

*The Man-God**

Part I

Aspirants and God-Realized Beings

Even before God-realization, advanced aspirants pass through states of consciousness that, in some ways, are akin to the state of God-realization. For example, the *masts* and advanced souls of the higher planes become desireless and immersed in the joy of God-intoxication. Since their only concern is God, they become the recipients of the unique happiness characteristic of the God state. They have no beloved except God, and they have no longing except for God. For them, God is not only the only Beloved but also the only Reality that counts. They are unattached to everything except God and remain unaffected by the pleasures and the pains to which worldly persons are subject. They are happy because they are always face to face with the divine Beloved, who is the very ocean of happiness.

Advanced aspirants not only participate in some of the privileges of the Divine state, but also wield great occult and mystic powers (siddhis). Depending upon the powers they wield, the aspirants belong to different types. For example, even on the first plane the aspirant begins to see lights and colors, smell perfumes, and hear the music of the subtle world. Those who advance further can see and hear things at any distance. Some aspi-

*The Man-God is also called Perfect Master, Sadguru, Qutub, or Salik-e-Mukammil, and is most frequently referred to throughout the *Discourses* simply as "Master" (see Glossary).-ED.

rants see the whole gross world as a mirage. Other advanced aspirants can take a new body immediately after their death. Some agents of Perfect Masters have such control over the gross world that they can change their bodies at will. In Sufi tradition they are called *abdal*. All these achievements of advanced aspirants pertain to the phenomenal world. The field of their powers is itself a domain of illusion, and the miracles they perform do not necessarily mean that they are in any way nearer to the God state.

From the standpoint of consciousness also, aspirants belong to various types according to the line in which they have advanced and according to their nearness to the God state. Some get intoxicated with their extraordinary powers and, tempted to use them, have a long pause in their Godward march. They get stuck in the consciousness of the intermediate planes. Some become dazed, confused, and even self-deluded. Others are caught in a coma. There are some who, with difficulty, try to come down to gross consciousness by repeating a physical action or by repeating some utterance many times. There are those who, in their God-intoxication, are so indifferent to the life of the gross world that to all appearances their external behavior is like that of mad persons. And there are some who tread the spiritual path while performing their worldly duties.

Owing to their exalted states of consciousness, some advanced aspirants are worthy of adoration; but they are in no way comparable to God-realized beings, either in spiritual beauty and perfection of the inward state of consciousness or in their powers. All aspirants, right up to the sixth plane, are limited by finite consciousness; and they are all in the domain of duality and illusion. Aspirants are mostly happy: this is due to their contact and communion with God. For some the joy of inward companionship with the divine Beloved is so great that they become unbalanced in their behavior. As a result, in their unsubdued state of God-intoxication they may abuse people, throw stones at them, and behave as though possessed. Their state is often described as that of the *unmatta*. Owing to the exuberance of uncontrolled joy in their inward contact with the divine Beloved, they are utterly heedless of worldly standards or values. Because of the fearlessness that comes to them through complete detachment, they often manifest a self-expression that can easily be mistaken for idio-

syncracy and unruliness.

Only when it attains God-realization on the seventh plane can the soul fully control its joy. The unlimited happiness that is eternally his does not in any way unbalance the person because he is now permanently established in the poise of nonduality. The extravagance of newly found love and joy is no longer for him. Occasional unsettlement due to increasing joy at the closer proximity of God is also finished because he is now inseparably united with Him. He is lost in the divine Beloved and merged in Him, who is the infinite ocean of unbounded happiness. The happiness of the God-realized person is unconditional and self-sustained. It is therefore eternally the same, without ebb and flow. He has arrived at unqualified finality and unassailable equanimity.

The happiness of the aspirants is born of their increasing proximity and closer intimacy with the divine Beloved-who, however, remains externalized as the *Other*. Whereas the happiness of the God-realized is an inalienable aspect of the God state, in which there is no duality. The happiness of the aspirants is derivative, but the happiness of the God-realized is Self-grounded. The happiness of the aspirants comes from increasing bounty of divinegrace, but the happiness of the God-realized merely IS.

When a person attains God-realization, he has infinite power, knowledge, and bliss. These intrinsic characteristics of inner Realization are always the same despite minor differences, which give rise to certain distinguishable types of God-realized beings. These differences between the God-realized are purely extrinsic and pertain only to their relation with the universe.

Differences in relation to universe

They do not create any degrees of spiritual status between the God-realized, who are all perfect and one with all life and existence. From the point of view of the creation, however, these differences between the God-realized are not only definite but worth noting. After God-realization, most souls drop all their bodies and remain eternally immersed in God-consciousness. For them, God is the only Reality, and the entire universe is a zero. They are so completely identified with the impersonal aspect of the Truth that they have no direct link with the world of forms.

Some God-realized souls retain their gross, subtle, and mental

bodies; but in their absorption in God-consciousness, they are totally unconscious of the existence of their bodies. Others in creation continue to see these bodies and treat them as persons incarnate, but the bodies exist only from the point of view of the observer. Such God-realized persons are called *Majzoobs-e-Kamil* in Sufi terminology. These Majzoobs do not use their bodies consciously, because their consciousness is wholly directed toward God and is not turned toward the bodies or the universe. For them their own bodies as well as the world of forms have no existence, so there can be no question of their using the bodies in relation to the world of forms. However, their bodies are necessarily the centers for radiation of the unpremeditated and constant overflow of the infinite bliss, knowledge, and love that they enjoy. Those who revere them derive great spiritual benefit from this spontaneous radiation of divinity.

In addition to consciousness of God, some God-realized beings have an awareness of the existence of other souls who are still in bondage. They know all these souls to be forms of the *Paramatma* (Oversoul), and that all are destined one day to achieve Emancipation-and some, God-realization. Being established in this knowledge, they remain indifferent to the provisional and changing lots of the souls who are in bondage. These God-realized souls know that, just as they themselves have realized God, others will also realize God at some time. They are uninterested, however, in speeding up the God-realization of those who are in bondage and take no active interest in the time process of creation.

A rare few God-realized souls not only possess God-consciousness but are also conscious of creation and their own bodies. They take active interest in the souls who are in bondage; and they use their own bodies consciously to work in creation, in

Man-God (Sadguru) order to help other souls in their Godward march. Such a God-realized soul is called *Man-God*, *Perfect Master*, *Sadguru*, *Qutub*, or *Salik-e-Mukammil*. The Man-God experiences himself as the center of the entire universe; and everyone-high or low, good or bad-is at the same distance from him. In the Sufi tradition this center is called the *Qutub*; the Qutub controls the whole universe through his agents.

When man becomes God and retains creation-consciousness, he is called a *Man-God*; but when God becomes man, He is called the *God-Man*, or the *Avatar*. The God-Man is the foremost Sadguru, who

God-Man (Avatar) was the first to emerge through evolution and involution; and He helps all souls in bondage through His recurrent advents.

However, from the point of view of the fundamental characteristics of consciousness and the nature of His work in creation, the God-Man is like any other Man-God. The God-Man and the Man-God never lose their God-consciousness even for an instant, although they may be engaged in all sorts of activities in relation to creation. Neither has a finite and limited mind; both work through the *universal mind* when they desire to help other souls.

The Man-God

Part II

The State of the Man-God

Of all the subjects of human study, God is the most meaningful. But purely theoretical study of God does not take the aspirant very far toward the real purpose of human life, though it is always better to study God than to be completely ignorant of

Becoming God His existence. To seek God intellectually is infinitely better than to be merely a skeptic or an agnostic. And it is decidedly better to feel God than to study Him through the intellect, though even feeling for God is less important than the actual experience of God. However, even the experience of God does not yield the true nature of divinity because God, as the object of experience, remains different from and external to the aspirant. The true nature of God is known to the aspirant only when he attains unity with God, by losing himself in His Being. Thus, it is better to study God than to be ignorant of Him; it is better to feel God than to study Him; it is better to experience God than to feel God; and it is better to become God than to experience Him.

The state of God-realization is unmarred by the doubts that cloud the minds of those who are in bondage. Those in bondage are in a constant state of uncertainty about their “whence” and “whither.” The God-realized, on the other hand, are at the very heart of creation where its source and end are known. The God-realized soul knows

itself to be God as surely as an ordinary person knows himself to be a human being and not an animal. For the **Supreme certainty** God-realized it is not a matter of doubt, belief, self-delusion, or guesswork. It is a matter of supreme and unshakable certainty, which needs no external corroborations and remains unaffected by the contradictions of others because it is based upon continuous Self-knowledge. This spiritual certainty cannot be challenged by anyone or anything. The realized soul cannot think of itself as anything but God, just as the ordinary person cannot think of himself as being anything except a human being. But the person thinks himself to be what he is not, in reality, and the God-realized soul knows itself to be what it is, in reality.

God-realization is the very goal of all creation. All earthly pleasure, however great, is but a fleeting shadow of the eternal bliss of God-realization. All worldly knowledge, however comprehensive, is but a distorted reflection of the absolute **Glory of God-realization** Truth of God-realization. All human might, however imposing, is but a fragment of the infinite power of God-realization. All that is noble, beautiful, and lovely, all that is great, good, and inspiring in the universe, is just an infinitesimal fraction of the unfading and unspeakable glory of God-realization.

The eternal bliss, the infinite power, the unfading glory, and the absolute Truth of God-realization are not to be had for nothing. The individualized soul has to go through all the travail, the pain, and the **Price of God-realization** struggle of evolution, reincarnation, and involution before it can inherit this treasure, which is hidden at the heart of creation. The price it has to pay for coming into possession of this treasure is its own existence as a separate ego. The limited individuality must disappear entirely if there is to be an entrance into the unlimited state of Godhood.

In the ordinary person of the world, the limited individuality, which is identified with a finite name and form, predominates and creates a veil of ignorance over the God within. If this ignorance is to disappear, the limited individual has to surrender his own limited existence. When he goes from the scene without leaving a vestige of his limited life, what remains is God. The surrenderance of limited existence is the surrender of the firmly rooted delusion of having a separate

existence. It is not the surrender of anything real: it is the surrenderance of the false and the inheritance of the Truth.

When a person is crossing the inner planes toward God-realization, he becomes successively unconscious of the gross, subtle, and mental worlds as well as his own gross, subtle, and mental bodies. But

**Two aspects
of Man-God**

after God-realization, a few souls again descend, or come down, and become conscious of the whole creation-as well as their gross, subtle, and mental bodies-without in any way jeopardizing their God-consciousness. Only five of them function as the Perfect Masters. God as God alone is not consciously man, and man as man alone is not consciously God; the Man-God is consciously God as well as man. Yet by again becoming conscious of creation, the Man-God does not suffer the slightest deterioration of spiritual status.

What is spiritually disastrous for the soul still in bondage is not mere consciousness of creation but the fact that consciousness is *caught up* in creation because of sanskaras. Thus consciousness is

**Man-God not caught
up in creation**

covered with ignorance, and this prevents the realization of the Divinity within. In the same way, what is also spiritually disastrous is not mere consciousness of the bodies but *identification* with them due to sanskaras. These sanskaras prevent the realization of the infinite Soul, which is the ultimate Reality and the basis of all creation. In it alone is to be found the final meaning of the entire creation.

The soul in bondage is tied to the world of forms by the chain of sanskaras, which create the illusion of identification of the soul with the bodies. The disharmony within consciousness and the distortions in the expression of the divine will arise from sanskaric identification with the bodies and not merely through consciousness of the bodies. Since the Man-God is free from all sanskaras, he is constantly conscious of being different from the bodies and uses them harmoniously as mere instruments for the expression of the divine will in all its purity. The bodies are to the Man-God what a wig is to a bald man. The bald man puts on his wig when he goes to work during the day, and he takes it off when he retires at night. So the Man-God uses his bodies when he needs them for his work, but he is free of them when he does not need them and knows them to be utterly different from his true

being as God.

The Man-God knows himself to be infinite and beyond all forms, and with complete detachment he can therefore remain conscious of creation without being caught up in it. The falseness of the phenomenal world consists in its not being

**Changing shadow of
God cannot affect
God-consciousness**

understood properly, that is, as being an illusory expression of the infinite Spirit. Ignorance consists in taking the form as complete in itself, without any reference to

the infinite Spirit of which it is the expression. The Man-God realizes the Truth. He is conscious of the true nature of God as well as the true nature of creation. And yet this does not involve him in any consciousness of duality because, for him, creation does not exist as anything but the changing shadow of God—who is the only eternal and real Existence, and who is at the heart of creation. The Man-God can therefore remain conscious of creation without lessening his God-consciousness; and he continues to work in the world of forms for the furtherance of the primary purpose of creation, which is to create full Self-knowledge, or God-realization, in every soul.

When the Sadguru descends into the world of forms from the impersonal aspect of God, he assumes universal mind; and he knows, feels, and works through this universal mind. No longer for him is the

**Man-God works
through universal mind**

limited life of finite mind; no longer for him are the pains and the pleasures of duality; no longer for him are the emptiness and the vanity of separative ego. He is consciously

one with all life. Through his universal mind he not only experiences the happiness of all minds but also their suffering. Since most minds have a great preponderance of suffering over happiness due to ignorance, the suffering that thus comes to the Man-God because of the condition of others is infinitely greater than the happiness. The suffering of the Man-God is great; but the infinite bliss of the God state, which he constantly and effortlessly enjoys, supports him in all the suffering that comes to him, leaving him unmoved and unaffected by it.

The individualized soul has no access to the infinite bliss of the God state, and it is seriously moved and affected by its sanskaric happiness and suffering because of its ignorant identification with the limited mind. The Man-God does not identify himself even with the

universal mind, which he assumes when he comes down for the world.

**Man-God drops
universal mind
after his mission**

He has taken the universal mind only for his mission in the world; and since he uses it solely for his work without identification with it, he remains unaffected by the suffering or happiness that comes to him through

it. He drops the universal mind after his work is done. Even when he is working in the world through his universal mind, he knows himself to be the eternal and only God and not the universal mind.

The union that the Man-God has with God is perfect. Even when he comes down into duality for his universal work, he remains inseparable from God even for an instant. In his normal state as man, he has to be on the level of all and eat, drink, and

**Suffering of Man-God
and the God-Man**

suffer like others. Yet as he retains his Godhood even while he does all these things, he constantly experiences peace, bliss, and

power. But when God *becomes* man, He as the God-Man literally suffers as man. Jesus Christ, as the Avatar, *did* suffer on the Cross. However, with the continuous Knowledge that His conscious Godhood gave Him, He knew at the same time that everything in the world of duality is illusion; and He was sustained by this Knowledge of His God state.

The God-Man experiences all souls as His own. He experiences Himself in everything, and His universal mind includes all minds in its scope. The God-Man knows Himself to be one with all other souls in

Crucifixion

bondage. Although He knows Himself to be identical with God and is thus eternally free, He also knows Himself to be one with

the other souls in bondage and is thus bound. Though He is conscious of the eternal bliss of His God state, He also experiences infinite suffering, owing to the bondage of others whom He knows to be His own forms. This is the meaning of Christ's Crucifixion. The God-Man is, as it were, continuously being crucified, and He is continuously taking birth. In the God-Man, the purpose of creation has been completely realized. He has nothing to attain for Himself by remaining in the world, yet He retains His body and continues to use it for emancipating other souls from bondage and helping them attain God-consciousness.

Even while working in the world of duality, the God-Man is in no

way limited by duality. In His God state, the duality of “I” and “you” is swallowed up in the all-embracing divine love. The state of Perfection

**Nonduality in midst
of duality**

in which the God-Man dwells is beyond all forms of duality and opposites. It is a state of unlimited freedom and unimpaired completeness, immortal sweetness and undying happiness, untarnished divinity and unhampered creativity. The God-Man is inseparably united with God forever and dwells in a state of nonduality in the very midst of duality. He not only knows Himself to be one with all but also knows Himself to be the only One. He consciously descends from the state of being God to the state of experiencing God in everything. Therefore, His dealings in the world of duality not only do not bind Him but reflect the pristine glory of the sole Reality, which is God, and contribute toward freeing others from their state of bondage.

The Man-God

Part III The Work of the Man-God

God-realization is the endless end of creation and the timeless consummation and fructification of intelligent and nonbinding karma. Souls who have not realized God are still in the domain of duality, and their dealings of mutual give-and-take in different fields create the chains of karmic debts and dues from which there is no escape. The Man-God, however, dwells in the consciousness of unity; and all that he does, not only does not bind him, but contributes toward the emancipation of others who are still in ignorance. For the Man-God there is no one who is excluded from his own being. He sees himself in everyone; and since all that he does springs from the consciousness of nonduality, he can freely give and freely take without creating bindings for himself or others.

**Free and nonbinding
give-and-take**

If a person accepts without reserve from the bounty the Man-God showers, he creates a link that will stand by him until he attains Freedom and God-realization. If a person serves the Man-God, offering his life and all possessions in his service, he creates a link that will augment his spiritual progress by inviting upon himself the grace and help of the Man-God. In fact, even opposition to the work of the Man-God often turns out to be a begin-

**Contact with Man-God
beneficial to all**

ning of development that imperceptibly leads a person Godward, because while opposing the work of the Man-God, the soul is establishing a link and a contact with him. Thus everyone who voluntarily or involuntarily comes into the orbit of his activities becomes, in some way, the recipient of a spiritual push.

The work of the Perfect Masters in the universe is fundamentally different from the kind of thing most priests or clergy of established religions aspire to. Most of them attach too much importance to external forms, rituals, and conformity.

**Perfect Masters
inimitable and
unlimited**

Since they themselves are not free from selfishness, narrowness, or ignorance, they exploit the weak and the credulous by holding before them the fear of hell or the hope of heaven. The Perfect Masters, on the other hand, have entered forever into the eternal life of love, purity, universality, and understanding. They are therefore concerned only with the things that really matter and that eventually bring about the inner unfoldment of spirit in all whom they help.

Those who are themselves in ignorance may, out of self-delusion or deliberate selfishness, use the same language as that of the Masters; and they may try to imitate them in many of the external things associated with the life of the Masters. But they cannot, by the very nature of their spiritual limitations, really imitate the Man-God in possessing perfect understanding, experiencing infinite bliss, or wielding unlimited power. These attributes belong to the Man-God by virtue of his having attained unity with God.

Those who are in ignorance lack the fundamental traits of the Masters. And if out of self-delusion or hypocrisy they try to pose as a Man-God, their self-delusion or pretense is invariably exposed at some time. If a person becomes committed to a

**Self-delusion and
hypocrisy**

way of life out of self-delusion, it is an unfortunate situation. He believes himself to be what he is not and thinks that he knows when he actually does not know. But if he is sincere in all that he thinks or does, he is not to be blamed, though to a limited extent he can become a source of danger to others. The hypocrite, however, knows that he does not know and pretends to be what he is not for selfish reasons. In doing so he creates a serious karmic binding for himself. Though he is a source of considerable danger to the weak and the

credulous, he cannot go on indefinitely with his willful deceit; for in the course of time he is automatically exposed by some claim he is unable to substantiate.

In the performance of his universal work, the Man-God has infinite adaptability. He is not attached to any one method of helping others; he does not follow rules or precedents but is a law unto himself.

**Man-God may play
role of aspirant**

He can rise to any occasion and play the role that is necessary under the circumstances without being bound by it. Once a devotee asked his Master the reason why he fasted.

The Master replied, "I am not fasting to attain Perfection; for having already attained Perfection, I am not an aspirant. It is for the sake of others that I fast." A spiritual aspirant cannot act like one who has attained Perfection, since the Perfect One is inimitable; but the Perfect One can, for the guidance or benefit of others, act like an aspirant.

One who has passed the highest examinations of a university can write the alphabet without difficulty to teach children, but children cannot do what he can do. To show the way to divinity, the Man-God may often play the role of a *bhakta* (devotee) of God, although he has already attained complete unity with God. He plays this role, though God-realized, in order that others may know the way. He is not bound to any particular role, and he can adjust his technique of helping others to the needs of those who seek his guidance. Whatever he does is for the ultimate good of others. For him there is nothing worth attaining because he has become Everything.

Not only is the Man-God not necessarily bound to any particular technique in giving spiritual help to others, but also he is not bound to the conventional standard of good. He is beyond the distinction of good and evil; although what he does may appear

**Man-God uses Maya
to annihilate Maya**

lawless in the eyes of the world, it is always meant for the ultimate good of others.

He uses different methods for different persons. He has no self-interest or personal motive and is always inspired by compassion that seeks the true well-being of others. Therefore, in all that he does, he remains unbound.

He uses Maya to draw his disciples out of Maya and employs infinite ways and workings for his spiritual task. His methods are different with different persons, and they are not the same with the same person at all times. Occasionally he may even do something that

shocks others because it runs counter to their usual expectations. However, this is always intended to serve some spiritual purpose. The intervention of a short shocking dream is often useful in awakening a person from a long beautiful dream. Like the shocking dream, the shocks the Man-God in his discretion deliberately administers are eventually wholesome, although they may be unpleasant at the time.

The Sadguru may even seem to be unduly harsh with certain individuals, but onlookers have no idea of the internal situation and cannot therefore understand properly the justification of his apparent cruelty. In fact his sternness is often demanded by the spiritual requirements of the situation and is necessary in the best interests of those to whom he seems to be harsh.

Saving a drowning person

A good and illustrative analogy for such apparently cruel action is when an expert swimmer tries to save a drowning person.

It is well known that if someone is drowning, he has a tendency to cling to anything that comes to hand. In his desperation he is so blind to the consequences that his thoughtless grip on the one who has come to save him not only makes it impossible for him to be saved but is often instrumental in drowning the very person who tries to save him. In fact, an expert in this art of lifesaving must often hit the drowning person on the head and render him unconscious. Through his apparent cruelty he minimizes the danger the individual is likely to create, and so ensures success for his efforts. In the same way, the apparent sternness of the Man-God is intended to secure the ultimate spiritual well-being of others.

The soul in bondage is caught up in the universe, and the universe is nothing but imagination. Since there is no end to imagination, a person is likely to wander indefinitely in the mazes of false consciousness. The Man-God can help him cut short

False consciousness

the different stages of false consciousness by revealing the Truth. When the mind does not perceive the Truth, it is likely to imagine all kinds of things—for example, the mind can imagine that it is a beggar or a king, a man or a woman, and so forth. The soul, through the mind, thus goes on gathering experiences of the opposites.

Wherever there is duality, there is a tendency to restore balance through the opposite. If a person has the experience of being a murderer, for instance, it has to be counterbalanced by the experience of

being murdered. Or if one has the experience of being a king, this has to be counterbalanced by the experience of being a beggar. Thus the individual may wander ad infinitum from one opposite to the other without being able to put an end to false consciousness. The Man-God can help him arrive at Truth by giving him perception of the Truth and cutting short the working of his imagination, which would otherwise be endless. The Man-God helps the soul in bondage by sowing in it the seed of God-realization, but Realization always takes some time to attain. Every process of growth in the universe takes time.

The help of the Man-God is, however, far more effective than the help some advanced aspirant may give. When an aspirant helps, he can take a person only up to the point he himself has reached. Even this limited help that he can give becomes

Help of Man-God effective very gradually; with the result that the person who ascends through such help has to stay in the first plane for a long time, then in the second, and so on. When the Man-God chooses to help, he may, through his grace, take the aspirant even to the seventh plane in one second—though in that one second the person has to traverse all the intermediate planes of involution of consciousness.

In taking an aspirant to the seventh plane, the Man-God is making him equal to himself; and the one who thus attains the highest spiritual status may also become a Perfect Master. This transmission of spiritual knowledge from the Man-God to his disciple is comparable to the lighting of one lamp from another. The lamp that has been lighted is as capable of giving light to others as the original lamp itself. There is no difference between them in importance or utility.

The Man-God is comparable to a banyan tree. The banyan tree grows huge and mighty, giving shade and shelter to travelers and protecting them from sun, rain, and storm. In the fullness of its growth, its descending rooting branches

Analogy of banyan tree strike deep into the fallow ground below to create, in due time, another full-grown banyan tree. It too becomes equally huge and mighty—giving shade and shelter to travelers and protecting them from sun, rain, and storm—and has the same potential power to create similar full-grown banyan trees. The same is true of the Man-God, who arouses the

Godhood latent in others. Thus the continued succession of the Perfect Masters on earth is a perpetual blessing to mankind, helping it onward in its struggle through darkness.

The God-Man (Avatar), however, may be said to be both the Lord and servant of the universe at one and the same time. As the One who showers His spiritual bounty on all in measureless abundance, He is

**God-Man, the Lord
and servant**

the Lord of the universe. As the One who continuously bears the burden of all and helps them through numberless spiritual difficulties, He is the servant of the universe. Just as He is Lord and servant in one, the God-Man is also the supreme Lover and the matchless Beloved. The love He gives or receives goes to free the soul from ignorance. In giving love He gives it to Himself in other forms; in receiving love He receives what has been awakened through His own grace, which is continuously showered on all without distinction. The grace of the God-Man is like the rain, which falls equally on all lands irrespective of whether they are barren or fertile; but it fructifies only in the lands that have been rendered fertile through arduous and patient toiling.

The Circle

After several lifetimes of search, purification, service, and self-sacrifice, some persons have the good fortune to meet and get connected with a God-realized Master. Through their several lifetimes of close connection with the one who has now become a Perfect Master, and through their love and service for this Master, they enter into his Circle. Those who have entered into the Circle of a Master are the souls who, through their efforts, have acquired the eligibility for God-realization. When the exact moment for Realization arrives, they attain it through the grace of the Master.

All actions in the world of duality are prompted by *sanskaras* of duality. Consciousness of duality implies the working of the impressions of duality. These impressions of duality first serve the purpose of evolving and limiting consciousness, and then they serve the purpose of liberating it so as to facilitate Self-knowledge, or God-realization. The soul cannot attain consciousness of its own unity unless it goes through the experiences of duality, which presuppose and require corresponding impressions of duality. From the very beginning till the very end, the soul is subject to the momentum of impressions, which constitute the destiny of the soul. These impressions are called *prarabdha sanskaras*. These *prarabdha sanskaras* always relate to the opposites of experience, for example, the *sanskaras* of greed and its opposite, the *sanskaras* of lust and its opposite, the *sanskaras* of anger and its opposite, the *sanskaras* of bad thoughts, words, and deeds and their opposites.

From the stage of the atom till the realization of God, the soul is bound by the impressions of duality; and all that happens to it is determined by these impressions. When the soul realizes God, all its sanskaras disappear. If it remains immersed in the experience of divinity without coming back to normal consciousness of the world of duality, it remains eternally beyond all types of sanskaras. It does not have any sanskaras and cannot have any.

Disappearance of sanskaras

If the God-realized soul returns to normal consciousness of the world of duality, it assumes universal mind. This universal mind has superfluous and nonbinding sanskaras, which are known as *yogayoga sanskaras*. In the Beyond state, the Perfect Master is eternally free from all sanskaras. Even when he is conscious of creation and is working in creation, he remains unbound by these *yogayoga sanskaras*, which sit loosely upon his universal mind. The *yogayoga sanskaras* merely serve as channels for his universal work. They do not form a restricting chain to his consciousness.

Yogayoga sanskaras of universal mind

The *yogayoga sanskaras* are automatic in their working. All the specific contacts and links to which the Man-God responds in his work are ultimately based upon these *yogayoga sanskaras*. They do not create a veil on the universal mind; they do not constitute a cloud of ignorance. They only serve as a necessary framework for the release of definitive action. Through these *yogayoga sanskaras* the universal will of God is particularized in its expressions. Any action released in the world of space and time must be in relation to a certain definite situation or set of circumstances. There must always be some reason why a response is given to one situation rather than another and why it is given in one way rather than another. The basis for the self-limitation of the actions of a soul in spiritual bondage is in its *prarabdha sanskaras*, which are binding. The basis for the self-limitation of the actions of a soul that is spiritually free is in its *yogayoga sanskaras*, which are not binding.

Function of yogayoga sanskaras

If the Man-God were not to get these *yogayoga sanskaras* while coming down to normal consciousness, he would not be able to do any work of a definite nature. *Yogayoga sanskaras* help the Man-God to particularize and materialize the divine will through him, and to fulfill

his mission. The Master is and knows himself to be infinite in existence, consciousness, knowledge, bliss, love, and power; and he always remains infinite in the Beyond state. But the work he does in the world of creation is subject to the laws of creation and is therefore in one sense finite.

**Work of Man-God
subject to laws
of creation**

Since his work is in relation to the unveiling of the hidden Infinity and Divinity in everyone, and since the realization of this Infinity and Divinity is the only purpose of the entire creation, his work is *infinitely* important. However, when it is measured by the standard of results, it can only be-like any work possible in the world-so much and no more.

Even when the work of the Man-God is measured by the magnitude of its results, the results achieved by the worldly-minded are mostly trivial in comparison. The greatest of souls who are still in spiritual bondage cannot approach the achievements of the Man-God. The Master

**Master's work
determined by
yogayoga sanskaras**

has behind his work the infinite power of God, while the worldly person is working with the limited power available to him through his ego-mind. A Man-God may sometimes end his incarnation after achieving some limited task. This is not because he is limited in his power but because the work, which is determined by his yogayoga sanskaras, is so much and no more. He is in no way attached to work as such. Having finished the work given to him by his yogayoga sanskaras, he is ready to be reabsorbed in the impersonal aspect of the Infinite. He does not tarry in the world of unreality and duality a minute longer than is necessitated by his yogayoga sanskaras.

In the Beyond state, time, space, and the whole world of phenomena are nonexistent. Only in the phenomenal world of duality is there space, time, or operation of the law of cause and effect. When the

Beyond state

Perfect Master works in the sphere of duality for the upliftment of humanity, his work becomes subject to the laws of time, space, and causality. From the point of view of external work, at times he appears to be limited; though in reality he is at all times experiencing the oneness and infinity of the Beyond state. Though he himself is beyond time, when he works for those who are in duality, time counts.

The Master's universal work for humanity, in general, goes on

without break through the higher planes. When he works for the members of his Circle, his action follows a timing he himself fixes with utmost care; for it has to be a precise and

Special work for Circle

definite intervention in the mechanical working out of their sanskaras. He works for the Circle at fixed times. Therefore those who, in following the instructions received from the Master, abide by the timing given by him have the benefit of his special work. From the standpoint of the special tasks the Master sets for himself, time becomes an extremely important factor. The special work that the Master undertakes in relation to the members of his Circle not only touches and affects these members themselves but also those who are closely connected with the members of his Circle.

Like the Perfect Masters, the Avatar also has His Circle (of ten concentric Circles). When the Avatar takes an incarnation, He has before Him a clear-cut mission that proceeds according to a plan; and

Avatar and His Circles

this plan is always carefully adjusted to the flow of time. The process of the incarnation of the Avatar is unique. Before taking on a physical body and descending into the world of duality, He gives to Himself and members of His Circles special types of sanskaras, which are known as *vidnyani sanskaras*. The Circles of the Avatar always consist of a total of 122 members, and all of them have to take an incarnation when the Avatar takes an incarnation. The taking on of vidnyani sanskaras before incarnating in the physical body is like the drawing of a veil upon Himself and His Circles. After taking an incarnation, the Avatar remains under this veil of vidnyani sanskaras until the time that has been fixed by Himself. When the appointed time comes, He experiences His own original divinity and begins to work through the vidnyani sanskaras, which now have been transmuted into the yogayoga sanskaras of the universal mind.

For all intents and purposes, vidnyani sanskaras are like the ordinary sanskaras of duality, though they are essentially different in nature. Vidnyani sanskaras prompt activities and invite experiences

Nature of vidnyani sanskaras

that are similar to activities and experiences caused by ordinary sanskaras. But while the activities and experiences caused by ordinary sanskaras have a general tendency to strengthen the grip of illusory duality, the activities and

experiences caused by vidnyani sanskaras systematically work toward the loosening of the grip of duality. The logic of the working out of vidnyani sanskaras necessarily invites the realization of the oneness of existence. They are therefore known as a threshold of Unity. The members of the Circles remain under the veil of vidnyani sanskaras until they attain realization of God at the time fixed by the Avatar. After they attain Realization through the Avatar, the vidnyani sanskaras they brought with them do not constitute a veil but for some, become yogayoga sanskaras-serving only as an instrument for the fulfillment of the divine plan on earth.

There are important differences between vidnyani and yogayoga sanskaras. Though vidnyani sanskaras ultimately work toward the realization of Unity, they cause the experience of being limited until Realization. Yogayoga sanskaras come after Realization and do not in any way interfere with the experience of Infinity, which is above duality-although they serve as instruments for enabling and determining responses and activities in the dual world. The working out of vidnyani sanskaras contributes toward one's own Realization, while the working out of yogayoga sanskaras contributes toward the process of Realization in others who are still in bondage.

The Circles of the Avatar, as well as the Perfect Masters, constitute the most important particular feature in relation to which and through which the Avatar and the Masters adjust their spiritual duty toward humanity. This particular feature has come into existence as a result of the close links and connections of several lifetimes. The Avatar and all Perfect Masters always have such Circles of very close disciples; but the Circles do not in any way create a limitation on their inner consciousness. In their God state, the Avatar and the Masters find themselves in the center of the universe as well as in the center of Everything; and there are no Circles to circumscribe their Being. In the infinity of nonduality, there are no preferences; the Circles exist only in relation to the duty and the work that the Avatar and the Perfect Masters have undertaken in the phenomenal world. But from the point of view of this spiritual work in the phenomenal world, the Circles are as much a reality as the Himalayas.

Differences between vidnyani and yogayoga sanskaras

Avatar and Masters not circumscribed by Circles

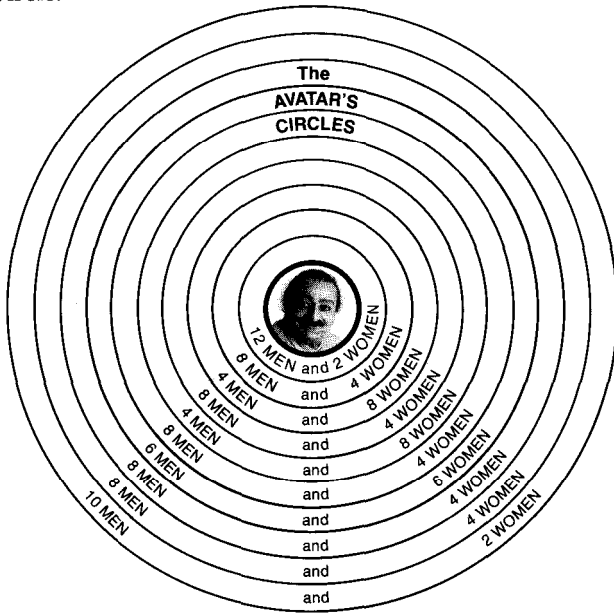
The Circles of the Avatar

Absolute Oneness prevails in Reality. Space and time are but illusory. They are merely the effect of the reflection of God's infinitude. When man realizes Reality, the reflection that has estranged him from Reality vanishes; and he experiences the absoluteness of the absolute Oneness of God. And when such a One continues to live his life in Illusion, he leads the life of a Man-God, or Perfect Master, on earth. With his abiding experience of the absolute Reality, he serves as the pivot around which rotates the entire cosmic universe. Every point in the cosmos is equidistant from the Perfect Master, who abides in Illusion as the nucleus of the cosmos.

Although the Perfect Master remains in Illusion as the center of the cosmic periphery and radiates his influence uniformly over the entire universe, in his lifetime he gathers around him twelve men who directly have their center of interest in his individuality. These men, through their constant and close association with him in the past—right from the earliest evolutionary stages of consciousness—reap the greatest benefit now when their past close associate has become a Perfect Master. Such a group of twelve men is called the Circle of a Perfect Master. However, besides this group of twelve men, there is an appendage of two women to complete the Circle of a Perfect Master in all its aspects. These two women also owe their position in regard to the Circle to their past connection with the Perfect Master.

One or more of these fourteen close ones associated with the Perfect Master realize the God state during or after the lifetime of the

Perfect Master, and in some instances, after one or a few more reincarnations. However, the Perfect Master fulfills his obligations by establishing his Circle during his lifetime; and the greatest good he bestows is God-realization, with all its perfection, to at least one from his Circle.



In the case of the Avatar it is different. He has ten Circles in all, as shown in the accompanying diagram. The first or inner Circle of the Avatar consists of twelve men with an appendage of two women; and each of the following nine outer Circles consists of twelve persons, both men and women. In all there are 120 persons in the ten Circles of the Avatar, plus the two women of the inner Circle who are but appendages to that particular Circle-122 in all. One or more of the 108 members of the nine outer Circles realize the God state during or after the life span of the Avatar, and some in the next incarnation or after a few more reincarnations.

As in the case of the Perfect Master's Circle, the inner Circle of the Avatar consists of only twelve men, with an appendage of two women. The difference between the Circle of the Perfect Master and the inner Circle of the Avatar is that the Perfect Master *establishes* his Circle from among those who were closely connected with him right from the earliest evolutionary stages of their consciousness. But the Avatar in

His recurrent advents does not pass through the process of evolution, reincarnation, and involution; therefore He does not have the same links of association to establish anew His inner Circle with every advent. In short, whereas the Perfect Master establishes his Circle, the Avatar is directly *allied* with His inner Circle, which is always the same in all His advents. With His descent on earth, the Avatar, as it were, brings along with Him the association of His inner Circle.

The connection of the inner Circle in relation to the Avatar may be compared to that of a person who associates himself with fourteen parts of his own body: two eyes, two ears, two nostrils, the mouth, two hands, two legs, the genitals, the anus, and the trunk of the body itself. As soon as an individual is born, he directly makes use of the these fourteen parts of his body; and these parts in turn respond to his dictates individually or collectively. Similarly, with the advent of the Avatar on earth, His inner Circle of the same twelve individualities and the appendage of the same two individualities directly begin to function, individually and collectively, according to the dictates of the Avatar Himself.

With every advent of the Avatar on earth, the twelve men of the inner Circle and its appendage of two women gather around the personality of the Avatar, as the selfsame fourteen types of individualities. These fourteen different individualities, in the shape of different *personalities*, always occupy their respective offices whenever the Avatar manifests on earth. And during and after the life span of the Avatar, they-individually and collectively-function in the same way as their predecessors, who had held and functioned in the same offices of the inner Circle during the past advents of the Avatar.

Therefore it would not be wrong to say that with the Christ's coming again, come Peter, Judas, and all His apostles. But this can never mean that the very *same* Peter or the selfsame Judas reincarnates again and again. These can never reincarnate, as all of the individual personalities of the Avatar's inner Circle attain God-realization in every Avataric period, either during or soon after the life span of the Avatar. Once God-realization is attained, reincarnation is impossible. The only exception to this rule is the Avatar Himself, who comes again and again to redeem humanity.

It is not the same individualized personalities of the inner Circle that reincarnate; it is the individualities of their particular *offices* that come with every advent of the Avatar. It is because in all the Avatar's

advents each of the twelve men and two women of the inner Circle hold exactly the same office and function in exactly the same manner that it is said the Avatar always brings with Him the same Circle. As soon as the veil with which the Avatar descends on earth is rent-by the then-living Perfect Master or Masters-and the Avatar realizes His Avatarhood, the twelve men and two women automatically group around the personality of the Avatar to occupy their respective positions in the inner Circle and to function as usual, according to the dictates of the Avatar of the Age.

The position of the Avatar in regard to the inner Circle and its function may be compared to a person asleep. As soon as he is made to wake up through some external agency, the individual spontaneously finds that all the fourteen parts of his body (as mentioned before) are already there in their individual roles, ready to function at his slightest wish. Similarly, as soon as the Avatar is made to realize His Avatarhood through one or two or more of the five Perfect Masters of the time, He also realizes that the fourteen personalities in their characteristic roles of the inner Circle are ready at hand to discharge their duties.

To explain in detail why only these fourteen particular personalities hold such positions in every advent of the Avatar would take a volume of explanation. Who can become the fourteen members and how do they become attached to the inner Circle of the Avatar?-these questions would require yet more volumes of explanation. Suffice it to say that each of these fourteen particular personalities, when occupying the office and function of the inner Circle, not only must resemble the characteristic individuality of his or her predecessor in the previous advents of the Avatar but must be exactly similar in all respects. For example, one of the offices of the inner Circle of Jesus Christ was held by Peter. At the "second advent" of the Christ, this particular office must be held by another Peter, who may be named "A" but who has the same qualities of mind and heart and other characteristics as *the* Peter. The same applies to the offices held by Judas, John, James, and so forth, of the inner Circle in the time of Jesus Christ.

All fourteen members of the Avatar's inner Circle realize God by the grace of the Avatar, during the same Avataric period, which is of one hundred years duration after the manifestation of the Avatar on earth.

Regarding the outer Circles of the Avatar, none of the 108 persons

in the nine Circles hold any office similar to that held by those of the inner Circle. All of these 108 persons attain God-realization by the grace of the Avatar, but not necessarily during the Avataric period. These 108 persons of the outer Circles have their respective places in the nine Circles in accordance with their past connections with the members of the Circle ahead of them. For example, the members of the second Circle of twelve persons, next to the inner Circle, are grouped around the Avatar in accordance with their past connections with the members of the inner Circle. Similarly, the twelve persons of the third Circle, next to the second Circle, are grouped around the Avatar in accordance with their past connections with the members of the second Circle-and so on, with all the remaining seven Circles.

deprivation and through noble acts of bravery and self-sacrifice. The present war is teaching man to be brave, to be able to suffer, to understand, and to sacrifice.

The disease of selfishness in mankind will need a cure that is not only universal in its application but drastic in nature. Selfishness is so deep-rooted that it can be eradicated only if it is attacked from all sides.

**Cure for
selfishness needed**

Real peace and happiness will dawn spontaneously when there is a purging of selfishness. The peace and happiness that come from self-giving love are permanent. Even the worst sinners can become great saints if they have the courage and sincerity to invite a drastic and complete change of heart.

The present chaos and destruction will engulf the whole world, but in the future this will be followed by a very long period in which there shall be no war. The passing sufferings and miseries of our times

**Man will become sick
of wanting, greed, hate**

will be worth enduring for the sake of the long period of happiness that is to follow eventually. What will the present chaos lead to? How will it all end? It can only end in one way: Mankind will become sick of it all. Man will be sick of wanting and sick of fighting out of hatred. Greed and hatred will reach such intensity that everyone will become weary of them. The way out of the deadlock will be found through selflessness. The only alternative that can bring a solution will be to stop hating and to love, to stop wanting and to give, to stop dominating and to serve.

Great suffering awakens great understanding. Supreme suffering fulfills its purpose and yields its true significance when it awakens an exhausted humanity and stirs within it a genuine longing for real

**Suffering generates
understanding**

understanding. Unprecedented suffering leads to unprecedented spiritual growth. It contributes to the construction of life on the unshakable foundation of the Truth. It is now high time that universal suffering should hasten humanity to the turning point in its spiritual history. It is now high time that the very agonies of our times should become a medium for bringing a real understanding to human relationships. It is now high time for humanity to face squarely the true causes of the catastrophe that has overtaken it. It is now high time to seek a new experience of Reality. To know that life is real and eternal is to inherit unfading bliss. It is time

that man had this realization by being unified with his own Self.

Through unification with the higher Self, man perceives the infinite Self in all selves. He becomes free by outgrowing and discarding the limitations of the ego-life. The individual soul has to realize with full consciousness its identity with the universal Soul. Man shall reorient life in the light of this ancient Truth and will readjust

Affirmation of Truth

his attitude toward his neighbors in everyday life. To perceive the spiritual value of *oneness* is to promote real unity and cooperation. Brotherhood then becomes a spontaneous outcome of true perception. The new life that is based upon spiritual understanding is an affirmation of the Truth. It is not something that belongs to utopia but is completely practical. Now that humanity is thrown into the fire of bloody conflicts, through immense anguish it is experiencing the utter instability and futility of a life based upon purely material conceptions. The hour is near when man in his eager longing for real happiness will seek its true source.

The time is also ripe when humanity will ardently seek to contact the embodiment of Truth in the form of the God-Man (Avatar), through whom it can be inspired and lifted into spiritual understanding. It will

**Inherit divine love
through the God-Man**

accept the guidance that comes from divine authority. Only the outpouring of divine love can bring about spiritual awakening. In this critical time of universal suffering, humanity is becoming ready to turn toward its higher Self and to fulfill the will of God. Divine love will perform the supreme miracle of bringing God into the hearts of man and of getting him established in lasting and true happiness. It will satisfy the greatest need and longing of mankind. Divine love will make people selfless and helpful in their mutual relationships, and it will bring about the ultimate solution of all problems. The new brotherhood on earth shall be a fulfilled fact, and nations will be united in the fraternity of Love and Truth.

My existence is for this Love and this Truth. To suffering humanity I say:

Have hope. I have come to help you in surrendering yourselves to the cause of God and in accepting His grace of Love and Truth. I have come to help you in winning the one victory of all victories—to win your Self.

Reincarnation and Karma

Part I

The Significance of Death

The worldly person completely identifies life with the manifestations and activities of the gross body. For him, therefore, the beginning and the end of bodily existence are also the beginning and the end of the individualized soul. All his experience seems to testify to the transitoriness of the physical body; and he has often witnessed the disintegration of physical bodies that were once vibrant with life. Hence he is naturally impelled to believe that life is coterminous with bodily existence.

**Identification of soul
with gross body**

As the worldly individual considers death to be the cessation of life, he gives great importance to it. There are few, however, who contemplate death for prolonged periods. And in spite of the fact that most persons are completely engrossed in their worldly pursuits, they are impressed by the incident of death when confronted by it. For most people the earthly scene of life has, as its background, the inevitable and irresistible fact of death—which imperceptively enters into their greatest triumphs and achievements, their keenest pleasures and rejoicing.

**Death as background
of life**

Apart from being the general background to the scene of life, death

also assumes an accentuated and overwhelming importance among the variegated incidents of life. Death falls among those happenings that are most dreaded and lamented. People, in malice or anger, try to inflict death upon each other as the last penalty or the worst revenge, or they rely upon it as the surest way of removing aggression or interference by others. People also invite death upon themselves as the token of supreme self-sacrifice; and at times they seek it with the false hope of putting an end to all the worldly worries and problems they are unable to face or solve. Thus, in the minds of most persons, death assumes an accentuated and overwhelming importance.

The overwhelming importance of death is derived from man's attachment to particular forms. But death loses much of its sting and importance, even for the worldly, if one takes a broader view of the course of life. In spite of their transitoriness, there is an unbroken continuity of life through these forms—old ones being discarded and new ones being created for habitation and expression. The recurring incidence of death is matched by the recurring incidence of birth. Old generations are replaced by new ones; life is reborn in new forms, incessantly renewing and refreshing itself. The streams of life, with their ancient origin, are ever advancing onward through the forms that come and go like the waves of the ocean.

So, even within the limits of experience of the worldly, there is much that should mitigate morbid thoughts of death as being an irreparable loss. A sane attitude toward death is possible only if life is considered impersonally and without any

Attachment to specific forms

attachment to particular forms. This the worldly person finds difficult because of his entanglement with specific forms. For him, one form is not as good as another. The form he identifies himself with is by far the most important. The general preservation and advancement of the stream of life has for him no special interest. What the worldly individual craves is a continuation of his own form and other particular forms with which he is entangled. His heart cannot reconcile itself to his intellect. With the vanishing of the forms that have been dear to him, he becomes a victim of unending sorrow—though life as a whole may have replaced elsewhere the lost forms with new ones.

The sorrow of death, on closer analysis, turns out to be rooted in selfishness. The person who loses his beloved may know intellectually

that life as a whole has elsewhere compensated for the loss; but his only feeling is, What is that to me? When one looks at it from one's own personal point of view, death becomes a cause of unending sorrow. From the point of view of life in general, it is an episode of minor importance.

Impersonal considerations go a long way to fortify the mind against the personal sorrow caused by death. But they do not by themselves solve the wider problems that confound even the imper-

Problems of impersonal intellect

sonal intellect of man when he considers some of the implications of death within the limits of his ordinary experience. If death is regarded as the final annihilation of individual existence, there seems to be an irreparable loss to the universe. Each individual may be in a position to give to the universe something so unique that no one else can exactly replace it. Further, in most cases there is the cutting short of an earthly career long before the attainment of spiritual Perfection by the individual. All his struggles toward the ideal, all his endeavor and enthusiasm for the great, the good, and the beautiful, and all his aspirations for things divine and eternal seem to end in the vast nothingness created by death.

The implications in assuming death to be the termination of individual existence run counter to the ineradicable expectations based upon rationalized intuition. A conflict usually arises between

Conflict between intellect and intuition

the claims of intuition and the conclusions of impure intellect, which assumes death to be the termination of individual existence. Such conflict is often a beginning of pure thinking, which immediately seriously challenges the usually accepted belief that death is the real termination of individual existence. Death as an extinction of life can never be wholly acceptable to the spiritual aspirations of man. Therefore, belief in the immortality of the individualized soul is often accepted by the human mind without much resistance, even in the absence of direct supersensible knowledge about the existence of life after death.

Those who know from personal experience the immortality of the soul to be true are few. Supersensible knowledge of the existence of life after death is inaccessible to the vast majority of persons. For them, immortality must remain an agreeable and acceptable *belief* but nothing more. It becomes a part of personal *knowledge* for those who,

through their interest in the occult, have built up means of communication with “other worlds”; or those whose special circumstances have resulted in their personally experiencing the appearance or intervention of departed spirits; or those who, through their spiritual advancement, have automatically unfolded certain latent perceptual capacities of the inner vehicles of consciousness.

Immortality of the individualized soul is made possible by the fact that the individualized soul is *not* the same as the physical body. The individualized soul continues to exist with all its sanskaras in the inner worlds through its mental and subtle bodies, even after it has discarded its gross body at the time of death. Hence, life through the medium of the gross body is only a section of the continuous life of the individualized soul; the other sections of its life have their expression in other spheres.

Nature is much greater than what a person can perceive through the ordinary senses of the physical body. The hidden aspects of nature consist of finer matter and forces. There is no unbridgeable gulf separating the finer aspects of nature from its gross aspect. They all interpenetrate one another and exist together. The finer aspects of nature are not perceptible to the ordinary individual, but they are nevertheless continuous with the gross aspect that is perceptible to him. They are not remote; and yet they are inaccessible to the consciousness that is functioning through the physical senses, which are not adapted for perceiving those finer aspects of nature. The ordinary person is unconscious of the inner planes, just as someone deaf is unconscious of sounds, and he cannot deal with them consciously. For all practical purposes, therefore, they are other “worlds” for him.

The finer and hidden part of nature has two important divisions, namely, the subtle and the mental, corresponding to the subtle and mental bodies of man. The whole of nature may therefore be conveniently divided into three parts—the gross world, the subtle world, and the mental world. When the individualized soul has incarnated in a physical body, it expresses its life in the gross world. When it drops the outer sheath, the physical body, it continues to have its expression of life either in the subtle world through the subtle body or in the mental world through the mental body.

Ordinarily, life in the physical body is terminated only when the

sanskaras released for expression in that incarnation are all worked out. In some exceptional cases the soul gives up its gross body before

Effects of untimely death the working out of these sanskaras is completed. For example, an individual who commits suicide cuts short the period of his life artificially and thereby prevents the

working out of those sanskaras that were released for fructification. When, due to untimely death, the sanskaras released for fructification are withheld from expression, the discarnate soul remains subject to the propelling force of these sanskaras even after the physical body has been discarded. The momentum of the sanskaras that were prevented from being worked out is retained even in life after death, with the result that the departed spirit greatly desires the things of the gross world.

In such cases, the discarnate soul experiences an irresistible impulsion toward the gross world and craves gross objects so badly that it seeks gratification of its desires through the gross bodies of those souls still incarnate. Thus, for exam-

Irresistible impulsion ple, the discarnate soul may want so much to drink alcohol that it takes to unnatural methods of gratifying the craving. It awaits its opportunity. When it finds someone who is a suitable medium drinking alcohol in the gross world, the spirit satisfies its own desire through that person by possessing his physical body. In the same way, if it wants to experience the gross manifestations of crude anger, it does so through someone in the gross world who is feeling angry.

Such souls are constantly waiting to harass incarnate persons with similar sanskaras, and they try to maintain their contact with the gross world through others as long as possible. In life after death, any lingering entanglement with the gross world is a serious hindrance to the natural flow of the soul's onward life. Those who are subject to this precarious condition must be looked upon as particularly unfortunate, since they invite upon themselves and others much unnecessary suffering by seeking unnatural gratification of coarser desires through others who are still incarnate. Compared with these unfortunate souls, the posthumous life of other souls is much smoother.

In normal cases, death occurs when all the sanskaras seeking fructification are worked out. When the soul drops its physical body, it

is completely severed from all connections with the gross world, though the ego and the mind are retained with all the impressions accumulated in the earthly career. Unlike the exceptional cases of spirits stillobsessed with the gross world, ordinary souls try to reconcile themselves to the severance from the gross world and conform to the limitations of changed conditions. They sink into a state of subjectivity in which a new process begins of mentally reviewing the experiences of the earthly career by reviving the sanskaras connected with them. Thus death inaugurates a period of comparative rest consisting in a temporary withdrawal from the gross sphere of action. It is the beginning of an interval between the last incarnation and the next.

Reincarnation and Karma

Part II Hell and Heaven

After death there is no consciousness of the gross world for the ordinary soul, since such consciousness is directly dependent on the physical body. Though the consciousness of the gross world is thus lost, the impressions of the experiences of the gross world are retained in the mental body; and they continue to express themselves through the semisubtle world. During the interval between death and the next incarnation, the consciousness of the soul is turned toward these impressions resulting in a vivification of impressions and the revival of corresponding experiences. However, this soul does not become aware of the subtle environment; it is wrapped up in complete subjectivity and absorbed in living through the revived impressions.

Subjectivity of life after death

In life after death the experiences of pain and pleasure become much more intense than they were in earthly life. These subjective states of intensified suffering and joy are called hell and heaven. Hell and heaven are states of mind; they should not be looked upon as being places. And though subjectively they mean a great deal to the individualized soul, they are both illusions within the greater Illusion.

Hell and heaven states

In the hell state as well as in the heaven state, desires become much more intense since they no longer require expression through the gross medium. Like desires, the experiences incurred in their fulfillment or nonfulfillment also become greatly intensified. In the earthly career desires, as well as the pleasures and the sufferings they bring, are experienced through the medium of the gross body. The soul is of course actually using its higher bodies at the same time, but in the earthly career its consciousness is bound up with the gross body. Therefore the processes of consciousness have to pass through an additional veil that lessens their force, liveliness, and intensity—just as rays of light are dimmed when they are required to pass through a thick glass. During habitation in the body, desires and experiences suffer a deterioration in intensity; but when that habitation is given up, they undergo a relative increase of intensity.

Desires and experiences intensified after death

In the heaven state the fulfillment of desires is not, as in the gross sphere, dependent upon having the object of desire. Fulfillment of desire comes merely through thinking of the object desired. For example, if a person wishes to hear exquisite music, he experiences this pleasure merely by thinking about it. The imaginative idea of exquisite music becomes, in this state, a substitute for the physical sound vibrations in the gross sphere. The pleasure he derives from the thought of exquisite music is much greater than the pleasure he derived in his earthly career from the actual hearing of physical sounds. In the heaven state there are no obstacles between desires and their fulfillment; the pleasure of self-fulfillment through thought or feeling is always at hand.

Fulfillment of desires through thought

In fact, even in the earthly sphere of existence some individuals develop this capacity of making their pleasure independent of possession of a gross object. Beethoven, for example, was completely deaf; and yet through the exercise of imagination alone, he was able to enjoy intensely his own compositions of music. In a sense, even on earth he might figuratively be said to have been in the heaven state.

Heaven on earth

In the same way, a person who meditates on the Beloved with love derives happiness merely through the thought of the Beloved, without requiring His physical presence. After death, in the heaven state, the

enjoyment of such imaginative fulfillment is infinitely greater since consciousness is then unburdened of the outermost veil of the gross body.

Some desires have a direct relation to the possession and assimilation of gross objects through the gross body. The coarser desires such as lust, gluttony, or the craving for alcohol or drugs are of this type.

**Coarser desires
contribute to hell state**

These desires are specifically earthly because they are possessive and they involve an element of clinging to the physical object.

In these desires there is not only a preponderance of sensations derived from contact with the object but also of those sensations that constitute the response of the body itself. These coarser desires contribute to the hell state.

In contrast with the finer desires, the coarser desires place an infinitely heavier premium on mere sensations, quite independently of any intellectual meaning or moral value. In the finer desires, such as

**Difference between
coarser and finer
desires**

the desire for music, there is of course an element of wanting sense contact with the physical sounds. But these sounds become important not so much in their own right as in their capacity to express beauty. In the

same way, a desire to hear discourses has a hold upon the mind, not so much because of the sensations of sound, but because of the intellectual meaning and emotional appeal they convey.

Thus in the finer desires, the actual sensations play a subordinate role to the derivative aspects based upon the sensations. In the coarser desires the chief element is provided by the actual sensations con-

**Bodily sensations of
coarser desires**

connected with the physical object and the sensations aroused by them through bodily response to their possession. The organic sensations of the physical body play the

greatest part in experiences connected with the coarser desires. Through them the individualized soul feels its own existence as the gross body much more effectively and vividly than through experiences connected with finer desires.

Almost the entire significance of experiences brought about by the fulfillment or nonfulfillment of coarser desires is constituted by the *bodily* sensations themselves. Therefore they can rarely yield the full experience of fulfillment achieved through finer desires merely by

the exercise of thought and imagination. It is characteristic of the coarser desires to insist on the possession and assimilation of the gross objects themselves. Any imaginative idea of the gross objects merely serves the purpose of accentuating the urge to reach out to them. Since the gross objects of the coarser desires are not available in the semisubtle world, these desires are mostly productive of an intensified experience of the suffering of nonfulfillment. Just as in the gross world the presence of coarser desires leads to the preponderance of suffering over pleasure, in the life after death the revived experiences connected with these coarser desires also lead to a preponderance of suffering over pleasure—thus bringing into existence the hell state. Similarly, in the life after death the revived experiences connected with the finer desires lead to a preponderance of pleasure over suffering, thus bringing into existence the heaven state.

Hell and heaven are both states of bondage, however, and subject to the limitations of the opposites of pleasure and pain. Both are states whose duration is determined by the nature, amount, and intensity of the accumulated impressions. Time in the semisubtle world is not the same as time in the gross world due to the increased subjectivity of the states of consciousness. Though

Time in semisubtle world

time in the semisubtle world is thus incommensurable with time in the gross world, it is strictly determined by the impressions accumulated in the gross world. However, the important fact is that the hell state and the heaven state are far from being lasting; and after they have served their purpose in the life of the individualized soul, they both come to an end.

The coarser sensual desires, like lust and their emotional products like hate and anger, all contribute to the life of delusion and suffering prevalent in the hell state. The finer desires—like idealistic aspirations, aesthetic and scientific interests, goodwill toward neighbors and others, and their emotional products like personal love or fellow-feeling—contribute to the life of enlightenment and pleasure prevalent in the heaven state.

These states for most souls consist in reliving the experiences of the earthly life by vivification of the impressions left by them. Their

Vivification of impressions

duration and nature are dependent upon the duration and nature of the experiences undergone by the soul while in the physical body.

Just as a phonograph record is set aside after the needle has traveled through each groove, the hell state and the heaven state terminate after consciousness has traversed the imprints left by earthly life. Just as the song produced by the

**Termination of hell
and heaven**

record is strictly determined by the original song recorded on it, the quality of intensified and magnified experiences the soul passes through after death is strictly determined by the kind of life that was led on earth in the physical body. From this point of view, heaven and hell are shadows cast by one's earthly life.

Heaven and hell would, however, serve no specially useful purpose in the life of the individual soul if they were to consist merely of mental revival of the earthly past. That would mean bare repetition of

**Retrospective survey
of earthly experiences**

what has already occurred. Consciousness in these after-death states is in a position to make a leisurely and effective survey of the animated record of earthly life. Through intensification of experiences, it can observe their nature with better facility and results. On earth, the consciousness of most persons is predominantly objective and forward-looking and under the pressure of unspent *sanskaras*. It is mostly concerned with the possible fulfillment of *sanskaras* through the present or the future. In life after death the consciousness of most persons is predominantly subjective and retrospective. With the absence of forward-goading *sanskaras*, it is, as in reminiscences, mostly preoccupied with reviewing and assessing the significance of the past.

The fret and fury of immediate responses to the changing situations of earthly life is replaced in life after death by a more leisurely mood, freed from the urgency of immediately needed actions. All the

Analogy of cinema

experiences of the earthly career are now available for reflection in a form more vivid than is possible through memory in earthly life. The shots of earthly life have all been taken on the cinematic film of the mind, and it is now time to study the original earthly life through the magnified projections of the filmed record on the screen of subjectivized consciousness.

Thus the hell state and the heaven state become instrumental in

the assimilation of experiences acquired in the earthly phase; and the individualized soul can start its next incarnation in a physical body

Assimilation of earthly experiences with all the advantages of digested experience. The lessons learned by the soul through such stocktaking and reflection are confirmed in the mental body by the power

of their magnified suffering or happiness. They become, for the next incarnation, an integral part of the intuitive makeup of active consciousness, without in any way involving detailed revival of the individual events of the previous incarnation. The truths absorbed by the mind in the life after death become in the next incarnation a part of inborn wisdom. Developed intuition is consolidated and compressed understanding, distilled through a multitude of diverse experiences gathered in previous lives.

Different souls start with different degrees of intuitive wisdom as their initial capital for the experiments and adventures of their earthly careers. This intuition may seem to have been the product of past experiences, thus adding to the equipment

Heaven and hell and release of wisdom of the psyche; but it is more truly an unfoldment of what was already latent in the individualized soul. From this deeper

point of view, the experiences of earthly life-as well as the reflective and consolidating processes they are subjected to in life after death-are merely instrumental in gradually releasing to the surface the intuitive wisdom already latent in the soul from the very beginning of creation. As is true of the earthly career and its experiences, the states of hell and heaven in the life after death are also integral parts of and incidents in that journey of the individualized soul, which is ultimately meant to reach the Source of all things.

Reincarnation and Karma

Part III

The Existence and the Memory of Past Lives

Those who have immediate access to the supersensible truths concerning the life of the soul and its reincarnation know, through their unclouded perception, that so-called birth is only an incarnation of the individualized soul in the gross sphere. The unbroken continuity of the life of the reincarnating soul is punctuated by birth and death, both of which are comparable to gateways in the stream of life as it advances from one type of existence to another. Both are equally necessary in the greater life of the soul, and the interval between death and birth is as necessary as the interval between birth and death.

Gateways of birth and death

As is true of those who consider death to be the termination of individual existence, those who consider the birth of body to be its beginning are also confronted with a conflict between their false assumptions and the claims of rationalized intuition. From the standpoint of individual justice, the uneven distribution of good and bad in relation to material happiness or prosperity seems seriously to impugn the rationality and justification of the entire scheme of the universe. To see the virtuous at times suffering deeply and the vicious

Demands of intuition

possessing the amenities of pleasure creates insurmountable difficulties for anyone who prefers to look upon life as being meant to fulfill an eternal and divine purpose.

Unless there is some deeper explanation forthcoming, the human mind is riddled with agonizing perplexities that tend to embitter a person's general outlook on life and foster a callous cynicism. This in

Tendency to accept deeper explanations many ways is even worse than the deepest personal sorrow that death may cause. But in spite of all appearances to the contrary, the human mind has in it an inborn tendency to try to restore to itself a deep and unshakable faith in the intrinsic sanity and value of life. Except where artificial resistances are created, it finds acceptable those explanations that are in conformity with this deeper law of the spirit.

Those who have direct access to the truth of reincarnation are even fewer than those who have direct access to the truth of the immortality of the individual soul. The memories of all past lives are

Effect of getting a new brain stored and preserved in the mental body of the individual soul, but they are not accessible to the consciousness of ordinary persons because a veil is drawn over them. When

the soul changes its physical body, it gets a new brain; and its normal waking consciousness functions in close association with the brain processes. Under ordinary circumstances, only the memories of the present life can appear in consciousness because the new brain acts as a hindrance to the release of the memories of those experiences that had been gathered through the medium of other brains in past lives.

In rare cases, in spite of the resistance offered by the brain, some memories of past lives leak into the present life in the form of dreams that are completely unexplainable in terms of the present life. An

Memory of past lives individual may see persons in his dreams whom he has never seen in his present life. It often happens that those who appeared in

the dreams were persons whom he had met in his past lives. But of course such dreams, when they are of the ordinary type, cannot be treated as a *memory* of past lives. They merely indicate that the imagination at work in the dreams was influenced by information taken from past lives. The real memory of past lives is clear, steady and sure like the memory of the present life. When it comes to an individ-

ual, he no longer has any doubt about his having existed in several previous lives along with many other individuals. Just as he cannot doubt his own past life in the present incarnation, he cannot doubt his life in past incarnations.

The number of persons who can remember their past lives is very small compared with the vast majority, who are so completely bound to the gross sphere of existence that they do not even suspect super-

**Release of memory
of past lives**

brain processes. When consciousness is emancipated from the limitations imposed by the brain, it can recover and reestablish the memories of past lives, which are all stored in the mental body. This involves a degree of detachment and understanding that only the spiritually advanced can have. The memory of past lives can come with full clarity and certainty, even to those who are still crossing the inner planes of consciousness but have not yet become spiritually perfect.

The memory of past lives does not come back to a person, except in abnormal and rare cases, unless he is sufficiently advanced from the spiritual point of view. This provision made by the laws of life secures

**Loss of memory of
past lives does not
affect progress**

is not at all necessary for the guidance of the onward course of spiritual evolution. Spiritual evolution consists in guiding life in the light of the highest values perceived through intuition, and not in allowing it to be determined by the past. In many cases, even the memory of the present life acts as an obstacle for certain adjustments demanded by the spiritual requirements of the changing situations of life. The problem of emancipation may in a sense be said to be a problem of securing freedom from the past-which, in the case of those who are bound to the wheel of birth and death, inexorably shapes the present life.

Life would be infinitely more complicated if one who is not spiritually advanced were burdened by the conscious memory of number-

less past lives. He would be dazed and unsettled by the diversity of settings in which persons would appear to him in the light of his memory. He is not called upon to face such confusion, however, because he is shielded from the resurrection of the memory of past lives. Things and persons come to him in a limited and definite context and setting, with the result that he finds it easy to determine his actions and responses in the light of what he knows from the present life.

This does not mean that his actions and responses are *entirely* determined by what he knows from his present life. All that has happened in past lives also has its own unconscious but effective share in determining his actions and responses. In spite of the actual influence of past lives, the fact remains that since he is shielded from the resurrection of conscious memory, his consciousness is not subject to the confusion that would result if the conscious memory of past lives were among the data he had to consider for the purpose of determining his actions and responses.

The resurrection of the memory of past lives can be faced without confusion or loss of balance only when the person has become desireless and has lost all feeling of “mine” and “thine.” Those whom he once looked upon as belonging to him might be seen in the present life belonging to someone else. And if he were to continue his attachments and supposed claims, he would create untold complications, misery, and confusion for himself and others. Possessiveness of all types has to be purged from the mind if the aspirant is to be spiritually prepared to withstand the disturbing influence of memories from past lives.

When an individual is spiritually prepared, he is completely desireless and full of impersonal love. All entanglements of the personal ego have disappeared from his mind. He can look upon his old friends and enemies with the same equanimity. He is so lifted out of his limitations that he is the same to relations and nonrelations from his past and present lives. He is free from the idea of any pressing claims and counterclaims on his part against others, or of others against himself, because he has realized the deeper truth of the unity of all life and the illusoriness of mundane happenings.

It is only when a person is thus spiritually prepared that he is unaffected by the revived memory of past lives. Only then is it worthwhile for him to have access to it. For he can then have that cool and unerring judgment and pure, incorruptible love that enable him to make right and wise use of the new knowledge gathered through the resurrected memory of past lives. This knowledge opens to him a great deal of information about his own incarnations and those of others connected with him in past lives. It not only enables him to advance further on the spiritual path by conscious karmic adjustments but also to help others on the path by directing them in the light of their past lives.

Wise use of

resurrected memory

The speed of spiritual evolution is faster after the natural recovery of the memory of past incarnations. Disentanglement from mundane things is facilitated by conscious knowledge of the history of the development of such entanglements. Spiritual evolution, which was mostly unconscious of the limiting past, now becomes conscious of it. The obstacles as well as the facilities created by the past are now within the reach of consciousness and therefore are capable of being intelligently and carefully handled. Inarticulate intuition is supplemented by rationalized data. Therefore action has less possibility of error and becomes more potent in producing desirable results.

Advantages of

recovered memory

The Masters of wisdom, having become spiritually perfect, have no special interest in past incarnations, which are among the many unimportant facts of mundane existence. If they make any use of their knowledge of the past lives of a person, it is only to help him on toward the eternal Truth. Their knowledge of the past places them in a special position to give an aspirant just the guidance he needs. The details of the aspirant's spiritual path are often determined by the incidents of the past, the manner in which he has sought the highest Truth in his past lives, and the obstacles or facilities he has created for himself through his past doings. All these things, which are hidden from the aspirant, are open to the unclouded perception of the Perfect Master, who uses his knowledge in order to accelerate the spiritual progress of the seeker of Truth. The Master leads the aspirant from the place in which he has landed himself

**Knowledge of
past lives**

through the experimentation and search of several lives. In spiritual matters, as in mundane matters, greater and unerring knowledge means economy of energy and time.

Reincarnation and Karma

Part IV

Specific Conditions of an Incarnation

The individualized soul has its beginning and source in the infinite, formless, sexless, and indivisible being of God, who is beyond all forms of duality or evolution. With the beginning of the individualized soul, there is the beginning of duality and evolution, though the specific form of duality consisting in the distinction and attraction based upon sex makes its appearance at a later stage of evolution. Duality exists as soon as there is subject and object—a center of consciousness, however dim, and its environment. Sex, on the other hand, is a specific kind of bodily attraction that presupposes differentiation of forms, a specific kind of entanglement of the psyche with the forms, and specific expressions of life and energy.

In the mineral kingdom there are no sexual distinctions. In the kingdom of plants and trees, the bodily differentiations of sex, with specialized biological functions, have come into existence. Plants and trees do not generate sexual consciousness,

Sex in subhuman forms since the development of consciousness in plants and trees is rudimentary and its expressions are not influenced by these bodily differentiations. Contact between the male and the female in plants and trees is (due to their

being fixed in the ground) not direct but only indirect, through the intermediate agency of winds, bees, and so forth. Therefore, from the standpoint of the evolution of *forms*, sexual differentiation may be said to have begun to emerge even at the level of plants and trees; but from the point of view of their own *consciousness*, they cannot be said to have any sexual distinctions because their consciousness of duality is not in any way colored by sex.

In the evolution of sexual duality, plants and trees stand midway between minerals, which have no sexual differentiation, and birds and animals, which have it in its complete form. Just before the soul incarnates in the first human form, it arrives at full consciousness and energy in its last animal form, which it then drops to take a human body. Reincarnation of the individualized soul through human forms is preceded by its successive incarnations in the subhuman forms.

In animals, sex not only expresses itself through the bodily differences and activities but is a deep-rooted factor that affects consciousness. Since humans inherit their bodies as well as consciousness from highly evolved animals, like apes, humans **Psyche modified by sex** also find themselves subject to sexual duality. In humans, sex is so completely developed that it is no longer a matter merely of the body. It substantially modifies the psyche, which seeks its expression through the body in accordance with whether the form is male or female.

After attaining the human form, as a rule there is no reversion to animal forms; cases of retrogression to subhuman forms are special and rare exceptions. Once the soul has attained human status, the normal course is to go through countless reincarnations in the human form itself. **Male and female incarnations** The human form may sometimes be male and sometimes female, according to the *sanskaras* and the spiritual requirements of the soul. The female form has the special prerogative that even the Sadgurus and the Avatar have to be born through the female form. The male form has the prerogative that the majority of the Sadgurus appear in male form. Although women can become saints and Masters, the Avatar always appears in male form.

The general advantages and handicaps of an incarnation are always determined by the specific *sanskaras* the individual soul has accumulated in the past. The needs involved in the further develop-

ment of the soul are related to the nature of its accumulated sanskaras.

Specific incarnation determined by sanskaras

Therefore these accumulated sanskaras really determine whether the soul takes its incarnation on the earth in the East or in the West, in a male form or in a female form, in one cycle of existence or in another. The

facilities afforded by a specific incarnation are dependent not only upon whether an incarnation is in the male form or female form but also upon whether it takes place in one cycle of existence or another cycle of existence, and whether it matches the tenor of earthly life in the Eastern Hemisphere or in the Western Hemisphere.

Generally speaking, today on the whole the East has developed more along spiritual lines than material lines, with the result that the Eastern mind has a more spontaneous aspiration for God. The West, on the whole, has developed more along material lines than along spiritual lines, with the result that the Western mind has a

East and West

more spontaneous urge toward intellectual and artistic things. An incarnation in the East usually brings with it a greater tendency toward spiritual life than in the West, and an incarnation in the West usually brings with it a greater tendency toward material life than one in the East. But the soul has to experience the material as well as the spiritual aspects of life before it is freed from the fetters of a divided life. Therefore the same soul has to incarnate in the East as well as in the West.

If a soul has had many successive incarnations in the East and then takes an incarnation in the West, it carries with it the impressions of its lives in the East; and though living in the West, it leads a life essentially in conformity with the Eastern pattern.

Change of sphere

If a soul has had many successive incarnations in the West and then takes an incarnation in the East, it carries with it the impressions of its lives in the West; and though living in the East, it leads a life that is in conformity with the Western pattern. Sometimes one may thus have, for example, a European soul in an Indian form or an Indian soul in European form. It must be borne in mind that this distinction is only relative to past incarnations and sanskaras, and that the soul as such is beyond such distinctions.

The facilities afforded by male and female incarnations are not

rigidly invariable. They change according to the cycles of existence as well as whether the incarnation is in the East or in the West. In some ages men are more active, energetic, and materialistic than women. In other ages, the reverse is true. In the past the women of the East were brave and intellectual. They considered no sacrifice too great for the happiness and well-being of their husbands, and their spiritual humility extended to looking upon the husband as God Himself. Now in the Eastern Hemisphere, the average man has a greater spiritual inclination than the average woman, just as in the West the average woman of today has a greater spiritual inclination than the average man. A man living in the East is different from a man living in the West, and a woman living in the East is different from a woman living in the West.

The joke is that in comparison with members of the opposite sex, the *same* soul shows varying degrees of superiority, inferiority, or equality with regard to spiritual or material matters—depending upon the cycle of existence, the sex of its body, and the earthly sphere in which it takes an incarnation.

Reincarnation and Karma

Part V

The Need for Male and Female Incarnations

Though the facilities afforded by each sex vary according to the age and place in which the incarnation occurs, each sex affords special facilities for the development of experience along specific lines. The lessons readily learned in male incarnations may not be easily attainable through female incarnations, and the lessons readily learned in female incarnations may not be easily attainable in male incarnations. As a rule, men excel in qualities of the head and will. They are capable of sound judgment and steadfast purpose. As a rule, women excel in qualities of the heart. They are capable of intense love, which makes them welcome any sacrifice for the loved one. It is because of this capacity of women for love that, in devotional references to the Avatar, the name of a woman is often given precedence-as when bhaktas (devotees) of Rama or Krishna sing of “SitaRam” or “Radha-Krishna.”

In qualities of the heart women are usually superior to men, and in qualities of the head and will men are usually superior to women. The interesting point is that the same soul excels in the qualities of the heart or in the qualities of the head and will, according to whether it takes an incarnation in a female or male form. The alternate develop-

ment of specific spiritual qualities goes on through the alternation between the male and female forms, until the development is all-sided.

Since male and female incarnations are equally necessary for Self-knowledge, it is not right to look upon one as being more important than the other. Though there are differences between the nature

Male and female incarnations equally indispensable

of the respective facilities afforded by them, they are both indispensable. The soul must go through male incarnations as well as female incarnations if it is to have that richness of experience which is a condition

of attaining the realization that the soul, in itself, is beyond all forms of duality-including the accentuated duality based on sex.

Before the soul is set free from all sanskaras, it assumes numerous male forms and numerous female forms. If the soul were to incarnate only in male forms or only in female forms, its experience would remain one-sided and incomplete.

Unity of subject and object

The duality of experience can be overcome only through understanding, and the understanding of experience is only partial as long

as it moves within the limits of only one of the two opposites. Unity of the subject and object of experience is unattainable as long as there is in the object any aspect or element not fully covered by one's own experience; and this applies particularly to sexual duality.

The mind retains the gathered experience of male and female incarnations. Since the soul identifies itself with the body, the psychological tendencies that harmonize with the sex of the body find a

Mind retains experience of incarnations

suitable medium for expression. The tendencies that are characteristic of the opposite sex are ordinarily suppressed into the unconscious part of the mind because they do not harmonize with the sex of the body

and find the medium of expression obstructive. When the soul takes a female body, the male tendencies are, so to speak, held in abeyance; and only the female tendencies are released for expression. In the same way, when the soul takes a male body, the female tendencies are held in abeyance; and the male tendencies are released for expression.

Identification with the body involves identification with the sex of the body. It therefore implies a free play only for that limited part of the mind which is in tune with the sex of the body. Since the other part of

the mind is repressed and latent in the unconscious, there arises in the conscious part a feeling of incompleteness as well as a tendency to restore completeness through attachment to persons of the opposite sex. By getting entangled with the opposite sex, the buried part of the mind that is not in tune with the body seeks some kind of expression through another. From this point of view sexual attraction might be said to be a result of the effort the mind makes to unite with its own unconscious part.

Genesis of sexual entanglement

Sex is a manifestation of the ignorant attempt the conscious mind makes to compensate for the fragmentation entailed in identification with the sex of the body. This attempt to compensate for fragmentation is doomed to be futile, however, because it is not only based upon identification with the body but actually accentuates it by setting into opposition the body of the opposite sex and getting entangled with it through attachment and possessiveness.

When the soul is trying to overcome sexual duality through detachment from the opposite sex, it is paving a way for understanding the experience associated with the opposite sex from *within*. Then

Understanding through detachment

a man tries to understand a woman, not through the eyes of the male, but through the imaginative reaching out toward what the woman feels herself to be, in her own personal experience. In the same way, a woman then tries to understand a man, not through the eyes of the female, but through the imaginative reaching out toward what a man feels himself to be, in his own personal experience. So, paradoxical though it may seem, the form of the opposite sex prevents the true understanding of experience associated with the opposite sex. Detachment from the form of the opposite sex facilitates true understanding of the experience associated with the opposite sex because it removes the barrier created by sex-obsessed imagination.

If one is transcending sexual duality and trying to understand the experience associated with the opposite sex, sometimes one actually

Freedom from sex-ridden imagination

exhibits the traits usually associated with the opposite sex. Thus, for example, some aspirants in the male body at one phase or another actually put on the clothes of women, talk like them, feel like them, and take on their habits. But this is

only a passing phase. When inner understanding of the relevant experiences is complete, they neither experience themselves as male alone nor as female alone but as being *beyond* the distinction of sex. The experiences connected with the male and female forms are both accessible and intelligible to the aspirants who have transcended sexual distinctions. They remain unaffected by the limitations of either, because through understanding they have freed themselves from the limiting obsessions characteristic of sex-ridden imagination.

The completeness that the mind seeks is not attainable through attachment to other forms and their accession. It is to be sought *within* by recapturing the lost unity of the mind. Reconciliation of the con-

**Reconciliation of
conscious and
unconscious mind**

scious and the unconscious mind is possible, not through sexual attraction or through other forms of possessiveness, but through nonidentification with the body and its sex.

Nonidentification with the body removes the barrier that prevents the amalgamation and integration of the total of experience deposited in the mind. Completeness within is to be sought by overcoming sexual duality and distinction, which accentuate identification with the body.

To be free from attachment to the opposite sex is to be free from domination of the sex of the body in which the soul has incarnated itself, thereby annihilating the majority of those *sanskaras* that compel the soul to identify itself with the body.

Divine love

The transcending of sexual duality does not in itself amount to the overcoming of all

duality, but it certainly goes a long way toward facilitating the complete transcendence of duality in all its forms. On the other hand, it is equally true that the problem of sexual duality is a part of the problem of duality as such. Its complete solution comes when the wider problem of all duality is solved through divine love, in which there is neither "I" nor "you," neither man nor woman. The purpose of male and female incarnations is the same as the purpose of evolution itself: it is to enable the soul to arrive at its own undivided and indivisible existence.

Reincarnation and Karma

Part VI

The Operation of Karma Through Successive Lives

In the successive incarnations of an individual soul, there is not only a thread of continuity and identity—manifested in personal memory and revived in the case of advanced souls—but there is also an uninterrupted reign of the law of cause and effect through the persistence and operation of karma. The successive incarnations with all their particulars are closely and unfailingly determined by rational law, so that it becomes possible for the individual soul to mold its future through wise and intelligent action. The actions of past lives determine the conditions and circumstances of the present life, and the actions of the present life have their share in determining the conditions and circumstances of future lives. Successive incarnations of the individual soul yield their full significance only in the light of the operation of the law of karma.

The intermittent incarnations in the gross world are only apparently disconnected. Karma persists as a connecting link and determining factor through the mental body, which remains a permanent and constant factor through all the lives of the soul. The law of karma and its manner of operation cannot be fully intelligible as long as the gross body and the gross world are considered to be the only facts of existence. Karmic determination is

**Incarnations governed
by law of karma**

**Karma persists
through mental body**

made possible by the existence of the subtle and mental bodies and worlds.

The plane on which one can possess physical consciousness is the gross world. The planes on which one can possess consciousness of desires are in the subtle world, and the planes on which the soul can

Mental and subtle bodies

have mental consciousness are in the mentalworld. The source of desire is to be found in the mind, which is on the mental planes.

Here the seed of desire is attached to the mind; the desire exists here in a latent form, in the same way as the tree is latent in the seed. The mental body, which is the seat of the mind, is often called *karan sharir*, or the causal body, because it stores within itself the seeds or the causes of all desires. The mind retains all impressions and dispositions in a latent form. The limited “I,” or ego, is composed of these sanskaras. However, the actual manifestation of sanskaras in consciousness, as expressed through different mental processes, takes place in the subtle body.

The soul, which in reality is one and undifferentiated, is apparently individualized through the limitations of the mental body, which is the seat of the ego-mind. The ego-mind is formed by the accumulated

Formation and continuation of ego-mind

impressions of past experiences and actions. And it is this ego-mind that constitutes the kernel of the existence of the reincarnating individual. The ego-mind, as a reservoir of latent impressions, is the state of the mental

body. The ego-mind, becoming spirit and experiencing activated and manifested impressions, is the state of the subtle body. The ego-mind, as descended in the gross sphere for creative action, is the state of a physical incarnation. Thus the ego-mind, which is seated in the mental body, is the entity that contains all the phases of continued existence as a separate individual.

The ego-mind, seated in the mental body, takes lower bodies according to the impressions stored in it. These impressions deter-

Stored impressions determine conditions of incarnation

mine whether individuals will die young or old; whether they will experience health or illness or both; whether they will be beautiful or ugly; whether they will suffer from physical handicaps, like blindness, or will

enjoy general efficiency of the body; whether they will have a

sharp or a dull intellect; whether they will be pure or impure of heart, fickle or steadfast in will; and whether they will be immersed in the pursuit of material gains or will seek the inner light of the spirit.

The ego-mind, in its turn, becomes modified through the deposited impressions of karma, which include not only gross and physical action but thought and feeling. And the circumstances of each incarnation are adjusted to the composition and

Game of duality

needs of the ego-mind. Thus, if a person has developed certain special capacities or tendencies in one incarnation, he takes them on to the succeeding incarnations. Similarly, things that have been left incomplete in one incarnation can be completed in the incarnations that follow. Through the persistence of impressions, the karmic links that have been forged in one incarnation are carried on and developed in succeeding incarnations. Those who have been closely associated with each other through good or bad dealings therefore tend to have recurring contacts. Thus the game of duality is carried on long enough to gather so much experience of the opposites that the soul, out of the fullness of its experience, eventually becomes ripe for dropping the ego-mind and turning inward to know itself as the Oversoul.

If there has been a give-and-take between certain persons that forges karmic and sanskaric ties between them and creates claims and counterclaims, they have to come together and carry on fresh dealings

Claims and counterclaims created by give-and-take

in order to meet these claims and counterclaims. That which a person gives with a selfish motive binds him in the same way as that which he takes with a sense of separateness. The transaction of give or take, which thus binds, need not be purely on a material plane in the form of exchange of goods or money, nor in the performing of some physical tasks. It could consist of the exchange of views or feelings.

If a person pays respect to a saint on the higher planes of consciousness, he creates a claim against him. The saint, who is still crossing the inner planes and treading the spiritual path, must then

Karma of interference

tarry and give such help as will bring the person paying respect to that point on the path which he himself has reached. Paying respect to an advanced soul thus amounts to karma of *interference*. Though respect, as such, is a good thing to

receive, in receiving it the advanced soul may have to halt on the spiritual path until he has helped the person who came to him and paid respect.

The quick and unfailing responsiveness of souls is expressed in the law that hate begets hate, lust begets lust, and love begets love. This law operates not only during a single lifetime but across several lives. An individual feels impelled to hate or fear an enemy from past lives, although the present life may not have provided him with any apparent reason for this attitude. In the same way, without any apparent reason from the present life, he is impelled to love and help a friend from past lives. In most cases the person may not be aware of the reason for his unaccountable attitude, but that does not mean there is no reason for it. Many things that seem inexplicable on the surface become intelligible when considered in the light of karmic links brought forward from past lives.

The law of karma is law exhibiting itself through continuously changing mutual adjustments, which must go on when there are individual souls who seek self-expression in a common world. It is an outcome of the responsiveness of ego-minds. The rhythm in which two souls start their relationship tends to perpetuate itself unless the souls, through fresh intelligent karma, change the rhythm and raise it to a higher quality.

As a rule, accumulated karma has a certain inertia of its own. It does not change the nature of its momentum unless there is a special reason for it. Before karma is created, the individual has a sort of

Freedom to choose and fate freedom to choose what it shall be. But after it has been delineated, it becomes a factor that cannot be ignored and that either has to be expended through the results it invites

or counteracted by fresh and appropriate karma. The pleasure and pain experienced in life on earth, the successes or failures that attend it, the attainments and obstacles with which it is strewn, the friends and foes who appear in it—all are determined by the karma of past lives. Karmic determination is popularly designated as fate. Fate, however, is not some foreign and oppressive principle. Fate is man's own creation pursuing him from past lives; and just as it has been shaped by past karma, it can also be modified, remolded, and even undone through karma in the present life.

Just as the nature of karma in earthly life is determined by impressions stored in the ego-mind, the impressions in turn are determined by the nature of karma in earthly life. The impressions in the ego-mind and the nature of karma are interdependent. Karma on earth plays an important part in shaping and reshaping the impressions in the ego-mind, and giving it a momentum that decides the further destiny of the individual. It is in the arena of earthly existence that creative and effective karma can be expressed, through the medium of the gross body. Proper understanding and use of the law of karma enables man to become master of his own destiny through intelligent and wise action. Each person has become what he is through his own accumulated actions. And it is through his own actions that he can mold himself according to the pattern of his heart or finally emancipate himself from the reign of karmic determination, which governs him through life and death.

Broadly speaking, karma is of two kinds: that which binds and that which helps toward Emancipation and Self-realization. Good as well as bad karma binds as long as it feeds the ego-mind through wrong understanding. But karma becomes a power for Emancipation when it springs from right understanding and wears out the ego-mind. Right understanding in this respect is best imparted by the Perfect Masters, who know the soul in its true nature and destiny, along with the complications created by karmic laws.

The karma that truly counts comes into existence after a person has developed a sense of distinction between good and bad. During the first seven years of childhood, the impressions that are released for expression are very faint. They also entail a consciousness of the world correspondingly less responsive to the distinctions of the world. Therefore the actions of children under seven years do not leave any strong or effective impressions on the ego-mind, and they do not play any important part in shaping their future. True and effective karma, which molds the ego-mind and its future, begins after the individual develops a sense of responsibility. This sense of responsibility is dependent upon a sense of distinction between good and bad, which usually dawns fully after one has passed the first few years of childhood.

The law of karma, in the world of values, can be compared to the law of cause and effect that operates in the physical world. If there were no law of cause and effect in the physical world, there would be chaos; and people would not know what to expect. In the same way, if there were no law of karma in the world of values, there would be an utter uncertainty of the results that people cherish; and they would not know whether to expect good or bad from their actions. In the world of physical events there is a law of conservation of energy, according to which no energy is ever lost. In the world of values there is a law that once karma comes into existence, it does not mysteriously flitter away without leading to its natural results but persists until it bears its own fruit or is undone through counteracting karma. Good actions lead to good results, and bad actions lead to bad results.

Comparison with law of cause and effect

Law of karma maintains moral order of universe

The moral order of the universe is sustained through the systematic connection between cause and effect in the world of values. If the law of karma were subject to any relaxation, reversals, or exceptions, and if it were not strictly applicable in the domain of values, there would be no moral order in the universe. Human existence would be precarious from the standpoint of the attainment of values. In a universe without moral order, human endeavor would be perpetually fraught with doubt and uncertainty. There cannot be any serious pursuit of values if there is no assured connection between means and ends, or if the law of karma can be set aside. The inflexibility of the law of karma is a condition for significant human action, which would be utterly impossible if the law of karma could be safely ignored or flouted.

In its inviolability, the law of karma is like the other laws of nature. However, the rigorousness of the operation of karmic laws does not come to the soul as the oppressiveness of some external and blind power but as something involved in the rationality of the scheme of life. Karmic determination is the condition of true responsibility. It means that an individual will reap as he sows. What a person gathers by way of experience is invariably connected with what he does. If a person has done an evil turn to someone, he must accept the penalty for it and welcome the

Law of karma an expression of justice

evil rebounding upon himself. If he has done a good turn to someone, he must also receive the reward for it and enjoy the good rebounding upon himself. What he does for another he has also done for himself, although it may take time for him to realize that this is exactly so. The law of karma is an expression of justice and a reflection of the unity of life in the world of duality.

Reincarnation and Karma

Part VII

The Destiny of the Reincarnating Individual

The series of incarnations, which the soul is impelled to take through karmic determination, has a tendency to become endless. Through innumerable lives an individual has come into contact with countless persons, and he has had all kinds of dealings of give-and-take with them. He is entangled in a web consisting of all sorts of debts to pay and dues to recover. According to karmic law, he can avoid neither the debts nor the dues, since both are the outcome of karma inspired by desire. He keeps incarnating in order to pay off his debts and to recover his dues; but even when he means to clear up the account, he is often unable to do so.

All persons with whom an individual has karmic links of debts or dues may not be incarnate when he has taken a body. Or owing to the limitations imposed by his own capacities and circumstances, he may be unable to meet all the complex requirements of a situation. While he is trying to clear up accounts with those with whom he has past links, in this very attempt he cannot help creating fresh claims and counterclaims concerning them. Even with new persons he cannot help but create debts and dues of

diverse kinds and magnitudes, and get involved with them. An individual thus goes on adding to his debts and dues, with the result that there is no getting out of his endlessly increasing and complex karmic entanglements.

The spinning of the yarn of karmic debts and dues would be endless if there were no provision for getting out of the karmic entanglements through the help of a Perfect Master. He can not only initiate an aspirant into the supreme art of non-binding karma, but can become directly instrumental in freeing him from his karmic entanglements. The Master has attained unity with God, whose cosmic and universal life includes all persons. Being one with all life and in his representative capacity, he can become, for the sake of the aspirant, the medium for the clearing up of all debts and dues that have come into existence through the aspirant's dealings with countless individuals contacted in his incarnations. If a person must get bound to someone, it is best for him to get bound to God or a Master, because this tie ultimately facilitates emancipation from all other karmic ties.

When the good karma of past lives has secured for the aspirant the benefit of having a Master, the best thing that he can do is to surrender himself to the Master and to serve him. Through surrenderance the aspirant throws the burden of his karma on the Master, who has to find ways and means of freeing him from it. Through serving the Master he wins an opportunity to get clear of his karmic entanglements. The relationship between the Master and the disciple is often carried on from one life to another for several reincarnations. Those who have been connected with a Master in past lives are drawn to him by an unconscious magnetism, not knowing why they are thus drawn. There is usually a long history to the apparently unaccountable devotion that the disciple feels for his Master. The disciple is often beginning where he had left off in the last incarnation.

When the disciple invites the attention and the grace of a Master, it is not without reason. Sometimes the Master seems to impart spirituality to a disciple without there being any apparent effort or sacrifice on the part of the disciple. But these are always cases in which the disciple has earned the right to this favor by his associations

and endeavors in past lives. The love and devotion the disciple may have felt for the Master in his past lives have formed a deep connection between him and the Master, so that the awakening of spiritual longing in the disciple has its counterpart in the grace and help that flow to him from the Master. It is through his own past nonbinding karma that a person invites the grace of the Master; just as it is through his own binding karma that he invites upon himself the pleasure and pain, as well as the good and evil, of which he is the recipient in this life.

As a rule, the person who has entered the spiritual path gradually advances until he attains the goal; this does not apply to those who have not definitely entered the path or have no Master to guide them.

Spiritual progress requires active effort Through their chaotic pursuits of several lifetimes, most persons are likely to go further away from the goal by the heaping up of binding sanskaras. Hence spiritual progress cannot be said to be automatic, in the sense that it will come about without the active effort of the person concerned.

Sooner or later, however, the logic of experience gathered through several lives drives everyone to enter the path and seek the highest goal. Once the aspirant enters the path, he usually goes forward with steady progress. As he advances on the path, he often develops certain latent capacities that enable him not only to experience consciously the inner subtle and mental worlds but also to manipulate the forces and powers available on the higher planes of consciousness. Yet, the crossing of the first few planes does not necessarily ensure safe and steady progress. There are many pitfalls on the path itself, and unless there is the assured guidance of a Master, the aspirant is in danger of falling back.

From any of the first few planes the aspirant, instead of going forward toward the goal, may have such a setback. In exceptional cases an aspirant of the fourth plane may, through abuse of his powers, invite upon himself such a fall that it takes ages for him to return to his earlier point of progress. The aspirant who has such a fall is known as a *yoga-bhrashtu*. Even the yogis are subject to the unyielding law of karma, which knows no exceptions, concessions,

Inviting grace of Master

Spiritual progress requires active effort

Danger of falling back

Yoga-bhrashta

or preferences. It is only when the aspirant has the advantage of the guidance by a Perfect Master that the spiritual journey is rendered safe and steady, and it is only then that there is no possibility of a fall or retrogression. The Master steers the aspirant from negative karma in which he might otherwise become involved.

Treading the spiritual path continues for several incarnations before the aspirant attains the goal. Centuries of continued sacrifices, service, self-purification, suffering, and determined search have to roll on if the aspirant is to be spiritually prepared for the final realization of God. God-realization, which is the goal of the reincarnating individual, is never an attainment of a single life. It is always the culmination of his continued endeavor through many lives. Unintelligent karma of many lives has created the bindings of the individual soul, and it has to be undone by the persistent creation of intelligent and nonbinding karma carried on for many more lives.

The power that keeps the individual soul bound to the wheel of life and death is its thirst for separate existence, which is a condition for a host of cravings connected with objects and experiences of the world of duality. It is for the fulfillment of cravings that the ego-mind keeps on incarnating itself. When all forms of craving disappear, the impressions that create and enliven the ego-mind disappear. With the disappearance of these impressions, the ego-mind itself is shed, with the result that there is only the realization of the one eternal, unchanging Oversoul, who is the only Reality. God-realization is the end of the incarnations of the ego-mind because it is the end of its very existence. As long as the ego-mind exists in some form, there is an inevitable and irresistible urge for incarnations. When there is cessation of the ego-mind, there is cessation of incarnations in the final fulfillment of Self-realization.

The life of the reincarnating individual has many events and phases. The wheel of life makes its ceaseless rounds, lifting the individual to the heights or bringing him down from high positions. It thus contributes to the enrichment of his experience. Ideals left unattained in one life are pursued further in the next life; things left undone are finished; rough edges left by incomplete endeavor are rounded off; wrongs are eventually set right. The accounts of give-and-take between persons receive renewed

Power behind incarnations is craving

Culmination of reincarnations

adjustment by the repayment of karmic debts and the recovery of karmic dues. At last, out of the ripeness of experience and through the dissolution of the ego-mind, the soul enters into the sole unity of divine life. In this divine life there is neither the binding of giving nor the binding of taking, because the soul has completely transcended the consciousness of separateness or duality.

The drama of the continued life of the individual soul has many acts. From the standpoint of the worldly existence of the soul, a curtain may be said to be drawn over its life after the closing of each act. But no act yields its real significance if

Analogy of drama it is regarded as complete in itself. It has to be viewed from its wider context as being a link between the acts already performed and the acts still to come. Its meaning is entwined with the theme of the whole drama of which it is a part. The end of the act is not the end of the progressive theme. The actors disappear from the stage of earth only to reappear again in new capacities and new contexts.

The actors are so engrossed in their respective roles that they treat them as the be-all and end-all of all existence. For the major part of their continued lives (running into innumerable incarnations), they are unconscious of the closely guarded

Game of hide and seek truth—that the *Author* of the drama, in His imaginative production, Himself became all the actors and played the game of hide and seek in order to come into full and conscious possession of His own creative infinity. Infinity has to go through the illusion of finiteness to know itself as Infinity; and the Author has to play the parts of all of the actors to know Himself as the Author of this greatest detective story, worked out through the cycles of creation.

Live for God and Die for God

This war* is a necessary evil; it is in God's plan, which is to awaken humanity to higher values. If humanity fails to profit by the lessons of the war, it will have suffered in vain. This war is teaching that even an ordinary person can rise to the greatest heights of sacrifice for the sake of a selfless cause. It is also teaching that all the mundane things of the world—wealth, possessions, power, fame, family, and even the very tenor of life on earth—are transitory and devoid of lasting value. Through the lessons they bring, the incidents of war shall win man over for God, who is the Truth; and they will initiate him into a new life that is inspired by true and lasting values.

People are making unlimited sacrifices and enduring untold sufferings for the sake of their country or political ideology. They are therefore capable of the same sacrifices and endurance for the sake of God, or the Truth. All religions have unequivocally claimed man for a life in the Truth; thus it is sheer folly to fight in the name of religion. It is time humanity had a fresh vision of the truth that all life is one and God is the only thing that is real and that matters. God is worth living for, and He is also worth dying for. All else is a vain and empty pursuit of illusory values.

*World War II.-ED.

Work for the Spiritual Freedom of Humanity

All over the world the spirit of man is crying out for freedom. Love of freedom and the search for freedom are the principal characteristics of humanity. In all races and in all climes, in all countries and at all times, the watchword for groping and struggling humanity has always been *freedom!*

Cry for freedom

There are very few persons, however, who really understand the full implications of true and unqualified freedom. And there are many who, in their partial understanding of the real conditions of freedom, strive only for the attainment of that kind of existence which gives them a sense of relative freedom. Thus different persons long for different kinds of freedom according to the different things they have come to value.

Freedom to live as one wishes is sought in all spheres of life. This imperative demand for freedom usually expresses itself by fastening upon some external conditions of the kind of existence people wish to

Kinds of freedom

lead. Hence those who identify their being with their country seek national or political freedom. Those who are animated by economic purposes seek economic freedom. Those who are inspired by religious aspirations seek freedom of religion. Those who are enthusiastic about sociological or cultural ideology seek freedom of movement and freedom to express the ideals that they cherish and wish to propagate. But there are few who realize that the basic freedom, which alone gives the stamp of true value to any of these different kinds of

relative freedom, is spiritual freedom. Even if all the external conditions of a free life were completely fulfilled and guaranteed, the soul of man would still remain in woeful bondage if it failed to realize spiritual freedom.

All the different types of freedom that fasten upon some external conditions must, in their very nature, exist within certain limits. For the freedom that an individual or community or state seeks must be

Limits of freedom

consistent with a similar freedom for other individuals, communities, or states. National, economic, religious, or cultural freedom expresses itself in and by means of the duality of existence. It lives on duality and is sustained by duality; therefore it has to be relative and limited and cannot be infinite. It exists in varying degrees. Even when it is won through persistent effort, it cannot be a permanent attainment, since the external conditions having once been secured are not secured forever but are capable of deteriorating in the course of time.

Only spiritual freedom is absolute and unlimited. When it is won through persistent effort, it is secured forever. Though spiritual freedom can and does express itself in and through the duality of existence,

Spiritual freedom alone is unlimited

it is grounded in the realization of the inviolable unity of all life and is sustained by it. One important condition of spiritual freedom is freedom from all wanting. It is want that fetters life through attachment to conditions that would fulfill that want; if there is no want, there is no dependence or limitation. The soul is enslaved through wanting. When the soul breaks asunder the shackles of wanting, it emancipates itself from its bondage to the bodies-gross, subtle, and mental. This is the spiritual freedom that brings with it the final realization of the unity of all life and puts an end to all doubts and worries.

It is only in spiritual freedom that one can have abiding happiness and unimpaired Self-knowledge. It is only in spiritual freedom that there arises the supreme certainty of Truth. It is only in spiritual

Importance of spiritual freedom

freedom that there is the final ending of sorrow and limitation. It is only in spiritual freedom that one can live for all, and yet be detached in the midst of all activities. Any

lesser type of freedom is comparable to a house built on sand, and any lesser type of attainment is fraught with the fear of decay. Therefore

there is no gift greater than the gift of spiritual freedom, and there is no task more important than the task of helping others to achieve spiritual freedom. Those who have understood the supreme importance of spiritual freedom have not only to strive for it for themselves but also to share the God-given duty of helping others win it.

Those who are inspired by a spirit of selfless service are quick to render unto humanity all possible help through provision of the necessities of life-like clothes and shelter, food and medicine, education and other amenities of civilization. In pursuing the path of duty they are not only

True service

prepared to fight for the weak against aggression and oppression but also to lay down their very lives for the sake of others. All these types of service are great and good; but from the ultimate point of view, the help that secures spiritual freedom for humanity surpasses them all. It is insuperable in importance.

The way to help others attain spiritual freedom is far different from the way of rendering other types of help. For the hungry you can provide food, and they have only to eat it. For the naked you can provide clothes, and they have only to wear them. For the homeless you can provide houses, and they have only to dwell in them. For those who are in the agonies of spiritual bondage, however, there is no ready-made

Way to help others attain spiritual freedom

provision that can give them immediate relief. Spiritual freedom has to be won by oneself for oneself through watchful and unflinching war against the lower self and the lower desires. Those who would be soldiers in the cause of Truth have to help all, not only in launching upon the thrilling enterprise of attaining victory over themselves, but also in every step they take toward that attainment. There is no other way of sharing their burden.

I have full confidence that you, my devotees, will share this burden. Many of you, for years together, have obeyed my orders and carried out my instructions, through faith in me and love for me. You have stuck to me and my spiritual cause through storm and stress and thick and thin. Now the time has come for you to offer

The call

all your services in my mission of helping humanity tread the spiritual path and realize God. The eternal truth that God alone is real has to be clearly understood and unreservedly accepted, and it has to be unequi-

vocably expressed through words and deeds. In the full realization of the Truth, humanity shall attain spiritual freedom.

No sacrifice is too big to set man free from spiritual bondage and help him to inherit the Truth, which alone shall bring abiding peace to all and which alone will sustain an unassailable sense of universal fellowship-cemented by the ungrudging love of all, for all, as expressions of the same Reality. In this God-willed, divinely planned, and predestined task of bringing spiritual freedom to humanity, you, my devotees, have to help me-even at the cost of your lives. In your duty of helping others to find God, you have to welcome every type of suffering and sacrifice.

The Task for Spiritual Workers

I am very happy that, in response to my call, you have gathered to receive my message to you. On the path, the most important condition of discipleship is readiness to work for the spiritual cause of bringing humanity closer and closer to the realization of God. I am glad to note that through faith and love for me you have wholeheartedly offered yourselves to share in my universal work of spiritualizing the world. I have full confidence that you will not only inherit for yourselves the Truth that I bring but also become enthusiastic and valiant torchbearers for humanity, which is enveloped in deep ignorance.

Be torchbearers for humanity

Because of its supreme importance for the true and final well-being of humanity, spiritual work has a natural and imperative claim on all who love humanity. It is therefore very necessary to be quite clear about its nature. The whole world is firmly established in the false idea of separateness; and being caught up in the illusion of duality, it is subject to all the complexities of duality. Spiritual workers have to redeem the world from the throes of imagined duality by bringing home to it the truth of the unity of all life.

Nature of spiritual work

The cause of the illusion of manyness is that the soul, in its ignorance, identifies itself with its bodies. The gross, subtle, and mental bodies are all mediums for experiencing, through the ego-mind,

the different states of the world of duality. But they cannot be the mediums for knowing the true nature of the soul, which is above them all. By identifying with the bodies, the soul gets caught up in the ignorance of manyness. The soul in all the bodies, with the ego-mind, is really one undivided existence. However, as it gets mixed up with these bodies and the ego-mind, which are only its vehicles, it considers itself as limited; and it looks upon itself as being only one among the many of creation, instead of looking upon itself as the only one Reality without a second.

Every soul is eternally and inviolably one with the one undivided and indivisible universal Soul, which is the sole Reality. Yet false identification with the bodies and the ego-mind creates the illusion of manyness and of differentiation within the whole. The bodies, with the ego-mind, are only the mediums or the vehicles of consciousness; and as the soul experiences the different inner planes through its different mediums or vehicles, it goes through different states of consciousness.

Most souls are unconscious of their true nature as God, who is the Unity and the Reality of all souls. God-realization is latent in them, since it has not yet come to be experienced consciously. Those who have cast off the veil of duality experience the soul through itself independently of any mediums or vehicles. In this experience the soul consciously knows itself as being identical with God. Life in the Truth of the unity of all brings with it freedom from all limitations and sufferings. It is the self-affirmation of the Infinite as infinite. In this state of spiritual Freedom and Perfection, the ego-life is finally and completely surrendered in order to experience and release the divine life in the Truth; and God is known and affirmed as the only Reality worth living for.

To realize God is to dwell in eternity; it is a timeless experience. But spiritual work must be done for the souls who are caught up in the mazes of creation, which is bound by time. Spiritual workers cannot afford to ignore the element of time in creation. To ignore time would be to ignore the spiritual work itself. It is imperative to be discriminatingly aware of the flow of time in creation and to appre-

ciate fully the supreme importance of the moment in the future that shall witness the universal dispensation of the Truth of spiritual wisdom.

The task for spiritual workers is to help me in this universal dispensation of the Truth to suffering humanity. You have not only to prepare humanity to receive this Truth but also to get established in it

Task for spiritual workers

yourself. It is extremely important to remember that you can help others to gain spiritual freedom and to come out of the illusion of duality only if you yourself do not forget this idea of unity while working for others—who are inclined to create divisions where they do not exist and who thus allow no respite to spiritual workers. The minds of people have to be completely purged of all forms of selfishness and narrowness if they are to inherit the life in eternity that I bring. It is by no means an easy task to persuade people to give up their selfishness and narrowness.

It is not by accident that people are divided into the rich and the poor, the pampered and the neglected, the rulers and the ruled, the leaders and the masses, the oppressors and the oppressed, the high and the low, the winners of laurels and the recipients of ignominy. These differences have been created and sustained by those who, through their spiritual ignorance, are attached to them and who are so settled in perverse thinking and feeling that they are not even conscious of their perversity. They are accustomed to look upon life as divided into inviolable compartments, and they are unwilling to give up their separative attitude. When you launch upon your spiritual work, you will be entering into a field of divisions that people desperately cling to, and that they accentuate and strive to perpetuate consciously or unconsciously.

Mere condemnation of these divisions will not enable you to destroy them. The divisions are being nourished by separative thinking and feeling, which can yield only to the touch of love and understanding. You have to win people to the life

Win people to life of Truth

of Truth; you cannot coerce them into spirituality. It is not enough that you should have unimpaired friendliness and untarnished goodwill in your own hearts. If you are to succeed in your work, you have to bring home to them the faith and the conviction that you are helping them to redeem themselves from bondage and suffering,

and to realize the Highest-to which they are rightful heirs. There is no other way to help them attain spiritual freedom and enlightenment.

For rendering spiritual help you should have a clear understanding of the following four points:

1. *Apparent descent to a lower level.*

It may often be necessary for you to *apparently* descend to the lower level of those whom you are trying to help. Though your purpose is to

Hints for spiritual workers

your thoughts and feelings should not go over their heads. They are bound to miss the point unless you adapt it to their capacity and experience. However, it is equally important to remember that while doing this, you should not *actually* lose your own high level of understanding. You will change your approach and technique as they gradually arrive at deeper and deeper understanding, and your apparent descent to the lower level will be only temporary.

raise people to higher levels of consciousness, they might fail to profit by what you say if you do not talk in terms they understand. What you convey to them through

2. *Spiritual understanding ensures all-sided progress.*

You must not divide life into departments and then begin to deal with each department separately and exclusively. Departmentalized thinking is often an obstacle to integral vision. Thus if you divide life into politics, education, morality, material advancement, science, art, religion, mysticism, and culture-and then think exclusively of only one of these aspects-the solutions that you bring to life can neither be satisfactory nor final. But if you succeed in awakening spiritual inspiration and understanding, progress in all these spheres of life is bound to follow automatically. You will have to aim at providing, as spiritual workers, a complete and real solution for all the individual and social problems of life.

3. *Spiritual progress consists in the spontaneous growth of understanding from within.*

As spiritual workers, you have also to remember that the spiritual wisdom you desire to convey to others is already latent in them, and that you have only to be instrumental in unveiling that spiritual wisdom. Spiritual progress is not a process of accumulating from without; it is a process of unfoldment from within. A Perfect Master is absolutely necessary for anyone to arrive at Self-knowledge, but the true significance of the help given by the Master consists in the fact

that he enables others to come into the full possession of their own latent possibilities.

4. *Some questions are more important than answers.*

You, as spiritual workers, must not lose sight of the real work the Master desires to get done through you. When it is clearly understood that spiritual wisdom is latent in all, you will no longer be anxious to provide others with ready-made answers and solutions. In many cases you will be content to set up for others a new problem or to clarify for others the nature of the problems they face. You may have done your duty if you ask them a question that they would not ask of themselves, when placed in some practical situation. In some cases you will have done your duty if you succeed in putting them in a searching and questioning attitude, so that they themselves begin to understand and tackle their problems along more fruitful and creative lines. To give them a deeper point of view or to suggest to them a fruitful line of thought and action may itself mean much more than thrusting upon them the results of your judgment. The questions that you may help them formulate for themselves should neither be merely theoretical nor unnecessarily complicated. If they are simple, straight, and fundamental, these questions will answer themselves; and people will find their own solutions. You will have rendered indispensable and valuable service to them because, without your tactful intervention, they would not have arrived at the solution of their multifarious problems from the *spiritual* point of view.

It has been seen that spiritual workers must necessarily be confronted with many obstacles, but obstacles are meant to be overcome. Even if some of them seem to be insuperable, you have to do your best

Overcoming obstacles to help others irrespective of results or consequences. Obstacles and their overcoming, success and failure, are all illusions within the infinite domain of Unity. Your task is already done when it is performed wholeheartedly. If you are steadfast and one-pointed in your desire to help my cause of awakening humanity to the sole reality and the ultimate worthwhileness of God and God alone, you will get many opportunities for spiritual work. There is ample scope for work in this field.

You must do your work without worrying about consequences, irrespective of success or failure; but be confident that the result of work done in this spirit and with this understanding is assured.

Through the untiring activities of spiritual workers, humanity shall be initiated into a new life of abiding peace and dynamic harmony, unconquerable faith and unfading bliss, immortal sweetness and incorruptible purity, creative love and infinite understanding.

Results of spiritual work

Qualifications of the Aspirant

Part I

Entering into the Realities of Inner Life

Though realization of the Truth is the ultimate destiny of all persons, there are very few who have the necessary preparation for the early fulfillment of this glorious destiny. The mind of the worldly individual is darkened by a thick layer of accumulated sanskaras, which must be considerably weakened for the aspirant even to enter the spiritual path. The usual method for gradually dissipating the load of sanskaras is to follow as strictly as possible the external code of religious rituals and ceremonies.

**Value and limitations
of external conformity**

This stage of external conformity to religious injunctions or traditions is known as the pursuit of *shariat*, or *karma-kanda*. It covers actions like offering daily prayers, visiting holy places, performing duties prescribed by the scriptures, and observing well established rules of the ethical codes generally accepted by the moral consciousness of the times. The stage of external conformity is useful in its own way as a spiritual discipline, though it is by no means free from evil effects. For it not only tends to make one dry, rigid, and mechanical but it often nourishes some kind of subtle egoism. However, most persons are attached to the life of external conformity because they find it the easiest way of placating their uneasy consciences.

The soul often spends several lives in gathering the lessons of external conformity; but there always comes a time when it tires of external conformity and becomes more interested in the realities of the

Realities of inner life inner life. When a worldly person takes to this higher kind of search, he might be said to have become an aspirant. Like the insect that passes on through metamorphosis to the next stage of existence, the aspirant transcends the phase of external conformity (shariat, or karma-kanda) and enters upon the path of spiritual emancipation, known as *tariqat*, or *adhyatma-marga*. In this higher phase the aspirant is no longer satisfied by external conformity with certain rules but wants to acquire those qualifications that would make his inner life spiritually beautiful.

From the standpoint of the realities of inner life, the life of external conformity may often be spiritually barren; and a life that deviates from such rigid conformity may often be spiritually rich. In seeking conformity with established conventions

Limitations of conventions and formality, one is almost always prone to slip into a life of false or illusory values rather than a life based upon true and lasting values. What is conventionally recognized need not always be spiritually sound. On the contrary, many conventions express and embody illusory values since they have come into existence as a result of the working of average minds that are spiritually ignorant. Illusory values are mostly conventional because they grow into that matrix of mentality which is most common. This does not mean that conventions necessarily embody nothing but illusory values.

Sometimes people stick to unconventional things for no other reason than that they are out of the ordinary. The unusual nature of their pursuits or interests enables them to feel their separateness and difference from others, and to take delight

Freedom from convention due to critical thought in it. Unconventional things also often generate interest merely through their novelty in contrast with those that are conventional. The illusory values of the usual

become insipid through familiarity; and the mind then has a tendency to transfer the illusion of value to those things that are not usual, instead of trying to discover true and lasting values.

Transcending the stage of external conformity does not imply a

merely mechanical and thoughtless change from conventionality to unconventionality. Such change would be essentially in the nature of reaction and could in no way contribute toward a life of freedom and truth. The freedom from conventionality that appears in the life of the aspirant is not due to any uncritical reaction but is due to the exercise of critical thought. Those who would transcend the stage of external conformity and enter into the high life of inner realities must develop the capacity to distinguish between false and true values, irrespective of conventionality or unconventionality.

The rise from shariat (karma-kanda) to tariqat (adhyatma-marga) is not to be interpreted, therefore, as being merely a departure from external conformity. It is not a change from conventionality to idio-

**Discrimination
between true and false**

syncracy, from the usual to the unusual. It is a change from a life of thoughtless acceptance of established traditions to a mode of being that is based upon thoughtful appreciation of the difference between the important and the unimportant. It is a change from a state of implicit ignorance to a state of critical thoughtfulness. At the stage of mere external conformity, the spiritual ignorance of an individual is often so complete that he does not even realize that he is ignorant. But when the person is being awakened and enters the path, he begins by realizing the need for true light. In the initial stages the effort to attain this light takes the form of intellectual discrimination between the lasting and the transitory, the true and the false, the real and the unreal, the important and the unimportant.

For the spiritual aspirant, however, it is not enough to exercise merely intellectual discrimination between the false and the true. Though intellectual discrimination is undoubtedly the basis for all

**Bankruptcy of barren
beliefs**

further preparation, it yields its fruit only when newly perceived values are brought into relation with practical life. From the spiritual viewpoint, what matters is not theory but *practice*. The ideas, beliefs, opinions, views, or doctrines that a person might hold intellectually constitute a superficial layer of human personality. Very often someone believes in one thing and does exactly the opposite. The bankruptcy of barren beliefs is all the more pitiable because the person who feeds upon them often suffers from the delusion that he is spiritually advanced, when in truth he has not even begun spiritual life.

Sometimes even a wrong view, which is held with fervor, may indirectly invite an experience that opens the gates to spiritual life. Even at the stage of shariat, or karma-kanda, allegiance to religions is

not infrequently a source of inspiration for many selfless and noble acts. For while the dogmas or creeds are blindly accepted, they are often held with a fervor and enthusiasm that supply a dynamic element to the ideology that has been accepted by the person for the moment. Dogmas and creeds, as compared with barren views and doctrines, have the distinct advantage of being embraced not only by the intellect but also by the heart. They cover and affect a wider part of personality than purely theoretical opinions.

Dogmas and creeds generally, however, are as much a source of evil as of good, because in them the guiding vision is clouded owing to degeneration or suspension of critical thinking. If allegiance to creeds

and dogmas has sometimes been good for the individual or the community to which he belongs, it has more often done harm.

Though the mind and the heart are involved in allegiance to dogmas and creeds, *both* function in such cases under the serious handicap of suspension of critical thought. Hence dogmas and creeds do not contribute to unmixed good.

When a person gives up uncritically accepted dogmas and creeds in favor of views and doctrines to which he has devoted thought, there is a certain amount of advance-insofar as his mind has now begun to think and critically examine its beliefs.

Very often, however, the newly held beliefs are seen to lack the fervor and enthusiasm that characterized allegiance to dogmas and

creeds. If these newly held beliefs lack motive power, they belong only to the superficial aspects of life; and they hang loosely upon the person like an overcoat. The mind has been emancipated from the domination of uncultured emotion, but this is often achieved by sacrificing the cooperation of the heart. If the results of critical thought are to be spiritually fruitful, these results must again invade and recapture the heart so as to enlist its cooperative functioning.

In other words, the ideas that have been accepted after critical examination must again be released into active life if they are to yield their full benefit. In the process of practical living, they often undergo a

healthy transformation and become more soundly interwoven with the very fabric of life.

The transition from external conformity (shariat, or karma-kanda) to the life of inner realities (tariqat, or adhyatma-marga) involves two steps: (1) freeing the mind from the inertia of uncritical

**Critical and creative
thinking balances
mind and heart**

acceptance based upon blind imitation and stirring it to critical thinking; and (2) bringing the results of critical and discriminative thinking into practical life. In order to be spiritually fruitful, thinking must be not

only critical but creative. Critical and creative thinking leads to spiritual preparation by cultivating those qualities that contribute toward the perfection and balancing of the mind and the heart-and the release of unfettered Divine Life.

Qualifications of the Aspirant

Part II Some Divine Qualities

If the inner life of an aspirant is to be harmonious and enlightened, he has to develop and express many divine qualities while he is engaged in his daily duties. Each quality by itself may not seem to be extremely important, but to consider it apart from its necessary relationship with other important qualities is not correct. In spiritual life all these qualities implement and support each other, and their interconnection is so vital that not one of them can be completely ignored without detriment to many other essential qualities. So, considered in its true function, each of these divine qualities turns out to be absolutely indispensable for a complete life.

Qualities necessary for spiritual life interconnected

Every person is a rightful heir to the Truth. But he who would inherit it must be spiritually prepared for it, and this spiritual preparation sometimes takes several lives of patient and persistent effort. Therefore, one of the first requirements of the aspirant is that he should combine unflinching enthusiasm with unyielding patience. Once an individual is determined to

Patience and persistence

realize the Truth, he finds that his path is beset with many difficulties, and there are very few who persist with steady courage till the very end. It is easy to give up the effort when one is confronted with obstacles.

This might be illustrated by a story of a man from Poona, India. He once read a spiritual book that impressed him so deeply that he felt like renouncing everything. He left Poona and went to a forest near the city; and sitting under a tree with prayer beads in his hand, he began to repeat God's name. He kept doing this all day in spite of much inconvenience and dwindling enthusiasm. After sunset he heard from all sides the cries of animals; and though these cries grew louder and louder in the gathering darkness of the night, he persisted in his determination. However, when he saw through the darkness a huge bear coming toward him, he fled for his life and ran at top speed until he fell unconscious in a shop back in Poona. As he regained consciousness, he related his adventure to those who had gathered around him, much to their amusement-and that finished his mood for renunciation.

Spiritual effort demands not only physical endurance and courage but also unshrinking forbearance and unassailable moral courage. The world is caught up in Maya and is addicted to false values.

Therefore the ways of the world run counter to the standards the aspirant has set for himself. If he runs away from the world, that does not help him. He will again have to come back to the world to develop that quality which would enable him to face and accept the world as it is. Very often his path lies through the world that he has to serve in spite of not liking its ways. If the aspirant is to love and serve the world that does not understand him or even is intolerant toward him, he must develop infinite forbearance.

As the aspirant advances on the spiritual path, he acquires, through his contact with a Perfect Master, an increasingly deeper understanding of true love. This makes him painfully sensitive to the impact from outside actions that not only do not taste of love but actually bring him into contact with cold contempt, cynical callousness, agonizing antipathy, and unabating hatred. All these encounters try his forbearance to the utmost. Even the worldly person suffers in a world he occasionally finds indifferent or hostile, but he is

Forbearance

more thick-skinned and his suffering is less acute. He does not expect anything much better from human nature and thinks that these things are inevitable and incurable. The aspirant, who has tasted a deeper love, knows the hidden possibilities in every soul. Thus his suffering is more acute because he feels the gulf between that which is and that which might have been, if only the world had even faintly appreciated the love he has begun to understand and cherish.

The task of forbearance would be easy if the aspirant could become reconciled to the ways of the world and accept them without challenge. Having seen the higher truths, however, it becomes his

Moral courage and confidence

imperative duty to stand by them, even if the whole world opposes him. Loyalty to the higher truths of his own perception demands unshakable moral courage and readiness to face the criticism, the scorn, and even the hatred of those who have not yet begun to open up to these truths. Although in this uneven struggle he does get unfailing help from the Master and other aspirants, he has to develop the capacity to fight for these truths single-handedly, without relying upon external help all the time. This supreme moral courage can only come with supreme confidence in oneself and in the Master. To love the world and serve it in the ways of the Masters is no game for the weak and fainthearted.

Moral courage and self-confidence should be accompanied by freedom from worry. There are very few things in the mind that eat up as much energy as worry. It is one of the most difficult things not to

Freedom from worry

worry about anything. Worry is experienced when things go wrong, and in relation to past happenings it is idle merely to wish that they might have been otherwise. The frozen past is what it is, and no amount of worrying is going to make it other than what it has been. Nonetheless, the limited ego-mind identifies itself with its past, gets entangled with it, and keeps alive the pangs of frustrated desires. Thus worry continues to grow into the mental life of a person until the ego-mind is burdened by the past.

Worry is also experienced in relation to the future, when this future is expected to be disagreeable in some way. In this case worry seeks to justify itself as a necessary part of the attempt to prepare for coping with the anticipated situations. But things can never be helped merely by worrying. Besides, many of the things that are anticipated

never happen; or if they do occur, they turn out to be much more acceptable than they were expected to be. Worry is the product of feverish imagination working under the stimulus of desires. It is the living through of sufferings that are mostly of one's own creation. Worry has never done anyone any good; and it is very much worse than mere dissipation of energy, for it substantially curtails the joy and fullness of life.

Among the many things the aspirant needs to cultivate, there are few that are as important as cheerfulness, enthusiasm, and equipoise. When the mind is gloomy, depressed, or disturbed, its actions are chaotic and binding. Hence arises the

Cheerfulness, enthusiasm, equipoise supreme need to maintain cheerfulness, enthusiasm, and equipoise under all circumstances. All these are rendered impossible unless the aspirant succeeds in eliminating worry from his life. Worry is a necessary result of attachment to the past or to the anticipated future, and it always persists in some form or other until the mind is completely detached from everything.

The difficulties on the spiritual path can be overcome only if the aspirant has one-pointedness. If his energies are dissipated in worldly pursuits, the progress he makes is very slow. One-pointedness implies dispassion concerning all the allurements of the phenomenal world. The mind must turn away from all temptations, and complete control must be established over the senses. Thus control and dispassion are both necessary to attain one-pointedness in the search for true understanding.

The supreme condition for sure and steady progress on the path is the benefit of guidance from a Perfect Master. The Master gives just that guidance and help which is necessary according to the immediate

Guidance from Master needs of the aspirant. All the Master expects is that the aspirant will try his best for spiritual advancement. He does not expect immediate transformation of consciousness except where the ground has been previously made ready. Time is an important factor in spiritual advancement, as it is in all material endeavors. When the Master has given a spiritual push to the aspirant, he waits till the help thus given is completely assimilated by him. An overdose of spirituality always has an unhealthy reaction, particularly when it is inopport-

tune. The Master therefore carefully selects the moment when his intervention is assured of maximum results; and having intervened, he waits with infinite patience till the aspirant really needs further help.

Qualifications of the Aspirant

Part III Readiness to Serve

The aspirant always has to be in readiness to serve the cause of humanity. He need not apply himself to any type of work irrespective of his capacities. He has to select that type of work which he is qualified to do by virtue of his individual aptitude and abilities. But whatever service he can render by virtue of his capacities, he renders it even when the circumstances are most trying. The ordeals through which he may have to pass are many, but his determination to serve whenever possible must remain unshaken.

The aspirant is not in any way attached to the idea of service, however, in the sense of maximum results being secured through himself alone. If any service needs to be rendered, he is willing to render it with any amount of sacrifice; but he is never bound by the false idea "I alone should have the credit for doing this." If the privilege of rendering the service falls to the lot of someone else, he is not envious. If he were to seek opportunities for himself to render service, it would be a form of selfishness. In service that really counts in spiritual life, there can be no thought of the self at all. There should be no feeling of having something for oneself or of being the one who

can give something to others. The self in all its forms has to be left entirely out of the picture. Service should spring out of the spontaneity of freedom, if and when it is necessary; and it has to come in the cooperative spirit in which there is no insistence upon the claims of the limited "I."

If the aspirant is completely detached from all works and their results, he becomes free from the vitiating opposites of great and small. The worldly-minded feel their separative existence through

**Freedom from
opposites of great
and small**

achievements. Therefore they have a natural tendency to judge their achievements in terms of tangible quantities. They grasp at the great things and avoid the little things.

From the spiritual point of view, the so-called little things are often seen to be as important as the so-called great. Hence the aspirant has no reason to eschew the one and seek the other; he attends to little things with as much zest as to great things. Although in spiritual life even little things matter as much as great things, the conventions of the world usually fail to recognize this simple truth. By following conventionally accepted ideas, the scope of possible service to fellow beings gets artificially restricted to those activities that are conventionally regarded as important. Much that really is of vital importance to life is neglected, with the result that life is spiritually impoverished.

Thus, in a society dominated by merely material conceptions of life, service is interpreted in terms of providing for bread or clothes or other physical amenities of existence. In a society responsive to the

**Accepted values
determine types of
service**

value of intellectual culture, service is interpreted in terms of spreading learning in different forms. In a society that has developed a taste for beauty, service is interpreted in terms of organizing the production and distribution of works of art. In a society responsive to the ineffable values of the heart, service is interpreted in terms of constructing those channels that will facilitate culture and expression of the heart. In a society alive to the supreme importance of the spirit, service is interpreted in terms of imparting spiritual understanding. Of these different types of service, the service that is concerned with spiritual understanding is the highest, because spiritual understanding includes the right perspective to all human problems and promotes their solution.

If there is no spiritual understanding, the desire for rendering service to others is harnessed by limited conceptions. Service is of two kinds: it consists in adding to the lives of others those things that are really worthwhile; or it consists in removing from the lives of others those handicaps that prevent them from having things that are worthwhile. If one's ideas of things that are worthwhile are narrow, the scope of possible service also becomes correspondingly narrow.

The scope of service is not limited to great gestures like giving big donations to public institutions. They also serve who express their love in little things. A word that gives courage to a drooping heart or a smile that brings hope and cheer in the midst of gloom has as much claim to be regarded as service as onerous sacrifices and heroic self-denials. A glance that wipes out bitterness from the heart and sets it throbbing with a new love is also service, although there may be no thought of service in it. When taken by themselves, all these things seem to be small; but life is made up of many such small things. If these small things were ignored, life would be not only unbeautiful but unspiritual.

Just as the worldly-minded have a tendency to judge positive contributions in terms of magnitudes, they also make a similar mistake in judging obstacles, handicaps, and adversities. Thus, for most persons, the adversity of another must assume colossal proportions if it is to deserve notice. It is characteristic of the worldly to give more importance to things that take shape in external and tangible ways than to things that are silent elements of inner life. Devastating war, for example, is considered to be a greater calamity than lingering lives filled with bitter hatred; though from the purely spiritual point of view, lives filled with bitter hatred are not in any way less evil than devastating wars. War assumes so much importance because of the many visual instances of cruelty, but hatred is equally unbeautiful even when it does not materialize itself into outward action. In the same way, epidemics, injuries, and the sufferings of the deathbed invite more attention from the worldly-minded than the agonies of the heart that is heavy with the burden of unquenchable desire.

For the aspirant who is eager to serve without any desire for recognition and credit, everything that thwarts or perverts the release of a full life is worthy of attention, irrespective of whether it is great or small in the opinion of the world. Just as the

Life as integral whole building up or the collapse of empires has a place in the flow of universal life, the fleeting moments of sadness also have their own place in it. The importance of the one should not be measured in terms of the other, and the claims of the one should not be ignored for the claims of the other. The aspirant looks at life as an integral whole, without allowing any part to monopolize his attention at the cost of others.

Even when the aspirant is rendering service that is selfless, he keeps constant guard upon his mind. The aspirant must be humble, honest, and sincere. The service he renders must not be for the sake of

Service inspired by love ensures harmony mere show; it should be an outcome of true love. If the aspirant is inspired by love, his love will enable him to be in complete harmony with other aspirants without being

jealous. If there is not complete harmony among fellow workers, the service that is rendered falls short of the spiritual ideal. Further, if the aspirant renders the outward service without a spirit of love, he is acting from a sense of duty, as in worldly institutions where there are paid workers. In the institutions of the world people work for pay. At best it is a cold sense of duty that prompts them to be efficient. Their work cannot have the inward beauty of work spontaneously done out of love.

The aspirant can best assimilate the lessons of true service if he has the good fortune to be in contact with a Perfect Master. The Master teaches not through preaching but through example. When the Master is seen in his capacity of rendering

Importance of contact with a Master service to humanity, the aspirant is quick to catch that spirit because of his love for the Master. Contact with the Master is

also helpful in imbibing the spirit of cooperation, which the aspirants can cultivate easily because of their common love for the Master. They serve because the Master wants it. They do the Master's work, not their own; and they do it not of their own accord but because they have been entrusted with that work by the Master. Therefore they are all free from any ideas of individualistic claims, rights, or privileges.

They are keen only about the Master's work, ready to serve his cause to the best of their ability when they are called upon to do so, and equally ready to hand over that work to another aspirant if he can do it better.

In cooperation of this type the aspirants are in a way serving each other because the Master's work is accepted by them all as their own. And in being useful to a fellow aspirant in doing the Master's work, the aspirant is rendering a service to him as much as to the Master. In such service there can be no bossing because the aspirant is always conscious that it is the Master's work, which he has accepted as his own, that he is doing. He further knows that, as aspirants, they are all equal; and it is easy for him to cultivate the habit of serving in the spirit of utter humility. If service makes him proud, he might as well not have served. One of the most difficult things to learn is to render service without bossing, without making a fuss about it, and without any consciousness of high and low. In the world of spirituality, humility counts at least as much as utility.

When the Master serves others, he does so not because he is attached to the work but in order to help, and also to set his disciples an example of selfless service. While serving others, he sees himself in them and thus experiences having served himself. In his unwaning blissful feeling of oneness, the Perfect Master knows himself to be at once the master of all and the servant of all. He therefore exemplifies the ideal of service in which there is no enslavement, either of the one who receives service or of the one who renders it. The aspirant can speedily realize the ideal of true service if he has before him the example of a Master. However, the spiritual preparation of the aspirant can never be termed complete unless he has learned the art of rendering service that gives not boredom but joy, that brings not enslavement but freedom, that does not set claims and counterclaims but springs from the spontaneity of free give-and-take, that is free from the burden of personal want, and that is sustained by the sense of ever-renewed fulfillment.

Qualifications of the Aspirant

Part IV

Faith

One of the most important qualifications for the aspirant is faith. There are three kinds of faith: faith in oneself, faith in a Perfect Master, and faith in life. Faith is so indispensable to life that unless it is present in some degree, life itself would be impossible. It is because of faith that cooperative and social life becomes possible. It is faith in each other that facilitates a free give-and-take of love, a free sharing of work and its results. When life is burdened with unjustified fear of one another, it becomes cramped and restricted.

Faith and its forms Children have a natural faith in their elders. They instinctively look to them for protection and help without requiring any letters of introduction. This quality of trusting others persists in later life unless a person is rudely shocked by others who, through self-interest, deceive and exploit him. So, though faith is natural to man, it grows and flourishes in a society where people are reliable, honest, and worthy of faith; and it fades in a hostile environment. Faith in one another becomes complete and steady when it finds its counterpart in those qualities that invite and confirm faith. Being worthy of the faith others place in one and having faith in others are two complementary virtues. They are the conditions for an unhampered flow and development of individual and

collective life.

Unqualified and implicit faith in each other belongs to the world of ideals. In actual practice it exists only in special cases. Though it is very much to be desired, it cannot come unless the world is populated by persons who deserve unlimited faith.

**Importance of faith
in oneself**

This condition requires a perfect development of the qualities of being reliable, steadfast, and invariably helpful. But these qualities that foster mutual faith remain undeveloped unless one has supreme faith in oneself. If an individual has no faith in himself, he cannot develop those qualities that invite and foster faith from others. The confidence that you can remain loyal under all sorts of trying circumstances to your own perception of what is right is the very foundation of the superstructure of a reliable character.

Unshakable faith in oneself is as rare as implicit faith in some other person. Few have developed it to the degree that ensures effective and constructive control of oneself. In most persons faith in

**Secure basis of
self-confidence**

oneself is always being challenged and undone by the constant experience of one's own frailties and failings, which often prove to be unyielding, even when one knows what is right. Self-confidence, which is thus in perpetual danger of being shattered, can be securely established only when the individual has before him the vision of a living example of Perfection, and has faith in it.

Faith in a Perfect Master becomes all-important because it nourishes and sustains faith in oneself and faith in life-in the very teeth of setbacks and failures, handicaps and difficulties, limitations and failings. Life, as a person knows it in himself, or

Faith in a Master

in most of his fellow beings, may be narrow, twisted, and perverse; but life as he sees it in the Master is unlimited, pure, and untainted. In the Master, the aspirant sees his own ideal realized; the Master is what his own deeper self would rather be. He sees in the Master the reflection of the best in himself, which is yet to be but which he will surely one day attain. Faith in the Master therefore becomes the chief motive power for realizing the divinity that is latent in man.

True faith is grounded in the deeper experiences of the spirit and the unerring deliverances of purified intuition. It is not to be regarded

as the antithesis of critical reason but as the unfailing guide of critical reason. When critical reason is implemented by a deep and living faith based on pure intuition, its functioning becomes creative, fruitful, and significant instead of barren, ineffective, and meaningless. On the other hand, many forms of naive credulity cannot be broken through except by the fearless and free working of critical reason.

Faith and critical reasoning

However, it remains true that critical reason can touch and inform only those kinds of faith that are not based upon pure intuition. True faith grounded in pure intuition always remains an imperative that cannot be ultimately reduced to the conclusions of rational intellect. It is not derived from the limited intellect but is more fundamental and primary, with the result that it cannot be silenced by any intellectual acrobatics. This does not mean, however, that faith need at any stage be blind, in the sense that it is not allowed to be examined by critical intellect. True faith is a form of sight and not of blindness. It need not be afraid of the free functioning of critical reason.

The right of testing the Master through critical reasoning has always been conceded to the disciples. But if, after testing and being satisfied about the Perfection of the Master, a disciple shows any wavering of faith, it is a result of a deplorable deficiency in his sincerity of approach and integrity of purpose. As there is much uncritical and undeserved credulity given to claimants of spiritual wisdom, so there is much unjustified wavering of faith in spite of a convincing basis for it in one's own experience. Just as uncritical credulity is ultimately the result of the unconscious operation of many worldly wants, unjustified wavering of faith is also due to the unconscious operation of desires that run contrary to the effective manifestation of a rationalized faith. In the first case desire is the source of unwarranted belief, and in the second case desire is the source of unwarranted doubt. Cravings have a tendency to pervert the functioning of critical reason. An unwavering faith grounded in pure intuition can come only to a mind that is free from the pressure of diverse wants. True faith is therefore a matter of gradual growth. It grows in proportion to the success that the disciple attains in freeing his consciousness from diverse cravings.

Faith must be carefully distinguished from mere intellectual

belief or opinion. When a person has a good opinion about someone, he is said to have a certain kind of faith in him. But this kind of opinion does not have that spiritual potency which

Beliefs and opinions belongs to a living faith in a Perfect Master.

The beliefs and opinions of a person often constitute a very superficial layer of the human psyche. They do not have any integral relationship with the deeper forces of the psyche. They remain in one region of the mind without bringing about any radical changes in the core of personality, which determines the attitude toward life. People hold such beliefs just as they wear clothes, and in times of emergency they tend to change their clothes to suit their immediate purposes. In such cases, beliefs are unconsciously determined by other purposes; the purposes are not consciously determined by beliefs.

Living faith, on the other hand, has the most vital and integral relation with all the deeper forces and purposes of the psyche. It is not held superficially; nor does it hang, like mere intellectual beliefs, in the periphery of consciousness. On the contrary, living faith becomes a powerful factor that reconstructs the entire psyche; it is

Living faith creatively dynamic creatively dynamic. There is no thought unenlivened by it, no feeling unilluminated by it, no purpose not recast by it. For the disciple such living faith in the Master becomes a supreme source of inspiration and unassailable self-confidence. It expresses itself primarily through the spirit of active reliance upon the Master and not merely through some opinion about him. Living faith is not a sort of certificate given by the disciple to the Master. It is an active attitude of confidence in the Master, expressing itself not only through implicit and trustful expectation of help from him but also through the spirit of self-surrender and dedication.

Such fruitful and living faith in the Master is always born of some deep experience that the Master imparts to the deserving disciple. It is fundamentally different from the beliefs people hold either through uncritical acceptance or superficial thinking. Mere intellectual beliefs for the most part have very little spiritual importance.

Living faith born of experience The Master, therefore, is utterly unconcerned with whether the disciple believes in him or in someone else; and he is equally unconcerned with whether the disciple, at any

moment, does or does not believe in him. If in some fortunate case the Master, through his benign intervention, wins for himself the living faith of the disciple (as distinguished from mere belief), it is because he knows that the disciple will be helped through it.

Just as the disciple is testing the Master's capacity to guide him, the Master in turn is testing the disciple's integrity of purpose. The Master is unconcerned whether the disciple doubts him or has faith in him. What he tests is whether the disciple is or is not sincere and wholehearted in his spiritual search and pursuit. The Perfect Master is not at all interested in giving proof of his own divinity to the disciple, except when he feels that such proof is likely to be unfailingly useful and unavoidably necessary for the spiritual benefit of one who has surrendered himself to him.

Maya

Part I *False Values*

Everyone wants to know and realize the Truth, but Truth cannot be known and realized as Truth unless ignorance is known and realized as being ignorance. Hence arises the importance of understanding Maya, or the principle of Ignorance. People read and hear much about Maya, but few understand what it really is. It is not enough to have a superficial understanding of Maya; it is necessary that Maya should be understood as it is, in its reality. To understand Maya, or the principle of Ignorance, is to know half of the Truth of the universe. Ignorance in all its forms must disappear if the soul is to be established in the state of knowledge.

Therefore it is imperatively necessary for humanity to know what is false, to know it to be false, and to get rid of the false by knowing it to be false. What is the essential nature of falsehood? If the true is known as being true or if the false is known as being false, there is no falsehood but only a form of knowledge. Falsehood consists in taking the true as being false or the false as being true, that is, in considering something to be other than what in itself it really is.

Falsehood is an error in judging the nature of things.

Broadly speaking there are two kinds of knowledge: purely intellectual judgments about the facts of existence; and judgments of valuation, which imply the appreciation of the worth or importance of things. Purely intellectual judgments or beliefs derive their importance from being related to values in some way. Divorced

Two kinds of knowledge

from values, they have very meager importance in themselves. For example, no one takes much interest in counting exactly the number of leaves on a particular tree, although from the purely theoretical point of view such information would be a form of knowledge. Such information or knowledge is treated as unimportant because it is not vitally connected with other values. Intellectual knowledge becomes important when it enables man to realize certain values by giving him control over the means to their realization or when it enters into valuation itself as an important factor, modifying or in some other way affecting the accepted values.

Just as there are two kinds of judgment, there are two kinds of falsehood: mistakes in accepting as facts those things that are not facts and mistakes in valuation. Mistakes in valuation can be committed in the following ways: (1) in taking as

Mistakes in valuation

important that which is unimportant, (2) in taking as unimportant that which is important, or (3) in giving to a thing an importance other than the importance it really has. All these falsehoods are creations of Maya. Although Maya includes all falsehoods from the spiritual point of view, there are some falsehoods that count and some falsehoods that do not count very much. If a person takes a throne to be higher than it is, it would be a falsehood, but one that does not matter very much. On the other hand, if a person regards the throne as the be-all and the end-all of his life, that would be a falsehood which substantially affects the course and significance of his life. On the whole, mistakes in valuation are far more effective in misguiding, perverting, and limiting life than mistakes in purely intellectual judgments about certain objective facts.

Mistakes in valuation arise owing to the influence of subjective desires or wants. True values are values that belong to things in their own right. They are intrinsic; and because they are intrinsic, they are absolute and permanent and are not liable to change from time to time

or from person to person. False values are derived from desires or wants. They are dependent upon subjective factors; and being dependent upon subjective factors, they are relative and impermanent, and are liable to change from time to time and from person to person.

For example, an individual who is very thirsty and is in a desert like the Sahara thinks that nothing is more precious than water; while someone who has at hand an abundance of water and who is not very

Examples of relative values

thirsty does not attach the same importance to it. In the same way, a person who is hungry considers food very important, but the individual who has had a full dinner does not even think of food until he is hungry again. The same thing applies to other lusts and longings, which project imaginary and relative values onto those objects that will fulfill those lusts and longings.

The value of sense objects is great or small according to the intensity or urgency with which they are desired. If these lusts and longings increase, the corresponding objects assume greater importance. If they subside in their intensity or

False values derivative and relative

urgency, the objects also lose much of their importance. If the lusts and longings appear intermittently, those objects retain possible value when the lusts and longings are latent and actual value when they are manifested. These are all false values because they are not inherent in the objects themselves. When in the light of true knowledge all the lusts and longings disappear completely, objects vested with importance through the working of these lusts and longings immediately lose all their borrowed importance and appear meaningless.

Just as a coin that is not in current use is treated as false, though it has a kind of existence, the objects of lusts and longings when seen in their emptiness are treated as false, though these objects might continue to have some kind of recognition.

Emptiness of sense objects

They all exist, and they may be known and seen; but they no longer mean the same thing. They hold false promise of fulfillment to an imagination perverted by lusts and longings; yet to tranquil and steady perception, they are seen to have no importance when they are considered as separate from the soul.

When a loved one dies, there is sorrow and loneliness; but this sense of loss is rooted in attachment to the form independently of the soul. It is the form that has vanished, not the soul. The soul is not dead;

**Taking as important
the unimportant**

emotions, and thoughts were centered upon the form; and when through death the form disappears, there is a vacuum, which expresses itself through missing the departed one.

If the form as such had not come to be surcharged with false importance, there would be no sorrow in missing the one who has passed away. The feeling of loneliness, the lingering memory of the beloved, the longing that he or she should still be present, the tears of bereavement, and the sighs of separation—they are all due to false valuation, the working of Maya. When an unimportant thing is regarded as important, we have one principal manifestation of the working of Maya. From the spiritual point of view it is a form of ignorance.

On the other hand, the working of Maya also expresses itself by making an important thing look unimportant. In reality, the only thing that has importance is God; but very few persons are really interested in God for His own sake. If the

**Taking as unimportant
the important**

worldly-minded turn to God at all, it is mostly for their own selfish and mundane purposes. They seek the gratification of their own desires, hopes, and even revenges through the intervention of the God of their imagination. They do not seek God as Truth. They long for all things except the only Truth, which they regard as unimportant. This again is the blinding of vision caused by the working of Maya. People pursue their happiness through everything except God, who is the only unailing source of abiding joy.

The working of Maya also expresses itself by making the mind give to a thing an importance other than the importance it really has. This happens when rituals, ceremonies, and other external religious practices are considered to be ends in themselves. They have their own value as means

Wrong importance

to an end, as vehicles of life, as mediums of expression; but as soon as they assume claims in their own right, they

are being given an importance other than that which belongs to them. When they are considered important in themselves, they bind life instead of serving the purpose of expressing it. When the inessential is allowed to predominate over the essential by giving it wrong importance, one has the third principal form of ignorance concerning valuation. This again is the working of Maya.

Maya

Part II *False Beliefs*

The shackles that hold the soul in spiritual bondage consist chiefly of wrong values or falsehoods concerning valuation. Some falsehoods, in the nature of wrong beliefs, also play an important part in holding the soul in spiritual bondage. False beliefs implement false values, and they in turn gather strength from the false values in which the soul has been hung up. All false beliefs are as much creations of Maya as are false values, and they are used by Maya to keep the soul still in ignorance in its clutches.

Shackles of Maya

Maya becomes irresistible by taking possession of the very seat of knowledge, which is human intellect. Surmounting Maya is difficult because, with the intellect under its sway, Maya creates barriers and upholds false beliefs and illusions. It creates barriers to the realization of the Truth by persistent attempts to sustain and justify erroneous beliefs. The intellect that functions in freedom prepares the way to the Truth, but the intellect that plays into the hands of Maya creates obstacles to true understanding.

Intellect plays into hands of Maya

The false beliefs created by Maya are so deep-rooted and strong that they seem to be self-evident. They take on the garb of veritable

truths and are accepted without question. For example, a person believes that he is his physical body. Ordinarily it never occurs to him that he may be something other than his body. Identification with the physical body is assumed by him instinctively without requiring proof, and he holds the belief all the more strongly because it is independent of rational proof.

False beliefs may seem self-evident

An individual's life is centered around the physical body and its desires. To give up the belief that he is the physical body involves the giving up of all the desires pertaining to the physical body and the false values they imply. The belief that he is his

Identification with physical body

physical body is conducive to the physical desires and attachments; but the belief that he is other than his physical body runs counter to accepted desires and attachments. Therefore the belief that the individual is his physical body becomes natural. It is a belief easy to hold and difficult to uproot. On the other hand, the belief that he is something other than his physical body seems to call for convincing proof. It is difficult to hold and easy to resist. All the same, when the mind is unburdened of all physical desires and attachments, the belief that he is his physical body is seen to be false, and the belief that he is something other than his body is seen to be true.

Even when a person succeeds in shedding the false belief that he is the physical body, he remains a victim of the false belief that he is his subtle body. His life is then centered around the subtle body and *its* desires. To give up the belief that he is the

Identification with subtle body

subtle body involves the giving up of all desires pertaining to the subtle body and the false values they imply. Therefore the belief that he is his subtle body now becomes natural for him, and the belief that he is something other than his subtle body seems to call for convincing proof. But when the mind is unburdened of all desires and attachments pertaining to the subtle body, the person gives up the false belief that he is his subtle body as readily as he gave up the false belief that he was his physical body.

This is not the end of false beliefs, however. Even when a person abandons the false belief that he is his subtle body, he cherishes the illusory belief that he is his mental body. The person cherishes this false belief because he relishes it. Throughout his long life as an

individual soul, he has clung fondly to the false idea of his separate existence. All his thoughts and emotions and activities have repeatedly assumed and confirmed but one affirmation, namely, the existence of the separate "I." To surrender the false belief that he is the ego-mind of the mental body is to surrender all that has seemed to constitute his very existence.

Identification with mental body

In surrendering the false belief that he is his physical or subtle body, it is necessary to surrender various desires and attachments. It is a giving up of something one has had for a long time. In surrendering the false belief that he is his ego-mind, the individual is called upon to surrender the very core of what he has thought himself to be. To shed this last vestige of falsehood is therefore the most difficult thing. But this last falsehood is no more lasting than the earlier falsehoods that had seemed to be unchallengeable certainties. It also has its ending, and it is shed when the soul renounces its craving for separate existence.

Shedding last falsehood

When the soul knows itself to be different from the gross, subtle, and mental bodies, it knows itself to be infinite. As infinite Soul, it does nothing; it merely IS. When the mind is added onto the individualized soul, it appears to think. When the subtle body is added onto the soul with the mind, it appears to desire. When the gross body is added onto these, the soul appears to be engaged in actions. The belief that the soul

Soul is beyond thinking, desiring, and doing

is doing anything is a false belief. For example, an individual believes that *he* is sitting in the chair, but in fact it is the body that is sitting in the chair. The belief that the soul is sitting in the chair is due to identification with the physical body. In the same way a person believes that *he* is thinking, but in fact it is the mind that is thinking. The belief that the soul is thinking is due to identification with the mind. It is the mind that thinks and the body that sits. The soul is neither engaged in thinking nor in any other physical actions.

Of course it is not mere mind or mere body that does the thinking or other physical actions, for mere mind and mere body do not exist. They exist as illusions of the individualized soul, and it is when the soul falsely identifies itself with them that the thinking or the doing of things occurs. The soul, and mental, subtle, and gross bodies taken

together constitute the agent of actions, or the limited “I”; but the soul in its true nature is neither responsible for thinking, for desiring, nor for actions. The illusion that the soul is the mind or the bodies and the illusion that the soul is the agent of thinking, desiring, or actions are created by Maya-which is Illusion and the principle of Ignorance.

In the same way, the belief that the soul experiences the pleasures and the pains of life or is going through the opposites of experience is also false. The soul is beyond the opposites of experience, but it does not know itself as such. And so it takes on the experiences that are characteristic of the opposites because of identification with the mind and the subtle and gross bodies.

Belief that the soul subject to dual experience The soul that is mixed up with the mind and the bodies becomes the recipient of pains and pleasures. Thus all the pleasures and the pains that one is subject to are rooted in ignorance.

When an individual thinks that he is the most miserable person in the world, he is embracing an illusion that comes into existence through Ignorance, or Maya. He is really not unhappy but imagines that he is unhappy because he identifies himself with the mind and the bodies. Of course it is not the mind by itself or the bodies by themselves that can have any experiences of the opposites. It is the soul and the mind and the bodies taken together that become the subject of dual experience; but the soul, in its true nature, is beyond the opposites of experience.

Thus it is the mind and the bodies together that constitute the agent of activities and the subject of dual experiences. However, they do not assume this double role in their own right but only when they are taken along with the soul. It is the mind

Nature of ensoulment of mind and bodies and the bodies, which are ensouled, that together become the agent of activities or the subject of dual experience. The process of ensoulment is based upon ignorance, for the soul in its true nature is eternally unqualified, unmodified, and unlimited. It appears to be qualified, modified, and limited through Ignorance, or the working of Maya.

Maya

Part III
Transcending the Falsehoods of Maya

Countless are the falsehoods that a Maya-ridden person embraces in the stupor of ignorance; and from the very beginning, falsehoods carry within themselves their own insufficiency and bankruptcy.

Discerning falsehood Sooner or later they are known to be falsehoods. This brings one to the question, How does one discern the falsehood as falsehood?

There is no way out of falsehood except by knowing it as falsehood, but this knowledge of falsehood as falsehood would never come unless it was in some way latent in falsehood itself from the very beginning.

The acceptance of falsehood is always a forced compromise. Even in the very depths of ignorance, the soul gives some kind of challenge to falsehood. However feeble and inarticulate it might seem to be in its

In falsehood there is suspicion and fear initial stages, it is the beginning of that search for the Truth which ultimately annihilates all falsehood and all ignorance,

In the acceptance of a falsehood there is an ever-growing restlessness, a deep suspicion, and a vague fear. For example, when an individual considers himself and others to be identical with the gross body, he cannot completely reconcile himself to this belief. In embracing this false belief there is fear of death and fear of losing others. If a person depends for his happiness only upon the possession of forms, he knows in his heart that he is building his

castles on shifting sands, that this surely is not the way to abiding happiness, that the support he so desperately clings to may give way any day. Hence, he is deeply suspicious of his grounds.

The individual is restlessly aware of his own insecurity. He knows that something is wrong somewhere and that he is counting upon *false* hopes. Falsehood is treacherously unreliable. He simply

**Falsehood betrays
itself**

cannot afford to embrace it forever. He might as well garland himself with a poisonous snake or go to sleep on the top of a volcano that is only temporarily inactive.

Falsehood bears the hallmark of being incomplete and unsatisfactory, temporary and provisional. It points to something else. It appears to the person to be hiding something greater and truer than what it seems to be. Falsehood betrays itself, and in doing so leads one on to know the truth.

Falsehoods are of two types: those that arise due to irregular and loose thinking, and those that arise due to vitiated thinking. Falsehoods that arise due to irregular thinking are less harmful than those that arise from vitiated thinking. The un-

Two types of falsehood

truths of a purely intellectual nature arise because of some mistake in the application

of the intellect. Whereas falsehoods that are important from the spiritual point of view arise because of the vitiation of the intellect through the operation of blinding and unreasoning desires.

The difference between these two types of falsehood may be brought out by a physiological analogy. Some disorders of the vital organs of the body are *functional* and some are *structural*. Functional

**Analogy of functional
and structural diseases**

diseases arise because of some irregularity in the functioning of a vital organ. In these cases there is nothing seriously wrong with the structure of the vital organ. It has

merely become sluggish or irregular, and needs only slight stimulation or correction in order to function properly. In structural disorders the disease comes into existence because of the development of some deformity in the structure or constitution of the vital organ. In these cases the disorder of the vital organ is of a much graver nature. It has become damaged or rendered inefficient due to some tangible factor that has affected the very constitution of the organ. Both types of diseases can be corrected, but it is far easier to correct merely func-

tional disorders than to correct structural ones.

Falsehoods that arise due to some irregularity in the application of the intellect are like functional disorders, and falsehoods that arise due to the vitiation of the intellect are like structural ones. Just as the functional disorders are easier to correct than the structural, falsehoods arising out of irregularity in the application of the intellect are easier to correct than those that arise due to the vitiation of intellect. In order to correct a functional disease of a vital organ, all that is necessary is to give it a better tone and strength. If there is a structural disease, it is often necessary to perform an operation. In the same way, if falsehoods arise due to some mistakes in the application of the intellect, all that is necessary is more carefulness in the application of the intellect. But if falsehoods arise due to vitiation of the intellect, it is necessary to purify the intellect. This requires the painful process of removing those desires and attachments that are responsible for vitiating the intellect.

The falsehoods of vitiated thinking spring from initial mistakes in valuation. They arise as a by-product of intellectual activity, which consists in the pursuit of certain accepted values. They come into existence as a part of the rationalization and the justification of accepted values, and they owe their hold upon the human mind to their apparent support of those accepted values. If they did not affect human values or their realization, they would immediately dwindle into insignificance and lose their grip upon the mind. When false beliefs derive their being and vitality from deep-rooted desires, they are nourished by false seeking. If the error in false beliefs is purely intellectual, it is easy to set right. But false beliefs that are nourished by false seeking are the citadels of Maya. They involve much more than intellectual error and are not diminished by mere counterassertions of a purely intellectual nature.

Elimination of desires and attachments that vitiate thinking is not accomplished purely by sheer intellect. This requires right effort and right action.

Clarity of perception from inner purity Not by armchair speculation but by the doing of right things shall spiritual truths be discovered. Honest action is a preliminary to the elimination of spiritual falsehoods. The perception of spiritual truths requires not

merely strenuous and furious thinking but clear thinking, and true clarity of thought is the fruit of a pure and tranquil mind.

Not until the shedding of the last vestige of Maya-created falsehood is God known as *the* Truth. Only when Maya is completely overcome does there arise the supreme knowledge that God is the *only*

God as only Truth

Truth. God alone is real. All that is not God, all that is impermanent and finite, all that seems to exist within the domain of duality, is false. God is one infinite Reality. All divisions that are conceived within this Reality are falsely conceived; they do not actually exist.

When God is considered as divisible, it is due to Maya. The variegated world of multiplicity does not effect the partitioning of God into several different portions. There are different ego-minds, different

God is indivisible

bodies, different forms, but only one Soul. When the one Soul (God) takes different ego-minds and bodies, there are different individualized souls; however, this does not introduce any multiplicity within the one Soul itself. The Soul is and always remains indivisible. The one indivisible Soul is the base of the different ego-minds and bodies, which do the thinking and acting of various types and which go through innumerable types of dual experiences. But the one indivisible Soul is and always remains beyond all thinking and doing and beyond all dual experience.

Different opinions or different ways of thinking do not introduce multiplicity within the one indivisible Soul, for the simple reason that there are no opinions or any ways of thinking within the Soul. All the activity of thinking and conclusions drawn

No opinions or ways of thinking within Soul

therefrom are within the ego-mind, which is finite. The individualized soul as Soul does not think; it is only the ego-mind that thinks. Thinking and the knowledge that comes through thinking are both possible in the state of imperfect and incomplete knowledge that belongs to finite ego-minds. In the individual soul itself there is neither thinking nor the knowledge that comes through thinking.

The individualized soul as Soul is infinite thought and infinite intelligence; there is no division between the thinker and the thinking and the conclusions of thinking, nor the duality of the subject and object. Only the ego-mind with the background of the soul can become the thinker. The individual soul as Soul, which is infinite thought and

infinite intelligence, does not think or have any activity of the intellect.

Soul is infinite thought and intelligence Intellect with its limited thinking comes into existence only with the finite ego-mind. In the completeness and the sufficiency of the infinite intelligence, which is the one

Soul, there is no need for the intellect or its activities.

With the shedding of the last vestige of falsehoods created by Maya, the individualized soul not only knows its reality to be different from the gross, the subtle, or the mental body but it knows itself to be God, who is the *only* Reality. In this state

God the only Reality the soul knows that the mind, the subtle body, and the physical body were all equally the creations of its own imagination, and that in reality they never existed. It knows that through Ignorance it conceived itself as the mind or the subtle body or the physical body. The individual soul knows also that, in a sense, it became the mind, the subtle body, and the gross body, and then identified itself with all these self-created illusions.

Maya

Part IV God and Maya

God is infinite because He is above the limiting opposites of duality. He is above the limited aspects of good and bad, small and great, right and wrong, virtue and vice, happiness and misery; therefore He is infinite. If God were good rather than bad or bad rather than good, or if He were small rather than great or great rather than small, or if He were right rather than wrong or wrong rather than right, or if He were virtuous rather than evil or evil rather than virtuous, or if He were happy rather than miserable or miserable rather than happy—He would be finite and not infinite. Only by being above duality is God infinite.

Whatever is infinite transcends duality; it cannot be a part of duality. That which is truly infinite cannot be the dual part of the finite. If the Infinite is regarded as existing side by side with the finite, it is no longer infinite; for it then becomes the second part of duality. God, who is infinite, cannot descend into duality. So the apparent existence of duality, as infinite God and the finite world, is illusory. God alone is real; He is infinite, one without a second. The existence of the finite is only apparent; it is false; it is not real.

How does the false world of finite things come into existence?

Why does it exist? It is created by Maya, or the principle of Ignorance.

**World of finite things
created by Maya**

Maya is not illusion; it is the creator of Illusion. Maya is not false; it is that which gives false impressions. Maya is not unreal; it is that which makes the real appear unreal and the unreal appear real. Maya is not duality; it is that which causes duality.

For the purposes of intellectual explanation, however, Maya must be looked upon as being infinite. It creates the illusion of finitude, yet it is not in itself finite. All the illusions created by Maya are finite; and the entire universe of duality, which appears to exist due to Maya, is also finite.

Illusion of finitude

The universe may seem to contain innumerable things, but that does not make it infinite. Stars may be countless; there are a huge number, but the total collection of stars is nevertheless finite. Space and time might seem to be infinitely divisible, but they are nevertheless finite. Everything that is finite and limited belongs to the world of Illusion, though the principle that causes this illusion of finite things must, in a sense, be regarded as not being an illusion.

Maya cannot be considered as being finite. A thing becomes finite by being limited by space and time. Maya does not exist in space and cannot be limited by it. Maya cannot be limited in space because space is itself the creation of Maya. Space, with all that it contains, is an illusion and is dependent upon Maya. Maya, however, is in no way dependent upon space. Hence it cannot

**Maya not limited by
space and time**

be finite through any limitations of space. Nor can Maya be finite because of any limitations of time. Though Maya comes to an end in the state of Superconsciousness, it need not be considered finite for that reason. Maya cannot have a beginning or end in time because time itself is a creation of Maya. Any view that makes Maya a happening that takes place at some time and disappears after some time puts Maya in time and not time in Maya. Time is in Maya; Maya is not in time. Time, as well as all happenings in time, is the creation of Maya. Maya is in no way limited by time. Time comes into existence because of Maya and disappears when Maya disappears. God is timeless Reality; thus the realization of God, and the disappearance of Maya, is a timeless act.

Nor can Maya be considered finite for any other reasons. If it were finite, it would be an illusion; and being an illusion, it would not have any potency to create other illusions. Thus Maya is best regarded as being both real and infinite, in the same way that God is usually regarded as being both real and infinite. Among all possible intellectual explanations, the explanation that Maya, like God, is both real and infinite is most acceptable to the intellect of man. Nevertheless, Maya cannot be *ultimately* true. Wherever there is duality, there is finitude on both sides. The one thing limits the other. There cannot be two real Infinities. There can be two huge entities, but there cannot be two *infinite* entities. If we have the duality of God and Maya and if both are regarded as coordinate existences, then the infinite reality of God would be considered as the second part of a duality. Therefore the intellectual explanation that Maya is real does not have the stamp of final knowledge, though it is the most plausible explanation.

There are difficulties in regarding Maya as illusory and also as ultimately real. Thus all attempts of the limited intellect to understand Maya lead to an impasse. On the one hand, if Maya is regarded as finite, it itself becomes illusory; and then it cannot account for the illusory world of finite things. Therefore Maya has to be regarded as being both real and infinite. On the other hand, if Maya is regarded as being ultimately real, Maya itself becomes a second part of the duality of another infinite Reality, namely God. Hence from this point of view, Maya actually seems to become finite and therefore unreal. So Maya cannot be ultimately real, though it has to be regarded as such in order to account for the illusory world of finite objects.

In whatever manner the limited intellect tries to understand Maya, it falls short of true understanding. It is not possible to understand Maya through the limited intellect; it is as unfathomable as God.

God is unfathomable, ununderstandable; so Maya is unfathomable, ununderstandable. Thus it is said that Maya is God's shadow.

Where a person is, there is his shadow also. Where God is, there is this inscrutable Maya. Though God and Maya are inscrutable for the limited intellect working in the domain of duality, they can be

thoroughly understood in their true nature in the final knowledge of Realization. The enigma of the existence of Maya can never be finally solved until after Realization, when it is known that Maya does not exist in Reality.

There are two states in which Maya does not exist: in the original unconscious state of Reality there is no Maya and in the Self-conscious, or Superconscious, state of God there is no Maya. It exists only

**Two states in which
Maya does not exist**

in God's consciousness of the phenomenal world of duality, that is, when there is consciousness of the gross world or of the subtle world or of the mental world. Maya exists when there is no Self-consciousness but only consciousness of the imagined other, and when consciousness is helplessly dominated by the false categories of duality. Maya exists only from the point of view of the finite. It is only as illusion that Maya exists as a real and infinite creator of unreal and finite things.

In the last and the only Truth of Realization, nothing exists except infinite and eternal God. There the illusion of finite things as separate from God has vanished, and with it also has vanished Maya,

**Knowledge of
Realization**

the creator of this illusion. Self-knowledge comes to the soul by looking within, and by overcoming Maya. In this Self-knowledge it not only knows that the different ego-minds and bodies never existed but also that the entire universe and Maya itself never existed as a *separate* principle. Whatever reality Maya ever had is now swallowed up in the indivisible being of the one Soul. The individualized soul now knows itself to be what it has always been—eternally Self-realized, eternally infinite in knowledge, bliss, power, and existence, and eternally free from duality. But this highest form of Self-knowledge is inaccessible to the intellect, and it is incomprehensible except to those who have attained the heights of final Realization.

The Conditions of Happiness

Part I

The Overcoming of Suffering Through Detachment

Every creature in the world is seeking happiness, and man is no exception. Seemingly man sets his heart on many kinds of things, but ultimately all that he desires or undertakes is for the sake of happiness. If he is keen to have power, it is because he expects to derive happiness from its use. If he strives for money, it is because he thinks it will secure the conditions and means for his happiness. If he seeks knowledge, health, or beauty, science, art, or literature, it is because he feels that his pursuit of happiness is directly dependent upon them. If he struggles for worldly success and fame, it is because he hopes to find happiness in their attainment. Through all his endeavors and pursuits, man wants to be happy. Happiness is the ultimate motive power, which drives him in all that he does.

Everyone seeks to be happy, yet most persons are immersed in some kind of suffering. If at times they do get small installments of happiness in their lives, it is neither unadulterated nor abiding. Their lives are never a series of unmixed pleasures. It moves between the opposites of pain and pleasure, which are entwined like darkened clouds and shining rainbows. The moments of pleasure occasionally appearing in their lives soon

vanish-like rainbows, which shine in their splendor only to disappear from the sky. If these moments of pleasure leave any trace, it is of a memory that only augments the pain of having lost them. Such memory is an invariable legacy of most pleasures.

Man does not seek suffering, but it comes to him as an inevitable outcome of the very manner in which he seeks happiness. He seeks happiness through the fulfillment of his desires, but such fulfillment

Desire bears two kinds of fruit

is never an assured thing. Hence in the pursuit of desires, man is also unavoidably preparing for the suffering from their nonfulfillment. The same tree of desire bears two kinds of fruit: one sweet, which is pleasure, and one bitter, which is suffering. If this tree is allowed to flourish it cannot be made to yield just one kind of fruit. Those who have bid for one kind of fruit must be ready to have the other also. Man pursues pleasure furiously and clings to it fondly when it comes. He tries to avoid the impending suffering desperately, and smarts under it with resentment. His fury and fondness are not of much avail, for his pleasure is doomed to fade and disappear one day. And his desperation and resentment are equally of no avail, for he cannot escape the suffering that results.

Goaded by multifarious desires, man seeks the pleasures of the world with unabating hope. His zest for pleasures does not remain unalloyed, however, because even while he is reaching for the cup of

Changing moods

pleasure, he often has to gulp down doses of suffering. His enthusiasm for pleasure is abated by suffering, which often follows in pleasure's wake. He is subject to sudden moods and impulses. Sometimes he is happy and elated, at other times he is very unhappy and downhearted. His moods change as his desires are fulfilled or frustrated. Satisfaction of some desires yields momentary happiness; but this happiness does not last, and it soon leads to the reaction of depression. His moods subject him to ups and downs and to constant change.

Fulfillment of desires does not lead to their termination; they are submerged for awhile only to reappear with

Suffering caused by desires

added intensity. When a person is hungry, he eats to satisfy the desire, but soon feels hungry again. If he eats too much, even in the fulfillment of his desire he experiences pain and discomfort. It is

the same with all the desires of the world; they can only yield a happiness that is fleeting. Even in the very moment of their fulfillment, the happiness they yield has already begun to fade and vanish. Worldly desires can therefore never lead to abiding happiness. On the contrary, they invariably invite unending suffering of many kinds. When an individual is full of worldly desires, a plentiful crop of suffering is unavoidably in store for him. Desire is inevitably the cause of much suffering: this is the law.

If a person experiences or visualizes the suffering that waits upon desires, his desires become mitigated. Sometimes intense suffering makes him detached from worldly life, but this detachment is often again set aside because of a fresh flood of desires. Many persons temporarily lose their interest in worldly objects due to the impact of acute suffering brought on by desires, but detachment must be lasting if it is to pave the way for freedom from desires. There are varying degrees of detachment, and not all of them are lasting.

Mitigation of desires through suffering

Sometimes a person is greatly moved by an unusually strong experience, such as seeing someone die or witnessing a burial or a cremation. Such experiences are thought-provoking, and they initiate long trains of ideas about the futility and emptiness of worldly existence. Under the pressure of such experiences the person realizes that one day he must die and take leave of all the worldly objects so dear to him. But these thoughts, as well as the detachment born thereof, are short-lived. They are soon forgotten, and the person resumes his attachment to the world and its alluring objects. This temporary and passing mood of detachment is known as *shmathan vairagya*, cremation- or burial-ground detachment, because it usually arises when witnessing a cremation or a burial and stays in the mind only while in the presence of the dead body. Such a mood of detachment is as temporary as it is sudden. It seems to be strong and effective while it lasts, but it is only sustained by the vividness of some experience. When the experience vanishes, the mood of detachment also quickly passes, without seriously affecting one's general attitude toward life.

The passing mood of detachment might be illustrated by the story of a person who once saw at the theater a spiritual drama about

Gopichanda, the great Indian king who renounced everything in pursuit of Truth. The drama impressed him so

Illustrative story

deeply that, disregarding all his duties to his family, he joined a band of *bairagis* (wandering ascetics) belonging to the cult of Gopichanda. Renouncing all his former modes of life, he dressed as a bairagi, shaved his head, and sat under a tree, as advised by the other members of the group. At first he plunged into deep meditation, but as the heat of the sun grew stronger his enthusiasm for meditation began to cool down. As the day went on he began to feel hungry and thirsty and became very restless and miserable.

When the members of his family noticed his absence from home, they became worried about him. After some searching they found him sitting under the tree in this miserable plight. He had grown haggard and was plainly unhappy. His wife seeing him in this strange condition was furious and rushed to upbraid him. His mood of detachment had flitted away; and as he was thoroughly tired of his new life, he took her reproach as a boon from heaven. So, silencing her quickly, he put on his turban and ordinary clothes and meekly followed her home.

Sometimes the mood of detachment is more lasting and not only endures for a considerable time but also seriously modifies one's general attitude toward life. This is called *tivra vairagya*, or intense

Intense dispassion

dispassion. Such intense dispassion usually arises from some great misfortune—such as the loss of one's own dear ones or the loss of property or reputation. Under the influence of this wave of detachment, the person renounces all worldly things. *Tivra vairagya* of this type has its own spiritual value, but it is also likely to disappear in the course of time or be disturbed by the onset of a recurring flood of worldly desires. The disgust for the world that a person feels in such cases is due to a powerful impression left by a misfortune, and it does not endure because it is not born of understanding. It is only a severe reaction to life.

The kind of detachment that really lasts is due to the understanding of suffering and its cause. It is securely based upon the unshakable knowledge that all things of this world are

Complete detachment

momentary and passing, and that any clinging to them is bound eventually to be a source of pain. Man seeks worldly objects of pleasure and tries to avoid

things that bring pain, without realizing that he cannot have the one and eschew the other. As long as there is attachment to worldly objects of pleasure, he must perpetually invite upon himself the suffering of not having them-and the suffering of losing them after having got them. Lasting detachment, which brings freedom from all desires and attachments, is called *purna vairagya*, or complete dispassion. Complete detachment is one of the essential conditions of lasting and true happiness. For the person who has complete detachment no longer creates for himself the suffering that is due to the unending thralldom produced by desires.

Desirelessness makes an individual firm like a rock. He is neither moved by pleasure nor by sorrow; he is not upset by the onslaughts of opposites. One who is affected by agreeable things is bound to be af-

Opposites

ected by disagreeable things. If a person is encouraged in his endeavors by an omen considered auspicious, he is bound to be discouraged by one considered to be inauspicious. He cannot resist the discouraging effect of an inauspicious omen as long as he derives strength from an auspicious one. The only way not to be upset by omens is to be indifferent to auspicious as well as inauspicious omens.

The same is true of the opposites of praise and blame. If a person is pleased by receiving praise, he is bound to be miserable when he receives blame. He cannot keep himself steady under a shower of blame as long as he is inwardly delighted by receiving

Praise and blame

praise. The only way not to be upset by blame is to be detached from praise also.

Only then can a person remain unmoved by the opposites of praise and blame. Then he does not lose his equanimity. The steadiness and equanimity that remain unaffected by any opposites is possible only through complete detachment, which is an essential condition of lasting and true happiness. The individual who has complete detachment is not at the mercy of the opposites of experience; and being free from the thralldom of all desires, he no longer creates his own suffering.

Humanity is subject to much suffering, physical and mental. Of these two, mental suffering is the more acute. Those with limited vision think that suffering can only be physical. Their idea of suffering is of some kind of illness or torture

Physical and mental suffering

of the body. Mental suffering is worse than physical suffering. Physical

suffering sometimes comes as a blessing because it serves the purpose of easing mental suffering by weaning away one's attention from the mental suffering.

It is not right to make much of purely physical suffering. It can be borne through the exercise of willpower and endurance. The true suffering that counts is mental. Even yogis who can endure great physical suffering find it difficult to keep free from mental suffering, which is rooted in the frustration of desires. If a person does not want anything, he is not unhappy under any adverse circumstances, not even in the jaws of a lion. The state of complete desirelessness is latent in everyone. And when through complete detachment one reaches the state of wanting nothing, one taps the unfailing inner source of eternal and unfading happiness—which is not based upon the objects of the world but is sustained by Self-knowledge and Self-realization.

The Conditions of Happiness

Part II

Contentment, Love, and God-Realization

Most of man's suffering is self-created through his ungoverned desires and impossible demands. All this is unnecessary for self-fulfillment. If man becomes desireless and contented, he will be free from his self-inflicted suffering. His imagination will not be constantly harassed by feverish reaching out toward things that really do not matter, and he will be established in unassailable peace. When an individual is thus contented, he does not require any solutions to problems, because the problems that confront worldly persons have disappeared. He has no problems, therefore he does not have to worry about their solution. For him the complexities of life do not exist because his life becomes utterly simple in the state of desirelessness.

Contentment free from self-created problems

When a person understands desires as being merely the bondage of the spirit, he decides to give them up; but even when voluntary, this is often a painful process. The suffering that comes from purging the mind of its many desires exists—even when the soul may be ready to renounce them—because this decision of the soul goes counter to the inclination of the ego-mind to persist through its habitual desires. Renunciation of desires curtails the very life of the ego-mind. Therefore it is a process invariably accom-

Suffering of renunciation

panied by acute suffering. But such suffering is wholesome for the soul because it liberates the soul from bondage.

Not all suffering is bad. When suffering leads to the eternal happiness of desirelessness, it should be regarded as a blessing in disguise. Just as a patient may have to suffer an operation at the hands

Analogies

of a surgeon in order to free himself of persistent and malignant pain, the soul has to welcome the suffering of renouncing desires in order to be free from the recurrent and unending suffering caused by them. The suffering the soul has in renouncing desires may be very acute, but it is endured because of a sense of greater freedom that comes when desires gradually disappear from the mind. If an infected swelling on the body is opened and allowed to drain, it gives much pain, but also much relief. Similarly, the suffering from renunciation of desires is accompanied by the compensating relief of progressive initiation into the limitless life of freedom and happiness.

The simple life of freedom and happiness is one of the most difficult things to achieve. Man has complicated his life by the growth of artificial and imaginary desires, and returning to simplicity amounts to the renunciation of desires.

True nature of suffering

Desires have become an essential part of the limited self of man, with the result that he is reluctant to abandon them unless the lesson that desires are born of ignorance is impressed upon his mind through acute mental suffering. When an individual is confronted with great suffering through his desires, he understands their true nature. When such suffering comes, it should be welcomed. Suffering may come in order to eliminate further suffering. A thorn may be taken out by another thorn, and suffering by suffering. Suffering has to come when it is of use in purging the soul of its desires; it is then as necessary as medicine to a sick person.

However, ninety-nine percent of human suffering is not necessary. Through obstinate ignorance people inflict suffering upon themselves and their fellow beings; and then, strangely enough, they ask, "Why should we suffer?" Suffering is often

Suffering caused by dissatisfaction

symbolized by scenes of war: devastated houses, broken and bleeding limbs, the agonies of torture and death. But war does not embody any *special* suffering; people really suffer all the time. They

suffer because they are not satisfied—they want more and more. War is more an outcome of the universal suffering of dissatisfaction than an embodiment of representative suffering. Through their greed, vanity, and cruelty, people bring untold suffering upon themselves and others.

People are not content to create suffering only for themselves but are relentlessly zealous in creating suffering for their fellow beings. Everyone seeks his own happiness even at the cost of the happiness of others, thus giving rise to cruelty and unending wars. As long as he thinks only of his own happiness, he does not find it. In the pursuit of his own individual happiness, the limited self becomes accentuated and burdensome. When someone is merely selfish he can, in the false pursuit of separate and exclusive happiness, become utterly callous and cruel to others; but this recoils upon him by poisoning the very spring of his life. Loveless life is most unlovely; only a life of love is worth living.

Selfish pursuit of happiness

If an individual is desireless, he will not only eliminate much suffering that he causes others but also much of his own self-created suffering. Mere desirelessness, however, cannot yield positive happiness, though it protects one from self-created suffering and goes a long way toward making true happiness possible. True happiness begins when one learns the art of right adjustment to other persons, and right adjustment involves self-forgetfulness and love. Hence arises the spiritual importance of transforming a life of the limited self into a life of love.

Happiness through self-forgetful love

Pure love is rare because in most cases love becomes adulterated with selfish motives, which are surreptitiously introduced into the consciousness by the operation of accumulated bad *sanskaras*. It is extremely difficult to purge the consciousness of the deep-rooted ignorance that expresses itself through the idea of “I” and “mine.” For example, even when a person says that he *loves* his beloved, he often only means that he possessively *wants* the beloved to be with him. The feeling of “I” and “mine” is notably present even in the expression of love.

Selfless love is rare

If a man sees his own son wearing tattered clothes, he does all that he can to give him good clothes and is anxious to see him happy. Under

these circumstances he would consider his own feeling toward his son as that of pure love. But in his quick response to the distress of his son, the part played by the idea of “mine” is by no means inconsiderable. If he happened to see the son of some stranger on the street wearing tattered clothes, he would not respond as he had in the case of his own son. This shows that though he may not be fully conscious of it, his behavior toward his own son was in fact largely selfish. The feeling of “mine” is there in the background of the mind, though it can be brought to the surface only through searching analysis. If his response to the son of a stranger is the same as to his own son, then only can he be said to have pure and selfless love.

Pure love is not a thing that can be forced upon someone, nor can it be snatched away from another by force. It has to manifest from within, with unfettered spontaneity. What *can* be achieved through

Domain of pure love bold decision is the removal of those factors that prevent the manifestation of pure love.

The achievement of selflessness may be said to be both difficult and easy. It is difficult for those who have not decided to step out of the limited self, and it is easy for those who have so decided. In the absence of firm determination, attachments connected with the limited self are too strong to break through. But if a person resolves to set aside selfishness at any cost, he finds an easy entry into the domain of pure love.

The limited self is like an external coat worn by the soul. Just as an individual may take off his coat by the exercise of will, through a bold, decisive step he can make up his mind to shed the limited self and

Need for bold decision get rid of it once and for all. The task that otherwise would be difficult becomes easy through the exercise of a bold and unyielding decision.

Such a decision can be born in his mind only when he feels an intense longing for pure love. Just as someone who is hungry longs for food, an aspirant who wants to experience pure love must have an intense longing for it.

When the aspirant has developed this intense longing for pure love, he may be said to have been prepared

True love awakened only by Master for the intervention of a Perfect Master—who through proper direction and necessary help ushers him into the state of

divine love. Only the Master can awaken pure love through the divine

love that he imparts; there is no other way. Those who want to be consumed in love should go to the eternal flame of love. Love is the most significant thing in life. It cannot be awakened except by coming into contact with the Incarnation of love. Theoretical brooding on love will result in weaving a theory about love, but the heart will remain as empty as before. Love begets love; it cannot be awakened by any mechanical means.

When true love is awakened in the aspirant, it leads him to the realization of God and opens up the unlimited field of lasting and unfading happiness. The happiness of God-realization is the goal of all creation. It is not possible for a person to have the slightest idea of that inexpressible happiness without actually having the experience of Godhood. The idea that the worldly have of suffering or happiness is entirely limited. The real happiness that comes through realizing God is worth all the physical and mental suffering in the universe. Then all suffering is as if it had never been.

Those who are not God-realized can control their minds through yoga to such an extent that nothing makes them feel pain or suffering, even if they are buried alive or thrown into boiling oil. But though the advanced yogis can brave and annul any suffering, they do not experience the happiness of realizing God. When one becomes God, everything else is zero. The happiness of God-realization, therefore, cannot suffer curtailment by anything. The happiness of God-realization is self-sustained, eternally fresh and unfading, boundless, and indescribable. It is for this happiness that the world has sprung into existence.

**Love leads to
God-realization**

**Happiness of
God-realization**

God as Infinite Love

Those who try to understand God through the intellect alone arrive at some cold and dry concept that misses the very essence of the nature of God. It is true that God is infinite Knowledge, infinite Existence, infinite Power, and infinite Bliss; but God is **Essence of God is Love** not understood in His essence until He is also understood as infinite Love. In the Beyond state, from which the entire universe springs and into which it ultimately merges, God is *eternally* infinite Love. It is only when God's love is viewed in the limited context of forms (which arise in the interim period between the appearance of the illusory universe of duality and its merging) that its infinity *seems* to have been impaired.

When God's love experiences itself *in* and *through* the manifested forms of the universe, it goes through the following phases: (1) experiencing itself as extremely limited; (2) experiencing itself as becoming less and less limited and becoming more and **Phases of manifest love** more like infinite love; and (3) experiencing itself to be what it really is—infinite in essence and existence. The experience of limitation in love arises due to the ignorance caused by *sanskaras*, which are the by-products of the evolution of consciousness. And the process of love becoming infinite is characterized by the shedding of these limiting *sanskaras*.

As love, latent in the universe, goes through the early, almost unconscious stages of the various kingdoms, it gradually makes its appearance as lust in the animal kingdom. Its appearance in human consciousness is initially also in the form of lust. Lust is the most

limited form of love in human consciousness. In spite of the clear reference lust has to other persons, it is indistinguishable from undiluted selfishness, because all the objects lust clings to are desired for the sake of and from the viewpoint of the limited and separate self. At the same time, it is a form of love because it has in it some kind of appreciation for others, though this appreciation is completely vitiated by thick ignorance about the true Self.

When human consciousness is completely caught up in the duality of the gross sphere of existence, love cannot express itself as anything other than lust of some type. One may like curry because it tickles one's palate. There are no higher considerations, so it is a form of lust. It is only a craving for the sensations of taste.

Love in gross sphere Mind also has cravings for the bodily sensations of sight, smell, sound, and touch; and it nourishes its crude ego-life through the excitement derived from these sensations. Lust of every type is an entanglement with gross forms, independent of the spirit behind them. It is an expression of mere attachment to sensual objects.

Since in all forms of lust the heart remains unfed and unexpressed, it becomes a perpetual vacuum and is in a state of unending suffering and nonfulfillment. Love that expresses itself as undiluted or one hundred percent lust is in a state of extreme limitation because it is helplessly caught up in ceaseless craving. When the heart is in the clutches of lust, the spirit remains, as it were, in a state of delusion or stupor. Its functioning is severely curtailed and perverted by the limiting ignorance it is subject to. Its higher potentialities are denied expression and fulfillment, and this thwarting and suppression of the life of the spirit entails a state of utter bondage.

Lust is the most limited form of love functioning under the thrall of ignorance. The unambiguous stamp of insufficiency that lust invariably bears is in itself a sign that it is an incomplete and inadequate expression of something deeper that is vast and unlimited. Through the manifold and unending sufferings that are attendant upon undiluted lust and the continued experiences of the frustration it brings, the spirit is ceaselessly registering its unyielding protest against the utter superficiality of a life of unqualified lust. In this manner the irrepressible voice of the

In lust Infinity asserts itself indirectly

infinity of God's love indirectly asserts the imperative claims of its unexpressed but unimpaired reality.

Even in the lowest lustful life of the gross sphere, God is experiencing Himself as a lover; but it is the state of a lover who is completely ignorant about the true nature of himself or of God the

Stages of love

Beloved. It is the state of a lover who is inexorably separated from the divine Beloved by an opaque curtain of ununderstood duality. It is nevertheless the beginning of a long process by which the lover breaks through the enveloping curtain of ignorance and comes into his own truth as unbounded and unhampered Love. But in order to get initiated into infinite love, the lover has to go through two other stages that are characteristic of the subtle and mental spheres.

The lover in the subtle sphere is not free from lust, but the lust he experiences is not undiluted as in the gross sphere. The intensity of lust in the subtle sphere is about half that in the gross sphere. Besides,

Love in subtle sphere

there is no gross expression of lust as in the gross sphere. The lover in the gross sphere is inextricably entangled with gross objects; hence lust finds gross expression. However, the lover in the subtle sphere has gotten free from attachment to gross objects; hence in this case lust remains unexpressed in its gross form. This lust has subtle expressions, but it cannot have gross expressions. Moreover, since about half of the original lust of the gross sphere gets sublimated in the subtle sphere, the lover in the subtle sphere experiences love not as undiluted lust but in a higher form—as longing to be united with the Beloved.

In the gross sphere, then, love expresses itself as lust, and in the subtle sphere it expresses itself as longing. Lust is a craving for sensations and as such is completely selfish in motive. It has utter disregard for the well-being of the worldly

Love as longing

beloved. In longing there is less selfishness; and though it continues to be possessive in a way, the object of love is recognized as having infinite worth and importance. Longing is a less limited form of love than lust. In longing the curtain of duality has become more transparent and less obstructive, since the lover now consciously seeks to overcome duality between the lover and the Beloved by yearning for His presence. In lust

the emphasis is solely on the limited self, and the worldly beloved is completely subsidiary to the gross needs of the self. In longing the emphasis is equally distributed on the self and on the divine Beloved; and the lover realizes that he exists for the Beloved, just in the same way as the Beloved exists for him.

The lover in the mental sphere has an even higher and freer expression of love. In this case, though lust has not completely disappeared, it is mostly sublimated. Only about one-fourth of the original lust of the gross sphere remains, but it remains in a latent form without any expression. In the mental sphere, lust does not have even subtle expression. The lover in the mental sphere is detached from subtle objects; and he is free from possessive longing for the object of love, which is characteristic of the lover in the subtle sphere.

In the mental sphere love expresses itself as complete resignation to the will of God, the Beloved. All selfish desire, including longing for the presence of the Beloved, has disappeared, as now the emphasis is solely on the worth and will of the Beloved and to be united with Him. Selfishness is utterly wiped out, and there is a far more abundant release of love in its pure form. However, even in the mental sphere love has not become infinite, since there is still present the thin curtain of duality that separates the lover from the Beloved. Love is no longer in the clutches of selfishness; but it is still short of being infinite because it is experienced through the medium of the finite mind—just as in the lower spheres it is experienced through the medium of the lower bodies.

Love becomes consciously infinite in being as well as in expression when the individual mind is transcended. Such love is rightly called divine, because it is characteristic of the God state in which all duality is finally overcome. In divine love, lust has completely disappeared. It does not exist even in latent form. Divine love is unlimited in essence and expression because it is experienced by the soul through the Soul itself. In the gross, subtle, and mental spheres, the lover is conscious of being separated from God, the Beloved; but when all these spheres are transcended, the lover is conscious of his unity with the Beloved. The lover loses himself in the being of the

Beloved and knows that he is one with the Beloved. Divine love is entirely free from the thralldom of desires or the limiting self. In this state of Infinity the lover has no being apart from the Beloved: he is the Beloved Himself.

One thus has God, as infinite Love, first limiting Himself in the forms of creation and then recovering His infinity through the different stages of creation. All the stages of God's experience of being a finite lover ultimately culminate in His experiencing Himself as the sole Beloved.

Divine romance

The sojourn of the soul is a thrilling divine romance in which the lover—who in the beginning is conscious of nothing but emptiness, frustration, superficiality, and the gnawing chains of bondage—gradually attains an increasingly fuller and freer expression of love. And ultimately the lover disappears and merges in the divine Beloved to realize the unity of the lover and the Beloved in the supreme and eternal fact of God as infinite Love.

Epilogue

Twelve Ways of Realizing Me

1. Longing

If you experience that same longing and thirst for union with Me as one who has been lying for days in the hot sun of the Sahara experiences the longing for water, then you will realize Me.

2. Peace of mind

If you have the peace of a frozen lake, then too you will realize Me.

3. Humility

If you have the humility of earth, which can be molded into any shape, then you will know Me.

4. Desperation

If you experience the desperation that causes a person to commit suicide and you feel that you cannot live without seeing Me, then you will see Me.

5. Faith

If you have the complete faith that Kalyan had in his Master-in-believing it was night although it was day because his Master said so-then you will know Me.

6. Fidelity

If you have the fidelity that your breath has in keeping you company till the end of your life-even without your constantly feeling it, both in happiness and suffering, never turning against you-then you will know Me.

7. Control through love

When your love for Me drives away your lust for the things of the senses, then you will realize Me.

8. Selfless service

If you have the quality of selfless service unaffected by results similar to that of the sun, which serves the world by shining on all creation-on the grass in the field, on the birds in the air, on the beasts in the forest, on all of mankind with its sinners and saints, its rich and poor-unmindful of the attitude toward it, then you will win Me.

9. Renunciation

If you renounce for Me everything physical, mental, and spiritual, then you will have Me.

10. Obedience

If your obedience is as spontaneous, complete, and natural as light is to the eye or smell to the nose, then you will come to Me.

11. Surrenderance

If your surrenderance to Me is as wholehearted as that of one who, suffering from insomnia, surrenders to sudden sleep without fear of being lost, then you will have Me.

12. Love

If you have that love for Me that Saint Francis had for Jesus, then not only will you realize Me but you will please Me.

-Meher Baba

Glossary

The Glossary is divided into two parts. Part I lists terms used in the text of the *Discourses* and includes all non-English words, names, and selected English terms that call for clarification of their usage. Part II is a brief list of non-English terms and names that commonly appear in other Meher Baba literature.

Most of the non-English terms in the Glossary are from either the Sufi or Vedanta traditions (*Sufism* and *Vedanta* are defined in Part I) and are labeled accordingly by the abbreviation "S." or "V." respectively. The Sufi terms have their origins in the Arabic and Persian languages. The terms drawn from the Vedanta tradition are derived from Sanskrit. Corresponding forms are given for both traditions when appropriate. Words that come from outside these two traditions are labeled by the language of their origin.

Definitions. The terms are defined according to the sense and meaning used by Meher Baba, which may differ occasionally from commonly accepted or traditional usage.

Spelling. The spelling of non-English terms is generally the form used in *God Speaks*; this decision necessitated some changes in the spellings used in earlier editions of the *Discourses* for the sake of consistency. Since the spellings are not phonetic nor based on a scientific scheme of romanization, the pronunciation guide and the phonetic transcriptions should be consulted. Words are entered in the singular or plural depending on the predominant form found in the text; the opposite form is given when appropriate. Plurals of non-

English terms have usually been made by adding the English plural suffix "-s."

Cross-references. There are numerous cross-references in the Glossary, indicated by *see*, *see also*, *see under*, *cf.*, and *q.v.* These will lead the reader either *from* variant or corresponding terms or *to* related ones, under which full or additional information is given.

Bold type. When a term is printed in **bold** type within a definition, it indicates that the reader should also refer to that term for its own full definition.

Abbreviations and symbols used in the Glossary: *adj.*, adjective; *Ar.*, Arabic; *ca.*, circa; *cf.* compare, confer; *d.*, died; *fem.*, feminine; *lit* literally; *Mar.*, Marathi; *Pers.*, Persian; *pl.*, plural; *pron.*, pronounced; *q.v.*, which see; *S.*, Sufi; *sing.*, singular; *Skt*, Sanskrit; *V.*, Vedanta; *var.*, variant spelling or form. The slant or slash (/) between two words denotes "and/or," indicating variant usage or forms found in the text; a word enclosed within two slants is the phonetic transcription of the preceding term.

Pronunciation. The following guidelines are based on English pronunciation as far as possible. Complete accuracy in phonetic transcription has been sacrificed for greater simplicity. Many of the more subtle sound distinctions between and within the various languages often had to be disregarded. The principle aim of the guide is to provide the reader with an approximation of correct pronunciation and stress of terms drawn from a variety of linguistic origins. The vowels and consonants listed below describe only those sounds that actually occur in the Glossary and do not represent all the possibilities in any of the languages concerned.

Pronunciation Guide

Consonants that are pronounced as in English:

b, d, f, j, k, l, m, n, p, t, v, w, y, z

Consonants needing special comment:

- | | |
|----|--|
| bh | b-h in <i>rob him</i> , said quickly. |
| ch | ch in <i>church</i> . |
| dh | dh in <i>adhere</i> . |
| g | always as g in <i>go</i> . |
| gh | guttural g, pron. far back in the throat, similar to r in Parisian French. |

h	as in English but also sounded when occurring at the end of a syllable.
kh	guttural k, as ch in Scottish <i>loch</i> or German <i>ach</i> .
q	k pron. as far back in the throat as possible, but not guttural.
r	lightly rolled.
s, ss	always as s in <i>see</i> , <i>cross</i> .
sh	sh in <i>show</i> .
th (t'h)	t-h in <i>but he</i> , said quickly (never as in <i>the</i> or <i>thin</i>) the apostrophe is added in phonetic transcriptions.

Doubled consonants should be sounded nearly twice as long as single consonants, e.g., *Shakkar* is pron. more as shák-kar than shá-kar.

Vowels used in phonetic transcriptions:

a	a in <i>about</i> , <i>tuna</i> ; final a in Vedantic/Indic terms is often silent, resulting in the variant spellings where the final a is dropped.
aa	a in <i>father</i> , <i>star</i> .
ai	<i>ai</i> in <i>aisle</i> .
ar	closer to a in <i>around</i> than in <i>far</i> .
au	ow in <i>how</i> .
ay	a in <i>fate</i> , <i>say</i> , but without a diphthong glide into ee.
e	e in <i>net</i> .
ee	ee in <i>sweet</i> .
I	i in <i>sit</i> ; final i as y in <i>fancy</i> .
ir	as in <i>ear</i> .
o	o in <i>old</i>
oo	oo in <i>pool</i> .
u	u in <i>full</i> .

Stress. Primary stress is indicated by an acute accent (á) above the stressed vowel or diphthong, e.g., dáaman. Secondary stress in compounds spelled as one word is indicated by a grave accent (à), e.g., Maháabhàarata.

The Glossary has been compiled by the Editors and designed and formatted by the Publisher.

Part I
Terms Used in the Text of the Discourses

abdal (S.) (*sing./pl.*): spiritually advanced souls who can take different physical forms at will.
Pron.: abddáal.

Abraham: the Prophet; the Patriarch. In the Koranic story, Abraham (Ibrahim) is called upon to sacrifice his son Ishmael (Ismail); in the Bible he is called upon to sacrifice his son Isaac.

abrar. See **wali**.

Absolute Vacuum state. See **Nirvana**.

adhyatma-marga (V.): the inner path of spiritual advancement.
Pron.: adhyáatma máarga. *Var.*: adhyatmic marga. Also V.: moksha-marga /móksha máarga/. S.: **tariqat**.

ahadiyat. See under **vidnyani sanskaras**.

Aham Brahmasmi (V.): "I am the Reality"; the affirmation of the God-realized state.
Pron.: ahám brahmáasmi. S.: **Anal Haqq**. See also "I am God"; **Realization**.

Aikya. See **Union**; **Vasl**.

alam-e-jabrut. See **mental sphere**.

alam-e-malakut. See **subtle sphere**.

alam-e-nasut. See **gross sphere**.

amavasya (Skt.): the darkest night of the lunar month.
Pron.: amaaváasya.

Anal Haqq (S.): "I am the Reality"; the affirmation of the God-realized state.
Pron.: anáal haq (sounds like "hock")-V.: **Aham Brahmasmi**. See also "I am God"; **Realization**.

anna bhuvan. See **gross sphere**.

anwaya (V.): synthetic activity of the mind; connective process.
Pron.: ánwayiya.

Arjuna. See under **Krishna**.

aspirant. See **sadhak**; **yogi**.

astral body: the form that experiences the astral world, which serves as a link between the **gross** and **subtle** worlds.
See also **semisubtle world**. (For further information see *God Speaks*.)

atma (V.): the soul.

Pron.: áatrna. *Var.*: atman. S.: jan /jaan/; ruh /rooh/.

Atmapratisthapana. See **Sahaj Samadhi**.

Aum. See under **Om Point**.

Avatar, the (*also* Avatarhood, Avataric) (V.): the total manifestation of God in human form on earth, as the Eternal Living **Perfect Master**; the direct descent of Reality into Illusion; the Savior, the Highest of the High, the Ancient One. Also called the **God-Man**, the **Messiah**, the **Buddha**, the **Christ**, the **Rasool**. *Pron.*: avatáar or avataar *Var.*: Avataara. S.: Saheb-e-Zaman /sáaheb ay zamáan/.

Azad-e-Mutlaq. See **Jivanmuktas**.

Baba Farid/Fariduddin. See **Ganj - e - Shakkar**.

Bahlul: a Persian king who left all and became a great mystic.
Pron.: báahlool.

bairagi (Hindi) (*pl.-s*): wandering ascetics or renunciates.
Pron.: báiraagi (-z).

Baqah-Billah. See **Sahaj Samadhi**.

Beyond state: a state of God beyond time and space; also the highest state, in which God in manifested form is infinitely conscious of both Reality and Illusion. (See *God Speaks* for further information).

Bhagavad Gita. See under **Krishna**.

bhakta (V.) (pl.-s): a devotee.

Pron.: bhákta (-z).

bhakti (V.): devotion or love.

Pron.: bhákti. See also **para-bhakti**.

bhas (V.) (sing.): illusion.

Pron.: bhaass. *Var.*: bhasa. Cf. **Maya**.

Bible. See under **Abraham; Jesus Christ**.

Brahmi Bhoots. See **Majzoobs-e-Kamil**.

Buddha: Gautama Buddha, the Enlightened One; the **Avatar** (q.v.) whose teachings come to us through Buddhism.

Pron.: búddha; gáutama búddha. *Var.*: Siddhartha Gautama.

Buddha, the: the Enlightened One, the **Avatar** (q.v. for full definition). *Pron.*: búddha.

causal body. See **karan sharir; manas; mental body**.

Chishti, Muinuddin, Khwaja: 12th century Sufi **Perfect Master** of Ajmer, India.

Pron.: chíshti, muéenuddín, khwáaja. *Var.*: Khwaja Saheb; Moenuddin Chisti.

Christ, the: the **Messiah**, the **Savior**, the **Avatar** (q.v. for full definition). See also **Jesus Christ**.

Christianity. See under **Jesus Christ**.

consciousness, planes of. See **planes of consciousness**.

Creation Point. See **Om Point**.

darshan (V.): the act of seeing; folding of hands in adoration or bowing at the feet to express devotion to the one worshipped; silent audience with **saints and Masters**; public veneration. *Pron.*: dárshan. *Var.*: darshana.

dharma shastra. See under **karma-kanda**.

divine powers. See **occult experiences/powers; siddhis**.

dnyan (V.): knowledge; knowledge of spiritual truths; gnosis.

Pron.: dnyaan (soft d). *Var.*: dnyana; jnana. S.: irfan /irfáan/. See also under **vidnyani sanskaras**.

ego-mind: the seat of individuality (i.e., the individualized soul) that experiences the impressions through the **gross, subtle, and mental** bodies.

Emancipation. See under **Freedom**.

enchantment. See **hairat**.

enlightenment. See **Illumination**.

Everything, the: God, the Infinite; the Everything, being infinite, includes the **Nothing**.

fana (S.) (pl.-s): annihilation, dissolution; the annihilation of some aspect of the false self (ego), which precedes entering each **plane of consciousness**. *Pron.*: fanaa(-z).

fana-e-batili (S.): annihilation of the false; the merging into the second **plane of consciousness**. *Pron.*: fanáa ay báatili.

fana-e-jabruti (S.): annihilation of all desires; the merging into the fifth **plane of consciousness**. *Pron.*: fanáa ay jabróoti. *Var.*: fana-e-jabaruti.

fana-e-mahabubi (S.): annihilation of the self (lover) in the Beloved (God); the merging into the sixth **plane of consciousness**. *Pron.*: fanáa ay mahabóobi.

fana-e-malakuti (S.): annihilation leading toward freedom; the merging into the fourth **plane of consciousness**. *Pron.*: fanáa ay malakóoti.

fana-e-zahiri (S.): annihilation of the apparent; the merging into the third **plane of consciousness**,

- where one experiences **videh sa-madhi**, or the state of divine coma.
Pron.: fanáa ay záahiri. *Var.:* fana-e-zaheri.
- Fana-Fillah** (S.): the "I am God" state of the **Perfect Ones**; final annihilation of the false self in God; the final merging into the seventh **plane of consciousness**.
Pron.: fanáa fillááh. V.: **Nirvikalpa state**. See also **Realization**.
- Fana, final. See under **Nirvana**.
- Francis, Saint** (1181 or 2-1226): of Assisi /aasséezi/, Italy.
- Freedom**: the release from the bondage of births and deaths (reincarnation); Emancipation. See also **Liberation; Mukti**.
- Ganj-e-Shakkar** (*also* Baba Fariduddin): the well-known **wali** who was trapped in the state of enchantment (**hairat**) but was finally led on to become a **Perfect Master** by his Master, Khwaja Muinuddin **Chishti**.
Pron.: ganj ay shákkar; báabaa faréeduddin. *Var.:* Baba Farid Ganje-Shakar.
- Ghausali Shah**: a Muslim saint of northern India.
Pron.: ghausáali shaah. *Var.:* Ghausali Shah.
- God-intoxicated, the. See **masts; unmatta**.
- God-Man**: the direct descent of God on earth in human form; God-become-man; the **Avatar** (q.v. for full definition). See also **Man-God**.
- God-realization. See **Realization**.
- God state**: a state of God; the state in which the soul experiences itself as God.
- Gopichanda**: the great Indian king who renounced everything in pursuit of Truth. *Pron.:* gópitchanda.
- gross body/form**: the physical body or form, which functions in the **gross sphere**.
S.: jism-e-kasif /jism ay kaséef/. V.: **sharir; sthul sharir**.
- gross sphere/world**: the world of matter; the visible and invisible worlds in creation, which can be experienced by the **gross body** through one's dense, gross impressions.
S.: alam-e-nasut /áalam ay naasóot/. V.: anna bhuvan /ánna bhúvan/; sthul bhuvan /st'hul bhúvan/.
- hairat** (S.): enchantment. *Pron.:* háirat.
- haram** (S.): forbidden or prohibited, in Islam. *Pron.:* haráam.
- Hinduism. See under **Krishna; Rama; Vedanta**.
- "**I am God**": the affirmation of the God-realized state.
S.: **Anal Haqq**. V.: **Aham Brahmasmi**. See also **Realization**.
- Ignorance. See **Maya**.
- Illumination**: the state of spiritual enlightenment in which the mind sees the Soul (God) but has not realized God. Cf. **Realization**.
- Illusion. See **bhas; Maya**.
- impressions. See **sanskaras**.
- Insan-e-Kamil. See **Perfect One**.
- involution of consciousness, planes of. See **planes of consciousness**.
- irfan. See **dnyan**.
- Ishmael and Isaac. See under **Abraham**.
- Islam. See under **Muhammad, the Prophet; Sufism**.
- Jalaluddin Rumi. See **Rumi, Jalaluddin, Maulana**.
- Jami** (1414-1492): Persian poet and mystic. *Pron.:* jáami.

Jan. See **atma**.

Jesus Christ: the Son of God; the **Avatar** (q.v.) whose teachings come to us through Christianity and the New Testament of the Bible. See also **Christ, the**.

jism-e-altaf. See **karan sharir**; **manas**; **mental body**.

jism-e-kasif. See **gross body**; **sharir**; **sthul sharir**.

jism-e-latif. See **pran**; **subtle body**; **sukshma sharer**.

Jivanmuktas (V.) (*sing.* Jivan-mukta): those who have attained the "**I am God**" state with creation-consciousness but are free of spiritual duties; liberated incarnate souls.

Pron.: jeevanmuktaz. S.: Azad-e-Mutlaq (*sing.*) /aázaad ay mútlaq/; Salik-e-Kamil (*sing.*) /sáalik ay káamil/.

Jivanmukti. See under **Mukti**.

jnana. See **dnayan**.

Kabir (1440-1518): **Perfect Master** and poet of northern India. *Pron.*: kabéer.

Kalyan: (1) favorite disciple of the Perfect Master Swami **Ramdas Samarth**, mentioned in the discourse "True Discipleship"; (2) Kalyan (mentioned in the "Epilogue: Twelve Ways of Realizing Me"), also known as Kamal, favorite disciple of **Kabir**, the Perfect Master. *Pron.*: kalyáan; kamáal.

Kamal. See under **Kalyan**.

Karan sharir (V.): the causal or **mental body**; the seat of the mind.

Pron.: káaran sharéer. *Var.*: karana sharira. S.: jism-e-altaf /jism ay áltáaf/. See also **manas**.

karma (V.) (*adj.* karmic): action, work; effect; fate. The natural and necessary happenings in one's life, preconditioned by one's past lives. *Pron.*: káarma or kárma.

karma-kanda (V.): external conformity and adherence to dharma shastra (religious injunctions and traditions); orthodoxy.

Pron.: kaárma káanda; dhárma sháastra. S.: **shariat**.

karma-yoga (V.): the **yoga** of selfless action; yoga through the selfless performance of duties. *Pron.*: kárma yóga.

karma-yogi (V.): **one who practices the yoga** of selfless action. *Pron.*: kárma yógi. *Var.*: karmayogin.

kasturi-mriga (Skt): musk deer; a deer whose navel yields musk. *Pron.*: kastóori mréega.

Kauravas. See under **Krishna**.

Khwaja Saheb. See **Chishti, Muinuddin, Khwaja**.

Koran. See under **Abraham**; **Muhammad, the Prophet**.

Krishna: the **Avatar** (q.v.) whose history is narrated in the Hindu epic the Mahabharata and whose teachings come to us through Hinduism. His discourse to the warrior Arjuna just before battle against the Kauravas is known as the Bhagavad Gita.

Pron.: krishna; maháabhàarata; arjóona; káuravaz (>/>); bhagavad géetaa. See also **Radha-Krishna**.

Kutub. See **Qutub**.

lahar (V.): impulse; wave, ripple; the whim of God that caused creation. *Pron.*: lahár. *Var.*: lahari.

Layla. See **Majnun and Layla**.

Liberation: release from the cycle of births and deaths (reincarnation).

S.: Najat /najáat/. V.: **Moksha**; **Mukti**. See also **Freedom**.

Mahabharata. See under **Krishna**.

Mahapralaya (V.): the great dissolution of creation at the end of a cosmic cycle.

Pron.: maháapràlaiya. S.: Qiamat /qiyaáamat/.

mahapurush. See **wali**.

Majnun and Layla: the Islamic tale of Majnun's one-pointed love for Layla has its origins in Arabia and is thought to be based on a true story.

Pron.: majnóon; láyla. *Var.*: Majnu; Laila; Leila.

Majzoobiyat. See **Videh Mukti**.

Majzoob-Saliks. See **Paramhansas**.

Majzoobs-e-Kamil (S.) (*sing.* Majzoob-e-Kamil): God-merged souls of the seventh **plane of consciousness** who are divinely absorbed and overpowered but who retain the **gross body** for a time.

Pron.: majzóobz ay káamil. *Var.*: Majzubs. V.: Brahmī Bhoots /bráhmī bhoots/; Videh Muktas /vidáyh múktaz/.

manas (V.) (*sing.*): *lit.* mind; the causal or **mental body**; the seat of the mind.

Pron.: mánass. *Var.*: mana. S.: jism-e-altaf /jism ay altáaf/. See also **karan sharir**.

Man-God: man-become-God; a **Perfect Master** (q.v. for full definition).

S.: **Qutub**; **Salik-e-Mukammil**. V.: Param Mukta /páram múkta/; **Sadguru**. See also **God-Man**.

mano bhuvan. See **mental sphere**.

Manonash. See **Nirvana**.

Master: the term most frequently used throughout the text for **Perfect Master** (q.v. for full definition),

Man-God, or **Sadguru**.

Var.: Masters of wisdom.

Masters of wisdom. See **Master**; **Perfect Master**.

masts (S.) (*sing.* mast;/fem. *sing.* mastani): souls on the spiritual **path** experiencing the state of God-intoxication (masti).

Pron.: masts (rhymes with "trusts"); mastáani; másti. See also **unmatta**.

Maya (V.) (*adj.* mayavic): Illusion, Ignorance; the shadow of God.

Pron.: máiyaa; maiyáavik. S.: **Mejaz** /mejáz/. Cf. **bhas**.

Mejaz. See **Maya**.

mental body/form: the causal body, which functions in the **mental sphere**; the seat of the mind.

S.: jism-e-altaf /jism ay altáaf/. V.: **karan sharir**; **manas**. See also **ego-mind**.

mental sphere/world: the sphere consisting of the fifth and sixth **planes of consciousness** as experienced by the **mental body** through one's mental impressions, which are finer and more feeble (i.e., much less dense) than the subtle impressions.

S.: alam-e-jabrut /áalam ay jabróot/. V.: mano bhuvan /máno bhúvan/.

Messiah, the: the expected Savior; the **Avatar** (q.v. for full definition).

Moksha (V.): ordinary **Mukti**, or the **Liberation** achieved by most souls, i.e., the release from the cycle of births and deaths (reincarnation). *Pron.*: móksha. S.: Najat /najáat/.

moksha-marga. See **adhyatma-marga**.

Muhammad, the Prophet: the **Rasool**; the **Avatar** (q.v.) whose teachings come to us through Islam and the Koran. *Pron.*: muháammad. *Var.*: Mohammed.

Muinuddin Chishti. See **Chishti**, **Muinuddin**, **Khwaja**.

mujahida. See **sadhana**.

mukam-e-afasan. See **muqam-e-afsan**.

Mukta. See under **Mukti**.

Mukti (V.): **Liberation**; the release from the cycle of births and deaths (reincarnation). There are four types of Mukti: (1) ordinary Mukti, or **Moksha**; (2) **Videh Mukti**; (3) Jivanmukti, of the **Jivanmuktas**; (4) **Param Mukti**,

of the **Perfect Masters**.
Pron.: miikti; jëevanmúkti; páram múkti. S.: Najat /najáat/.

muqaddar. See **prarabdha**.

muqam. See under **muqam-e -afsan**.

muqam-e-afsan (S.): abode of delusion; the illusion of being at the end of the spiritual **path** when one is still traversing it.
Pron.: muqám ay afsáan. *Var.*: mukam-e-afasan. (muqam: a station or place. V.: sthan /st'haan/.)

mystic powers. See **occult experiences/powers; siddhis**.

Najat. See **Liberation; Moksha; Mukti**.

neti neti (V.): *lit.* not-this, not-this; the principle of negation. *Pron.*: nátyi nátyi

Nirvana (V.): total and final absorption in divinity (God); annihilation of the mind (self); the Absolute Vacuum state; the first stage of the final **Fana**.
Pron.: nirváana. Also V.: Manonash /manonáash/.

Nirvikalpa Samadhi (V.): divinity in expression; the experience of the "I am God" state of the **Perfect Ones**.
Pron.: nirvikálpa samáadhi.

Nirvikalpa state (V.): the "I am God" state of the **Perfect Ones**.
Pron.: nirvikálpa. S.: **Fana-Fillah**. See also **Realization**.

Nothing, the: the infinite shadow of the **Everything** (God).

nuqush-e-amal. See **sanskaras**.

occult: beyond the range of ordinary experience; hidden, concealed, not revealed; psychic, supernatural.

occult experiences/powers: experiences and powers that occur in the **gross and semisubtle** spheres, including the **astral**

world. On the first three **planes of consciousness** (q.v.), the occult powers are known as mystic powers. The powers of the fourth plane are the divine, almighty powers of God.
 See also **siddhis**. (For further information see *God Speaks*.)

occultism: occult theory or practice; belief in or study of the action or influence of occult or supernatural powers and forces.

occultism as an art: applied occultism; the use of occult powers, especially for spiritual purposes.

occultism as a science: the study of occult phenomena.

Om Point (V.): Creation Point; the point from which all creation springs.
 (Om: the primal, oceanic sound at the beginning of creation; the sacred syllable. *Pron.*: om. *Var.*: Aum.)

Oversoul: the supreme, universal Soul; Almighty God.
Var.: Over-Soul. V.: **Paramatma**. See also Glossary Part II under **Ahuramazda; Allah; Yazdan**.

para-bhakti (V.): divine love. *Pron.*: pará bhákti.

Paramatma (V.): the **Oversoul** (q.v.); the supreme, universal Soul; Almighty God.
Pron.: paramáatma. *Var.*: Paramatman.

Paramhansas (V.) (*sing.* Paramhansa): **Perfect Ones** who are sometimes totally absorbed in God (called Majzoob-Saliks) and at other times conscious of creation (called Salik-Majzoobs).
Pron.: paramhánsaz (nasalized n). *Var.*: Paramahansas. S.: Majzoob-Saliks /majzóob sáaliks/; Salik-Majzoobs /sáalik majzóobz/.

Param Mukta. See **Perfect Master**.

Param Mukti. See under **Mukti**.

path, the: the inner path of spirit-

ual advancement that the aspirant traverses through the **planes of consciousness** (q.v.). S.: **tariqat**. V.: **adhyatma-marga**.

Perfect Master: a Man-God. A

God-realized soul who retains God-consciousness and creation-consciousness simultaneously, and who works in creation to help other souls toward the **Realization** of God. Referred to most frequently throughout the text simply as "**Master**." Var.: Masters of wisdom. S.: **Qutub**; **Salik-e-Mukammil**. V.: Param Mukta /páram múkta/; **Sadguru**.

Perfect One: one who has realized God and attained Perfection in human form.

S.: Insan-e-Kamil /insdan ay kdamil/. V.: Shiv-Atma /shiv áatma/.

Perfection: a state of God-realization. See also Realization.

planes of consciousness (also planes of involution of consciousness): the states of consciousness experienced by the soul while traversing the spiritual **path**. During the first six planes, the soul gradually withdraws the focus of its consciousness from the **gross sphere** to the **subtle sphere** and then to the **mental sphere**: this is involution. At the seventh plane the soul experiences **Realization** and knows itself to be God. (See *God Speaks* for further information.)

prakriti (V.): the phenomenal world; creation. Also, the unmanifest cosmic energy that in conjunction with **Purusha** generates phenomenal existence. Pron.: prakriti.

pran (V.): vital energy; the **subtle body** (the seat of desires and vital forces). Pron.: praan. Var.: prana. S.: jism-e-latif /jism ay latéef/. See also **sukshma sharir**.

pran bhuvan. See **subtle sphere**.

prarabdha (also prarabdha sanskar-as) (V.): the inevitable destiny of each lifetime; the impressions (sanskaras) that predetermine the destiny of a person.

Pron.: prárabdha (sanskáaraz). S.: muqaddar /muqáddar/.

psychic. See under **occult**.

purna vairagya (V.): complete dis-passion or detachment; total renunciation. Pron.: póorna vairáagya.

Purusha (V.): the supreme Spirit, which in conjunction with **prakriti** causes phenomenal existence. Pron.: purúsha. Var./Purush.

Qiamat. See **Mahapralaya**.

Qutub (S.): lit. hub or axis; the spiritual center of the universe; a **Perfect Master** (q.v. for full definition).

Pron.: qútub. Var.: Kutub; Qutb. Also S.: **Salik-e-Mukammil**. V.: Param Mukta /páram múkta/; **Sadguru**.

Radha-Krishna: Radha was the milkmaid whose unsurpassed love for the Lord **Krishna** (q.v.) earned her the status of being His beloved. Pron.: ráadhaa krishna.

rah-e-tariqat. See **tariqat**.

rahav. See **sadhak**; **yogi**.

Rama: the Avatar (q.v.) whose life is the subject of the Hindu epic the Ramayana and whose teachings come to us through Hinduism.

Pron.: ráama; raamáayana. Var.: Ram. See also **Sita-Ram**.

Ramdas Samarth, Swami: 17th century **Perfect Master**.

Pron.: ráamdaass samárt'h, swáami. Var.: Swami Ramdas.

Rasool (S.): the Messenger of

God; the **Avatar** (q.v. for full definition).
Pron.: rasóol. See also **Muhammad, the Prophet**.

Realization (also God-realization, Self-realization):
 when the soul experiences itself as God; the "**I am
 God**" state.
 S.: **Fana-Ffflah**. V.: **Nirvikalpa state**.

rishis (V.) (*sing*, rishi): sages; seers.
Pron.: rishiz.

ruh. See **atma**.

Rumi, Jalaluddin, Maulana (ca. 1207-1273): **Sufi
 Perfect Master**
 and Persian poet; originator of dervish dancing and
 disciple of **Shams-e -Tabriz**.
Pron.: róomi, jaláaluddin, maulána. *Var.* Jalal ad-
 Din ar-Rumi; Maulana Rumi.

Sadguru (V.) (*pi -s*): Guide to the Truth; a **Perfect
 Master** (q.v. for full definition).
Pron.: sádguru (-z). S.: **Qutub; Salik-e-Mukammil**.
 Also V.: Param Mukta /páram múkta/.

sadhak (V.): an aspirant; one who traverses the spiritual
path.
Pron.: sáadhak. *Var.*: sadhaka. S.: rahrav /ráahrav
 (soft v)/. See also **yogi**.

sadhana (V.) (*pi -s*): practice, striving, endeavor;
 directing toward the goal.
Pron.: sáadhana (-z). S.: mujahida /mujáhahida/.

Sahaj Samadhi (V.): the spontaneous experience of the
Perfect Masters and the **Avatar** of their effortless
 and continuous life of **Perfection**; divinity in
 action.
Pron.: saháj samáadhi. S.: Baqa-Billah /baqáa
 billáah/. Also V.: Atmapratisthapaná
 /áatmapratistháapana/.

Sahajawastha (V.): the effortless state of
 infinite consciousness with unlimited
 spontaneity and uninterrupted Self-
 knowledge. *Pron.*:
 sahajáawastháa.

sahavas (V.) (*sing./pi*): dwelling together; in the
 company of. *Pron.*: sahaváass (soft h). *Var.*:
 sahavasa.

Saheb-e-Zaman. See **Avatar, the**.

saint: one eminent for piety or virtue; a spiritually
 advancing soul on the inner **planes of con-
 sciousness**. (See *God Speaks* for further
 information.)

Salik-e-Kamil. See **Jivanmuktas**.

Salik-e-Mukammil (S.): a supremely **Perfect One**; a
Perfect Master (q.v. for full definition).
Pron.: sáalik ay mukámmil. Also S.: **Qutub**. V.:
 Param Mukta /páram múkta/; **Sadguru**.

Salik-Majzoobs. See **Paramhansas**.

samadhi (V.) (*pi -s*): meditative trance; absorption,
 union.
Pron.: samáadhi (-z). See also **Nirvikalpa
 Samadhi; Sahaj Samadhi; videh samadhi**. Cf.
samadhi (tomb), Glossary Part II.

Samarth, Swami Ramdas. See **Ramdas Samarth,
 Swami**.

sanskaras (V.) (*sing*, sanskara; *adj.* sanskaric):
 impressions; accumulated imprints of past
 experiences, which determine one's desires and
 actions.

Pron.: sanskáaraz. *Var.*: samskara. S.: nuqush-e-
 amal (*pl.*) /nuqóosh ay aamáal. See also
**prarabdha sanskaras; vidnyani sanskaras;
 yogayoga sanskaras**.

sant. See **saint; wali**.

Self-realization. See **Realization**.

semisubtle world: a stage between the **gross** and
subtle spheres in which the disembodied soul
 experiences the heaven and hell states through
 the **astral body** (q.v.).

Shams-e-Tabriz (*d.* 1247): **Sufi Perfect Master** and
 Master of Jalaluddin **Rumi**.
Pron.: shamss ay tabréez. *Var.*: Shams ad-Din;
 Shamsi Tabriz.

shariat (S.): external conformity to
 religious injunctions and tradi-

tions; orthodoxy.

Pron.: sharéeyat. *Var.*: sharia. *V.*: **karma-kanda**.

sharir (V.): *lit.* body; the physical form or **gross body**.

Pron.: sharéer. *Var.*: sharira. *S.*: jism-e-kasif /jism ay kaséef/. Also *V.*: **sthul sharir**. See also **karan sharir**; **sukshma sharir**.

Shivaji (1630-1680): founder of the Maratha kingdom in India; social reformer, military leader, and champion of religious tolerance. *Pron.*: shiváaji. *Var.*: Sivaji.

Shiv-Atma. See **Perfect One**.

shmashan vairagya (V.): *lit.* burial- or cremation-ground detachment; sudden but temporary detachment.

Pron.: shmasháan vairágya. *Var.*: smashan vairagya.

Siddha (V.): one who has realized God and attained **Perfection**. *Pron.*: síddha. See also **Realization**.

siddhis (V.) (*sing*, *siddhi*): divine or mystic powers; also occult powers.

Pron.: síddhiz. *S.*: tajalliyat (*sing*. *tajalli*) /tajalliyáat; tajállí/. See also **occult experiences/powers**.

Sita-Ram: Sita was the consort and beloved of Lord **Rama** (q.v.). *Pron.*: séetaa raam.

sthan. See under **muqam-e-afsan**.

sthul bhuvan. See **gross sphere**.

sthul sharir (V.): the physical form or **gross body**.

Pron.: st'hul sharéer. *Var.*: sthula sharira. *S.*: jism-e-kasif /jism ay kaséef/. Also *V.*: **sharir**.

subtle body/form: the vital energy force (**pran**), which functions in the **subtle sphere**; the vehicle of desires and vital forces.

S.: jism-e-latíf /jism ay latéef/. *V.*: **pran**; **sukshma sharir**.

subtle sphere/world: the sphere consisting of the first four **planes of consciousness** as experienced by the **subtle body** through one's subtle impressions, which are less

dense than the gross impressions. The fourth plane serves as the threshold to the **mental sphere** but is neither fully subtle nor mental. *S.*: alam-e-malakut /áalam ay mala-kóot/. *V.*: pran bhuvan /praan bhúvan/. See also **semisubtle world**.

Sufism (*also* Sufi, *pl.* Sufis): mysticism in which the goal is to purge the heart of everything but God, through spiritual contemplation and ecstasy, and to eventually achieve total absorption in God. Such mysticism, whose beginnings are lost in antiquity, is an expression of the way of life recurring after every advent of the **Avatar** (q.v.) by those who adhere to the very kernel of His teachings. Adherents of the esoteric teachings of **Muhammad, the Prophet**, came to be known as Sufis. *Pron.*: sóofism; sóófi (-z).

sukshma sharir (V.): the **subtle body**, which is the vehicle of desires and vital forces.

Pron.: sóokshma sharéer. *S.*: jism-e-latíf /jism ay latéef/. See also **pran**.

tajalliyat. See **siddhis**.

tariqat (S.): the way; the inner **path** of spiritual advancement.

Pron.: taréeqat. *Var.*: tarikat; tariqa. Also *S.*: rah-e-tariqat /raah ay taréeqat/. *V.*: **adhyatma-marga**.

tivra vairagya (V.): intense dispassion, detachment, or renunciation. *Pron.*: téevra vairágya.

Union: the state of being united with God, the Infinite. *S.*: **Vasl**. *V.*: Aikya /áikya/.

unmatta (V.): one who is in the state of unsubdued God-intoxication, heedless of worldly standards and values; frantic. *Pron.*: óonmatta. See also **masts**.

vairagya. See **bairagi**; **puma**

vairagya; shmashan vairagya; tivra vairagya.

wali. See **wali**.

Vasl (S.): **Union**; the state of being united with God, the Infinite. *Pron.*: vasl. V.: Aikya /áikya/.

Vedanta (also Vedantic, -ist, -ists): the system of Hindu philosophy (derived from and dependent upon the thoughts expressed in the Vedas) that is concerned with the ultimate Reality, the **Liberation** of the soul, and the soul's identity with the **Oversoul**.

Pron.: vedánta; váydaz. *Var.*: Vedantism.

Videh Muktas. See **Majzoobs-e-Kamil**.

Videh Mukti (V.): a state of **Liberation**, or **Mukti** (q.v.), in which the **gross body** is retained for a time.

Pron.: vidáyh múkti. *Var.*: Videha Mukti. S.: Majzoobiyat /majzoobéeyat/.

videh samadhi (V.): the state of divine coma, where one is totally unconscious of one's body or the world.

Pron.: vidáyh samáadhí. *Var.*: videha samadhi. See also **fana-e-zahiri**.

vidnyan. See under **vidnyani sanskaras**.

vidnyani sanskaras (V.): the special type of **sanskaras** (impressions) the **Avatar** has before His unveiling, and the type of **sanskaras** He gives to those in His Circles.

Pron.: vidnyáni sanskáaraz. *Var.*: vijnani samskaras. (vidnyani conscious unity; oneness; the highest consciousness. *Pron.*: vidnyán. S.: ahadiyat /ahadéeyat/.) See also **dnyan**.

vyatireka (V.): the analytic activity of the mind.

Pron.: vyatiráyka.

wali (S.): *lit.* friend; friend of God; one who is on the fifth **plane of consciousness**.

Pron.: wáli. *Var.*: vali. Also S.: abrar /abrárar/; wali Allah /wáli alláhah/. V.: mahapurush /maháapurùsh/; sant /sant/.

yoga (V.): yoking, union; disciplined activity or way of life.

Pron.: yóga. See also **bhakti-yoga; dnyan-yoga; karma-yoga**.

yoga-bhrashta (V.): an aspirant who has a setback or downfall on the spiritual **path**. *Pron.*: yóga bhráshta.

yogayoga sanskaras (V.): the nonbinding **sanskaras** (impressions) of the **Perfect Ones** who return to normal consciousness; the impressions of the impressionless Ones. *Pron.*: yogáyogya sanskáaraz.

yogi (V.) (*pi* -s): one who practices or has attained **yoga**; an aspirant.

Pron.: yógi (-z). *Var.*: yogin. S.: rahrav /ráhrav (soft v)/. See also **karma-yogi; sadhak**.

Part II
Terms Commonly Used in Other Meher Baba Literature

Ahuramazda (Avestan): Almighty God; the supreme Being in Zoroastrianism.

Pron.: ahóoramázda. *Var.*: Ahura Mazda. Cf.

Oversoul, Glossary Part I.

Allah (S.): Almighty God; the supreme Being in Islam.

Pron.: allááh. Cf. **Oversoul**, Glossary Part I.

Amartithi (Hindi/Mar.): *lit.* amar, deathless; tithi, day.

The anniversary of the day (31 January) that Meher Baba, the deathless One, dropped His body.

Pron.: ámartit'héé.

arti (V.) (*pi.* -s): a devotional song or prayer with a refrain or theme expressing the yearning for and the offering of oneself to the one worshipped; an act of devotion; the performance of devotional songs and prayers. *Pron.*: árti (-z). *Var.*: arati.

Avesta. See under **Zoroaster**.

daaman (Urdu): hem of a garment; as used by Meher Baba, holding on to His daaman implies holding on to Him, the **Avatar** (q.v., Glossary Part I). *Pron.*: dáaman. *Var.*: daman.

dhuni (Hindi): purifying fire that symbolizes divine light.

Pron.: dhóoni.

Elahi (Ar./Pers.): the one God; related to the Hebrew

Elohim (God).

Pron.: eláahi; elohéem.

Ezad (Avestan): the one God, the only One worthy of worship.

Pron.: éezad.

jai (*also* -ki jai) (Skt./Hindi): hail, victory, glory; -ki is a suffix meaning *to* or *belonging to*. Most frequently used in "Jai Meher Baba" and "Avatar Meher Baba-ki jai."

Pron.: jay (-kee jáy); avatáar máyhayr báabaa-kee jáy.

mandali (Skt/Mar.): a circle of intimate disciples.

Pron.: mándali.

Parabrahma (V.): supreme Spirit; God in the Beyond Beyond state (q.v. in *God Speaks*).

Pron.: pàrabrâhma.

Parameshwar (V.): Almighty God.

Pron.: pàramáyshwar.

Parvardigar (S.): God as the Preserver and Sustainer.

Pron.: parvardigáar. *V.*: Vishnu /vishnoo/.

Prabhu (V.): the Lord (God). *Pron.*: prabhóo.

prasad (V.): a precious gift from God; a small gift, often edible, given by or in the name of a **saint**, **Perfect Master**, or the **Avatar** (q.v., Glossary Part I).

Pron.: prasáad.

samadhi (Hindi/Mar.): tomb; tomb-shrine, e.g., the Tomb-Shrine of Meher Baba.

Pron.: samáadhi. Cf. **samadhi** (meditative trance), Glossary Part I.

Vedanta. See **Vedanta**, Glossary Part I.

Vishnu. See **Parvardigar**.

Yezdan (Avestan): Almighty God.

Pron.: yezdáan. See also

Ahuramazda. Cf. **Oversoul**, Glossary Part I.

Zoroaster: the Avatar (q.v., Glossary Part I)

Whose teachings come to us through Zoroastrianism and the Avesta.

Pron.: zoroáaster; avésta. *Var.*: Zarathushtra.

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Index

This book is addressed to those who long for God and His love, and since its themes throughout are God-realization and love of God, only the most important references to these subjects are given.

The Publisher

- Abdals*, 272
 Abode of Delusion, 154
 Abraham, 155
 Absolute, Absolute Reality. *Syn. for*
 God, *q.v.*
 Acceptance of the world, 356-57
 Action
 cause and result of, 26-32
 and inaction, 76-77
 intelligent, 77
 path of, 262-64. *See also karma-yoga,*
 service
 Adaptability, 81
Adhyatma-marga, 351
 Adjustment, self-, 50
 Aggressiveness, 173-74
 Ahmednagar, *xiii*
 Animal sanskaras, 62
 Anger, 11-12
 Ant, analogy for injustice, 89-90
 Arjuna, 81
 Art, 5, 85-86
 Asceticism, 15, 47-48. *See also*
 renunciation
 Ascetics, man who joins, story of, 390-91
 Aspirant, qualifications of, 350-69. *See*
 also disciple, spiritual life
 Ass, story of, 262-63
 Associative meditation, 207-09
 Astral body, 184
Atman. *See* soul Attachment. (*See also* desire,
 detachment)
 to bodies, 377-78
 to forms, 6-7
 freeing from, 47-48
Avatar. *See also* Circles of Avatar;
 vidnyani sanskaras
 compared to *Sadguru*, 274-75
 perfection of, 82
 sex of, 320
 source of divine love, 300
Avataric periods, 268-69
 Awakening
 beginning of, 126
 by a Perfect Master, 100
 Baba, Meher, biography of, *xii-xvii*
 statement of purpose, 300
 Babajan, *xii*
 Bahlul, story of, 156-57
 Bald prince, story of, 156-57
 Ballast, simile for ego, 161
 Banyan tree, analogy of, 286-87
 Beethoven, 308
 Belief, 368 Beliefs. *See also* dogmas and creeds
 false, 375-78
 Beloved, Divine. *Syn. for* God, *q.v.*; *see*
 also love
Bhakti, 55-56, 264. *See also* love
Bhas, 34-35
 Birth. *See* incarnation
 Birth control, 106-09
 Blame and praise, 392
 Bodies. *See also* spheres of existence
 astral, 184
 causal, 328 '
 evolution of, 35-36, 224-25
 identification with, 16-17, 136-38, 222-
 25, 247-49

- as mediums of experience, 344-45
 mental, 26,327-29
 subordinate to spirit, 84-85, 252
- Bondage, 128
- Books. *See* reading
- Brotherhood, the new, 300
- Bubble, simile of soul, 34
- Buddha, 197
- Causal body. *See* bodies
- Celibacy, 101-02
- Ceremonies and rituals, 6, 76,373-74. *See*
also new humanity, religion
- Character, qualities of, 355-59
- Cheerfulness, 358
- Children
 karma of, 331
 place in marriage, 106
- China, analogy of traveler to, 130
- Chishti, Muinuddin Khwaja, 197
- Christ, 6,280, 405
- Circles, of Sadguru and Avatar, 269,
 288-97
- Collective meditation, 205-06
- Competition, 3
- Concentration, 203. *See also* meditation
- Confidence, 357
- Conflict, 3
 mental, 38-39,162-65,169
 between mind and heart, 95-97
- Conformity, to religious practices, 350-52
- Consciousness, 17-22,141-44
 degrees of, 20
 evolution of. *See* evolution
 identification with not-self, 25
 individualization of, 18-19
 limitations on, 10
 on Path, 272
 states and planes of. *See* states,
 transcendent state of, 78. *See also* superconsciousness
 and unconsciousness, 19-20
- Contentment, 394
- Control, 2
 mental, in birth control, 107-09
 of mind and body, 49-51
 realization through, 405
 of senses, 358
 of world, by Perfect Masters, 191-92
- Courage, moral, 357
- Craving. *See* desire
- Creation, 23-31,34-37
 purpose of, 35,223
- Creeds, 353
- Critical thought, 354
- Crucifixion, of Christ, 280
- Cycles, *Avataric*. *See Avataric* periods
 of existence, 322
- Darkness, in meditation, 204
- Darshan*, 187
- Death, 301-06. *See also* hell and heaven
 true, 12-13
- Descent to help others, 347
- Deer, musk, story of, 264-65
- Delusion, self, 283-84
- Departmental thinking, 347
- Desire, 10-15
 cause of reincarnation, 337
 cause of suffering, 389-90,394-96
 after death, 308-10
 and the ego, 168
 and faith, 367
 flavoring experience, 61-62
 freedom from, 97
 of God to be conscious, 35
 limits on, 19
 as manifestation of sanskaras (*q.v.*
also), 17,26
 for occult experience, 181-82
 on the planes, 29
 rejecting, 45-48
 sexual, 99-101,325. *See also* lust
 surrendering, 377
- Desirelessness, 46,341, 394-95. *See also*
 detachment
- Desperation, 125-26,404
- Destiny, 331
- Detachment, 46-47,260. *See also*
 desirelessness
 degrees of, 390-93
 from good deeds, 91
 not indifference, 86
- Devotion, 55-56. *See also* love
- Diet, 209
- Disappointment, 11-12
- Disciple. *See also* aspirant, spiritual
 Life
 readiness of, 344
 relationship with Perfect Master,
 146-59. *See also* Perfect Master
 service of, 150
- Discourses, of Meher Baba, history of,
iv-viii
- Discrimination, 261-62
 in love, 112-13
- Diseases, analogy for false thinking,
 380-81
- Dishwashing, analogy for overlapping
sanskaras, 66
- Dispassion, 358
- Diversity, in spiritual life, 258-59
- Divine Beloved, 115-16. *See also* God,
 love
- Divine Lover, 116. *See also* God, love
 Divine Truth. *See* truth
- Dnyan*, 260-62. *See also* knowledge
- Dogmas and creeds, 353-54
- Drama, analogy for life, 338
- Dreams, 180-81
- Driver, analogy for ego, 175-
 76
- Drops in ocean, simile for soul, 40
- Drowning person, analogy of, 285
- Dry, keeping, in river, 248-49
- Duality, 19, 25-26, 285-86. *See also* sex,
 nonduality

- Duality (continued)*
 and infinity, 384
 perfection in, 78,280-81
 soul free of, 378
- Duty, 115
- Dying, true, 12-13
- East and West, incarnations in, 321
- Ego, 160-78 .1.
 conflicts in, 161-65
 constructing new, 177,254-57
 construction of, 168-69
 effects of ritual on, 76
 evolution of, 177-78
 expressed through good *sanskaros*, 64
 forms of, 172-74
 help of Perfect Master, 171,174-77
 and love, 167-68
 as an obstacle, 142-43,253-54
 origin of, 160-61
 and separateness, 166-67
 and service, 53-54
 tricks of, 170-71
 wearing out of, 130-32
- Ego-mind, 328-29,376-77
- Enchantment, 198
- Ends and means, 259-60
- Energy. *See also* spheres of existence
 domain of, 247-48
 mental, conservation of, 50-51
- Entanglement
 with duality. *See* duality
 with the spheres, 11
- Enthusiasm, 355-56,358
- Environment
 effect on individual, 42-43
 as not-self, 25-26
- Equipoise, 358
- Escape, 6,15
- Eternal now, 118-19
- Evil, 61-66
- Evolution
 of consciousness, 17-18, 23-28, 35-36,
 178,222-27,266-67
 sexual, 319-20
- Excellence, 79-80
- Exclusivity, feelings of, 166-67
- Existence, Real, 1
- Experience, 61-62. *See also* *Maya*
 cause and result of. *See* action,
sanskaras
 after death, 307-12
 reevaluation of, 126-27
 spiritual or mystical. *See* spiritual
 experience, occultism
- Extremes. *See* opposites
- Eye, internal, 190
- Faith, 365-69
 degrees of, 123
 in oneself, 366
 in Perfect Master, 148-50,366
 realization through, 404
- Falsehood. *See* *Maya*
- Fanas*, 132-34
- Fasting, 43-44
- Fate, 331
- Fear
 and the ego, 166-67
 freedom from, 49-50
 and nonviolence, 73-75
- Feet, of the Perfect Master, 187-88
- Fidelity, 404
- Finite, the, 16-17
- Fire and smoke, analogy for the Path,
 153-54
- Fish in water, analogy of, 128
- Flashlight, analogy for consciousness,
 136-38
- Food, simile for meditation, 209
- Forebearance, 356-57
- Force. *See* violence
- Forest, cutting a way out of, analogy, 201
- Forms, 247-48
 identification with, 6-7,302-03
 limit love, 399-400
- Francis, St. (of Assisi), 405
- Freedom, 42-43,340-43
 from good and evil, 61-62
 kinds of, 340-43
 negative and positive, 84
 through service, 54
- Future, worry over, 357-58
- Game, the sole worth playing, 200
- Ganj-e-Shakkar, 198
- Ghausali Shah, 155
- Gift of grace, 113-14
- Goal. *See also* quest
 of creation, 140,226,252-53
 of *Sadhana*, 259-60,265
- God, 16-22
 all that matters, 339,345
 belief in, 123-25
 -intoxication, 271-72
 longing for, 30,190,271
 as love, 399-403
 manifests life, 34-37
 and *Maya*, 384-87
 meditation on, 235-36
 the only reality, 1,382-83
 perfection of, 81-82
 realization of. *See* realization
 search for, 125-27
 union with, 14-15, 115-16, 133-34. *See*
also Sahaj Samadhi
- God-Man. *See* *Avatar*
- God Speaks*, v, xiii, xv
- Good, 7,19,61-66
- Goodness, 13-14
- Ghost, story of man who challenged, 37-38
- Grace, 113-14
- Gravitation, law of, 110
- Greed, 11,113. *See also* possessiveness
- Gross body. *See* bodies
- Gross sphere. *See* spheres of experience

- Guru. *See* Perfect Master
- Hairat*, 198
- Hallucination, 182-83
- Happiness, 12,388-93
of the God-realized, 273
illusory, 100
through love, 396-98
- Harmony, inner, 97-98
- Heart
as approach to understanding spirit,
94-98
feminine qualities of, 323
opening of, 14
- Hell and heaven, 307-12
- Hierarchy, spiritual, 268
- Higher self, in marriage, 105-06
- Hope, 8
- Humanity, the new. *See* new humanity,
the
- Humility, 404
cultivation of, 44
in service, 364
- Humor, of a Perfect One, 81
- Hypocrisy, 283-84
- Iceberg, simile for ego, 168
- Ideal, the, 164-65
- Identification
with the body. *See* bodies
with forms, groups, 7
- Ignorance, 21,370. *See also* *Maya*
- Illusion, 34-35. *See also* *Maya*
- Illumination, 66
- Imagination, 18,25
getting rid of false, 130
and *sanskaras*, 26
- Immortality, 304. *See also* heaven and hell
- Importance. *See* values
- Impressions. *See* *sanskaras*
- Impulse, divine. *See* *lahar*
- Inaction, 77. *See also* action
- Incarnation, 319-26
- Individual soul. *See* soul
- Individuality
of consciousness, 18-21
in realization, 250
- Infatuation, 112
- Inferiority complex, 173-75
- Infinity, 117-22,235-36. *See also* *God*
- Instinctive love, 110-11
- Intellect. *See also* mind
limitations of, 5
and *Maya*, 375
purification of, 381
- Intoxication, God-. *See* *God*
- Intuition, 312
aid on Path, 184
basis for faith, 366-67
and expression of heart, 95
place of, 98
use of, 261-62
- Irani, Merwan Sheriar. *See* Meher Baba
- Irani, Sheriar, *xii*
- Islam, 155
- Jealousy, 167
- Jesus. *See* Christ
- Journey of the Soul, exposition, 222-27
- Journey, spiritual, 127. *See also* Path,
Spiritual
- Kabir, 153
- Kalyan, story of, 149-50
- Karan sharir*, 328
- Karma*, 327-33
carried in mind, 327-29
of children, 331-32
debts and dues, 334-35
engendered by service, 91
help of Perfect Master with, 335-36
inertia of, 330
intelligent use of, 331
of interference, 329-30
maintains moral order, 332-33
ties between souls, 329
- Karma-kanda*, 351
- Karma-yoga*, 262-63
defending the weak, 70
description of, 83-87, 232-33
and service (*q.v. also*), 89
- Kasturi-mriga*, story of, 264-65
- Knowledge
direct and inferential, 123-24
infinite, 273
kinds of, 371
occult, 193-94
path of, 260-62
real, 1
Self-. *See* self-knowledge
- Krishna, 80,81
- Lahar*, 34-35
- Lay la. *See* Majnun
- Law, spiritual, 135
- Letters, candy, analogy for teaching, 195
- Liberation, 14,21-22,28,267-68. *See also*
Realization
- Life
after death. *See* death, hell and heaven
divine, 9
and love, 110
- Light. *See* God-realization
- Longing, for God, 248-49, 404
in all beings, 128-29
as cause of suffering, 30
- Love, 1,8-9,110-16. *See also* meditation
of heart, *bhakti*
in animals, 110-11
for *Avatar*, 269
cause of happiness, 396-98
diminishes ego, 167-68 *•
in discipleship, 147-50,190
God as, 399-403
human and divine, 87,115-16
lower and higher, 112-13

- Love (*continued*)
 and mind, 96-97, 111
 and nonviolence, 72-75
 a path to realization, 54-56, 260, 264, 405
 pure, 114-15
 and service, 13
 in spiritual work, 346, 363
- Lover, Divine. *See* Divine Lover
- Lust, 11, 99-100. *See also* desire, sexual
 becomes love in marriage, 109
 as limited love, 400-02
 and love, 113, 399-400
 and promiscuity, 102
- Mad, the. *See masts*
- Mahapralaya*, 23-24
- Majnun and Layla, 147-48
- Majzaob*, 2ff?, 274
- Male and female, 320, 323-26
- Man-God. *See* Perfect Master
- Manas*, 222. *See also* bodies
- Manifestation of life, 33-35
- Marriage, 104-09
- Masts*, 271-72
- Master, Perfect. *See* Perfect Master
- Matter, 83-86
 adjustment of, 4-5
 entanglement with, 19
- Maya*, 14, 17, 18, 222-23, 370-87
 cause of false beliefs, 375-78
 cause of false valuation, 370-74
 and God, 384-87
 reality of, 386
 transcending falsehoods, 379-83
 used by Master, 154-55, 284-85
- Means and ends, 259-60
- Meditation, 51-52, 201-03, 260-61
 of action, 210, 232-33
 associative and dissociative, 207-09
 basic instructions for, 203-06
 difference between deliberate and
 spontaneous, 240-45
 discriminative, 210
 general, 214
 guidance of Master in, 212
 through hearing, 220
 of the heart, 210, 232
 impersonal, 234-39
 personal, 228-33
 principles of classification, 207
 through reading, 220-27
samadhi. *See samadhi*
 specialized, 215-18
 on subjects and objects of experience,
 216-17, 228-31
 table of general types, 217
 table of specialized types, 229
 types of, 201-51
- Meher Baba, biography of, *xii-xvii*
- Memory. *See* past lives
- Meherabad, *xiii*
- Mental body. *See* bodies
- Mental conflict. *See* conflict, mental
- Mental contact with Master, 188
- Mental control, in birth control, 107-09
- Mental sphere. *See* spheres of existence
 Messiah. *See Avatar*
- Mind. *See also* bodies, mental; intellect
 control of, 49-53
 entanglement with, 141-42
 and heart, 94-98
 identification with, 17, 137-38, 248-49
 illuminated, 66
 impressions. *See* sanskaras
 seat of anger, 11
 synthetic and analytic activities of,
 207-08
 universal, 275, 279-80
- Minorities, 120-21
- Miracles, 95-96
- Mohammed, 197
- Moksha*, 250 .«
- Moral courage, 356
- Moral order, 322
- Muqam-e-afsan*, 154
- Mukti*, 267
Videh-Mukti, 267
- Mystical experience. *See* spiritual
 experience
- Mysticism, 5-6
- Needs and wants, 12
- Neti-neti*, 46-47
- New civilization, 122
- New humanity, the, 3-9
- Nirvana*, 217, 250-51
- Nirvikalpa* state, 217, 240-44, 246-51
- Nonbeing. *See* nothing
- Nonconformity, 351-54
- Nonduality, 120
- Nonviolence. *See* violence and nonviolence
- Nothing (nonexistence), 24-25
- Not-self. *See* self
- Now, eternal, 118
- Obedience
 to a Master, 58-59. *See also* Perfect
 Master
 realization through, 405
- Occultism, 179-200. *See also* powers
- Ocean, as simile for God, 34
- Om*-point, 34, 190
- One-pointedness, 358
- Oneness of humanity, 300
- Opinions, 368
- Opposites, 19. *See also* duality
 balancing through experience, 27-28
 division of experience into, 61-62, 137
 and ego, 170
 identification with, 7-8
 of indulgence and repression, 99-100
 integration of, 160-61
- Origin of life, 33-34
- Oversoul. *Syn. for* God, *q.v.*
- Para-bhakti*, 56

- Paramatma*. *See* God
- Parenthood, 106-08
- Past lives, 313-18. *See also* reincarnation
- Past, worry over, 357-58
- Path, Spiritual, 128-34, 225-27. *See also*
- Perfect Master
 - beginnings of, 350-54
 - help of Perfect Master on, 153-54, 335-36
 - progress on, 135
 - unbinding karma, 335-37
- Patience, on Path, 248-49, 355-56
- Peace, 14, 49-50, 404
- world, 299
- Penance, 44-45, 137-38
- Penitence. *See* repentance
- Perception, mystical, 5-6
- Perfect Master (*Sadguru* or Man-God). *See also* *yogayoga sanskaras*; circles of *Sadguru* and *Avatar darshan* of, 187
- effects of contact with, 57-58, 282-83
 - end of evolution of, 30, 36-37
 - as object of meditation, 230-33
 - opposition to, 282-83
 - relationship with, 57-60, 146-52, 174-75, 368-69
 - service of, 92-93, 363-64
 - source of help on Path, 20, 29, 33, 57-60, 138, 171, 174-78, 195, 220, 253-57, 286-87, 358-59
 - source of help with *karma*, 335
 - as source of love, 8, 114, 397-98
 - state of, 21-22, 30-31, 39, 59-60, 79-82, 267-68, 274-81. *See also* *Sahaj Samadhi*, *Nirvikalpa* state
 - testing, 367
 - use of divine powers by, 155, 180, 186-92
 - ways of, 153-59
 - work of, 282-87
- Perfection, 15, 21-22, 78-82
- Persistence, 355-56
- Personality, in marriage, 104-05
- qualities. *See* qualities
- Phenomenal world, 223
- Philosophy, 219-20
- Physical bodies. *See* bodies
- Plan, Divine, 3, 191-92
- and marriage, 106
 - in war, 339
- Planes of consciousness, 28-30, 128-34. *See also* spheres of existence
- help of Master on, 153-54, 197-99
- Plants. *See also* evolution
- sex in, 319-20
- Pleasure and pain, 388-89
- Poise, 46-47
- Polarity of existence. *See* opposite
- Politics, 85-86
- Poona, *xii*
- man from, story, 356
- Population control, 106-071
- Possession, by discarnate souls, 305-06
- Possessions, 11, 172
- Possessiveness, 120. *See also* greed
- Posture in meditation, 204
- Power, infinite, 273
- Powers, 271-72. *See also* *siddhis*, occultism
- misuse of, 195
 - on the planes, 133
 - used by Masters, 155-56, 186-92
- Practice and theory, 352
- Praise, 392
- by a Master, 157-58
- Pran*, 222. *See also* bodies
- Present time. *See* now, eternal
- Pride, 170
- Priests, compared to Man-God, 283
- Prince-sage who doubted, stories of, 123-24
- Promiscuity, 102-05
- Psyche, 19-20
- Psychical research, 193-94
- Psychology, 164, 171-73
- Pumpkin, story of, 139-40
- Purification, of intellect, 381
- Purna-vairagya*, 392
- Purpose
- of creation. *See* creation
 - divine, 259
- Qualities, divine, 355-59
- Quest, 258. *See also* goal
- Questions, 348
- Qutub*, 274-75. *See also* Perfect Master
- Reading, 220-27
- Reality, 24-25. *See also* God
- Realities of Meher Baba's teachings, 1-2
- Realization, 66. *See also* liberation of God, 21-22, 30, 141-45, 222-27, 276-78, 282, 345, 398, 404-05
- pseudo sense of, 130-31
 - seed of, 286
- Reason, 111, 366-67
- Reincarnation, 225, 313, 337-38. *See also* evolution, *sanskaras*, bodies, past lives and karma, 301-38
- male and female, 323-26
 - and relationship with Master, 335-36
- Religion, 350. *See also* ceremonies and rituals
- identification with, 7
 - and Perfect Masters, 283
 - transcendence of external, 258
- Renunciation, 1
- internal and external, 42-44
 - realization through, 405
 - suffering of, 394-%
 - of wants, 12-13, 15
- Repentance, 44-45
- Repression, 12, 50, 99-100
- Resignation, 402
- Respect for saints, 196

- Responsibilities, 15
 karmic, 333
- Retirement from world. *See* world
- Revealed truths, 220
- Rituals. *See* ceremonies and rituals
- Rivalry, 3
- River and silt, analogy of, 253
- Rumi, Jalaluddin, Maulana, 155
- Sacrifice, 1, 54-55, 343
- Sadguru*. *See* Perfect Master
- Sadhana*, 258-65
- Sahajawastha*, 264
- Sahaj Samadhi*, 217-18, 245, 250-51
- Sahasas*, 187
- Sai Baba, *xii*
- Saint, 17, 329-30
 and sinner, 63
darshan of, 187
- Salik*, 274. *See also* Perfect Master
- Samadhi*, 131-34
Sahaj. *See Sahaj Samadhi*
 story of yogi, 243-44
- Sanskaras*, 26-31, 224-25
 aid of Master with, 187-88
 animal, 62
 cultivation of good, 62
 and death, 305-06
 formation and function of, 32-39
 good and bad, 62-66
 and incarnations, 321, 328-29
 limiting action of, 10, 17-18
 and meditation, 241
 natural and nonnatural, 33
 potency of, 37-38
prarabdha, 288-89
 removal of, 40-60
 suspension of, 253
 unwinding of, 30
vidnyani, 291-92
 weakening of, 136-37, 350
yogayoga, 289-91
- Sanskritic*, ties or links, 27-28, 329-30
- Science
 expression of spirituality, 5, 85-86
 and occultism, 193-94
 and religion, 98
- Scriptures, 220-22
- Security, false, 6
 Self, 25-26
 causal nature, 190-91
 dictates of higher, 151
 shedding limited, 397-98
- Self-adjustment, 50
- Self-conscious soul. *See* Perfect Master
- Selfishness, 10-15, 302-03
- Self-knowledge, 12, 135-40
- Selfless service. *See* service
- Selflessness, 13-15
- Self-surrender. *See* surrender
- Separateness, 166-71
 an imaginary state, 18
 obstacle to spiritual work, 346-47
- Service, 89-93, 360-64
 by defending the weak, 70
 to humanity, 342-43
 instructions to workers, 347-49
 to Master, 150
 as method of removing *sanskaras*, 53-54
 nature of, 344-47
 realization through, 405
 as *sadhana*, 263-64
 and selflessness, 13
- Sex, 99-103. *See also* desire, lust
 detachment from, 325-26. *See also*
 celibacy
 experience of male and female, 323-25
 identification with, 7, 324-26
 in plants and animals, 319-20
sanskritic determination of, 321-22
- Shams-e-Tabriz, 155
Shariat, 320
- Sharir*, 222-23. *See also* bodies
- Siddha*, 246-47
- Siddhis*, 191. *See also* powers
- Silence
 in meditation, 203-04
 by Meher Baba, *xiii*, 270
- Simplicity, 395
- Sinner and saint, 63
- Slander, 170
- Sleep, 20, 142-44
- Shmashan vairagya*, 390
- Solitude, 43-44, 53
- Son, spiritual. *See* spiritual son
- Sorrow, 302-03
- Soul, 16-22. *See also* reincarnation
 creation of, 34
 evolution of. *See* evolution
 and heart, 14-15
 journey of, 222-27
 knowledge of, 138-39
 in *Maya*, 377-78
 purity of, 66
- Soul, universal, 16, 345. *See also* God
- Space, finiteness of, 385
- Spheres of existence, 222-27, 304
 entanglement with, 11, 19
 experience of, 181
 interaction in, 186
 love in, 400-02
 progress through, 136-38, 247-49
 and *sanskaras*, 39
- Spirit, understanding of, 94
- Spiritual
 advancement, 20, 252-57
 experience, 5-6
 freedom, 340-43
 hierarchy. *See* hierarchy, spiritual
 importance, of an act, 119-20
 life, 83-88. *See also* aspirant, disciple
 Master. *See* Perfect Master
 Path. *See* Path, Spiritual
 preparation, 114
 son, of a Master, 59
 understanding, 4-5

- Spirituality, 15,83-88
 States of consciousness, 131-32, 247-49,
 272. *See also* planes of consciousness
 Stimuli, 46-47 String, winding on a stick, simile for
samskaras. *See* winding
 Subconscious mind, 168
 Sublimation, of energy, 50-51,105
 Subtle body. *See* body
 Subtle sphere. *See* spheres of existence
 Suffering, 388-96
 mental and physical, 392-93
 physical and spiritual, 30
 of renunciation, 394-%
 results of, 299
 Suicide, 305
 Superconsciousness, 111
 Superiority complex, 173-75
 Superstition, 37-38
 Surrender, 2
 to Perfect Master, 58-60,148,174,
 252-57
 realization through, 405
 Sword, walking on, analogy of Path, 254
- Tariqat*, 351
 Theory and practice, 262-63,352-54
 Thinking
 departmental, 347
 mistakes in, 380-82
 Thieves, dead, story of, 198-99
 Thoughts, control of, 237-39
 Time
 beginning and end of, 23
 finitude of, 385-86
 importance of now, 118-19
 in spiritual work, 345-46
 in subtle world, 310
Tivra-vairagya, 391
 Tradition, 6-7
 Train, analogy of Path, 129-31
 Trance meditation, 244
 Transcendent consciousness. *See*
 consciousness
 Truth. *See also* God
 exposition on Divine, 222-27
 and ignorance, 370
 infinity of, 117-22
 studying the, 220
- Unconscious, 19-20
 Understanding, 87-88, 94-98. *See also*
 intuition
 as highest form of service, 361-62
 necessary to service, 347-48
 and suffering, 299
 Union with God. *See* God, God-realization
 Unity, 14,116
 Universe, 18-19. *See also* spheres of
 existence, matter
 creation of. *See* creation
 Universal Selfhood, 14
Unmatta state. *See* God-realization
 Upasni Maharaj, *xii*
- Values, 162-65,199-200
 and control, 50
 false, 381
 illusory, 4,351
 mistaken, 371-74
 spiritual, 117
Vast, 246-47
 Violence and nonviolence, 67-75
 Volcano, analogy of meditation, 201-02
- Wants and wanting. *See* desire
 War, 299
 causes of, 3-4, 8,396
 and nonviolence, 68-75
 World War II, 339
 Water from midstream, story of, 155
 Wave, simile for *lahar*, 34
 Weakness, in a disciple, 148
 West. *See* East and West
 Will, 8
 Will-to-be-conscious. *See* *lahar*
 Winding of string on a stick, simile for
samskaric action, 37, 41-42
 Wine fetching, story of, 155
 Winking story, 156-57
 Wisdom. *See* understanding
 Witness of action, 237
 Words and meaning, 67
 Work. *See also* service
 for humanity, 4
 the Master's, 189-90. *See also* Perfect
 Master
 World, retirement from, 84
 Worlds, gross, subtle, mental. *See* spheres
 of existence
 Worry, 357-58
 cause of, 12
 as an obstacle, 114
- Yoga*, 137,398. *See also* karma-yoga
Yoga-bhrashta, 336-37
Yogi, greedy, story of, 243-44

***Centers of Information
about Meher Baba***

For additional information about Meher Baba as well as publications by and about Meher Baba, the following centers may be contacted:

Avatar Meher Baba Trust

King's Road
Ahmednagar (MS) 414 001 India

Meher Spiritual Center

10200 Highway 17 North
Myrtle Beach, SC 29577
U.S.A.

Avatar's Abode Trust

P.O. Box 779
Nambour, 4560 Qld.
Australia

Meher Baba Information

Box 1101
Berkeley, CA 94701
U.S.A.

**Avatar Meher Baba Center
of Southern California**

10808 Santa Monica Boulevard
Los Angeles, CA 90025
U.S.A.

Meher Baba Association

1/228 Hammersmith Grove
London W67FH
England