, whether he does right or wrong, good or evil, in both cases a wrong rhythm will make him fail; for rhythm is not only a law to which nature is subjected, but rhythm is something that maintains things as they are and gives to things and beings the power to continue to live and to progress.

To know rhythm one must develop the sense of rhythm. How readily one notices it when one has a little pain! This shows that a person intuitively knows the effect of rhythm. For instance sometimes a congestion causes illness; but what is congestion and what can it do? It is something which stops the rhythm. The rhythm with which the blood was circulating is stopped by congestion; that is why illness came. By being regular one maintains rhythm in everything one does, and an irregular person will

always find himself lost, because he cannot accomplish anything for want of rhythm.

Rhythm is a great mystery, and a sense which one should develop more than anything else in life. But if one were to explain what the right rhythm of work and rest is, the whole Western way of life would be in question, for when we look at it from the point of view of rhythm and balance, there is far too much activity in the life of the West. It would make any person abnormal. The bad effects of this are continually felt, but since the people are so much absorbed in life, they are not yet able to realize to what an extent they suffer from these bad effects. However, before long there will come a time when thoughtful people will begin to realize that this problem has been neglected too long. And what has caused it? This life of competition; the whole misery is caused by competition. People do things not for their own pleasure or for the pleasure of God, but in order to compete with one another.

The law of rhythm can be considered as governing four actions: right or wrong rhythm in feeling, right or wrong rhythm in thinking, right or wrong rhythm in speaking, and right or wrong rhythm in acting. Not only hate but even love that is not maintained by rhythm will fail; not only an evil thought but even a good thought will prove to be disastrous without regard for rhythm. Not only false but even true speech which has no rhythm will prove to be fatal; not only a wrong action but even a right action devoid of rhythm will prove to be out of place.

With the wrong person, even if we do right it sometimes turns into wrong, for instance when we say to someone who is in a rage and who has just been quarrelling, 'You have done wrong'. By saying this we have not given him a good thought, but have only added fuel so that he may fight with us too. One often sees that when two people are fighting and a third person approaches them with the best intentions, they will both turn on him, and that will make three persons fighting at the same time.

Every plane of man's being is dependent upon the other planes. For instance if the body has lost its rhythm, something goes wrong with the mind; if the mind has lost its rhythm, the body goes wrong; if the heart has lost its rhythm, the mind is puzzled;

if the rhythm of the soul is lost, then all is wrong. To say that the virtue of a sinner is sin and the sin of the virtuous is virtue is an extreme statement, but it would not be an exaggeration.

The rhythm of the soul is influenced by the mind and by action. The soul has not got its own rhythm. As in a higher sense the soul is pure from all things which can be distinguished and divided, one may ask, how then can it happen that the rhythm of the soul is lost? But if we see our friend in great grief we also will feel grief. It is not because we have a grief ourselves; we feel it only because our friend is in grief and this reflects on us. The soul is not subjected to a right rhythm or a wrong rhythm, but a right rhythm or a wrong rhythm can be reflected in the soul. For instance when a person says of something that it is ugly, what is ugly is outside him. Then why does he feel discomfort or ugliness? Because it reflects upon him. For the moment, while he is looking at the ugly thing, that ugly thing is in his eyes and in his mind, just as when we are standing in front of a mirror our image is not engraved upon the mirror but is only reflected there; and it will remain there as long as we are standing before it. Thus the soul may experience misery or wretchedness, a wrong rhythm or a right rhythm, but when these are removed the soul is again free from them. In order to maintain a perfect condition in life one must be the master of rhythm.

CHAPTER IX

THE THREEFOLD, DUAL, AND UNIQUE ASPECTS OF NATURE

DEEP THINKERS have in all ages recognized the threefold aspect of nature. Teachers have called these three aspects by different names according to their religious terminology, and they gave them an interpretation which suited the time and the place. Tracing back this idea, we find that it already existed among the Hindus in very ancient times; they called it *Trimurti*, and they personified these three aspects by giving them characters such as Brahma the Creator, Vishnu the Sustainer, and Maheish or Shiva the Destroyer or Assimilator. This idea is not only applied to God, but everything in nature shows these three aspects: for instance there is fire, there is fuel which is its sustenance, and there is the air that can come and blow out the flame.

In all things and beings, in their actions and in their effects, these three aspects can be seen every moment of the day. Every object shows them, though perhaps one aspect is more significant than another in a certain thing, and also every individual; in everything we do we can see these three aspects. Thinking is the creative action, remembering is the action of sustaining, and forgetting is the third action, assimilating. The assimilation of something is in a way its complete destruction; although it is turned into something its name is different and it is not the same thing any more.

Then there is the action of forgetting. Sometimes a person forgets something, but he has stored it in his subconscious mind. He says, 'I have forgotten it', but when he tries to remember, one day it springs up in his memory; and this shows that it was not assimilated though it was forgotten. This is a light form of assimilating; real assimilating is forgetting a thing altogether. It is not as easy as one might think. We say very easily, 'Forget it', but really to forget something is very difficult, especially something we want to forget.

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One day a person came to see me and said, 'I have only one question to ask: do we really meet those again whom we have loved and have lost?' I said, 'Certainly, we meet those whom we have loved and those whom we have hated,' and this person was very surprised. He was quite ready to see again those whom he had loved, but he was not willing to see those whom he had hated. But it is a fact that we remember both those whom we like to remember and those whom we like to forget.

Everyone is capable of these three actions, though some people may appear more inclined to one than to another. The skill of the bird in building its nest, the love of the hen that sustains its chicks, and the wrath of the lion in destroying lives, show us the three aspects which are continually working in nature.

Others have seen these three aspects in a different light. They have seen them as the source of all things, as what He has created, and as what the object created by Him has become. In religious terms they have called the threefold aspect Trinity, personifying it by calling it the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. These three aspects exist not only in all things but in every being. In every person there is a part which signifies the source, the goal of all things; every person represents what he has made, and every person represents also what he has become. One can see these three things in everyone. Each person either shows the source to be more pronounced in his nature and character, or he shows what he was made to be, or he shows what he has become. These three aspects may be called God, man, and divine Being.

And if we look at it from still another angle we shall see the three aspects of light at work in the action of seeing: the light that sees, the radiance of the object that shows itself, and the light of the sun that falls upon it, making it clear to our view. If we look at it from a mental point of view we can again distinguish three aspects: the knower, the knowledge, and the knowing faculty; it is these three that bring about the action of knowing. And when we look at it in the light of love we see it, as has been said by the Sufis of all ages, as love, the lover, and the beloved.

The most interesting fact that emerges from the study of these three aspects is that they exist in every thing, in every being, and

in every condition, and that without them nothing can exist. Only, if in studying these three aspects we continue to see them as three, then we have missed their secret; but if we learn to see them as one and the same, then we have profited by the observation of these three distinct aspects.

When we look at the dual aspect of nature we shall find this to be even more important. The dual aspect is also to be seen in all things and in every being, for instance the two sides, the right and the left, the head and the feet, the top and the bottom, two points in one line, the two eyes which enable us to see, the necessity of the pairs of opposites. The dual aspect is manifest to our view when we see the sun and the moon, when we see the male and the female aspect in nature, and when we see good and not good. When we experience joy and sorrow, when we realize that there is birth and death, we know what is to be known about the dual aspect of nature. The earth and the water, above and below, everything in nature distinctly shows two opposite aspects.

Furthermore there are opposite qualities in every human being, call them male and female, call them positive and negative, call them fine and gross; no one can exist without opposite qualities. Besides the more power one has in one quality, the greater capability one has for the opposite quality; in other words the higher a person stands, the deeper is the space before him to fall into.

There is a hidden quality, and there is a quality which is manifest. What is manifest we recognize; what is hidden we do not see. There is going forward and there is going backward, there is success and there is failure, there is light and there is darkness, there is joy and there is sadness, there is birth and there is death. All things that we can know, feel, and perceive have their opposites. It is the opposite quality which brings about balance. The world would not exist if there were not both water and earth. Every thing and every being needs these two opposite qualities in order to exist, to act, and to fulfil the purpose of life; for each quality is incomplete without the other. No man has a complete personality if he does not have some little touch of the fineness that belongs to the female nature; woman is only complete in her character when there is some little touch of the male nature.

Now coming to the one and unique character of nature: by a deep insight into nature we discover that the creation is the same as the Creator, that the source is the same as the goal, and that the two only mean one. There are two ends to a line, but the line is one; and this oneness is manifest in all things, though man seldom gives any thought to this subject. This amazing manifestation, this world of variety, keeps us so puzzled, so confused, and so absorbed in it that we hardly give ourselves any time to see this wonderful phenomenon: how the one and only Being shows Himself even in the world of variety. There are no two faces alike, there are no two leaves alike, there are no two fruits completely alike, there never are two flowers that are identical. If a man has keen insight he will find that even the objects he makes differ in some respect. Each being has its own peculiarity and cannot be compared with another being, for each being is unique. If a man is good, there is no other whose goodness is the same as his; and if he is wicked, there is no other whose wickedness is exactly the same. He is unique, proving to those whose eyes are open that there is only one Being.

CHAPTER X

SPIRIT WITHIN AND WITHOUT

THE SPIRIT of every thing and of every being is to be found both within and without. Be it a metal, a stone, a fruit, or a flower, every thing has its spirit within it, even if it be in a hidden form; and this spirit continues to exist even after the object has lost its apparent life. Sandalwood keeps its perfume even when dry; the ashes of pearls still preserve that essence which is so powerful; in the stone, which is cold, a spark of fire is hidden; in fruit there is a seed which contains its essence; and in some fruit there is a space, a vacuum which is not devoid of spirit either.

Not many are able to find the spirit in the vacuum, yet in the vacuum a phenomenon can be observed, for instance in the vacuum of an apple is to be found the essence of the whole fruit. It was not, therefore, only imagination when ancient peoples believed in the spirits of trees and plants, in the spirits of the mountains and hills; for there is nothing existing which has no spirit, although that side of the object is veiled and we cannot see it. We see only the outside, but there is a spirit behind it just the same, and by tracking it we shall find it one day.

The qualities of all things are to be found in their spirit rather than in the things themselves. Ancient physicians, knowing this, tried to extract the essence from certain things by grinding, by burning, or by washing them a great number of times. By doing this they were able to bring out the spirit of the object, and that spirit became a thousand times more powerful than the object itself. Those who are acquainted with alchemy know how to bring out the living part hidden within every substance, every object, and even to some extent their essence; and when this essence is extracted, then all the benefit that can be derived from that object is derived.

Alchemists at one time used a process by which they produced metal out of herbs, and another process by which they extracted the essence of flowers in such a way that one drop of it spread its

perfume for miles around. That art seems to have been lost; yet what we can learn from it is that in everything that exists there is a spirit, and that spirit has all the qualities which the outside of that thing shows least.

Astronomers regard the planets they know as accommodations, as worlds, and scientists have considered space to contain certain recognized substances; but if there is one source of all life, then there cannot be an empty space. There must be life, and there is life. Space is not only full of substance, but also full of spirit. In other words, life is one and life represents many; and thus there is not only one life in space, but there are many lives. Since our senses are so limited that we can see no farther than a certain distance, and since we can hear no better than our ears permit, our senses cannot perceive all things and beings, which nevertheless exist. Those who have seen or otherwise perceived such things and beings have described them to us in the form of legends. They have called them fairies and spirits and jinns and by many other names, and artists have also helped people to form a certain idea of such beings. But this does not mean that it is all imagination and that nothing exists save that which we can perceive through our organs of sense. Everything shows itself by its own light. Our eyes are capable of seeing certain forms, and there are other forms which our eyes cannot see; but this does not mean that there are no forms except those which we can see with our eyes.

Ideas, such as that of the other world and of different planes, are taught by philosophers in order to give people some notion of the inner world; but in point of fact there is not one inch of space where no beings exist, beings with a form, even if it is a form that our limited sight cannot see. The reason is that the light with which an object, a form, shows itself is dim in these other forms. It is more clear in one way and more dim in another way; it is more clear to our inner perception and it is more dim to our outer sight.

What we see before our eyes is not so clear as the things we see in our thoughts. Only, the sphere of thought is different; it belongs to a different dimension. Our thoughts are clearer to us than what we see with our eyes, for we see our thoughts in

detail, and every little detail is clear, whereas what we see with our eyes is mostly only the outline. This is also the reason why one can more easily idealize someone at a distance: the eyes of the heart are more capable of seeing clearly than the physical eyes. Naturally when we are thinking and seeing at the same time, neither what we see nor what we think is clear to us.

What is it that makes man limited and debars him from the vision of objects and beings in the unseen world? In the first place the unseen world is a name invented for our convenience. The seen world is the unseen world, and the unseen world is the seen world; the next world is the same world as this, and this world is the same as the next; only, what is veiled from our eyes we say is a next step, and we call it the unseen world. But in so far as man is capable of seeing the seen world, to that extent he is also capable of observing the unseen world, on condition that he first sees and observes his own unseen world. And why a person does not observe the unseen world is that he is accustomed to observe only what is before him; he never turns within to see what is within him.

Those whose sympathy is awakened, those who have fine feelings, those whose thoughts are deep, those whose imagination rises high, will never deny the fact that thought reaches beyond all boundaries of land and water, that feelings are reflected from thousands of miles away. Two souls can communicate, wherever they may be, in one instant. If this is true then the next world is not very far away; the unseen world has not been drowned, it is there, it is before us, and we live and move and make our life in it.

Then after death do we not depart from here? It is a poetic thought to think that there is a next world, it is a beautiful fancy, yet are we not a world ourselves? Every next experience is a next world; besides every day is a new world. We need not wait for death to see the next world; every new experience brings a next world into our lives. In order to get an insight into the unseen world the first thing is to open our own sight to the unseen being that is within us. It only means opening the third eye, as it is called in occult terms. Why is it called the third eye? Because it is not two eyes, it is one, it is sight itself. It is in order to look

outward that we need two eyes; to look inward we need one eye, and that is sight.

In the unseen world we human beings are as fine as the unseen beings, in the outer world we are as dense as the visible beings. When we are conscious of the physical part of our being, and when we identify ourselves with that part, naturally the other part of our being, which is unseen and similar to all unseen beings, is unknown to us. But that does not mean that we are not unseen beings; we are unseen beings just the same. The subtlety of human nature, the fine perception, the deep feeling, the high imagination, is it not all unseen, is it not our own being? Our being reaches further than birds can fly; our own being is finer than the moth and brighter than the flame. For anything to be visible to human eyes there is a condition: that its form must have a certain degree of radiance; and if it is not radiant enough or if its radiance is of a different character, then human eyes cannot see it. But this does not mean that what human eyes cannot see a human being cannot see; for the real eye is the being, and that is why man calls himself 'I', saying, 'I am.' It is not necessary to develop insight into nature in order to experience the phenomena of a finer world, but one must see with one's eyes and perceive with one's insight in order to live a fuller life, a life of greater perfection.

CHAPTER XI

SPIRIT AND MATTER (1)

WE OFTEN use the words spirit and matter in our everyday speech, but their meaning is not understood by everyone in the same way. There is the man who says, 'Spirit is one thing and matter is another thing; matter is not spirit neither is spirit matter'. This is a religiously inclined person. There is another, a materialist, who says, 'There is no such thing as spirit; all that is there is matter'. And then a third person comes along who says, 'Do not mention the word matter to me; there is no matter. It is only an illusion; only spirit exists.'

One is free to believe what one wishes to believe, but when it comes to reasoning and looking deeply into life one sees it in quite a different way. Just as ice and water are two things and yet in their real nature they are one, so it is with spirit and matter. Water turns into ice for a certain time, and when this ice is melted it will again turn into water. Thus matter is a passing state of the spirit; only, it does not melt immediately as ice melts into water, and therefore man doubts if matter, which takes a thousand forms, ever really turns into spirit. In reality matter comes from spirit; matter in its true nature is spirit; matter is an action of spirit which has materialized and has become intelligible to our senses of perception, and has thus become a reality to our senses, hiding the spirit under it. It has covered the existence of the spirit from the eyes of those who look at life from the outside.

We read in the Qur'an that all comes from God and returns to Him. In philosophical terms one can simply say that all comes from spirit and will return to it. No substance can exist without spirit. Although there is a war between spirit and substance, although they are opposed to each other, at the same time no substance can ever exist without spirit. Throughout this battle between substance and spirit the substance will resist spirit and outwardly drive it away, resisting surrender or diminution by the power of the spirit. But there will come a day when it will be

diminished; in other words there is no mountain which will not one day crumble.

What is death to the spirit? As spirit is nothing to matter, so is matter nothing to the spirit; it does not miss it because it is self-sufficient. Spirit misses matter only in its limited, active condition. When the spirit is acting in a process towards manifestation then it needs a capacity. Through that capacity it experiences life in a limited way, but in its true nature it is self-sufficient. It stands in no need of any experience; it is itself all experience, all knowledge; nothing is wanting in it.

One may call matter positive and spirit negative, or spirit positive and matter negative; there is a reason for it in each case. If one calls matter positive it is true, because matter shows itself as the picture while spirit is the background, and we are always inclined to call the picture part positive, not the background. But if we call the spirit positive that is true too, because matter has come from the spirit and spirit will consume it one day.

It is through vibration, through motion, that spirit turns into matter. Hindus call it *Nada*, and they always combine this word with *Brahma*; together this means God-vibration. They never call it vibration alone; they always call it divine vibration. By vibration spirit arrives at two experiences; the first is that it becomes audible to itself, and the next that it becomes visible to itself. In the Bible we read that first was the Word and the Word was God; and then came light, visible life. This means that the first experience of the spirit is that life is audible and that the next experience is that life is visible.

And now coming to the idea of spirit, what is it, how do we define it? The answer is: if we define spirit it cannot be spirit; the spirit that can be defined cannot be spirit. The best definition of spirit is 'that which is not matter'. The chemical world has applied the word spirit to the essence taken from anything; symbolically this expresses the same meaning, though in this way spirit is brought into matter. When one takes a bottle of essence and says, 'There is spirit', it is true symbolically; but in reality spirit means something that our senses cannot perceive. It is spirit in the sense that it is essence, but in the sense that it is perceived it cannot be spirit.

Then spiritualistic people have given this name to the souls which have passed. Symbolically it is true that the body representing the material part of man has disappeared, and that the personality has gone towards the spirit; and yet as long as the personality is perceptible and has its own particular qualities, as long as it still retains its individuality, it cannot be spirit.

If we really want to define spirit, the best definition is pure intelligence. Because, occupied as we are with this world of illusion, we retain in our mind impressions and knowledge of the material world, we are not always able to experience that part of our being which is pure intelligence. We generally use the word intelligence in quite a different sense; when we say that someone is intelligent we mean that he is clever. But pure intelligence has nothing to do with cleverness; nor can one call pure intelligence the knowing quality, for it is above this. We know intelligence as a faculty, but in reality it is spirit itself. No doubt science today may not accept this argument, as the idea of the modern scientist is rather that what we call intelligence is an outcome of matter, that matter has evolved during thousands of years through different aspects, and has culminated in man as a wonderful phenomenon in the form of intelligence. He traces the origin of intelligence to matter. But the mystic holds, as in the past all prophets, saints, and sages have known, that it is spirit which through a gradual action has become denser and has materialized itself into what we call matter or substance; and through this substance it gradually unfolds itself, for it cannot rest in it. It is caught in this denseness, gradually making its way out through a process taking thousands of years, until in man it develops itself as intelligence.

Many biologists have said that animals have no mind, but it is only a difference of words. Mind is merely a vehicle of intelligence. It is intelligence which has manifested as matter, and it is the same intelligence which gradually develops through different aspects into a clearer and purer intelligence. Therefore the lower creatures may not have that mind which a scientist perhaps sees in man; nevertheless we find a vehicle of intelligence in all, and not only in animals and birds, but even in substance we can find intelligence.

It is not only due to chemical action that a flower fades in the hand of one person and keeps fresh in the hand of another; it is not automatic when a plant grows under the care of a certain person but wilts if tended by someone else. And a still deeper study will reveal that the colour and the brilliance of precious stones change in every person's hand; pearls too change their light when they go from hand to hand. The more deeply we study matter, the more proofs shall we find of intelligence working through the whole process of continual unfoldment.

What is the reason that flowers fade when touched by some people? It is the same reason as with us. The presence of one person annoys us, we cannot tolerate it; the presence of another person brings us closer. It is the same with flowers. But the phenomenon behind it all is love. Whatever is touched by a person who lacks that element becomes dead; whether he touches a flower or whether he touches an affair or whether he touches a child, whatever he touches is destroyed. For love is in itself an essence, *the* essence; it is the sign of spirit. All that a person touches with love will be given light and life; and lack of love causes all death and decay. Glasses will break and saucers will crack when a loveless person touches them. One may not yet have had this experience, but one day one will see that when an inharmonious person enters the house things begin to break, accidents happen, pet animals such as dogs and cats become restless.

But what is most interesting in the study of spirit and matter is the nature of vacuum and substance. Substance has a tendency to add substance to itself and to turn all that it attracts into the same substance, and vacuum has a tendency to make a greater vacuum. This shows that there is a continual struggle between substance and vacuum. Where vacuum can get hold of substance it will turn the substance into vacuum, and where substance is stronger it will turn out vacuum and make substance. The idea behind this is not what we might think. We think of vacuum as being nothing; we recognize vacuum by contrasting it with substance. If we want to explain what vacuum is we call it absence of substance, but in reality substance has arisen from vacuum; vacuum is the womb of substance. Substance has been composed in vacuum and has developed in it; it has formed itself, it has

constructed itself, and it will again be dissolved in the vacuum. There can be no form without a vacuum, visible or invisible. Everywhere there is a vacuum, but we see only what our eyes can see, and we cannot recognize as a vacuum that which our eyes cannot see. Even the pores of the body are a vacuum, although we do not always see them.

The difference between the nature of vacuum and the nature of substance is that vacuum is knowing. Therefore the prophets have called it the Omniscient God, not in the sense of a person who is knowing but of the Whole Being, the All-knowing Being. Man is so limited; he is limited because his knowledge is limited, and so he thinks, 'I alone know. The vacuum which is meaningless to me, which gives no sign of life, to me is nothing.' But if he goes further in investigating the nature of vacuum he will find that he himself is nothing, his body, eyes, head, bones, and skin; if there is anything in him which makes him a knowing being, it is the vacuum.

In the mineral kingdom the stone is dense; it does not know much. The reason is that it has little vacuum. The tree feels more than the stone because it has more vacuum, as the Indian scientist Jagarji Chandra Bose has pointed out. He tried to prove to the scientific world that trees breathe. Animals and birds show greater signs of life and a more pronounced knowing quality because the vacuum in them is greater still; and in man it is even more so. What makes one part of substance knowing and keeps another part without this faculty of knowing is the vacuum in one object and the denseness in another.

There is a third thing we should understand concerning this subject which is of great importance: that which stands between vacuum and substance is capacity. When we look at the sky we feel that it is a vacuum; it seems to be nothing, but in reality it is not nothing, it is capacity. Vacuum is all-knowing, but it is capacity which enables vacuum to know. And as the sky is a capacity for the vacuum to be all-knowing, so every being and every thing is a capacity, greater or lesser, which supplies a body or a vehicle for pure intelligence to work through. There is nothing in this world, whether a stone, a tree, a mountain or a river, water or fire, earth, air, anything, which is not in itself a

capacity; it cannot exist without being a capacity. Therefore all that exists, whether living or not living, is a capacity. We read in the scriptures that every atom moves by the command of God. In other words, behind everything that exists, be it large or small, in every motion it makes, even the slightest, there is the hand of the Spirit. It cannot act or move otherwise. Jelal-ud-Din Rumi describes this in his *Masnavi*, where he says that fire, water, air, and earth all seem to man to be dead things, but before God they are living beings, ready to answer His call.

Capacity is all-accommodating. All that we can know is known through some capacity—higher things through a higher capacity and ordinary things through an ordinary capacity. Even when we hear a voice it is through a capacity. A house is a capacity which helps us to hear it more clearly; the ears are a capacity in which it becomes audible; the mouth is a capacity in which the word is formed; the mind is a capacity in which we perceive it. The nature of every capacity is different, but the whole phenomenon is that of capacity.

Among Sufis there is a spiritual culture, a culture which recognizes four centres, each centre being a vacuum, or a capacity, for pure intelligence to function in. This shows that man has the greatest possibility of knowing all that is knowable, and he has an even greater capacity than that: to realize all that can be known. If he only knew how he could achieve it! But, one may say, why must substance coming from vacuum learn to know, when vacuum is already the all-knowing state? The all-knowing state is not the same as a limited knowing state. To look at all is one thing, and to look at a flower with a little instrument is another thing. The conductor of an orchestra may hear the whole orchestra at the same time, and yet he may want to hear one instrument alone to know in how far it is correct.

It is not enough for us to see and to hear, to feel and to touch all these experiences going on at the same time; we like to experience through every sense singly in order to get a definite experience. That is the nature of the spirit.

CHAPTER XII

SPIRIT AND MATTER (2)

SPIRIT and matter are the two names of one life. The primal aspect of life developing into denseness remains spirit, and its development into dense form is called matter. It is like water turning into snow: it is liquid, but it develops into a harder substance; it loses its fineness.

There is a conflict between spirit and matter. The matter absorbs the spirit in order to exist, and the spirit assimilates matter, for it is its own property. The whole of manifestation may thus be regarded as a continual conflict between spirit and matter; the spirit developing into matter on the one hand and assimilating matter on the other: the former being called activity and the latter silence, or construction and destruction, or life and death. When one realizes that the source of both spirit and matter is life, then one will see that there is no such thing as death; but this one can only recognize when one knows the distinction between the life which may be called the source and the life which is momentary, the life which matter shows by absorbing spirit.

Vacuum or space consumes substance; and when substance absorbs life from space, the space opens up within the substance. For instance, trees and plants absorb more from space than do rocks, and animals absorb still more from space than do trees and plants. Man absorbs the most spirit from space, and therefore man represents both matter and spirit in himself.

What is absorbed from space has the effect upon that which absorbs it of opening it up and of forming a vacuum. That is why the stone, which has very little vacuum in it, appears to be lifeless. Plant life shows some sign of life because it absorbs more from space. In the atoms of plant life there is an opening, for by absorbing all that it can absorb from space the plant opens within itself a space to accommodate also the spirit that it absorbs. We see a further development of the same phenomenon in animal life, which, through breathing, absorbs more of the spirit which is

in space and therefore becomes more intelligent. This shows that although intelligence manifests through living beings, yet it is absorbed from space. We only know intelligence as something that belongs to man, to the mind or to the heart; but whence is intelligence attracted? It is attracted from space. We recognize intelligence in its manifestation, but we do not know it in its essence. In its essence it is all-pervading, and that is why philosophically minded people have called God omniscient.

All that is constructed is subject to destruction; all that is composed must be decomposed; all that is formed must be destroyed; that which has birth has death. But all this belongs to matter; the spirit which is absorbed by this formation of matter or by its mechanism lives, for spirit cannot die. What we call life is an absorption of spirit by matter. As long as the matter is strong and energetic enough to absorb life or spirit from space, it continues to live and move and be in good condition, but when it has lost its grip on the spirit, when it cannot absorb the spirit as it ought to, then it cannot live, for the substance of matter is spirit.

The Bible says, 'It is the spirit that quickeneth, the flesh profiteth nothing'. But, one will say, does not the dense matter depend for its maintenance upon dense food? Yes, but at the same time the appetite is not satisfied by eating stones; man eats vegetable or animal food because he not only gets a substance from it but also the spirit it has absorbed. In other words, even in eating dense food one is absorbing spirit from space.

Some people will call spirit energy, or a scientist will give it the name of some form or force, but it is never called a person or a being. Then what is it that makes us call God spirit, or why do we call that which is really spirit God? If it is the very same spirit which we breathe from space that makes man an intelligent being, capable of thinking and feeling; the same spirit that gives him the power of perception and conception and develops in him that feeling which one calls ego, 'I'; if this is the phenomenon that the spirit shows by being absorbed by the material body, how much more capable of perception and conception, of thought and feeling, must the spirit be in itself! Only, because we are limited by our physical frame we are not able to experience fully its perfect life and its perfect personality.

Where there is a hole this hole has a tendency to become larger, and where there is a little substance there is a tendency for that substance to increase; this shows the tendencies of spirit and matter, the continual conflict that exists between spirit and matter. On the part of matter there is always a tendency to absorb, and on the part of spirit there is always a tendency to assimilate. Mortality, therefore, belongs to substance, not to spirit; immortality belongs to the spirit.

What is it that makes man spiritual? Spirit-consciousness. If a person is not conscious of what he absorbs, he is not conscious of that which makes him more than the dense part of his being. It is not the dense substance which has formed his body that makes him capable of thinking, that gives him the faculty of feeling, of experiencing, of knowing; it is the spirit which this dense substance has absorbed. And if one asks whether this spirit which belongs to man, which may be called an individual spirit, is to be found within or without, the answer is that man himself is the individual spirit. The body is something which the spirit has taken for its use; therefore just as man is dependent upon this vehicle, which one calls the body, for experiencing the outer life, to the same extent or even more is he independent of the outer body in order to exist for ever.

The dependence of man and the independence of man depend upon what he wishes to experience. If he wishes to experience the dense earth, he depends upon the dense body; if he wishes to live the life of the spirit, he need not depend upon anything. The spirit is living, the spirit is life itself; it only depends upon matter for its experience and not for its life; for the spirit itself is life, though a life which is different from the life we generally recognize as such. What we call living is the matter which has absorbed spirit; and what we call life is that which is moving, acting through and by that spirit. In reality life is that which matter has absorbed; life passes away from matter and remains; life cannot be destroyed. It is in the understanding of this that lies the secret of immortality.

CHAPTER XIII

SPIRIT AND MATTER (3)

SPIRIT and matter are not two things; they are one, seen by us as two. The reason is that the former is not distinguishable while the latter is distinct; the former is not evident while the latter is. The spirit is man's own being, his real being; the spirit is his knowing faculty, his intelligence. The very intelligence that distinguishes all things is man's real being.

How can this intelligence see itself? It is the task of the spirit to feel matter, and at the same time it is the work of the spirit to feel itself. Matter cannot feel the spirit; the spirit has to feel itself in order to be evident. What happens when the spirit cannot feel itself is shown in the story of the twenty peasants who went on a journey, and after crossing a river they wanted to know if everyone was there. Each counted and said, 'There are nineteen,' because each forgot to count himself. It is the same with the spirit: the spirit distinguishes everything except itself just as the eyes cannot see themselves. The eyes see all things; but no one has ever seen his own eyes except as a reflection in a mirror.

Another and most important fact is that no matter can exist without spirit. Spirit is its existence, and spirit is its life. With any object, sweet or sour, fragrant, hot or cold, whatever be its quality, it is the phenomenon of spirit working through that object which makes it distinguishable in one way or another. And if one were to ask whether there is a link between spirit and matter, the answer would be that there is none; there is no gap between the two because, as has been said, they are not two things; they are one and the same. It is simply that the distinguishable aspect of the spirit we call matter, and its finer aspect which cannot be distinguished we call spirit.

People use the word spirit in different senses. Spiritualists have called spirit the soul that has departed from the earth; religious people have called spirit the being of God. And both are right, although both explanations are limited. It is not only spirit

that is the being of God; matter is the being of God too. I once met a young man who said to me, 'I do not believe in God, the hereafter, or the soul.' I told him that I did not wish to make him believe in these things, that this was not my intention at all; but then the young man asked me what I believed, for he wanted to continue our conversation. I said, 'It is very difficult to put one's belief into words, but I would very much like you to tell me first what you believe.' He said very easily, 'I believe in eternal matter.' I said, 'My belief is not very far from yours, for the very same thing that you call eternal matter I call eternal spirit. It is a difference of words; we really believe the same thing.' Matter cannot be eternal, but if the young man wished to call that which is eternal, matter, I had no objection; I was quite willing to call it matter too.

The difference between what we call an object and a living being is the difference in the degree of spirit they absorb. Darwin died without finding the missing link. But there is no missing link; if there were any link which was missing it would have been found. There is a constant outpouring of spirit on matter, which is its own substance; and according to the degree in which the spirit touches matter, the matter forms into an object or into a being. Thus the difference between the lower creation and the higher creation is also that of the degree of the spirit which they are capable of absorbing; and there is the same difference between a material person and a spiritual person.

The question arises why, if spirit and matter are one and the same, is there then a need for anything or anyone to absorb spirit? Matter is something which is ever changing; it is continually going through a process of change; and we call this change destruction or death, or we say of matter that it is decomposed or destroyed. In reality it has taken another form, but this form is also changed by spirit and made into something else. Only, in order to distinguish it we give the first aspect of the object one name, and the next aspect of the same thing another name. For instance in one condition a substance is called coal, and in another condition it is called diamond. It has gone through a change. The value is different, the name is different, the appearance is different. The spirit has changed it in one condition to a

certain degree, and in another condition to a different degree.

When we study the lower creation, insects, birds, and beasts, and when we study their instincts, the intelligence they show, the sympathy to which they respond, we can clearly notice that they are awakened to life according to the spirit they are capable of absorbing. We see among human beings how one man is standing in the midst of all that is good and beautiful, his eyes open but his heart closed. He does not see anything; although happiness is at hand, he does not know it. And there is another person, awakened to all that is good and beautiful, ready to appreciate it and to be grateful for everything good that comes his way. There is one man whose thought reaches the highest level that thought can reach, and there is another who thinks, but his thoughts can rise no higher. What is the reason for these differences? They all come from the varying ability of these people to absorb the spirit.

The soul is likened to a ray of the sun. And what is the ray of the sun, what causes it? It is the motion of the sun, the motion of the light. The light-waves cause a space between one wave and another wave, just as in the sea a gap is formed between one wave and the next. There is no gap in reality; it is only a temporary condition of the rising of the water that makes a space between two waves; these two waves are a temporary condition of the water of the sea. The water of the sea remains, but these waves formed for a moment rise and fall again. If we say that five waves are coming it is in our conception that they are five, but the phenomenon is only momentary: they are and they are not.

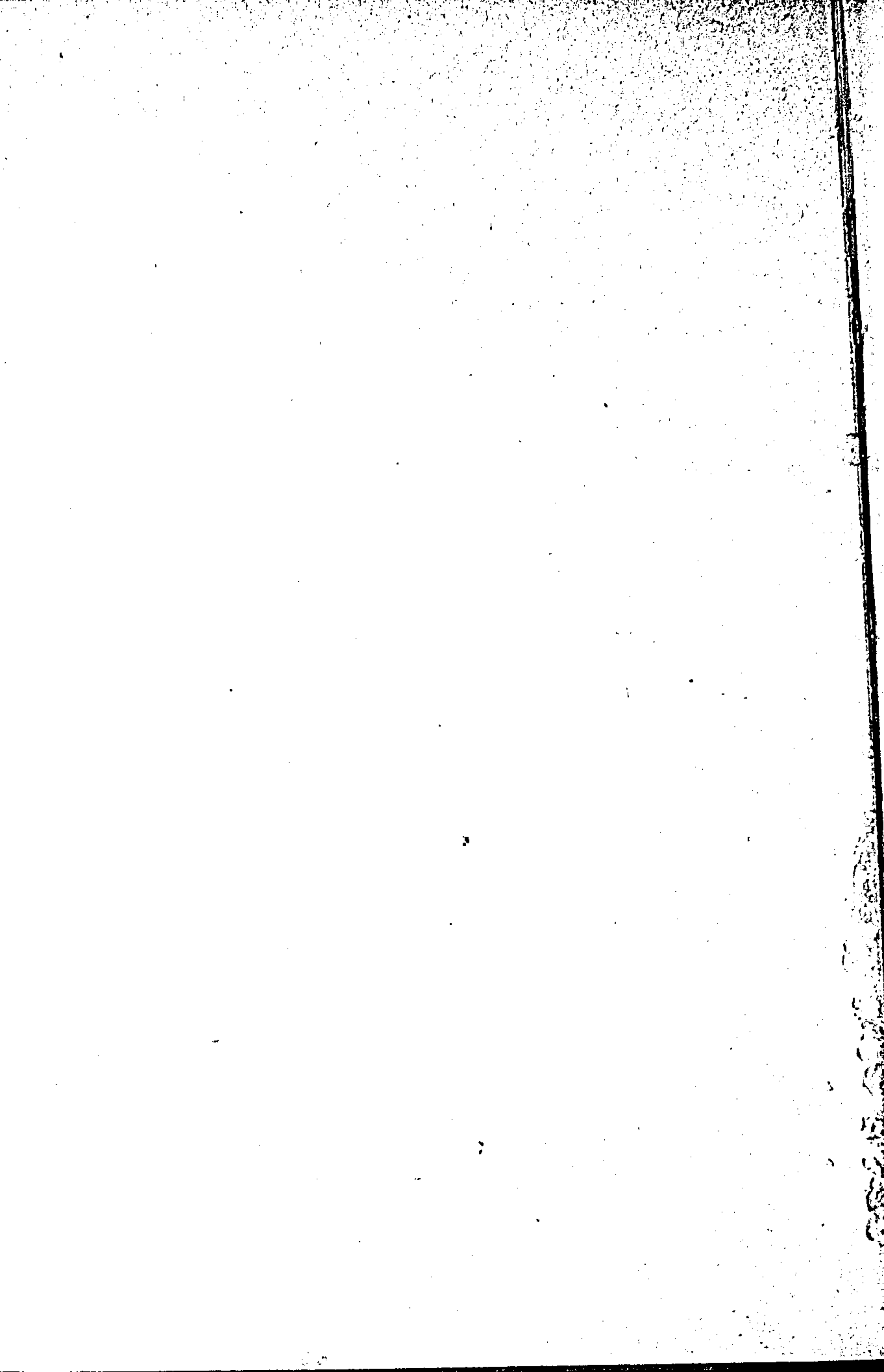
And so it is with souls. If we say that there are many souls, it is true, just as there are many waves or many rays of the sun; but if we say that there is one spirit, it is truer still, just as there is one sea and one sun. The waves are an action of the sea; the rays are a manifestation of the sun; the souls are a phenomenon of the spirit. They are and they are not. They are because we see them, and they are not because there is only one Being.

Those who separate soul from body are looking from the same point of view as the one who sees spirit and matter as two different things. The sight has made the eyes in order to see, but in making the eyes the sight has become limited; the sight had a much greater

power before it had eyes. By limiting itself to the eyes the sight's power has become less. So it is with the soul. The soul manifesting as a body has diminished its power considerably, even to the extent that it is not capable of imagining for one moment the great power, life, and light it has in itself. Once the soul realizes itself by becoming independent of the body that surrounds it, the soul naturally begins to see in itself the being of the spirit.

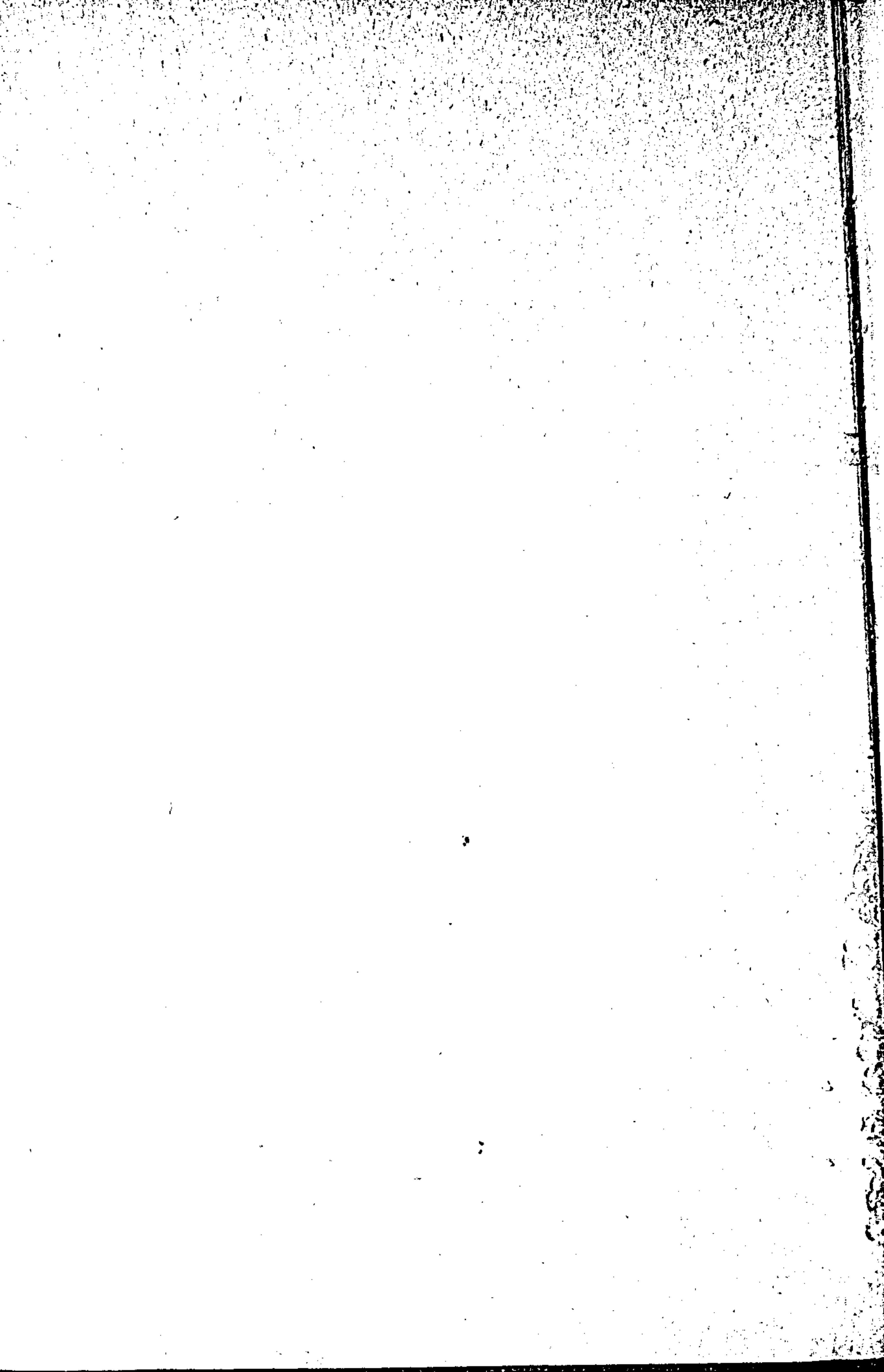
What is consciousness? Consciousness is the knowing faculty, but it is the knowing faculty when it has some knowledge; it is only then that we call it consciousness. One is conscious of something; consciousness must always be conscious of something. When consciousness is not conscious of anything it is pure intelligence. It is in this realization that the greatest secret of life can be revealed.

One might say that the experience of pure intelligence is possible only for the only Being, for God, but no one can stand outside of the only Being, and therefore each and everyone is in the only Being; the only Being includes all. And undoubtedly there is a certain process by which one can attain to this pure intelligence. Man is not conscious of it any more; he has lost the habit of experiencing what pure intelligence is; but all the meditations and concentrations, the whole process by which the mystic treads the spiritual path, bring us finally to the realization of that pure intelligence. And if one asks what benefit one derives from it, the answer is that since all that benefits us comes from one source, that source must be perfect; it must be all-beneficial. It is beyond our limited imagination, but it is the greatest thing one can attain in one's life.



PART II

PSYCHOLOGY



CHAPTER I

SCIENCE AND PSYCHOLOGY

WHEN SCIENCE and psychology arrive at a certain understanding, on that day knowledge will become complete. But then I use the word psychology in a specific sense, not in the sense in which it is generally understood. The psychology which is considered nowadays as a new philosophy is still in a primitive condition; what I mean by psychology is the bridge between material science and esotericism. But before going further into this subject I should mention that the terms matter and spirit are meant only for our convenience. As far as we perceive life as something tangible we call it matter; and what is not as tangible as a substance but is yet perceptible we call spirit. It is the knowledge of this spirit that we call psychology, whereas the knowledge which is gained neither by tangibility of substance nor by perception but by revelation is called esotericism. Thus we can divide the different aspects of knowledge into three groups: science, psychology, and esotericism. It is these three that make knowledge complete; and it is through these that one can hope to understand life more fully.

There is a vast field of knowledge in the realm of psychology. The knowledge of imagination and of imagination turning into thought, the knowledge of feeling and of feeling turning into emotion, the knowledge of passion and of passion turning into expression, the knowledge of impulse and its outlet, the knowledge of attraction and its contrary effect, the knowledge of the origin and source of sympathy and antipathy—all these belong to psychology. Thus psychology is a knowledge of perceptible things, yet not of solid things that one can touch, and that is why it is more difficult to explain the laws of psychology in words than the laws of material science.

In order to understand psychology better one should develop one's perception and obtain insight into life. Real psychology is the understanding of a law working behind the scenes, it is the

understanding of cause and effect in everything, in every action, in every aspect. It is also a stepping-stone towards esotericism, for it is the psychological attitude which leads one to esoteric knowledge. The one who cannot see the truth of esotericism or mysticism is ignorant because he is backward in psychology; if a person is not able to see the hidden law he will not be able to see that hidden love which is called God in the scriptures.

Esotericism is therefore a process of learning which is quite contrary to the process by which science is learned. For science is learned by analysis and esotericism by synthesis. If a person who wants to obtain esoteric knowledge breaks things up into bits, he is analysing them; and as long as he does this he will never come to understand esotericism. In psychology two things are needed: analysis and synthesis; and when through a better understanding of psychology one has accustomed oneself to synthesize as well as to analyse, then one prepares oneself to synthesize only, which leads to a fuller understanding of esotericism. Therefore the acquisition of esoteric knowledge is quite different from the study of science.

The only difficulty in acquiring esoteric knowledge at the present time is that man who is trained in science is not yet capable of attaining to esoteric knowledge unless he goes through the process of obtaining psychological knowledge. In order to enter the gates of mysticism the first thing for man to understand is what feeling is, what service is, what sympathy is, what sincerity is. It is a great fault of the education of today that sentiment, which is really its most important side, is neglected. It is like wanting a person to become, not alive, but like a corpse: in order to educate him life must be taken from him and he must be turned from a living person into a dead one! This is what lies behind the deaths of heroism and idealism, the deaths of souls which have made an impression on humanity that has lasted for thousands and thousands of years.

What is to be revived in the present generation is the capacity of feeling. Only thinking is developed today and not feeling, but thinking is not enough; after thinking comes feeling, after feeling comes seeing, and it is this seeing which is meant by the word *seer*.

CHAPTER II

SUGGESTION

WE HARDLY realize how much we depend in our everyday life upon suggestion, especially in forming our opinions of other people. Any praise or blame of a person that falls upon our ears soon appears to us as reality; and few there are in this world who reject this suggestion that comes to them from someone else though they are quite ignorant of the facts themselves. We may become quite prejudiced against someone whom we have never seen, never known, merely because of what another person has said. And the interesting part of it is that we are doubtful of praise, but credulous as to blame; the reason for this is that our experience makes us pessimistic. All the wickedness and evil that we meet with in life impresses us and in time makes us feel that if anything exists it is wickedness, it is evil, and when we hear good of anyone we begin to doubt; we think that it is perhaps a mistake on the part of the person who tells us, that perhaps he is ignorant of the facts, or that we should wait till we know more about the man who is so good. But as to blame, we do not try to wait for the time when we can meet the man and get to know him and see where the blame lies; we believe it immediately.

When we consider the psychology of the crowd, we see how often great people who have really worked for their fellow-men, in whatever capacity, fall into disfavour when once people begin to speak against them! And at this time when our life in the world is very automatic and we all depend upon what the newspapers say, we collectively change our opinion of people, day after day. We neither know the cause of their being praised, nor do we know much about why they are blamed.

When people begin to realize what suggestion means, many react wrongly against it. For instance they think that to say to oneself, 'I am well,' is suggestion, and they wonder whether it is not wrong. But they do not know that from morning till evening we are impressed by suggestions coming to us automatically in

different forms. The importance does not lie in receiving suggestions or in rejecting suggestions; it lies in understanding what will benefit us and what will be detrimental. Suggestions about haunted houses make people afraid or ill; because of such a suggestion they believe that the house is haunted, and that in itself is enough to make them feel ill.

Suggestions about difficulties we have to meet will produce difficulties. Suggestions made by people who say, 'This person likes you,' 'That person dislikes you,' all these things act so much upon a man that very often he becomes convinced of something before he even begins to try and find out the truth about it. Among a hundred people we will hardly find one who wishes to find out the truth before he accepts any suggestion; very often he does not even trouble about it. To believe in something as soon as another has said it, and to form an opinion immediately is the easier way: it saves him from troubling any more about it. That is why we readily accept a suggestion; and so our whole life is full of suggestions. It is hard on the person about whom we form an opinion just by hearing something against him. In any of the different capacities, whether he be our relation, our friend, our servant, or our superior, in any such case it proves to be unjust. And it does not end there. When once a person has heard something against someone else and has formed an opinion about it, his opinion acts upon that person and makes him what the other thought him to be.

In this way many do not develop in themselves a sense of justice, a capacity for understanding rightly, because they are dependent upon what others say. And when a man is in a high position where he has to do with many people and his opinion counts, his opinion changes the condition of their lives; when that man lightly forms an opinion only from hearing about someone, many people under him suffer. This often happens with people in high positions. When they have neither time nor inclination to take the trouble to find out about others who are dependent on them or who work under them, and when they change their opinion just because another person has said something, it becomes very difficult. Often most devoted and faithful friends have broken their friendship because of this weakness of accepting

a suggestion from another. Between relations and friends it happens frequently that there comes a break without reason.

The best way to react against suggestion is to try and find out the facts. But very often what a person does is to try and find out the facts in the light of that suggestion. It is just like the story of Othello, who when he begins to enquire about Desdemona interprets everything in the same light as it was suggested to him.

According to metaphysics one way of removing the effect of suggestion from the mind is by concentration. There are two things one can accomplish by concentration: one is to establish a thought in one's mind, and the other is to remove a thought from one's mind. Concentration helps one to accomplish both these things, and then one is able to remove any thought one wishes from one's mind, and to implant a thought which one wishes to keep in one's mind.

But besides this, from a moral point of view one should close one's ears and eyes to all that is disagreeable, inharmonious, and ugly, to all that sets one against another, and one should not take notice of it. There is much beauty to be observed in our lives, if we can only turn our eyes away from all ugliness, from all that is undesirable, and fix our eyes on all that is beautiful and agreeable. For if we want to feel hurt and insulted and troubled, there is not one thing only, there are a thousand things that trouble us, and the only way of getting over them is not to notice them.

Some people always seem to prefer the opposite to a given suggestion. That is another weakness. It not only shows that they do not trust another person, but that they do not trust themselves either. The natural or normal state of mind is to have mastery over things, over conditions, and if a suggestion comes from another person, to think about it. By thinking about it we do not need to believe it, but we need not act against it. For all things are a suggestion, whether they be good or bad. It is not that suggestions are always wrong; suggestions are often very good; but when a person is always against any suggestion, he will reject all that is good because he is afraid.

There are many people in this world who will defend themselves before they are attacked; no one has any intention of attacking them but they are already on the defensive. There are

people who before anyone has insulted them are on the war-path; even before anyone insults them they imagine that someone had that intention. These are wrong tendencies of the mind, and they should be fought against in order to keep the mind clear. To clear the path of life, the mentality must be kept clear.

To keep a harmful suggestion out of one's mind means a struggle, but if a person does not know how to struggle he will continue the same suggestion by this very struggle. For instance a person who is struggling against his illness and is saying to himself, 'I am not ill. I am not ill,' since both the words *not* and *ill* are there, he continues both. Or a person who is in poverty and who says, 'I am not poor,' the *poor* is there besides the *not*, and his poverty will stay with him. While he is struggling against it he keeps it all the time before his mind; although he does not want it, yet it is there. It is in his own consciousness and he cannot get rid of it. One should act wisely in regard to suggestion.

The nature of the mind is such that the first suggestion makes a deep impression, and the following suggestion can only make little impression. Therefore, if once a person is impressed by a wrong thing and has formed a wrong opinion it is most difficult to change it. Besides there are people who sit upon their opinions. They do not hold an opinion, the opinion holds them, and once they have formed an opinion nothing can change it, for it is a dead opinion, just like a rock. Where the rock is placed, the rock lies; it is not a living being that walks and moves.

Humanity suffers greatly by this weakness which persists in the human race; and as there is a lack of psychological knowledge in the world it spreads and goes on more and more every day. In ancient times humanity suffered because it had to depend upon the opinion of one man, but now humanity suffers because it has to depend upon the opinions of ever so many people, working automatically all the time. During the last years how many personalities came out to shine before the world, how many became popular for some time, and how many fell into disfavour! The reason is that the crowd works automatically and does not know the reality. What it knows is what it is told. If through the newspapers or in any other way an opinion is formed, it becomes the opinion of the mob. And often it is not right; seldom can it be

true. For the betterment of humanity people should be taught to understand from childhood what the automatic working of mind is, and what a difference there is between it and the working of mind with will.

Can one overcome everything by suggestion? It can be done; but it cannot be said. There are many very great things that can be accomplished; but when one wants to speak about them, it is too difficult. Not only will others not believe it, but a man will not be able to believe it himself if he begins to speak about it. If they were left unsaid, greater things could be done than one's imagination can conceive.

CHAPTER III

SUGGESTION THROUGH IMPRESSION AND BELIEF

IT HAPPENS very often that we find that a man who has been successful in life goes on being successful, and that a person who has once failed goes on failing. Looked at from a psychological point of view the reason is that the first man was impressed by his success and so he continued to be successful, and the other, who was impressed with his failure, continued to have failures because that impression suggested failure to him. But it is not because of the displeasure of God that unfortunate souls continue to be unfortunate in everything they do; it is that the suggestion of misfortune, of misery, keeps them miserable throughout their lives.

There was a poor person who had lost all his money and had become poor, yet he would not admit it. He said, 'No, I have not lost it; I have still got it in my mind somewhere.' And in six months time he became as rich as he was before. He did not allow his failure to suggest itself to him. And so it is with one's character. Often a person says, 'I am stupid, I cannot think,' and when he has said this several times naturally he becomes stupid. Sometimes he says it out of modesty, humility, or politeness; but this virtue will prove to be a sin. Also, many have lost their memory through suggestion. When they have forgotten something, which is a natural thing for a human being to do, they repeat to themselves, 'How stupid! How forgetful on my part!' and that idea repeated twice or thrice deepens their forgetfulness.

There are many different drawbacks of this kind, as when a person says, 'When I am among people I become nervous, I become timid. When I am asked to speak or to do something, I cannot do it.' All these things are suggestions. Napoleon never liked to say, 'I cannot'. When a man says, 'I cannot,' he has made a suggestion to himself, he has weakened his power of accomplishing what he could otherwise have accomplished. To admit to

oneself, 'I have no force, I have no power, I have no thought, I have no intelligence,' only means working against oneself.

Often people who are disappointed with the world say, 'My heart has grown cold,' but it is actually they who suggest to themselves that their heart has become cold. Others may say, 'I can no longer love,' but we have come from love, we are love itself, we are made of love; how then can we no longer love? All these suggestions which are undesirable and foolish work against our life. Then there are people who imagine that nobody likes them, that everybody hates them, that everybody is jealous of them. Nobody may hate them, nobody may even dislike them, but naturally when such a thought develops in their own minds it reflects upon others and creates in them the tendency to hate and dislike.

We should always remember that man is not created by God as wood is carved by the carpenter, for the carpenter is different from the wood, but that man is created out of the self of God; therefore all that is in God is in man. All the different powers and qualities that we need in life are attainable if we do not deny their existence in ourselves, but when we deny that they exist in us, then naturally life will deprive us of that gift which is our own. How can a man be fortunate when he believes and thinks that everything that he touches goes wrong? How can a man be loved when he carries in his heart the thought that everyone who sees him dislikes him, hates him, avoids him, works against him? Nobody is his enemy except he himself; by such an attitude one becomes one's own worst enemy.

This psychological idea should not of course keep us from cultivating the principle of modesty. If a man without learning says, 'I am learned,' it does not mean that he will become learned. If without having a voice he claims to be a tenor, this will not make him a tenor. If he has not got those qualities he should not profess them, though he may anticipate them and expect them. He should not say that he is not entitled to them; he should say, 'I am entitled to all that opens the door to progress.' But as soon as a man admits to himself that he has not got that quality, that intelligence, that power, that gift in him, he himself drives his spirit out of that world.

The following story is an example of modesty together with suggestion. A slave named Ayaz was so highly favoured by the Sultan that the Sultan made him his treasurer. The most precious jewels and gems were given into his charge. And those around the Sultan felt angry about it, to think that a slave was raised to their rank and that he was given such a trust. They were always trying to point out faults in the slave to the Sultan. One day a courtier said, 'Ayaz goes every day to the treasure-house, even when there is no need to, and he sometimes remains there for hours. He certainly steals precious jewels from the treasury.' Every day the Sultan was hearing something against Ayaz, and at last he said, 'If this is really so, I will go and see it with my own eyes.' He went and had a hole made in the wall so that he could see and hear what his slave did there. The Sultan was standing outside, looking into the room, and Ayaz entered and closed the door. First he opened the chest in which the precious jewels of the Sultan were kept; then out of the same chest he took something which he had kept there. He kissed it and pressed it to his eyes, and then he opened the package. And what was it? It was the same garment which he had worn when he was sold as a slave. He took off his courtier's clothes and put on that garment and he stood before the mirror and said, 'Ayaz, do you remember today what you were before? Nothing; a slave brought before the king to be sold. The king appreciated something in you; perhaps you do not deserve it. But try your best to be faithful to the king who has made you what you are, and never forget the day when you wore this garment, that you may not raise your head in pride above the others who work under you; and never allow your feeling of gratitude to leave you, for prosperity is always intoxicating. Keep yourself sober and thank God, and pray God to grant the Sultan a long life, and be grateful for all that has been given to you.' Then he took off his garment and put it back in the chest and closed the doors and came out. The Sultan approached him with open arms and said, 'Ayaz, until now you were the treasurer of my jewels, but now you are the treasurer of my heart. You have taught me a lesson of how I must stand before my King, before whom I was nothing and am nothing.'

This must be the attitude. It was not a suggestion of his misery

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as a slave, it was a suggestion of the realization that he had come from that state to his exalted position, and also that he should prove worthy of it. When we become conscious of our unworthiness, of our limitations, it certainly helps us, yet it can only really help us when we hope to become better. But if we stop there, then we might just as well stay there for ever. When a person says that he is too weak to become any better, he stays where he is, but when he admits to himself, 'Yes, today I am weak, but tomorrow I will be better, I will try to be better,' that is the right attitude. We should never allow that spirit of mastery which is in us to become blunted by a feeling of inability, for the essence of life is hope, and when we hope for the better, we shall be better; it cannot be otherwise. Hopelessness is worse than death. It is better to die than to lose hope.

We are able to do anything if we choose to make the effort. The difficulty is that often we do not choose to make an effort. And why not? Because we do not believe. What is generally lacking in man is belief; he does not believe. Another interesting thing is this: suppose there were ten people sitting in meditation and Providence granted them a boon—to ask for as much wealth as they would wish. Will all ten ask for the same amount? No, because no two will agree as to how much can be obtained. One will ask for a hundred, another for a thousand, a third will ask for a million, and a fourth for nothing because he will not believe that any can be obtained.

Although the river is flowing with clear water, the different people who go to it will not all be able to take the same quantity of water. The one who has a glass will take a glass, another who has a pitcher will take a pitcher, a third who has a rubber bag will fill that, and the one who has brought a tank will take a tankful. But no one will take the same quantity as another. And so it is with all of us in our lives: what we obtain is what our belief allows us to obtain, either wealth or virtue, power or rank or spirituality. What our belief does not allow us to attain to we do not attain to; we cannot attain it. It is difficult to say to what extent our belief allows us to attain, for we live in this world of limitation and we cannot believe beyond what we can see. What keeps us from believing is that we are impressed by the limitations

around us, and we can never think of or believe in anything different from what we see.

How can one get belief? This is the most difficult question anyone can ask; for it cannot be learned, it cannot be taught, it is a grace of God. Belief is essentially the same thing as faith, but only when belief has become a conviction does it turn into faith. I remember my murshid giving me, in blessing me, this wish, 'May your faith be strengthened.' Being a young man, I thought, 'Is that all he is saying to me, not, "May you be inspired, or illuminated, or prosperous," or something else?' But when I think of it now I know that in that blessing there was all. When belief is strengthened, then there is everything; all that we lack in life is mostly because of our lack of belief. But again, it is not something that one can learn or teach or that one can give to anybody; this comes from the grace of God.

To affirm a belief is one thing, and really to believe is another. Many will say that they believe, but few really believe. Yes, there are moments when a person is under the spell of belief, but then there come other moments when he is under a spell of unbelief. If this condition vanishes and there comes a steady flow of belief, then, as a river reaches the sea, that soul reaches perfection.

CHAPTER IV

SUGGESTION THROUGH VARIOUS FORMS OF IMPRESSION

COLOURS and forms automatically suggest to us a thought or a feeling. The colours we wear and the colours that are around us have an effect upon us and produce an atmosphere. I once happened to go to a newly formed club, and some members said to me, 'There is surely some evil spirit in this house, for since we have had our club here, every time we have had a committee meeting there has been a quarrel!' I directed their attention to the walls of the room where they used to have their meetings and which were covered with red paper. I said, 'It is this red wall-paper; it appeals to the fiery side of your nature, and if there is any inclination to fight it encourages you.'

The ancient orders of sages and saints and contemplative people knew this, and with this thought in mind they chose the colours of their dress and of their surroundings. This idea is overlooked today, and people take any colour which is the fashion of the season, not knowing what it suggests to themselves and to others. And so it is with the form of things. If an object is well-formed it suggests rhythm and harmony, and if it is crooked it suggests the opposite.

In ancient times there were superstitions concerning good and bad omens. One of these was based on the principle that every colour suggests to a person who is going to do some work whether he will be successful or whether he will fail; the impression he gets from that colour stays with him to the extent that it has an effect upon his work. There was also a superstition that if one met a crooked person when going to one's work one would have ill luck: not only a crooked person, but anything crooked one sees at such a time naturally impresses one's spirit with crookedness. Not everyone knows something about features, but every person is affected by features; he receives an impression from them without knowing it, for the form suggests something

which he may not be able to describe, although he can feel it. It is a language without words; it conveys something, though it is not always easy for anyone to interpret it even to himself.

Every little pain and discomfort often continues through the power of suggestion. As soon as one feels discomfort or pain the mind repeats, 'I have a pain. I am uncomfortable,' and this suggestion adds to that pain, like fuel to the fire. Very often a person becomes tired before he has done any work because a previous experience of tiredness suggested it to him. There are many cases of people who are tired because of an impression in their mind which gives them the suggestion that they are tired. It is the same with weakness. Once a person is impressed with his weakness, his feebleness of body, this impression continues to act on him; it comes as an inner suggestion. And if some good friend tries to help him by saying, 'You seem to be very low today,' then this only aggravates it.

There is another most important side to suggestion, and that is an impression on one's conscience of 'I have done wrong,' 'I have done something which was unjust,' 'I was not fair; it was beneath my dignity.' No doubt this impression is produced by the good side of a person's being, but often it results in something bad. For what happens is that first comes the idea of having done wrong, and then in time that feeling is blunted and a person begins to bear it and think that it is all right. But as the impression of having done wrong remains and continues to act upon him, this makes him do worse and worse. Thus a man who has been in prison very often continues to go to prison, continues to commit the same crime. The reason is that he is impressed by that crime, and the spirit which opposes it has become blunted. He is now accustomed both to his crime and to the punishment; in other words he has become master of the situation.

We see the same with children. If a child is impressed by something it has done which is good, and we admire it and say, 'It is very nice,' or if the child, of itself, thinks, 'What I have done is very good', this continues to work in the child and in that way it will improve every day.

It is because they recognized the power of suggestion that the ancient people gave names to their children with a meaning

that would suggest to them certain ideas. Naturally if a person hears his name called by others a hundred times a day, he has something suggested to him a hundred times. He may not realize it at the time, but the depths of his consciousness receive the suggestion and he develops that quality, for such is the nature of the soul.

This idea is very little known to the world, but the more it becomes known, the more people will understand its value. There is nothing in the world that can give a deeper suggestion to a person than his own name, for he is called by that name all the time. And one should be thankful to those who begin to understand this idea so that they can spread it among their friends. There is an automatic suggestion in the name. We hear ourselves called so many times during the day, and this produces the feeling of that name, not only in our own consciousness but also in the minds of those who call us. Automatically a feeling arises, and all this works for our benefit.

Many give names thoughtlessly, or names without meaning, and this of course has no result. And when a person has been given a name which means for instance something like torture, the life of that person may become torture in the end. Also, if the parents who give the child a name are not inspired, then an automatic working of the cosmic forces may suggest to them a particular name, and that name then builds the child's destiny.

It has been the custom of the great mystics to give someone a better name in order to produce better results. Sometimes a name given by a sage or a mystic in a moment of deep feeling, a name which comes out of his heart, changes the whole destiny of that person from the day that it is given. The poor become rich, the stupid wise, the insignificant great or famous. It is not only an idea, but a frequent experience. There have been many such instances when people have received a name as a blessing from a spiritual man and their whole life has been changed. We know so little about the power of the name, but the more one studies this question, the more one will realize that a person's name can have a very great influence upon his life.

Nothing gives a stronger suggestion than a deep impression of success or failure, of weakness or strength, of good or ill luck,

of sorrow or joy; and it is the greatest pity when a person is deeply impressed by his unworthiness. When this impression continues, where does it lead him? It leads him to a complete unworthiness, and naturally he will have to bear with himself; and in that way the side of his nature which should oppose it becomes blunted, and this results in hopelessness.

SUGGESTION BY WORD AND VOICE

THE TONE of a spoken word, the music of a phrase, often suggest a meaning which is quite different from what these words and phrases really mean. Simple words such as yes and no convey different meanings with different tones; the music of a phrase may convey either a sincere thought or a sarcasm. Not everyone can explain very well what tone it is that makes the meaning different, or what music it is that changes the sense of a phrase; but automatically one may say an ordinary word or a phrase in a tone which one normally uses to express deep feeling. When this happens many plead that it is not their fault if they have been misunderstood, and that they cannot be blamed for having only said a few simple words—and indeed, if the same words had been said in another tone they would have been simple.

When we go deeper into this subject we find that every vowel is suggestive of a certain feeling, and that therefore names and words have a certain effect upon the speaker and the listener apart from their meaning. For instance it is interesting to gather from the sound of the word why the flower should have been called flower and why the stone should have been called stone. We feel from the sound of *stone* that it is hard, solid; and we feel from the word *flower* that it is soft and beautiful. Those who speak without any knowledge of tone and music, those who have no intuition of how to express their thoughts and feelings in a proper tone, lose a great deal in life; for it takes away much of the sense which they wish to express in their speech, and often it even suggests something quite different from what they had meant. We very often hear people say, 'I told him over and over again, but he would not listen,' but this may be because they were ignorant of the tone and music of speech. There is a psychological reason why he would not listen: perhaps the tone was not right or the music might not have been correct.

Voice has great mystery. The voice of the individual is suggestive of something, not only of his thought, feeling, and action;

but of his grade of evolution, of his past, present, and future. If ten people say the same thing, we will find each of them suggesting a different sense, a sense which goes further than the words themselves. While the word reaches as far as the ears, feeling reaches further into the heart. It is the voice that carries a sense, a feeling, and it expresses so much that the more one studies it the more one finds that voice has a very great significance. When a person says, 'I spoke, but nobody heard me,' he does not usually know that it was because of his voice that he was not heard. It was not what he said, but what his voice conveyed. Not everyone will notice it, but everyone will feel it automatically. Kind, wise, foolish, weak, or powerful personalities will all show their character in their voice. It would not be an exaggeration to say that sometimes a person's voice expresses quite a different meaning from what he says in words.

When we trace the secret of language in history we find that many languages known to us today have come from just a very few ancient languages. But if we go further than history takes us we shall find that all languages have come from one language, a language that the human race knew in its cradle, a language that man learnt from intuition. The names he gave to everything were derived from what each thing suggested; he called things according to what he intuitively felt on seeing and feeling them. That is why the nearer we get to the ancient languages, the more we find the secret of psychological suggestion; for every word of the ancient languages has a psychological value, and is suggestive of its sense in such a profound way that it is as if the word had come as a reaction to what the actual thing had suggested to a person. Our minds, corrupted by the new languages, which have themselves been corrupted by mixture, cannot conceive or fully appreciate that feeling which one finds in an ancient language, and which is suggestive not only of the meaning of the word, but of the nature and character and mystery of what it is identified with.

It is on this principle that Mantra Yoga was founded. Words which sprang from the intuition of the Yogis and thinkers, words which conveyed the meaning in a most profound manner, such words were collected for the use of the adepts, who repeated them

and who profited by repeating them. Mantra Yoga means a science of words, words which were sacred and helpful in one's spiritual evolution. The Yogis have worked on this principle for many thousands of years, and have discovered a great mystery in the power of words. Sufis of all ages have followed this principle of making use of words which are suggestive of a certain sense, a sense which one wishes to bring out and make a reality in one's life. No doubt it is necessary to know the meaning of the sacred words one repeats; this gives a thousandfold greater effect. And the spoken word has a greater power than silent concentration, provided there is power of concentration and sincere feeling at the back of that word.

The suggestion of sacred words first impresses one's own spirit, helping one to develop that quality, that virtue, that merit, that power of inspiration which the words suggest. And the mechanism of one's inner being is such that every word that one repeats so many times becomes each time more living, and then this mechanism goes on repeating the same word automatically. Thus if a person has repeated a sacred word for fifteen minutes, throughout the day and night this word goes on, as the spirit repeats it continually.

Another effect of this repetition is that the word is reflected upon the universal Spirit, and the universal mechanism then begins to repeat it automatically. In other words, what man repeats, God then begins to repeat, until it is materialized and has become a reality on all planes of existence.

There are also dangerous words. There are actually so many dangerous words that one cannot warn people against them. In order to avoid words of bad effect there is a very amusing custom in India among certain people. Instead of saying, 'When you were ill I came to see you,' they will say, 'When your enemies were ill I came to see you.'

The mystics of all ages have attached great importance to the mystery of the word, and every adept who has persevered in the path of Mantra Yoga has always arrived at the desired issue. No doubt perseverance, patience, and faith, all three, are required in accomplishing a mystical work by the power of repetition.

CHAPTER VI

SUGGESTION BY MOVEMENT

EVERY movement has a greater significance than one can imagine. The ancient people, recognizing this fact, knew the psychology of movement, and it is a great pity that the science of movement and of its psychological effect seems to be so little known today. Movement is life; its absence is like death. All that gives proof of life in whatever form is movement; all that shows the sign of death in whatever form is the absence of movement.

Movements can be considered from different points of view, and there are several kinds of movements. There is a natural spontaneous movement, which is mostly seen by noticing the movements of an innocent child who has not learned them from anywhere, who is not influenced by having seen someone else making these movements, but just makes them naturally, expressing its feelings which words can never express. When feelings of astonishment, of fear, of joy, of fancy, of affection, or of appreciation are expressed naturally, they reveal much more than words can ever say.

Then there are the movements which can be regarded as a language of people belonging to a certain community, a certain family, a certain country, or a certain race. The members of that particular community alone know that language; others are quite ignorant of it. These movements which have become expressions of language are not understood by the people of another country, but they are not the natural and spontaneous movements mentioned above which are like a language for all. For instance the Eastern way of beckoning a person is with all one's fingers; it suggests, 'I call you from my whole heart', and when a person calls somebody with only one finger it is not considered right. In Italy and other Mediterranean countries there is the same way of beckoning someone. In all the countries of the East the movements may differ, and there may also be some movements which are like those of southern Europeans; there

are psychological reasons why these movements should be alike.

There are also individual movements, the movements an individual makes, showing thereby his particular state of health and his particular mental condition; for one can read a person's condition by the movements he makes. And if one has insight into movements one can perceive by the movements of a person whether his eyes and ears are in good order, or whether he has anything wrong with any part of his body; his movements will convey it. Movements also show the characteristics of a person, his attitude, his point of view, his outlook on life. The fineness or crudeness of a person's character can be traced in his movements, and his deep characteristics such as pride and humility can also be discovered from a person's natural movements. Is it right to make movements? All is right, movements or no movements, because everything has its uses, everything has its meaning. It is the right use of all things that is right, and the wrong use of everything that is wrong.

No doubt there is also a meaning in controlling the movements. If a person is allowed to go on with his movements we do not know where it will end, but at the same time by repressing movements one can turn into a rock; and so there are many people who, with beautiful feelings and fine thoughts, turn into a rock because they control their movements too much. Every day a greater stiffness comes over them, and this works against their original character. They may not be stiff by nature, they may have fine thoughts and deep feeling, but they become stiff because they are taught to control their movements too much, even to the extent of turning into a stone. One sees this happen frequently.

By repressing a movement a person may have buried a thought or a feeling inside him, but if it is an undesirable thought or feeling it is just as well that by these movements it should be thrown out instead of being kept inside him; it is better that it is extirpated than buried in the heart. No doubt there is another way of looking at it, and that is from the point of view of self-control; but this belongs to asceticism, which is another subject altogether.

Then there are the more refined movements which belong to

art. This art, the art of movements, can be divided into three different classes. To the first belong the grace and fineness of movements executed with skill and subtlety, the harmony that they express and the music that they have of their own. The next is the movements which convey the meaning of what one says more fully. When the art of speech and of singing is separated from the art of movement, this certainly takes away a great beauty and charm, for speech, reciting, and singing go together with movements. And the third class of movements is to illustrate the feeling that is in music, to express or to interpret music in the form of movements.

But the most essential aspect of movement is that movement does not only suggest the meaning for which it is intended, but that a movement, according to its nature and character, can make an impression on the person who sees it or on the one who makes it, an effect which can automatically work to form a destiny in their lives. In ancient times every movement the priest made during the service or ceremony had a significance, a psychological significance, and accordingly it made an impression on those who attended the services. In the ceremonies and rituals of ancient peoples every movement had a psychological significance. Thus we do not only attach a meaning to a movement, but a movement very often has a meaning in itself, and that meaning has an effect; a person can even harm himself or others, not knowing the significance of the movement he makes.

How can we know which movements are good or which have a destructive effect? All we want to know we can know and will know. Often we do not know things because we do not care to know them. The field of knowledge is so vast and yet so near that once we are interested in a subject it is not only we that go towards it, but the subject comes to us. To begin to discover the significance of movements, their character, their nature, their mystery, we have only to watch, and our sense of right proportion, our sense of beauty and harmony, will begin to show us what suggests destruction and what suggests to us harmony, sympathy, love, beauty, or fineness. We have only to give our attention to it and it will all come; but to describe which movement is constructive and which is destructive would take volumes.

It is perhaps as difficult and as subtle as making out which word is destructive and which word is constructive, and what hidden psychological significance each word has besides its common meaning.

Furthermore our life as it is just now, so busy and occupied with material things, gives us little opportunity to look into the deeper significance of life. It keeps our mind occupied on the surface all day long, so that we have become ignorant of what is behind the veil of the life itself which we are living, of the movements around us and of the movements we make. It is a kind of intoxication, and it keeps us floating on the surface, ignorant of the depths of life, for we have no time to think of these things. Nevertheless, these things have their meaning, their significance, and their effect just the same, whether we know them or not.

The blessings given by the sages, the good wishes and prayers of the masters, were always connected with movement. The movements made the prayer alive; they insured that the blessings were granted. No doubt if movement is without silent thought and deep feeling it is less than thought and feeling, it is almost nothing; but when a movement is made with a living and sincere thought, and with deep feeling, it will make the thought and feeling a thousand times more effective.

CHAPTER VII.

SUGGESTION IN PRACTICE

PRACTICAL suggestion has four different aspects. The first is the suggestion that is made to oneself, which is called auto-suggestion; the second is the suggestion that is made to another person; the third is the suggestion that is made to the lower creatures; and the fourth, which is little known to the scientific world but which has always been understood by the mystics, is the suggestion that is made to an object.

Auto-suggestion is something by which one helps oneself to be encouraged or to be discouraged, to be well or to be ill, to go down or to rise, to be happy or to be unhappy. There are two kinds of auto-suggestion: the kind that one intentionally, consciously, makes to oneself and upon which the whole mystical training is based; and the suggestion that one makes to oneself automatically, knowing neither its nature nor its results. The latter kind of suggestion is made by everyone to himself without knowing whether it is to his advantage or to his disadvantage; by it many go downhill and very few uphill. There are many who without knowing it are in love with misfortune. They will say outwardly, 'I hate it. I don't want it. I don't want to be ill. I don't want to be unfortunate,' yet at the same time unconsciously they continually suggest the contrary to themselves by thinking, 'I am so ill, I am so unfortunate, I am so stupid, I am so weak'.

There are also two kinds of suggestions that one makes to others. One suggestion is that which one makes to another person to help him to be cured of an illness, or to help him to improve his life or his character. And the other is the suggestion one makes out of foolishness or out of ignorance of its effect. For instance someone says in fun to a friend, 'I will shoot you today.' It is a joke, but he does not know what effect that joke can have upon his friend. One easily says by way of a joke, 'You will go

bankrupt if you do so, if you go on spending like this,' or, 'Do you wish to die? You will surely have an accident.' One simply says it, not realizing what effect it could have, sooner or later, upon the other. Sometimes in order to show one's friendship a person says, 'But how weak you look! You are very run down. You can't be feeling well!' These suggestions often make a person ill.

Then there is the suggestion that one makes to the lower creation. All pet animals such as dogs and cats and horses receive suggestion readily and act upon it. This shows that it is not true, as many say, that the lower creatures have no mind; they not only have a mind but they have a heart too, and very often it is more apparent and more alive than in so-called human beings.

And the fourth kind of suggestion is the suggestion that one makes to an object. In this age of materialism this is not understood by most people, but from a mystical point of view it is very often as effective and wonderful as any other suggestion I have mentioned. In ancient times a hero, before going to war, used to take his sword in his hand and speak words of friendship to it from the bottom of his heart. He would say, 'I have taken you in my hand so that you will be my support, my protection, and my friend on the battlefield. All else I leave at home, but you I take along with me, my friend, my beloved sword.'

A musician in India, before playing on his vina, used to greet his instrument saying, 'You are my life, you are my inspiration, you are the means of elevation for my soul; I greet you humbly. You will stand by me when I play.' No one can know of its effect except the one who has spoken these words; he knows what life he has put into the object. That instrument which was an object has turned into a living being.

All manner of practices such as invoking sacred names, repeating spiritual chants in a new house, are suggestion and affect even objects. However foolish it may look from the outside, still the fact remains that all things and beings represent life, the one life, although some are more open to suggestion and feeling, and others seemingly less open. But even the latter are also open to suggestion; it is we who are not open to see them receive it. Rumi says in the Masnavi that fire, water, air, and earth are all as dead things

to us, but before God they stand as living beings, as His obedient servants. The man who knows this mystery knows a wonderful law of nature. As soon as a soul is awakened to this mystery life begins to reveal itself, and the soul begins to communicate with life.

CHAPTER VIII

ATTITUDE

IT IS upon one's attitude that one's whole life depends; by attitude one achieves desirable or undesirable results. Generally the whole difficulty in the life of a person is that he is not master of his own attitude. And however learned, however intelligent, or however spiritual a man may appear to be, if he has no control over his attitude and no insight into the result of that attitude, he has not gone very far on the path.

Although a right attitude is an inborn quality, it can be changed and developed. A right mind has a right attitude, a wrong mind has a wrong attitude. Sometimes the mind gets into a crooked or awkward position, it is not in its right place, and then whatever a person sees seems wrong to him, and whatever he does turns out to be wrong. In some people's lives this happens very often, in others' only at times.

In Sanskrit there is a saying that when a bad time comes in one's life, the mind changes its attitude. But he who looks at the mind as a compass which always points in the right direction, and who continues to believe in this, will always find the right attitude. And once a person has a key to his attitude in life, then everything can be of use to him, as for instance humility and pride. The one who has humility as his principle is incapable of pride, and the one who has pride as his principle is incapable of humility: one lacks the right leg, the other the left, and in both cases something is missing. There is a time when humility wins, when humility raises one's position, when it melts hearts, when it is the greatest virtue in a man's life; and at such times it is a serious fault if humility is missing. But then there is a time when pride has its place, when pride has to perform a role, when it raises a person, or when it sustains him; and at that time he is lost if he practises the principle of humility. Therefore it is not the principle, it is making use of the principle which is the main thing.

When we tell a composer, 'The music you have composed is

wonderful,' and he answers, 'It certainly is,' it is as if his whole composition has become out of tune; in such a case he would have harmonized his music by having humility. But when a person is urged very strongly by his friends to come and have a drink in a café, which may be all right for his friends, but not for him, if his pride at that time helped him and he said, 'I am sorry, I cannot come,' that would be much better than humility or showing courtesy to them by saying, 'I will come.'

It is the same with optimism and pessimism. There are people who obstinately hold on to optimism, and there are others who think it is wise to be always pessimistic. Both of these make a mistake. Optimism has its place and so has pessimism. If one looks at every sign of misfortune with pessimism, maybe one will be able to avert a coming misfortune. If for instance a young violinist, among whose audience there are perhaps fifty people who he himself feels do not appreciate him, is pessimistic in regard to that feeling, in time he will find that everyone in the audience will appreciate him. But if this pessimism develops too much he will find in the end that everyone in the audience is against him.

There are some things about which we must be pessimistic, and others about which we must be optimistic, and both are necessary in life. If someone says, 'Your friend is unkind to you, he does not love you, he is not a true friend to you,' and we keep an unbelieving attitude towards this criticism, this criticism will remain negative, and will have no effect either upon us or upon our friend; whereas if we believe it, our belief in time will allow the same attribute to manifest in our friend. When a man says, 'I am going to fight, but I doubt if we shall win,' he had better not fight; but the one who notices all the signs which show that there cannot be a victory and yet feels that he will succeed, will surely win in the end. To have a pessimistic attitude towards all that should not happen and to have an optimistic attitude towards all that one wishes to be, is a great thing. Very often a person, blinded by facts, falls flat because of them, and sometimes the truth is hidden by facts; but he should rather ignore the facts and keep to his optimistic point of view. The latter is like standing in space, and the former is like creeping on the ground. There is a saying

in India, which everyone there knows, 'If the attitude is right, then all will become easy,' and by right attitude is meant the proper attitude towards life.

Then there is the question of hopefulness and resignation. Resignation is the attribute of the saints, and hopefulness is the attribute of the masters; but in all the illuminated souls there is a balance. The preferable resignation is the resignation to the past. We should be resigned to all that we have suffered, to all the pain we have gone through, to all that has gone wrong, to all that we have lost; but we should not continue that resignation for the things of the present, because the present should be met with hopefulness. By being hopeful one is sometimes able to change one's life, while by being resigned one allows conditions to continue throughout life.

Even such a great and wonderful attribute as contentment, which is the sign of the saints, could sometimes prove to be disadvantageous in one's life. When a person is contented with his life's conditions this will affect his enthusiasm, and in time his enthusiasm will become paralysed, whereas his discontented heart emits an enthusiasm which becomes a battery enabling him to go forward. Very often contentment proves a fault in people who may show harmony, calmness, peace, and kindness in their nature, but who at the same time do not go forward. But with things that cannot be helped, situations that cannot be changed, conditions that will always remain the same, one may just as well be contented. Besides, if one has risen above certain things in life one does not attach any more importance to them; to be contented in that case is the contentment of the sages, of the wise. But if one wishes to obtain things which one considers to be of great importance to one, one should not be content, one should not practise contentment but enthusiasm. One should let enthusiasm grow so that the will-power may use that enthusiasm to produce the desired results from it.

There are two different dispositions. There is the person who feels that he must do something outwardly, that he must finish it; but although he is busy with it he has no hope of success. He may be studying for an examination or he may be working with his hands or with his brain, but at the back of his mind he holds the

thought that perhaps it will not be successful. I knew a writer who had this disposition. She was most gifted and there was every opportunity for her to be successful, but that unfortunate disposition was so strong that every time she wrote something she asked herself, 'Will it really be accepted? Will it really take, I wonder?' Her first thought was denial. And what happened? She would finish splendid articles and essays and books, but when they were sent to a publisher they were never accepted. It was not the fault of her essay or article; it was her attitude. The influence she put into it destroyed it all.

And then there is another disposition, the disposition of a person who will not accomplish anything, who will not do anything but will only be hopeful. He will be disappointed too, for he is hopeful about nothing; he hopes for wonderful things to happen, but he does not move, he does not work for it.

Of these two kinds of people it seems that the one has the body but not the mind, and that the other has the mind but not the body; both are lacking in something. It is balance that brings about desirable results: on one side hopefulness, on the other perseverance. Then again there are some who are very keen on perseverance, but at the same time they do not have anything except perseverance. They are just like a machine that can produce or make something; but first there must be an engineer to make it work; the machines cannot do it alone. This makes a person very dependent.

In conclusion, the right attitude is to keep a balance between reason and hopefulness. There must be facts, and there must be will together with the facts. Hopefulness should be built upon a ground which is solid and strong; and if a person has a hopeful attitude firmly built upon the ground of reason, he will no doubt achieve success.

CHAPTER IX

MAGNETISM

ONE OF the aspects of personal magnetism is physical magnetism, which has three kinds of attraction. One kind comes because the mechanism of the body is working properly, regularly, when the circulation of the blood is right and when proper care is taken of the body; the next depends on the attractiveness of the form and features with which a person is born; and the third is caused by harmonious movement. The person who lacks any of these three things will naturally lack magnetism. As there is the blossoming of the trees, so there is the time in a person's life when he blossoms, a time which is called youth, when this magnetism expresses itself in its fullness. It comes as a season and it goes as a season.

The second aspect of magnetism is the magnetism of mind. A person of thought and wit, one who is quick to grasp something and apt in expressing his ideas to others, naturally has magnetic power. This magnetism of thought can also be divided into three kinds. One is thoughtfulness. A thoughtful person may not perhaps speak one word, nor do anything, but the very fact that he is thoughtful will attract others to him. The next way in which the magnetism of mind manifests is in the form of speech, of wit, of expression. Those who are in the presence of a man who has a living mind are immediately won by his magnetism. And the third kind of magnetism of the mind is the power of perception and conception. There are people to whom we at once feel attracted, to whom we feel close, who understand us and what we say and what we mean. Such a person need not speak or explain anything in order to show his magnetic power. He may sit before us and listen to us, and while we are talking to him we feel at one with him.

The third aspect of magnetism is the magnetism of heart. It is more powerful than the magnetism of mind, for the latter touches the surface whereas the magnetism of heart touches the

depths of a person. The heart can be best described as a glowing fire if it is living, but when it is dead it is like frozen snow. Magnetism of heart needs no expression, for a person with a loving heart is indubitably magnetic. Therefore no one should profess to love, for love speaks for itself; it needs no words. The fire does not cry out, 'I am burning!' The heat of the glow is felt without words.

The magnetism of the heart can also be divided into three kinds. One is the heart that receives love. It has the magnetism of the moon; the cooling effect of the moon is seen in the beloved soul. Then there is the heart that loves, and this has a more powerful magnetism, a magnetism which can be likened to the sun, which is powerful and which shines. And the third kind of love is greater, finer, and more subtle than the two mentioned above: it is developed when the love becomes a continually springing fountain, which rises as a stream and falls as many drops. It is the love of souls who cannot help but love, the love of souls who only know love, not hate; the love of souls who are no longer the possessors of love but who have become love itself. Their magnetism spreads in a wider horizon and lasts longer than one could ever imagine.

The fourth and highest aspect of magnetism is the magnetism of the soul. The soul that is born again, the soul that has begun to live, the soul that has opened its eyes to the world, that soul not only attracts the wise and the virtuous, but also those who are devoid of wisdom and who lack virtue. The presence of souls who have awakened is itself a magnetism; it draws people walking on the earth and it draws souls that are not seen on the earth. It not only draws the living beings, the lower creation, but also the trees and plants are drawn to it. The atmosphere that an awakened soul produces lives for centuries in this world, unbroken and unpolluted. The sky takes care of it and preserves it for generations, in order to experience and enjoy this atmosphere produced by the illuminated souls. And the third way in which the illuminated soul shows its magnetism is in words and acts, so that every word becomes dynamic, in Biblical terms a tongue of flame; and everything this soul gives to the world remains, it lives and never dies.

PHYSICAL MAGNETISM

THERE IS not much difference between magnetism and vibration, but at the same time we use the word vibration for that which we can feel in some form or other, which we can perceive, which is more intelligible; whereas we are not always conscious of magnetism and it is not always intelligible although it has an effect on us. Sometimes magnetism may work for a long, long time before we are even conscious of it. Nevertheless, these are one and the same thing; in the aspect where it is intelligible we call it vibration because we feel the movement, whereas in the aspect of magnetism we may not feel it until its effect manifests to our view.

It is not always that one is attracted or feels repulsion on meeting a person, though it may happen that one is attracted or repulsed by merely seeing a person. Attraction or repulsion is something which takes place in less than a moment. The finer a man is the more he is awakened to this sense of attraction or repulsion, and as soon as he casts his glance over a person he either feels attracted or repelled. The only difference is that the wise see all and rise above it, whereas people of little sense react instantly. Nevertheless, every person gives an impression in an instant which calls out either attraction or repulsion.

Treating this subject from a physical point of view only, the first important thing which works automatically on another person is form and feature. The reason is that every individual is partly, even if not wholly, responsible for his form and features. Form and features do not represent only a family resemblance, but they tell us something about the person's mentality, his attitude of mind, his outlook on life, his condition. The first principle in regard to feature and form, besides the right formation, is the right proportion. Upon this depend attraction and repulsion. No doubt everyone sees it differently, because the sense of proportion is different in everyone, and therefore the

impression is also different. And when we look at it from the artistic point of view, we find that there is a sense which is more developed in some and less in others, a sense which is awakened and which is touched by line and colour.

The next aspect of physical magnetism can be seen in the regularity of the working of the physical body, in the rhythm of the heart and the pulse and in the circulation of the blood; also in the purity of the body, within and without. This magnetism is sustained by a regular life, by taking care of one's health and vigour, and by maintaining a regular rhythm of life. A man, absorbed as he is in his daily affairs, often neglects his body which is a vehicle to express the spiritual ideal. His neglect is sometimes due to his absorption in his daily work, sometimes to thoughtlessness, and sometimes because he does not trouble to think about it.

Another aspect of physical magnetism can be observed in the movements. By this is not meant dancing movements, but movements in ordinary life: walking, sitting, eating, drinking. Every moment one shows the bent of one's mind with every turn one takes. We can see from a man's movements what his weakness is and what his strength; his movements can tell us of his wretchedness and of his joy. A person with awkward movements will always have an awkward mentality, a person with crude movements will naturally be coarse. This does not mean that one should develop artificial movements in one's everyday life in order to make one's movements more beautiful and appealing; that would be still worse. Nothing that is artificial has any power; that which attracts is an innocent movement. It manifests naturally; one cannot help moving in a certain way. Control over one's actions, over one's movements, gives a person magnetism; and the one who moves automatically loses that magnetism, whereas the one who gains control over his movements develops a power of magnetism which manifests in different forms. Is it not clear that a person who walks stamping on the floor with his feet has something hard in his mentality? A person may show his animal tendencies in the way he eats; also the way he sits, the way he looks, the way he speaks, and the way he acts in every capacity of life, are expressive of the condition of his mind.

Many do not observe all this, and yet they are affected by it

just the same. Either they are attracted to someone or they are repulsed by him without his having said one word. Very often a person goes to look for work in an office, in a shop or elsewhere, and the man who appoints him, before he asks him any question has gained a first impression of him without even knowing it himself; and it is this impression which directs the whole conversation that he has with that person. He may ask him a hundred questions or only two questions, but they are dictated by the first impression he received in one instant. Naturally an ordinary person is not awakened to the higher aspects of magnetism, but everyone in a greater or lesser degree possesses a sense to feel and to be affected by physical magnetism.

CHAPTER XI

THE MAGNETISM OF THE MIND

IN MANY cases the magnetism of the mind proves to be more powerful than physical magnetism. It can be divided into five aspects.

The man who has a keen perception can win the hearts of both the foolish and the wise, because he understands them both. The wise man looks for someone who will understand his wisdom, but the foolish man is also longing to meet someone who will listen to his story and who will understand him. For the foolish person is always rejected; everybody gets tired of listening to his stories and tries to avoid him. The wise man, with his rare thoughts of wisdom, is always disappointed in people, and when he meets someone who can perceive his ideas this gives him a joy beyond words. It is because of this that a perceptive faculty in a person makes him loved by all.

The next aspect of mind is creative. It may manifest in the form of an invention or in a work of art; it may manifest in the form of composing music, writing poetry, and in many other forms. This aspect shows a most wonderful quality of God, namely creation. The creative genius has always the sword of victory in his hand, and all he does will bring him success and give his personality that magnetism which attracts everyone who understands his merit.

The third aspect of the mind is reasoning, judging. The man who has the faculty of reasoning and of justice is sought by everyone. He is the one to depend upon and to accept advice from. This faculty will show in all he says and does, and it will win for him many who are attracted by it.

The fourth aspect of the mind is memory. A man who can remember verses, songs, words, or ideas collects knowledge within himself. It is he who may be called learned, who has within him a storehouse of all he has studied, experienced, and

seen, and this gives him a magnetic influence which attracts those who value learning.

Sometimes people, wishing to improve a weak memory, attempt to memorize more and more, but it is not always by trying to use a particular faculty that the faculty develops. Very often we remember things which are useless. There are many things which it is not necessary to remember, and in trying to do so we make our memory tired with those thoughts; consequently, it is not free to remember other, more important things. It is no longer open; it becomes limited; it closes itself with the thoughts it has in it, and this may even develop insanity. The best advice in regard to memory is to forget all the disagreeable things of the past, and only to remember the most beautiful ones.

The fifth aspect of the mind is feeling. The mind that has a touch of feeling is brilliant like a diamond. It has a liquid quality, for the warmth of feeling liquefies the crystal-like mind. A man with such a mind shows this quality in what we call wit, and also in tact. Wit is a play of delicate feelings, of humour or joy, and the thought which it forms manifests in speech or action. It has a cunning way of winning those who have subtle perception. When three or four people are sitting together, and a serious person comes and sits down among them like a rock, hard and stiff and devoid of any sense of humour, he kills even the atmosphere of the place; but when someone, even if he is a stranger, joins them and shows that he possesses the quality of wit, he wins them all in a few moments. The mentality of the witty person can be called a dancing mind, and to have a witty mind is a wonderful manifestation of nature; it is a great quality. A witty person can make words dance; his phrases can give us the joy of a symphony.

The serious manifestation of this quality is tact. It is essentially the same as wit; when wit is developed and centralized it becomes tact. Everyone can feel, think, speak, and act, but not everyone is always tactful. It takes lifelong study and practice to be tactful, and even if a person becomes tactful at the last moment of his life it is worth while. The magnetism of a tactful person is beyond words. Every word and movement, every action of his, will have

an influence on those whom he meets, for he is not only a considerate person; he is consideration itself. It is not that all sympathetic people are always tactful. There are people who are most loving and yet tactless; the more they want to please their friends, the more they displease them. Their loving words can become stones instead of flowers. This does not mean that they have no love, that they have no sympathy; it only means that they do not possess this great wealth of mind which is tact.

There are three degrees of the rhythm of mind. There is a mind which creates slowly and perceives slowly, there is a mind which creates gently and perceives gently, and the third degree is the mind which perceives quickly and creates thoughts quickly. There is a particular phenomenon that manifests from these three rhythms of the mind, which each has its particular influence. The three qualities of the mind—slow, gentle, and quick¹—are the outcome of the three *Gunas*, as they are called in Sanskrit: *Satva*, *Rajas*, and *Tamas*. There is one person to whom we may say something and he answers, 'Will you give me time to think it over? May I tell you about it tomorrow?' The answer that he will give us will surely be of some worth. There is another person who has heard us say something and he says, 'And then, what then?' and then we go on speaking, and while we are saying something else he is thinking about what has struck his mind. By the time we have finished our conversation he has found a proper answer to what we said first. And there is a third man who answers us even before we have finished our sentence; far from thinking about what we have said, he has not even heard it. He has at once formed an opinion on it and promptly gives an answer. Such a man may easily make a mistake.

In conclusion we might say that there are two principal mentalities, of which one may be called a living mind and the other a dead mind. A living mind will show its life by its creative and perceptive quality, whereas a dead mind is recognized by the absence of this quality. The pleasure that a man derives from a clear mind and a living mentality is a pleasure that cannot be compared with the pleasures that belong to this earth. A brilliant intellectuality imparts the pleasure of flying in the air, it lifts one

¹ See p. 22.

above the earth. The thinker is like a bird that flies in the air compared with the man who is like an animal that stands on its four legs; and the joy of the bird that flies in the air is beyond comparison with the pleasure of the animal that walks on the earth.

CHAPTER XII

THE MAGNETISM OF THE HEART

THE LIVING heart has the same quality as the primal being of God, and it is because of this that the heart of man is the greatest magnet there is. The primal aspect of the divine Being, as it is said in the Bible, is love; the manifestation of the same principle in its fullness is to be found in the heart of man, and thus the awakening of the heart is in fact the awakening of God. In the person whose heart is not awakened, God is not yet awakened.

There is nothing in the world that draws people closer together than sympathy. A simple answer to the question as to what attracts and what repulses, will be that sympathy attracts and that antipathy gives a feeling of repulsion. Some people have sympathy for one person and antipathy for another, but when they feel antipathy for somebody this eats up the magnetism which is created in their hearts by sympathy, and therefore they will always lack magnetism. What is created on one side is used up on the other side.

Heart quality is that which attracts not only mankind but even animals and birds. When travelling abroad we very often meet a person who does not know one word of our language, and yet we feel a silent friendship with him. He may not speak, but his heart speaks and our heart hears it. The living heart is such a phenomenon that it needs no pleading. A sympathetic person need not say, 'I like you very much.' Sympathy speaks for itself. The voice of the heart reaches us before a word is uttered. The voice of the heart is louder, the words that the heart speaks are clearer than the words of any language. No barrier remains when the heart draws a person, neither land nor water, for the heart is a phenomenon in itself. If there is anything in man that can be called living it is the heart, not heart in the physical sense but in the mystical sense.

There are three reasons why a person may be attracted to another: in one case the heart quality of the one is the same as that of the other with only very little difference; then they are

attracted. The second reason is that the heart quality of the one is quite opposite to that of the other. And the third reason is that in the one there is a heart and in the other there is a stone.

The explanation of the first of these three rules is that like attracts like; a sympathetic person is naturally drawn towards a loving person. The explanation of the second rule is that the one has certain heart qualities and the other has other heart qualities; the qualities of the one supplement those of the other; together, therefore, they make a complete heart; that is why they are drawn together. One will often see two people of quite different qualities who are yet great friends. And the explanation of the third rule is that what is most fine seeks for what is most dense in order to express itself. Are not souls attracted to the dense earth in order to be born as mortal beings, are not souls living in the angelic world attracted to a human body, donning it in order to be walking under the sun? If heaven can be attracted to the earth, then a most spiritual person can be attracted to a most material one. What is fine cannot exist without what is dense, and what is dense cannot exist without what is fine; therefore two opposite poles, meeting together, form a perfect whole.

The other law is the law of repulsion. It is possible for a sympathetic person to become friends with a quite unsympathetic one, but there is often repulsion between a sympathetic person and one who is half-sympathetic, as there is between the wise and the half-wise. They cannot get along together. The wise can get along better with the foolish than with someone who is half-wise. The latter makes life very difficult for the wise man.

Another reason for repulsion is the inharmonious grouping of the qualities of two people; in other words the qualities of the one do not blend with those of the other. Both may have lovable qualities, but they may be so different that they cannot blend, and then there comes repulsion.

The third reason for repulsion is that there is no echo of sympathy to be found in the other. Even in what we call a heartless person one expects to find an echo of one's own sympathy, but when one does not find that echo, then it is like standing before an iron wall; it is then that repulsion comes.

We read in ancient legends that the saints, the illuminated souls,

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spoke with birds and animals. What language did they speak? It was the language of the heart. We read in the Bible of the Twelve Apostles understanding all languages. What was it? It was the awakening of the heart. Once the heart is awakened we begin to understand another's language before a word is spoken. Birds and beasts apart, sympathy has an influence even on trees and plants. A sympathetic person creates an atmosphere which naturally attracts another; worthy or unworthy, both are drawn by sympathy.

There are some who are capable of sympathy, and there are others who are not capable of it; nevertheless everyone possesses a heart. Either it is living or it is dead, and if it is living it has magnetism. The more living it is, the more magnetism it has; without magnetism the heart is dead, or one should rather say that it is not yet awakened, that it is asleep.

It is the greatest pity when the heart awakens and then goes to sleep again; this is worse than not awakening. If it is awakened and keeps awake its magnetism becomes stronger and stronger because the power of the heart becomes greater and greater, and what it can attract is beyond words to explain. Souls who have the power of wonder-working, of performing miracles, do this through the power of the heart. And the power of the heart is the power of God. In Sufi terms an awakened heart is called *Sahib-e Dil*, which means master-mind. If anyone has ever heard the word within, it is he whose heart is awakened; for the Speaker speaks all the time while the heart is mostly asleep. If the heart is awakened it can hear the whisper which comes from within.

When disagreement arises between friends, when sympathy turns into antipathy, when sweet turns into bitter, and when one asks them why it is so, what do they say? 'The other one does not understand.' Probably they will both say the same. Very few will say, 'I did not understand the other,' most people will say, 'The other does not understand me.' But why must there be this lack of understanding? What causes it? It is lack of sympathy. No words can ever make a person understand; it is the heart alone which can convey its full meaning to the other heart, for there are subtle waves of sympathy, there are delicate perceptions of feelings such as gratefulness, admiration, kindness, which cannot

be put into words. Words are too inadequate to explain the finer feelings; it is the heart quality which can express itself fully, and again it is the heart quality which can understand fully. Would it therefore be an exaggeration to say that as long as the heart is not awakened a man is as though dead? It is after the awakening of the heart that a man begins to live.

Then there is the question of how to develop this magnetism which is more powerful than all the other influences and qualities of man. The answer is that one should not try to develop the power of this magnetism; this in itself would be an error. To develop a quality in order to draw others? For that reason? It is a selfish reason, and selfishness stands in the way of magnetism. Magnetism comes from having no desire for any such powers, but allowing this quality of the heart to develop naturally; for love is the plant of God, and it needs no water to grow. It is life itself, it has power in itself to grow and to expand, if only we do not close our heart. What is necessary on the part of man is not to keep it from developing. And in cases where we find lack of sympathy in people, it is not that their heart did not have sympathy, but only that it is closed, either intentionally or unintentionally. To say that someone is loveless is like saying that there is no water beneath a certain piece of land. There is no land which has no water in its depths, and if one has the patience to dig deep enough there is no heart that will seem to be without sympathy.

All the beauty of life manifests to the view of him whose heart is awakened. To the extent to which a heart is opened, to that extent the horizon of beauty manifests to his view. It is not only that the awakened heart draws man nearer, but a living heart also draws God closer. It is as in the story of a Persian king, to whom his Grand Vizir said, 'All day long you give your time to the work of the state and at night you are occupied in devotion to God. Why is this?' The king answered, 'At night I pursue God, so that during the day God will follow me!' People talk about magic; can there be greater magic than the quality of heart? The most melodious song, the most beautiful poetry, is the fine feeling of a living heart.

CHAPTER XIII

THE MAGNETISM OF THE SOUL

THE SOUL has the greatest magnetism compared with the power of mind and the physical magnetism. The word soul is so little understood that it is difficult for most people to perceive and to distinguish soul qualities. There are, however, soul qualities, distinct and different from the qualities of mind and body. They are greater than what one calls virtue, and they can attract more than any other quality. One might call them angelic qualities, but since we have to do with human beings and we have little to do with angels, it is better to call them soul qualities.

The principal soul quality is innocence. There is a great difference between innocence and ignorance. The ignorant one does not know; the innocent one both knows and does not know. It is its innocence that attracts us in a child, and the magnetism that we feel in the expression of an infant has a heavenly character. The child does not know and therefore it is innocent, but when the soul has reached a point where it knows and yet is innocent, then it is divine. Very often people mistake an innocent soul for a simple soul. Indeed, that soul is simple, but not in the way people think. When one sees generosity in someone who is poor and humility in someone who is honoured, when one notices simplicity in a great soul and fineness in a strong personality, when one discerns an unassuming quality in a brave man and a desire to learn in a man who knows and understands, then one may realize that all these are qualities which belong to the soul, and they win the heart of man more than anything in the world. People are unconsciously attracted; souls without realizing it will surrender to the soul that shows its original qualities.

Every infant brings with it to the earth soul qualities, but as it grows it forgets them and learns the qualities of the earth. And when these earth qualities have matured and developed after a person has learnt the practical side of life, after he has learnt to distinguish between good and bad, between right and wrong,

then if the soul unfolds itself it will begin to show the soul qualities as a sign of its unfoldment. It is not possible to keep the innocence of childhood for ever; even if one wanted to preserve it one could not do so, for life on earth sweeps it away. And as a child grows up it becomes more and more clever, and that gives it satisfaction. People will call it common sense, they will call it practicality, or whatever name they may choose; they will even call it wisdom. But the time of the soul's maturity eventually comes; and when once the soul has matured a new outlook on life arises. All the knowledge gained through experiences, through cleverness, practicality, common sense, or wisdom, drops its hard shell and remains only in the form of essence; and innocence manifests as its natural outcome. It is not that innocent people are not wise, though they may not seem wise from our point of view; those who are really innocent know the essence of wisdom while yet perhaps appearing to be simple.

No doubt a person with soul qualities is not always understood. His language is different. But at the same time it is the one with soul qualities who will penetrate and who will have power in the form of influence. When we read in the lives of the saints of the simplicity with which they talked with birds and trees and flowers, then we can understand, if we try, that it was not the condition of a simple mind that they showed; it was a mind full of wisdom only it worked in a different way. It does not take long for someone with soul quality to make friends; he can make friends with the wise, with the foolish, with the virtuous, with the sinner; for nothing can stand as a barrier between two souls. His soul will reach the soul of the other, and the deeper he is, the deeper will he penetrate into the other.

Another soul quality is harmony. It is a natural inclination of an illuminated soul to create harmony, for it is in harmony that an illuminated soul finds peace; the one who is without illumination finds his satisfaction in struggle. Fearlessness is also a soul quality. It is the light of the soul, falling on problems that trouble us, which makes us see life more clearly and which gives us the power to surmount our difficulties. Soul quality gives bravery, courage, as we see in the image of Shiva, the Lord of the Yogis, who has a snake round his neck, which means that he is not afraid

of keeping the enemy he has conquered curled round him. That is bravery.

All the manners one learns in order to become refined are the natural outcome of the soul quality. Once the soul is awakened one need not learn manners; manners come of themselves. For all beautiful manners belong to the soul; they are the qualities of an illuminated soul. One tries to build a personality, but once the soul has awakened the personality is built like a magic palace. It is built without building.

In point of fact all virtues are soul qualities. But virtues are also preached from the pulpit, and a person who has learned to be good and nice and kind because the preacher has told him to may possess virtues, and yet these virtues do not belong to him. They are like something he has borrowed from somewhere, and he will have to give it back some day. But that which comes out of the heart as a natural spring is real virtue, for it will all remain, and that gives one the greatest satisfaction. It is very sad for a person to be good only because goodness has been urged upon him and he cannot escape, and so he has to be good. This kind of goodness is really worse than badness.

Soul quality also expresses itself through art, through music, through poetry. And in whatever way one may wish to give expression to the soul, the soul quality manifests in the form of love, harmony, and beauty.

CHAPTER XIV

SPIRITUAL MAGNETISM

MAGNETISM is something that can be wasted, that can be lost, and that can be made powerless. When a person consciously exerts the magnetism he has it becomes powerless; the very power with which one exerts the magnetism makes it powerless. Magnetism can be wasted if one does not have the strength and control to sustain it. Many possess great magnetism in some form or other, but without knowing it they lose some of it every moment of the day. As one needs a safe for keeping one's treasures, so one must know the key to the control of magnetism of whatever kind.

Magnetism can be lost in two ways. A person who has some magnetism, without his noticing it may be robbed by another who does this either consciously or unconsciously. How can a man know when he robs another unconsciously of his magnetism? It is very easy to know. When he sees that people do not want to listen to him, when he realizes that people do not want to be with him for long but feel like running away from him, then he must know that he robs them unconsciously of their magnetism; that is why they run away. And magnetism may also be lost by lack of regularity in life, by lack of conscientiousness, and by not knowing how to keep magnetism intact. By being conscious of one's magnetism one develops it, but by using magnetism consciously one loses it; and by being unconscious of one's magnetism one retains its charm, but it develops slowly.

Magnetism is a life substance, a living spirit. It has its own particular science. The more one knows of this science, the more one will be able to value it, to maintain it, and to utilize it to the best purpose. Action develops magnetism, but repose controls it; that is why very active people always develop their magnetism, but without being able to hold it. With one hand they take magnetism, with the other hand they give it out, and

there is nothing left. It is like earning money from one side, spending it on the other, and always being without.

A continual effort is necessary to control magnetism, and it can be controlled by a certain amount of reserve. But there are two things to consider. By too much reserve one will also close the doors to the development of magnetism, just as too much work will exhaust a man while working moderately will develop his muscular system. So it is with magnetism: when we use it continually it is soon exhausted, but when it is used no more than is needed in order to cultivate it and control it then it remains in proper proportion.

The magnetism of the word is cultivated by speech, but it is controlled by silence. A talkative person may be interesting for some time, but afterwards he loses his magnetism; he has given it out by talking. Magnetism is also lost by speaking too low, or with too much emphasis, or with too high a pitch of voice. Magnetism is lost by every unnatural expression. When a cow-herd calls his cows in a high-pitched voice, as is done in India, this is natural for him. He loses no magnetism, on the contrary he develops magnetism because it is natural for him to do so. But if a lawyer goes into a field and calls a cow in that same pitch he certainly loses magnetism, and the cow will not come either.

A speaker is handicapped when he has to speak very loudly, for a speaker can speak best in his natural tone. It is most unfortunate if he has to speak in a larger hall than he is accustomed to, for if an unnatural tone is produced he will himself be disturbed by it so that he cannot create the effect he desires. No doubt when he has been speaking for many years to large audiences he may develop his voice, and then it would become natural to him, but if not it takes away all his inspiration and power.

A thoughtful person develops magnetism by thinking, but when he is over-anxious to tell everyone about his thought he loses it. There are people who before they have even thought of a thing are too eager to speak about it, and thus instead of producing magnetic power they spoil and destroy it. Magnetism of feeling is also very powerful; its power is so great that words cannot express it; but too much expression of sentiment lets it escape. One is

attracted to a kind person, but one runs away from a person who is always shedding tears.

Spiritual magnetism is the most valuable magnetism there is, for it is the magnetism of the soul. But as soon as one begins to show one's lantern, however beautifully it burns, the oil will begin to give out and then the lantern will become dim. It is a human tendency that a little spiritual stimulus gives man such an inclination to show it that as soon as he gives an extensive expression to his spiritual awakening in the form of words or acts he loses magnetism, for the magnetism had not yet been prepared; it was not ready. It is as if a piece of coal before turning into a diamond already began to shine out; it would then remain as it was and could never become a diamond. The mystery is that magnetism is developed by use and controlled by reserve; one must know the right balance between how to develop it and how to preserve it.

It is not true that only a few people have magnetism; in point of fact everyone has some kind of magnetism. It is not true that there are people who do not develop their magnetism; the very fact that one is alive means that one develops it. But it is true that not everyone can control magnetism, and not everyone does control it. The loss of magnetism is more disadvantageous than the loss of wealth, for there is no earthly treasure to be compared with magnetism.

By *Bayat*, the initiation which a teacher gives to his pupil, a magnetism is given: the soul of the pupil is charged with a new battery. And if the pupil knows how to maintain it, how to keep it without wasting it, it will be like yeast, which never spoils and which lives for thousands of years. All the practices which are given by the teacher to guide his pupil on the spiritual path produce their particular magnetism. There is no occupation, there is no interest in the world which has so much to do with magnetism as treading the spiritual path. The power with which one progresses on the spiritual path is the power of magnetism, and the speed with which one advances depends upon the power of magnetism.

Spiritual magnetism is the best and the most dependable magnetism. Its character is healing and very powerful. This magnetism

appears with the unfoldment of the soul; this means that the soul which is covered by many veils is uncovered through the meditative process, and then the soul begins to shine out as a flame does through the lantern, which spreads its light and radiates its heat so that everyone around can feel it.

In the same way a spiritual personality begins to radiate the original light of the soul, thereby giving light and life. When Jesus Christ bade us to drink his blood and eat his flesh, he meant that the spiritual magnetism which is given by spiritual personalities in the form of blessing, in the form of prayer, by their presence, in their atmosphere, should be our sustenance, should be the food for our soul. The spiritual path is a living path, because the magnetism of the spiritual path is living.

CHAPTER XV

PSYCHOLOGY, THE MASTERY OF MIND

PSYCHOLOGY is a science of human nature, human tendencies, human inclinations, and human points of view; and the more a man touches the depths of this science the more it enlightens him, making life more clear to his vision. The word psychology is not used here in the sense in which it is generally understood today, as a branch of modern medical science; what I mean by psychology is the point of view of the thinkers; the way of the wise of looking at life, the manner of the thoughtful, the ideas of those who know life more fully. There is individual psychology and psychology of the crowd; also, it is very interesting that the more one becomes acquainted with psychology, the more one begins to see the thoughtless side of the thoughtful and the foolish side of the wise, the intoxication of the sober and the weakness of the strong.

An important aspect of psychology is attitude of mind. The mind takes a certain attitude, and then the whole world comes under the shadow of this attitude. If one has a fear, a doubt, or a suspicion it becomes the attitude of the mind, and everything that one sees one begins to suspect, to fear, or to doubt, and, as Sa'di says, every brain may have a little of it. One never knows when one changes one's attitude. Life is an intoxication; whatever happens to be a person's attitude, it is according to that attitude that he looks at life. He may be the most thoughtful, wise, qualified, and learned man there is, but if he happens to have one of these attitudes of fear, doubt, or suspicion, the whole world will become the subject for proving to him the truth of whatever he has at the back of his mind. This does not mean that things and people in the world actually become what he fears; what happens is that first the shadow of his mind falls on them, and then the action of the shadow convinces him of the rightness of his doubt, of the truth of his suspicion, and of the reality of his fear. In other

words, his doubt, his suspicion, or his fear becomes like a living entity before him.

There is an amusing story of an opium-eater who, half asleep, half awake, was lying on the grass with his hat on his knees, thinking, 'Suppose a thief came along, what would I do?' And no sooner had he thought this than he saw a thief before him. He looked for a stick, and he struck the thief hard, whereupon he woke up suddenly and said, 'Well, you gave it to me, but I gave it you back all right!' There was no thief; it was his own knee; his knee with his hat on it appeared for the moment to be a thief because the thought of a thief was in his mind. He gently, slowly, raised his stick, and when he struck he never thought that he would strike himself. In this moment there was fear, there was a thief, there was a fight, and there was a hurt; and what was it all? He himself.

Such is the life of man. Man takes this opium from life. He has deep impressions of fear, of doubt, of suspicion, of prejudice, or of distrust; and when these impressions fall upon others they make him see in these others the same thing that he is keeping hidden in the depths of his heart.

A young man one day said to his friends, 'You can send me to any place that is haunted. I can stand it, for I do not believe in such things.' One friend asked him, 'Do you think you can stay all night in the graveyard?' He said, yes; and so all night long he stayed there without any fear. Nothing appeared, but just before sunrise, when he got up after waiting all night for the ghost and started to leave the graveyard, his long cloak was caught by some thorns on the ground and he felt a pull. That shock made him faint and he almost died.

When a person thinks, 'Everyone is unfriendly to me; no one is my friend,' wherever he looks he will see unfriendly faces. They may be most friendly and lovable and kind people, but he sees them as unfriendly. When a person suspects that people are working against him, he believes he sees this in everything they do. If he knows that somebody has been writing a letter he thinks, 'He is writing something against me'; if he sees somebody following his own thoughts he thinks, 'He is thinking about me, he is planning against me just now'; if he finds a man who is asleep he

will even think, 'He is dreaming against me!' In the end what happens is that this thought falls upon the mind of every person that he sees or thinks about like a shadow, and this shadow turns that person into itself. And then, if that person happens to be weak he will do something unconsciously against the other. He does not do it consciously; the one who had that thought inspired him to do it and to prove thereby that he was against him.

It is the same with distrust. When we do not trust someone, we think that everything that he does is untrustworthy; it appears like this. And if we were to fight against every person who shows us the shadow of our own thought, there would be no end to the fight. We would become excitable and in the end we would die of that excitement, we would become mad and all kinds of ill luck would be attracted by that attitude, or we would become very frightened at our own fear. This happens in so many cases that we cannot say that even one person in a hundred is free from it. If we cured ourselves of this impression, we would change the outer circumstances of our life even without trying to do so; just by changing ourselves we can change the outer circumstances. We can also change those whom we cannot trust into trustworthy people; we can change objects and individuals of whom we are afraid into great friends. Once suspicion had been cleared from the mind we would have very little chance of suspecting anyone any more.

This does not mean that it is a great virtue to trust everybody. To do this would be making oneself responsible for everyone's purse; it would be taking a great responsibility upon oneself. The Prophet has said, 'Tie your camel to the tree, and then trust in God.' But if a person developed trust so much that he trusted the camel to space and himself to God, then he would not wish for the camel any more. To trust or not to trust, these different attitudes follow our experience. We gradually gather experience from life, and this experience teaches us whom to trust and whom not to trust. No doubt there are people who distrust everybody, but that is a disease, that is not normal.

One need not say that one should fear nothing, though one may say that fear is a bad thing. There is a story of a Brahmin, a young man who was very much impressed by what his guru

told him: that the whole of manifestation is the immanence of God and that therefore there is nothing to fear, nothing to distrust. This thought made the young man feel quite at home in the world, quite comfortable. Then one day a mad elephant came along the road on which the young man was walking. The men running before the elephant yelled, 'Away, away! The elephant is coming!' but the young man would not get out of the way. With palms joined he stood as fearlessly before the elephant as one stands before God, as his guru had told him. The consequence was that the elephant gave him a shove and he fell down. He was brought to the guru who asked him what had happened. The young man said, 'Guruji, you said that all is the immanence of God, and therefore, in all reverence, I stood before the elephant with joined hands.' The guru said, 'Did anyone tell you to get out of the way?' He replied, 'Yes.' 'Why then,' said the guru, 'did you not stand before that man with joined hands and listen to him?' Not to be deeply impressed by distrust does not mean that we should be over-ready to bestow our trust upon anyone, nor does giving up fear mean that we can stand in front of a moving motor-car thinking, 'I trust it will be all right.' Everything has its place in life, and if we do not let it influence us unduly then everything is useful.

There is another aspect of psychology which is of very great importance. It is that often a person thinks, 'I feel like this, I cannot help it,' or 'I think like this. I cannot help it.' But in reality it is not so. One is master of one's thoughts and master of one's feelings. One cannot think or feel unless one wants to. And when a person says, 'I cannot help this thought coming to me,' he is the slave of his thought. Instead of being master of his mind his mind is his master, and this is a kind of poverty and helplessness which is greater than any other in the world. Some even become so negative that the thought of another person works in their mind, the thought or the feeling of someone they know or even of someone they do not know works in their mind; they can no longer distinguish between their own thoughts and feelings and those of someone else. But as soon as a man begins to say, 'I think like this, but I do not know why,' or, 'I feel like this, but I do not want to feel so,' then he has gone down one step below the normal state

of mind. A man who is helpless before his own mind is helpless before everything in the world; and therefore the great mastery is to stand before one's own mind and make it think what one wishes it to think, and make it feel what one wishes it to feel.

Still another aspect of psychology is an unconscious suggestion against one's own wishes. This happens, for instance, when a person says, 'I see it, my attitude is quite wrong.' But it is his attitude, it is in his own hands, and yet he watches and only says, 'My attitude is wrong'! If he knows that his attitude is wrong why can he not make it right? It only means that he suggests to himself that his attitude is wrong. Or a person says, 'I would like so much to have a friendly feeling towards you, but I feel like hitting you, I cannot help it.' This means that he has suggested to himself that he must hit the other, and yet he is helpless before his own idea. When someone says that he wishes that he could be your friend, but that he is sorry that he happens to be your enemy, this is the greatest helplessness that one could ever have; it is as if he did not exist, as if he were worse than a log of wood, for the log of wood would not re-echo. The one who accepts a suggestion which goes against himself and his own wishes is poisoning himself and working against his own happiness.

However much knowledge of science or art or philosophy a man has, if he does not consider these simple aspects of psychology he will allow his mind to develop many illnesses which cannot be cured by external remedies. Our attitude with regard to illness should be that one is resigned to the illness of the past, but one must try and avoid the illness of the future. And if a person is anticipating that something good will come his way, he must say to himself that the time is coming closer and closer every day; but if it is something he does not want, he must say that the time will never come.

The mind can be trained by regarding it as a separate entity, watching it and teaching it. There is the ego and there is the mind; the ego is our self and the mind is before us. We should look at the mind and think, 'I am the ego, my mind is before me,' and then analyse it, imagine it to be an entity, speak with it, and the answer will come. Even animals are trained; can man not train himself? When one cannot train oneself this only means that

one does not want to train oneself; it is laziness, lethargy, one does not want to take the trouble. For instance very often people, when asked to read a poem, will say, 'Yes; I shall be glad to read it presently.' They do not want to exert their brain, and they may arrive at a state where they do not even want to take trouble for themselves. First they do not want to take trouble for another, and then their laziness increases and they do not want to take trouble for themselves. It begins with selfishness; they do not want to think about another, and then it ends by a person not wanting to think about himself. Then what is he thinking about? Nothing.

One should say to the mind, 'Look here, you are my mind, you are my instrument, you are my slave and servant, you are here to help me, to work for me in this world. You have to listen to me. You will do whatever I wish, you will think whatever I wish, you will feel whatever I wish. You will not think or feel differently from my wishes, for you are my mind and you must prove in the end to be mine.' By doing this we begin to analyse our mind. We begin to see where it is wrong and where it is right; what is wrong in it and what is right in it; whether it is clouded, whether it is rusted, whether it has become too cool or whether it has become over-heated. We can train it ourselves, in accordance with its condition, and it is we who are the best trainers of our mind, better than anybody else in the world.

TWIN SOULS

THERE IS a belief which comes from ancient times, and that is the belief in a twin soul. Some people wait for this phenomenon and search for it; and sometimes this belief is the cause of much unhappiness during the greater part of their lives because they have not yet found their twin soul. What is a twin soul? One might say that a proper answer is the twin soul of a question: every person is a question and every person is an answer, and when two people meet and one of them is a question and the other is the answer to that question then they are twin souls. But unfortunately what very often happens is that either two questions meet or two answers.

Twin souls can belong to three distinct spheres: to the angelic sphere, to the sphere of the jinns, and to the sphere of the earth. Two people may have inherited from their childhood, or brought with them from the moment of their birth, qualities that fit one another. They need not be of opposite sex; they can be personalities of the same sex; they can be friends or partners in life, it does not matter. It is two souls; one answers the other's question, as every person is a question and at the same time an answer. These two souls who have brought with them qualities which already fit one another, become friends the moment they meet, and in coming together they find a satisfaction they have never experienced before, because all their life there has been a question and suddenly it is answered. This may come about early or late in life, but there comes a time in the life of most souls when they meet someone who is the answer to their soul's question.

Souls need not know what question they are, and naturally they do not know it, but they are a question all the same. Neither do they know what the answer is, but when it comes they know that it fits, they know that it is satisfying, and unconsciously they know that it is the answer to their question. It may be that the two were friends before they came on earth or, as many call it, in

a past incarnation, but there is no doubt that a contact had been established before their coming to earth, and that is why the moment they meet they think that they have known each other for many, many years.

Very often people do not realize it when they meet their twin soul, and very often they know it and yet do not feel sure. There were two sisters who were so devoted to each other that it seemed that there was one world made for these two sisters and another quite apart from it. They used to call one another 'my twin soul'. There have been men who have worked together throughout their lives, who have striven and suffered and planned together, and when one of them passed away the other followed him. They were twin souls. One might wonder whether it is not an error of the soul to be born like this, because the conditions are often so unfavourable for twin souls; but whether circumstances are favourable or unfavourable, their satisfaction lies with one another and for one another if they are twin souls, and therefore it is not an error. It is never an error for a person to have been born on earth, to have to struggle all his life in order to gain the results that he wanted; it is natural.

There is a well-known story in India about a young Brahmin who after his marriage went on a pilgrimage, while his wife stayed at home. And after two or three months some mischievous man brought her the news that her husband had died. He wanted to create a commotion in the house and see how Brahmins mourn. But the moment this young bride heard of her husband's death she passed away herself. And after six months the young man came home from his pilgrimage and heard what had happened, that on hearing the news of his death his wife had died. No one saw a tear or heard a cry; he only closed his lips and from that moment he never spoke to anyone, he never saw anyone. It was as if he had drunk the news like a bowl of poison. People were anxious about him and kept guard over him, but one day he escaped and went to the place where his wife had been cremated, and where ever since a fire used to glow every night; many people had seen this. He went closer to this fire, and before those who had followed him could reach him the fire leaped up and made three turns around him, and he fell down dead.

Not only in man, but even among animals and birds one can see this tendency. A man who was very fond of shooting told the story that once he shot a bird, and before he could reach it to pick it up another bird came down from the tree to see if it was really dead. It moved it with its beak, and when it found that its mate was dead it fell dead too. It need not only be human beings that find their twin soul; even the animals and the birds, even the lower creatures can find it—and much sooner than human beings, because human beings are so absorbed in themselves.

Then there are twin souls of another kind which belong to the earth, the world, the human sphere. The nature of these twin souls is different; they must develop to become twin souls. And what develops them is the situation in life that brings them together; they are drawn to each other by providence, and circumstances cause them to meet. As they develop they become twin souls, just as in one shell one can sometimes find two almonds. The shell has been the situation, the circumstances, the mould which has brought them together in order to go through life tolerantly. There is a lesson to be learnt from this: that each of those two almond kernels has a curve, some part of it is removed, is gone, in order to let the other grow. If the two almonds had pushed one another they would never have grown. It was done by reciprocity; it was as if they said, 'I will let you grow,' 'I will let you grow too,' 'Some part of my being will be held in check,' 'We shall grow as one almond.' But when that conception is not there, then there is no chance of growing together; that is the lesson which mankind has to learn.

The almonds can grow together, but souls cannot grow like that, for each soul has its *Nafs*, its ego, and each soul wants to push itself forward. It does not mean that man has no love, but that man puts his ego before love; that is the general feeling. One may not realize it, but it is so; and that is why those who are meant to become twin souls are often denied that privilege only because they will not give in to one another. What is friendship? Friendship is sacrifice. What is love? Love is regard for the pleasure and displeasure of the beloved; if that is not there then one does not grow. No one can be selfish and at the same time loving; these two things cannot go together. Either one

becomes selfish or one becomes loving; and in order to become loving one must erase selfishness, while in order to become selfish one must erase love. For love will not allow the self to grow; love is the enemy of the self, and the self is the enemy of love.

The third kind of twin souls are those of the angelic spheres. The twin souls of the angelic spheres are united in one person. He himself is his twin soul: himself one and his soul the other. It is this soul which develops quickly, for this soul contains his answer within himself.

Those who, not understanding the secret of twin souls, remain dissatisfied in life do not understand that either their twin soul is there, and that if it is there providence must bring them together one day; or that they should develop within themselves the quality of the twin soul in order that one day they may perfect themselves in it; or that they should find in their own soul the answer to their life's question. It is the knowledge of one of these three qualities of twin souls that enables a person to realize in his life the meaning of this idea. Each soul has one of these three aspects.

Souls who have grown to be twin souls on earth remain so in heaven, for life on earth continues in heaven. The Prophet has said that death is a bridge which unites friend with friend. Can we have a twin soul in each sphere? We can have a twin soul every day; it depends on how much we want it; but if we choose to have another twin soul in another sphere we can change them every day. It is either a continual development from the beginning to the end, from the angelic sphere to the earthly sphere, and that brings about the perfect union; or a new union is created and accomplished and fulfilled for eternity, for the hereafter; or the soul has found within itself the twin soul, and that is God, that is perfection.

Furthermore, there are three aspects, three principles in life: *Jelal*, *Jemal*, and *Kemal*. *Jelal* is power, *Jemal* is beauty, and *Kemal* is perfection. The twin souls of the jinn sphere are *Jemal* because they respond to one another and *Jemal* is responsive. They naturally respond; they need not work for it. The twin souls of the earthly sphere are *Jelal*. They have to struggle with

themselves, with their situation in life, with conditions, in order to develop those qualities which in the end will culminate in the condition of being twin souls. What is necessary is an effort, a power, an action. And the third aspect is Kemal; no action is needed there. One has to be quiet, one has to be meditative, one has to be silent, one has to close one's eyes and get in touch with one's self within; and then one will realize one's twin soul within one's own being. That is why it is called Kemal, perfection.

CHAPTER XVII

NATURE AND CHARACTER

NATURE IS born, character is built, and personality is developed. If nature is such, then it is not easy to change a person's nature. Neither can a dog be made into a horse nor can a cat be made into a cow. Sa'di says, 'The kitten in the end proves to be a kitten. Even if it were kept on the queen's sofa, petted and kissed and loved and cared for, when the mouse came it would show that it was a cat.'

It is very easy to talk about equality, and it is very easy to consider all kinds of excellent points of view. It is also easy to talk about wonderful moral principles; but if we see the difference there is between one soul and another, which is sometimes as wide as the distance between earth and sky, we stand helpless before natures that cannot be changed. If we say that horns can be turned into hooves and that hooves can be turned into horns it may be believed, but if we say that a person has changed his nature it will be doubted.

Where does man's nature come from? What is it made of? How does a person get his nature? Man's nature comes from that which the soul has borrowed. It is not the being of the soul; it is that which the soul has added to itself. Just as innocence in someone shows an angelic nature, so intelligence shows the nature of the jinn, and a good manner or a sympathetic attitude shows human nature.

The nature of a person is not the same as his false ego, but the false ego is obsessed by his nature. Everyone has brought with him on earth a certain nature, and it is not always easy to get rid of it. A lion may be trained by his keeper and may work under a certain discipline for twenty years; but one day his predisposition may be awakened and he will turn on his keeper, thus showing his nature that had been hidden; it will show that he is a lion. With all the training he has received and all the humility and surrender he has displayed, he is still a lion.

Besides a man's nature is what he has inherited from his earthly parents, either from his mother's or from his father's side; it may not be from his parents but from his grandparents, and if not from his grandparents then from his great-grandparents, or perhaps five or six generations back. There is some part of his nature that he has brought with him and it is there; it is no use denying it.

When those who are peaceful and calm think that another person who is active and enthusiastic should also be calm and peaceful like them, when those who are thoughtful and considerate think that another person who is impulsive and adventurous should be like them, when those who have patience and endurance think that another person who is quickly aroused and temperamental should be like them—it is all impossible. The modest cannot be bold nor can the bold be modest. Every soul has its nature, and if one tries to bury it, although it will remain covered for some time, it only needs digging; anyone can dig and find what is beneath. There may be a good nature hidden, and there may be a bad nature hidden, though for the moment one does not see it. A soul may seem to be a saint until one has spoken with him; another soul may seem to be quite the contrary until one has investigated him, and then he may prove to be totally different.

Some show their nature outwardly, others have their nature covered, covered under what is called character. Character is something quite different. Nature is just like the light, and character is just like the globe. If it is a yellow globe the light seems yellow; if it is a green globe the light seems green. The light seems to be of the same colour as the globe; but it is the light which is the principal thing. It is either a bright light or a dim light, and that is according to the degree of light there is. That is its nature; what covers it is its character.

Then one might ask where and how the character is built. The character is built by habit, by whatever habit one forms from childhood; and as the habit stays with one so the character is moulded. If there is a habit of answering back, of interfering, of being curious, sarcastic, or ironical, or if there is a habit of being respectful, gentle, humble, or modest, if there is a habit of

being proud and conceited and boastful, of pushing oneself forward, or if there is a habit of being thoughtful and considerate—according to this habit one's character is made. It is the same electric light which one sees in the most ordinary shop and in the most beautiful palace. What is the difference? It is not the difference of light. It may be the degree of light, but very often it is the difference of the globe. Sometimes the globe is so beautiful and so costly that it changes the whole light. And it is the same with a beautiful character: it changes the whole person, so that he can be called noble or something else according to the globe that covers him.

When we form a habit we never think about it. If it is undesirable we think that it does not matter, that it is nothing, just taking a little liberty; what is it after all, do we not seek freedom? And so by trying to seek freedom we develop habits which become our enemies. It is like finding a little hole in a garment, and then thinking that it is not necessary to mend it. It is such a small hole, nobody notices it! But one does not realize that the hole will expand, it will become larger and larger until everybody will see it.

Another thing is that if someone has developed an undesirable habit people, as a rule, do not mention it to him. They are polite; they are kind. And so one goes on, and one believes that everything is all right because nobody says anything. Besides there are always many to welcome an undesirable habit. The one who has taken to drink will find many friends who will welcome him in their society, and the one who has formed a habit of gambling will also find sympathetic comrades to encourage him.

Whatever path a man takes, he will find encouragement to go further on that path. Naturally, therefore, if a man is not careful as to where he is going he may end up anywhere; he may fall into any pit, any hole; and nobody comes to pick him up once he has fallen. The deeper he falls, the less people will look at him, for everyone, either consciously or unconsciously, is looking for someone who is going upward; no one is anxious to associate with someone who is going downhill. Even his best friends will leave him some day. Therefore to study the mystery of character, to think about it and to build it, is life's main purpose; that is the chief education.

There are some people who are interested in building their character, but at the same time there is always a conflict between their character and their nature; for the character is made by a certain habit, but the nature says, 'You must not make this a habit; I will fight with you about it.' For instance a coarse person may have formed the habit of being very polite, but we can usually find him out if we speak with him for a little while, for then the conversation may end in impoliteness. It begins with politeness, it ends with impoliteness, because then the nature conquers the character, proving thereby that there was rudeness in the nature and that politeness was only an outer cover.

Then there is always a struggle going on between principle and nature. Sometimes the principle subdues nature and nature surrenders, and sometimes nature subdues the principle and the principle surrenders; and there comes a great conflict. A person may seem to be very modest, and he remains modest as long as one does not know him, but when one gets to know him he may appear to be quite the contrary. Nature will clash with the character under certain conditions. A man who is lazy by nature may be in a situation where he must work, the moment he sees that nobody is looking he will sit down in a chair and doze. He will only work as long as he is watched, for by nature he is lazy, and only the conditions have made him work.

There is another person who is told, 'This is the king's palace, you may not speak.' But he is very talkative, and when he sees that nobody is looking and that he is out of earshot, he will begin to talk as soon as he has found someone who will listen to him. He is only silent because he is obliged to be silent, but it is his nature to talk; and when he wants to change his nature it is very difficult.

There are some who have built a character just like a cherry: outwardly soft, but inside there is hard stone; there is another character which is like a grape: it is outwardly soft and inwardly soft; there is also a walnut character, which is outwardly hard and inwardly soft; and there is a character like a pomegranate: outwardly hard and inwardly with hard pips. These differences come from both nature and character.

An effort made to change someone's character does not always

meet with success. People who want to develop a certain aspect in another's character frequently produce a kind of confusion in his soul, and very often parents and guardians who want to change the character of their son or daughter make a great mistake; they spoil the character instead of making it better. One sees thousands of cases where such mistakes have been made. There was a Maharaja in India who was a great educator; to all classes of his subjects he gave the most wonderful education, even to the very lowest. One would imagine that a ruler who was so interested in the education of every youth in his country would naturally make a success of the education of his own children, but every son of his died a drunkard, every single one of them. This shows that to wish to change the character is one thing, but to try to change it and to know how to change it is another thing.

Sometimes a person has a tendency to exaggerate, and this develops from childhood. It is a very interesting tendency, because it gives an opportunity for the imagination to express itself; and if a person is poetical and wants to express himself, he will always show a tendency to exaggerate. It is a good tendency, but at the same time it can be carried too far, and then the virtue can become a sin. Therefore guardians should not encourage a child in this tendency; but if it is kept under control and if the child is told that it must not exaggerate, that it may just say so much and no more, and if the child is corrected whenever it goes on doing it, then this will help the child very much.

It is easy to help children, but it is most difficult to help the grown-up. One may change snow into water and water into ice, but to try to change a character is the most difficult thing one can ever imagine. Therefore it is usually vain to try. But what one can do is to build one's own character; that is in one's own hands. Only, what people are most occupied with is the character of someone else; they are always thinking of the other but they never want to change themselves.

Lastly there is personality. Personality is the finishing of character. Personality is like a cut diamond: when the character is cut all round, then it becomes like a cut diamond. As long as the personality is not developed, however much goodness and virtue a person possesses he remains an uncut diamond. Personality is the

harmony of nature and character; that is what makes personality. When the nature harmonizes with the character, when there remains no conflict between these two, then a personality is born.

Personality also has an influence on the other planes, just as character and nature have. If Farid¹ could change himself into a cow by concentration, there is nothing in this world which cannot change; but only if we want to change; the one who does not care to change will never change. But the power constantly working from within can no doubt change the nature to anything, right or wrong. The life of humanity is not only nature, it is an art, and art is an improvement on nature; through art God finishes His creation. That is why the building of the character and the developing of the personality is an art, an art by which the purpose of life is fulfilled.

It is all right for a man who goes into a mountain cave or into the forest and says that he does not care to develop either his character or his personality; it is just as well that he should go there and not take the trouble to develop his nature. He need not change, he need not worry, he can live just like the trees and plants in nature which just grow; they do not develop themselves. But if he has to live in the midst of the crowd in this artificial world, then he must know the art of developing the character, and how to produce beauty in life.

Among all the different schools of esotericism and mysticism the Sufi school has concerned itself most with the development of personality. As a Sufi poet says, 'If you have a diamond, if you have a ruby, what is it? If your self is not developed into a precious spirit, the diamond and the ruby are nothing.' And another Sufi poet says, 'In order to worship God angels were made; in order to eat, drink, and sleep animals were made. Why was man created? Man was created in order to develop into a person, that he may be an image of God.' Image in this verse means God's spirit, God's tendency, God's outlook, God's nature; it means that there is divine nature in man, if only he can develop it. And when that nature is developed, then personality becomes

¹ For the story of Farid, see 'Mental Purification', *The Sufi Message of Hazrat Inayat Khan*, Vol. IV, p. 109.

a phenomenon; such a personality spreads harmony, peace, thoughtfulness, and consideration.

How did Sufis help their pupils, their mureeds, to develop their personality? Was it by telling them that this is right and that is wrong; or this is good and that is bad; or you must do this or you must do that? No, it was by establishing that current of sympathy through which the spirit of the teacher is reflected in the pupil, and the mureed begins to show forth his teacher in his thought, in his speech, and in his action. This training was considered most valuable among the Sufis of all ages, a training which is not given in words. For if a teacher has to correct his pupil in words it is perhaps only a scratch on the pupil, but on his own spirit it is a cut. Putting their feeling into words is the greatest pain for souls that live in the higher spheres. Subtle souls never say things that they should not say; it is not their desire to speak. The sympathetic mureed has to grasp, to feel what the teacher wishes to convey, what the teacher feels, how the teacher can be pleased, and what the teacher will be displeased with. And if the teacher has to descend to earth, so low as to have to tell it in words, then this means that there is no current. There is only a difference of two letters between worthiness and unworthiness.

Besides it is not the teacher's responsibility to make his pupil an occultist. The Sufi teacher never wants his pupil to become an occultist or a great psychic or a man with great power. This does not mean that he will not become powerful, but the responsibility of the teacher is to develop the personality of the mureed, that it may reflect God, that it may show God's qualities; and when that is done then the responsibility of the teacher is over. Then he can only pray for the pupil, for his well-being.

If a person does not wish to develop his personality, he may not even develop his character, he may not develop anything; and yet he may advance, and when the time of his progress has come he will progress just the same. But we should always try to find the shortest way, and the shortest way is the development of the self.

There are also many people who show a very beautiful tendency and nature, and yet no tendency towards the spiritual ideal. The reason is that they have not yet reached the spiritual

ideal, but they are on the way, and the proof of this is that they show a beautiful character in their nature. All those teachings that are given to say and repeat, 'I am God,' are the teachings of insolence. Christ did not teach such things. Read the Beatitudes in the Bible; has Christ not taught the development of personality? Did he not teach the building of the character? Did he not show in his life the innocence which proves the angelic heritage of man? Did he say, 'Be ye occultists,' or 'Tell people their fortunes,' or 'Correct people of their errors'? Never. What Christ taught was, 'Make your personality as it ought to be, that you may no more be the slave of the nature which you have brought with you, nor of the character which you have made in your life; but that you may show in your life the divine personality, that you may fulfil on this earth the purpose for which you have come.'

CHAPTER I

MYSTICISM IN LIFE

MYSTICISM may be considered as the essence of all knowledge. It may be likened to the perfume of a flower, for it has a fragrance of its own. We do not see the perfume, but we see the flower, and so we will not hear many words from the mystic to explain mysticism, but we can perceive that mysticism in his atmosphere. Mysticism may also be likened to honey. Honey is purifying and so is mysticism; it purifies man of his infirmities, and it is the sweetest of all the different aspects of knowledge that exist.

To a mystic the outward forms such as rituals and ceremonies are not of the first importance; yet a mystic will take part in them, whereas the half-wise man who says, 'I have advanced too far. I cannot tolerate the outer forms any more,' will rebel against them. The mystic can tolerate anything, for he interprets life according to his own stage of development. He can enjoy the meaning of ritual, which is something that even the people who are officiating do not always know. He may interpret a ceremony according to his own wisdom, and give an interpretation which those who perform that ceremony or those who watch it would never even have dreamt of. He sees all that he wishes to see and he knows all that he wishes to know, in the outer form as well as in the inner form.

It is a fact that mysticism cannot be defined in words in the form of doctrines, theories, or philosophical statements, for mysticism is an inner experience. In order to know an inner experience one must arrive at that experience. If we say to a person who has never had a headache in his life, 'I have a headache,' he will never understand it; he will not know what it is. Therefore the word mysticism means nothing; it is through the inner experience that one realizes its meaning in all its fullness. Naturally, therefore, we can find many books on psychology or philosophy, but seldom anything on mysticism; and the few there are on

mysticism are generally about something quite different from what mysticism really is. The reason is that it cannot be put into a book; it cannot be expressed in words. But the very reason why it is so vague is why it so valuable, for if there is any knowledge that is worth while, if there is any science which is precious, it is the knowledge and science which one can get out of one's mystical experiences.

The difficulty is that there are half-mystics and quarter-mystics, and yet all of them are regarded as mystics, and this causes confusion. When a person says, 'I am a Christian mystic, or a Jewish or a Muslim mystic,' he has not yet arrived at mysticism. Mysticism cannot be divided into different sects, and the one who says, 'My mysticism is different from your mysticism', has not yet arrived there, for true mystics cannot differ. Because inner experiences cannot be changed their experience is one and the same; all changes belong to the outer experiences of life. The further one progresses on the spiritual path, the more experiences one has which are similar to those of others in that advanced stage. All ideas such as that of the inner body or the hereafter are actual experiences of mystics; they are not speculations. The power of the mystic belongs to his own experience; the speculator is never satisfied with his knowledge, he is always doubting himself and wondering whether he is right or wrong.

There are seekers after mystical truth who have perhaps devoted twenty years or more to discovering some key to mysticism, and they have come back through the same door by which they entered in, saying, 'I have found nothing; I have closed my eyes for years, but all in vain. Tell me what am I to see, what am I to find there?' The reason is that not only did such a person go on his search with his eyes closed, but he also closed his soul. Instead of receiving a revelation he had a double loss; he could have done much better with open eyes. Although he did not want to fool himself, which is always worth while, yet he did not want his imagination to make an effort, so his mind and his heart were closed even before he shut his eyes, and consequently nothing was open.

Imagination should not be discarded. Imagination becomes a ladder on the path of the mystic. Besides, if it were not for

imagination there would have been no art, there would have been no literature, there would have been no music; these are all an outcome of imagination. When imagination can produce beauty outwardly in the form of poetry, music, art, or literature, it can produce beauty of much higher and greater value when it is directed inward. Someone may say, 'If there is a God He should appear before me so that I may believe. I do not wish to take the trouble to imagine that there is one,' yet if he lived on earth for thousands of years, he would remain where he is. First his imagination must help him to form an idea of the deity; then he will have made an abode for the deity to abide in. As Voltaire has said, 'If God did not exist one would have to invent Him'.

Naturally the mystic begins his work with the ladder of imagination, and actual experience follows. What experience does a mystic have? Does he see colours, does he communicate with spirits, does he wander in the higher worlds, does he read thoughts, does he recognize objects by psychometry, does he perform wonders? To a mystic all these things are elementary, and those who do them are half-mystics, quarter-mystics. To a mystic who is a thorough mystic it is all child's play. These things are not beyond his power; the power of the mystic can be so great and his insight can be so keen that an ordinary man cannot imagine it, yet for this very reason a mystic, who looks no different from an ordinary man, cannot profess to see or feel or know or understand any better. Naturally, therefore, the real mystic who has arrived at a certain point of understanding makes the greatest effort to keep his power and insight hidden from the eyes of all. It is the false mystic who comes forward and claims perfection and prophetic powers, and who suggests that he can work wonders.

Mysticism changes man's outlook on life. The higher a mystic reaches, the wider becomes his outlook. It is therefore very difficult for a mystic to adjust himself to the limited life of the world. He must continually speak and act differently from what he feels and knows. It is just like an actor on the stage: when he has to be a king then he acts as a king and speaks as a king, and when he takes the part of a servant he acts that part, but all the time he knows and feels that he is neither a king nor a servant; that he is an

actor. And thus the feeling of a mystic is one thing, and his outer affirmation is another.

Is this a right thing to do? Is it not a kind of hypocrisy? An outspoken person would say, 'I say what I mean,' just as he might say, 'I tell the truth whether you like it or not, I don't mind.' But it cannot be helped. In order to get away from this hypocrisy some mystics have closed their lips and have not spoken throughout their whole life; they have retired into the forest in order to get away from it. But when they live in the midst of the world they can only adopt this method: feel and know the truth, while speaking and acting as everybody else does. And if someone says that this is not right, the answer is that in the case of other people most things are wrong: knowing, acting, as well as speaking; whereas in the case of the mystic only one thing is wrong. The mystic at least feels and knows rightly; that much is to his advantage.

Imparting mysticism to a seeking soul is an automatic action on the part of the pupil and also on the part of the mystic, for what the mystic gives to the pupil is not his own, it is God's, and the pupil is a kind of vessel that receives this blessing. If the vessel is not ready or if it is filled with something else, with every desire on the part of the mystic to fill it he cannot. Therefore the whole training of mysticism is first to clean this vessel, to make it ready for the mystic to pour into it the divine knowledge which comes from within.

One might wonder whether life in the West has become too confused for real mystics to develop there. As there are tall people and short people in all parts of the world, so there are wise people and foolish people everywhere. The mystic is born with a tendency towards mysticism, and there are many who are born like this in the West. Only, in the East there are many who are interested in giving a stimulus to this tendency, whereas in the West it is the contrary; for when a person shows that tendency people laugh at him, they think it is something abnormal and they do not allow this gift with which he was born to develop in him. That is why one finds far fewer mystics in the West than in the East. Besides, when a youth has a mystical tendency in the East he finds a teacher, a guide who can help him on, whereas in the West

this is very difficult. Then generally nobody in his family knows anything about mysticism, and so they discourage him or disapprove of his tendency; and it is the same with his friends. So from all around he is pulled back instead of finding encouragement on the path. Nevertheless, a person born with a mystical tendency, however much he is pulled back, will always sooner or later try to find what he is looking for. He cannot feel satisfied because of that innate yearning.

People often ask what is the difference between mysticism and occultism. In point of fact occultism is that which the mystic shows as the result of his experience, as the outcome of his insight, as the expression of divine law. Nowadays we often hear occultism spoken of as something distinct from mysticism, but that is not so. Often a man who is a half-mystic comes forward, and then if people say that he is not a mystic, he will call himself an occultist; he must be something. This gives him a position too.

There is a story that three horsemen were coming from Delhi, and behind them there was a man riding on a donkey. Someone on the road addressed them and said, 'Riders, where do you come from?' Before the three horsemen could answer, this man on the donkey said, 'We four riders are coming from Delhi'.¹

To give another example: clever and wise are not the same. It is not right to say that the wise man is not clever, though his wisdom weighs more than his cleverness. A person cannot be wise if he is not clever, only his wisdom gives his cleverness such dignity that it would be an offence to call a wise man clever. Thus a mystic is an occultist, but to call a mystic an occultist is to bring him down to a lower level; it is like calling a wise man clever. Occultism is the result of the mystic's experience. He fathoms the laws of the unseen world, and he interprets them in ordinary language; that is occultism.

¹ The untranslatable pun is on *savar*, a word which means both 'knight' and 'rider'. The claim of the man on the donkey in the story, who was a low-caste potter, became a Hindustani proverb: *Chharon savar dillise a rahi hen*.

CHAPTER II

DIVINE WISDOM

NOTHING IN the world can bring us happiness and satisfaction except divine wisdom. All other things which seem to suffice our needs will show their importance for a moment, but after that moment has passed there will be the same longing. It is only in divine wisdom that our life's purpose is fulfilled. The basis of mysticism is to be found in that saying of the Bible, 'Seek ye first the kingdom of heaven, and all these things will be added unto you'. Thus the search of the mystic is for that kingdom, for God, and in that search what does he find? In the search for God he finds his self.

Mysticism teaches communication with the self and enables the self to communicate with life. Also, the way to learn mysticism is quite different from the way in which one learns other things. In learning these one communicates with things, but in learning mysticism one communicates first with one's self, and this enables man to communicate with the outer life. It is not only a legend of the past that saints and sages spoke with trees and plants, with animals and birds. A soul that can communicate with life, with the self, can communicate even today with animals and birds and trees and plants.

Often people picture a mystic as a dreamer, as someone who is intoxicated, a drunken man; but in reality to the mystic everybody else is intoxicated, for the knowledge of mysticism is soberness. The mystic's consciousness makes him sober, for he begins to see things more clearly. Mostly he cannot speak about it, because his language is not always understood. People have reason to consider a mystic to be like a drunken person: he does not take notice of things that everybody else takes notice of, he does not attach any importance to things that everybody else considers important, he does not give as much thought to himself as everybody else does, he does not look at everyone in the same way as other people do, he does not judge people in the same light as

everybody else judges others, he does not think of God and man in the same way as every other person does. Naturally it becomes difficult for the mystic to live in the world where his language is not understood, while he understands the language of all others. Before we have spoken to the mystic he has heard us speak; before we have expressed our thought he has read it; before we have expressed our feeling he has felt it. That is why a mystic can be in communication with another person better than one could ever imagine, and thus the best definition that can be given of mysticism is that it is communication with life.

No doubt a mystic is born a mystic; it is a certain type of mind which is born mystical; but mysticism can also be acquired. A soul who is born a mystic will from his cradle show mystic tendencies; but mysticism which is acquired is a greater achievement, for then one has made a normal progress towards divine wisdom.

Now the question is, how does man communicate with his self? By self-analysis. No doubt there is a danger in self-analysis. When a person is always wondering how wrong he is, how bad he is, how wicked he is, or how stupid he is, he will never stop worrying and troubling about himself, and the further he continues in this way, the more he will find in himself the spirit of wickedness or stupidity; perhaps throughout his whole life he will find that same spirit in himself. The mystic delves deeper in himself in order to discover what it is in him that gives him the sign of existence, what it is in him that lives and what it is that dies, what it is in his being that is limited and what it is that is beyond limitation. By meditating on this a mystic communicates with his self. And in order to communicate with others he removes the barrier which stands between one person and the other, between 'I' and 'you'.

As to the religion and the moral of the mystic, the mystic has one moral and that is love; and he has one aim in his religion and that is to make God a reality. Therefore his God becomes a greater God than the God of millions of people who only imagine that there is a God somewhere; to him God is a reality. How can one make God a reality? Since we are able to make what is unreal a reality, it is very easy to make reality real.

There was a Brahmin who was worshipping his idol, and a man came along and said to him, 'How foolish! You are a high-caste Brahmin, you have such great culture, and yet you worship a God of stone which you have made with your own hands!' The Brahmin said, 'If you have faith this god of stone will become a real god to you, and if you have no faith even the formless God who is in heaven is nothing.' The idea behind this is that we do not know and see the reality of God because we have made real all that is unreal before us. We are impressed by it, we live in longing for it, we pursue it, we live in it; and so from morning till evening we are, so to speak, wrapped up in this world of illusion, in all that is unreal and that covers our eyes from reality.

In order to find goodness one must find wickedness to compare it with. When we have found both, then both become clear; wickedness will show what goodness is. In order to find reality we must gather the knowledge of what is unreal, and this is not difficult. In our ordinary language we use the word false; false is that which is not real. All that is subject to change and destruction may be something in appearance, but it is never that which it pretends to be. All this existence which is before us and which is subject to change and death is not reality; it cannot be reality; but we can only see this when we have acquired some knowledge of reality. If we do not look at it as unreal, we shall not have the desire to find what is real. We must find out what is unreal and acknowledge it as unreal; then alone can we go on to the next step which will be to find reality.

CHAPTER III

LIFE'S JOURNEY

IT IS THE coming of the soul from its original place to manifestation and its returning again from manifestation to its original condition that makes life's journey; the meaning of life as we understand it is merely this journey. The condition of the soul before this journey and after this journey is not recognized, not acknowledged by man; in reality before this journey the soul is not a soul, nor does the soul remain as a soul after this journey. But for people who hold on to their personality and who have not yet probed the wider horizon of knowledge, it is very difficult to absorb this knowledge; and as all that they know is themselves, God being no more than an idea to them, they sometimes get disappointed and discouraged. Yet whatever conception may be given to them, it does not take away the fact that a soul only exists as an individual soul from the time it shoots out as a current through the different spheres until the time when it goes back and meets its original Being.

There is a difference between eternal and everlasting. The word 'eternal' can never be attached to the soul, for that which has a birth and a death, a beginning and an end, cannot be eternal though it can be everlasting. It is everlasting according to our conception; it lasts beyond all that we can conceive and comprehend, but when we come to the eternal that is God alone.

Different spheres such as the angelic sphere and the jinn sphere are like a clay which is made for the soul to use. In other words, the soul borrows from the angelic sphere the matter of that sphere; it is called matter because there is no other term for it except the matter or substance of that sphere. Then from the sphere of the jinn it gathers the substance of that sphere, and that substance covers the substance which it has already gathered in the angelic sphere; and after this the soul gathers around itself the substance of the physical sphere.

By analysing the substance of the physical sphere we can arrive

at a better conception of the idea that the whole of creation was made in order that man might be created, that all that went before was a preparation. Even the angelic sphere and the jinn sphere were preparatory stages for the soul coming towards manifestation.

Thus we come to the analysis of the four different clays of which the body of man is composed. The first clay comes from the mineral kingdom. Rocks and mountains were made first; trees and plants came afterwards; and the third process was that the same substance which first was rock and mountain and then became tree and plant, afterwards became still more living and manifested in the form of animals and birds; and it is from this same substance that the body of man was made. It is as if God had made a clay for man which was first dense in the form of a rock and in the form of a tree, then less dense in the form of an animal, until it was made still finer so that in the fourth stage it might become the substance for the body of man.

It is for this reason that man depends for his sustenance on all these substances. There is mineral substance which is good for his health, there is the vegetable kingdom on which he depends for his food, and there is the animal kingdom which also serves for his sustenance. Because his body is made of these elements it is also sustained by these elements; man is made of these four substances, the flesh, the blood, the skin, and the bone representing the four different clays.

Besides from infancy and childhood man begins to show the qualities which he has gathered from the different spheres. For instance infancy shows the sign of the angelic world; in the form and face of the infant, in its expression, in its smiles, we can see the angelic world. An infant is like an envoy sent from heaven to the earth. And early childhood begins to show the quality of the jinn world: the inquisitive tendency to ask of everything what it is, the love for all that is good and beautiful, all that attracts the senses, these qualities of the jinn world manifest in a child. The child takes such keen notice of everything, the child remembers more than ten trained grown-up persons remember, the child is keen to understand everything that it encounters, eager to learn and happy to remember. All these are jinn qualities; afterwards, with youth, the qualities of the world become apparent.

When man advances in age he shows a return of the same qualities. First the jinn quality; when he has had all the experience of the world and has reached a certain age he becomes most keen to express all that is beautiful. At this age human beings become intelligent, they speak, they teach, they understand things which young people cannot understand; the jinn quality develops. And when he advances further in age, then the angelic quality develops, then innocence comes with its engaging smiles, then all malice and prejudice are gone and a quality of continually giving out begins to manifest. If one does not see these qualities developing in some people this is usually because they are more engrossed in the world, and then the natural development does not show itself.

In infancy man also shows a mineral quality, and that is the slow perception of everything. An infant is living just like a rock, sitting or lying, and it does not move as quickly as an older child. In seeing, in hearing, in responding, in perceiving, in everything it has a slow rhythm; it shows the rock quality. And with childhood appears the vegetable quality: as vegetables grow so the infant grows, and as trees and plants are responsive to human sympathy so the child begins to respond. With a loving person the plant grows more quickly and flourishes better, and so the child grows up more harmoniously with a loving guardian. But where that love is not given, then just as plants and trees wither so the life of the child becomes ruined.

In youth the animal or bird quality begins to show, and that again demonstrates the continuity of the same process, the process of the angelic sphere, of the jinn plane, and of the physical world. With age it is again the same process, but the other way round: first the vegetable kingdom begins to show, a person becomes milder, more gentle, thoughtful, and considerate, just like trees compared with rocks. And as one advances so one comes closer to the mineral kingdom; then a certain exclusiveness, a remoteness, a wish for retirement, a love of solitude develop which are all qualities of the mineral kingdom.

There is another most interesting side to this subject, and that is the spiritual development. A man who develops spiritually also shows the qualities of those spheres whence he has come, and of those substances on which he has lived. For instance the first quality that

a spiritually advanced person shows is that he is more perceptive, more observant, more responsive, more outgoing, more appreciative, more sympathetic, more harmonious. Where does it all come from? It comes from the animal kingdom.

As he goes further man begins to show the vegetable quality: gentleness, mildness, kindness, and above all, the bearing of fruit and giving it to all, to the deserving and to the undeserving alike. The one who can reach the branch of the tree can take the fruit. People throw stones at trees and cut them, but although no doubt this hurts the tree, the tree does not blame them. It has borne fruit and it is willing to give it to them; and this becomes the condition of the spiritual person: willing to serve all who need his service, bearing fruits and flowers which may nourish and please others.

Afterwards man adopts the stone quality, which is to endure heat and cold and wind and storm and to stand firm through them all. The soul who has advanced further spiritually becomes like this. Everything that falls on him he accepts. He loves retirement, he loves solitude, and at the same time the world may drag him out of it and life may compel him to be in the world. But the rocks always seek the wilderness, they belong to the wilderness, they live in the wilderness; that is their seeking, that is their place.

There have been many kings and rich people in the history of the world, but they have never been so loved and honoured and held in so much esteem by human beings as the spiritual souls. Why is this? Because it is out of the rock that the idol of God is made; and when man has become a rock, then he is worshipped, then he becomes a living idol. And if one asks why man has to become a rock in order to be worshipped, the answer is because the rock is not conscious of itself; that is why. People prefer to worship a rock rather than a man, so when the spiritual soul has reached the stage of becoming a rock, no more conscious of his little self, unaware of his limitation, not concerned with anything, detached from all things and beings, then that soul is to be worshipped.

There are three higher qualities which also manifest when a person becomes spiritual. The human quality manifests when he develops personality. This is the first step; when there is spiritual

advancement personality blooms. The jinn quality manifests in the next stage when a spiritual man begins to teach, when he shows genius in his inspiration and in his insight into human nature, into past, present, and future. And when he reaches the stage where the angelic quality manifests, then he begins to show innocence, simplicity, love for all, sympathy, and God-consciousness. The angelic quality manifests in the spiritual man when he has withdrawn himself from the world, when he has centred his mind on the cosmos, and when his consciousness is no longer an individual consciousness. By that time he has become God-conscious.

CHAPTER IV

RAISING THE CONSCIOUSNESS

THE WHOLE striving of the mystic is to raise his consciousness as high as possible. What this raising of the consciousness means, and how it is raised, can be better understood by the one who has begun to practise it. The best means of raising the consciousness is by the God-ideal; therefore, however much one has studied metaphysics or philosophy intellectually and found some truth about one's being, it does not suffice for the purpose of life; for the culmination of life lies in the raising of the consciousness.

We can see this tendency in the rising of the waves, always trying to reach high and higher still. When they cannot go any farther they fall, but again they rise. The tendency of the animals to stand on their hind legs is also the tendency of rising; fishes enjoy that swing of going up with the waves in the sea; the greatest joy of the bird is to be up in the sky. And man, whose soul is striving to rise, shows in his upright form that among all living beings he is the one who stands upright. All through creation this tendency shows itself; that is why the mystic uses this tendency to work towards the real purpose of life.

There are strivings which pull one down in the eyes of others and in one's own consciousness, and there are strivings which raise one in the eyes of others and in one's own consciousness. By studying this the mystic tries to raise himself in his consciousness instead of falling beneath it. He may go so far that he becomes independent of what others say, for as a man advances in the spiritual life he is less understood by others in his thought, speech, or action; but his striving is to raise himself high in his own consciousness. One might call it pride, but the proud will inherit the kingdom of heaven. It is the pride in God which makes a mystic feel the emptiness of all other things in this world, the insignificance of all the things to which most people attach such importance. It is this which raises him high in his own consciousness. To a mystic, to fall means to fall beneath his own ideal; and

to rise means to climb constantly towards his own ideal. If anything he thinks or does or says brings him lower in his own estimation instead of higher, he struggles against it and calls it a fall.

There is no law governing the mystic's life other than this law, the law of conscience, a constant striving which makes him struggle joyfully against influences that pull him down and keep him beneath his ideal. No doubt once a man takes this path it means that he chooses a path of continual suffering, because everything in the world is pulling him down from that ideal; there is nothing whatever to help him. Therefore to raise oneself above the threads that pull from every side and try to drag one down to the lowest level is a struggle against the whole of life. So one should not be surprised at the custom of the dervishes, who sometimes in their assemblies, sitting on the ground under the shade of a tree or beside a river, without a mat and without proper clothes, yet address one another as 'Your Majesty the King' or 'Your Majesty the Emperor'. For the moment it might make one laugh, but in reality they are the emperors, they are the kings, for they have striven all through life to raise their consciousness above these influences which continually drag one down to the depths of the earth.

One might think that in a way this is pride. Indeed, it could be a form of pride if it were not offered on the altar of God. It is a pride which is won and held in high honour, and when that honour is offered on the altar of God, then this is the highest possible form of worship. There is foolish pride and there is wise pride. Foolish pride draws one to the depths of the earth and to destruction; wise pride raises one to the highest heaven, and brings upon one the bliss which belongs to the heavens. But besides pride humility has a place in the life of a Sufi, of a mystic. Its place is in willing, loving surrender. As the Emperor Mahmud Ghasnavi says in a poem, 'I, the Emperor Ghasnavi, on whom thousands of slaves wait, have myself become a slave since love has awakened in my heart.'

In devotion or love we cannot humble ourselves too much. The Persian poets such as Hafiz and Jami and many others show us the humble side of the mystic; they show how much he can humble

himself. To call himself dust at the feet of the Beloved is the least he can say, to worship the ideal that he loves is the highest worship for him; it is never a humiliation. This shows that the work of the mystic is to expand the scope of life, to make its range of pitch as vast as possible. At one end of it is the greatest pride; at the other end is the greatest humility. Pride and humility are to the mystic the positive and negative forms of sentiment, of feeling. Those who proudly refrain from humility are ignorant of its blessing, for in humbleness there is a great bliss; and those who are fixed in their humility and forget that pride which will enrich life do not know what they are losing in their lives. Yet it is the really proud who are humble, and it is the really humble who are proud.

No doubt the raising of the consciousness can also be interpreted differently. One can say that it means raising the consciousness from this earthly plane to a higher plane, and then again to still higher planes, in order to experience the depths and the heights of life. And this gives the mystic a wide horizon in which to experience and to make experiments of all kinds. It opens up many worlds before him, the whole cosmos in which to live and move and have his being; and then to him the ordinary life will seem to be a life in a narrow, small world. It is just like living one's life in the ocean instead of in a small well. The world of the mystic becomes the whole being, the whole existence; it gives him a wide scope to live in, and it gives him the assurance of immortal life.

A man who climbs a steep mountain is always apt to slip. But if this slipping, which is natural, induces him to go down again he will never climb any more. If he slips and then tries to go on he will become more sure-footed, and will learn how to avoid slipping. Perhaps he will slip a thousand times, but a thousand times he will go forward again. It is nothing to be surprised at if a person slips; it is natural. The mountain is steep; it is natural that one should slip. The best thing one can do is to go on after every such slip, without losing courage, without allowing one's consciousness to be impressed by it; to think that it is natural and to continue the ascent.

CHAPTER V

THE PATH TO GOD

A MAN WHO stands outside Sufism is always confused as to the Sufi's attitude towards God. He cannot make out whether the Sufi is a worshipper of God or a worshipper of self, whether the Sufi claims himself to be God, whether he is an idolator, or whether he worships the formless God in heaven. The one who wonders like this has some reason for it, because when he sees that in this world there are believers and unbelievers, that there are some who worship God and some who do not, he cannot understand the attitude of the Sufi, he cannot decide whether the Sufi is a beginner on the spiritual path or whether he has arrived at the goal. If he calls him a beginner he cannot prove this to himself, because of the Sufi's personality which radiates God; and if he calls him someone who has arrived at the height of spirituality then he thinks, 'How can a Sufi, who is supposed to be a God-realized man, be so childlike as to worship God in the same way as everybody else does, when he says that he does not see any importance in the worship of form, that he is above it?'

Moreover, there are some attitudes of the Sufi which very much shock a religious man, an orthodox person, for the realization of the Sufi cannot always be held back. He may try to do so, but sometimes it will leap out, and then one begins to doubt whether the Sufi is really a worshipper of God or whether inwardly he feels differently towards God. The Sufi, therefore, is a riddle to a person who cannot understand him fully, to one who stands outside Sufism, for he does not know what the Sufi believes and what he does not believe.

There are four different stages of God-realization of the Sufi. The first and primitive stage is to make a God. If he does not make Him out of a rock or out of wood he makes Him out of his thought. He does not mind, as an idolator would not mind, worshipping the God that he has made himself. Out of what does he make Him? Out of his imagination. The man who has no

imagination stands on the ground; he has no wings, he cannot fly. The Sufi imagines that in spite of all the injustice of human nature there is one just Being, and he worships this Being whom he has imagined as his God. In spite of all the unreliable lovers and beloveds, he imagines that there is a Lover and a Beloved upon whom he can always depend. He thinks, 'Notwithstanding this ever-changing and unreliable human nature that surrounds me there is a reliable, unchangeable source of love and of life before me. He hears not only my words but every thought I have, He feels all my feelings, and He is continually with me and within me; to whichever side I turn I meet Him. He protects me when I am asleep, when I am not conscious of protecting myself; He is the source of my support, and He is the centre of all wisdom. He is mercy, He is compassion. God is the greatest friend, upon whom I can always depend; and if the whole world turns away from me I shall still have that friend, a friend who will not turn away as the friends of this earthly life do after having buried their beloved friend or relation, a friend whom I shall find even in my grave. Wherever I exist I will always have this friend with me.'

And when he has passed through this stage then there comes another stage, the stage of the lover of God. In this stage he begins to look upon God as his Beloved, and only then does he begin to learn the manner of true love; for love begins in man and culminates in God, the perfect ideal and object of love. A Hindustani poet says that the first step on the path of love teaches a person to say, 'I am not.' As long as he thinks, 'I am,' he is far away from the path of love; his claim of love is false. Naturally, just as a lover is resigned to the will of the beloved, to suffer or to go through any test, so the Sufi at this stage takes all things in life as they come, courageously and bravely, meeting all difficulties and all circumstances, realizing that it all comes from the beloved God. It is in this way that contentment and resignation are learnt, that a willing surrender in love is practised, and that love, which is a divine quality, naturally raises man to a higher standard.

One might say, how can one love God, God whom one does not know, does not see? But the one who says this wants to take the second step instead of the first; he must first make God a reality, and then God will make him the truth. This stage is so

beautiful; it makes the personality so tender and gentle; it gives such patience to the worshipper of God; and together with this gentleness and patience he becomes so powerful and strong that there is nothing that he will not face courageously: illness, difficulties, loss of money, opposition—there is nothing that he is afraid of. With all his gentleness and tenderness, inwardly he becomes strong.

When a man has passed through this stage then there comes a third stage, and it is that he considers all earthly sources, whether favourable or unfavourable, all that comes to him, as God. If a friend comes to meet him, to the Sufi it is God who is coming to meet him; if a beggar is asking for a penny, it is God whom the Sufi recognizes in that form; if a wretched man is suffering misery, he sees also in this the existence of God. Only, the difference is that in some he sees God unconscious, in others he sees God conscious. All those who love him, who hate him, who like or dislike him, who look upon him with admiration or contempt, he looks at with the eyes of the worshipper of God, who sees his Beloved in all aspects. Naturally when this attitude is developed he develops a saintly spirit. Then he begins to see in this world of variety the only Being playing His role as various beings, and for him every moment of his life is full of worship. But even with this realization he will never say that he is more evolved than those who worship God in an ordinary form; he can stand with them and worship in the same manner as they, although he stands above it all; but he will never claim to do so.

The fourth development of the God-ideal is in the loss of the self. But which self is lost? The false self is lost, and the true self is gained. In this stage the Sufi hears through the ears of God, sees through the eyes of God, works with the hands of God, walks with the feet of God; then his thought is the thought of God and his feeling is the feeling of God. For him there is no longer that difference which a worshipper makes between himself and God; as Khusrau the Persian poet says, 'When I have become Thee and Thou hast become me, when I have become body and Thou hast become soul, then, Beloved, there is no difference between "I" and "Thou"'.
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What profit does the Sufi derive from this loss of what he calls

his outer personality? It is not really a loss of outer personality, it is an expansion of the outer personality to the width and height of the inner personality. Then man becomes God-man, God-conscious; outwardly he is in the universe, inwardly the universe is in him. Outwardly he is smaller than a drop, inwardly he is larger than the ocean; and in this realization the purpose of belief in God, of worshipping God, and of loving God is accomplished.

The Sufi says that since the whole of manifestation is the manifestation of love, and since God Himself is love, then it is natural that the same love which comes from the source returns to the source, and that the purpose of life is accomplished by it. Somebody asked a Sufi, 'Why did God create the world?' and he said, 'In order to break the monotony of loneliness.' And how is that monotony broken? It is broken through God loving His creation and through His creatures loving God. We see the same love of God in all things: in the love of a mother for her child, in the love of a friend for his friend, in all the different aspects it is the same love manifesting. Outwardly it may seem human, but inwardly it is all divine.

If we come face to face with truth, it is one and the same. One may look at it from the Christian, from the Buddhist, or from the Hindu point of view, but in reality it is one point of view. One can either be small or large, either be false or true, either not know or know. As long as a person says, 'When I look at the horizon from the top of the mountain I become dizzy; this immensity of space frightens me,' he should not look at it. But if it does not make one dizzy it is a great joy to look at life from above; and from that position a Christian, Jew, Muslim, and Buddhist will all see the same immensity. It is not limited to those of any one faith or creed. Gradually, as they unfold themselves and give proof of their response to the immensity of the knowledge, they are asked to go forward, face to face with their Lord.

One should remember, however, that there are very few who enjoy reality compared with those who are afraid of it, and who, standing on the top of a high mountain, are afraid of looking at the immensity of space. It is the same sensation. What frightens them is the immensity of things; they seem lost and they hold on to

their little self. The difficulty of this is that they not only die in the thought of mortality, but that even while they live it culminates in a kind of disease; and this disease is called self-obsession, obsession by the self. They can think of nothing but themselves, of their fears, doubts, and confusions, of all things pertaining to themselves; and in the end it turns them into their own enemy. First they look upon everybody else as their enemy because they are out of harmony with everybody, and in the end they are a burden to themselves. Such cases are not rare. Whatever religion they have, whatever faith they claim, they do not yet know what religion is. A man who professed to have no religion once said to me very profoundly, 'I am happy, I have no fear!' He was spiritual though he did not know it.

One might ask if someone who has this realization can still have weaknesses. The weaknesses of the one who has gone along this path do not make him weak. It is his weaknesses which are weak, not he himself. Besides there is a saying in Hindi, 'Never judge the godly.' As the eyes have a limit, so the mind has a limit. How can the unlimited soul, who is in the Unlimited, be judged by the man who looks at life from a narrow point of view? Those who arrive at an advanced stage never judge; it is the man who is at a lower stage who judges. The one who is on the top of the mountain judges no one, and therefore he is exempt from being judged.

Furthermore, when a person says, 'I have not made a God, but I want to love God,' or when he says, 'I have not loved God, but I want to know God, I want to see Him,' or when he says, 'I do not wish to see God, but I want to realize God,' he is asking for something which is impossible. One can go through these stages either quickly or slowly, but one must pass through these four stages. And if a person has not the patience to pass through these four stages, he certainly cannot enjoy that pleasure, that happiness which is experienced by the traveller on the path of God.

CHAPTER VI

THE IDEAL OF THE MYSTIC

AN ADEPT on the path of spiritual attainment needs an ideal to keep before him. And people often wonder when they see that a mystic who is on the esoteric path appears to have the same kind of ideal that an orthodox person has in his religious life; but although the mystic may perhaps have the religious ideal of a Lord and Saviour just like many others, yet the way he looks upon that ideal is different from the way of the world. His spiritual ideal is not a personality from a story or legend; his ideal is the Rasul, by whatever name people may know him. And who is the Rasul? The Rasul is the soul through which God Himself has attained that which is the purpose of creation, in other words the Rasul is the one who represents God's perfection through human limitation. The historical man, the man of a tradition, is the Rasul of his followers, but the adept recognizes that Rasul who is behind the picture which history or tradition makes of him.

When people argue after reading the life of one Rasul whom they consider their own, or of the Rasul of other people, the adept is not interested in this dispute; for to him it is like two artists who have made a portrait of the same person and argue saying, 'Your conception is wrong, my conception is right,' or, 'My picture is better than yours,' whereas an adept looks at the picture and says, 'It is his conception.' One artist may have painted Dante in one form, another paints him in a different way, but if there is a dispute about which is the real portrait of Dante, the one who has understanding will say that each is a different conception. Perhaps one appeals to one person, while another appeals to another person.

Thus the adept makes a garland of the names by which different people have called their Rasul and offers this garland to his own ideal. He says, 'If there was any Buddha it is you, if there was any Christ it is you, if there was any Mohanmad it is you; in you I see him. If Moses came with a message it was you who came. I see

you in Solomon; and in the wonders of Krishna as well as in the splendour of Shiva I see you.' Whereas others argue about the different names of the great ones and about the different conceptions that people have of them, he does not limit his ideal; he makes his ideal the Alpha and Omega, the first and the last.

A mystic can only be called a mystic when he has arrived at the stage where his ideal is larger than that which can be covered by a name. He may give any name to his ideal, but if he covers his ideal with a name he has certainly not yet arrived at the mystic stage. All the beautiful forms that exist are forms of this ideal, all the good qualities that one finds in man he gives to his ideal, and also all the different ways of expressing one's respect and devotion that he sees in the world. And in this way, as he progresses through life, he makes his ideal better and better, greater and greater, higher and higher, till the ideal is perfect. If there seems to be a limitation in his ideal he thinks that it is his own limitation, that it is he who cannot conceive his ideal better. It is just like an artist who tries to make a statue of his beloved ideal as beautiful, as fine as he can, and at the same time he realizes that all that is lacking in it and all that remains to be done, or all the faults that it may seem to have, are his own faults, while his ideal is perfect. This is a stepping-stone for the mystic to come closer to God's shrine; by this he attains more quickly to a higher degree of perfection, for it is through love and devotion alone that man can forget himself.

As there is great joy and satisfaction in the worship of God, so there is great joy and satisfaction in adhering to one's ideal. When a person says that he will not let anyone come between him and God, he does not know what he is saying, for in the ideal it is God who is made intelligible for our own limited mind to grasp the divine ideal. If one denies the existence of the ideal, one certainly denies the reality of God, for it is really only after having attained to spiritual perfection that one may say anything—but then one does not say anything. When people say things without having thought about them, they speak before they have arrived at perfection.

No devotion given to our ideal is too great. However high we believe our divine ideal to be, it is certainly higher than that;

however beautiful a picture of our ideal we make, the ideal itself is still more beautiful; and therefore a devotee always has scope for expansion, for advancement. And an adept who advances on the mystical path, with all his striving, his study of life, and his meditation, will still need a spiritual ideal to carry him through all the difficulties of the path, and to bring him to the destination which is attainment.

CHAPTER VII

NATURE

ANYONE who has some knowledge of mysticism and of the lives of the mystics knows that what always attracts the mystic most is nature. Nature is his bread and wine; nature is his soul's nourishment; nature inspires him, uplifts him, and gives him the solitude for which his soul continually longs. Every soul born with a mystical tendency is constantly drawn towards nature; in nature that soul finds its life's demand, as it is said in the Vadan, 'Art is dear to my heart, but nature is near to my soul'.

Upon those who are without any tendency towards mysticism nature has a calming effect; to them it means a peaceful atmosphere; but to the mystic nature is everything. No wonder that the mystics, sages, and prophets of all ages sought refuge in nature from all the disturbing influences of daily life. They considered the caves of the mountains to be better than palaces; they enjoyed the shelter under a tree more than beautiful houses; they liked looking at the running water better than watching the passing crowds; they preferred the sea-shores to the great cities; they enjoyed watching the rising and the falling of the waves more than all the show that the world can produce; they loved to look at the moon, at the planets, at the stars in the sky more than at all the beautiful things made by man.

To a mystic the word nature has a wider meaning; according to the mystical point of view nature has four different aspects. The forest, the desert, hills and dales, mountains and rivers, sunrise and sunset, the moonlit night, and the shining stars are one aspect of nature. Before a mystic they stand like letters, characters, figures made by the Creator to read if one is able to read them. The sura of the Qur'an which contains the first revelation of the Prophet includes the verse, 'Read in the name of your Lord . . . who taught with the pen'. The mystic, therefore, recognizes this manifestation as a written book; he tries to read these characters and enjoys what they reveal to him. To the mystic it is not only

the waxing and the waning of the moon, it has some other significance for him; it is not only the rising and the setting of the sun, it tells him something else; it is not only the positions of the stars, but their action and their influence relate something to the heart of the mystic. The mountains standing so silently, the patient trees of long tradition, the barren desert, the thick forest, not only have a calming effect upon the mystic, but they express something to him. The fluttering of the leaves comes to his ears as a whisper, the murmur of the wind falls on his ears as music, and the sound of little streams of water running in the forest, making their way through rocks and pebbles, is a symphony to the ears of the mystic. No music can be greater and higher and better than this. The crashing of the thunder, the sighing of the wind, the blowing of the morning breeze, all these convey to a mystic a certain meaning which is hidden behind them; and for a mystic they make a picture of life, not a dead picture but a living picture, which at every moment continually reveals a new secret, a new mystery to his heart.

And then we come to the next aspect of nature, an aspect which manifests through the lower creation. The silent little creatures crawling on the earth, the birds singing in the trees, the lion with its wrath, the elephant with its grandeur, the horse with its grace, and the deer with its beauty, all these tell him something. He begins to see the meaning of the wrath of the lion and of the modesty of the deer; he listens to the words that come to his ears through the singing of the birds, for to him it is not a wordless song. The ancient mystics in their symbology used the head of the tiger, the form of the lion, the image of the eagle, and also pictures of the snake and the cow. They pictured them as a character which they had read through observing this aspect of nature.

There is an aspect of nature which is still more interesting, and to see it the mystic need not go away, for he sees it in the midst of the world. What is it? It is to read human nature and to watch its continual change, its progress, its degradation, its improvement. It is so interesting that in spite of all the difficulties that the world presents, one feels life worth living when one begins to notice how those who were going forward begin to go backward,

and how those who were going backward begin to go forward; when one observes how a person, without sinking in the water, is drowned in life, and how a person who was drowning begins to swim and is saved; when one sees how from the top a person comes down to the bottom in a moment, and how a person who was creeping on the ground has at last arrived at the top; when one sees how friends turn into bitter enemies, and how bitter enemies one day become friends. To one who observes human nature keenly it gives such an interest in life that he becomes sufficiently strong to bear all, to endure all, to stand all things patiently. One may observe this moving picture all through life, and it is never enough; one never tires of it.

And the fourth aspect of nature is seeing the divine nature, realizing the meaning of the saying that man proposes and God disposes. When one is able to see the works of God in life, another world is opened before one; then a man does not look at the world as everybody else does, for he begins to see not only the machine going on but the engineer standing by its side, making the machine work. This offers a still greater interest, the greatest interest in life. If one were to be flayed or crucified one would not mind, for one rises above all pain and suffering, and one feels it worth while to be living and looking at this phenomenon that gives one in one's lifetime the proof of the existence of God.

It is these four aspects of life that are called nature by the mystics; to a Sufi they are his holy scripture. All the other sacred books of the world, however highly esteemed by the followers of the different religions, are interpretations of this book, given by those who were granted clear vision and who tried their best to give all they had learnt from it to humanity in our human language, which is a language of limitations.

Nature does not teach the glory of God; it need not teach this as nature itself is the glory of God. People wish to study astrology and other subjects in order to understand better, but if we study astrology then we are sure to arrive at an interpretation which is given by a man, whereas what we should read from nature is what nature gives us and not what any book teaches us. There comes a time with the maturity of the soul when every thing and every being begins to reveal its nature to us. We do not need to

read their lives, we do not need to read their theories. We know then that this wide nature in its four aspects is ever-revealing and that one can always communicate with it, but that in spite of this it is not the privilege of every soul to read it. Many souls remain blind with open eyes. They are in heaven, but not allowed to look at heaven; they are in paradise, but not allowed to enjoy the beauties of paradise. It is just like a person sleeping on a pile of gems and jewels. From the moment man's eyes open and he begins to read the book of nature he begins to live; and he continues to live for ever.

CHAPTER VIII

IDEAL

A MYSTIC is an idealist in every sense of the word: one who has no ideal cannot be a mystic. It would not be an exaggeration to say that the one who has no ideal lives without life. If there is anything in the world which we can say we live for, it is one thing only—the ideal; and when there is no ideal there is nothing to live for. In Sanskrit religion is called *Dharma*, which literally means duty; to give a definition of what religion is one can say that it is an unswerving progress towards the ideal. But then what is the ideal? Any ideal or every ideal that we have before us is the ideal for that moment.

Ideal can be divided into five aspects, of which the first is the ideal which one has for oneself. It might begin to show itself as a whim, as a dream, as an imagination, even as an expectation of a child. If a child says, 'When I am grown-up I will have an elephant to ride upon, or a beautiful horse,' this is an ideal. And this first aspect of the ideal can again be divided into three classes. The first is when one says, 'I shall possess this or that—so much wealth, so many gardens, so many palaces', or, 'I shall surround myself with so much grandeur that I shall appear quite different from anyone else.' The next is when one says, 'I shall be the Prime Minister or the President of the country or have a throne and crown.' And the third class is when one says, 'I shall keep to this particular virtue, I shall be pious', or, 'I shall be good in every sense of the word', or, 'I shall be that which I consider good and beautiful in myself'.

There was a young man in Indian history, whose name was Shivaji, and whose story is an example of this first aspect of ideal. He began his life by living on robbery, and one day he came into the presence of a sage, to ask his blessing for success in his robbery. The sage saw in his face, in his eyes, in his voice that here was a real jewel, that there was an ideal in him, although not yet awakened. The sage asked him, 'How many men have you in

your gang?' He said, 'No one. I work alone.' The sage said, 'It is a pity. You must form a small band and keep together.' He was glad to take this advice, and he formed a small band of robbers, and continued in his pursuit. He was more successful, and when he visited the sage again the latter said, 'How many are there now in your gang?' He said, 'Only four or five.' The sage told him that this was too few, that he should have at least fifty or a hundred men to do something really worth while. And then Shivaji, by the charm of his personality, gathered some more robbers to accompany him, and they did many really daring things. They attacked caravans, and they risked their lives, and were very successful. And one day the sage said to him, 'Do you not think that it is a great pity that you, such a hero, who are willing to risk your life and who have won all these friends and made them your companions, do not try to throw out the Moghuls [who were occupying the country at that time] at least from our district?' Shivaji agreed. He was prepared, he had drilled, this was something for him to think about. The first attack brought him victory. Then he made a second attack and a third, till he was the chief of the whole province. And he went to the sage to express his gratitude. 'Yes,' the sage said, 'be thankful but not contented, for what you have done is not enough.' And one reads in the history of India that this man nourished the desire to form an Indian empire, but he did not live long enough to achieve it, although during his life he became a wonderful king and a splendid hero whom India will always remember.

The second aspect is when a person makes an ideal out of a principle; and when he succeeds in carrying out this principle throughout his life, then he has accomplished a great thing. If he has been able to live up to that principle, then he has everything. And this aspect can also be illustrated by the story of a robber. In the deserts of Arabia there used to be a well-known robber, and when caravans passed through there they were warned beforehand that there was danger in that particular place where he lived. And once when a caravan arrived near there a man who was very anxious about his gold coins thought that it would be a good thing if he could find someone to whom he could entrust his money. He saw a tent at a distance, and when he came near he

saw a most dignified man sitting there smoking his pipe. He saluted him and said, 'I am anxious; I have heard that in this place there is danger of robbers, and I beg you to keep my coins in your charge.' 'I will do it with pleasure,' said the man, and he accepted them. And when the other rejoined the caravan he heard that there had been an attack by robbers and that they had taken all they could from everyone. He said, 'Thank God for the inspiration He gave me to give my money in safe keeping!' Then later he went again to the tent to get his money back, and what did he see? He saw that this dignified man was the chief of the robbers, and that the other robbers were sitting before him dividing the spoils. He stood at a distance, fearing they would perhaps take his life now that his money was already gone. And he thought how foolish he had been to have taken the trouble to bring his money to the robbers himself! He turned to go back, but the chief called him asking, 'Why did you come, and why are you leaving?' The man said, 'I thought when I gave my money to you that you would return it to me, but now I realize that you belong to the robbers who have attacked the caravan.' The chief said, 'What has that got to do with the money you entrusted to me? The coins which you gave into my keeping are your money. It was not robbed, it was given into my charge; I give it back to you.'

This was a principle which the robber lived up to. He is a historical person, and in the end this very man became a great murshid, and those around him became his mureeds; one can find his name among the Sufis of the past. This shows how living up to one's principle makes a ladder for a person to climb to the desired goal.

The third ideal is the idea of bettering the conditions. Someone thinks, 'I should like my village to be improved; I should like my town to have all comforts and facilities.' Or he thinks, 'I would like my fellow-citizens to be better educated, to have more happiness,' or, 'My nation should be honoured in the world, and for the honour of my nation I will give my life.' One may think of his race, another of humanity, to better its conditions, to serve it, to be its well-wisher, to bring to it all the good that is possible. The great heroes who have saved their nation through their lifelong service, who have given examples to humanity,

who have sacrificed their lives for their people, all had some ideal, they all lived a life which was worth while.

As great as is a person's ideal, so great is that person. It is the ideal that makes a person great, but at the same time if he is not great his ideal cannot be great. Besides life is a small thing to offer to the ideal, and if life is a small thing, what else is more valuable? Nothing. It is the one who has no ideal who holds on to everything and says, "This is mine, and I am very anxious to keep it!" The one with an ideal is generous. There is nothing that he will keep back, for his ideal he will give everything, and it is that person who is a living being.

The fourth aspect of the ideal is when one idealizes a person. One man sees his ideal in his child, in his mother, in his father, ancestor, friend, in his beloved, or his teacher: No doubt this ideal is greater than all others, for in this ideal there is a miraculous power: it awakens life and gives life to dead things. There are however difficulties in following this ideal to the end, for when we idealize a person, naturally he cannot always come up to our expectations, for our ideal moves faster than the progress of this living being. Besides, when one idealizes a person one wishes to cover one's eyes from all his shortcomings, one wishes to see only what is good and noble in him; but there come moments when the other side of that person is also seen, for goodness cannot exist without badness and beauty cannot exist without the lack of it. Very often beauty covers ugliness and ugliness covers beauty, very often goodness covers evil and evil goodness; but both opposites are always present. If not, man would not be man.

An idealist will see all that is good and beautiful in the one he idealizes; yet he keeps the object of his ideal before his eyes. His mind can idealize, but his eyes cannot remain closed; his heart takes him to heaven, but his eyes hold him fast on earth and there is always a conflict. And when it happens that the person whom one has idealized falls short of the goodness and beauty which one had expected him to possess, then one becomes disheartened, and one wonders whether there is anything in this world that could be ideal.

We see that emotional people are apt to idealize quickly, but are also apt to cast down the object of their idealization quickly.

To keep up an ideal which is living on earth and which is before one's eyes is the hardest thing there is, unless one has such balance that one will never waver and such compassion that one is able at one's own expense to add to the ideal all that it lacks. This is the only way in which one can hold on to a living ideal, otherwise what happens is that one says during the waxing of the ideal, 'You are so good, you are so kind, you are so great', and during the waning of the ideal one says, 'But you are unjust, you are thoughtless, you are inconsiderate; I am disillusioned. You are not what I expected you to be.' It is so natural, and at the same time it is not the ideal which has fallen; the one who has fallen is the one who climbed the ladder of the ideal and went too high, and then he has to come down again till he stands on the same level as before.

Also belonging to this fourth aspect of the ideal is the idealizing of a historical or legendary person, of a dramatic character of the past, a personality who is not before one. This one can maintain better, for it gives one scope for adding all the goodness and beauty one wishes to add; and at the same time it will never disappoint one, because it will never appear different from that which one has made of it in one's heart. The gods and goddesses of the ancient Egyptians, Indians, and Greeks were made to represent certain types of character, and in order that a worshipper might be impressed by a certain character these gods and goddesses were held up as objects of devotion, as something to keep before one, as an ideal. Besides the great prophets and teachers and saviours of humanity have been the ideals made for centuries by writers, by poets, by devotees, by thinkers, as good and as beautiful as they could be made. No doubt others have looked at them differently and have held the ideal of someone else to be less than their own; nevertheless the benefit that they derived from devotion to such an ideal lay in the seeking of a character, of a certain beauty, of a virtue, which would always help them to arrive at that stage which is the desired goal of all beings.

The fifth aspect of the ideal is God, the perfect ideal, an ideal which cannot change, which cannot be broken, which remains always steady for the reason that God is not within man's reach. If God were within his reach then he would try to test Him too!

It is just as well that He is not. It is in this ideal that one finds life's fulfilment, and all other ideals are but stepping-stones, steps towards this perfect ideal, an ideal which shows no sign of imperfection; for God is goodness, God is justice, God is might, God is intelligence, all-knowing, God is all beauty, God is everlasting.

To a mystic the ideal is his religion, and he looks upon every person's ideal as a religion. He respects it before weighing and measuring and analysing what ideal it is. The ideal itself is sacred to a mystic, and thus it is the central theme of his life; it is in the ideal that the mystic finds both his way and his goal.

CHAPTER IX

THE MORAL OF THE MYSTIC

WHEN CONSIDERING virtue the natural tendency is to disregard the laws which govern human nature. The mystic therefore does not take the point of view of some preachers who urge and impose upon all those who come to them that they should be good, that they should be kind, and that they should be just. A mystic recognizes that man's first response is to react in accordance with what strikes him. We already see this tendency in a child. When we smile at the child it will laugh, but if we show it a hand as if we were going to strike it the child will do the same unless it is afraid; at least its desire would be the same, it would want to hit back. Therefore there is nothing to be surprised at if Moses stood before the multitude and told them, 'An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth.' What else could he have said to them? 'Be ye kind and saintly and most loving'? Would they have listened to that?

Even on the mystic path, the first step of an adept is to recognize fully the law of *reciprocity*. The difference between an adept and an ordinary person is that an ordinary person does automatically what the mystic begins to do consciously. In considering the law of reciprocity one must not overlook human nature: how a man always sees written before him in big letters what he has done, but in very small letters what the other has done. He always overestimates his own goodness, his generosity, his kindness, his service to another person; and he blinds himself to the kindness, goodness, and generosity of the other. Thus it is seldom that people live the law of reciprocity, although everyone is sure that he returns love for love and hate for hate. Perhaps he returns hate for hate, but whether he returns love for love is another question. The reason is that the first thing man thinks of is himself, what he feels, what he thinks, what he says, what he does; and it is only his second thought that he gives to what another person says, thinks, feels, or does. So that which one thinks, says, feels, or does stands

clearly and fully before one, and all that another person feels, thinks, says, or does is something that one sees from a great distance. And when it is something which concerns himself, a person very often views it with only his own interest in mind.

Once a man has begun to recognize the law of reciprocity, from that moment he begins to open his eyes to what is called justice. We have wrongly given the name justice to man-made laws.

Justice is a sense; and when we recognize justice as a sense we begin to see justice as a living spirit. To explain this in ordinary terms: if the carpet is not laid properly there is a sense in us which tells us that it is not right, a kind of discomfort comes over us only from looking at it; or if the lamp is not standing in its usual place on the table there is a sense in us which gives us discomfort, which makes us think that it is not right, that it ought to be the other way. And it is the same with justice. It is a sense of seeing the right proportion, the right weight, the right measure. No one can live without it and be a saint; this is the first step he must take, and if he does not take this step then he will surely fall into a ditch before he arrives at saintliness. There are two ends to a line: one end is ignorance, the other end is innocence, and in between is wisdom. And as the two ends are similar, so innocence and ignorance seem to be the same; only, the difference is that in order to go from ignorance to innocence we have to cross wisdom. Very often people confuse the ignorant and the innocent soul.

Reciprocity does not mean allowing a larger measure to the other, or giving a greater weight for the money he pays; by reciprocity is meant just dealing in all the different walks of life, remembering at the same time the weak point in human nature: that man always thinks he is just though he is often far from being so.

This naturally produces in the mystic a friendly tendency. In the same way that plants grow, so this tendency grows and blossoms into *beneficence*. Man begins to think less of himself and of all that he does for others, and he begins to appreciate more what others do; he can even arrive at the stage where he entirely forgets all that he does for another, only remembering what the

other has done or is doing for him. There are some few souls here and there in the world who may not be recognized as such, but who in reality are saintly souls, in whatever guise they live. Their number is small, but they are to be found everywhere, those who do good to another, who render their services, who are kind, generous, loving, without any thought of appreciation, of thanks, of return. One might think from a practical point of view that such a person is on the losing side. He may seem to be, but he derives pleasure from it, a pleasure that cannot be compared with the pleasure of the one who exacts his share; and no one can experience this pleasure unless he has practised this law in his own life. One awakens to the law of beneficence by being able to admire and to appreciate, by sympathy, by being grateful. The person who thinks, 'I have done some good to another, I have rendered a kind service to another, I have been of great help in the life of another', cannot understand the law of beneficence. It means to do and to forget, to serve without desiring any appreciation, to love without wishing for any return, and to do kindness even if there is no recognition on the part of the other. If we look at them from the point of view of the law of reciprocity, those who do this are not unhappy, although it might seem that they should be. There is a saying that there are some who are happy in taking and others who are happy in giving, but in the case of the latter the reward is greater and they are happier in the end.

In the law of *renunciation* the mystic finds the rest and peace which is the object of his journey on the spiritual path. There is nothing so difficult as renunciation. To pursue an object, to persevere on a path, and to attain to a certain thing, all these are easy in comparison with being able to renounce something which one really values. Sometimes renunciation is like death; but having once renounced, one finds oneself standing above death. Renunciation, in other words, may be called sacrifice, although sacrifice is a small word for it. Sacrifice is the beginning of renunciation, and it is its point of perfection which may be called renunciation. The saints and sages and prophets all had to go through this test and trial, and in proportion to the greatness of their renunciation, so great have these souls become. Renunciation is the sign of heroes, it is the merit of saints, it is the character of the masters,

and it is the virtue of the prophets. No one can come to this unless he has passed through the laws of reciprocity and beneficence.

What must be renounced? Nothing must be renounced: it is renunciation itself. It is as Farid-ud-Din Attar, the great Persian poet, says, 'Renounce the good of the world, renounce the good of heaven, renounce your highest ideal, and then renounce your renunciation.' Is the only way to perfection through renunciation? The way to perfection is not limited; there are many ways. No one can make a rule that one can only pass through this way and not by another way. The mystic, therefore, instead of imposing upon others or upon himself great principles and high morals, tries to pass through the laws of reciprocity and beneficence in order to arrive at the idea of renunciation.

CHAPTER X

BROTHERHOOD

BROTHERHOOD seems to be an inner inclination of man, although he continually shows the opposite inclination, just as goodness is a natural inclination of man though the opposite of goodness is more frequently to be found. Mysticism need not teach brotherhood, for a mystic becomes a brother by nature; mysticism culminates in brotherhood, a brotherhood which is unlike any other institution of brotherhood in the world.

There are several kinds of brotherhood. First there is professional brotherhood, which is seen in the unionizing of some profession or other. In appearance it is a brotherhood, but in fact the members have become brothers only because of their mutual interest in that profession. One may call them brothers, but they are certainly not twins! They have become brothers for earthly benefit, with the good motive of furthering their particular profession as much as possible. But there is another side to it: that all those who are outside that profession are not brothers; they are only cousins and it would not be wrong to profit by them, and the brothers will meet and find out how best to profit by the cousins. We find this idea in the Mahabharata, the ancient Hindu scripture, where a war is described between brothers and cousins. It is symbolical.

There is another brotherhood which may be called a federation. Those who have the same business will unite in their common interest against all those who depend upon their business or upon what they sell. As long as they can agree among themselves as how to make their efforts profitable they are brothers, but the moment the profit of one is endangered by the other their brotherhood breaks up, for it is only profit which makes them brothers.

Then there is brotherhood in the political field, calling itself one party or the other. And this brotherhood can even be seen in the form of nations. The parties are formed in order to be

brothers in the fight against the cousins of the other party. Nations will remain united as brothers as long as their own interest is not harmed by the other nation, but as soon as their interest is interfered with this brotherhood can immediately break up. It does not take long to break the bonds of alliance; as soon as a question of national interest arises there is only their own benefit which comes first. Brotherhood is a word which was adopted in order to strengthen themselves in their own interest.

In still another type of brotherhood people become brothers when they belong to a certain Church, a certain religion. Those who attend that particular Church, those who follow a particular principle which was given to them, are brothers. Any other people who are perhaps following better principles are outcasts, for the very reason that they do not belong to this particular Church. No doubt this brotherhood extends more widely than the other forms.

Maybe there will arise other forms of brotherhood, but as long as a brotherhood is formed by an earthly interest divisions will always arise. It is human nature to divide into sections, into parties, yet at the same time it is the innermost nature of man to unite with others. Thus the brotherhood of the mystic is not limited to a certain section or a certain division. His brotherhood, like the human brotherhood, envelops all. To him it does not matter what Church a person belongs to or what business, what profession a person has or what his political opinion is; he does not mind, for the mystic sees brotherhood in the source of all things. Just as the children of the same parents see themselves united in the parents, so mystics see all as members of one brotherhood above and beyond every section of cast, creed, nation, or religion.

A nation is a family, a race is a family, but the brotherhood of family bonds has diminished in these days. There remain hardly any families now such as there used to be in ancient times. The family bonds were often so strong that feuds developed between rival families. For years and years families caused bloodshed, taking revenge perhaps for some wrong that somebody's grandfather had done, or for what somebody's great-grandfather had said to somebody's great-great-grandfather. We have improved since then, and we have become such a large family that whereas

family feuds used to cause three deaths in fifty years, they now cause the death of millions and millions of people; this is because we have advanced in the organization of families, without first knowing how we should form a family. The loosening of the family bonds is one of the things which make modern life so unnatural, although the word 'unnatural' is a very strange word. What is natural and what is unnatural? Natural is that to which we are accustomed; unnatural is that to which we are not accustomed. Sometimes centuries make something natural, sometimes a few years make a thing natural, and sometimes a few months. We call something natural because we are accustomed to see it as it is, but we do not realize that it has taken perhaps many centuries, many years, or many months to make it natural to us.

Moreover, what is natural to us need not be natural to others. The present condition of the world is not to be blamed for the lack of consideration for what is called the family bond. This is a kind of development, and although it does not have perhaps the beauty which the family had, yet it has its own beauty, it has its own ways. Only, too much of any good thing is wrong. When there was such a strong family bond that it resulted in fights going on for many years, this was not a good thing, but now a kind of restaurant life has begun which will end in hotel life, and this also is going too far. Imagine, thousands of people living in a hotel, their food never of their choice, their living organized by the hotel authorities, and when they are ill they are immediately sent to a clinic; that is their life! When they go out they go out by fifties or hundreds in large cars, and they all travel in the same ship across the sea. There is none of the joy that existed in ancient times for those who travelled in freedom. Even when people travelled in caravans, on foot, on horseback, on a camel, or on an elephant, it was something, it was a different experience. In ancient times a family lived perhaps in a small hut, but they showed one another sympathy in their time of need.

It is not that this or that is not good; it is not that this is beautiful and that has no beauty. Every period has its own conditions. Whether for earthly interest or for spiritual interest, brotherhood is nothing but the forming of a family; it only depends in whose name we form a family. It was for this reason that Jesus Christ

always pointed out. God as being the father, which means: do not unite because of your earthly forefathers and ancestors and fight with one another because you come from different families, but think of that Father who is the father of all men; unite in Him. No doubt people will establish the same idea in another form, depending on the times.

Mysticism makes the mystic tolerant towards other people's opinions, mysticism makes him rise above divisions, mysticism makes him assimilate all that he sees and hears, and mysticism gives him love for God whom he sees in all beings. Mysticism gives him the sympathy by which he is attracted to every person he meets, and mysticism helps him to understand and to admire all things and to appreciate all beings, and in that way to come nearer to all that exists.

This ideal of brotherhood develops, taking different forms. In the first stage the mystic becomes respectful to all beings, both to the saint and the sinner, to the wise and the foolish. In the next stage his sympathy goes out to everyone he meets, no matter who it is. The third stage is when he understands the condition of every person because of his sympathy and respect. The fourth stage is when he tolerates and forgives; he cannot help doing it for the very reason that he understands. One who cannot tolerate, who cannot forgive, is not able to understand; tolerance and forgiveness come from understanding. And the fifth stage is that he sees himself united with all, not only in God but even in himself; in each being he sees himself. No one can sympathize more than one sympathizes with oneself, and so it is natural that, when the self of the mystic is at the same time all people, he can then sympathize with everyone as he would with himself.

Mysticism is thus the lesson of brotherhood. All this destruction which has been caused by wars and revolutions, by the continually rising sections of humanity, fighting against one another, calling themselves federations or communities or parties or divisions, this is all caused by lack of mystical understanding. What the world needs today is not so much preaching or religious teaching; what the world needs most is the mystical outlook, to look upon the world with the mystic's attitude, and to see the whole of humanity as one, the single Being, the only Being. In

order to bring this idea to the world it is not only necessary that there should be esoteric centres, but also that the message of universal brotherhood which is essential to mysticism should be given freely to all people, to those who sympathize as well as to those who are not yet ready to understand it. It is by bringing this idea to every soul one meets and can speak to that one will be able to accomplish the work which many institutions in the world today are trying to accomplish, calling themselves peace leagues and various other names. Man may have a good motive, but a good motive can only give good results with right methods. Whenever there is a good motive but not a right method, the good motive will be of no avail; on the contrary, the good motive can bring very bad results. And throughout world history whenever real brotherhood has been taught to humanity, it has always been conveyed by the mystical ideal.

CHAPTER XI

LOVE

MYSTICS OF all ages have been known not for their miraculous powers or for the doctrines they have taught, but for the devotion which they have shown throughout their lives. The Sufi in the East says to himself, 'Ishq Allah, Mahbub Allah', which means, 'God is love, God is the Beloved'; in other words, it is God who is Love, Lover, and Beloved. When we hear the stories of the miraculous powers of mystics, of their great insight into the hidden laws of nature, of the qualities which have manifested through their beautiful personality, we realize that these have all come from one and the same source, whether one calls it devotion or calls it love.

When we look at this subject from a mystic's point of view, we see that love has two aspects: love in itself, and the shadow of love fallen on the earth. The former is heavenly, the latter earthly. The former develops self-abnegation in a person, the latter makes him more selfish than he was before. Virtues such as tolerance, forgiveness, mercy, or compassion rise of themselves in the heart which is awakened to love; and infirmities such as jealousy, hatred, and all manner of prejudice begin to spring up when the shadow of love has fallen on the heart of the mortal. The former love raises man to immortality, the latter turns the immortal soul into a mortal being. A poet has said that the first step in love teaches selflessness; and if that is not experienced then one has taken a step in the wrong direction, although one calls it love. For man has learned from the moment he is born on earth the words 'I am', and it is love alone that teaches him to say, 'Thou art, not I'; for no soul can love and yet affirm its own existence.

Love in its first stage may be called affection, a tender feeling towards someone, be it mother or father or child or brother or sister, be it friend or mate. It is in affection that love begins to show itself; and even in that first awakening one will see the

phenomenon of selflessness. When an innocent child comes with a sweet to its mother and offers it to her, its delight is to see the mother take it instead of itself. There we begin to see love in its incipient stage, and also selflessness taking the first step on the path of self-abnegation. One sees it in the form of the mother's compassion for her child; the self-sacrifice that she shows, staying up all night, sharing the pain of her child, being anxious every moment when the child is away, rejoicing in its pleasures and sorrowing over its troubles. In this love which is without passion, a love which only desires the child to grow and flourish and prosper while the mother's self is merged in seeing this happen, in this love there is self-abnegation.

There is the love of a friend for his friend, the only reason for which is the admiration that one has for the other; but when there is real friendship between two people it gives them the experience of divine perfection, as in the Persian saying, 'When two hearts become one they can remove mountains'. To feel that there is someone in whom we can place our confidence, that there is someone who understands us, whom we can trust, upon whom we can lean and rely, to whom we can open our heart, to know that someone will sorrow in our pain more than he will sorrow for his own troubles, to know that there is someone in the world who will share all that is good and beautiful with us, imagine what a feeling it is! If we put this friend on one side of the scale and on the other side the whole world, the side where that friend is will weigh more than the other.

And then there is the love of one's beloved mate, a beloved in whom one can see the beauty of God and hear the voice of God; one can long for that beloved, one can yearn all the time to attain to the presence of that beloved. When there is someone to long for, to think about, then one begins to realize the truth of the saying that pain is preferable to pleasure. When one begins to feel the thought of one's beloved, to feel the feelings of one's beloved, to overlook all the wrong that the beloved may have done, when one begins to see that all is right and beautiful and good in one's beloved, then one is raised to experience the paradise of which the legends speak.

Rumi says, 'Whether you have loved man or whether you have

loved God, if you have really loved you are brought in the end before the throne of love'. All the different aspects of love and devotion in their beginning may appear wrong or right, but if there is real love and devotion one arrives in the end at that stage which sages and masters have experienced; for love is purifying, love is strengthening, love is uplifting, and love gives life.

The one who says, 'I love someone, but I hate someone else,' does not know what love means. How can one who loves hate? It is impossible. The heart that is tuned to love is incapable of hate, it cannot hate. If it is capable of hate it cannot love, it has never loved. The person who says that he did love his friend once, but that he no longer loves him, has never known the light of love, real love. Love is living and therefore growing; love is growing and therefore expanding; there is no limit to the expansion of love, for its source is divine and thus its expansion is perfect.

Passions that arise in their various aspects are like smoke; it is affection, it is emotion which is the glow of love, and devotion is the flame that rises out of love, that lightens the path of the seeker. As God is eternal, so love is eternal. If there is truth in anything it is in love; if there is no truth in love there is no truth in anything. If there are any morals or principles they all arise from love, for that is the only principle and moral which is real. There are many doctrines and principles made by man, but these are simply laws; love has its own law and it adheres to the law of no one.

Can a person reach perfection by love alone, without meditation? Man meditates because he cannot really love. The word love is misinterpreted, misunderstood; we use it in everyday life without knowing what it means. When once the soul begins to understand what it means, it is a word too sacred to utter; no one can profess to love, for love should make us just and able to see our shortcomings and infirmities. Once the flame of love is kindled in the heart one feels so ashamed of oneself that one can no more say, 'I love.' People mostly fall in love, as one says in English; but they never rise, though what is intended is to rise through love, not to fall. All inspirations are revealed and the mysteries and secrets of life manifest to the view of the one whose

heart is prepared by love; all kinds of virtue spring from it.

People talk of ecstasy. Some say that visionary people or those who see spirits and ghosts have ecstasies; but they do not know what ecstasy means. Ecstasy is a feeling that comes only when the heart is tuned to that pitch of love which melts it, which makes it tender, which gives it gentleness, which makes it humble.

When someone says, 'I love the formless', he professes something which is inaccurate. He cannot love the formless without first having given his love a form. If he has not recognized the formless in form he has not arrived at the love of the formless, and when the beginning is not right the end cannot be right. When one has recognized the formless in form and has loved the formless in a form so that one has experienced what self-abnegation means, when one has lost oneself, then the next step is the love of the formless. And what is this love? How does it manifest? It manifests in the love of all, making a man a fountain of love, pouring out over humanity the love that gushes from his heart, and not only to mankind; it may even reach all living beings.

CHAPTER XII

BEAUTY

BEAUTY, which a knower appreciates and a lover admires, is worshipped by the mystic. It is useless to try and put into words what beauty is; but if anything can explain it, it is the other word for beauty and that is harmony. It is the harmonious combination of colours, the harmonious grouping of lines, and the harmonious blending of the objects of nature which suggest to us the idea of beauty. In order to be beautiful an object must be harmonious, for in point of fact harmony is beauty. If there is anything in the world that makes man unconscious of himself, in other words that makes man lose his self-consciousness, if there is anything that makes man humble, that makes him surrender willingly, it is beauty. Beauty is something that conquers without a sword, that holds without hands, that is more tender than the petals of a flower and stronger than anything in the world. The Prophet has said, 'God is Beauty, and He loves what is beautiful.'

Beauty can be divided into three different aspects. The first is the beauty of the objective world, of objects. This aspect of beauty is to be seen in nature. What attracts man unconsciously to the beauty of nature is the harmony which it expresses. The sea, the mountains, the rivers, and the blue sky, the rising and the setting sun, the crescent and the full moon, they all seem to blend together so that a divine vision is produced which begins to speak to the soul. That is why the beauty of nature is uplifting. For the mystics, the prophets, and the sages this was the means of rising to that pitch where they could feel God; then there was no longer any question of their belief in God, for they felt God in the beauty of nature.

There is the other objective beauty which is art, the creation of man. This beauty appeals to one because it is a production, an imitation of that which the soul admires; and very often those details which one cannot see clearly in nature are noticeable in art.

Thus art is sometimes the finishing of the beauty which is expressed in nature. An image drawn by an artist can be more beautiful, for the reason that the artist has finished what nature had left unfinished. But who is working in the artist? The Creator Himself; what the Creator had left undone, He has finished through the artist. Therefore creations of art are also uplifting. It is most inspiring when a person listens to the song of birds, yet a song sung or composed by a human being can be still more uplifting, for man has completed that beauty; it was his mission to complete it. It is for this that the world was created, that man might finish in his own way that which was not finished in nature, so as to make beauty complete.

The second aspect of beauty is personal beauty, the beauty of the living being, whether in form and feature, in thought and imagination, in merit and qualifications, or in virtue and higher qualities. What is goodness? Beauty. What is right and wrong? That which is beautiful is right, and that which lacks beauty is wrong. Is there then no such thing as what the religious people call sin and virtue? That which is beautiful is virtue, and that which lacks beauty is sin. Are these not two opposite poles? They are when we look at them as opposite poles; when we look at the two ends of a line we see that there are two ends, but when we look at the centre of the line we see that it is one line. These opposite poles appear to us as two only when we look at the two ends. When the carpet on the floor is not laid down as it should be then we say it is wrong; but there is no rule as to how it should be laid; it is only the sense we have of recognizing beauty. This sense is disturbed by seeing that the carpet is not laid straight, and so what is wrong is the lack of beauty.

The third aspect of beauty is the beauty of God, which means beauty in its perfection. In order to see this beauty one must develop spiritually, so that this beauty may manifest to one's view. All that seems good and beautiful one can imagine in perfection as far as one's imagination reaches, calling it the beauty of God; for beauty is only manifest to our view in its limitation; it is in God alone that we see beauty in its perfection. There is no object of which we can say that it is perfectly beautiful, nor is there anyone except in our ideal to whom we can attribute all beauty. We can

make something as beautiful as possible, but in reality all beauty belongs to one only, and that is God.

There are two ways of discovering beauty. One way is to find it in the distribution of all things and beings. What one person lacks another has got; what one tree lacks the other tree has; what the river lacks the sea has, and what the desert lacks is to be found in the forest; what the earth lacks is to be found in the sky. And therefore, when we take beauty as a whole, we begin to get a glimpse of what it is. Beauty is never absent, but when we take a part of it and look only at that, we shall certainly see some lack of beauty. Those who see beauty cut up in divisions, in sections, become critical. They are in pursuit of beauty, but they do not find it; they find a little in one person and the lack of it in another. But even when they find a little beauty in one person, they still find something lacking too; and when we compare this with the perfection of beauty, then the lack of beauty manifests much more to us than the beauty itself. Naturally, therefore, man becomes critical, and this tendency makes him blind to himself.

The other way of seeing divine beauty is to close one's eyes for a moment to the dense aspect of beauty in order to see the inner beauty. For instance the one who rises above the beauty of form begins to see the beauty of thought; the one who rises above the beauty of thought begins to feel the beauty of feeling, of sentiment, which is greater still; and the one who rises even above sentiment and sees the spiritual aspect of beauty, sees a beauty which is still greater. There is no end to the realization of the inner beauty; the inner beauty is much greater when compared with the outer beauty, yet it does not make a person turn away from the outer beauty. It only makes him appreciate it more than others do.

Once an ascetic thinker was taken to a variety show in New York, where there were all sorts of dances and acts and different amusements; and the one who took him there was eager to find out what his opinion about it was and said to him, 'This must disgust you, a contemplative person, to come and see this nonsense going on on the stage.' He replied, 'No, never. How can it be disgusting? Is it not my Krishna who is playing there?' It is those who have touched the inner beauty who are capable of

appreciating beauty in all forms; and it is not only that they appreciate it, they admire and worship it. If worship is given to anything or anyone, it is given to the God who is hidden in the form of beauty.

The poems of the Sufis of Persia and elsewhere, such as Hafiz and Jami, Rumi and Farid-ud-Din Attar, are not only philosophical statements, but they are written from beginning to end in admiration of beauty. And if one were to dive deep into their every verse, one would find that each one is equal to a hundred books full of philosophy. Why? Because their souls have been moved to dance at the sight of beauty. What they have expressed in their words is living, burning, full of beauty. It penetrates the one who can feel it, who can admire it. Their poetry is their prayer. It might seem that it is sung to beauty, but to whom is it sung? Their song is to God.

CHAPTER XIII

SELF-KNOWLEDGE

THE KNOWLEDGE that the mystic seeks after is self-knowledge, the knowledge of one's self, within and without, the only knowledge that is worth attaining. It is contrary to the general tendency of man; man always wants to know what is before him, and that is why he sees more faults in another and less in himself. He thinks that if anyone is wrong it is the other, because he is less conscious of his own mistakes.

Self-consciousness is something quite different from self-knowledge. The self-conscious one is never conscious of his real self; he is only conscious of the reflection he receives from others. 'Does this person hate me?' 'Does that person speak against me?' That is the thought of the self-conscious. If it is not that then he pities himself: 'I am poor,' 'I am so wretched,' 'I am so miserable.'

Self-knowledge can be divided into four kinds, of which the first is knowledge of this physical vehicle which we call our body: how this vehicle has again two aspects, the head and the body, the former for knowledge (for all the special organs of perception are situated in the head), the latter for action. Knowledge of the physical body does not end with the knowledge of anatomy; in this body there are also centres which are the organs of intuition. In so far as science recognizes them they are nervous centres, but what a mystic sees in them is the subtle power of perception. And therefore to a mystic the human body is a more perfect instrument than a wireless receiver, for that is a dead thing compared with the human body; the body is a living wireless receiver if it is prepared for that purpose. And if one asks why it is necessary that one should prepare it for that purpose, this would be like asking if it is necessary that we should see with the eyes we have. The very fact that we have eyes means that we must see with them; and because of the very fact that the intuitive centres are situated in the physical body, it is necessary that man should be intuitive as well as intellectual. Besides to be intuitive and to be

intellectual are not essentially two different things; they are just like the two ends of the same line.

The next aspect of man's being is the breathing system, which in reality is not physical. Breath as it is understood by science is the air which one inhales and its action on the lungs and other organs. But according to the mystic the breath is a formation of man, it is magnetism, it is an ethereal aspect of his being which is not only situated in the body, but which is also around the body. It is by the power of this breath that man is able to stand and walk on this ever-moving world. The moment this energy which is breath fails, man can no longer stand on the ground, even if the whole mechanism of his physical body is in perfect condition. Thus there is a part of man which lives on the ethereal magnetism that he breathes and that gives him energy and radiance.

When we go still further we find that there is a being in us which we believe to be perhaps within our body or perhaps somewhere else. One cannot point it out, but it is there; and it is what we call mind. This thinking faculty has its seat in the physical body; but it is not limited by the physical body, it is independent of it. No doubt it functions in the organs of sense and in the nervous centres in order to perfect man's experience; nevertheless it is independent of the physical body, it is a faculty that can exist without the physical body, as the eyes can exist without spectacles: the spectacles only help the eyes to see more clearly. The mind is the surface of that part of our being of which the depths may be called heart. The mind thinks, the heart feels; the mind perceives, the heart reflects; the mind imagines, the heart enjoys. The thoughts of the mind are strengthened by the heart. Yet mind and heart are not two things; they are the two aspects of one thing, the surface and the depths.

The fourth aspect of our being is beyond explanation. It is joy, happiness. Man seeks for joy, and when the circulation of the joy which belongs to the depths of man's being is congested so that he cannot feel it, then he tries to experience it in what he calls pleasure. Pleasure is the shadow of happiness, something that passes away, that does not last. Being continually occupied in seeking the wrong thing instead of looking for the right thing,

man loses his hold on something that belongs to him: his happiness. He begins to look for it everywhere, wherever he thinks he can find it, but he may look for it all his life and yet it will always elude him. He thinks, 'Now I have grasped it,' and it is gone; he thinks, 'Now I have got it,' and it is lost; he thinks, 'Now it is mine,' and it is no longer there. For it is a shadow, and pursuit after a shadow is pursuit after nothingness. The joy becomes eclipsed because man does not know that his very being is joy, that his very self is happiness.

By looking for happiness, what does man seek after? He is seeking after his self, though he does not know it. There is nothing so easily lost as self; in one instant a person can lose it, because he is always accustomed to hold things that are in his hand, and there is only one thing that he can never hold and that is self; it instantly slips from his grasp. Naturally happiness is lost in the search for pleasure, and self becomes drowned in the pursuit of outer things. The way of the mystic is to find self in all its aspects, to learn and to understand the self within and without.

One might ask why one cannot understand self by studying human nature in general. Why must one study self by trying to understand oneself? The answer is that to study human nature is most interesting, but one can only study it well after one has studied oneself, for that enables one to understand human nature. As long as one remains ignorant of self one cannot study human nature properly. Often we hear people say, 'I am so disappointed in my friends,' 'I am so disheartened by my neighbours,' 'I have lost my faith in mankind,' 'I can bear animals, I can stand trees and plants better than human beings; I always try to avoid places where there are people.' Why do these thoughts come? Where do they come from and what causes them? It is the lack of understanding of oneself. The more one understands oneself, the more one finds that everything that is lacking in others is also lacking in oneself. Does a person become less by finding faults in himself? No, he becomes greater, for he not only finds that all the faults which are in others are also to be found in him, but that all the merits of the others are also his own merits. With faults and merits he becomes more complete; he does not become less.

What a great treasure it is when a man has realized that in

him are to be found all the merits and all the faults which exist in the world, and that he can cultivate all that he wishes to cultivate, and cut away all that should be removed! It is like rooting out the weeds and sowing the seed of flowers and fruits. One finds that all is in oneself, and that one can cultivate in oneself what one wishes. A world opens for the man who begins to look within himself; for it is not a little plot of ground that he has to cultivate; he has a world to make of himself, and to make a world is a sufficient occupation to live for. What more does one want? Many think that life is not interesting because they make nothing, but they do not realize that they have to make a world, that they are making a world, either ignorantly or wisely. If they make a world ignorantly then that world is their captivity; if they make a world wisely then that world is their paradise.

Only self-realization can give man full independence. It would be no exaggeration to say that by self-realization the heart of man becomes greater than the universe. The world in which man lives like a drop in the sea then becomes a drop in the ocean of his heart. The saints and sages, the illuminated souls who have brought light to others, have been the self-realized ones. One might ask, then where is the place of God, if self-realization brings one to perfection? The answer is that God is a stepping-stone to self-realization. The godly one is not always self-realized, but the self-realized one is godly. All the different ways that lead to God, different religions, faiths, occult schools, mystical paths, all these bring one in the end to the same goal, and that is self-realization. Even where there is a great difference such as that between the teachings of the Hebrews and those of Buddha, both teachings will meet in one thing, and that is self-realization.

There are four different ways by which one can attain to the knowledge of this truth. One person has been told that self-knowledge is the guide to perfection, and he says, 'Yes, it must be so'. He knows no more than that. There is another person who has read in this or in that book that it is self-knowledge which leads to perfection; and he thinks it must be true because it is written in a book. There is a third person who has reasoned it out; and by his reasoning, by synthesizing, he comes to the knowledge that it is one which has become many, that this variety is

again gathered into one, and that this one is to be found in oneself. No doubt the more his reason helps him, the more he will be consoled. But then there is a fourth person who realizes this truth himself, not by reason but by experience, and that is the way of the mystic.

How does the mystic proceed to experience it? By the mystical process of turning the eyes within, by shutting out the outside world for a moment and going into meditation, and by realizing, 'I do not exist only as a physical body, which I always see myself to be, but I also exist as a life, as a magnetism, as an energy.' Meditation which lifts him, in other words the consciousness, from the physical body, helps to make it clear to the mystic that he is not only a physical body, but that he is a being of energy, of magnetism, of breath, by the touch of which the physical body lives, being attached to it. As he goes further in the meditative life, he then begins to see that the faculty of thinking, of imagining, of feeling, is independent of the first two aspects; that he himself is a thought, that he himself is a feeling, and that he himself is the creator of thought, even a creator of feeling. And as he goes still higher, he sees that he is happiness himself as well as the creator of happiness.

It is by this process that one arrives at and experiences the happiness which is in oneself and which does not depend upon anything outside. As long as that happiness is not attained, all else that is taken as a substitute for it must disappoint sooner or later; and therefore, if there is any knowledge which can be said to be the only knowledge worth attaining, it is the knowledge of self.

CHAPTER XIV

THE REALIZATION OF THE TRUE EGO

THE PROCESS of mystical development is the annihilation of the false ego in the real ego. Sufis call the false ego Nafs, and the real ego Allah or God. It is not that the false ego is our ego and the true ego is the ego of God; it is that the true ego, which is the ego of the Lord, has become a false ego in us. One might ask how something which is true can become false, but false and true are relative terms; in reality all is true and nothing is false. When we call something false it means that it is less true compared with that which is more true. Reality has become confused. The soul, coming from the highest source but having identified itself with a smaller domain, the domain of the body and the mind, has conceived in itself a false idea of itself; and it is this false idea which is called Nafs.

In all people the ego appears in different degrees of intensity. Where it is most intense a person appears to be egoistic; the one in whom it is less pronounced seems to be unselfish. The false ego with its greater intensity becomes not only hard on others, but also on the man himself. The lion is not only cruel to other animals, but it is also very restless itself because of the intensity and strength of its ego, whereas the lamb is much less hard on others and therefore it is not hard on itself. All manner of trouble and torture, of deceit and treachery, of cruelty and tyranny is born of the false ego.

In its intensity the ego becomes blind, blind to justice. An intense ego is also devoid of life, and therefore of love. The man who loves himself cannot love others. A curious trick of the ego is that the egoist sees in every other person a pronounced ego. 'Why has this person beautiful clothes?' 'Why has he got a higher rank than I?' 'Why is he more distinguished than others?' that is his continual thought. He always sees another person as having something that he ought not to have; and by this trick the false ego makes him believe that others are egoistic, when on

the contrary it is he himself who is most egoistic, because his ego is hurt by the sight of the others' ego.

All the methods by which humanity tries to bring about better conditions fail if the psychology of the ego is not studied. Hardly anyone gives it a thought. In working for the construction of a new civilization many efforts are being made regardless of this principal secret of life, and in the name of reconstruction a great deal of cruelty is taking place; yet all think that they are doing it for the best for humanity. But no false ego can ever do anything for the best for humanity. One person who has risen above the false ego can do much more for the good of humanity than a thousand people blinded by their false ego, pretending to do good. Today many people, before having any idea of what to do about it, come forward and say that they want to do something good for humanity; and everybody's way of doing good is different. This may seem strange, yet if we look at life with open eyes we see a thousand examples of it. In the name of reconstruction, of bringing good to the world, of changing life's conditions, what methods people adopt! The reason is that they have begun the work of doing good too soon; one must know what kindness is before trying to be kind.

The Sufis recognize four stages in the development of the ego. The ordinary ego is called *Anmara*, which means a mechanical reaction of mind, the mind which is conditioned to react against something to the same extent: tooth for tooth and measure for measure.

And when either suffering has developed the ego, or a person has learned to be different in life, then he becomes what the Sufis call *Lauwana*, which means self-disciplined. A person who wants to talk back, but thinks that it would perhaps be better if he did not; a person who would like to hit back, but at the same time thinks, 'Better let it go this time', shows that he is not acting mechanically but by exerting his will. Even when he does exactly the same as the other he shows he has a will; his action is directed by his will.

When the ego is developed still more it becomes *Mutmaina*. This is a certain rhythm of mind; where the mind has risen above chaotic motion and the mentality has become rhythmic, and

where the reaction of the mind is not only a control, but a deliberate control. This condition of the mind is like a calm sea; all agitation that belongs to the ego has been suppressed. Suffering is the greatest teacher of the ego, and those whose personalities have become a source of consolation for others, a source of healing and upliftment, are those souls whose ego has risen above all agitation.

When the ego is developed still further it becomes *Salima*, which means peaceful. According to the mystic this is the normal state for a person to be in, though if we took that point of view we would not be able to find many normal souls! In this condition we find that the world no longer has a jarring effect on us; we are above irritation, and all manner of agitation is removed. Peace is not something that can be found outside; it is within ourselves, though it is buried under the false ego. The false ego is like the tomb of a living being, not of a corpse. The living being is buried in this tomb which is made of the thoughts of 'I' and 'myself' and 'what I am' and 'why I am so'. The life thus covered is suffocated, and there is a natural agitation, irritation, and unrest; for the peace which is in the depths of our being wishes to manifest to view, and the awakening of the soul depends only on the manifestation of this peace.

How many souls are searching for some outer thing that can make them spiritual: dogmas, phenomena, experiments, anything but the exploring of the self! Willing to become confused, ready to be puzzled, happy with the riddles of life, contented to go into the dark caves in order to find something! Man never values plain words, he always wants subtlety. He is pleased with something he cannot understand and thinks that it must therefore be mysticism. If one realized that spiritual development depends upon the awakening of the false ego to its true existence, its own reality, how simple the way to spiritual perfection would become! Is it not true that we make our own difficulties? Where one step is needed we would like to go a hundred steps. It is for this that the Hindus asked simple worshippers not to go directly into the temple, but to go around it a hundred times before entering, so that they felt that they had walked sufficiently to be entitled to go in.

Such is the picture of human nature. The path of the mystic is the quickest path for the very reason that he takes the path of simplicity, that he tells the truth in plain words. And yet is it really as simple as it appears to be? The beauty is that in the simplicity of the mystic there is the greatest subtlety; sometimes a thing which looks all too gross may in the end prove to be most fine.

Belief in God helps one to annihilate one's false ego; but in order to believe in God the seeker must first believe in the one who believes in God, in whom he places his confidence, in other words in his teacher. If one cannot fully believe in one's teacher one can never believe in God. That is the first step in learning to believe, and the second step is believing in the ideal. It is not necessary for the ideal to exist on earth in the form of a human being; this ideal may be in one's heart, in one's mind. And thirdly one comes to believe in God, and in that belief one loses oneself, so that God covers the believer and all there is. In this way one arrives at the perfect realization of the true ego, which is the pursuit of the mystic.

CHAPTER XV

THE TUNING OF THE SPIRIT

THERE ARE two sides to which one can look: one of these is before us and the other side is within us. The first step of the mystic is to see the side which is before him, and his second step is to look at the side which is within him. The first view, which is the minor development, is the view of the adept; and the other, the major development or stage, is the view of the mystic.

When people take the spiritual path they begin to interest themselves in psychology, occultism, or some other exciting subject, believing that it is the same as mysticism or esotericism; but real mysticism or esotericism begins simply with the first step, with looking outside. And at what does one look outside? At two things. One thing is that a person asks himself how all he sees affects him and what is his reaction to it all; how does his spirit react to the objects or the conditions he encounters, to the sounds he hears, to the words that people speak to him? And the second thing is to see what effect he himself has on objects, conditions, and individuals when he comes in contact with them.

One must be just to be able to analyse these things; if not, one may always look at them in a light which is favourable to oneself and unfavourable to others. We hear many people say, 'That person has a bad influence upon me'; but no one says, 'I have a bad influence upon that person.' Most people think that everybody else is wrong and bad, and that everything undesirable is in everybody except in themselves, but to become just is the process of becoming an adept, an adept who is developing into a mystic.

After this comes the inner process, looking within; and this is a most wonderful process. As soon as a person is able to look at his spirit, he is born again; it is a new life. By looking at one's spirit one can analyse how all that one says, thinks, and feels acts upon one's spirit, and also how the spirit reacts. In this way one's life is analysed more and more; it seems like churning one's spirit, and by this churning one brings out the cream of the spirit, and

that cream is wisdom. The difference between the wise and the foolish is only this, that the foolish looks at another whereas the wise looks at himself. Besides it is most wonderful to see how the person who is most at fault sees many faults in others. Because he looks at others he has not yet been able to look at himself, but the moment he begins to look at himself he does not look at others any more; he then has so much to look at in himself that both his hands are full.

Innumerable souls die without ever coming to this experience; they never even think about it. At the same time there are fine souls who may be quite young and yet have that perception; and wherever this perception is there is the living spirit, even if one finds it in a little child. That child is then as old as its grandfather; it is an 'old soul' as a child which shows wisdom, depth, and subtlety is called in the East. By 'old' is meant that it shows more experience; it does not take a long time to make a person old in this sense. Many become old in a very short time. There are people who from their childhood show that they are old souls; they make utterances of great wisdom, as if they had had experience on earth for hundreds of years. And sometimes people of a very advanced age may think and feel and say and do things just like a child. This shows that the age of the soul does not correspond with the time since the birth of the person on this plane.

The soul which can analyse its own spirit is sparkling, for it is that soul which will train itself and train others; but the soul which cannot analyse its own spirit cannot train others. To keep the spirit in proper condition is as difficult or even more difficult than cultivating a delicate plant in a greenhouse, where a little more sun may spoil it, a little more water may destroy it, a little more air may be bad for it. The spirit is even more delicate than that. A slight shadow of deception, a mere feeling of dishonesty, a little touch of hypocrisy can spoil it. If fear touches it, if doubt shakes it, if anger strikes deep into its root, it is spoiled. And the more delicate the spirit, the more delicate the care it needs; it must be carefully guarded in the greenhouse. A slight sense of dishonour, the least insult coming from any side, can kill it. Apart from man, the spirit of a horse can die the day that it feels

the whip; once the whip has fallen upon it its spirit may be gone. No doubt, 'killing the spirit' is only a way of speaking; spirit is never killed, and yet for the spirit that is killed in the meaning of this expression it is worse than death. Death is preferable; life loses all its interest once the spirit is dead. It is better that a person should die than that his spirit should.

Nevertheless, spirit is divine and spirit is eternal, and it can always be restored if one only knows the key to it. And what is this key? If this were told, then what remains? It is not an easy thing to find this key; it is not easy to mend the broken spirit; not everyone can raise his spirit when once it is fallen, for then it is heavier to lift than a mountain. But what one can say is that there is only one key, the first and the last, and that is found in seeking for the kingdom of God. It works as an antidote, and it helps one by tuning the spirit, by harmonizing one and putting one into rhythm. If this is combined with wisdom it is better still; that is why a person looks for a teacher on the path of wisdom, in order that the teacher may guide him to find the key.

There is a delicacy in friendship, in all kinds of relationship; there is delicacy in meeting people. If that delicate thread is damaged or moved out of place something goes wrong. There is no more delicate machinery than the spirit of man. How careful man is with his electrical machinery! Every little wire is looked at with a magnifying glass, and every little part of it is guarded so carefully and kept so clean that no rust can come on it; no one may touch it! At the same time man has no regard for his spirit, which is the most delicate machinery of all. Once it goes wrong it may never get right again; and it is very easy for it to go wrong, while it is most difficult to repair it. For other machinery we can get spare parts, but not for this machinery when once it is broken, when once something of it is lost. And when one thinks of all the illnesses and disagreeable experiences of the outer life, what about the spirit? When once the spirit is disturbed then the whole universe is disturbed for that person.

What happens, very often unconsciously, is that there are friends who are very devoted to each other, and then there is something in the machinery that goes wrong. Perhaps neither of them knows this, but unconsciously the spirit of their friendship

is destroyed; and it is most difficult to mend it. Then there is no joy of friendship any more. Friendship lasts only as long as that delicate thread exists, as long as the machinery is in proper order. Besides, all the external things of life, money, power, position, or comfort, are nothing in comparison with the condition of one's spirit. If the spirit is disturbed none of these things has any value whatever; it is all lost.

There is a story of a king who one day called a porter and gave him a command, and after having given that command he went into his room and signed his abdication of the throne. His wazirs asked him why he did this, what had gone wrong. He said, 'When I was giving that porter a command I saw by his expression that it was not received in the same way as he had received my orders up till now. So something must have gone wrong in my spirit; I should no more handle the affairs of the state.' It takes a long time to become fit, and it does not take a minute to become unfit. It is most difficult to collect the spirit and make it work as it ought to; the least little thing can upset it. Think of how many different parts must be made in order to make a watch go regularly; and how easy it is to drop the watch and destroy it.

There are some people who have no spirit; that is to say whose spirit is still buried. They do not care, they are quite happy, although they do not know what true happiness means. But for others who are very much aware of their spirit there is nothing more difficult than to keep it in the right condition; yet no sacrifice is too great and nothing we can do is too much to keep the spirit in tune. The mystic, therefore, trains his spirit; it is the training of his own spirit that enables a man to help the souls who come to him.

The story of Ayaz¹ gives us an example of this. That is the way to tune the spirit: to cleanse it, to purify it, to humble it, to mould it, to efface whatever may have clouded it, and to raise it high. Everything that is necessary should be done with it. And it is not easy to handle the spirit. Many who do not know how to handle it break it, just as children break their toys, and when once the spirit is destroyed then what is left? It should be remembered that greatness and smallness, happiness and wretchedness, are all

¹ See p. 82.

effects coming from the condition of the spirit. We are as great as our spirit, we are as wide as our spirit, we are as low as our spirit, we are as small as our spirit; spirit can make us all that we are.

Verily, if there is anything that is more necessary than all else, it is to be able to tune one's spirit.

CHAPTER XVI

THE VISION OF THE MYSTIC

THAT WHICH a mystic cannot see or does not see before his eyes, he sees in space; and therefore if a thousand people say, 'This does not exist', yet for the mystic it does exist. While they depend upon the objective world one day to produce their thought in a material form, the mystic sees it already in space. Naturally his faith becomes more firm and powerful, whereas the faith of those who depend upon the objective world becomes weaker every time their wish does not come true. When a person says of something that it is not there, the mystic says, 'It is there; it is before me; I see it'. But because the other cannot see it he is confused; thus the same idea that confuses the one confirms the other in his faith. This is how a mystic builds steps to climb to his final destination, which is the real meaning of resurrection; whereas the man who has not made any steps, no sooner loses touch with the objective world than he is lost in space. And the mystic finds steps already made in space to help him in his climb upward, but the other finds himself lost when once the garb of the objective world is discarded. Then the soul feels no ground under its feet, while the mystic has already attained his goal.

When a mystic sees something before his eyes in space, does he see it in the three-dimensional space or in a space of more dimensions? This space of three dimensions is reflected by the space which is in the inner dimension. This inner dimension is different; it does not belong to the objective world; but what exists in the inner dimension is also reflected in the three-dimensional space. So in reality what the mystic sees in space is something which is within; when a mystic closes his eyes he sees it within; but when he opens his eyes he sees it before him. That which he sees within himself is reflected in the outer space. When everyone else depends upon his two hands for making or preparing things, the mystic sees time preparing them; and therefore

time and space are the hands and the feet of the mystic. Through space he climbs, and through time he accomplishes.

As there is a season for everything, as there is a fixed time for nature to manifest, so there is a season for every happening. Good luck, bad luck, rise, fall, health, illness, success, and failure, all depend upon a certain time. There is a time for every season as well as for every experience; and as there is a time for birth so there is a time for death. Every thought, every action, and every condition has a birth and death, and each has a fixed time. And when one has become convinced of the fact that every happening is brought about by time and is fixed at a certain time, then naturally one develops faith, and then one believes that what is not realized today will be realized tomorrow, some day.

The great drawback we find in humanity today is its lack of patience: if people can accomplish something at once then it is all right, but if not then they think that it cannot be done. Only if anything can be done quickly can it be done; if it cannot be done as quickly as one expects this means that it cannot be done at all. There are thousands of people today who already accept failure before failure becomes apparent, because they have no patience to wait for success to come. Although success may be preparing, yet they are in such haste that they would rather turn the success into a failure than wait for it; the reason is that this mystery, which is the mystery of the mystics—that everything depends upon a certain time—is forgotten by most people.

Time uses conditions to bring about certain results; and very often a seemingly bad condition is preparing a good issue, and a seemingly good condition may be preparing a bad result. Frequently, therefore, a person who depends only upon objective phenomena makes a mistake, is deluded. The mystic sees in both adverse and favourable conditions that which is going to happen. He does this by believing in the action of time and space, and by believing that there is no such thing as coincidence or accident. It is only because we are unaware of where an action has started, of what has brought it about, and of what is preparing, that we call something a coincidence or an accident; in reality there is no such thing. Every happening, whether it comes by our will or by a higher will, is prepared, is directed by wisdom. If it is not

directed by our individual will it is directed by a greater wisdom, and it brings about a greater result. The mystic therefore awaits that result which is brought about by time and space through different conditions.

For the divine mind time and space exist and yet do not exist. For a great musician sound is the breath of music, and yet in order to play or to compose music he must divide sound into different grades and notes, and that produces beauty. The divine mind is also interested in this composition, this music of the whole creation; therefore it is in the division of time and space that the secret of the whole of manifestation lies. If the divine mind were not interested in the manifestation God would not have been the Creator; God is the Creator because of the interest of the divine mind in creation.

This brings us to the question of the word and silence. The mystic realizes the power of the word, and at the same time the splendour of silence. The word can do so much, but even more can be accomplished by silence. Great phenomena are produced by those mystics who know the power of the word and how to use it, but even greater miracles are performed by them through the splendour of their silence.

Life is the answer to the mystic's question. With every question that arises in the heart of the mystic he has but to look at life before him and it answers him. Even a question about some business or industry is revealed to the mystic just by looking at a tree. Someone is laughing, someone is crying, someone is talking, someone is working, and every one of those actions is an answer to what the mystic wishes to enquire into. No sooner does a sound fall on his ears, no sooner are his eyes cast upon any object, condition, or individual, than the answer to the question which has arisen in his heart comes to him. The mystic need not go to a palmist to ask what is going to happen, he is not in pursuit of soothsayers, the mystic need not consult horoscopes; the whole of life, everything he looks at, is the answer to his question. And if he does not wish to look at the objective world he has only to close his eyes and find the answer within himself. The objective answer is waiting for him in the outer world, and the answer from the inner voice is waiting within. Thus he has two ways open to

him for receiving an answer to his questions. Can one be surprised, therefore, if the mystic closes his mouth and speaks to no one for years on end? Why should he speak to anyone? What should he ask? There is nothing to ask.

In different ages and in different countries people have adopted methods such as looking at random in the scriptures to find the answer to their question, or consulting the cards, or looking in the teacup and such superstitions: anything that suggests something to them, such as seeing a black cat or a turtle or a snake, or hearing the sound of a certain bird that predicts something. The mystic does not need all this. Everything all the time is answering his questions. Life is such a mystery that there comes a time when we begin to see that every action, everything that is going on, is an answer to that which is going on within ourselves. For instance a man is walking in the street, thinking about his business or his domestic affairs, and then suddenly a horse becomes restive and breaks the carriage it was drawing, upsetting the coachman. Now these are two different things. The man is thinking about something, and the horse with which he has nothing to do upsets the carriage. It is another thing altogether, but at the same time for the mystic everything is connected; there is no condition which is detached from another condition. Every condition has a correspondence, a relation with another condition, because for a mystic there is no divided life; there is only one life, one Being, and one mechanism which is running. And therefore a mechanism is always running in relation to another mechanism; however different and disconnected they may seem, they are not disconnected. One has only to see it, then all is revealed to one; but in order to see it one has first to open the mystic eye.

What questions has the mystic to ask? The greater the mystic, the fewer his questions. The further he goes on this path, the fewer his questions become. For the more questions one has, the more unmytical one is, because questions are born of the restlessness of the mind. The restless mind wants to find an answer somewhere; and as more peace comes, the questions become fewer. The nearer, the closer to peace one comes, the fewer will be one's questions. By finding peace, by finding light, by finding harmony and joy, questions are reduced to nothing. Then there is no longer

any question. The moment the mystic has reached this stage where he has no questions, he himself becomes the answer to every question.

At one time I wanted to take a friend to meet my murshid. This friend was a very material man, restless and pessimistic and doubting and sceptical. And every day I urged him to come with me to see my murshid. 'But,' he asked, 'what can he do for me?' I said, 'You can ask him something.' He said, 'I have twenty thousand questions to ask, when could he answer them?' I said, 'You can ask one or two of the twenty thousand, that is already something.' 'Well,' he said, 'one day I will see.' And indeed, some time later he came along, but the moment he reached my murshid's presence he forgot every question and did not know what to ask. He was sitting quiet, spellbound, breathing the atmosphere of the master's presence; he had no desire to ask a question. And after the interview, when we were leaving the house of my murshid, he again began to feel inclined to ask twenty thousand questions, this time of me, and when I asked him why he had forgotten them there, he only answered, 'I cannot understand why.'

Where do questions come from? Very often they come from the restlessness of the mind. And does an answer satisfy them? Never. During my travels I went thrice to San Francisco, and each time I saw a lady who always asked me the same question. And each time I answered her, and each time when I came again she asked me the same question. This meant that for fifteen years there was a question and there was an answer; but that answer was never heard. One ear heard it, and the other ear let it out again; and the question remained there alive. A question is a living being, it does not wish to die; the answer kills it, and therefore those kindly souls who wish to cherish the question, keep the answer away, although the question calls out for an answer. Do not be surprised, therefore, if for twenty years a person asks a question of two thousand other people and gets two thousand answers. It does not mean that the answer he gets does not satisfy him; it only means that he does not wish to have the answer. He only wishes to cherish the question.

CHAPTER XVII

THE MYSTIC'S NATURE

THERE ARE five things to consider when one is trying to understand the nature of a mystic: his temperament, his dream, his outlook, his meditation, and his realization. It is not easy to find out whether a soul is a mystic or not. But as gilt and gold are two different things, and as imitation gold does not endure when it is tested, so it is with the one who is not a true mystic. It is easy to talk as a mystic, to act as a mystic, but it is difficult to pass the test when it comes.

Once a mystic, walking in a garden, noticed a particularly beautiful rose. Attracted by its beauty he exclaimed, 'Praise be to God!' and went and kissed it. His disciples, who were walking behind him, then each picked a flower and kissed it fifty times. The gardener was annoyed and came towards them grumbling, but they said that they had only followed the example of their teacher. The teacher kept silent. But when they had gone a little farther they saw a smith at work, and a hot iron was glowing in the fire. The teacher approached, spoke the same words, 'Praise be to God!' and took the hot iron and kissed it. He asked the disciples, 'Why do you not follow me in this?' But none of them dared to do it.

In the East when people know that somebody is a mystic, they do not try to pass judgment if he has kissed a flower or if he kisses the fire. They regard it all as belonging to the mystic temperament.

There is another story of a mystic which explains a different side of this temperament. It is about the leader of the Qadiri Sufis in Baghdad, who was one of the greatest of the world's mystics. One day at the time that he was getting ready to eat his dinner a mother came to him, very vexed with the teacher. On his table was a dish of chicken. And she said, 'You have given my son a vegetarian diet, and he is becoming thinner and paler every day; and here you are eating chicken!' The teacher smiled

and said gently, 'Good lady, look here,' and he took off the cover of the dish and the chicken jumped out. And he added, 'The day your son can make the chicken jump out, he may eat it too.'

One cannot pretend to be a mystic; one is born a mystic. No doubt a mystic may develop in life, that is another thing, but if one thinks that one can imitate a mystic one is mistaken, one can never do it. Mystics apart, can a person imitate a singer and sing correctly, or imitate a painter and paint well, or a poet and make poetry? Never. Either one is or one is not.

As in education, in all different kinds of training, there are certain degrees one reaches as one advances, so in mysticism also there are degrees. Such names as Wali, Ghauth, Qutb, Nabi, and Rasul belong to the different degrees of masters, saints, and prophets.

The temperament of a mystic is a kingly temperament. The difference between a king and a mystic is that the mystic is a king without worry. And his main idea is that whatever happens, happens for the best; in other words, nothing really matters. For a mystic time does not exist; it is only to be found on the clock. Life for him is eternal, and the time between birth and death is an illusion. The mystic temperament is adventurous and impulsive. The mystic can readily jump into anything and come out of it again; into the water, into the fire, whatever it may be. If the mystic thinks that he must go to the south, or if he feels that he must go to the north, he will not trouble his brain by asking himself why he should go. He only knows that there is a call for him to go, and he goes; perhaps he finds the reason there.

Every good and bad experience he accepts as a lesson, and he thinks that all of them lead him onward. If it is a bad experience it is also a lesson; if it is a good experience, so much the better; but they are all leading him towards the purpose of his life. The quality of the mystic is the outgoing quality, the sympathetic, loving quality; and yet the mystic is detached and indifferent. Deep love on the one side, indifference on the other side; together they make the balance of his life. In loving another he loves God, in serving another he serves God, in helping another he helps God; and in this way he worships. In worldly life neither a rise nor a fall is very important to him, but

at the same time he may experience all these things. Be not surprised if you see a mystic on the throne, adorned with gold and silver and jewels, and do not feel contempt if you see a mystic clad in rags in the form of a beggar in the street. In all conditions he is the king, and a king without a worry, a king whose kingdom will endure, a king who is never in danger of losing his kingdom.

The mystic temperament is the same as the temperament of any human being, only perhaps more intense. A mystic can be intensely pleased and he can be intensely displeased. He can feel joy deeply and he can feel sorrow very deeply, much more deeply than the average person, because he lives more and therefore his feelings are more intense. At the same time it is the self-control of the mystic that balances his pleasure and displeasure, his joy and sorrow. It may be that others cannot realize it or feel it; nevertheless, if the mystic's feelings were not delicate, and if there were no subtlety in him, he could not be a mystic. On the one hand the mystic is most subtle; on the other hand he is most simple. He can be most wise, and he can be quite innocent. People call the mystic Pir, which means old, and yet he can be like a child, like an infant. He may control giants, and yet he may be led by a little child. The words of the mystic may be simple and at the same time full of depth. His every expression is symbolical, for he sees the symbol of life in all names and forms.

And now we come to the dream of the mystic. It may be that other people have seen a mystic in a trance, or meditating with closed eyes; but this is not necessary. With open eyes or with closed eyes: the mystic can dream in both ways. He may be in a crowd or in the solitude, in both places he can dream. To the mystic the dream is reality, although to another it might seem a dream. It is reality to the mystic because of his faith in what is written in the Qur'an, that when God said, 'Be!' it became, and also in what the Vedanta say, that manifestation is the dream of Brahma, of the Creator. The mystic, who realizes the Creator within himself, thinks that his dream is the Creator's dream: if the Creator's dream is all this which we call reality, then the dream of the mystic is the same. If it is still in the mental sphere, that does not mean that it will never materialize; it will surely materialize one day.

Yet one often sees that the mystic lives above the world, and many think that he is not conscious of the world. But they do not know that for the very reason that he lives above it he is more conscious of it. One might think that a person who is flying in an aeroplane does not know what is going on in the crowd beneath him because he is in the sky, but this is not so. One who is flying in the air is more capable of seeing what is going on below, for he can see a wider horizon than the one who is standing on the earth. Very often people misunderstand a mystic. They think that the mystic, who is dreamy, is above the things of the world, above business and industry and politics. But they are mistaken; they do not realize that a clear intelligence can do everything better if it is applied in that direction, although the question remains whether a mystic would think it worth while to put his mind to it. I was very surprised when one day Mr Ford told me, 'If you had been a business-man, you would have made a tremendous success, but I am glad you are not!' Never, therefore, think that a mystic with his closed eyes or with his head turned away, is not looking at you. The mystic can sometimes be more conscious of the condition of those before him than they are themselves.

Thirdly there is the outlook of the mystic. The mystic not only sees the first reason of everything and anything; he sees the reason behind the reason, and behind that still another reason, until he touches the essence of reason, where what we call reason is lost. As far as we can see, we see only a cause, but what the mystic sees is deeper than a cause; it is the cause of all causes. And by this his outlook changes from the ordinary outlook. Thus it may happen that the language of the mystic seems gibberish; people cannot understand its wisdom because they only use their reason.

The mystic is the friend of many, but for a mystic to find a friend is difficult. It is difficult enough for anyone to feel that there is even a single person in the world who understands him, so how much more difficult must it be for the mystic! He can only try to understand himself; but if he can do that it is quite sufficient. The mystic does not concern himself much with what will be the immediate result of anything; he concerns himself with what will be the final result. This makes his point of view different from

the worldly point of view. The outlook of the mystic shows him that the rise is for a fall and that the fall is for a rise; in other words, after the night comes the day, and the day awaits the night.

In regard to the meditation of the mystic one should remember that he is born with a meditative nature as an inner disposition, and every day, even without ever having learned any meditation, he has some way of meditating. No doubt every mystic finds a way and a guide and master who leads him forward, but all the time he is ready for guidance. The mystic never has to say that it is difficult for him to meditate; he is at home in meditation. It is his nature, his pleasure, his joy. Meditation is his life; in meditation he lives. And the meditation which lasts five or ten or fifteen minutes is to the mystic only a kind of winding up. His meditation takes place every moment of the day; there is not one moment when he is not meditating, whatever he may be doing. In the crowd and in the solitude, on land and on water, in silence, and while working, in all conditions the mystic continues his eternal meditation.

Lastly there is the mystic's realization. It is the mystic who realizes the latent power in man, and he may realize it even to such an extent that no man could believe it if it were to be put into words. He realizes the latent inspiration in man, an inspiration which culminates in revelation, when every object and every being begins to communicate with him, when he knows and sees and understands and realizes the essence of the whole of life. The mystic knows, if anyone knows, what limitation means, for that is wherein lies his suffering, his pain; and the mystic knows what perfection means, for it is in perfection that his joy and his happiness are to be found.

CHAPTER XVIII

THE INSPIRATION AND POWER OF THE MYSTIC

THE MYSTIC, when his heart is about to mature in the mystical spheres, need not have an inspiration once in a while; his every thought, imagination, and dream have a meaning; it is all inspirational. Thus even the joke of a mystic has a meaning to it. Perhaps that joke is symbolical, maybe it expresses something that is going on somewhere, or it may be that it will produce something in the future. And even as the joke of the mystic has a meaning, influence, and effect, so every thought and imagination of a mystic has an effect. When he thinks of something it may materialize the week after, or next month or next year, or perhaps after many years, but all that a mystic says or thinks is fulfilled sooner or later.

People speak about truth and falsehood, but once the mystic has reached the truth all is truth to him; then everything is a phenomenon of truth, a picture of truth. For instance a person looking at a picture may distinguish light and shade, but another, instead of speaking about light and shade, will say, 'This is a portrait of so and so, it is a very good picture, exactly like him.' Truth is like this; and to a mystic the whole of life is the picture of the divine Beloved. He appreciates the picture as it is, accepting both its light and shade; he does not ask, as some would, why God who is perfect has not made everything perfect; he sees the whole as a perfect whole, and every imperfection is something that goes to make the perfect whole. Therefore the mystic does not look at imperfection as imperfection, but as something that leads to perfection. And if one wonders whether a mystic sees only the outline of this existence and not the details, one may ask who can see more details than the mystic who sees the reason behind reason, the cause behind the effect, and again another cause behind every cause. He sees every object in detail, and even in that he sees the divine perfection.

A mystic can know the thought of another person even better than can that person who is thinking, and he can feel the feeling of another even more deeply than he. One may call this natural or supernatural. The mystic knows the attitude of a person, of which he himself is often unaware. While others go one step forward, physically or mentally, the mystic goes ten steps forward; that is why he sees what is there before the other has arrived. To a mystic space is no hindrance; space is his means of communication. A longer or shorter distance, in the physical sense of the word, is not the same from the mystical point of view, for it takes no time for the soul of a mystic to reach any part of the world. As soon as he has had the thought he is there. The three dimensions are no obstacle, no hindrance to him; all three dimensions are a capacity, an accommodation for the mystic to realize life's phenomena.

We hear stories about faqirs sticking knives into their cheeks and hairpins through their tongues, piercing their muscles, jumping into the fire, swallowing flames, eating thorns, but all this is juggling compared with the power of the mystic. People are often apt to compare a mystic with a juggler, but they are two different beings altogether. This does not mean that these jugglers have no power; they are powerful too; but their world is different, their object in life is different, and they have another sphere, another destiny, another destination. A mystic may not do any of the things that jugglers do, and yet the mystic may accomplish far greater things than the jugglers. A so-called man of common sense, who considers himself to be practical, cannot imagine the power that is at the command of the mystic. Only the non-mystic boasts of his power and shows it off to people, whereas the mystic neither speaks about it nor does he exhibit his powers before others.

Once I met a great scientist in New York, who said to me, touching his pen lying on the table, 'If there is really a spiritual power, a mystic power, I would like to know if it is possible to lift this pen by this power'. I said, 'Do you really think that a mystic will waste his energy in making this experiment, raising a pen in space? And if he did it, what would he have gained? Would he not sooner raise a soul higher, bringing him to another

sphere, raising his ideals, his aspirations, instead of trying to raise this little pen lying on the table? What will he get for it? Praise? He does not want it. That people will believe in him? He does not care. Praise is not his object nor does he care if people believe in him. Why should he trouble about these things?

Then I told him a story of a juggler I myself had seen in the streets of India, in Baroda. A man used to sit in a corner with his mantle spread on the ground, and he had little horses and elephants and camels and dogs and cats cut out of paper and painted. They were lying on his mantle, and the man had a tambourine in his hand; people crowded round him to see the phenomena he was going to show. He would begin to sing, and after his song of introduction was ended it would seem that some life was coming into those animals. Then he would sing, 'Horses, run,' and as long as he repeated this the horses ran; and then he would say, 'Camels, walk,' and the camels would begin to walk; and when he said, 'Elephants, move,' the elephants would move.

Those who eat thorns or swallow different-coloured balls and then take them out again to show them, what has this got to do with mysticism? It has no connection. Some of these jugglers are most powerful, but their kind of power does not belong to the higher spheres; it belongs only to their world. It is from the mystics that destiny chooses those who have to accomplish a certain work for the multitude, for humanity, for certain races; and most unassumingly, quietly, they accomplish that work without the world knowing anything about it.

In the East there is a belief that a mystic should not be judged by what he says or what he does, because for all we know what he says may be only a cover over that which he is accomplishing. One might sometimes think that a mystic is very attached, but in point of fact the mystic can be the most detached person there is. At other times one may think that the mystic is most detached, but there is no doubt that the mystic can be exceedingly attached. One might think that a mystic lives in his dream, but one should know that the mystic can be more wide awake than anybody else; and if someone thinks that the mystic is very wakeful in his everyday life, he should realize that behind that wakefulness there is perhaps a deep dream which not everyone can understand. In my

play *The Bogeyman* there is a description of the strange ways of a guru, who seems to be one thing and in reality is something quite different. It is not easy for anyone to realize the truth of this; and if people try to realize the truth they will only confuse themselves still more.

Is then a mystic's view open to his friends? It is, as the Bible is to its readers. Those who read the words of the Bible, read its words; and those who get sense out of what they read, get the sense. It is available to both. Will there always remain this distance between the mystic and the unevolved? The unevolved are distant from the mystic, but the mystic is not distant from the unevolved; the mystic remains quite close to both the evolved and the unevolved. And the most wonderful characteristics that one can observe in a mystic are on one side extreme simplicity, and on the other side extreme subtlety. Both these characteristics are true in themselves; in the mystic his subtlety and complexity are as real as is his simplicity. The subtlety is the depth; the simplicity is the surface. This means that wisdom is covered by innocence.

Is a mystic religious? He is religious in the real sense of the word, even more so than an ordinary religious man. Yet mysticism is deeper than religion; in other words mysticism is the soul of religion. A person who follows a religion follows its form; the one who touches mysticism touches the spirit of religion. Religion with mysticism is living, without mysticism it is dead.

The great teachers and inspirers of humanity in all ages were mystics. One only has to study their lives. Whether they came as a king or as a beggar, whether they lived in the thick of worldly life or were wandering about in the forest as ascetics, whether they lived in caves or played the role of a commander, a warrior, or a statesman, in every case they were different from others. And from their childhood, from the beginning to the end of their lives, they have shown their mystical tendencies. Thus all the saints and sages and masters and prophets come from among the mystics; and if any soul rises, it is the mystical soul which rises to the higher planes of realization.

APHORISMS

ILLUSION is the cover of things; reality is the depth of things. The body is the illusion; the soul is the reality. The flower is the illusion; the fragrance is the reality. The fragrance is the spirit of the flower; it persists.

Man is not made by God as the wood is cut by the carpenter; for the carpenter and the wood are different, while God and man are the same. Man is made of the substance of God; man is in God, and all that is in God is in man.

Belief cannot be taught; it cannot be learned; it is the grace of God. To affirm a belief is one thing; to realize belief is another.

The aim of the mystic is to stretch his range of consciousness as widely as possible, so that he may touch the highest pride and the deepest humility. The only fall for a mystic is to fall beneath the level of his ideal.

A man who has no imagination stands on the earth, he has no wings; he cannot fly.

When we are face to face with truth, the point of view of Krishna, Buddha, Christ, or any other Prophet, is the same. When we look at life from the top of the mountain, there is no limitation; there is the same immensity.

To every question that arises in the heart of the mystic, he finds the answer in the life before him.

The false shows itself; all that is true proves itself.

That which is not beautiful in its effect cannot be real beauty.

It is those who have touched the inner beauty who are able to appreciate beauty in all its forms.

The beauty which the knower knows and the lover appreciates, the mystic worships.

The difference between spirit and soul is like that of the sun and the ray. The ray is the ray of the sun, but at the same time the sun is the sun, and the ray is the ray.

God is the essence of beauty; it is His love of beauty which has caused Him to express His own beauty in manifestation.

Beauty is God's desire fulfilled in the objective world.

Beauty is the depth of the soul; its expression in whatever form is the sign of the soul's unfoldment.

When an individual becomes a person, the beauty hidden in the individual, which is divine, develops; and that development of beauty is personality.

Beauty is hidden in every soul, however wicked; and our trust and confidence in the beauty of the soul helps to draw out that hidden beauty which must shine out one day.

Most unbelievers have a very near horizon, like birds in a covered cage which do not know that there is anything beyond.

The wonderful thing is that the soul already knows to some extent that there is something behind the veil, the veil of perplexity, that there is something to be sought for in the highest spheres of life, that there is some beauty to be seen, that there is Someone to be known who is knowable.

This desire, this longing is not acquired; it is a dim knowledge of the soul which it has in itself. Therefore disbelief in God is nothing but a condition brought about by the vapours arising from this material life and covering like clouds the light of the soul which is its life.

If this world offers to a person all it possesses, even then the

soul is not satisfied, for its satisfaction lies in its higher aspiration, and it is this higher aspiration which leads to God.

If the mind did not stand as a hindrance to the intuition, every person would be intuitive, for intuition is more natural and more easy than the reasoning of the mind.

What comes from without is not intuition; intuition is something which rises from one's own heart and brings a sense of satisfaction, of ease, and of happiness.

The life of man, however great and spiritual, has its limitations. Before the conditions of life the greatest man on earth, the most powerful soul, will for a moment seem helpless; but it is not the beginning that counts; it is the end.

It is the last note that a great soul strikes, which proves that soul to be real and true.

There can be no better sign of spiritual development than control over passion and anger. If one can control these, one can control life.

The secret of seeking the will of God lies in cultivating the faculty of sensing harmony; for harmony is beauty and beauty is harmony, and the lover of beauty in his further progress becomes the seeker of harmony; and by trying always to maintain harmony, man will tune his heart to the will of God.

If it were not for pain, one would not enjoy the experience of joy. It is pain which helps one to experience joy, for everything is distinguished by its opposite.

If it were not for pain, life would be most uninteresting, for it is by pain that the heart is penetrated.

Since the nature of life is action and reaction, every outer experience has a reaction within, and every inner experience has its reaction in the outer life.

In the spheres of conscience the soul of man and the Spirit of God meet and become one.

To a soul which is wide awake, the Judgment Day does not come after death. For that soul every day is a Judgment Day.

Every step forward gives a certain amount of freedom of action, and as one goes further and further on the path of truth the freedom becomes greater at every step.

The more one regards the feelings of others, the more harmony one can create.

The heart in its depth is linked up with the divine Mind, so in the depths of the heart there is greater justice than on the surface.

Inspiration comes when knowledge and the inner light, falling on one's own conception of things, come together in the conscience, which is the court of God, where He Himself sits on the throne of justice.

Happiness is our birthright; in our happiness is the happiness of God.

Thought has its birth and death like a living being, and the life of a thought is incomparably longer than that of a living being in the physical body.

The mind is a world, a world that man makes and in which he will make his life in the hereafter, as a spider lives in the web it has woven.

To what does the love of God lead? It leads to that peace and stillness which can be seen in the life of the tree; it flowers and bears fruit for others and expects no return.

Verily, he who pursues the world will inherit the world; but the soul who pursues God will attain in the end to the presence of God.

A material person has a silent craving in his heart to probe the depths of the spiritual ideal which he disowns.

There is nothing in this world which does not speak. Every thing and every being is continually calling out its nature, its character, and its secret; and the more the inner sense is open, the more capable it becomes of hearing the voice of all things.

When once the inner sense has broken the walls around it, it breathes the freedom and happiness which is the soul's own property, and which the soul then attains.

The sign of the enlightened soul is readiness to understand.

The soul comes to a stage of realization where the whole of life becomes to him one sublime vision of the immanence of God.

The brain may be said to be the seat of the intelligence, and the heart to be the throne of wisdom.

Wisdom may be called spiritual knowledge.

The real place where the heavens are made is within man.

The soul is the ray of that sun which is the infinite Spirit.

The soul is the action of the heavenly Sun. It manifests and returns, as man exhales and inhales.

God is love; so God is beyond the law, for love is above the law.

If we come to any solution of our ever-rising questions, it is never by studying the law that we find satisfaction, but by diving deep into love and letting love inspire us.

If one has learned while on earth how to create joy and happiness for oneself and others, in the other world that joy and happiness will surround one; and if one has sown the seeds of poison, one must reap those fruits there. Thus one sees that justice is the nature of life.

The Judgment Day is every day, and one realizes this as one's sight becomes more keen. Every hour, every moment in life has its judgment.

What connection has the soul which has passed from the earth with those still on this plane? The connection of the heart still keeps intact, and it remains unbroken as long as the link of sympathy is there.

To create happiness for oneself and others is the whole philosophy of religion.

What is Sufism? It is wisdom. To learn wisdom at every step on the path of life is the only work of the Sufi.

The one who is the slave of conventionality is a captive; the one who is the master of conventionality is the possessor of that kingdom which is mentioned in the Bible: 'Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the kingdom of the earth.'

As soon as a person begins to regard the pleasure and displeasure of God in the feelings of every person he meets, he can only be refined, whatever his position in life.

The human soul is by nature perfect, but the life of limitation on earth brings imperfection to it.

The sense of shame is a channel which leads to that goal which is called Perfection.

Beauty, in all its aspects, is beyond price.

Often the sense of shame works like a sharp knife upon a feeling heart, but it only makes it like a cut diamond: for by it we come to the realization that what is most precious in life is feeling.

The heights of every civilization show the fineness of human feeling, which is the highest of all aspects of culture.

What the moon seems to give as light, is not its own; it is the light of the sun. So it is with the divine messengers of all times.

When a soul arrives at its full bloom, it begins to show the colour and spread the fragrance of the divine Spirit of God.

The one who does not seek God, at the end of the journey of illusion has a great disappointment; for throughout his whole journey he has not found the perfection of love, beauty, and goodness on the earth, and he does not believe in, or expect to find, such an ideal in heaven.

Every soul seeks for happiness, and after running after all the objects which for the moment seem to give happiness, it finds out that nowhere is there perfect happiness except in God.

All souls in the world are receptacles of the message of God; not only human beings, but even the lower creation convey the message of the One and Only Being.

No sooner has the heart become living than the law of justice manifests.

God is both Judge and Forgiver. He forgives even more than He judges; for justice comes from His intelligence, but forgiveness comes from His divine love.

When God's divine love rises as a wave, it washes away the sins of the whole life in a moment, for law has no power to stand before love; the stream of love sweeps it away.

The very thought of the love of God fills the heart with joy and relieves it of its burden.

The kingship of God manifests in the blossoming of every soul.

The finest things are to be felt; words cannot express them. Noise only spoils their beauty and robs them of preciousness.

The attitude of looking at everything with a smile is the sign of the saintly soul.

As the sunshine from without lightens the whole world, so the sunshine from within, if it were raised up, would illuminate the whole life, in spite of all seeming wrongs and all limitations.

Fear is a shadow cast upon the light of the soul; the shadow of something the soul does not know, which is strange to the soul.

Fear comes from ignorance. For instance the soul is frightened on entering the body of matter; also, the soul does not know death, and so it is afraid.

The illuminated soul finds its way through darkness both within and without.

In spite of all his limitation, a wonderful power is hidden in man's soul. What makes man helpless is ignorance of his free will. Free will is the basis of the whole life.

Free will is the mighty power, the God-power hidden in man, and it is ignorance which keeps man from his divine heritage.

Many seem wide awake to the life without, but asleep to the life within; and although the chamber of the heart is continually visited by the hosts of heaven, they do not know their heart, for they are not there.

Man can only be really happy when he connects his soul with the spheres of heaven.

The more closely a person is drawn to heaven, the more the things of earth lose their colour and taste.

The religions have always taught self-denial, but the soul which naturally rises to heaven does not need to practise renunciation.

The moment the soul compares its own limitation with the perfection of God it has begun to progress.

At the cost of the happiness of heaven, the soul comes to the great fulfilment of life, which even angels are not blessed with; for manifestation in human form is the utmost boundary of manifestation, the furthest that any soul can go.

Every difficulty in life is owing to man's limitation which covers the divine spark in him until in time it becomes obscured from his view, and this culminates in the tragedy of life.

Not only human beings, but animals, birds, insects, trees, and plants all have a spiritual attainment. No creature that has ever been on earth will be deprived entirely of spiritual bliss.

There is nothing in this world without purpose, and, though the place of one in the scheme of life may seem different from that of another, yet in the sum total of things we and the lower creation, together with the jinns and angels, have our purpose; that purpose is the realization of truth, and it comes to all in the form of bliss.

Wisdom is love, and love is true wisdom. The cold-hearted man is never wise, and the truly warm-hearted person is never foolish, for love comes from wisdom and wisdom from love.

One must not make even principles so set that one cannot alter them.

Every soul inclined to serve has a scope for service on every plane, and the one who is able to serve here is able to serve even more on the higher planes.

Self-pity is the worst poverty. When a person says, 'I am to be pitied', before he says anything more he has diminished himself by half; and what is said further diminishes him totally.

Out of the heart that is happy springs a fountain that pours water from above and in time brings flowers and fruit.

A person need not be unworldly in order to become spiritual. We may live in the world and yet not be of the world.

Spirituality is in no way a hindrance to worldly progress. A worldly success when gained through the power of spirituality has a stronger foundation.

Virtue forced upon oneself or upon another is not a virtue; it loses its beauty. There must be willingness; virtue should not be forced.

The true ego does not know sorrow; its true being is happiness, for the real ego is God and God is happiness.

Once a soul has awakened to the continual music of life, that soul will consider it to be its responsibility, its duty, to play its part in the outer life, even if it be contrary to its inner condition at the moment.

The knowers of truth close their lips, for they can neither say one thing nor another from the point of view of absolute truth.

The seas and rivers and streams have many names, but they all contain water; and religions have various names, but they all contain the same truth expressed in different forms at different times.

It is the love element developing in the animals which brings them together in flocks and herds.

We must not observe only a principle, but we must consult our own ideals in everything we do.

I think the knower of the truth will find truth in the symbols of the Roman Catholic Church, and will find the same truth in the absence of symbols in the Protestant Church.

If the soul were awakened to feel what the birds feel when singing in the forest at dawn, man would know that their prayer is even more exalting than his own, for it is more natural.

Trees are more holy and spiritual than some men. Their purpose is to give some contribution to life and they are continually busy fulfilling their purpose. They feel that joy and

satisfaction which man cannot feel until he attains to their stage of stillness and peace.

Where there is form there is shadow; so where there is human love there is jealousy.

Tolerance is the sign of an evolved soul. A soul gives the proof of its evolution in the degree of tolerance it shows.

Death does not belong to the soul, so it does not belong to the person. Death comes to what the person knows, not to the person himself.

There is no scripture in which contradiction does not exist. It is the contradiction which makes the music of the message.

None of the great ones have called themselves Masters, nor have they ever considered themselves to be such. What they have known in their lives is their privilege in opening their heart wider and wider to reflect the Light of the Master, who is God Himself.

All faces are His faces, and from all lips it is His word that comes. But those who can respond to Him become as His appointed servants.

God has chosen all, for all souls are near and dear to the Creator.

The greater a person is in spiritual advancement, the more unassuming he becomes.

The Great Ones are initiated by God Himself, and they prove their initiations not by their claims, but in their works.

Everything has its purpose, but knowledge of the purpose makes us able to use it to the best advantage.

Beauty is created out of variety.

Truth is the heritage of man; the human soul, whether in the East or West, possesses the truth.

All souls in the world are receptacles of the message of God; and not only human beings but even the lower creation, all objects and all conditions, convey to us the message of the one and only Being.

There is nothing in the world which is not the instrument of God.

Evil and ugliness exist in man's limited conception. In God's great Being they have no existence.

Evil is only the shadow of goodness; as the shadow is non-existent, so is evil.

It is the knowledge of the purpose of life which gives man the strength with which to stand in the midst of the opposing forces of life.

God knows Himself by His manifestation. Manifestation is the self of God, but a self which is limited, a self which makes Him know that He is perfect when He compares His own Being with this limited self which we call nature. Therefore the purpose of the whole of creation is the realization that God Himself gains by discovering His own perfection through His manifestation.

Merit is not creative; merit is something which is possessed. Therefore attributes are not important; the importance is in the possessor of the attribute.

We are too limited to see the justice of the Perfect One.

We often suffer because we do not understand. Understanding is a great thing; once we understand, we can tolerate.

The soul of every individual is God, but man has a mind and a body which contain God according to the accommodation.

The water of the ocean is ever pure in spite of all that may be thrown into it, so the Pure One consumes all impurities and turns them into purity.

The soul is the divine breath. It purifies, revivifies, and heals the instrument through which it functions.

The soul is on a continual journey: on whatever plane, it journeys all the time, and on this journey it has a purpose to accomplish.

Nothing that the human heart has once desired remains unfulfilled; if it is not fulfilled here it is accomplished in the hereafter.

The desire of the soul is the wish of God.

The source of the soul is perfect, and so is the goal.

No soul perishes; the soul was not born to perish.

The one who loves fairness blows the spark of justice into a flame, in the light of which life becomes clear to him.

The one who judges himself learns justice, not he who is occupied in judging others.

There comes a stage in life, the stage of life's culmination, when man has nothing to say against any one unless it be against himself; and it is from this point that he begins to see the divine justice hidden behind manifestation.

The wise see in every form the divine form; in every heart they see the divine light shining.

When we judge others, we are certainly judging the Artist who has created them. If we realized this, it would not be difficult to feel the presence of God everywhere.

When we go more deeply into the phenomena of life, we shall come to a place where the whole nature of Being will unveil itself, and we shall be able to say, 'There is nothing but God'.

Noisiness comes from restlessness, and restlessness is the destructive rhythm.

Those who have made any success in life, in whatever direction, have done so by their quiet working.

Enthusiasm is a great thing in life. It is creative, but too much of it sometimes spoils things.

When one devotes one's time and thought to trying to know what one need not know, one loses the opportunity which life offers of discovering the nature and secret of the soul, in which lies the fulfilment of the purpose of life.

Life's mysteries apart, the fewer words used in the little things of everyday life, the more profitable it is.

People think that many words express things better. They do not know that most often all the words spoken are so many veils wrapped around the idea.

He who holds himself close to heaven is guided from heaven.

He who disconnects himself from the heavenly spheres is like the damaged fruit fallen from the tree.

He who clings to the light from heaven has a light to warn and guard him at every step, according to his desire for guidance.

The angelic souls who are in direct touch with the spirit of God, and who have no knowledge of the false world which is full of illusion, who live and know not death, whose lives are happiness, whose food is divine light, make around the divine Spirit an aura which is called the highest heaven.

Death is the removal of a cover, after which many things will be known to the soul in regard to its own life and in regard to the whole world which have hitherto been hidden.

Innocence is the natural condition of the soul and the lack of innocence is a foreign element which the soul acquires after coming on earth.

Death for the spiritual souls is only a gate through which they enter into that sphere which every soul knows to be its home.

Souls which have become conscious of the angelic spheres, even in the smallest degree, hear the calling of that sphere; and the discomfort they have in this world is that of homesickness caused by the call of the angelic spheres.

Intelligence is the light of life, the life of life, and the essence of the whole Being.

Rhythm cannot exist without tone, nor tone without rhythm. They are interdependent for their existence, and it is the same with time and space.

The mystic contemplates the Being of God, and so raises his consciousness above the limitations of time and space and liberates his soul by lifting it to the divine spheres.

The blessing of life is in the consciousness of the blessing.

Man will find in the end of his search along the spiritual line, that all beings including trees and plants, rocks and mountains, oceans and rivers, are prayerful; and that all attain to that spiritual summit which is the real longing of every soul.

Only when man learns to serve and do his duty without the thought of appreciation, only then will he attain.

Self-denial which comes as a result of helplessness and culminates in dissatisfaction cannot be a virtue.

The soul's happiness is in itself; nothing can make the soul fully happy but self-realization.

The life which everyone knows is this momentary period of the soul's captivity.

Spirit is matter, and matter is spirit. The denseness of spirit is matter, and the fineness of matter is spirit.

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According to the width of his motive man's vision is wide, and according to the power of his motive man's strength is great.

Such souls as are conscious of their relation to God as being that of a child and his parents, are especially cared for. They are always guided, because they ask for guidance.

There is nothing in this world which is devoid of form except God, who is formless.

The limitless God cannot be made intelligible to the limited self unless He is first made limited. This limited ideal becomes like an instrument, a medium of God who is perfect and who is limitless.

What is religion? In the outer sense of the word, a form given for the worship of God, a law given to the community that it may live harmoniously. And what does religion mean in the inner sense of the word? It means a staircase made for the soul to climb to that plane where truth is realized.

Many do good, but how few do it wisely! To do good wisely is the work of the sage.

The one who lives in his mind is conscious of the mind; the one who lives in his soul is conscious of the soul.

Truth is unlimited and incomparable, therefore truth alone knows, enjoys, and realizes its own existence.

The soul is light, the mind is light, and the body is light—light of different grades; and it is this relation which connects man with the planets and stars.

The infinite God is the self of God, and all that has manifested under name and form is the outer aspect of God.

All men who join in prayers may not be as sincere as the birds in the forest, for not one among these says its prayers without sincerity.

Spirituality is attained by all beings; not only by man but by beasts and birds, for they each have their religion, their principles, their law, and their morals.

The pride that says, 'I am so spiritual', is not spiritual pride; it is earthly pride. For where there is spirituality there is no proud claim.

Spiritual realization can be attained in one moment in rare cases, but generally a considerable time of preparation is needed.

Fineness of nature is the sign of the intelligent.

Fineness can be acquired by love of refinement.

In the heart of man the whole universe is reflected; and as the whole universe is reflected in it, man may be called the heart of the universe.

Subtlety produces beauty; it is subtlety which is the curl of the Beloved.

In order to acquire spiritual knowledge, in order to receive inspiration, in order to prepare one's heart for the inner revelation, one must try to make one's mentality pliable, like water rather than like a rock.

Once peace is made within, one will have gained sufficient strength and power to use in the struggle of life, both within and without.

Life is a continual battle. Man's constant struggle with outer things gives a chance to the foes who exist in his own being.

The first thing necessary is to make peace for the time being with the outside world, in order to prepare for the warfare which is to be fought within.

The one who is able to keep his equilibrium without being

annoyed, without being troubled, gains that mastery which is needed in the evolution of life.

The heart when it is not living and making its life a life of love, feels out of place; and all the discomfort of life comes from this.

Nothing, however good it appears, is a virtue unless it is willingly done, because even in the willingness of making a sacrifice one experiences the breath of freedom.

When a person is absorbed in self, he has no time to build his character; but when he forgets himself, he collects all that is good and beautiful. This is the key to the whole of life, both to worldly success and to spiritual attainment.

Peace is not a knowledge, peace is not a power, peace is not a happiness; yet peace is all these. Besides peace is productive of happiness, peace inspires one with knowledge of the seen and unseen, and in peace is to be found the Divine Presence.

God is happiness, the soul is happiness, and spirituality is happiness. So there is no place for sadness in the kingdom of God.

That which deprives man of happiness deprives him of God.

The light which comes from the soul, rises through the heart, and manifests outwardly in man's smile, is indeed the light from heaven. In that light many flowers grow and many fruits ripen.

We help God to forgive us by forgiving ourselves.

He who realizes the relation of friendship between one soul and another—the tenderness, delicacy, and sacredness of this relationship—he is living, and in this way he will one day communicate with God.

The same bridge which connects two souls in the world, when stretched becomes the path to God.

Nirvana is as a star in our hearts which we develop; and as we develop it, it becomes brilliant. Its brilliance consumes all the wrong of life until nothing is left but that purity which is the divine light.

It must be remembered as the first principle of life, that manifestation was destined for keener observation of life within and without.

The soul is happy by nature; the soul is happiness itself. It becomes unhappy when something is the matter with its vehicle, its instrument, its tool through which it experiences life. Care of the body, therefore, is the first and the most important principle of religion.

The purpose of the whole of creation is fulfilled in the attainment of that perfection which is for a human being to attain. The saints, seers, sages, prophets, and masters of humanity have all been human beings, and they have shown divine perfection in fulfilling the purpose of being human.

The teaching of Jesus Christ has as its central theme unfoldment towards a realization of immortality.

Vanity in its proper place is a great virtue; when not in its proper place it is a great sin.

Every person has his life designed beforehand; and the light of the purpose that he is born to accomplish in life has already been kindled in his soul.

Is not man the creator of sin? If he creates it, he can also destroy it; and if he cannot destroy it, his elder brother can.

In metaphysical terms the impression of sin may be called an illness, a mental not a physical illness. And as the doctor is able to cure physical illness, so the doctor of the soul is able to heal spiritually.

In reality no sin, no virtue can be engraved upon the soul; it can only cover the soul. The soul in its essence is divine intelligence, and how can divine intelligence be impressed with either virtue or sin?

When the object, the purpose for which a soul was born upon earth is fulfilled, then there is nothing to hold it, and the soul is naturally drawn back to its source and goal.

God Himself sees through the eye of man, thus the eye is a road between man and God.

Man has neither been created to be as spiritual as an angel, nor has he been made to be as material as an animal; and when he strikes the happy medium he will certainly tread the path which leads straight to the goal.

Man is good by nature. Goodness is his real self; badness is only a cloud. But clouds are ever floating; they are sometimes here and sometimes there, and if we trust in the goodness of man, the clouds will disappear. Our very trust will disperse them.

The sun shines on all the trees; it does not make distinctions between this tree and that, but in accordance with their absorption of the light falling upon them and their response to the sun they receive its light.

Remember that very often a disciple is an inspiration for the master, because it is not the master who teaches; it is God Himself.

The master is only the medium; and as great as is the response of the disciple, so strongly does it attract the message of God.

The further we go, the more our disputes and arguments cease. They fade away until there is no colour left in them; and when all the colour has gone, the white light comes which is the light of God.

The one who serves, however humbly, has the privilege of serving God.

Cheerfulness is life, sadness is death. Life attracts, death repulses.

Do not let your own mind be impressed by the depression of your friend. If you do, you will have taken the germ of his disease.

It is harmony, established with everyone one meets in life, which tunes one's soul with the Infinite.

The man conscious of his duties and obligations to his friends is more righteous than he who sits alone in the solitude.

The condition of God and His true lover is that either the Beloved lives or the lover, not both.

Whether a person feels attracted to God now or not, there will come a day when he will be attracted; for every soul has to return to God.

Ignorance of the self gives the fear of death. The more one learns of the true self, the less one fears death; for it is only a door through which one passes from one phase of life to another, and the other phase is much better.

Humour is the sign of light from above. When that light touches the mind, it tickles it, and it is the tickling of the mind that produces humour.

Renunciation is not something which we must torture ourselves to learn. It is in us, but it is buried and it can only be dug up by our love.

When the sun is clouded the light does not reach the earth, and so it is with the soul, which is divine and full of light. If it is thickly covered with clouds then man does not receive the light which is in the soul itself.

What is rooted out in the quest of truth is ignorance. When it is

entirely removed from one's heart, man's outlook becomes wide, as wide as the eye of God.

Man meets with hardships in life; sometimes they seem too hard for him to stand. But often such experiences become like higher initiations in the life of the traveller on the path.

Sadness comes from limitation in different forms, from lack of perception, from lack of power over oneself and over conditions, and from lack of that substance which is happiness itself and which is love.

The nature of love is as the nature of water in the depth of the earth. If we do not dig deep enough, we find mud not water; but when we dig deep, we find pure water.

If there is any death it is stillness and inactivity; and then the impulse of life comes, which breaks through the cloud of mortality and makes the soul see the daylight after the darkness of the night. And what does the soul see in this bright daylight? It sees itself living as before, having the same name and form, and yet progressing.

Every soul is striving to attain God; God not as a Judge nor as a King, but as a Beloved. And every soul seeks God, the God of love, in the form which it is capable of imagining.

The soul manifests in the world in order that it may experience the different phases of manifestation, and yet not lose its way, but regain its original freedom in addition to the experience and knowledge it has gained in this world.

In order to be, one must pass through a stage of being nothing.

When illumination comes, it seems to bring annihilation; but it is not annihilation, in reality it is exaltation.

Happiness cannot come by merely believing in God. Believing is a process. By this process the God within is awakened and made living; it is the living in God which gives happiness.

It is not only the link of love and sympathy, but also the belief in the hereafter to the extent of conviction, that lifts those on earth to know about their beloved ones who have passed over to the other side.

The soul's sustenance is the knowledge of God; it is by this knowledge that the soul lives the eternal life.

Man has the key of life in his own hands, if he only knew it.

Man is always journeying towards the truth. He is seeking, seeking; for in his heart is the love of that which is real.

There is no such thing as mortality except the illusion, and the impression of that illusion which man keeps before his eyes as fear during his lifetime, and still as an impression after he has passed from this earth.

The soul is life, it never touches death; death is its illusion.

To the one who realizes ultimate truth, time and space are of little importance; he rises above them.

The further one goes on the spiritual path, the more will one have to learn to play a part.

The spiritual man learns to answer the question of every soul on its own plane of evolution.

It is the ignorant soul, ignorant of its source and goal, that dreads leaving the sphere to which it has become attached. It is the soul that knows not what is beyond, that is afraid of being lifted up above the ground its feet are touching.

One's duty is to do now what can be done now. Nothing that one really values should one put off till tomorrow.

Souls when they start from the angelic heavens are vibrations. They have no earthly harps; they are the harps themselves.

There cannot be perfection where there is duality. God alone is perfect.

The whole interest in life is in journeying towards perfection. If man were born perfect there would be no joy in life.

In order to attain to God-consciousness, the first condition is to make God a reality so that He is no longer only an imagination.

The soul which develops its personality is like the fine flower with its colour, fragrance, and delicacy.

The essence of spirituality and mysticism is readiness to serve the person next to us.

The question, 'What is the purpose of manifestation?' may be answered in one word: satisfaction, the satisfaction of God.

Nothing in the world could give man the strength that is needed to live a life on the earth, if there were no blessing from heaven reaching him from time to time, and of which he is so little aware.

The work of the spiritual man is to forget his false self and to realize the true self, which is God; and to realize that this true self is in his brother also.

It is not true that Adam was put out of the Garden of Eden. He only turned his back upon it; and so he became an exile from heaven.

Every soul is born with the capacity by which it can draw all the spiritual bliss and ecstasy which is needed for its evolution.

Every thing and being is placed in its own place, and each is busy carrying out the work which has to be done in the whole scheme of nature.

Nirvana is not an intellectual realization; it is life.

There are blessed souls living on the earth today to whom sacrifice gives no pain but only pleasure. In seeing another eat, their hunger is satisfied; renunciation is to them a joy, for they have gone through the cross and risen above it.

The better the instrument, the greater the satisfaction of the soul.

Truth cannot be put into words. It must be seen in the light of our own intuition.

That which is acquired cannot be truth. Truth is that which is discovered.

The art of personality is not a qualification; it is the purpose for which man was created. Through this art man not only satisfies himself but also pleases God.

When the soul has once fought its battle with the things that make it fear and tremble and shrink, it has conquered life and become the master of life. It has inherited the kingdom which is its own.

The man who has proved in his life to be the friend of every person he meets, in the end will prove to be the friend of God.

The perfection of friendship, in which lies all spiritual perfection, comes when the soul is so developed that there is no one whom it cannot bear. When it has reached this state, it has certainly passed into the ranks of those initiates whose names are written on the spiritual records.

Nature in its different aspects is the materialization of that light which is called the divine Spirit.

In prayer the repetition of thanksgiving brings to our soul our own voice, and that voice echoes before the God who is within.

The angels were made to sing the praises of the Lord; the

jinns to imagine, to dream, to meditate; but man is created to show humanity in his character.

It is not what Christ taught that makes his devotees love him. They dispute over these things in vain. It is what he himself was that is loved and admired by them.

Man may have rank and position and a thousand qualifications, he may possess all the goods of the earth, but if he lacks the art of personality he is poor indeed. It is in this art that man shows the nobility which belongs to the kingdom of God.

A person, however learned and qualified in his life's work, in whom gratitude is absent, is devoid of that beauty of character which makes personality fragrant.

Throughout the whole journey on the spiritual path, the main thing that has to be accomplished is the forgetting of the false ego.

True freedom is within oneself. When the soul is free, there is nothing in this world that binds us; everywhere we find freedom, both in heaven and on earth.

As the heart expands so the horizon becomes wider, and one finds greater and greater scope in which to build the kingdom of God.

Joy is not something brought from outside. It belongs to us, but it manifests to us as the result of certain actions.

Life is an opportunity, and the more one realizes this, the more one will make the best of the opportunity which life offers.

The essence of life is hope. If we hope to be better, we shall become better.

You are love. You come from love. You are made by love. You cannot cease to love.

The whole manifestation is the manifestation of love. God Himself is love. So the love which comes from the source, returns to the source; and in this the purpose of life is accomplished.

You may go to the most exalted place, a place blessed with peace and rest; but if you take sadness and unrest with you, you will find them there.

God's message does not come only in words. What comes in words is small compared with the radiance the message brings to all things and all beings. It comes in the form of a sacrament, as bread and wine; and bread and wine symbolize life and love.

Renounce the good of the world; renounce the good of heaven; renounce your highest ideal. Then renounce your renunciation.

The way to perfection is not limited. No one can make a rule that you can only pass by this way and none other.

Beauty is the watchword of the seeker.

Patience is a process through which a soul goes in order to become precious.

By self-realization a man becomes larger than the universe. The world in which he lives becomes as a drop in the ocean of his heart.

In our sorrow is God's sorrow, for if God cannot sympathize man is greater than God.

Part of our sorrow and our joy comes from life; part we make for ourselves. Life cannot give us joy if we will not earn it.

The God-ideal is the flower of the human race, and this flower blooms in the realization of God.

The mind is a world, a world that man makes; and in it he will live in the hereafter as a spider lives in the web it has woven.

The further on the path of life's mystery a person travels, the finer he will have to become in order to perceive and to express the mystery of life.

The prophetic soul is like a fruit that is on the ground but still connected with the branch. The branch has bent and the fruit has touched the earth, but it has not lost connection with the stem.

The further we advance, the more difficult and more important our part in the symphony of life becomes; and the more conscious we become of this responsibility, the more efficient we become in accomplishing our task.

With all the arguments for and against the divinity of Christ, no sincere believer in God can deny that God reflected Himself through the personality of the Master.

The prophetic soul must, of necessity, rise so high that it can hear the voice of God, and at the same time it must bend so low that it can hear the softest whisper of the beings on earth.

Even the presence of the prophet is the answer to every question. Without speaking one word the prophet gives the answer. The prophet is only the medium between God and man, therefore the answer is from God. It is not that the prophet answers the question because he reads the mind; it is the mind of the one who asks the question which strikes, on the inner plane, the divine bell which is the heart of the prophet.

The moment a person rises above his mind and awakens in the light of the soul, he becomes spiritual.

There are many facts, but only one truth. Facts can be put into words, but not the truth.

The mystic seeks God both within and without; he recognizes God both in unity and in variety.

As one evolves spiritually one rises above the tendency to intolerance, for the reason that one begins to see God besides seeing oneself and another person, and so one unites oneself with the other person in God.

The souls of all are from one and the same source, but a soul which is unveiled shines out. Love and light come continually from such souls. We need no proof of it, for it is living; all else is dead in comparison.

It is death that dies, not life.

The soul covers its own truth with a thousand veils from its own eyes.

The ideal must not be turned into the idol.

The soul has not come on earth to die the death of helplessness, nor continually to suffer pain and misery. The purpose of the soul is that for which the whole of creation has been striving, and it is the fulfilment of that purpose which is called God-consciousness.

Evil is an ever-floating thing—sometimes here, sometimes there. So evil in man is just a cloud; it comes and goes; and if we trust in his goodness the clouds will disappear.

Man's sacred duty is to strive to attain to that perfect consciousness which is his true religion.

By making many sacrifices and practising renunciation, by going through many tests and trials, man will attain to that consciousness which is God-consciousness, in which resides all perfection.

Balance is the key-note of spiritual attainment.

No sooner is the God-ideal brought to life, than the worshipper of God turns into truth.

The depth of every soul is good. It is only belief in this doctrine that gives us a reason for our belief in the goodness of God.

The man who shuts himself away from all men, however highly evolved he may be spiritually, will not be free in the higher spheres.

In order to fulfil the practical duties of life, it is not necessary to forget our ideal. We can hold the ideal in the tenderest spot of our heart, and yet fulfil our practical duties. The ideal is to illuminate our lives, not to paralyse our actions.

The disciple can be inspired, and the disciple can shut off his inspiration. If there is no response on the part of the disciple, then the inspiration of the master is shut off. Just like the clouds which cannot give rain when passing over the desert, but when they come to the forest they are attracted by the trees and the rain falls.

The soul in its manifestation on earth is not at all disconnected with the higher spheres. It lives in all spheres, though it is generally conscious on only one plane. Thus it becomes deprived of the heavenly bliss, and conscious of the troubles and limitations of life on the earth.

There are rays and there is light. If the rays are the source of the souls of living beings, then the light of the divine Sun is the spirit of the whole of Being.

When we develop our sense of beauty, then we are naturally critical of that which does not come up to our standard. But when we have passed this stage, in the next cycle divine compassion is developed in our nature and we become able to add all that is lacking, and so to compensate for that perfect beauty.

In the making of personality, God finishes His divine art.

As the source and goal of all creation are one, so the source and goal of all religion are one.

The law of God is endless and limitless as God Himself, and once the eye of the seeker penetrates through the veil that hangs before him, hiding the real law of life from his eyes, the mystery of the whole of life manifests to him; then happiness and peace become his own, for they are the birthright of every soul.

The soul longs for a keen perception. The absence of such fine perception causes depression and confusion, because the inner longing is to see.

There comes a stage in the evolution of an illuminated soul, when it begins to see the law hidden behind nature. To it the whole of life reveals its secret.

The wider the outlook the less are one's troubles in life. If one fixes one's eyes on the horizon as far as one can see, one is saved from troubles and trials.

God is the horizon, and one can neither touch the horizon nor God. The horizon is as far as one can see and even further; and so is God.

When we find faults and see no excuses, we are blind to the Light which can free a person from his faults and give rise to that forgiveness which is the very essence of God, and which is to be found in the human heart.

Both life and death are contrary aspects of one thing, and that is change. Death is only passing from life on the earth to a still greater life.

The more you give of wealth such as spiritual wealth, the more it increases; what you have given you have not lost, you have gained it.

What is the soul? The soul is life; it never touches death. Death comes to something which the soul holds, not to itself.

There is no such thing as mortality except as an illusion, and the impression of that illusion, which man holds as fear.

Can a composer give a justification for every note written in his composition? He cannot; he can only say, 'It is the stream which has risen out of my heart. I am not concerned with every single note. What I am concerned with is the effect which is produced by my composition.'

Is law predominant, or love? Law is the habit; love is the being. Law is made; love was, is, and always will be.

Belief in the human soul is the bridge to belief in God.

By our trust in the divine beauty in every person we develop that beauty in ourselves.

Worry comes from self-pity. When the self is forgotten, there is no worry. Worry comes also from fear, and fear comes from the clouds of ignorance. Light breaks the clouds.

The soul takes with itself into the hereafter, all that it has collected in the way of impressions.

The teaching of the prophets is the answer to the demands of individual and collective souls.

To weigh, to measure, to examine, to express an opinion on a great personality, one must first rise to the same development.

If there is any solution to our ever-rising questions, it is never by studying the law that we shall be satisfied. If anything will give us satisfaction, it is diving deep into love and letting love inspire us, and that will enable us to see the law.

Verily a deep-felt need is a prayer in itself.

There is no liberation unless one has an ideal before one. The ideal is a stepping-stone towards that attainment which is called liberation.

Love is the shower by which sin is purified; no stain remains. What is God? God is love. When His mercy, His compassion, His kindness are expressed through a God-realized personality, then the stains of sins, faults, and mistakes are washed away and the soul becomes clear.

Earthly pleasures are the shadows of happiness, because of their transitoriness. True happiness is in love, which is the stream that

springs from one's soul; and he who will allow this stream to run continually in all conditions of life, in all situations, however difficult, will have a happiness which truly belongs to him, whose source is not without, but within.

Failure does not matter in life. To a progressive person even a thousand failures do not matter. He keeps success before his view, and success is his even after a thousand failures. The greatest pity is when life comes to a standstill and does not move any farther; a sensible person prefers death to such a life.

Verily, truth is all the religion there is, and it is truth which will save. At every step towards the final goal man will be asked for a sacrifice, and that sacrifice will be a greater and greater one as he continues on the path. When there is nothing, whether mind, body, thought, feeling, or action, that he keeps back from sacrificing for others, then man proves his realization of divine truth.



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